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Faculty of Tourism and Recreation
ul. Kazimierza Górskiego 1, 80-336 Gdańsk, Poland

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ASSESSMENT OF LAND RESOURCES OF THE ZHAMBYL REGION AS THE BASIS OF RECREATION DEVELOPMENT AND FOOD SECURITY OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

Gulnar ALDAZHANOVA*
Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University, Department of Geography,
Ecology and Tourism, Almaty, Kazakhstan, e-mail: gulnara.aldazhanova@mail.ru

Aliya BEISSENOVA
Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University, Department of Geography,
Ecology and Tourism, Almaty, Kazakhstan, e-mail: zhandosova1974@mail.ru

Irina SKORINTSEVA
Institute of Geography and Water Security Science Committee, Almaty, Kazakhstan, e-mail: skorintseva@mail.ru

Zhumakhan MUSTAFAYEV
Institute of Geography and Water Security Science Committee, Almaty, Kazakhstan, e-mail: z-mustafa@rambler.ru,

Duman ALIASKAROV
Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University, Department of Geography, Almaty, Kazakhstan, e-mail: duman_06@mail.ru

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Abstract: The article presents the scientific results of a study for the assessment of agricultural land in Zhambyl region of the Republic of Kazakhstan based on field studies in 2020-2021 and modern GIS technologies. The purpose of the study of the article is a comprehensive assessment of land resources used for agricultural production in Zhambyl region, identifying the prevailing areas of agricultural land, irrigated and rainfed pastures by administrative districts of the region. In the course of the scientific study, proven Kazakhstani methods of assessing the state of agricultural land, successfully applied to the arid agricultural regions of Kazakhstan, as well as methods of geographical and agricultural sciences for land analysis and calculation according to the structure of use, were used. Based on the statistical data of the Committee of Land Resources and preliminary regional plans, a map of the land fund of the Zhambyl region by land categories was created. The results of the study allow business entities, especially farms, to organize the rational use of irrigated lands, including pastures and hayfields, including the sustainability and profitability of agricultural production, as well as successfully develop agro-landscape tourism.

Key words: land fund, agriculture, reserve land, arable land, pastures, hayfields, and irrigated agriculture

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INTRODUCTION

The balance of agricultural sector is determined by the interaction researches that study: natural systems, agricultural environmental management (Quinio et al., 2022), assessment of natural resource potential, based on the landscape-ecological approach (Kuderin et al., 2019). From the new pressures of international economic integration and the impact of climate change, the need for the development of high-tech agriculture (HTA) is put at the forefront towards the goal of improving efficiency, breakthrough in productivity, and quality of products (Vu et al., 2021). Reaching sustainability goals at a regional scale requires an adequate combination of innovations at the field scale (agro ecological techniques) and adaptation of farm structure organization (integrated farming system, resource allocation), markets, supply chains, and policies (Selbonne et al., 2022). Agricultural land provides the largest share of food supplies and ensures an essential number of ecosystem services (e.g., providing food, fuel, fibre) (Viana et al., 2021). Agricultural food products (Hou et al., 2022) remain in perpetual demand because of the increasing population, rapid urbanization and urban growth, declining productivity of the agricultural land, climate change. Land suitability appraisal is the evaluation and aggregation of the suitability of particular areas of land for defined uses. It is a tool for deciding the factors that inhibit a crop from growing (Talukdar et al., 2022). Land suitability evaluation involves qualitative valuations of topography, vegetation, climate, hydrology, and soil properties and quantitative valuations that rely on yield estimates (Schmidt et al., 2022).

Zhambyl region is one of the largest agricultural regions of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Zhambyl region of the Republic of Kazakhstan has agro-climatic, land and water resources, capable of providing the population of the region with its own agricultural products. However, in the future, the region's water supply may become a serious limiting factor in the development of irrigated agriculture and flooding of pastures. The growing limitation of water resources is associated with their interstate distribution, severe limitation of water use, and changes in the regime of the Shu and Talas rivers (Geldyeva et

* Corresponding author

al., 2011). For the agriculture of the region, the problems of providing industries (crop raising and livestock) with water resources and fertile agricultural land, and the related problems of providing the population with food is one of the key problems of sustainable development of agriculture (Recommendations on the agricultural system of the Zhambyl region, 1978).

Naturally and climatically, the region is located in the desert zone of the temperate zone, characterized by a low amount of precipitation, high evaporation, significant daily and annual fluctuation in air temperature, which results in a sharp continentality and aridity. The key peculiarity of the climate is aridity, which directly determines the uniqueness of the region's landscape. Aridity and the anhydrous conditions of the territory, the salinity of soils and the low productivity of vegetation hinder the economic development of these vast lands (Vlasenko et al., 2011). The annual precipitation is no more than 250 millimetres and in many areas their amount varies from 100 to 200 millimetres (Consolidated Report on environmental protection in the Republic of Kazakhstan: statistical publication, 2020). For summer, high temperature is typical. The average air temperature in July ranges from 23-25°C in the north to 30°C in the south of the region. The amount of precipitation increases from north to south. In the desert part of the region, precipitation is 100-150 mm per year, while in the mountains up to 500 millimetres (Consolidated report on the state and use of lands of the Republic of Kazakhstan: statistical publication, 2020). The following agro-climatic regions are distinguished within the region: very dry moderately hot, very dry hot, dry hot, very arid foothill and mountainous, moderately arid and moderately hot. In agricultural terms, the most significant are the agro-climatic areas - dry, hot and very arid foothill, where irrigated and rain-fed land is mainly concentrated, used for sowing grain, fodder and vegetable crops, where transhumance is practiced at short distances from settlements (Erdavletov et al., 2008).

The existence of 10486.6 thousand hectares of agricultural land in Zhambyl region dictate the diversity of specializations of agricultural formations, the structure of which is prevailed by farms (8.5% of the number of agricultural formations) and households of the population (91.1%). The primary objective of the region's agriculture is the production of crops, production of feed in the quantities necessary for the development of animal husbandry (About change in agriculture of the Zhambyl region: statistical publication, 2019). The main commodity branches of crop production in the region are grain farming (wheat, oat, barley, millet) (Department of Land Relations of Akimat of Zhambyl region, 2020).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study of land resources of Zhambyl region was based on the methods of geographical and agricultural sciences. The theoretical and methodological basis of the study included: setting of a problem, development of an action program for the implementation of the tasks assigned with the definition of the key working hypotheses and priorities, selection and justification of the methodological framework adapted to the tasks assigned, stock and expeditionary collection of materials on the current state of land resources, creation a series of cartographic models (Figure 1) (Mazhitova et al., 2018). Based on the statistical data of the Land Resources Committee of Zhambyl region of the Republic of Kazakhstan and preliminary regional plan, using remote sensing data, a map of the land fund of Zhambyl region was created (Figure 1), which allowed us to assess its structure and territorial distribution of the region's land by categories. The majority of issues associated with the territorial distribution of the land fund of the Zhambyl region require methods that can be integrated in GIS, which are powerful tools designed for managing, transforming and representing referenced data spatially (Dehimi, 2021) Mapping farmlands with different land use categories is important for understanding regional water needs, agricultural production, water resources consumption and vulnerability to climatic extremes (Raei et al., 2022).

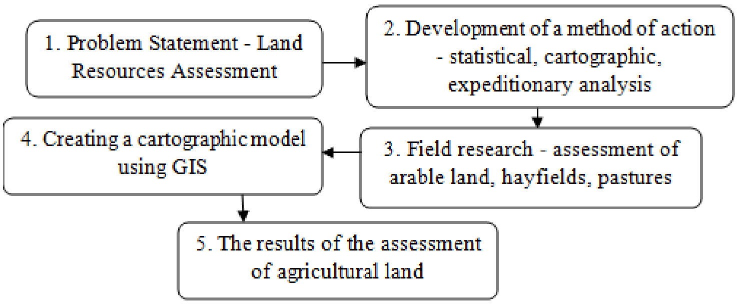

Figure 1. Flowchart of the study of land resources of the Zhambyl region (Source: Prepared by the authors)

In the land fund of the region, which is 14426.3 thousand hectares, prevail agricultural land (30.8% of the land fund area) (Figure 2). Agricultural land is the key category of land used for agriculture (crop production and livestock). In the territory of the region, there are 4448.3 thousand hectares (37% of the territory of the whole land fund) (Consolidated report on the state and use of lands of the Republic of Kazakhstan: statistical publication, 2020*)*.

Reserve land, accounting for 2094.6 thousand hectares (18% of the land fund territory) are the fixed reserves for the resumption of transhumance in the region over long distances. Most of these lands are concentrated in the territory of Moiynkum (608.9 thousand hectares) and Sarysu (1017.2 thousand hectares) districts, however, due to the low watering of pastures (70% of pastures) and poor condition of flooding installations (50% is in good condition), only 60% can be used for pasture (field studies in 2018). The production yield in the spring period on these lands is 1.5-2.5 c/hectare of dry weight, in autumn it is somewhat less (1.1-2.2 c/hectare), in general it ranges from 80 to 104 c/hectare of fodder units.

According to field studies in 2019, agricultural land is mainly concentrated in the southeastern, southwestern and southern parts of the region. Most of them are in T. Ryskulov district (748.1 thousand hectares) (Figure 3).

The development of agriculture in the region (livestock and crop production) depends on the availability of farm land in all categories of land. In the territory of the region, agricultural land in 2017 was 10486.6 thousand hectares or 72.7% of the land area of the region. The structure of agricultural land is represented by arable land (8.0% of the area of agricultural land), pastures (90.0%), hayfields (1.99%) and perennial plants (0.01%). On average, there are 12.6 hectares of agricultural land per resident of the region, and for administrative districts, these values range from 2.3 hectare/person (Zhualy district) to 58.7 hectare/person (Moyinkum district). In regional terms, the largest areas of these lands are concentrated in Moiynkum (24.5% of the area of agricultural land in the region), Sarysu (22.6%), Shu (10.3%) and Talas (9.9%) administrative districts (Figure 4). Analysis of the dynamics of changes in the area of agricultural land over the past 20 years has shown that there is an increase in their area as a result of development of reserve lands (Consolidated report on the state and use of lands of the Republic of Kazakhstan: statistical publication, 2020). When compared to 2000, the area of agricultural land in all categories of land has increased 1.1 times, excluding hayfields (Figure 5).

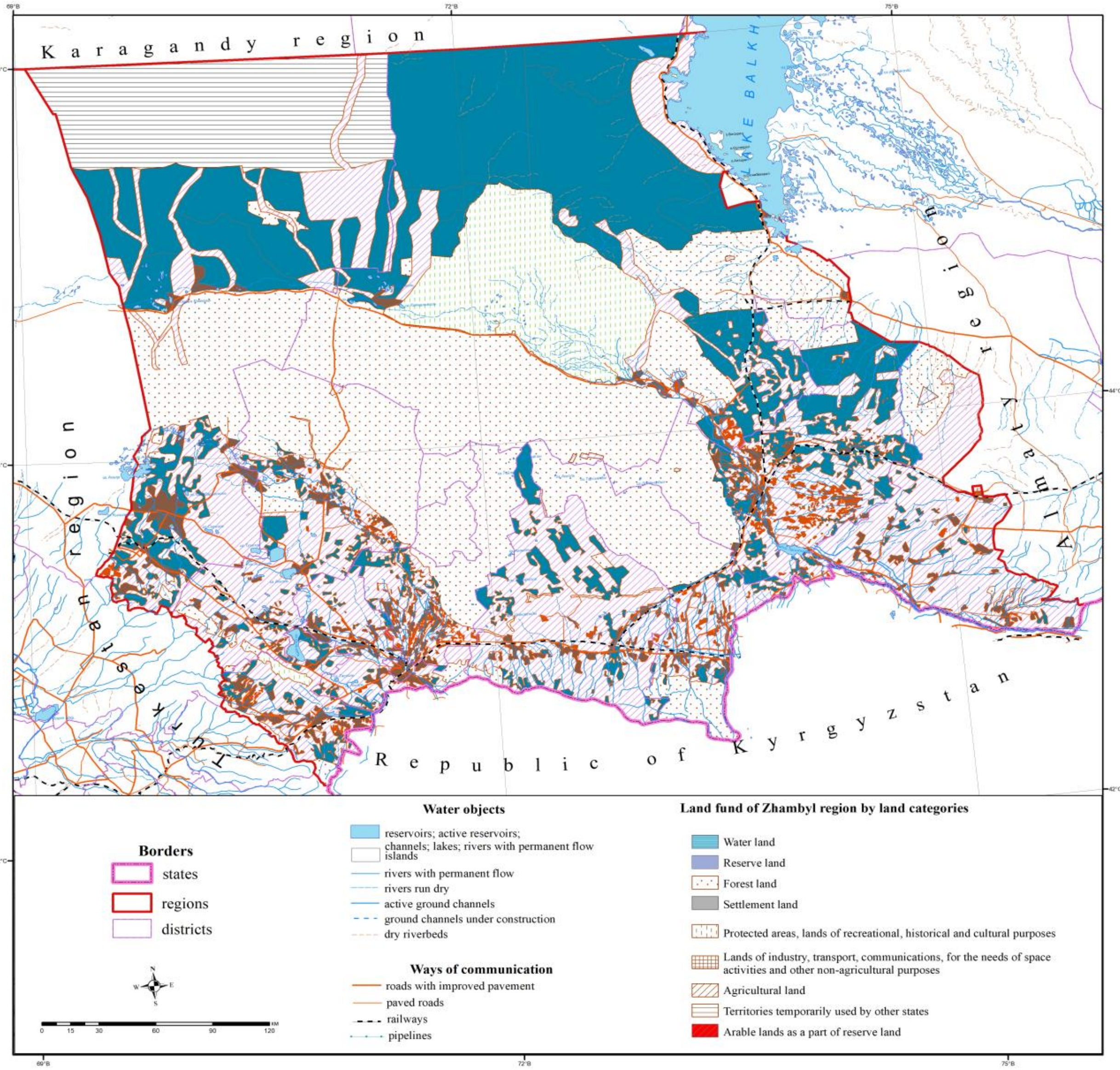

Figure 1. Land fund of the Zhambyl region of the Republic of Kazakhstan
(Source: Prepared by the authors based on Department of Land Relations of Akimat of Zhambyl region, 2020)

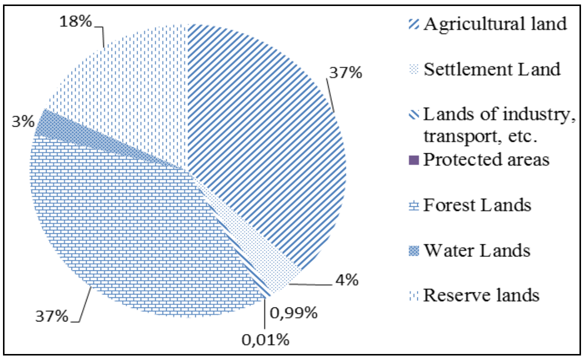

Figure 2. Structure of the land fund of the Zhambyl region (Source: own editing with Microsoft Excel 2010 and on the basis of the Consolidated report on the state and use of lands of the Republic of Kazakhstan: statistical publication about land fund, 2020)

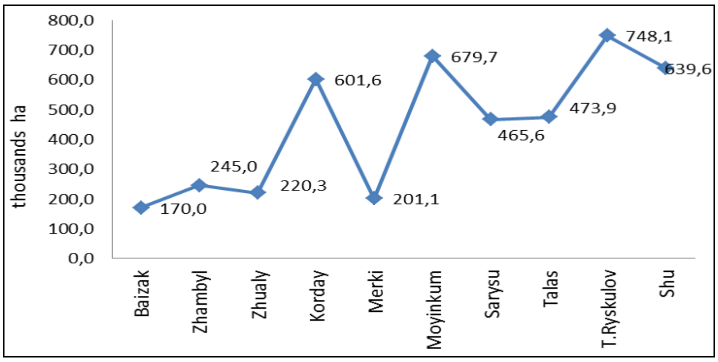

Figure 3. Availability of agricultural land by administrative districts, thousand hectares (Source: own editing with Microsoft Excel 2010 and on the basis of the Consolidated report on the state and use of lands of the Republic of Kazakhstan: statistical publication about agricultural land, 2020)

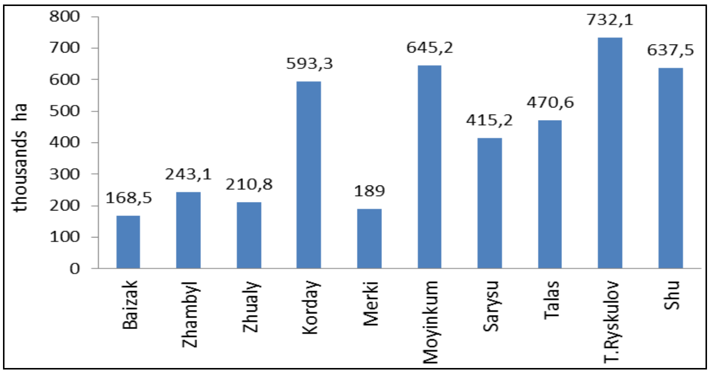

Figure 4. Availability of agricultural land, thousand hectares (Source: own editing with Microsoft Excel 2010 and on the basis of the Consolidated report on the state and use of lands of the Republic of Kazakhstan: statistical publication about agricultural land, 2020)

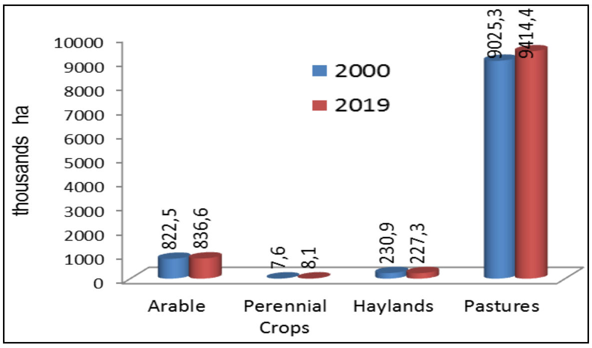

Figure 5. Dynamics of agricultural land, thousand hectares (Source: own editing with Microsoft Excel 2010 and on the basis of the Consolidated report on the state and use of lands of the Republic of Kazakhstan: statistical publication about agricultural land, 2020)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Agricultural lands are composed of three dimensions: the *structure*, which is the visual appearance of the landscapes; the *function*, which refers to the cultural, environmental, and economic benefits that the agricultural land provide to society (e.g., production of food and fiber, recreational services); and the *value*, which refers to the economic assessment of the landscapes, including producers' maintenance and production costs, and society's valuation (Gao et al., 2014).

The territorial distribution of agricultural land in the region directly depends on soil fertility and the availability of water resources. Irrigation systems modulate agricultural productivity, and are associated with significant implications for the soil, water resources, sustainable development and the environment. Efficient irrigation systems lead to a substantial decrease in labor and water needs in comparison with traditional surface irrigation methods (Raei et al., 2022). In the territory of Zhambyl region, all the diversity of soil is distributed by zones - high-mountain, mountain-steppe, low-mountain and foothill, desert. The content of organic matter in the region's soil - humus is one of the conditions for the yield of agricultural crops, and serves as the key criteria for assessing soil fertility. The results of field studies showed that the share of soil area with a high content of humus in the Zhambyl region is 5%, average 26%, low 69%. The main types of soil in the region are gray soil (ordinary, light and dark), brown and gray-brown soil.

1. The high-mountain zone includes the territory of the region with an altitude of 2000 -4600 meters. The soil cover is represented by mountain-meadow alpine and mountain-meadow subalpine soil. Soil features are high humus content (8-20%) and thick sod layer (15-20 cm). Soil varieties are arranged in a vertical sequence. Mountain meadows and meadow-steppes of the high-mountain zone are mainly used as summer pastures.

2. The mountain steppe zone includes the territory of the region with an altitude of 1200 - 2000 meters. The main types of soil are mountain black soil and mountain dark chestnut soil with humus content of 3-9% and up to 1% of gross nitrogen. The soil of the zone is poorly used in agriculture due to the strong ruggedness of relief.

3. Low-mountain and foothill zone (altitude of 700 - 1200 meters). The main types of soil are light chestnut and gray soil (ordinary and northern). The upper layers of light chestnut soil contain up to 2.5% humus. The lands are used for agricultural production (livestock and crop production). Grey soil is characterized by low humus content (less than 2%). Common gray soil produces a good yield with intensive irrigation and the use of organic and mineral fertilizers.

4. The desert zone covers a significant area of the region, and the soil cover is represented by takyr-like, gray-brown soil and sandy massifs. Takyr-like soil is low-humus (0.3-1.0%), carbonate from the surface, saline from a depth of 30-40 cm. Land development is possible with irrigation and full-scale reclamation. Gray-brown soil contains up to 1.5% humus, prevailing in Betpakdala, the degree of salinity is different. Sand within the region covers 20-25% of the total land area and distributed in large massifs throughout the territory, with a great economic importance as autumn-winter pastures and forest land (Krylova et al., 2020).

Arable land

836.5 thousand hectares of arable land are used for agriculture in the Zhambyl region, which is 8% of the agricultural land, of which 210 thousand hectares of land are irrigated (25.1% of the arable land). Most of the arable land is located in Korday (142.1 thousand hectares), Shu (146.8 thousand hectares) and T. Ryskulov (148.1 thousand hectares) districts (Figure 6).

Significant irrigated areas (in terms of land fund) are concentrated in Baizak (32.8 thousand hectares), Korday (47.9 thousand hectares), Zhambyl (44.3 thousand hectares) and Shu (34.5 thousand hectares) districts. Irrigated arable land in the region occupies 25.1% of the area of all arable land, distributed unevenly and confined mainly to the valleys of the Shu, Talas and Assa rivers, as well as to the foothill alluvial-proluvial plains of Talas, Zhualy, Zhambyl, Baizak, Lugovsky, Merken and Korday districts. The productivity of the region's arable land depends mainly on the soil fertility. It has been found that out of 210.0 thousand hectares of irrigated arable land, only 9.2 thousand hectares have the soil ball-bonitet of over 50.

In this area, efficient cultivation of agricultural crops is possible. 170.7 million hectares of irrigated arable land has the soil ball-bonitet of 40 - 50; good crop yield is guaranteed here. On irrigated area of 26.1 thousand hectares, the soil ball-bonitet is less than 40. The highest ball-bonitet of irrigated arable land is observed in Zhualy district, namely 57. As for the average-weighted ball-bonitet of agricultural land in Zhambyl region, then it is worth to highlight Korday, Merken and T. Ryskulov districts, where the ball-bonitet is 20. The distribution of the soil bonitet of irrigated arable land over the territory of the region has a zonal-provincial nature. The extreme values of bonitet vary from 25 to 57, which naturally determine the different ecological stability of soil and different approaches to farming systems, including fertility maintenance measures. Considering the ratio of soil bonitet of rain-fed arable land and pastures in the region, it can be noted that the most insignificant differences (17-21%) are observed in Zhualy, Korday and Merken districts, distinguished by the most fertile soil. The bulk of crop production comes from irrigated arable land, which accounts for one third of the arable fund of the region (Krylova et al., 2020).

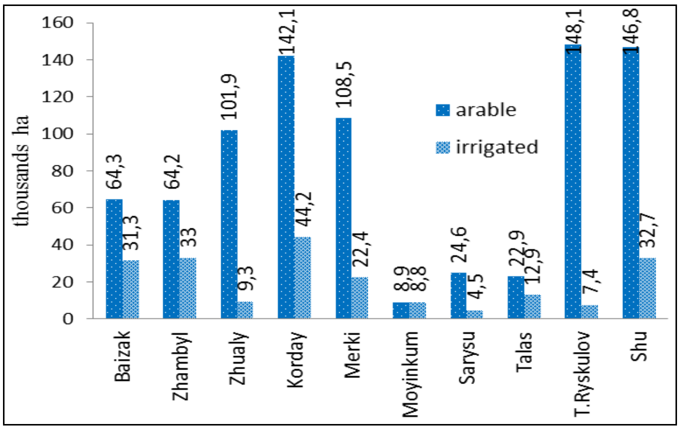

Figure 6. Area of arable land in Zhambyl region, thousand hectares (Source: own editing with Microsoft Excel 2010 and on the basis of the Consolidated report on the state and use of lands of the Republic of Kazakhstan: statistical publication about arable land, 2020)

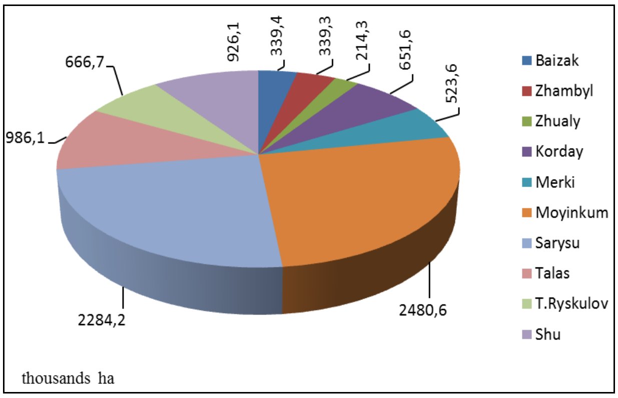

Figure 7. Area of pastures by districts of Zhambyl region, thousand hectares (Source: own editing with Microsoft Excel 2010 and on the basis of the Consolidated report on the state and use of lands of the Republic of Kazakhstan: statistical publication about pastures, 2020)

Pastures

The unique feature of pastures in the Zhambyl region is their diversity. In the structure of the agricultural land of the region in all districts, pastures prevail, accounting for 9414.4 thousand hectares (90% of the area of agricultural land), of which about 72.8% are watered, 13.5% are degraded (Figure 7, Table 1). In general, due to the decrease in the population of farm animals, the load on pastures has been reduced in recent years; however the negative effects of overgrazing continue to manifest themselves. As a result of the difficult economic situation of the population and business entities of the agricultural sector, livestock began to be concentrated near settlements. An increase in the load on near-village and watering pastures for a long period has resulted in a very strong degree of degradation due to failure and irregular grazing. As a result of denationalization and privatization, the unified system of inter-republican, inter-regional and inter-district regulation of animal husbandry has been destroyed, in particular the issues of seasonal transhumance of cattle for the rational use of pastures. This factor negatively affects both the level of livestock development and the state of pastures.

Table 1. Pastures of Zhambyl region
(Source: personal original data, and also Geldyeva et al., 2011, Bassova et al., 2019)

District	Prevailing group of pastures	Yield, c/hectare	Area of degradation, thousand hectare
1. Baizak	absinthic-Kochia prostrata shrub	3.5	116.8
2. Zhambyl	grey absinthic-ephemerous	3.6	134.6
3. Zhualy	cespitose-elac with ephemera	5.8	88.9
4. Korday	cereal-ephemerous	4.7	145.3
5. Merken	absinthic-cereal	4.4	135.8
6. Moyinkum	grey absinthic- thirst-quenching biyurgun	3.5	188.4
7. Talas	absinthic of various grasses	4.2	77.9
8. Sarysu	absinthic -thirst-quenching	3.0	206.4
9. T. Ryskulov	various grass-cereal-absinthic	5.3	90.5
10. Shu	grey absinthic-ephemerous	4.4	82.6

The vegetation of the forage land of the region is distinguished by a peculiar species composition, morphological and biological features of plants, and the nature of plant communities. Its essential features are the absence or a slight abundance of cereals, sparseness of grass and the poor floristic composition of plant aggregations. The complex of natural conditions predetermined the adaptability of desert plants to drought and increased amount of salt in soil. The pasture areas of the region are characterized by the predominance of xerophytic (drought-resistant) and halophytic (salt-tolerant) sub-shrubs and dwarf shrubs. There are few herbage plants of the early summer development cycle, mainly sod grasses - erkek, wheat grass, and rare feather grass. The landscape species in this area are *white-ground sagebrush, Turanian, Salsola arbuscula, and biyurgun* (Bassova et al., 2019). The wide distribution of white-ground *sagebrush* and the diversity of communities in which it prevails are explained by great ecological adaptability and low requirements for soil. The yield of *absinthic-ephemeral* pastures varies significantly in different areas depending on the moisture and temperature conditions. In dry years, the yield can be 1-2.5 c/hectare, and in wet years up to 4-5 c/hectare. The production yield in the spring period is 1.6-3.25 c/hectare of dry weight, in autumn it is somewhat less (1.0-3.4 c/hectare), in general it can range from 83 to 106 c/hectare unit. Turan-absinthic pastures are widespread in Betpakdala, represented by *Turan-absinthic, Turan- absinthic-thirst-quenching, Turan - absinthic-keireuk* and other types of pastures (Kurochkina, 1978; Kirichenko, 1980; Torehanov, 2006). The projective soil cover by plants on *sagebrush* is 40-50%. The average yield for the pasture season ranges from 1.1-2.9 c/hectare unit.

According to field studies of pastures, a significant part is degraded, which entailed decrease in productivity and forage capacity, increase of annual *saltwort and ephemers* in the share of grass that are low-edible by livestock, inedible and poisonous plant species. Within sandy massifs of Moiynkum, covered by *sagebrush-black saksaul-annual saltwort groups* of pastures on arid soil, sometimes with *sagebrush-erkek, astragalus* on the sand, there is a load on 100 hectares of background pastures - 33 units of sheep, degraded - 27 units of sheep. There are about 1.4 million reduced pastures in the region. The forage base of the region determined the development of animal husbandry. There are 321.0 thousand heads of cattle, 2212.6 thousand heads of sheep, 105.0 thousand heads of horses, 5.7 thousand heads of camels. The dynamics of livestock (of all species) showed that in the region there is a decrease in the sheep population (the main specie of grazing livestock) from 2413.2 thousand heads in 2015 to 2212.6 thousand heads (by 1.1 times).

In general, due to the decrease in the population of farm animals, the load on pastures has been reduced in recent years, but the negative effects of overgrazing continue to manifest themselves. As a result of the difficult economic situation of the population and business entities of the agricultural sector, livestock began to be concentrated near settlements. An increase in the load on near-village and watering pastures for a long period has resulted in a very strong degree of degradation due to failure and irregular grazing. As a result of denationalization and privatization, the unified system of inter-republican, inter-regional and inter-district regulation of animal husbandry has been destroyed, in particular the issues of seasonal transhumance of cattle for the rational use of pastures. This factor negatively affects both the level of livestock development and the state of pastures. The survey showed that in the northwestern part of the region, far from densely populated areas, the process of pasture degradation has been suspended and even their natural restoration is observed.

Hayfields

Hayfields in the region occupy 227.3 thousand hectares, of which the area of basin irrigation is 15.0 thousand hectares. The regulation of the flow of the Talas, Shu, Assa rivers and human business activity worsens the moisture regime of natural hayfields, which entailed reduction in their area. When compared to 2000, the area of hayfields have decreased by 3.6 thousand hectares. Based on the field studies and analysis of statistical data of land resources for 2014-2019, the average yield of hayfields in the region was determined in the context of prevailing groups of pastures by administrative districts (Table 2). On average, the yield of natural hayfields decreased from 6-8 c/hectare to 4 c/hectare. In addition to decrease in productivity, there is reduction in the area of hayfields, the main areas of which are located in the floodplains of the Shu, Assa and Talas rivers. As a result of reduction of surface runoff in the lower reaches of rivers, intensive drying of the territory, salinization and degradation of hayfields with a sharp change in plant communities take place. The importance of vegetation cover as a recreational resource is very great for all other types of natural tourism, as it is associated with the health -improving effect of the landscape, the presence of attractive plants and animal species due to ionization, and phytoncide properties of plants (Mukayev et al., 2022). At the beginning of 1960, the area of natural flooded hayfields of the region were 400 thousand hectares, and in 2019 it was already 60-120 thousand hectares, which affected the forage capacity of lands decreased by 3.5 times. Among the key reasons worsening the condition of hayfields are changes in the hydrological and hydrochemical regime of water bodies; absence of a departmental arm in charge of the protection, regulation, and use of plant resources along riverbeds and other water bodies. The visual quality of the rural scenes largely depends on their natural features mainly in terms of the degree of wilderness, percentage of plant and vegetation cover, availability of water resources, and color contrast. These natural features, in turn, are associated with people’s preferences, thus becoming major attractions in the context of nature based tourism and outdoor recreation (Gao et al., 2014). As for the agricultural features, rural tourists are more likely to accept well landscaped farm operations. Specifically, the deliberate incorporation of trees or shrubs in combination with other farming features (e.g., animals in the fields) helps to diversify the visual appearance of agricultural landscapes, enhance opportunities for recreational activities, thereby improving the aesthetics of the farmland. Regarding cultural features, well-preserved man-made structures and buildings (e.g., barns, storage sheds) and farm mechanization features (e.g., tractors, windmills) have been suggested to be important elements associated with the visual quality of rural landscapes and, thus, need to be considered when planning the modernization of rural areas (Tyndall et al., 2007).

Table 2. Current state of hayfields in Zhambyl region
(Source: personal original data, and also Geldyeva et al., 2011, Bassova et al., 2019)

District	Prevailing group of pastures	Area, hectare	Average yield, c/hectare
1. Baizak	wood reed- licorice-various grass	6579	6.4
2. Zhambyl	various grass-ephemerous	9452	5.3
3. Zhualy	cereal-various grass with sagebrush	6640	8.4
4. Korday	cereal-various grass with sagebrush	9568	5.6
5. Merken	reedy- Kochia prostrata-various grass	7606	6.0
6. Moyinkum	wood reed-reedy-various grass	75406	7.9
7. Talas	reedy-sedgy-wood reed	62199	7.2
8. Sarysu	wood reed-reedy-wheat grass	24173	6.8
9. T. Ryskulov	various grass- ephemerous	20211	7.1
10. Shu	reedy-wheat grass with licorice	5486	6.1

CONCLUSION

Assessment of land resources used for agricultural production in the Zhambyl region showed that:

1. 72.7% of the total land fund is used for irrigated and rain-fed agriculture, grassland farming. In the structure of agricultural land in all categories of land, pasture areas prevail, accounting for 90% of the area of agricultural land. The main pastures are concentrated on the sandy massifs of Betpakdala and Moiynkum with an average annual yield of 1.1-2.9 centner per hectare. The natural forage base of the region determined the directions for the development of animal husbandry (cattle breeding, sheep breeding and horse breeding).

2. Reserve land, accounting for 2094.6 thousand hectares are the fixed reserves for the resumption of transhumance in the region, however, due to the low watering of pastures (70%) and poor condition of flooding installations, only 60% can be used for pastures.

3. The most fertile agricultural land is concentrated in Zhualy, Baizak and Merken districts, where the weighted average soil ball-bonitet is 42-53 points for irrigated arable land, and 19-20 points for agricultural land.

4. Over the past five years, the livestock population has decreased by 1.1 times in the region. Due to the decrease in the population of farm animals, the load on pastures has been reduced by 1.2 times; however, the negative effects of overgrazing continue to manifest themselves, especially around settlements.

5. Arable land is 836.5 thousand hectares (8% of agricultural land), of which 210.0 thousand hectares of land is irrigated (25.1% of the arable land). 9.2 thousand hectares of irrigated land have a soil ball-bonitet of over 50 units.

6. The agritourism value of the territory decreases and has the smallest importance with monotonous relief and uncomfortable climate, water deficiency, poorly represented flora and fauna in conditions intensive drying of the territory and expansion of desert landscapes.

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PROMOTING THE IMAGE OF BANDA ACEH-INDONESIA BECOMES A POPULAR TSUNAMI-TOURISM DESTINATION CITY: THE MODERATING ROLES OF CULTURAL AND ISLAMIC TOURISM OBJECTS

Hafasnuddin HAFASNUDDIN*
Universitas Syiah Kuala (USK), Faculty of Economics and Business, Department of Management, Banda Aceh, Indonesia, e-mail: hafasnuddin@unsyiah.ac.id

M. Shabri Abd. MAJID
Universitas Syiah Kuala (USK), Faculty of Economics and Business, Department of Management, Banda Aceh, Indonesia, e-mail: mshabri@unsyiah.ac.id

Syafruddin CHAN
Universitas Syiah Kuala (USK), Faculty of Economics and Business, Department of Management, Banda Aceh, Indonesia, e-mail: syafruddin.chan@unsyiah.ac.id

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Abstract: This study aims to explore and analyze the moderating effects of Islamic and cultural tourism objects on the relationship between tsunami-related sites and the image of Banda Aceh city, Indonesia as a tsunami-tourism destination. Of 29.213 tourists who visited the city in 2019, 200 of them were selected as the sample of the study using a simple random sampling technique. The primary data collected through questionnaires and interviews were then analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM)-based moderated multiple regression techniques. The study documented that tsunami-related sites and Islamic and cultural tourism objects have promoted the image of the city as a tsunami-tourism destination. Additionally, the cultural and Islamic tourism objects strengthened the effect of tsunami-related sites on the city image as a tsunami tourism destination. Thus, to further promote the city image as the tsunami-tourism destination, the tsunami-related sites, Islamic and cultural tourism-related objects must be preserved and enhanced.

Key words: tsunami-related sites, Islamic and cultural tourism objects, tsunami-tourism city image

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INTRODUCTION

Since the last few decades, the role of the tourism sector has become increasingly important in the economic development of cities in both developed and developing countries, including the city of Banda Aceh in Indonesia. Banda Aceh, the capital city of Aceh Province, which is located in the westernmost province of Indonesia, is among 514 cities in Indonesia. Since the independence of the Republic of Indonesia on August 17, 1945, the municipal Banda Aceh City has made various efforts to attract tourists, nationally and internationally. One of them is to portray a good image of the city in three forms.

Prior to the 1980s, Aceh Province is imaged as the verandah of Mecca. Aceh is the first place Islam entered Indonesia and the majority of its citizens are committed Muslims. In addition, Muslims from other provinces across Indonesia who performed Hajj pilgrims to Mecca by sea should transit in Aceh, while preparing all supplies to sail to Mecca. During the 1980-2003 periods, Aceh has been imaged as the western gateway to Indonesia. Apart from being located in the western tip of Indonesia, Aceh also has beautiful panoramic views and rich historical heritage, including the largest graves of Dutch soldiers in the city. Various traditional dances and historical relics were inherited from the Islamic Kingdom of Pasai (1267-1517 BC) and the Kingdom of Aceh Darussalam (1496-1903 BC), including the Grand Mosque of Baiturrahman, has been promoted to attract tourist visits. However, the number of foreign tourists visiting Aceh has been far from expected.

On December 26, 2004, a huge tsunami wave hit Aceh, causing massive physical destruction and the death of around 200,000 people. The tsunami disaster that was reported globally has exposed the name of Aceh to almost the entire universe. After the tsunami disastrous incidence, the number of foreign tourists visiting Banda Aceh has dramatically increased by 138.85% from 288 foreign tourists in 2004 to 4,287 foreign tourists in 2005 and increased by more than 300% to the year 2010. Over the 2010-2019 period, the number of foreign tourist visits has reached 54,588 people, showing a 431.68% increase. However, a pandemic Covid-19 that was firstly discovered in Hubei, China on November 17, 2019, and spread over Indonesia with the first case found on March 2, 2019, has caused a decline in foreign tourist visits to Aceh, Indonesia by -99.47% in the end 2020 (BPS - Statistic Indonesia, 2021). The 2004 tsunami tragedy has left many unpleasant memories and tsunami-inherited objects. Present-day, various traces of serious damage caused by the 2004-tsunami can be easily found in the city of Banda Aceh. These include a floating boat, a boat stuck on the roof of a house, a

* Corresponding author

PLTD floating ship (*kapal apung*), the citrus park thanks to the world, mass graves, Baiturrahim Mosque (*Ulee Lheu*), and Rahmatullah Mosque (*Lampu'uk*). The mosques that were located about 20 meters from the edge beaches have remained intact and they had been only slightly damaged when the tsunami hit the city. All tsunami-related relics are documented and displayed in the tsunami museum in downtown Banda Aceh. The presence of tsunami-related objects has attracted more tourist visits to the city as the tsunami-tourism destination. Apart from the tsunami-related objects, various other tourism objects related to local religious and cultural values also existed in Banda Aceh city, but their presence is only complementary. This is evidence in our preliminary survey on 15 foreign tourists who acknowledged that their main purpose of visits is to witness how the 2004 tsunami disaster has hit the city, while visiting other Islamic and local cultural tourism objects, buying the traditional local handicrafts, and enjoying local culinary are seen as their peripheral motive. This preliminary evidence is supported by Hughes (2002) and Okumus et al. (2012) who classified tourist visits into the core and peripheral motives. Thus, in this context, the image of the city as a tsunami tourism destination is viewed as the most crucial factor attracting tourist visits in addition to peripheral factors of cultural and Islamic tourism objects.

Many previous studies have explored the determinants of the image of the tourism destination city. The tourism destination city's image does not only rely on a single tourism object but it depends on various tourist attractions that are complementary to each other (Ritchie et al., 2011). For example, in developing the image of the tourism destination city, Turkey has promoted the coastal areas of the Mediterranean and the Aegean (Tosun et al., 2003), various natural attractions of unspoiled landscape with forests, rivers, and mountains (Yolal, 2016), cultural heritages, such as the epochs of prehistoric times of the Hittite period, early iron epoch, Greek period, and Byzantium period, and Islamic tourism relics of the glory of Islam, such as the Seljuks and Ottomans heritages (Tavmergen and Oral, 1999).

Similarly, Abu-Dhabi, the capital of UAE has promoted its coastal tourism city equipped with a maritime museum of the Louvre Abu-Dhabi, Guggenheim Abu- Dhabi, the Sheikh Zayed National Museums, and a performance arts center as a global tourism destination. The city has also built a cultural district as a truly fantastic cultural tourism center (Hazime, 2011; Henderson, 2017) and it has appeared as a Muslim travel friendliness, *halal* travel destination, and Muslim shopping destination (Smith et al., 2017). Qatar, on the other hand, in its Tourism Master Plan and National Vision 2030 has set a long-term strategy to position its capital city as political, business, sport, and cultural arenas on the international tourism map (Hazime, 2011; Henderson, 2017). As a cultural and Islamic tourism destination city, Qatar has developed the world-class museum of the New Doha's Islamic Art (Hazime, 2011; Henderson, 2017).

Likewise, other major cities in the world include Beijing (Zhang and Zhao, 2009), Seoul, Taipei, Hong Kong, Singapore (Yun, 2019), Paris, Britain, Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Toronto (Carmichael, 2002) have also been imaged as global-scale tourism destinations through various cultural events. For example, during the 1988 Olympic event, Seoul held the cultural "Hi Seoul Festival", Taipei, Hong Kong, and Singapore had developed cultural film industries (Yun, 2019). During the 2008 Olympic event, Beijing has introduced Olympic mascots, articulated from the traditional Chinese culture of grace, peace, and kind-heartedness, which reflected Beijing as the famous cultural entity (Zhang and Zhao, 2009). Beijing has also promoted Muslim tourism attractions, including the largest and oldest Aitiduer Mosque in Kashi, which was built in 1442. In addition, along the sea Silk Road, several UNESCO Islamic cultural heritage sites were found in the city (Zhao, 2015). Similarly, in improving its image as a world-tourism city, Singapore has preserved old heritage buildings (Chang, 1997; Yun, 2019) and promoted its city as the Muslim friendliest tourism destination (Marlinda et al., 2021).

In the context of Indonesia, Bali, which is iconic as the Island of the Gods (Budhi et al., 2022), has recently built Islamic tourism destinations by preserving the 200-year-old Nurul Huda Mosque in Gelgel Village. Yogyakarta is another city in Indonesia that has promoted its image as an impressive religious tourism object of the Kauman Gede Mosque, Heroes' Cemetery, King's Tomb of Kotagede, Gondomanan Temple, and Poncowinatan Temple (Nurozi, 2021).

The above-reviewed studies showed the importance of cultural and Islamic tourism objects to create a strong cities image as a tourism destination. However, none of those studies has investigated the effects of tsunami-related sites combined with the cultural and Islamic objects on the image of the tourism destination city. In addition, the previous studies only explored the direct effects of cultural and Islamic tourism objects on the image of the tourism destination city, but ignored the potential moderating roles of cultural and Islamic tourism objects in enhancing the image of the tourism destination city. Thus, the previous studies failed to provide a comprehensive finding that can be used as a holistic policy reference to enhance the image of a city as a tourism destination either directly or through the moderating effects of cultural and Islamic tourism objects. Motivated to fill the existing gaps in the previous studies, this paper aims to measure and analyze the extent to which tsunami-related sites, cultural tourism objects, and Islamic tourism objects have an impact on the image of Banda Aceh, Indonesia as the tourism destination city. It also attempts to investigate and analyze the extent to which Islamic tourism objects and cultural tourism objects have moderating effects on the relationship between tsunami-related sites and the image of the city as a tsunami-tourism destination. Using a moderated multiple regression analysis based on the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), the findings of the study are hoped to enrich the existing literature on the determinants of tourist destination image and become a policy reference by tourism-related authorities enhance the tourist destination image, travel agencies to attract tourist visits through the promotion of tourist destination image.

The rest of the study is structured in the following manner. A literature review on which the hypotheses are developed and tested is discussed in Section 2. Section 3 provides research methods and followed by the presentation of findings, discussion, and their implications in Section 4. Finally, Section 5 concludes the paper.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, the relevant concepts and theories on tourism city image are discussed. The determinants of the city image, comprising tsunami-related sites, Islamic tourism objects, and cultural tourism objects are also discussed. Finally, the study proposes the hypotheses to be tested, developed based on the relevant existing theories and literature.

City image

In general, the previous researchers measured the image of a tourism destination city using two approaches, namely a holistic approach and a specific approach. The former approach defines city image as a set of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that people keep in mind about a destination city (Crompton, 1979). It is a profound expression of all knowledge, impressions, prejudices, and emotional thoughts that a person remembers about a particular place, city, or other objects (Fakeye and Crompton, 1991). On the other hand, Pike and Ryan (2004) argue that the image of a tourism destination or a city image is a pre-existing impression corresponding to the destination branding. Sekhniashvili (2021) and Chia et al. (2021) views city image as a totality of what a person already knows or perceives about that destination from different sources. The image of a city has been measured using only a general construct (Fakeye and Crompton, 1991) and a multi-dimensional approach, comprising functional, emotional, rational (Beerli and Martin, 2004; Supriono and Yulianto, 2021; Azeez, 2022), and religiosity dimensions (Carboni et al., 2014).

In their study, Beerli and Martin (2004) opine that the functional dimension relates to the tangible aspect of a product, while the emotional dimension relates to the side of how employees provide excellent services to visitors so that they can give a deep impression on their souls. Meanwhile, Pike and Ryan (2004) argue that rational image refers to the rational memories that a person has about the attributes of a tourism destination city. These attributes are destination views that attract tourists to visit a destination city or place (Beerli and Martin, 2004), while the emotional image is related to tourists' emotional memory of the tourism destination city (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Baloglu and Mangaloglu, 2001).

In short, many scholars come to an agreement that the city image construct is established by two interconnected factors, namely rational and emotional (Okumus and Yasin, 2009; Stylidis et al., 2017). The mixture of the images can better describe the actual overall image rather than being presented in one dimension (Chan et al., 2021; Nam et al., 2022).

Tsunami-related tourism objects

The tsunami that hit Aceh province, Indonesia on December 26, 2004, was initially caused by the 9.0-9.3 Richter scale earthquake that lasted for about 10 minutes (Nazaruddin and Sulaiman, 2013). Within less than 15 minutes after the earthquake, a wall of water of about 30 meters or as high as a nine-story building appeared as the deadly wave raced the coast of Aceh province, Indonesia (Nazaruddin and Sulaiman, 2013). Compared to 14 other countries hit by the 2004-tsunami, Banda Aceh as the capital city of Aceh Province was one of the most devastating disaster areas. It has caused severe physical damage and the death of more than 200,000 people. During the recovery and rehabilitation period, various tsunami sites have been repaired and preserved. These include the tsunami museum, PLTD floating ship, *Lampulo* floating ship, the monument of Aceh thanks to the world, tsunami education park, Baiturrahim Mosque (*Ulee Lheu*), and Rahmatullah Mosque (*Lampu'uk*). These tsunami-related sites had become monuments to commemorate the tsunami tragedy, tsunami-tourism sites, and tsunami-related education and research objects.

For instance, a floating ship is one of the tsunami-related sites located in the Punge Blang Cut Village, Banda Aceh. The 2,600-ton ship was previously at sea at the Ulee Lheu ferry port, was dragged 2.4 km inland due to an earthquake and a tsunami wave as high as 9 meters. In 2012-2013, the ship was renovated, equipped with two towers, a monument, a walkway, and a fountain. Visitors can board the ship and witness the enormity of the tsunami tragedy throughout the history of human civilization (Fahmi et al., 2018). Another well-known tsunami tourism object is Tsunami Museum. The museum was deliberately built to be a silent witness to the historical tragedy of the tsunami by displaying photos and various tsunami-related objects. The visitors could easily find various relics of the tsunami disaster.

Cultural tourism

Previous studies provide various definitions of cultural tourism due to its broad concept. For example, according to McIntosh and Goeldner (1994), cultural tourism comprises all aspects of travel, whereby travelers learn about the history and heritage of others or their contemporary ways of life or thought. Richards (2006) argues that cultural tourism has a broader scope than tourism itself as it becomes a culture or a way of life to quote the most frequent usage of the term. A similar view is given by ICOMOS in its Cultural Tourism Charter, which widened its definition over time.

Initially, the definition of cultural tourism was limited only to visits to monuments and sites of civilization heritage. In the 1990s, its definition was expanded to include visits to other places where tourists can gain experience about all aspects of cultural tourism, including cultural contemporary lifestyle, food, topography, environment, towns, historic sites, and cultural art performances (McIntosh and Goeldner, 1994). The World Tourism Organization (1985) categorized all human activities into cultural tourism as they can satisfy the human need for diversity, raise the cultural level of the individual, and give new knowledge, experiences, and encounters.

Culture itself covers broad aspects of human life. It portrays characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people, encompassing language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music, and arts, beliefs (right or wrong) including how we sit at the table, how we greet visitors, how we behave with loved ones, and a million other things (Richards, 2006; Moira, 2018). All these cultural elements become tourism products or cultural tourism objects which are called by various terms such as cultural tourism; heritage tourism object, arts tourism object, and ethnic tourism object (Richards, 2006). Considering the broad definition of cultural tourism objects, in this study, the objects of cultural tourism are only limited to all tourism objects that have no relation to religious tourism objects and tsunami-related sites.

Islamic tourism objects

An increasing trend of Muslims traveling across the globe has attracted scholars to define what Islamic tourism is. Abdullah et al. (2020), for example, defines Islamic tourism as the activity of visiting areas or tourism objects related to Islamic values and Islamic heritage. Other experts argue that Islamic tourism activities are driven by Islamic (*halal*) principles (Zamani-Farahani and Handerson, 2010), and a leisure interest equipped with several facilities, services (Battour and Ismail, 2016), and hospitality provided by the community, entrepreneurs, and governments following the teachings of Islam (Abdullah et al., 2020). Unlike conventional tourism concept, Islamic tourism is related to characteristics of tourism activities, objects, services, and all other tourism aspects that are permissible (*halal*) (Carboni et al., 2014) and free from all prohibited (*haram*) elements based on the Islamic tenets (Battour and Ismail, 2016). The concept of *halal* and *haram* can be viewed from religious and business perspectives. From an Islamic perspective, Muslim tourists can only consume foods and drinks following Islamic guidance, while from a business perspective, producers need to guarantee the *halalness* of tourism objects by attaching the halal logo (Abdullah et al., 2020). Islamic tourism objects include cultural heritage (Elrawi, 2017), Grand Mosque (Amri et al., 2020), tolerance of multi-ethnic society, implementation of sharia law in social life (Zulkifli et al., 2019), historical monuments, and sharia hotel that provides no alcoholic beverages and a distinct swimming pool and sauna with Islamic facilities for men and women (Abdullah et al., 2020).

PREVIOUS RELATED STUDIES: HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Tsunami related-sites and tourism city image

The image of a tourism destination can be viewed from various spectrums (Word Tourism Organization, 1985). These include the spectrum of cultural values (Alvarez and Korzay, 2011), certain events such as the Olympic (Zhang and Zhao, 2009; Yun, 2019), natural panoramic views such as mountains and beaches (Hafasnuddin, 2017; Raihan, 2021), the Roman Empire and the World War II historical relics (Yolal, 2016), and specific natural disastrous events such as a tsunami (Rindrasih, 2019). Other scholars argued that the image of a tourism city can also be formed through its religious values (Abdullah et al., 2020). According to Beerli and Martin (2004), the city image spectrum can be studied through two dimensions, namely the rational and emotional value dimensions. In general, the tourism-event objects are classified into two categories, namely happy and unhappy/memorial events. The Olympics in Beijing (Zhang and Zhao, 2009) and Seoul (Yun, 2019), for example, can be grouped into happy events, while war relics in Istanbul, Turkey, and Nagasaki, Japan (Yolal, 2016) and catastrophic 2004-tsunami can be grouped into unhappy events. These events shape the image of the tourism destination city (Nazaruddin and Sulaiman, 2013; Rindrasih, 2019). More specifically, the globally reported 2004-tsunami tragedy that struck 11 countries and caused heavy damages and the death of 200.000 people in Aceh, Indonesia had made Aceh becoming a well-known tourism destination city by the world community. After the tsunami tragedy, the number of foreign tourists visiting Aceh has dramatically increased until 2020 when pandemic Covid-19 spread over the world, including Indonesia (BPS-Indonesia Statistics, 2021). On this basis, the study proposes the first hypothesis, as follows:

H1: The tsunami-related sites influence the image of Banda Aceh as a tsunami tourism destination city.

Cultural tourism objects and tourism city image

The image of a tourism destination can be formed through the spectrum of cultural values (Word Tourism Organization, 1985). Hazime (2011) argues that specific local culture has shaped the image of the tourism destination city. More specifically, the cultural values of historical heritage (Chang, 1997; Alvarez and Korzay, 2011), cultural attractions such as life habits, dances, traditional songs, music, ceremonies (Azahari et al., 2021), and food (Hashim et al., 2007) have shaped the image of the city as a cultural tourism destination.

In their study, Kudumović (2020) find that Mostar city, Bosnia-Herzegovina has a variety of unique resources used to form the city image. These include specific rural, agro-environmental, aquatic, religious, cultural tourism objects used as the suitable basis for building a distinctive image of the desired tourist destination city. Hafasnuddin (2017) also finds a direct relationship between cultural factors and the city image. On this ground, the study proposes the following second hypothesis:

H2: Cultural tourism objects influence the image of Banda Aceh as a tsunami-tourism destination city.

Islamic tourism objects and tourism city image

Islam is a way of all aspects of life (Ali, 1989, The Holy Qur’an 2: 208). In the context of Islamic tourism, Islam guides people to travel to obtain blessings from the Almighty God and His messenger (Ali, 1989, The Holy Qur'an 4: 100). Thus, the devout Muslims are motivated to travel to places that have Islamic tourism objects to enjoy useful Islamic ritual experiences as one of the ways to enhance their good deeds and piety to Almighty God.

Previous studies found that the image of a tourism city can also be formed through its religious values. Mohsin et al. (2016), for example, argue that the person in charge of tourism management should manage tourism objects based on Islamic teachings to attract Muslim tourists to visit due to its good Islamic city image. Henderson (2010) and Samori et al. (2016) also find that well-packaged Islamic tourism objects, such as mosques and Islamic historical relics, accompanied by the availability of halal restaurants and hotels had promoted the image of the tourism destination city. Thus, Islamic values can become tourism objects (Abdullah et al., 2020). These include Islamic attributes, such as mosques that provide the Holy Qur'an, prayer facilities (Battour and Ismail, 2016), the availability of halal food and drinks (Hashim et al., 2007), the Qibla directions, and Islamic dress codes in tourism sites (Zamani-Farahani and Henderson, 2010).

Furthermore, Salleh et al. (2010) find that an increasing trend of Muslims from the Middle East visiting Malaysia since 2001 was due to the promotion of Islamic tourism objects by the Malaysian government (Samori et al., 2016). Kuala Lumpur is a popular halal destination tourism city among Middle Eastern tourists, especially for the desired honeymoon destination (Ibrahim et al., 2011). In satisfying Middle Eastern tourists, Malaysia has improved tourist services with Islamic nuances, providing Middle Eastern food menus, multi-language information brochures, Arabic-written signboards, Arabic fluent hotel employees, and travel agents (Albury and Ooi, 2017; Ahmed et al., 2018). Starting from 2010 onwards, the Malaysian government has set high halal standards by displaying halal certificates, especially, in public restaurants and hotels to ensure halal menus (Henderson, 2010). Finally, Okumus et al. (2012) discover Turkey as the top 10 country most visited by foreign tourists. Turkey has succeeded in portraying Istanbul as a tourism city by diversifying tourism products, especially cultural and Islamic tourism objects as the main icons to form an image as a well-known tourism destination city. Based on the above explanation, the study proposes the third hypothesis, as follows.

H3: Islamic tourism objects influence the image of Banda Aceh as the tsunami-tourism destination city.

Tsunami-related sites and city image: Moderating effects of cultural and Islamic tourism objects

The image of a tourism destination does not only rely on one type of tourism destination objects but on various types of tourism objects that are a complement and connected each other (Ritchie et al., 2011). To promote the city image, the city does not only need to offer unique tourism objects but it should also differentiate its tourism objects (Dwyer et al., 2009) with a creative innovation (Richards and Wilson, 2006). Previous studies find that cultural and Islamic objects have attracted the tourist's primary motive to visit (Okumus et al., 2012; Yolal, 2016). The cultural and Islamic objects have contributed to portraying the image of the city as a tourism destination (Yun, 2019; Kudumović, 2020).

Previous studies also identify the potential roles of cultural and Islamic objects to enhance the effects of existing tourism objects on the image of tourism destination city (Yolal, 2016). The cultural and religious-based tourism objects play a moderating role to improve the image of a tourism destination (Mohsin et al., 2016). Similarly, Islamic tourism objects have a potential role to attract tourist revisits (Raihan, 2021) due to its image (Hafasnuddin, 2017). On this ground, the study proposes the following last two hypotheses:

H4: Cultural tourism objects moderate the influences of tsunami-related sites on the image of Banda Aceh as the tsunami tourism destination city.

H5: Islamic tourism objects moderates the influences of tsunami-related sites on the image of Banda Aceh as the tsunami tourism destination city.

The above-formulated hypotheses will be tested to the following proposed research model, as illustrated in Figure 1.

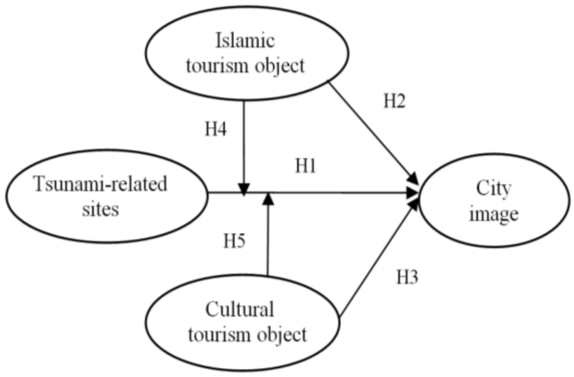

Figure 1. A proposed research model

RESEARCH METHODS

This study explores the effects of tsunami-related sites, Islamic and cultural tourism objects on the image of Banda Aceh, Indonesia as the tsunami-tourism destination city. It also attempts to examine the moderating effects of Islamic and cultural tourism objects on the relationship between tsunami-related sites and the city image as the tsunami-tourism destination city. Thus, the study involves four variables, namely tsunami-related sites (exogenous variable), Islamic tourism object and cultural tourism object (moderating variables), and image of Banda Aceh as the tourism destination city (endogenous variables). This study focuses on foreign tourists who visited Banda Aceh, Indonesia. Of 29.213 foreign tourists who visited the city in 2019 (BPS – Statistics Indonesia, 2021), 200 of them were selected as the study's sample using a simple random sampling technique. The sample size is determined based on the Slovin formula and the need for the minimum sample size for the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), which is five to ten times the number of indicators (Hair et al., 2019). Since the four variables measured in the study comprise 16 indicators, thus the minimum sample size required is 80 to 100. The 200 selected sample size is more than sufficient to represent the entire population.

To gather the data, 400 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents and 200 of them were returned and completely filled out (50% response rate). The respondents were asked to select the best answer reflecting their perception using a five-point Likert scale, comprising 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (quite agree), 4 (agree), and 5 (strongly disagree). Some interviews were also conducted with the selected respondents to enrich the research findings. The collected primary data are then analyzed using SEM-based moderated multiple regression techniques.

In measuring investigated variables, three indicators are used for tsunami related-sites variable, namely: i) information about the tsunami-related sites (Nazaruddin and Sulaiman, 2013); ii) traces of the preserved tsunami-related sites (Nazaruddin and Sulaiman, 2013; Hafasnuddin, 2017); and iii) facilities and services surroundings tsunami-related objects (Raihan, 2021). The variable of Islamic-related objects is measured by five items, namely: i) the practice of Islamic teachings or lifestyle in various areas of local community life; ii) *halal* food and drinks provided by hotels; iii. 3) *halal* food and drinks provided by restaurants (Abdullah et al., 2020); iv) the availability of prayer avenues (Battour and Ismail, 2015), and v) the *halal* services provided in various places (Abdullah et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the variable of cultural tourism objects are measured using four items, namely: i) heritage and buildings that express local cultural values (Filomena et al., 2019); ii) the habits and daily life of the local people (Okumus et al., 2012); iii) traditional local dances, songs, and arts (Hazime, 2011); and iv) historical artifacts (Yolal, 2016). Finally, the image of Banda Aceh as a tsunami tourism destination city was measured using four items, namely: 1) tsunami inundation monuments to commemorate the tsunami tragedy (Nazaruddin and Sulaiman, 2013; Raihan, 2021), ii) the atmospheres of the city that has ever hit by tsunami (Raihan, 2021), iii) the existence of public facilities for tsunami escape (Hafasnuddin, 2017), and iv) diversified tsunami-related souvenirs (Raihan, 2021). Referring to prior studies (Hashim et al., 2007; Alvarez and Korzay, 2011; Samori et al., 2016; Rindrasih, 2019; Okumus et al., 2012; Azahari et al., 2021), the effects of tsunami-related sites, cultural and Islamic tourism objects on the image of Banda Aceh as the tsunami tourism destination city, as illustrated in Figure 1, is estimated using the following equation:

$$CIM = \rho_{11}TRS + \rho_{12}CTO + \rho_{13}ITO + \varepsilon_1 \quad (1)$$

where *CIM* is the city image of the tourism destination city; *TRS* is the tourism-related sites; *ITO* is the Islamic tourism objects; ρ_{ii} is the estimated loading factors of each variable, and ε is the structural error terms. Furthermore, referring to previous studies by Yolal (2016), Mohsin et al. (2016), Hafasnuddin (2017), and Raihan (2021), the study proposes the following equation to measure and analyze the moderating effects of Islamic tourism objects and cultural tourism objects on the relationship between tsunami-related sites and the city image as the tsunami tourism destination:

$$CIM = \rho_{21}TRS + \rho_{22}CTO + \rho_{23}ITO + + \rho_{24}TRS^{x}CTO + \rho_{25}TRS^{x}ITO + \varepsilon_2 \quad (2)$$

where *CIM* is the city image of the tourism destination city; *TRS* is the tourism-related sites; *ITO* is the Islamic tourism objects; *CTO* is the cultural tourism objects; ^{x} is the interaction between variables to measure the moderating effect, ρ_{ii} is the estimated loading factors of each variable, and ε_i is the structural error terms. However, before estimating the Equations (1) and (2), the study performs serial tests of model measurement of Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and goodness of fit indices to ascertain the specification and robustness of the estimated proposed research model.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics of respondents

A number of 400 questionnaires were distributed to the foreign tourists who visited Banda Aceh City, Indonesia, and 200 of them were completely filled up and returned (response rate 50%) and used for further analysis. The majority of the tourists were male (57.4%) with the age of 35-50-year-olds (62.7%) and graduated Bachelor's degree (54.9%). In terms of country origin, 41.9% of them were from Malaysia, followed by China (29.1%), Australia (19.5%), Japan (7.3%), and Saudi Arabia (2.2%). In view of the length of stay, the majority of them spent between 2-3 days (33.2%), between 1-2 days (21.9%), 3-4 days (17.6%), 4-5 days (5.5%), more than 5 days (9.7%), and less than 1 day (2.1%). On average, the majority of them spent between IDR1.5 – 2.0 million (40.3%) per day, followed by IDR1.0 – 1.5 million (23.8%), IDR2.0 – 2.5 million (19.2%), more than IDR2.5 million (13.4%), and IDR0.5 – 1.0 million (3.3%). Finally, the tourists were motivated to visit the city due to tsunami-related sites (21.7%), Islamic tourism objects (20.7%), *halal* tourism objects (16.3%), cultural tourism objects (14.9%); friendliness tourism destination (9.1%); culinary destination (9.0%); and cheap tourism destination (8.3%).

Measurement model

Before model estimation, the study performed the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to ascertain the validity and reliability of indicators (Figure 2). Figure 2a showed that, of 16 indicators measuring four variables, only one indicator of the cultural tsunami objects (i.e., indicator 4 - historical artifacts) was found to be invalid. This is evidenced by its loading values of 0.427, which is lower than the minimum value of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2019). Meanwhile, all other indicators showed loading values greater than 0.5. The invalid indicator was then dropped from the model and the study re-estimated the adjusted measurement model (Figure 2b). The findings showed that all 15 indicators now became valid as their loading values were greater than 0.7. These valid indicators were then used to measure variables' interactions using the SEM technique.

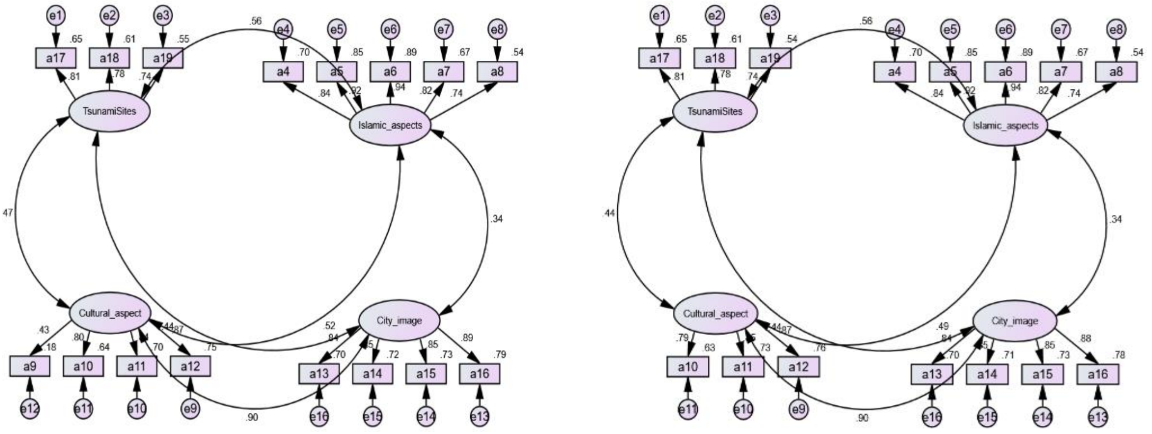

Figure 2a. Model measurement Figure 2b. Adjusted model measurement

Source: Primary data, processed (2021) using SEM-AMOS

In the next step, the study measured the Goodness of Fit Indices (GoFI) to ensure the best fit estimated model measurement (Table 1). As observed from Table 1, the estimated goodness of fit indices are as follows: X^2-Chi-square = 101.201 (p-value = 0.000), CMin/df = 1.973, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) of 0.079, Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) of

0.903, Adjusted GFI (AGFI) of 0.907, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) of 0.909, and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) of 0.904. Thus, our proposed estimated model is found to be the best fit since all estimated indices met the set criteria.

Table 1. Goodness of Fit Indices (GoFI) (Source: Primary data, processed (2021) using SEM-AMOS)

GoFI	Cut-off value	Finding	Remark
X^2-Chi-square	≤ 118.599	101.201	Best fit
Probability	≥0.05	0.000	Best fit
CMin/df	≤2.00	1.973	Best fit
RMSEA	≤0.08	0.079	Best fit
GFI	≥0.90	0.903	Best fit
AGFI	≥0.90	0.907	Best fit
CFI	≥0.90	0.909	Best fit
TLI	≥0.90	0.904	Best fit

Table 2. Tsunami-related sites, cultural and Islamic tourism objects, and image of the tourism destination city (Source: Primary data, processed (2021) using SEM-AMOS)

Variable	Estimated Value	Critical Ratio	P-value
Tsunami-related sites	0.494***	6.891	0.000
Cultural tourism objects	0.740***	6.024	0.000
Islamic tourism objects	0.459***	5.665	0.000

Note: *** and ** indicate significances at 1% and 5% levels

Table 3. Tsunami-related sites and city image: Moderating effects of cultural and Islamic tourism objects (Source: Primary data, processed (2021) using SEM-AMOS)

Variable	Estimated Value	Critical Ratio	P-value
Tsunami-related sites	0.399***	4.742	0.000
Cultural tourism objects	0.657***	4.742	0.000
Islamic tourism objects	0.326***	4.886	0.000
City image^{x}Cultural tourism objects	0.907***	11.073	0.000
City image^{x}Islamic tourism objects	0.453**	2.276	0.023

Note: *** and ** indicate significances at 1% and 5% levels

After ensuring the goodness of fit of our estimated model, the study preceded to test the effects of tsunami-related sites, Islamic and cultural tourism objects on the image of Banda Aceh as the tsunami tourism destination city (Table 2) and the moderating effects of Islamic and cultural tourism objects on the relationship between tsunami-related sites and the image of Banda Aceh as the tsunami tourism destination city (Table 3).

The effects of tsunami-related sites, cultural and Islamic tourism objects on the image of Banda Aceh as a tsunami-tourism destination city

As reported in Table 2, the study found that the tsunami-related sites, cultural tourism objects, and Islamic tourism objects had positively influenced the image of Banda Aceh as the tsunami tourism destination city at the 1% level with estimated values of 0.494, 0.740, and 0.326, respectively. Specifically, our findings denoted that an increase in tsunami-related sites, cultural tourism objects, and Islamic tourism objects by one unit on the Likert scale has enhanced the city image, respectively, by 0.494, 0.740, and 0.326 units on the Likert scale. Overall, our findings showed the non-rejection of the first three proposed hypotheses (H1, H2, and H3) in the study.

Some interesting findings can be put forward for further elaboration. First, the non-rejection of the first hypothesis means that the tsunami-related sites that are built to commemorate the tsunami tragedy have a positive significant effect on the image of Banda Aceh as a tsunami tourism destination city. This indicates that the tsunami-related sites, such as tsunami museum, floating PLTD floating ship, Lampulo boat on the house, Aceh thanks to the world monument, tsunami education park, *Ulee Lheu* Baiturrahim and *Lampu'uk* Rahmatullah Mosques, and other tsunami-related sites have become a special and the main attraction for tourists (Azahari et al., 2021) that enhanced the city image as the tsunami-tourism destination city. This finding is in line with the results of previous studies that documented the importance of tsunami-related sites to promote the city image for tourists to visit (Nazaruddin and Sulaiman, 2013; Kudumović, 2020; Raihan, 2021).

Second, the Islamic tourism objects have a positive significant effect on the city's image. Tourism objects with Islamic nuances have promoted the city image. This finding implies that aspects of the Islamic religion in the city have shaped the city image as the tsunami-tourism city with an Islamic characteristic. These Islamic aspects include practices of Islamic teachings or lifestyle in various areas of local community life, hotels and restaurants that provide *halal* food and drinks, prayer avenues that are easily found in various places, and other *halal* services provided in various places in the city.

The importance of Islamic tourism objects for creating the image of the city is witnessed by several foreign tourists during the interview. They have seen and enjoyed the atmosphere of religious life that contains Islamic values which are impressive in the daily life activities of Muslims in Banda Aceh, such as the sound of Azan's voice heard throughout the city as a sign of a call to perform congressional prayers in mosques, Acehnese dances (e.g., *saman*, *seudati*, and *ranup lampuan*) that have Islamic nuances, and the prohibition of unmarried couples to sit together after 6.00 pm, such as in Ulee Lheu Beach. In addition, several Islamic Holy Places, such as Baiturrahman Grand Mosque, *Lampu'uk* Rahmatullah Mosque, and *Ulee Lheu* Baiturrahim Mosque are among Islamic tourism objects that are closely related to the tsunami disaster. The mosques only suffered minor damages and still remained intact after the tsunami tragedy devastated the city massively.

Our finding of the significant impact of Islamic tourism objects on the city image as the tourism destination is supported by previous studies. For example, Salleh et al. (2010), Samori et al. (2016), and Abdullah et al. (2020) found that the Islamic tourism objects have promoted the image of the destination tourism city. A similar finding is also found that Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia has become a popular city for Middle Eastern tourists due to its *halal* tourism attractiveness (Ibrahim et al., 2011).

Finally, the non-rejection of the third hypothesis showed that cultural tourism objects significantly contributed to the promotion of the city image as the tsunami-tourism destination. Various local cultures, such as weddings, local dances, Acehnese songs, traditional clothes, cultural heritages, traditional houses, cultural parks, and *Pintu Khop* (a monument to the bathing place of the consorts of the Kings of Aceh) have strengthened the city image as the tsunami-tourism destination city. An annual presentation of the cultural events in the city and the local dances to welcome foreign tourists landed through Sultan Iskandar Muda (SIM) International Airport have promoted Banda Aceh as the popular tourist destination city, especially for foreign tourists from Malaysia. The finding of the importance of Islamic tourism objects to promote the image of the city as a popular traveling destination is supported by many previous studies (Okumus and Yasin, 2009; Henderson, 2010; Albury and Ooi, 2017; Ahmed et al., 2018; Raihan, 2021). All these studies found evidence of the important role of Islamic tourism objects to enhance the image of the city for tourist visits.

The moderating roles of cultural and Islamic tourism objects in strengthening the effect of tsunami-related sites on the city image

Table 3 presents the findings of the moderating roles of cultural and Islamic tourism objects on the relationship between tsunami-related sites and the image of Banda Aceh as the tsunami-tourism destination city. As for the direct effect of tsunami-tourism sites, cultural and Islamic objects on the city image (H1, H2, and H3), the findings confirmed our earlier evidence (Table 2) on the positive contribution of tsunami-tourism sites, cultural and Islamic objects in enhancing the city image as the tsunami-tourism destination city. As observed from Table 3, when the Islamic tourism object variable is estimated as a moderating variable, the variable is found to have a significant positive moderating effect on the relationship between tsunami-related sites and the city image with an estimated value of 0.907 at the 1% level. This indicates that when various Islamic tourism objects are enhanced by 1 unit on the Likert scale, it has strengthened the influence of tsunami-related sites on the city image by 0.907 units on the Likert scale. The presence of Islamic-tourism objects, such as Islamic nuances of *seudati* and *ranup lampuan* dances, Baiturrahman Grand Mosque, *Lampu'uk* Rahmatullah Mosque and *Ulee Lheu* Baiturrahim Mosque that remained intact after hardly hit by 2004-tsunami has strengthened the contribution of tsunami-related sites on the image of Banda Aceh as the tsunami-tourism destination city.

The above finding is in harmony with the previous studies by Hughes (2002) and Okumus et al. (2012). Tourist visits to Banda Aceh City have been motivated by two motives, namely visiting the tsunami-related sites as the core motive and visiting Islamic tourism objects as the peripheral motive. The presence of Islamic tourism objects has strengthened the city's image as a tsunami-tourism destination city (Raihan, 2021). Besides, the practices of Islamic teachings by the Acehnese citizens in the city that is well-known as the verandah of Mecca have shaped the image of Banda Aceh as the tsunami tourism city with high Islamic characteristics. Furthermore, Table 3 also showed that cultural tourism objects positively and significantly moderated the influence of tsunami-related sites on the city image with an estimated value of 0.453 at the 5% level. This signifies that when the cultural tourism objects are enhanced by 1 unit on the Likert scale, it has strengthened the influence of tsunami-related sites on the city image by 0.453 units on the Likert scale. The relatively lower moderating role of cultural tourism objects as compared to Islamic tourism objects on the city image could be partly because the foreign tourists rarely watch and understand aspects of the cultural tourism objects, such as the Islamic nuances of *saman* and *ranup lampuan* dances that are presented in the local languages at certain traditional cultural arts' performance.

Our significant finding of the moderating role of Islamic tourism objects on the relationship between tsunami-related sites and the city image is consistent with previous studies. For example, Hughes (2002) and Okumus et al. (2012) stated that visiting Islamic tourism objects as the peripheral motive has strengthened the influence of the main motive of the tourist, in our case is visiting tsunami-related sites, to support the city image become a popular tourism destination. Our finding is also similar to those of Hafasnuddin (2017) and Raihan (2021) on the moderating role of Islamic tourism objects in creating the city image for tourism destinations. Finally, in view of the roles of Islamic tourism objects and cultural tourism objects as the moderating variables, the study found both variables functioned as the quasi moderators.

This is simply due to their significant direct effects on the city image and their moderating effects on the tsunami-related sites and the city image as the tsunami-tourism destination city. In short, the main purpose of foreign tourists visiting Banda Aceh is to view and enjoy the legacy of the impact of the devastating 2004-tsunami tragedy, while visiting the cultural and Islamic tourism objects are seen as their second goal to visit the city. Overall, our findings imply that further efforts to promote Banda Aceh become a popular tsunami-tourism destination city should be focused on preserving, enhancing, and marketing the tsunami-related sites, cultural and Islamic tourism objects.

CONCLUSIONS

This study empirically explored and analyzed the influences of tsunami-related sites, cultural and Islamic tourism objects on the image of Banda Aceh, Indonesia as a tsunami-tourism destination city. It also attempted to investigate and analyze the moderating effects of cultural and Islamic tourism objects on the relationship between tsunami-related sites and the city image. Using the SEM-based moderated multiple regression analysis, the study documented that the tsunami-related sites and cultural and Islamic tourism objects had promoted the image of the city. Additionally, the cultural and Islamic tourism objects contributed toward making Banda Aceh become a popular tsunami-tourism destination city.

To further promote the image of Banda Aceh becoming a popular tsunami-tourism destination city, the relevant government authority should further enhance the tourism-related objects, including tsunami-related sites, Islamic and cultural tourism-related objects. Specifically, various tsunami-related relics have shaped the image of Banda Aceh as a tsunami-tourism destination city. This shows the importance of making tsunami-related sites a mainstay icon of the city of Banda Aceh in the future. Therefore, the municipal government should pay more attention to the pattern and quality of services in tsunami-related tourism sites to attract more foreign tourist visits. The practices of Islamic teachings by the local community have also shaped the image of Banda Aceh as the tsunami-tourism destination city, but the level of its influence was smaller than tsunami-related sites. Serious efforts should be taken by the relevant government authority to preserve Islamic atmospheric nuances, such as visitors' security, friendliness of the residents, honesty of hotel managers and employees, polite and honest behavior of traders, *halal* food and drink menus, and clean masques. Acehnese local culture, such as traditional dances of *rapai*, *saman*, *ratoeh jaroe*, *seudati*, and *ranup lampuan*, and various other cultural events should be presented and performed regularly to support the image of Banda Aceh as a tsunami-tourism destination city.

To provide more comprehensive and enriching empirical findings on the determinants of tourism city image, future studies might identify the image of the city as the tsunami-tourism destination from the views of domestic and foreign tourists with a comparative treatment. Investigating both pulling- and pushing-factors of tourist visits could also enhance the findings of potential determinants of the tourism city image. Finally, a comparative study of tourism city images across Muslim countries would also enrich the existing literature on tourism city image.

Acknowledgments

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(RE)THINKING THERMALISM IN EUROPE FROM THE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION PERSPECTIVE: A THEORETICAL REFLECTION

Vera ANTUNES[*]
Universidade da Beira Interior, Departamento de Comunicação, Filosofia e Política,
Faculdade de Artes e Letras, LabCom, Covilhã, Portugal, e-mail: vantunes@ubi.pt

Gisela GONÇALVES
Universidade da Beira Interior, Departamento de Comunicação, Filosofia e Política,
Faculdade de Artes e Letras, LabCom, Covilhã, Portugal, e-mail: gisela@ubi.pt

Cristina ESTEVÃO
Universidade da Beira Interior, Departamento de Gestão e Economia, Faculdade
de Ciências Sociais e Humanas, NECE, Covilhã, Portugal, e-mail: cristina.estevao@ubi.pt

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Abstract: This research aims to present a conceptual approach to the strategic importance of communication in the thermal sector. This therefore seeks to identify and analyse the scientific publications addressing the thermal sector from the strategic communication perspective. Furthermore, this also sets out the objectives and conclusions of the studies and conveys their relationship with communication. This study correspondingly applies a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) in keeping with the PRISMA Statement method covering the Scopus and Web of Science databases with 27 articles incorporated into the qualitative analysis. The results demonstrate that the three clusters obtained via the similarity of words enable the identification of the features that frame strategic communication as an essential tool for leveraging and promoting thermalism. This study contributes to identifying strategies and operationalised guidelines impacting on the publications able to outline promising future research paths for better knowledge about thermal tourism in Europe.

Key words: Europe, tourism, thermalism, public relations, strategic communication

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an industry not only with high growth potential but also generating the competitive value that boosts the economic performance of countries (Sipayung et al., 2021). The term wellness is often raised in European tourism (Tang et al., 2021) and represents a very modern form of relaxation and regeneration, with personal care deemed essential for physical and mental well-being, the reasons driving the exponential growth in demand for this type of tourism around the world (Liberato et al., 2021). From this perspective, the concept of wellness that initially derived from the application of mineral and natural heat (balneotherapy and thermalism) offers a good starting point for a discussion on the growth and development of the thermal and health and wellness tourism sectors (Erfurt and Cooper, 2009). Thermalism has been gaining importance in recent years, both in the global context of tourism and in academic research, visible in the various approaches and scientific areas, specifically marketing, health, and psychology (Pelegrin-Borondo et al., 2020; Wang, 2015). Trends and evolution in the media, as well as its overall influence, have also contributed to this type of tourism developing very rapidly (Sipayung et al., 2021). This research strives to identify and define an appropriate communication strategy for promoting thermal destinations. In this context, this article's objective is, through a systematic literature review (SLR), to analyse and identify the scientific articles addressing thermalism from the strategic communication perspective in order to reflect on the current state of research on this sector. Furthermore, this shall also identify the objectives and conclusions of the studies and understand their relationship with communication. To this end, two research questions guided our study: Q1 - *What are the subjacent dimensions of thermalism emphasized in scientific publications?* Q2 - *What is the relationship between strategic communication and thermal tourism?* Strategic communication should provide a lever capable of achieving the potential of this tourism product and foster the economic growth of the destinations.

The proposed conceptual model includes scenarios and communication strategies to overcome the communication gap in thermalism. After this brief introduction, the structure of this article contains four sections: in the first, a theoretical approach details thermalism and strategic communication; in the second section, there comes a description of the methodology applied before the third presents the findings and analysis of the articles as well as the discussions and final considerations of the articles under review. Finally, we set out the conclusions, limitations, and future lines of research.

[*] Corresponding author

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research into health, wellness and medical tourism has grown significantly (Smith, 2015). According to Alina-Cerasela (2015) and Mijajlovic et al. (2020), thermalism represents one of the oldest types of tourism and has also undergone constant evolution. Tang et al. (2021) identify how thermalism dates back to Roman times, when they took public baths in European cities with natural thermal waters, such as in France and Britain. The European culture of thermal tourism then developed in Bath in Britain, Slovakia in Eastern Europe and Baden-Baden in Germany. Gradually, other thermal destinations have since promoted thermalism, such as in the United States, Canada and more recently in Asian countries, including Japan and Korea. However, this raises a problem as there is no single definition of what constitutes thermalism. Mijajlovic et al. (2020) state that for many Western European countries, thermalism emerges as an important factor in local and regional development and defining thermalism constitutes a priority as the term is often used in tourism promotion under the "SPA" designation.

According to Smith and Puczko (2015), this may therefore lead to confusion in the minds of some consumers who primarily seem to associate the word 'spa' with relaxation and comfort. In this perspective, Mosqueira et al. (2009) suggests three classifications for centres according to the type of water: (1) spas and spa centres, which apply mineral waters to preventive and therapeutic purposes; (2) thalassotherapy centres, which use sea water and marine elements for preventive and therapeutic purposes; and (3) spas that offer hydrothermal and beauty techniques through tap water, with or without additives. Mijajlovic et al. (2020) maintains thermalism is an authentic term because it implies being performed in a thermal centre to improve physical and mental health, treat certain diseases or just relax the body through using natural mineral water.

The tourism industry has traditionally been based on economic and financial returns with metrics serving for the measuring of tourism performance standards (Costa et al., 2022), however, communication remains a necessary area of research and deemed by Emanoil and Fraticiu (2013) as vital to organisational success. According to Song et al. (2021), a destination might class as excellent but when there are shortcomings in its communication, whether through a lack of social media or a lack of promotional channels facilitated by technology, its level of attractiveness will be influenced.

After undertaking close scrutiny of the strategy concept, Hallahan et al. (2007) present an in-depth analysis of the term that opens new horizons for the practice of communication in modern organisations. In this sense, the exploration of the different meanings related to the term strategic as applied to the practice of communication management enables new research trends in the field of communication, contemplating all organisational aspects and skills, thus legitimising communication work across all levels. On the one hand, Pan et al. (2019) refers to how the communication strategies deployed should be realistic and direct as these types of tourism destinations provide tourists with a healthy lifestyle, maintaining and promoting their physical, mental, and spiritual health through travel. On the other hand, Kim et al. (2017) indicate it is essential to design marketing strategies able to promote health and wellness tourism and that communication professionals might incentivize previous tourists to share their travel stories on social media, through videos, photos, comments highlighting their memorable experiences. This approach also leads us onto clarifying the term strategic which, according to Hallahan et al. (2007), integrates the study of several areas of communication including marketing, public relations, and advertising.

Achieving a positive impact for a company/tourism destination necessarily requires a positively perceived brand and reputation conveyed through an open communication strategy (Smith, 2015). The promotion of tourism destinations has to respond to the expectations and desires of potential visitors and to offer specialised, distinguished, and authentic products and services built on the potential endogenous resources of a destination that, coupled with history and traditional competences in health and wellness, are important factors for these destinations maintaining their competitive advantage (Szromek and Naramski, 2019). Heung and Kucukusta (2013) identify the most effective methods for promoting health and wellness tourism, such as advertising in social media, government support and organising new regional events. Anaya-Aguilar et al. (2021) and Joukes and Gerry (2010) mention websites with well-structured, updated information that should be bidirectional in real time. Meanwhile, Liu et al. (2021) identify how travel websites allow tourists to share their thoughts, beliefs and experiences in relation to various travel destinations. Website evaluation models have to become diverse and accurate and websites have to become high-level communication systems. Thermalism for a better projection must, through using strategic communication, follow trends and adapt continuously to the new demands of the clients of the future. The relevance of this article stems from it addressing strategic communication from the thermalism perspective.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method adopted here is an SLR using the PRISMA Statement because it is an iterative process and researchers may need to specify or modify their original review protocol over the course of the review (Moher et al., 2009).

The SLR process carried out in February 2021 involved four distinct steps. First, the keywords "public relations" OR "strategic communication" AND "wellness tourism" OR "health tourism" OR "thermal tourism" were firstly identified and then applied in a search of the Scopus and Web of Science databases. This option stems from these databases covering several different fields, specifically Sciences and Technology, Social Sciences and, Arts and Humanities, among others. In addition, they together broaden the search and reduce the likelihood of bias in journals indexed exclusively to one of the databases, with Mongeon and Paul-Hus (2016) ascertaining how this returns the breadth necessary for truly comprehensive research.

This step resulted in the detection of 4,525 scientific article. In the second stage, following careful screening, we removed 55 duplicate articles and, based on the exclusion and eligibility criteria defined for fine-tuning the study review, we then excluded 2,487 articles as they were Systematic Review Studies, Conference Proceedings, Books, Book Series, Chapters in Book, Serials, lacking in their Full Text, not in English and with 1,956 full-text articles excluded on the grounds they lacked any relationship with the study's focus, or were not Empirical Studies. The third stage subjected the articles to analysis initially by considering the abstract before then proceeding with an in-depth reading of the full articles to identify the themes and sub-themes established. This final review stage resulted in 27 articles that served for the qualitative analysis process. We deployed EndNote20 and Nvivo software to identify the articles for the study, analyse them and systematize the information collected in accordance with the research objective. Figure 1 illustrates the flow diagram according to the PRISMA Statement.

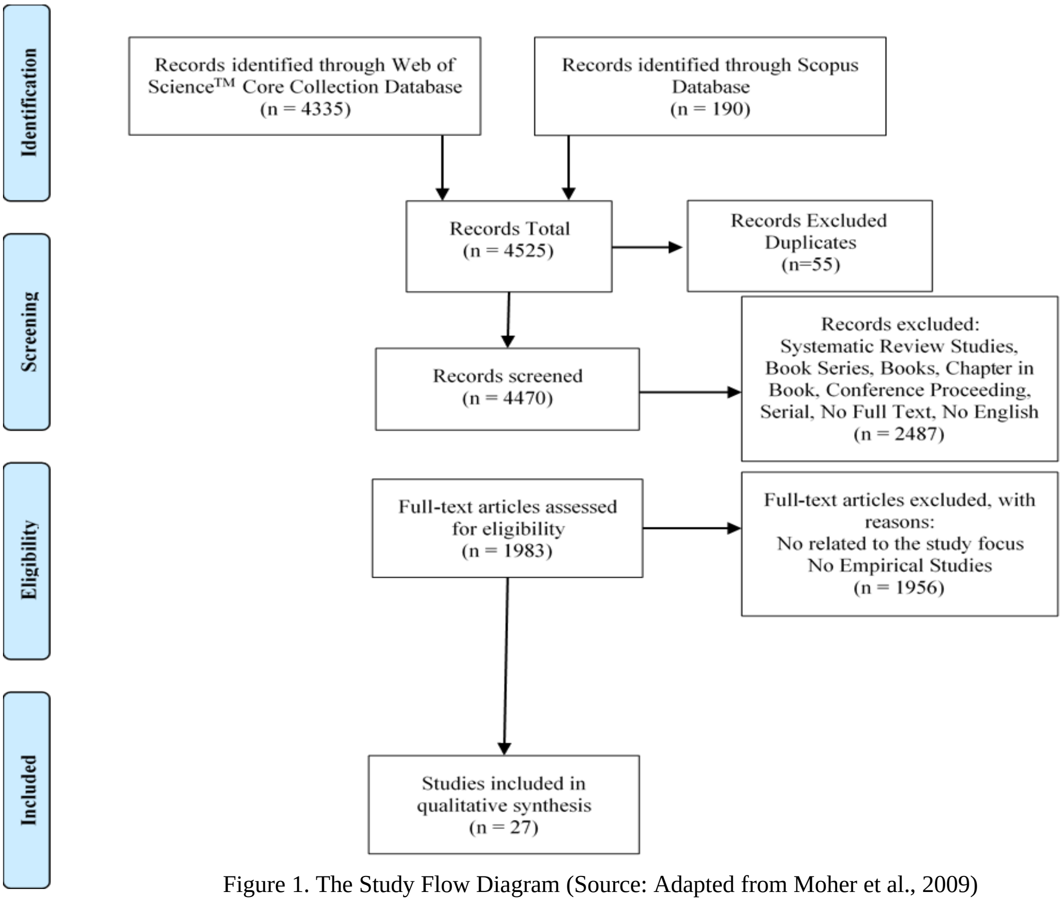

Figure 1. The Study Flow Diagram (Source: Adapted from Moher et al., 2009)

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This section describes the study results and analysis. Firstly, Figure 2 depicts the year of publication of the articles: Analysis of the graph above conveys how in 2013 and 2015, there were already expressions of interest in thermalism by various researchers with the publication of six articles in total. However, 2019 and 2020 experienced the largest number of publications, with the 12 articles reflecting the heightened scientific importance of this theme.

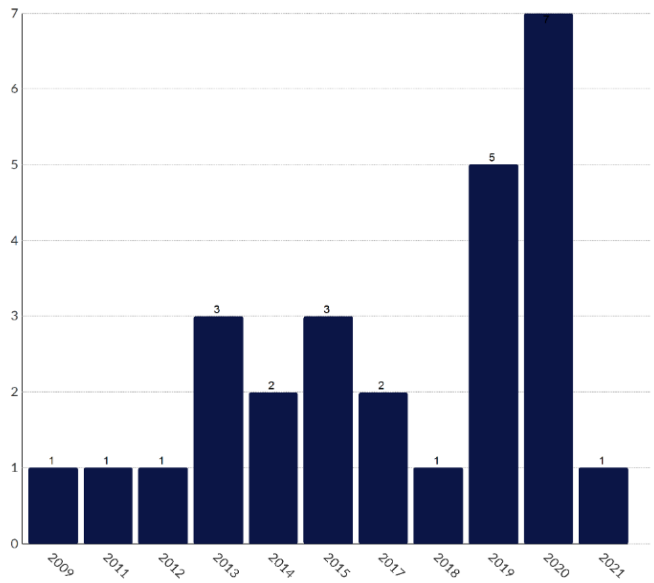

Figure 2. Number of References by Year of Publication

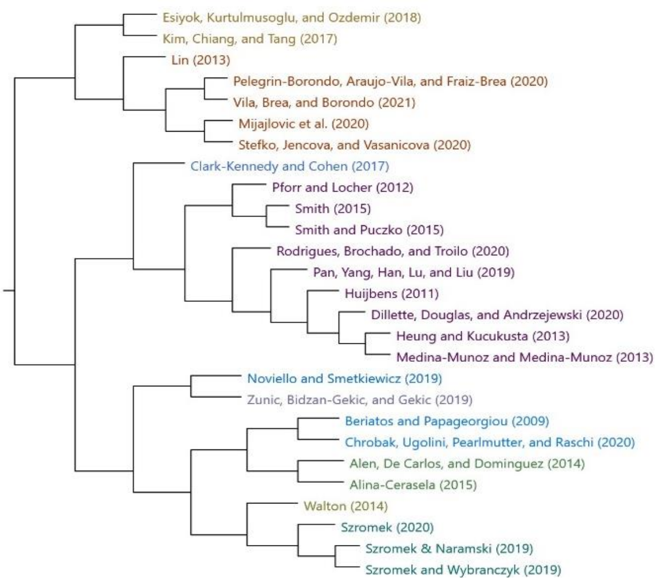

Figure 3. Cluster by word similarity

Considering that 2019 marked the appearance of Covid19, it is notable that this year saw an increase in publications related to well-being across different fields of science. Navarrete and Shaw (2021) stress the need to make known the opportunities provided by the thermal sector, focusing on treatment, prevention and well-being, conveying the benefits of this type of tourism through attractive messages. Table 1 systematises the methodologies used in the selected study sample according to the instrument, type of study, and analysis carried out: We may therefore conclude that most studies adopt quantitative approaches and as regards the study type, the questionnaire accounted for the most commonly used instrument. However, the importance of qualitative methodologies that consider different points of view and research practices is growing and strives to understand the particularity of concrete cases. Qualitative research involves the collection of a selection of empirical materials, important for the communication research area, with examples being websites, platforms, and netnography to analyse social media content and sentiments (Liu et al., 2021).

Table 1. Type of Study of the Articles Analysed

Type of study	Instrument	References
Quantitative	Questionnaire (14)	Beriatos and Papageorgiou (2009); Chrobak et al. (2020); Clark-Kennedy and Cohen (2017); Esiyok et al. (2018); Heung and Kucukusta (2013); Kim et al. (2017); Lin (2013); Medina-Munoz and Medina-Munoz (2013); Mijajlovic et al. (2020); Pelegrin-Borondo et al. (2020); Smith and Puczko (2015); Stefko et al. (2020); Szromek and Wybranczyk (2019); Vila et al. (2021)
	Delphi Study (2)	Pan et al. (2019); Smith (2015)
	Secondary Data(1)	Alen et al. (2014)
Qualitative	Case Study (3)	Rodrigues et al. (2020); Walton (2014); Zunic et al. (2019)
	Interview (3)	Alina-Cerasela (2015); Huijbens (2011); Pforr and Locher (2012)
	Netnography (1)	Dillette et al. (2020)
Mix	Questionnaire and Interview (3)	Noviello and Smetkiewicz (2019); Szromek (2020); Szromek & Naramski (2019)

Figure 3 reports the results of the cluster analysis that grouped the articles in terms of the similarity of their vocabulary based on Pearson's Correlation Coefficient. This analysis stands out due to the importance of thematic segmentation as a determining factor for better knowledge on this field. Cluster 1 - Tourist Behaviour, Emotional Balance, Economic and Financial Analysis and Marketing (Esiyok et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2017; Lin, 2013; Mijajlovic et al., 2020; Pelegrin-Borondo et al., 2020; Stefko et al., 2020; Vila et al., 2021). Kim et al. (2017) analyse the relationship between engagement, motivation, and loyalty in the context of the wellbeing tourism destination as a strategy to understand and predict the behaviour of this type of tourist. Spirituality, health, pleasure with experience, nature, relaxation, unique environments, culture, and traditions are some of the motivations identified in the study. If, on the one hand, Vila et al. (2021) propose a “model based on the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT2)”, originally applied to a non-technological service, to describe potential tourist purchase intentions in a spa context. The key implication of this study’s results for spa managers involves the need to focus their communication on convincing potential customers of the utility of their services. In this regard, both health and leisure aspects must be considered when formulating spa marketing communication campaigns and designing thermal suites. On the other hand, Pelegrin-Borondo et al. (2020) deploy the “Cognitive-Affective-Normative (CAN) model” to compare the factors that explain the purchase intentions in relation to two types of spa tourists: health and wellness tourists.

They also mention the importance of promotional communication within a differentiated and segmented strategy. Esiyok et al. (2018) analyse the factors affecting the duration of stay of senior spa guests, which results in fluctuating lengths of stay and hence the corresponding importance of defining marketing strategies specifically tailored to this market segment.

Lin (2013), in his structural model, integrates the factors of “destination personality” and “gastronomic experience and psychological well-being” and supports the emerging belief that intentions to revisit a spa destination are strongly influenced by these respective factors. The study’s findings also aim to help spa destination organisations improve the definition of their marketing strategies so as to build tourist loyalty and ensure stability through a sustainable economic development model. The study by Stefko et al. (2020) highlights the importance of evaluating the economics of companies and promoting the development of effective management strategies for economic and sustainable growth to boost the sector's profitability. Finally, Mijajlovic et al. (2020) provide an overview and complete assessment of the recent state of wellness places according to specialist decision making and multi-criteria analytical methods, putting forward 16 choices and eight sustainable criteria for improving spas and consequently raising their competitiveness. They consider the results obtained can contribute to managers understanding the positioning of their establishments and better leverage their advantages while mitigating their shortcomings to improve their business through recognising marketing and communication as essential promotional tools. From this perspective, forecasting tourism demand and promoting effective management strategies for the economic growth of the sector should be supported by effective marketing strategies.

Cluster 2 - Innovation, Destination Image, Diversity, Benefits and Promotion/ Communication (Clark-Kennedy and Cohen, 2017; Dillette et al., 2020; Heung and Kucukusta, 2013; Huijbens, 2011; Medina-Munoz and Medina-Munoz, 2013; Pan et al., 2019; Pforr and Locher, 2012; Rodrigues et al., 2020; Smith, 2015; Smith and Puczko, 2015).

Innovation, through the emergence of new products and services, characterizes this cluster. Within this perspective, Pan et al. (2019) propose a new concept for wellness tourism that includes health preservation, sports, recovery, medical treatments alongside some concepts integrated into Chinese culture. Medina-Munoz and Medina-Munoz (2013) refer to how developing this type of tourism requires certain specific considerations, especially: the transformation of goods and services into health care convenience, natural landscapes, the relationship between daily life and holidays, as well as the reasons for seeking this type of tourism. Dillette et al. (2020) advocate creating a holistic sense of wellness for tourists, presenting strategies to underpin its development: firstly, the “body dimension”, secondly, the “mental aspect of wellness travel”, thirdly, an emphasis on “solo travellers” (the power of sharing experiences with others while travelling alone) and finally, a focus on creating and maintaining an "environment conducive to wellness". Within this perspective, they provide new perceptions for wellbeing tourism businesses that integrate the ideas of building interpersonal relationships, personal growth, dining experiences, development, and community atmospheres.

Huijbens (2011), meanwhile, highlights how wellness destination images are typically nature-oriented, such as healthy local cuisine, local culture, outdoor experiences, clean air, nature and water. Similar to other existing health and wellness clusters, Smith (2015) proposes the creation of a Baltic Health Tourism Cluster with the aim of increasing cooperation in the region and improving service excellence through collaborative work to successfully promote its wellness range. This strategy seeks to create strong brands with criteria of excellence, highlighting the importance of communication in consolidating this brand and the image of the tourist destination. Heung and Kucukusta (2013) study the resources and main promotional strategies for the development of wellness tourism destinations. They highlight environmental resources, landscapes, clean air, clean water, among other attributes, as necessary for the promotion of this niche market. They also analyse the most effective methods for promoting this type of tourism, such as advertising on social networks, among others.

While, Smith and Puczko (2015) analyse the current profile of health and well-being tourists, those who believe that well-being is an important part of their lifestyle, implementing the new concept of lifelong well-being. Rodrigues et al. (2020) refer to how designing strategies for the promotion of this type of tourist destination should take into account the satisfaction and dissatisfaction factors identified using sentiment analysis. Clark-Kennedy and Cohen (2017) present indulgence, relaxation, escape, connection with nature and taking time out as key motivators for hot springs bathers, and the vast majority of hot spring users perceive health benefits from bathing. The most significant benefits from hot spring bathing are reported for back pain, arthritis, stress/anxiety, depression and insomnia and balneotherapy warrants consideration from Australian health practitioners and insurers as a form of complementary therapy for these conditions. As regards benefits, Pforr and Locher (2012) study the impacts of reforms in Germany applied to the health and wellness tourism sector. They also address the challenges and opportunities that have arisen from this transition process, centring on health but in a holistic approach. The integration of a wide range of products and services under the umbrella of medical and wellness tourism are the new offerings that provide a mix of health, wellness, and pleasure. Of the various relevant factors, quality stands out both for its importance to loyalty and for application in marketing strategies. Existing infrastructure, history, long-standing reputation, therapies and medical expertise provide officially recognised health resorts in Germany with competitive advantages and a quality label that positions them at the top of the wellness tourism sector.

Based on the attributes of a destination, innovation, quality, reputation and brand are essential factors for communication as a promotion strategy, once again highlighted in these studies.

Cluster 3 - Business and Tourism Development Models, Sustainability and Promotion Strategies (Alen et al., 2014; Alina-Cerasela, 2015; Beriatos and Papageorgiou, 2009; Chrobak et al., 2020; Noviello and Smetkiewicz, 2019; Szromek, 2020; Szromek and Naramski, 2019; Szromek and Wybranczyk, 2019; Walton, 2014; Zunic et al., 2019)

While Szromek and Naramski (2019) examine business management models for tourism treatment activities carried out in spas, emphasizing its uniqueness, for example, in terms of the raw materials available to the establishment (thermal waters). Alen et al. (2014) propose an efficient business model with differentiated services as a strategy for survival. We consider that promotion strategies based on differentiation and on appropriate communication and distribution channels are fundamental to properly positioning thermal establishments. Sustainability is now a prevalent concept and thermalism represents no exception. Szromek (2020) and Szromek and Wybranczyk (2019) propose a business model with sustainable policies and natural environments for mutual benefits. They mention, on the one hand, that the relationships developing in the health and wellness sector are promising coupled with the importance of applying a relational model based on mutual trust, extending also to companies and other entities within this sector, including the government through local government measures. The entrepreneurs participating in this study recognise how sustainable mutual synergies may be the only chance of surviving the crisis caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. On the other hand, the design and deployment of sustainable business models focused on tourist/therapist perspectives gain support from a set of characteristics able to become the basis for building a thermal business model capable of adapting customer value suggestions to the needs demonstrated by their eventual tourists.

Noviello and Smetkiewicz (2019) propose potential utilisation of geothermal resources for boosting the socio-economic development of the district of Bagnoli following the example of thermal complexes in Poland and Austria. Bagnoli is an area with currently unexploited natural potential that could boost the sustainable development of cities and regions leading to positive socio-economic changes of localities and regions as well as to environmental improvements. Chrobak et al. (2020) suggest a comprehensive model of thermalism, integrating knowledge of the landscape and the scientific value of nearby geological features. The authors sought to understand the receptivity of tourists with the perspective of increasing their knowledge about a specific natural area, reinforcing the utility and relevance of promotional campaigns for deepening people's general geological knowledge about the territory. This is an untapped potential that can help personalise present and future tourists by exploiting invisible knowledge, such as natural mineral water and underground minerals. Beriatos and Papageorgiou (2009) state that the development of thermal tourism in Greece should be based on a model with reliable and sustainable service provision capable of contributing to the desirable attractiveness of any thermal destination.

Walton (2014) explain the intergenerational success through the case study of Balneario Mondariz (a family-run spa hotel with an elite clientele) and identify factors such as amenity, patronage, imaginative advertising, networking, sustainability, alongside additional factors of Galician culture important for integration into the regional economy.

Zunic et al. (2019) developed a balneological study in the Ilidza region, due to the rich existing heritage of thermal waters, thermo-minerals and minerals, with high thermalism value and impacts on destination development. The importance of communication in the promotion and projection of a new tourist destination is essential for the marketing of

Sarajevo as a European health tourism destination. Finally, Alina-Cerasela (2015) highlighted modern health tourism through comparative analysis of two hotel units specialising in thermal treatments, one in Romania and the other in Spain. Thermalism is a key segment for both countries and two aspects stand out: the social factor, which is developed in both countries through programs for the elderly population, the main consumers of these services. From the communications perspective, the authorities get involved in promoting wellness tourism through a series of social programs.

In order to attract tourists and increase their awareness in this field, these studies recommend the deployment of targeted and creative communication strategies with a particular focus on sustainability.

DISCUSSION

Through this analysis, we sought to trace the research trends in the theme under study and identify the main challenges characterizing the contemporary relationship between thermalism and communication. The first debate surrounds to the importance of thermalism in recent years, both in the global context of tourism and in academic research, visible in various approaches and scientific areas such as marketing, health and psychology (Wang, 2015). However, this reflection presents an urgent need for the continuous updating of research on emerging themes in the field of communication related to thermal tourism, through the publication of scientific articles on thermal destinations in journals with a high impact factor to meet the goal of promoting thermal tourism. The second, relates to the problems inherent to the vagueness of the term "thermalism" (Smith and Puczko, 2015). Thermalism involves hot springs where the waters hold medical or healing functions. According to Mijajlovic et al. (2020), thermalism however represents an authentic term and cannot be confused with other types of wellness tourism. From the perspective of Brandão et al. (2021), thermal tourism is one of the oldest types of tourism worldwide and has undergone significant changes over time. While thermal springs and spas were initially mostly associated with places of healing, the perspective of thermal tourism today differs. Its scope of action now extends to environmental issues, aesthetics, quality of life and prevention. Nevertheless, we share the opinion that its singularity, a source of natural mineral water, with important therapeutic properties for the treatment of certain illnesses, constitutes the timeless characteristic that differentiates thermal tourism from other types of wellness tourism. The term "thermal tourism" or "thermalism" are synonyms, whereas the term "SPA" may mislead researchers as this may include treatments with any type of water, with or without additives (Gómez Pérez et al., 2019; Mosqueira et al., 2009). Finally, we have drafted a conceptual model, presented in figure 4, in order to highlight the logical aspects reflected in the articles in conjunction with the factors framing strategic communication as an essential tool for leveraging and promoting thermalism in Europe.

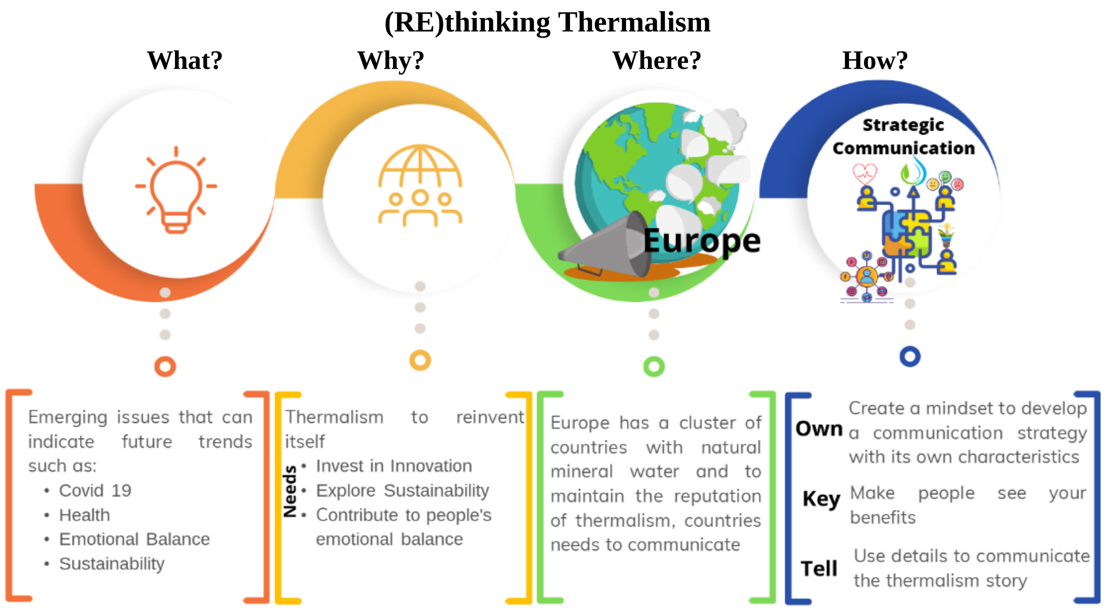

Figure 4. Conceptual Model (Source: Elaborated by the authors)

The need to rethink thermalism led to the formulation of four questions: “"What?", Why?”, "Where?" and "How?" Starting by answering the "What?" – as there are emerging issues detailed in these articles capable of indicating future trends for thermalism demand; Szromek (2020) addresses Covid 19, Dillette et al. (2020) approach health and emotional balance and Mijajlovic et al. (2020), Szromek (2020), Szromek and Naramski (2019) and Szromek and Wybranczyk (2019) mention concerns for the environment. Coronaviruses mainly affect the respiratory systems of those infected and thermal springs may serve as a prevention or cure. In addition, water, the key resource for thermalism, is not a carrier for the spread of disease, a factor that is also relevant for the destination’s safety (Navarrete and Shaw, 2021). In addition, we share the opinion of Brandão et al. (2021) who refer to three main reasons for seeking thermal tourism: (i) the increase in the average longevity of populations, associated with the increase in the number of elderly people travelling; (ii) the migration to large cities and the distance from nature, which causes psychosomatic imbalances (stress, anxiety, depression, among others); and (iii) sedentarism, unhealthy eating habits and incorrect body postures as well as problems caused by the civilisational crisis affecting the most developed countries, which translate into significant increases in loneliness and the associated affective, emotional and spiritual crises. From this perspective, thermalism emerges as a space for renewing physical and emotional balance and for updating socialisation, lifestyles and social identities.

Why?" – Thermalism is an expanding sector and there is a need to make its characteristics and benefits visible through an operational communication strategy. The articles analysed resulted in three clusters, which are aligned with the proposal for a differentiated communication strategy for thermal tourism to achieve a new positioning in Europe. As our main results, we conclude that rethinking thermal tourism requires resorting to innovation to create new and efficient business models, differentiated by sustainable policies and natural environments for mutual benefits as in the studies by Dillette et al., 2020; Pan et al., 2019. This new approach, with services providing a mix of health, well-being and pleasure, through natural mineral water, will provide the tourist with an emotional balance to be well in life and to be successful personally and professionally (Kim et al., 2017). This proactive vision, with its focus on quality, is key to maintaining position in the growing wellness tourism market. Basing business models on assumptions of sustainable development (Smith and Puczko, 2015; Szromek, 2020; Szromek and Wybranczyk, 2019), uniqueness (Szromek and Naramski, 2019) and differentiation (Alen et al., 2014) has become a priority factor to build competitive and differentiating advantages for the thermal sector.

To raise awareness and increase the profitability of thermal spas, an operational communication strategy is needed for different thermal destination countries to attract as many tourists as possible. While Heung and Kucukusta (2013) identify the most effective methods to promote health and wellness tourism, such as social media advertising, government support and the organisation of new regional events, (Pan et al., 2019) report that the communication strategies deployed should remain realistic, direct and convey a healthy lifestyle to tourists. This also involves deploying social media to communicate the benefits of thermalism (Clark-Kennedy and Cohen, 2017; Pforr and Locher, 2012). Molleda and Kochhar (2015) share the view that strategic communication research should analyse political, social and economic factors for tourism organisations or destinations. In-depth research guides organisations to deal with environmental complexity and reinforces the need to create a clear brand identity. According to Estevão and Costa (2020), marketing and advertising play an important role in restoring the tourist destination's image. In this sense, reinventing thermal tourism requires investing in comprehensive strategic communication that meets the challenges of strategic planning and the effective execution of communication campaigns. Communication functions, such as public relations, advertising and marketing, provide support to all types of sectors and industries, both in domestic markets and across borders that thermal tourism also responds to (Molleda and Kochhar, 2015).

"Where?" - The countries involved in the articles analysed are concentrated in Europe as this represents a geography clustering thermal water destinations, including Portugal, Spain, Italy, Germany, Greece, Poland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Romania, Slovakia, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, England, Turkey and Iceland. This article strives to make a contribution to a theoretical reflection on thermalism in general and in Europe in particular. In one period, thermal baths were frequented mostly by the European nobility and high society in Europe. (Tang et al., 2021). Currently and according to Stevens et al. (2018), thermalism is enjoying a global resurgence of interest as consumers seek out ethical, natural, and place-based wellness experiences. In Europe, the healing success rate of thermalism has maintained the high reputation of thermal springs with curative powers. The tourist type is now more extensive but also more demanding and there is a need to invest in thermal tourism in Europe to maintain thermalism's reputation alongside the need for countries to communicate with each other.

"How?" - Our analysis demonstrates how the essence of thermalism can not only be maintained but also multiplied and thereby contributing to a more efficient communication of just what thermalism is. This analysis also demonstrates how strategic clusters interlink with communication through appropriately selecting the content. This requires ascertaining the best means of communicating the uniqueness of natural mineral water and the beauty of the surrounding nature, the location of each territory, including the respective culture, traditions and gastronomy, and the benefits for physical, mental and spiritual health (Clark-Kennedy and Cohen, 2017; Heung and Kucukusta, 2013; Huijbens, 2011; Smith, 2015; Stevens et al., 2018). Through economic, environmental and social sustainability, thermal territories should be promoted through focusing on geotourism and geothermal tourism, valuing and protecting water as the main endogenous resource of thermalism (Chrobak et al., 2020; Noviello and Smetkiewicz, 2019; Szromek, 2020; Szromek and Nanaramski, 2019; Szromek and Wybranczyk, 2019). According to Anaya-Aguilar et al. (2021), Joukes and Gerry (2010), technologies integrated into the strategy of promoting health and wellness tourism represent the most efficient means of communication.

Based on the instigatory theory of Oliveira (2019), thermalism communication also needs to perpetuate and trigger behavioural changes in people. This research seeks to look at the specificities of thermal tourism and to come up with solutions for the communicative process and actions in the future. This analysis thus sheds new light on the dynamics of how communication should be produced as knowledge for full exposure and recognition. This demonstrates the need to conduct detailed analysis of communication in thermalism to fully understand the wealth of the interrelated forms of tourism discourse on thermalism whether as a whole or on its constituent parts. According to Hallahan et al. (2007), for the field of strategic communication to evolve into a mature scientific field, this needs researchers to conscientiously and thoroughly work on this field with this study making a clear contribution to this goal.

CONCLUSIONS

This rigorous and in-depth analysis of the theme of thermalism has led us to conclude that there is an urgent need for the continuous updating of research on these emerging themes. The relationship between thermalism and communication is scarce and the publication of scientific articles in journals with a high impact factor is fundamental to communicating the scientific findings on this sector. We answered the first research question through cluster analysis - *What are the subjacent dimensions of thermalism emphasised in scientific publications?* The different approaches, including tourist behaviour; analysis of companies in the sector; destination images, diversity, benefits/ incentives for both companies and tourists; business models and tourism development; sustainability, and communication and marketing strategies, lead us to conclude that to rethink thermalism in Europe requires analysis of all of these approaches in keeping with the future demands of tourism. According to Tang et al. (2021) and Navarrete and Shaw (2021), the pandemic caused by Covid 19 led to a public discussion about health, longevity and quality of life, opening the door to thermal spas and generating new opportunities for the sector. Therefore, we also conclude that the valorisation of companies and establishments that provide sustainable products and services, that promote healthy lifestyles, such as using local products and untreated raw materials, is not a fashion but rather a trend. Tourists are increasingly concerned about their health and thus favour, above all, options in the tourism service range that best contribute to their health and well-being.

Answering the second question - *What is the relationship between strategic communication and thermal tourism?* All the studies, in many different ways, refer to communication as fundamental for the promotion and management of the relationships between thermal services/products/destinations, evoking communication as the main strategy for developing the sector. Although the focus of the articles does not fall on communication, all the researchers perceive this area as the means for a better projection of thermal tourism. Furthermore, we may conclude that communication strategies, focused on the characteristics of thermalism can be produced and maintained through selecting the means of communication that make thermalism both more visible and better understood. This study contributes to the identification of operationalised strategies and guidelines with an impact in terms of the publications that may outline promising future research paths. This research also discusses the implications of predictive factors for developing communication and marketing strategies that lead people to view thermalism in a more "operational" and "autochthonous" way.

According to Brandão et al. (2021), this importantly involves improving communication about the health and wellbeing experiences on offer as well as communicating their benefits. We thus conclude that the beneficial effects of thermal cures have been well known ever since ancient times, however, it is necessary to sustain them through scientific knowledge and raise their profiles through instigatory communication strategies. The analysis also highlights the importance of further research into thermal spas, with a particular focus on communication as this is a sector with great growth potential. It is hoped these findings will motivate other researchers to conduct further empirical studies on thermalism. In fact, the very role of researchers involves understanding, analysing and promoting a more operational vision of strategic communication in thermal tourism. The study limitations include the fact that we only considered journal articles and from two databases. As a future research path, we would suggest extending the theme to brand communication studies of thermal destinations and carrying out qualitative studies on the communication strategies deployed by thermal spas. In addition, to clarify the respective concepts requires carrying out research on the terms existing throughout the field of thermalism.

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EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM THE TOURISM INDUSTRY ON THE FACTORS THAT AFFECT TOURIST DESTINATION SATISFACTION

Marlisa Abdul RAHIM*
Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Global Entrepreneurship Research and Innovation Centre (GERIC)
& Faculty of Hospitality, Tourism and Wellness, Kelantan, Malaysia, e-mail: marlisa@umk.edu.my

Nurzehan Abu BAKAR
Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Faculty of Hospitality, Tourism and Wellness, Kelantan, Malaysia, e-mail: nurzehan.ab@umk.edu.my

Nik Alif Amri Nik HASHIM
Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Faculty of Hospitality, Tourism and Wellness, Kelantan, Malaysia, e-mail: alifamri@umk.edu.my

Nor Maizana Mat NAWI
Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Faculty of Hospitality, Tourism and Wellness, Kelantan, Malaysia, e-mail: maizana.mn@umk.edu.my

Hassnah WEE
Universiti Teknologi MARA, Faculty of Hotel & Tourism Management, Selangor, Malaysia, e-mail: hassnah739@uitm.edu.my

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Abstract: This study examines variables in explaining the factors that affect tourist destination satisfaction among local tourists in Langkawi, Malaysia. The objectives of this study include examining the relationship between natural environment and tourist destination satisfaction, examining the relationship between cultural and historical environment and tourist destination satisfaction, and examining the relationship between infrastructure and tourist destination satisfaction. This quantitative study incorporated a convenience sampling technique where the responses were taken from 275 respondents among local tourists in Malaysia through an online survey. Pearson Correlation was used in this research to investigate the relationship between the natural environment and tourist destination satisfaction, the relationship between cultural and historical environment and tourist destination satisfaction, and the relationship between infrastructure and tourist destination satisfaction. The result shows there were high positive relationship between the natural environment and cultural and historical environment with tourist destination satisfaction, while the infrastructure factor has low positive correlation with tourist destinations satisfaction.

Key words: natural environment, cultural and historical environment, infrastructure, tourist satisfaction

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INTRODUCTION

The world tourism organization describes tourism sectors precisely because the behaviors of people who travel outside their normal atmosphere and travel activity relate to the actions of visitors according to their attitudes before and after travelling (Szromek et al., 2020). The tourist industry in Malaysia is also a key contributor to the country's economic growth, particularly in terms of foreign exchange revenues and employment generation. This rise happens as a result of the large number of international and local tourists who have selected Malaysia as a tourism destination (Puah et al., 2021).

This can be proven when Malaysia received more than 26 million foreign tourists with the value of expenditure recorded to reach RM86.14 billion, increasing one and 2.4 percent respectively in 2019 compared to 2018 (Tourism Malaysia, 2020). Statistics for 2020 show that ASEAN countries remain the largest contributor of international tourists to Malaysia by welcoming a total of 4,576,636 tourists with a share of 7.8 percent, equivalent to 2,868,359 tourists.

However, in 2020, Malaysia was shocked by the spread of the coronavirus (Covid-19), which hit Malaysia and the whole world. As a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, Malaysia's tourism sector has lost a billion dollars in the first six months of this year (Hamid et al., 2021). The outbreak also shook the tourism industry, which was dealing with dwindling visitor numbers, a lack of product innovation, and a reluctance to convert to digital operations as a result of the epidemic. In actuality, the Visit Malaysia 2020 Year campaign's goal of attracting 30 million international tourists has yet to be realized. As a result, the government has set out on a quest to repair and reinvigorate the tourism industry, which includes Malaysia's famous island of Langkawi. Degradation of natural resources and land structure, detrimental tourism activity, modification of flora and fauna life, pollution, poor infrastructure, water shortages, and ferry service problems all contributed to the declining visitor arrival trend (Rossello et al., 2020). As a result of these difficulties, Langkawi's UNESCO Global Geopark classification has been revoked, putting the island's tourism business in jeopardy. To make matters worse, little has been done to address the problems and update the island's infrastructure, adding to the stress on an already vulnerable ecosystem.

* Corresponding author

When the data collected can determine the satisfaction of foreign tourists choosing Malaysia as a vacation location, the statistics of tourist arrivals may be used to further promote the tourism business. Tourist pleasure, as well as tourists' want to repurchase, is a crucial element that influences the desire to return to a destination. In addition, the government launched a promotional effort that effectively highlighted the country's originality, peace, and diversity in order to attract more foreign tourists while also ensuring that tourists are satisfied with their visit to a place. This satisfaction factor is often an important consideration in business (Hung et al., 2021). This is because goods and services that provide satisfaction will continue to be in demand in the future. Through the recorded data, it can realize the importance of tourist satisfaction in influencing the arrival as well as stimulating repeat visits. Furthermore, a destination's attractions and natural beauty might contribute to tourist satisfaction. Similarly, the nicest and most pleasant facilities ensure that tourists enjoy their visit to the destination. According to Kozak and Rimmington (2000), Tourist satisfaction is critical for efficient destination marketing since it influences destination selection, use of products and services, and return decisions. Therefore, three main factors affect the satisfaction of tourists towards tourism destinations in Malaysia among local tourists which are closely related the natural environment, cultural and historical environment factors and the last is the infrastructure factor. Factors in terms of the natural environment are one reason it affects tourist satisfaction towards tourism destinations. For example, some tourists really love nature and the beauty found in it has prompted them to choose the destination. For destinations, environmental issues are now more important than ever before and are now an integral part of their sustainable development strategies. The new tourists demand more environmental resource–based experiences and are becoming sensitive to the actual environmental quality of destinations, which increasingly influences their price–quality ratio judgments. For example, research on the Balearic Islands (Aguilo et al., 2005) has shown that tourists have become increasingly demanding in regard to the natural surroundings and their quality. Indeed, in the late 20th century, it became evident that environmental tourist attractions must be maintained and offered to visitors in the quantity and quality that they demand together with the price they are willing to pay (Mihalic, 2013).

In addition, cultural and historical environment tourism that includes heritage and social lifestyle at a destination can attract foreign tourists to see the country's cultural diversity and historical relics, so some potential heritage-based products definitely include sites that UNESCO has designated as world heritage sites. The strong competition for visitors between destinations with cultural and historical sites, especially UNESCO listed sites, means that making continual improvements to the management of these sites is essential. The current situation will only become more difficult in the future (Kim et al., 2017). In view of this, tourist satisfaction is an important factor to take into account, especially for tourist destinations in areas with cultural heritage (Zhang et al., 2014). Infrastructure variables, such as tourism satisfaction with the quality of tourism products and services, including facilities and tourist locations in Malaysia, cannot be ruled out (Rahmiati et al., 2020; Narayan et al., 2008). The importance of this issue cannot be overstated because tourists' contentment in Malaysia influences their decision to return to the country in the future. Therefore, it can be said that improving tourism infrastructure to increase the attractiveness of the destination is an essential factor in attracting tourists. The studies of Naude and Saayman (2005), and Seetanah and Khadaroo (2011) point out that a country's infrastructure determines its potential attractiveness as a tourist destination. Thus, this study examines the relationship between natural environment, cultural and historical environment, and infrastructure with tourist destination satisfaction among local tourists in Malaysia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourist Destination Satisfaction

Tourist satisfaction is one of the consumer demands that can be increased by the criteria and expectations of tourists on the tourist package given. Tourism organizations must adopt a definition to aid them in their continual efforts to balance capacity with demand and the quality of services supplied to guests in order to satisfy them (Kandampully, 2000). The contentment of visitors is critical for efficient destination marketing since it influences destination selections, product use, and return decisions. Comparison of buyers' aspirations before and after purchase is fulfillment. The discrepancy between such guest expectations and the true value is tourist happiness. The thrilled tourists should return to the location and encourage others to do so as well. The frequency of complaints from tourists reduces as satisfaction levels rise.

Tourist pleasure hard be reached without the visitor's perception that the quality obtained is better than the money spent (Abbasi et al., 2021). In designing tourist regulations, the happy traveler who paints a positive impression of a tourist site is critical. In the context of globalization, visitor satisfaction is seen as a key tool for increasing tourism output. This is related to efforts to offer a tourist supply that can meet the needs of the industry. Satisfied customers can also be a great strategy to spread positive word of mouth (Pavlic et al., 2011). The satisfaction of the tourist destination is the product of the review among wishes and meetings (Ibrahim and Gill, 2015). Satisfaction is a high priority for businesses, and the more visitors achieve, the more money they are willing to spend. As a result, some firms tend to notice more client discrepancies, even at higher levels of satisfaction. Perceived value, perceived quality, and satisfaction are intermittent variables that can be used to define visitor motivation and measure the breadth of the reason of visiting or reviewing the tourist site when these aspects are considered in the picture of the target. This influences not only immediate repurchases but also prestige and morale. On the one hand, this view of satisfaction reflects the emotional nature, and on the other, the affective nature (associated feelings). Tourists evaluate the degree to which their demands and wishes for a wide variety of facilities supplied in the destination are met in a pleasurable manner in the case of a tourism destination. Baker and Crompton (2000) defined tourism as an emotional condition that only influences happiness after a trip with a high level of lightness.

Natural environment and tourist destination satisfaction

Environment was generally defined with multiple elements and investigated relationships with satisfaction (Jarvis et al., 2016). Tourists' destinations are determined mostly by the quality of the natural environment which has long been a major tourist attraction. In reality, the environment has numerous positive benefits on tourist satisfaction. So that, tourism management should pay attention in maintaining the quality of the environment of tourist locations that are increasingly eager to work together to conserve the environment (Khuong et al., 2016). The natural environment in the tourist business indicates that all tourism is directly dependent on the usage of natural resources such as scenery, water features, terrain, flora, and fauna (Fossgard and Fredman, 2019). Previous research has indicated that, travellers of all types are getting more sensitive to dirty circumstances at their various tourist sites. As a result, tourism is diminishing in certain regions that have recently been quite popular due to environmental issues (Khuong and Nguyen, 2017). The government will next take a more natural approach to tourist and conservation development in the region. However, in this case, the cost of environmental upkeep and treatment is a factor. As a result, the authorities can charge an admission fee to cover the costs (Shukor, 2017).

Cultural and historical environment with tourist destination satisfaction

In the tourism industry, quality of life represents customs and lifestyle; adjustable language; the friendliness of the locals; religion; historical attractions; concerts or festivals (McKay, 2018). In addition, the cultural environment selects several cultural attributes such as historic buildings, palaces, museum, theaters, galleries, festivals and events (Martin et al., 2016). Furthermore, based on past findings, people who want to travel in order to boost their self-esteem and capacity to quantify oneself have become the key desire. These elements include aspects of language, culture and environment. These aspects need to be taken into account for every tourist. Malaysia is chosen as a tourist destination by visitors from different continents since it has its own language, culture, and environment.

Therefore, Malaysia has to run promotions across the country that have the ability to disclose the country's culture and environment in order to attract more tourists looking for a unique experience (Shukor, 2017).

Infrastructure and tourist destination satisfaction

Notably, the strong connection between infrastructure and traveler satisfaction was mentioned by various studies (Khuong et al., 2020). Tourism infrastructure refers to both material and technological facilities produced by the government and tourism organisations to utilise tourism's potential, such as hotel and residential systems, products, entertainment and leisure parks, transportation equipment, infrastructure works, and so on. Infrastructure was seen in terms of transportation networks, including road, rail, sea and air. Furthermore, tourist pleasure is affected by location accessibility, which includes infrastructure, operating variables, government laws, and equipment (Virkar and Mallya, 2018). The infrastructure component of tourist development is critical since it supports the destination's competitive advantage. In addition, effective tourist destinations greatly influence the level of satisfaction with infrastructure (Nguyen, 2017). Previous studies have shown that infrastructure and ease of access expand existing tourism destinations and develop new attractions. Furthermore, the development of adequate public infrastructure is required for high-quality tourism facilities in tourist sites (Jovanovia and Ilia, 2016). According to Nguyen (2017), many studies examine the relationship between infrastructure and tourism development. This research has examined the relationship between infrastructure, tourist spending, distance, prices, and tourist satisfaction.

Hypotheses

This study used three variables that consisted of natural environment, cultural and historical environment, and infrastructure as factors that affected tourist destination satisfaction. Based on literature reviews, the following hypotheses were formulated for this study:

H1: There is a significant relationship between natural environment and tourist destination satisfaction.

H2: There is a significant relationship between the cultural and historical environment and the satisfaction of tourist destinations.

H3: There is a significant relationship between infrastructure and the tourist destination satisfaction.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Methodology flow chart was presented as shown in Figure 1.

Data Collection

In order to collect the data, a structured questionnaire was a private message to the selected online tourist group that have been visited Langkawi in social media such as in Facebook and Instagram. Langkawi was chosen as the study's destination because of its many histories, civilizations, natural wonders, and wonderful terrain. Langkawi Island, in fact, has been designated as a UNESCO World Geopark for its natural beauty and conservation efforts. Langkawi Island is a popular tourist destination for a variety of reasons, including leisure and businesses (Anuar et al., 2021).

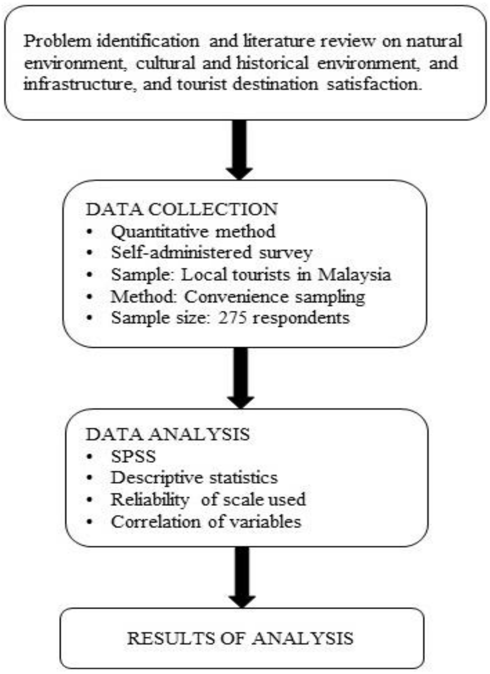

Figure 1. Methodology flow chart

The target population of this study involved domestic tourist in Malaysia and in year 2020, Malaysia welcomed 131.7 million domestic tourist (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2020). According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), sample sizes that represented the population was 384. Questionnaires that successfully distributed to the respondents in this study were

350. The study incorporated a convenience sampling technique to collect the data. To expedite the process and to enable the respondents to complete the questionnaires, the researcher personally follows up with the respective respondents. Out of 350 questionnaires distributed, a total of 275 questionnaires were useful for analyzing the data with a response rate of 78.57%.

Measurement Scales

The dimension of cultural and historical environment was developed by Martin et al. (2016), natural environment and infrastructure was developed by Khuong and Nguyen (2017) and tourist destination satisfaction was developed by Suanmali (2014). The 20 items of the variables were rated on a ten-point Likert Scale where 1= strongly disagree and 10= strongly agree.

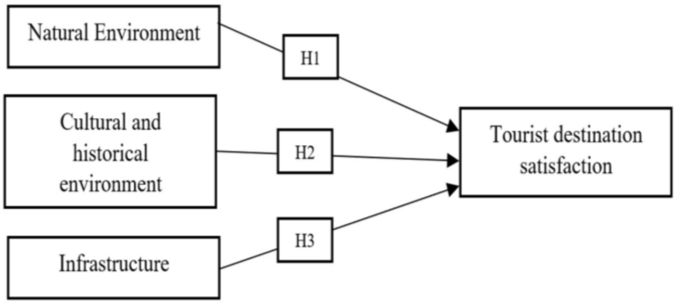

Figure 2. Conceptual Framework

Research Design

The present study used a quantitative research design to examine the factors that have relationship with tourist satisfaction. The quantitative also refers as descriptive study was chosen to ascertain and be able to describe the characteristics destination of the variable of interest in situation. The purpose of a descriptive study is to provide a profile or description of relevant characteristics of the phenomena of interest to the researcher from a personal, organizational, industry-oriented, or other perspective. Therefore, this research design is used because is more systematic and detailed as a result of its approach.

Table 1. Reliability of Scale (Analysis) (Source: Primary Data)

Variables	Items	Value of Cronbach's Alpha
Tourist destination satisfaction	05	0.936
Natural Environment	05	0.935
Cultural and historical environment	05	0.934
Infrastructure	05	0.964

Table 2. Overall Descriptive Statistics (n=275) (Source: Primary Data)

Variables	Mean	SD
Tourist destination satisfaction	9.00	1.275
Natural Environment	8.93	1.227
Cultural and historical environment	8.82	1.232
Infrastructure	9.02	1.343

Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient values for the independent and dependent variables in this study are shown in Table 1. From the table, we can conclude all the variables were above the value of 0.964. Therefore, the result shown is reliable and it can be accepted in this study. Five questions were used to measure the tourist destinations satisfaction among local tourists. Cronbach's Alpha for this section's questions was 0.936, which was outstanding, according to Table 1.

Thus, the coefficient obtained for the questions in personal variable were reliable. Next, there were five questions in measuring the natural environment variable that influenced tourist satisfaction among local tourists. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which is shown in this section, is 0.935, which is considered excellent. Thus, the coefficient obtained for the questions in natural environment variable were reliable. Five questions were used to measure the cultural and historical environment variable that influenced tourist destinations satisfaction among local tourists. Cronbach's Alpha for the questions in this area was 0.934, which is considered excellent. Therefore, the coefficient obtained for the questions in this cultural and historical environment variable reliable. Lastly, when it comes to the infrastructure variable that related to tourism destinations satisfaction among local tourists, five questions were used and the Cronbach's Alpha result for this section's question was 0.964 which indicated as excellent. Therefore, the coefficient obtained for this question in measuring the infrastructure variable were also reliable. The Cronbach's Alpha charge for the variables had exceeded 0.9, it shows that questionnaires are highly reliable and the study can be proceeded. The reliability of the questionnaires has shown that the respondent comprehended the questions effectively, implying that the questionnaires have been acceptable for this study.

Table 2 shows the number of respondents and the mean and standard deviation of independent and dependent variables. For the independent variables, the highest mean was infrastructure which is 9.02, followed by tourist destination was 9.00 and natural environment was 8.93. The mean cultural and historical was 8.82.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Natural Environment (n=275) (Source: Primary Data)

Item Description	Mean	SD
Tourist destination satisfaction mostly were influenced by the quality of natural environment that seem regularly the main attraction for tourists.	8.75	1.859
The natural environment has many positive impacts of tourist satisfaction.	8.98	1.703
Tourist operators should have a pay attention in preserving the environmental quality of tourist destinations that grow into increasingly love to work together to protect the environment.	8.98	1.665
Tourism is in the best condition when this destination has a conducive natural environment.	8.87	1.687
Satisfaction level of tourist depends on the natural environment and climate condition of the geographical location.	8.59	1.861

Table 3 revealed that the mean and standard deviation analysis of respondents for the independent variable which was natural environment. Items number two and three have the highest mean value of 8.98, where the respondents found that natural environment has many positive impacts on tourist satisfaction. Tourist operators should pay attention to protecting the environmental quality of tourist locations, according to the respondents, who are increasingly willing to work together to protect the environment. The lowest means was item number five, with the mean value 8.59, where tourist satisfaction depends on the geographical location's natural environment and climate condition. The standard deviation of most of the values in the data set from 275 respondents was larger than 1, indicating that the values were more dispersed.

Table 4 shows the mean and standard deviation analysis on the independent variable which was natural environment. The highest mean value was item number five which was 8.91, where respondents agreed that cultural tourism has informative and educational value. The lowest mean value was item number four, which was 8.68. The respondent slightly agreed that Tourist can certainly raise awareness among the local community that they should be involved in their traditional arts and crafts business. For the data set from 275 respondents with the standard deviation most of the value which lowest than 1, it indicated the values close to mean. Table 5 revealed the mean and standard deviation analysis of respondents on the independent variable, infrastructure. Item number one score the highest mean value which was 9.08, where the respondents agreed good travel services will encourage tourists to come to tourist places. The lowest mean was item number five, with the mean value of 8.96. The respondent found that infrastructure facilities that can generate enhanced operations and tourism activities are the main attraction for visitors. From the data set from 275 respondents with a standard deviation most of the value which lowest than 1, indicated the values close to mean while the standard deviation which greater than 1, it indicated the values were more dispersed. Table 6 shows the mean and standard deviation analysis of respondents on the dependent variable which was tourist destination satisfaction. Item number one score the highest mean value which was 9.12, where the respondents agreed that tourist destination satisfaction being attracted to a place by its reputation as a scenic spot and satisfying desire. The lowest mean was item number three, with the mean value 8.88, where the respondent found that protecting health status and improving physical health in travel destination will lead to satisfaction. From the data set from 275 respondents with the standard deviation most of the value which lowest than 1, indicated the values close to mean while the standard deviation which greater than 1, it indicated the values were more dispersed.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Cultural and Historical (n=275) (Source: Primary Data)

Item Description	Mean	SD
Tourist engagement is important because contact with history and cultural heritage is the strongest incentive.	8.90	1.351
Objects of cultural and historical heritage are an important asset of the modern cities.	8.87	1.434
Tourism provides funding to preserve and conserve cultural heritage and opens door for cultural sharing and learning.	8.73	1.331
Tourist can certainly raise awareness among the local community that they are should involve in their traditional arts & crafts business	8.68	1.385
Cultural tourism has informative and educational value.	8.91	1.428

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of Infrastructure (n=275) (Source: Primary Data)

Item Description	Mean	SD
Good travel services will encourage tourists to come to tourist places.	9.08	1.464
Improving the quality of services by taking into account the infrastructure facilities in the tourism area will provide guarantee security and quality of tourism.	9.01	1.453
Prioritizing complete infrastructure facilities will determine the presence of tourists to a tourist area.	9.01	1.456
Providing attractive and comfortable facilities is a contributor to the tourist attraction that comes.	9.02	1.415
Infrastructure facilities that are able to generate enhanced operations and tourism activities are the main attraction for visitors to the destination.	8.96	1.399

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics of Tourist Destination Satisfaction (n=275) (Source: Primary Data)

Item Description	Mean	SD
Tourist destination satisfaction being attracted to a place by its reputation as a scenic spot and satisfying desire.	9.12	1.452
Tourist destination satisfaction being able to relieve stress and relieve physical and mental exhaustion.	9.08	1.421
To protect health status and to improve physical health.	8.88	1.496
To increase the emotional exchange with family and friends.	8.94	1.365
Tourist destination satisfaction can make mood relaxation and stress relieving.	8.98	1.407

Table 7. Correlation Analysis for natural environment and tourist destination satisfaction (Source: Primary Data **Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

		Tourist Destination Satisfaction	Natural Environment
Tourist Destination Satisfaction	Pearson correlation	1	.849**
	Sig. (2 tailed)		.000
	n	275	275
Natural Environment	Pearson correlation	.849**	1
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.000	
	n	275	275

Table 8. Correlation analysis for cultural and historical environment and tourist destination satisfaction (Source: Primary Data **Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

		Tourist Destination Satisfaction	Cultural and Historical Environment
Tourist Destination Satisfaction	Pearson correlation	1	.798**
	Sig. (2 tailed)		.000
	n	275	275
Cultural and Historical Environment	Pearson correlation	.798**	1
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.000	
	n	275	275

Table 7 shows the Pearson correlation coefficient, significant value, and the total number of cases which was 275. The p-value was 0.000, which was less than significant level of 0.01. The correlation coefficient of 0.849 suggested a high positive correlation between natural environment and tourist destination satisfaction. Table 8 shows the Pearson correlation coefficient, significant value, and the total number of cases which was 275. The p-value was 0.000, which was less than significant level of 0.01. The correlation coefficient of 0.798 suggested a high positive correlation between the cultural and historical environment and the satisfaction of tourist destinations. Table 9 illustrated Pearson correlation coefficient, significant value and the number of cases which was 275. The p-value was 0.000, which was less than significant level of 0.01. The correlation coefficient of 0.458 suggested a low positive correlation between infrastructure and the tourist destination satisfaction.

DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis conducted, it was found that the strength of the relationship between natural environment and tourist destination satisfaction is at highest relationship (r = 0.849, n= 275, p<0.01). The finding discovered a positive and significant relationship between natural environment and tourist destination satisfaction. From the findings, the probability value of natural environment shows the pressing need for pragmatic solution and suggestions for future development in order to improve and to enhance tourist satisfaction level. By doing so, this will help in maintaining the tourist loyalty and in return could play a role in promoting Langkawi economic development (Marzuki et al., 2014). The findings supported the study of Jarvis (2016) who expounded that the quality of the natural environment mostly influences tourist destination satisfaction as a major attraction. Hence, it is clear that the natural environment is a significant element in determining tourism destination satisfaction. Next, the result shows that the strength of the cultural and historical environment towards tourist destination satisfaction among local tourist is at moderate level (r= 0.798, n=275, p<0.01). The finding infers that there was a positive and significant relationship between cultural and historical environment and tourist destination satisfaction. This probably, the people of Langkawi have been isolated from the mainland helped them develop a very rich legacy of myths and legends that blend in with the fascinating oral history of their colorful, if often violent, past. In addition, Langkawi has the Laman Padi Rice Museum that preserve traditional paddy-farming techniques and to showcase the historical and cultural importance of traditional rice farming in the region. Thus, cultural and historical environment in Langkawi became important to tourist destination satisfaction (Kasim et al., 2017). This result was consistent with previous study carried by Haneef (2017) who emphasizes that cultural and historical environment play an important role in establishing a positive reputation of the places to tourist and made them satisfy to revisit again.

Table 9. Correlation Analysis for infrastructure and tourist destination satisfaction (Source: Primary Data **Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

		Tourist Destination Satisfaction	Natural Environment
Tourist Destination Satisfaction	Pearson correlation	1	.458**
	Sig. (2 tailed)		.000
	n	275	275
Natural Environment	Pearson correlation	.458**	1
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.000	
	n	275	275

The findings reveal that the relationship between infrastructure and tourist satisfaction among Malaysian tourists is lower (r = 0.458, n=275, p<0.01). The findings imply a positive and significant relationship between infrastructure and tourist destination satisfaction. Infrastructure is an important element in tourism because in order to attract tourists to the destination, the environment must be equipped with efficient service infrastructure facilities. Tourism is a fragmented industry comprised of various elements such as attractions, activities, services and infrastructures, which build up the total appeals of the natural and man-made characteristics of the place. Cooper et al. (2005) suggested that destination facilities are the most important thing for tourism. It has interesting places to visit and must have all the necessities and facilities to the tourists such as accommodation, activities, and transportation that lead to tourist demand and satisfaction.

Inferences drawn from the Study

The findings of the study revealed and confirmed that there was high positive relationship between natural environment and cultural and historical environment with tourist destination satisfaction while infrastructure has low positive correlation between the tourist destinations satisfaction. The study's findings indicate that the tour operators need to effectively manage the environment, culture and historical environment and facilities provided in tourist attraction places to increase tourist destination satisfaction.

CONCLUSION & LIMITATIONS

This study contributed widely to the body of knowledge on the factors of natural environment, culture and historical environment and facilities towards tourist destinations satisfaction. This research aids tourism industry participants in better understanding the problem and improving their ability to develop and implement more effective tourist-attraction tactics. Like any other study, this research work does have its limitations.

This study is only focused at examining the relationship between natural environment, culture and historical environment and facilities with tourist destinations satisfaction. Hence, future research may be conducted to examine determinants such as service quality or promotion provided by tour operators and the external environment.

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ECOLOGICAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE NATIONAL PARKS OF BELARUS

Natallia V. HAHINA
Belarusian State University, Faculty of Geography and Geoinformatics, Minsk, Republic of Belarus, e-mail: nata-gagina@yandex.by

Elena I. GALAI
Belarusian State University, Faculty of Geography and Geoinformatics, Minsk, Republic of Belarus, e-mail: E_Galai@mail.ru

Duman T. ALIASKAROV*
Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University, Institute of Natural Sciences and Geography, Almaty, Kazakhstan, e-mail: duman_06@mail.ru

Yerкin A. TOKPANOV
Zhetysu University named after I. Zhansugurov, Faculty of Natural Sciences, Tadlykorgan, Kazakhstan, e-mail: tokpanov60@mail.ru

Zhansulu INKAROVA
L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Faculty of Natural Sciences, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, e-mail: inkarzh@mail.ru

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Abstract: The article is devoted to the development of ecological tourism in the national parks of Belarus. The methodological basis of the study was a systematic scientific approach, comparative geographical, cartographic, expert assessment methods. As a result of the research, the data on environmental requirements for ecological tourism organisation in the national parks of the Republic of Belarus such as state environmental institutions "National Park "Narochansky", "National Park "Braslav Lakes", "National Park "Belovezhskaya Pushcha", "National Park "Pripyatsky" are systematized. Landscape features of the national park's territories are considered as a factor determining the direction of ecotourism activities. The analysis of ecotourism infrastructure development, innovativeness and complexity of the offered tourist services is given. Prospective directions of development of domestic and international inbound ecological tourism in the national parks of Belarus are substantiated.

Key words: national parks, specially protected natural areas, landscapes, ecological tourism, ecotourism infrastructure, Belarus

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INTRODUCTION

Nowadays there are various forms and methods of organizing tourism in the world, and ecological types of tourism are becoming increasingly important. According to various estimates, the number of ecotourists in the world annually has increased by 7-20% (Afanasieva and Afanasieva, 2017; Tokpanov et al., 2021; Dunets et al., 2020). Ecotourism is one of the fastest growing sectors of the global tourism industry (Berdenov et al., 2016). Scientific research on the problems and prospects for ecological tourism development at the macro-regional, country and local levels has received sufficient coverage in scientific publications (Afanasieva, 2020; Akhmedenov, 2020; Berdenov et al., 2021). Foreign scientists studied the principles and structural components of ecotourism, the peculiarities of its organisation and management (Dunets et al., 2020; Welford and Gouldson, 1993; Cooper et al., 1998). There are five key structural components (characteristics) of this tourism direction: the natural environment, environmental sustainability, education, income and benefits for the local population and the satisfaction of all participants in this type of activity (Newsome et al., 2002).

The most important ideas about the development of ecotourism as one of the leading forms of sustainable tourism are reflected in international documents: Principles of environmentally sustainable tourism UNEP (2002), Quebec Declaration on the development of ecotourism (2002), etc. The issues of natural, cultural and historical resources estimation for the development of ecotourism activities in Belarus, possibilities of tourist and recreational use of quarry ponds, natural, historical and cultural heritage interpretation, strategic directions for the development of green routes and green tourism, formation of ecotourism clusters are considered in the works (Khomitch et al., 2019; Tarasenok, 2003; Hoppstadius and Dahlström, 2015).

The analysis of literary sources has showed the ambiguity of interpretation of "ecological tourism" concept both in different countries and within one country. Drozdov A.V. refers to ecotourism all types of environmentally oriented tourism, not only within the borders of specially protected natural areas (water areas), but also outside their borders. Tarasenok A.I. has identified three groups of definitions of the concept: definitions given in official documents, formulated by scientists based on tourism environmental management studies, as well as definitions used in the field of tourist consumption (Tarasenok, 2003). In this paper, we adhere to the concept of ecotourism, which is formulated by

* Corresponding author

the International Ecotourism Society as a responsible travel in natural areas (territories), which preserves the environment and supports the well-being of local residents. The Covid-19 pandemic has led to a global tourism crisis (Munne et al., 2021; Rogerson, 2021). In many states, including Belarus, the number of inbound and outbound tourist flows has significantly decreased, and the activity of a number of tourist entities has been suspended. Under such conditions, the importance of ecological tourism has increased, since the Republic of Belarus has a significant natural potential for its development. The main ecotourism activity is concentrated in specially protected natural areas.

The development of ecological tourism in specially protected natural areas (SPNA) has specific features associated with compliance with the requirements of environmental legislation. On the territory of all specially protected natural areas of the Republic of Belarus (wildlife reserves, national parks and natural monuments) environmental education activities, which can be scientifically substantiated and organised in various forms and types of ecological tourism, are allowed.

State environmental institutions, which tasks include environmental education and organisation of tourist, recreational, health-improving activities, taking into account a number of environmental restrictions, have been created for national park management. Within the category of specially protected natural areas, ecotourism activities are differentiated by functional zones. The recreational zone is intended for recreation, tourism, relaxation and health improvement of citizens. Location of environmental information centers, tourist camps, equipped zones and recreation areas is determined by the management plan developed for each national park or by the decision of local authorities (Suleimenov et al., 2022). It is allowed to equip recreation areas and ecological paths, houses for hunters and fishermen, and environmental information centers within the borders of the regulated use zone. Hunting, fishing and other types of use of the fauna during certain seasons are prohibited in certain parts of this zone. It is possible to conduct scientific and educational excursions along the routes and ecological paths determined by the management plan only accompanied by the employees of the state environmental institution and in compliance with the allowable load standards in the protected area.

Thus, management plans define the location of ecotourism infrastructure - environmental information centers, ecological paths, places for tents and campsites, tourist camps, equipped and recreation areas. The possible number of recreants in each national park, as well as the area that can be anthropogenically transformed into infrastructure facilities, is also scientifically substantiated (Berdenov et al., 2015; Shomanova et al., 2019). The development of ecological tourism including visits to the territory of national parks is also carried out at individual agro-eco-estates, with organization of green routes, ecotourism clusters. Taking into account the diversity and potential of organisational ecotourism forms, the most important task for the development of ecotourism is to create partnerships based on the state environmental institutions and local private initiatives with a joint strategy for sustainable tourism development in the regions (Miyazaki et al., 2011).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The object of the research is the national parks of the Republic of Belarus, which include National Park "Narochansky", National Park "Braslav Lakes", National Park "Belovezhskaya Pushcha", National Park "Pripyatsky", their location is presented on Figure 1. The methodological basis of the research is a systematic scientific approach, comparative geographical, cartographic and expert assessment methods. The research scheme includes a consistent consideration of the territory of the national parks based on the following aspects:

- ecological value: landscape diversity (specific landscapes and rare local landscape complexes), biological diversity (typological diversity of forest vegetation), the area of natural subfossil ecosystems, international statuses assigned to a specially protected natural area;
- ecotourism activities: types of ecotourism determined by the purpose of travel (recreational, educational, scientific), types of ecotourism routes by mode of transportation (walking, cycling, water routes);
- ecotourism infrastructure: equipped eco-paths, environmental information centers, equipped places for tourist camping and other objects of educational ecotourism (arboretums, safari parks), eco-routes with their description have been developed;
- basic tourist infrastructure: stationary accommodation facilities within specially protected natural areas and in a cross-border region;
- geo-information support: official Internet web-sites of the protected areas.

Materials from directories of the protected areas of the Republic of Belarus, large-scale (1:100 000) landscape maps of the national parks, cartographic and reference materials on the official websites of the national parks have been used in the process of carrying out the research.

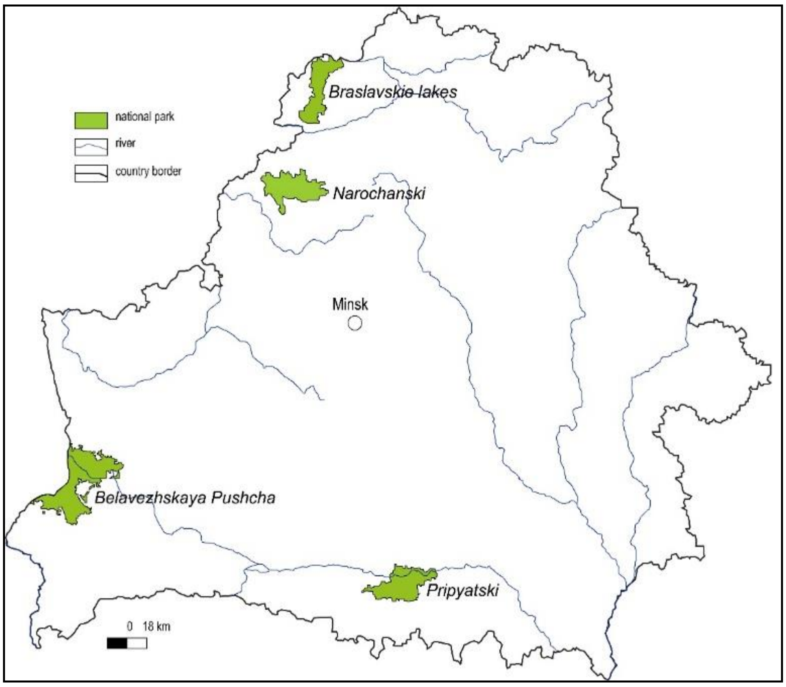

Figure 1. Location of the national parks of Belarus

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Belarussian national parks were created in the 1990s in order to preserve natural complexes as a standard of natural landscapes in various regions of the country, genetic and biological diversity and sustainable nature management in the process of environmental, scientific, educational, tourist, recreational, health-improving activities. Organisation of ecotourism activities in the national parks relies on the resources of the natural complexes and objects that are attractive to tourists, but also depends on the inherited types of nature management that previously existed here, the peculiarities of residential, transport, and economic developed land. National parks "Braslav Lakes"** and "Narochansky"** represent reference landscapes typical for the region of Belarusian Pooserie, the territory of national park "Belovezhskaya Pushcha"** is located on the border of Predpoleskaya and Polessye provinces, and national park "Pripyatsky"** presents typical natural complexes of Polessie region. These regional differences are manifested in the peculiarities of ecological tourism development and in the creation of ecological infrastructure. Landscapes, the morphological appearance of which is determined by the structure of the terminal moraine relief, as well as landscapes formed within the borders of the former large glacial lake basin are widespread in Braslav lakes national park. Lacustrine-glacial, kame-moraine and lacustrine-boggy landscapes are the most expanded (Kovalevskaya et al., 2020). Landscapes formed in the zone of the marginal glacial upland are common and a large area is occupied by the aqueoglacial plain in national park "Narochansky". Therefore hilly-moraine-lacustrine, aqueoglacial landscapes and areas of lacustrine-boggy landscapes are typical for this park (Hahina et al., 2021). The landscape structure of these two national parks is significantly complicated due to the extension of kame hills, esker and eolian ridges, swampy basins, runoff ravines, deeply incised river valleys with an underdeveloped floodplain (Table 1).

Table 1. Landscape features and ecological value of the national parks of Belarus for ecotourism development (Hahina et al., 2020)

Indicators	Braslav lakes	Narochansky	Belovezhskaya Pushcha	Pripyatsky
Characteristic landscapes	kame-morainic, lacustrine-glacial, lacustrine-boggy	hilly-moraine-lacustrine, aqueoglacial	aqueoglacial, lacustrine-alluvial and secondary moraine landscapes and lacustrine-boggy landscapes	alluvial terraced, lacustrine-boggy, inundable
Local landscape complexes	esker ridges, kame hills, eolian ridges, peaty basins	esker and eolian ridges, kame hills, peat basins, hollows	mineral remains, eolian dunes	oxbow lakes, channels, eolian dunes, hollows, basins
Typological diversity of forest vegetation	59 forest types	88 forest types	120 forest types	87 forest types
Area of aquatic ecosystems, %	18.2	17.6	0.5	2.0
Status of the territory of international importance	Territory of importance for birds, key botanical area	Key botanical area	UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, territory of importance for birds, key botanical area, Ramsar site, List of world heritage sites	Territory of importance for birds, key botanical area, Ramsar site

A distinctive feature of national parks "Narochansky" and "Braslav lakes" is a large number and variety of lake reservoirs. There are lakes of dammed, evorsion, hollow, complex types. The considered national parks have the status of Key botanical area. National Park "Braslav Lakes" also has the status of Territory of importance for birds. It is a part of trans-border specially protected natural area "Augshdaugava - Braslav Lakes" (Lithuania - Belarus).

A specific feature of National Park "Belovezhskaya Pushcha" and "Pripyatsky" is high preservation of their natural complexes (over 80% of the territory) and the presence of strict environmental regulations that existed before the declaration of these territories as national parks. National Park "Belovezhskaya Pushcha" is the oldest protected area, the first mention of which dates back to the 15th century, and is the only large forestland of Western European type preserved in its natural state in Europe. Pripyatsky National Park was formed by the reorganization of Pripyatsky state landscape-hydrological reserve, founded in 1969. These national parks have the status of Territory of importance for birds, Key botanical area, and Ramsar site. Besides national park "Belovezhskaya Pushcha" has the status of UNESCO biosphere reserve, and a part of its old-growth forest is included in the List of world heritage sites. Landscape structure of the parks differs significantly from each other. The most common landscapes in national park "Belovezhskaya Pushcha" are aqueoglacial, lacustrine-alluvial, secondary moraine and lacustrine-boggy ones. Alluvial terraced, lacustrine-boggy and inundable landscapes are common in Pripyatsky national park (Hahina et al., 2021). Landscape expressiveness of the territory, lakes, high recreational potential of forests, drainage conditions are natural factors for organization of recreational park areas (Table 2). The share of recreational areas in national parks "Braslav Lakes" and "Belovezhskaya Pushcha" is about 5% of the total area, in national park "Narochansky" it is slightly less – 3.4%, in national park "Pripyatsky" it is considerably reduced to 1.2 %.

Table 2. Functional zones of the national parks of Belarus

Indicators	Braslav lakes	Narochansky	Belovezhskaya Pushcha	Pripyatsky
Total area of the park, ha	64500	87400	153000	88600
Protected area, %	5	8.8	37	35
Recreational area, %	5	3.4	5.1	1.2
Regulated use zone, %	69	64.7	25.4	55
Economic zone, %	21	23.1	32.2	9.1

Ecotourism and basic infrastructure of the national parks is represented by equipped tourist camps, eco-paths, stationary recreation facilities, developed tourist hiking, cycling, water routes, accompanied by descriptions and excursions. There are nature museums, visitor centers, safari parks and other facilities in the parks, which are reflected in Table 3. The development of this or that type of ecotourism is largely determined by the landscape structure of the territory. In national parks "Braslav Lakes" and "Narochansky" kame-morainic, hilly-moraine-lacustrine, aqueoglacial and lacustrine-glacial with eolian hills landscapes in the relief are represented by a combination of moraine ridges and kame hills, complicated by small boggy basins, eolian hills, areas of wavy and hilly aqueoglacial and lacustrine-glacial relief. The natural vegetation cover is represented by pine, spruce-pine, birch forests. There are pine-birch and black alder boggy forests in the hollows. Active development of recreational and educational ecotourism, including active hiking, cycling, and water tourism, is possible for these territories.

Table 3. Development of ecotourism infrastructure and services on the territory of the national parks of Belarus (Source: compiled on the basis of the official websites of the national parks of Belarus)

Indicators	Braslav lakes	Narochansky	Belovezhskaya Pushcha	Pripyatsky
Priority of development of different ecotourism types	recreational, educational, scientific	recreational, educational, scientific	educational, recreational, scientific	educational, recreational, scientific
Types of ecotourism routes, number	cycling, water, walking, combined	walking, cycling, water	walking, cycling	river sightseeing tours, botanical, ornithological multi-day ecotours
Equipped eco-paths, number	3	1	3	-
Other ecotourism sites	safari park "Mekyany"	park of rare plants, arboretum, safari park	animal enclosures, museum of nature, museum of folk life, archaeological museum, "The estate of Belarusian Father Frost"	nature museum, safari park, historical and cultural complex
Equipped tourist camping, number/capacity	27/795	14/1235	3 (holiday resorts)	-
Other basic accommodation facilities, number/total capacity	5/181	11/3149	10/355	5/138
Official websites of the parks	https://braslavpark.by	https://narochpark.by	https://npbp.by	https://www.npp.by

Lacustrine-glacial, flat-hollow, aqueoglacial and lacustrine-boggy landscapes are characterized by a flat, inexpressive relief, often swampy. Spruce forests, large areas of broad-leaved spruce, aspen and birch forests, boggy pine forests are widespread here. Natural and recreational potential of the territory allows to develop educational types of ecological tourism, including the organization of ornithological and botanical tours, bogging (in the zone of regulated nature management). For ecotourism development in Braslav Lakes national park 3 ecological trails have been developed and equipped («Mayak mountain», «Slobodkovskaya os ridge», «Belmont Park»), «Mekyany safari park» has been organized on an area of 1,234.65 hectares, cycling, walking and water eco-routes have been developed. Basic infrastructure includes 5 recreation centers and a fisherman's house with a total capacity of 181 beds (Table 3).

One of the most interesting ecotourism sites representing rare local landscape complexes of the marginal glacial hills is «Slobodkovskaya os ridge» ecological trail in Braslav Lakes national park, which passes through a small-hilly os complex between two lakes. The route includes rare forms of glacial relief, thickets of common juniper, areas of steppificated ground cover, habitats of rare and protected plant species. The length of the trail is 4.6 km and includes 7 stops with information stands, benches, signs. In national park "Narochansky" 1 ecological path is equipped. There is an ecological and educational center, a park of rare plants, a dendrological garden, bicycle routes of various lengths and complexity between tourist stops. The natural complex in the region of Bolduk group of lakes is distinguished by high environmental and recreational value. It is a complex system of kame hills, deep lake basins and esker ridges with pine and spruce-pine forests, areas of oak-spruce and birch forests. A part of its territory is equipped with «Blue Lakes» ecological trail, which is very popular nowadays. Plots of hilly-wavy aqueoglacial landscapes with pine and spruce-pine forests on the coast of Lake Naroch are the most recreationally developed and included in the recreational zone of the park. There is a high potential for the development of ecological recreational tourism, including rest in numerous recreational facilities, large tourist camps. Location of tourist infrastructure in the national park is presented in Figure 2.

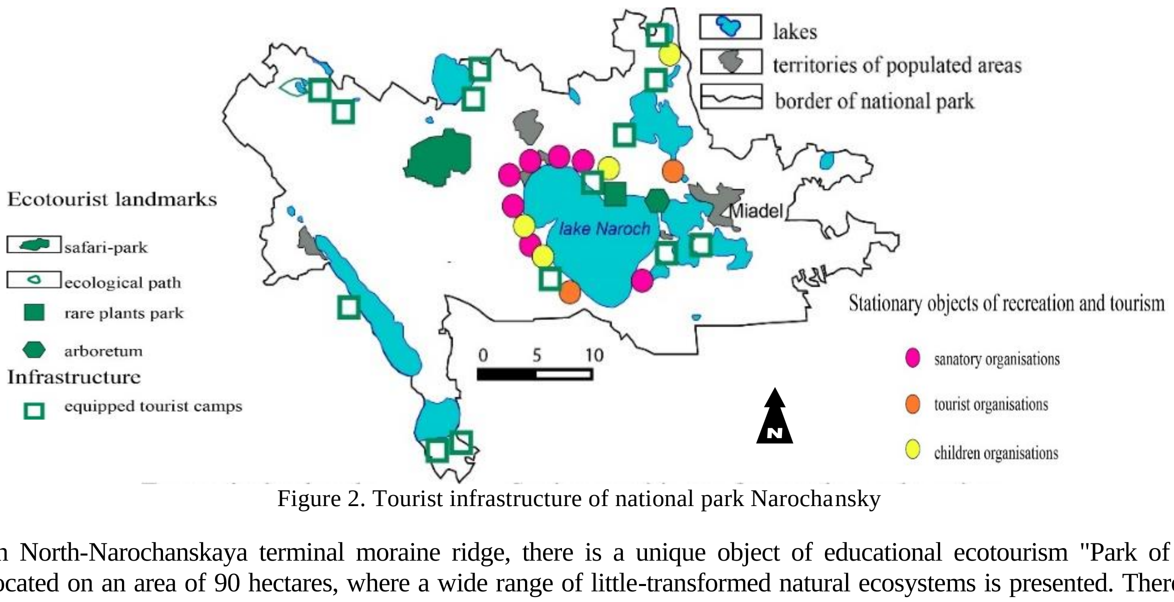

Figure 2. Tourist infrastructure of national park Narochansky

Within North-Narochanskaya terminal moraine ridge, there is a unique object of educational ecotourism "Park of rare plants", located on an area of 90 hectares, where a wide range of little-transformed natural ecosystems is presented. There are coniferous and deciduous forests, steppificated areas with junipers, upland meadows, transitional and lowland swamps in the park of rare plants. 8 species of plants listed in the Red Book of the Republic of Belarus are recorded on the territory. Ecological and educational excursions are organized by the scientific department of the national park scientific ecotourism is being developed with the opportunity to participate in monitoring observations of the state of protected plant species habitats. Numerous Park lakes make it possible to develop various types of water tourism and recreation here, including swimming and beach recreation, water kayaking routes, yachting, scuba diving, water skiing (Shevtsova, 1998). Tourist camps organized on the costs of the lakes are very popular – in Braslav Lakes national park there are 27 camps with a capacity of 795 people, in Narochansky national park – 14 tourist camps and a car camping, with a total capacity of 1235 places. Agro-ecotourism has been developed in these national parks, the services are provided by 65 agro-eco-farmsteads in Narochansky park and 139 agro-farmsteads in Braslav Lakes park. A distinctive feature of Narochansky national park is the presence of the largest resort area in Belarus and good knowledge of the recreational resources of the territory (Yurkevich et al., 1989). There are 11 sanatoriums, resort and health organizations with a total capacity of 3149 beds: 7 health resort organizations for 2030 beds, 2 children's health organizations for 710 beds, 2 tourist and health organizations for 409 beds. All sanatoriums and health organizations are located on the northwestern and western shores of Lake Naroch, which creates high recreational pressure on coastal landscapes and the lake itself. Territories of the sanatoriums are well-organised, equipped for beach and swimming holidays. Visitors of the organisations under consideration can be considered as a potential target group for educational ecotourism of the excursion type. A flow of international inbound tourists is formed by visitors to sanatoriums and healthcare resorts.

A different strategy for ecological tourism development has been formed in the southern parks of the country, which are characterized by less residentially developed territories. Natural potential of "Belovezhskaya Pushcha" national park focuses on the development of cognitive and scientific ecotourism, including international one. Aqueoglacial landscapes with hilly-wavy, rolling relief, where many eolian forms have been preserved, are quite widespread here. The vegetation cover is presented by pine and broad-leaved-spruce-pine forests. Areas of secondary moraine landscapes with complex old-aged broad-leaved and broad-leaved-spruce-pine forests that grow on the remnants of moraine ridges are of particular interest for scientific and educational ecotourism. Lacustrine-alluvial landscapes with flat relief are significantly waterlogged, there are mineral islands, eolian ridges among the marshes. The vegetation is presented by pine, broad-leaved-pine, broad-leaved-black alder forests, swamp pine-birch, black alder and fluffy-birch forests, there are areas of sedge and sedge-grass-sphagnum bogs. As well as in other swamp areas, it is possible to organize cognitive biological ecotours and bogging here.

National park "Belovezhskaya Pushcha" has the largest museum of nature in Belarus, which is visited annually by up to 150 thousand people. You can get acquainted with traditions, customs, beliefs and everyday life of Pushcha indigenous population in the museum of folk life and ancient technologies. An open-air archaeological museum and animal enclosures have been opened in the national park. The area of the enclosures with wild animals is 20 hectares. Tourists of the national park can see a bison, deer and roe deer, lynx, bear, fox, some species of birds of prey, among which the largest owl – the eagle owl attracts close attention. The enclosures contain some animals brought to the territory of Belarus: spotted deer, raccoon dog, etc. A new ecological tour "Photo-safari" has been developed here, the route of which runs along traditional places for scientific research and breeding of ungulates. During a photo safari, tourists have the opportunity to see wild animals in their natural habitat. Tourist infrastructure includes 2 hotel complexes, 2 hotels, 2 guest houses, guest rooms of 4 forestries, 3 equipped recreation areas. Natural potential of "Belovezhskaya Pushcha" national park for the development of mass recreational ecotourism is less obvious in comparison with the national parks of Belarusian Pooserie. The most popular place of mass recreational tourism is tourist site "The Estate of Belarusian Father Frost".

Landscape features of Pripyatsky national park determine educational ecotourism as its priority. Floodplain landscapes of the park have complex and mosaic structure. Natural vegetative cover of near-river flat floodplains with channels, old rivers, small ridges is represented by flooded grass-sedge meadows, oaks on edges and areas of black alder forests in lowlands. Alluvial terraced poorly drained flat and flat hilly landscapes are represented by two terraces above the floodplain of the Pripyat River with broad-leaved pine forests, areas of oak forests, black alder forests, and lowland swamps. Lacustrine-boggy landscapes in the form of several large high and transitional bogs are located in the central part of the park. Pine forests typical of aqueoglacial landscapes with eolian dunes are stretching in a narrow strip along the southern border of the park.

High preservation, diversity and inaccessibility of the natural complexes of Pripyatsky national park determine the priority of developing here unique tourist offers in the field of educational ecotourism. For international ecotourism development a program has been created to promote the park to the European market. The national park staff provide botanical tours as well as bird-watching tours with guaranteed species observation of five, seven and ten days. You can see 120-140 species of birds in the spring, during a ten-day tour. Rare species of birds that do not nest in Western Europe – the great spotted eagle, the great gray owl are particularly attractive to Western European ornithological tourists. Each ecotourist is provided with a tour program, brochures about the park, information on populations and ecology of rare species. Water, walking, automobile routes, view towers are used for ecological tours, shelters for photo hunting are equipped there.

A boat tour along Pripyat is popular and fee-paying amateur fishing is organized there. The park has a museum of nature, an open-air historical and cultural complex, and a demonstration platform of the safari park. An interesting object of ecological and educational tourism is the first safari park or park of wild animals in Belarus. It is an enclosure with an area of 4716 hectares, designed to keep a significant number of wild ungulates. It is organised like hunting ranches in various countries of the world. A bison, elk, deer, wild boar, roe deer, European fallow deer live in the safari park.

Ecological routes with a length of 32 kilometers have been laid through the safari park. The routes are convenient for observing both wild ungulates and diurnal birds of prey: white-tailed eagle, field harrier, Montagu's harrier, as well as various types of ducks and waders in reservoirs. Tourist infrastructure includes 2 hotels, a cottage, a tourist complex with a total capacity of 138 beds. Accommodation facilities are scattered throughout the whole national park. High tourist potential of the national park attracts tourists from various countries. In 2011, over 10,000 people visited the park for various purposes.

CONCLUSION

The development of ecotourism activities in national parks should be consistent with the goals of preserving reference natural landscapes, genetic and biological diversity, and sustainable nature management. It is recommended to take into account environmental value and structure of natural landscapes, natural and recreational resources that determine the priority areas of ecotourism, as well as ecotourism and basic tourism infrastructure, information support when studying ecological tourism development in national parks.

A comparative analysis of ecotourism development in the national parks of Belarus has revealed the differentiation of priority areas for ecotourism development, largely related to the structure and preservation of natural landscapes. In national parks "Belovezhskaya Pushcha" and "Pripyatsky" there are natural areas in the central parts, and rural settlements on the outskirts, which contributes to the development of educational ecotourism. In national parks "Braslav Lakes" and "Narochansky" the attractiveness of landscapes, the high lake potential, the developed ecotourism and basic infrastructure contribute to the priority development of recreational ecotourism.

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ECOTOURISM MANAGEMENT BASED ON LOCAL WISDOM FOR OPTIMIZING THE FUNCTION OF CAVE WATER RESOURCES AS A PREVENTION OF FLOODS AND DROUGHTS IN WAKATOBI REGENCY, INDONESIA

MARLINA*
Universitas Negeri Malang, Faculty of Social Science, Geography Department, Indonesia, e-mail: marlinamalaia@gmail.com

SUMARMI
Universitas Negeri Malang, Faculty of Social Science, Geography Department, Indonesia, e-mail: sumarmi.fis@um.ac.id

I Komang ASTINA
Universitas Negeri Malang, Faculty of Social Science, Geography Department, Indonesia, e-mail: komang.astina.fis@um.ac.id

Dwiyono Hari UTOMO
Universitas Negeri Malang, Faculty of Social Science, Geography Department, Indonesia, e-mail: dwiyonohariutomo@gmail.com

Elya KURNIAWATI
Universitas Negeri Malang, Faculty of Social Science, Sociology Department, Indonesia, e-mail: elya.kurniawati.fis@um.ac.id

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Abstract: The basis of local wisdom is an effort to preserve the environment in line with the main goal of developing ecotourism. Successful ecotourism management can optimize the function of the existence of natural resources. The purpose of this study was to examine the local wisdom of the community in ecotourism management to optimize the function of cave water as a prevention of flooding and drought in urban strategic areas. The research method uses descriptive qualitative by digging information through in-depth interviews with traditional leaders, relevant government, community and visitors to water caves. SWOT analysis in this study is used to determine the management of water resources and to plan the development of sustainable ecotourism as an alternative to managing the potential and conservation of cave water. Checking the validity of the data using a triagulation model. The results of the study show that there are three forms of community local wisdom regarding cave water conservation, namely: (1) *Ufe Karia*, (2) *Imaeka*, and (3) *Sala piara* (mistake of care). Should either intentionally or unintentionally have disturbed the existence of cave water. The cave water functions as a natural infiltration well that is able to accommodate large amounts of rain water with a concentrated flow pattern at the cave water point. Meanwhile, other cave water points are the main raw water sources to meet the domestic needs of the community with stable water discharge and never dry. The results of the SWOT analysis show that cave water has the potential to be developed into ecotourism so conserve water resources as a prevention of floods and droughts on Wangi-Wangi Island.

Key words: Ecotourism management, Local wisdom, Cave water resources, Prevention of floods and droughts

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INTODUCTION

The potential of natural resources and the use of nature by the community are the main assets for sustainable tourism development. Applying the ecotourism concept is a tourism strategy that focuses on environmental sustainability by maximizing nature's potential as the main product. Therefore, analyzing the potential of available natural resources is the first step that can be taken to achieve the desired goals. The fact that Wakatobi Regency's marine source is undeniable is reflected in the wealth that has been recorded. Wakatobi Regency has a great potential in marine resources, offered as the leading tourism product of the island. Marine tourism is the main sector developed through community-based management integrated with the ecotourism concept (Al Dilwan and Astina, 2019). Besides having great marine potential, the land area on Wakatobi Island also plays a significant role. Based on geographic location, the natural resources in Wakatobi Regency is very diverse, not limited under the sea. Geodiversity on the mainland also needs to be developed as ecotourism to achieve equal welfare for the community with caving ecotourism activities, but the development needed to be explored (Haryono et al., 2014).

The tourism in Wakatobi Regency still has weaknesses, namely the low level of community participation in ecotourism management due to the disclosure of information related to ecotourism development, weak coordination and communication between stakeholders, the lack of public knowledge about ecotourism, and political dynamics among locals. The lack of land potential studies needed to examine the natural resources of Wakatobi, especially the land potential.

* Corresponding author

The resources can benefit mainland tourism development based on community empowerment (Hamid, 2010). The district government of Wakatobi seems to be more focused on maritime potential, not on land potential. It is shown on the 2012-2032 Wakatobi Regency spatial plan, only aimed to realize the district spatial layout by optimizing marine-based natural resources. The spatial management of Wakatobi Regency that tended only on the potential maritime causes the need to re-examine the land potential to become a tourism area on Wangi-Wangi Island to be developed for sustainable ecotourism. The tourism development of Wakatobi Regency has been focused on marine resources, raises challenges in exposing that area. This research was conducted because the studies on the ecotourism potential were still limited, especially in Wangi-Wangi Island. One of the land potentials in Wakatobi Regency is the caves with rich water resources used by the surrounding community for daily water needs. Also, the utilization for a long time has fostered a tradition that was born in society. This study contributed to knowledge about cave water resources on Wangi-Wangi Island to be developed for sustainable ecotourism. Wakatobi community interaction with the surrounding environment creates local wisdom and culture. Adaptation ability to the environment forms a cultural setting that is not easy to change. The community's cultural identity, resource availability, and the threat of natural disasters are the primary reasons for humans to maintain the environment. Environmental conservation is essentially a system of mutual relationships. The available natural potential is used by humans to sustain life, on the other hand conservation awareness is an effort to keep the environment sustainable. Humans contribute to sustainability by establishing a local community knowledge system. Mentions that local wisdom is highly influenced by local values such as the conservation principles, management and exploitation of natural resources carried out by social groups (Masita, 2012). Local wisdom contains good values about the preservation of natural resources needed to maintain sustainability. Local wisdom supports a lot of nature conservation programs. According to Zamroni (2013) the local wisdom foundation can use as a basis for innovation in disaster management by community.

Creating a sustainable environment can help to prevent natural disasters. Maryani and Yani (2016) suggest that nature conservation to prevent natural disasters are disaster mitigation efforts. Natural disasters continue to occur frequently and are difficult to control. Disasters come in various of forms and result in property loss and even fatalities. Floods and droughts are unresolved problems in areas with climate deviation. Floods and droughts continue to be a problem in several areas of Indonesia. According to Kastolani and Mainaki (2018), Indonesia is a tropical country with high rainfall and irradiation, making it extremely prone to disasters such as drought, tropical storms, and floods. In general, flooding occurs when the water volume in a river exceeds the channel capacity (Adi Seno, 2013). However, an extended drought season can result in a drought disaster. Due to the vulnerability of hydrometeorological disasters that threaten areas of Indonesia, disaster mitigation actions are necessary. Various types of activities aimed at disaster mitigation can be conducted structurally or non-structurally. Flood disaster mitigation strategies that included in the structural category may also include regenerating the drainage system, normalizing rivers, constructing reservoirs, and absorption wells (Prasetyo, 2019).

Natural disasters caused by hydrometeorology are essentially uncontrollable by human understanding and technology. Meanwhile, the nature has been designed in such a way to try to recover itself. In other locations, disaster mitigation is performed through structural methods, but in Wakatobi Regency, disaster mitigation occurs naturally because of cave water supplies. Water caves located around Wangi-Wangi Island are unique potentials. This island is not only used as a natural bathing location, but also serves a critical mitigation function that should be fully investigated.

In Wakatobi Regency, there are several cave waters located in urban areas, namely *Ufe Kontamale* cave water, *Ufe Te'ekosapi* cave water, *Ufe Topa Wanci* cave water, *Ufe Lesa'a* cave water, *Ufe Endapo* cave water, *Lia Bete* cave water, *Te'e Ea'a* cave, *Te'eponu* cave water, and *Topa Mandati* cave water. According to inital observations, the community used cave water resources as a public bath, washing clothes, and raw water resource for household water needs controlled by regional water companies. Furthermore, the cave water serves as an indirect flood control mechanism in the capital urban districts. While cave water in urban areas serves the community as water source, it has a negative impact on cave water conservation due to the area's increasing population growth. Besides served as a flood and drought disaster mitigation method, conservation of cave water resources is necessary to encourage researchers to conduct disaster mitigation studies based on local cultures. This study aimed to explain the local wisdom of the Wanci and Mandati indigenous peoples regarding the preservation of cave water resources to prevent floods and droughts and sustainable ecotourism in the Wangi-Wangi Island area, Wakatobi Regency.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The studies in modern tourism focus a lot on the sociological factors of tourism activities and the environmental effects of tourism development. Thus, tourism is considered a social phenomenon with real ecological impacts. However, those view is very common because tourism can not be work without a valuable resource base, and natural resources are often important for tourism development in a particular region. Natural resources play a key role in tourism and tourism activities as the main instrument in community economic development (Fredman et al., 2012; Ijeomah et al., 2011; Firdaus et al., 2019; Sumarmi et al., 2020). One of the tourism concepts that can reduce environmental impact is ecotourism.

Ecotourism is a tourism practice that prioritizes sustainability aspects and environmental economic value. Stated that the tourism industry provides a huge contribution to the local economy (Nutsugbodo et al., 2020). Ecotourism is best applied in natural and rural areas, including the local community culture (Yilmaz, 2011). Ecotourism is the solution to humanity's problems with the environment, poverty, climate change, and human efforts to promote a more sustainable tourism industry (Zeppel, 2012). Understanding the importance of natural resource conservation, environmental education, and local communities' welfare, ecotourism is increasingly being raised as a recommended solution. Many countries make massive ecotourism promotions and attractions to get the benefits and opportunities in the ecotourism market. Ecotourism has been recognized as a core component of the sustainable development agenda due to its ability to promote the three primary principles of environmental protection, economic development, and community development (Cobbinah et al., 2015). Kunjuraman and Aziz (2019) also stated that diversifying income sources for community livelihoods, maintaining the community's cultural authenticity, restoring degraded forest environments, and developing communities are the surest ways to optimize the benefits of ecotourism projects. Ecotourism studies in Indonesia can be approached from the perspective of the overall performance of the national park (TN). One of the fast-growing ecotourism destination areas in Indonesia is placed in Wakatobi National Park, Southeast Sulawesi. Wakatobi Regency holds two positions: a conservation area and a tourism area for contribute to the local economy (Marlina et al., 2021). The results were obtained from diving and research services, foreign operators, adventure tourism, and the local economy. Based on the tourist visits in 2015-2020, tourism in Wakatobi Regency tended to be stable, which remained flat. The following table 1 showed the number of tourism visits in Wakatobi Regency for 2015-2020. For more details, the increase in tourist visits to Wakatobi can be seen in Figure 1 on the graph of the number of local and international tourist visits in 2020.

Table 1. The tourist visits in Wakatobi Regency for 2015-2020 (Source: Wakatobi Regency Government, Tourism Office)

Year	Visits		Total
	Local Tourists	International Tourists	
2015	11.401	6.626	18.027
2016	14.560	7.820	22.380
2017	20.419	7.020	27.439
2018	22.411	6.997	29.408
2019	23.093	5.764	28.857
2020	3.096	415	3511

Figure 1. The graph of tourist visits in Wakatobi Regency for 2015-2020

Based on Figure 1, the tourist visits in Wakatobi Regency have increased continuously from 2015-2019, but then drastically decreased in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The data of tourist visits were obtained from the number of visits to hotels and inns in Wakatobi Regency. In accordance with the main objective of ecotourism as an effort to preserve natural resources, it is directly an effort to optimize the function of the existence of natural resources. The physical existence of cave water resources is an area that is naturally able to prevent natural disasters such as floods and droughts. Plus the support of local wisdom in management is a strategic step that can be taken to optimize environmental management. Environmental studies based on local wisdom become more important. Culture is defined as the ability to use human intelligence to act wisely on the environment. Local wisdom is frequently conceptualized in foreign languages as local wisdom, local knowledge, or local genius. Local wisdom is defined by the local community as a wise way of using natural resources that is based on good principles and agreed by the all community members. Local wisdom is defined as the wisdom or understanding that results through community adaptation processes to the environment.

Local wisdom is formed from the traditions and practices of the community for generations. The truth of a local wisdom is a cultural legacy that has been believed and lived by every community (Gadeng et al., 2018). Umin (2019) stated local wisdom as a personality, cultural identity of the community in the form of values, norms, ethics, beliefs, customs, and special rules accepted by the community. Understanding the values of local wisdom is very important as a reference in responding to the challenges of natural resource conservation in an area (As'ari and Hendriawan, 2016; Marlina et al., 2020). Herawati and Kartini (2019) emphasized that local wisdoms and the values including in it can be used to help in disaster management. Wikantiyoso (2010) emphasized that local communities generally have local knowledge and ecological wisdom in predicting and mitigating natural disasters in surronding area.

METHODOLOGY

Wakatobi Regency is located in Southeast Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. Wakatobi Regency is an archipelago district. Wakatobi is an acronym for the four major islands, Wangi-wangi, Kaledupan, Tomia, and Binongko. Astronomically, Wakatobi Regency is located in the southern hemisphere, extending north to south between 5,000 and 6,250 south latitude (160 kilometers) and west to east between 123,340 and 124,640 east longitude (120 kilometers). Wakatobi capital city is located on Wangi-Wangi Island, the main island with a larger population than the other three islands.

Wakatobi Regency has a lot of cave water, and in Wangi-Wangi Island's urban area, cave waters are spread across community settlements. Communities in the surrounding of the cave water area have easy access to clean drinking water. In general, the Wangi-Wangi Island area is a reef rock with a high density. Morphologically, the mainland area of Wangi-Wangi Island has an altitude below 500 meters above sea level (masl) and is located around the equator, so this area has a tropical climate. This research is a qualitative descriptive study that use an inductive approach to explain research problems regarding the effectiveness of mitigation planning. An inductive method draws conclusions from a particular situation (the location of the topic under review) to make ideas more general and applicable to other fields.

The methodology used is a review of the literature and field research. Qualitative research approaches include field observation and in-depth interviews. Secondary data used in this study is population data and rainfall data from Meteorological, Climatological, and Geophysical Agency (BMKG). Qualitative analysis was used in this study to determine: (1) by conducting in-depth interviews with traditional leaders, communities in the area, and visitors to water caves to evaluate the local wisdom for preventing cave water resources; (2) by analyzing the community's role in cave water resource management. The data analysis used a triangulation methodology to determine the local wisdom of the Wanci and Mandati peoples on Wangi-Wangi Island. For more details, the research location can be seen in Figure 2.

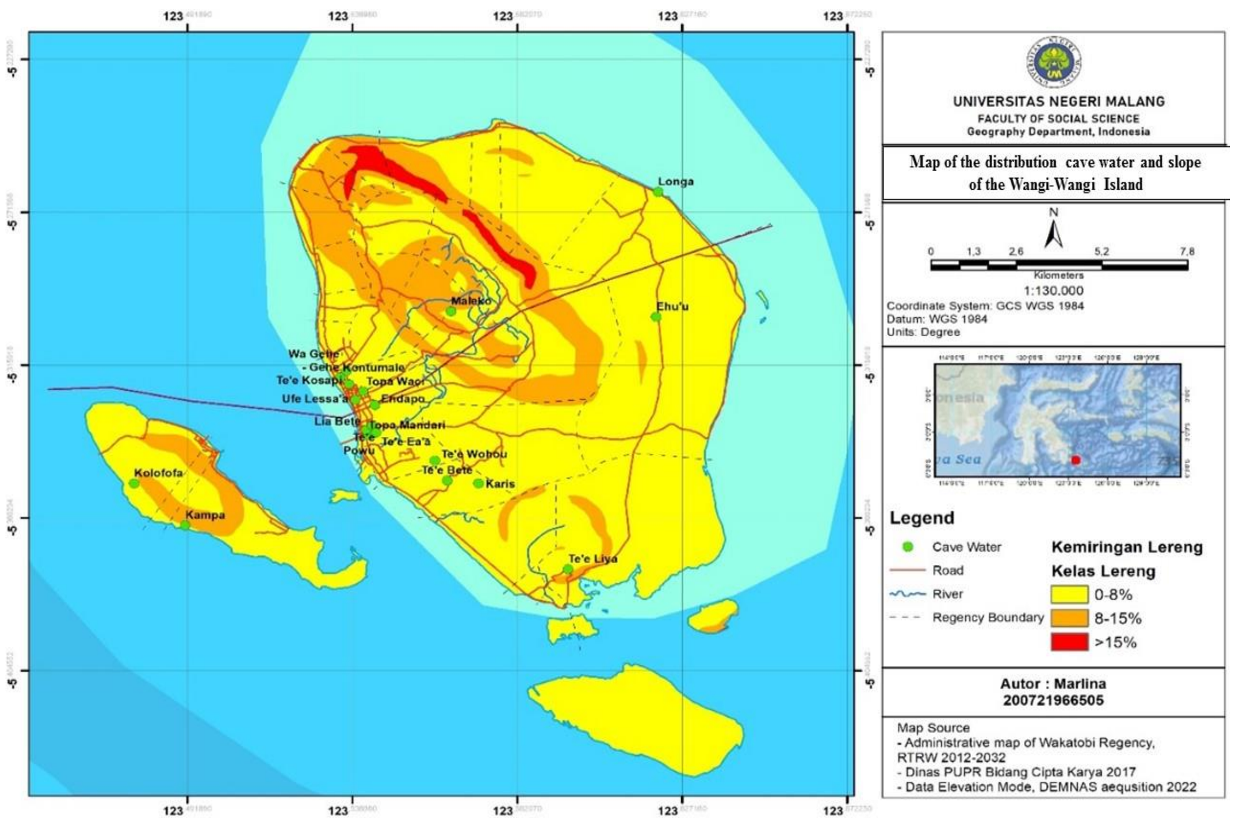

Figure 2. Wangi-Wangi Island distribution cave water and slope classification map (Source of research, 2021)

Data Collection Method

The research used descriptive methods with quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques. The data used in this study are primary data and secondary data. Primary data collection was carried out by interview, observation, and focus group discussions (FGD) with village and sub-district administrators and managers. Interviews were conducted with visitors, local communities. Secondary data were obtained from government agencies, institutions, and the community. Researchers are used as an instrument of data collection at the research location. In this study, the researcher described the study results as an impartial third person and reported the result and observed from the participants. The researchers conducted valid and accountable data collection in three stages:

1. In-depth interviews. The interview was used by asking the questions directly to the informants. The interviews conducted are unstructured interviews aimed at the questions being flexible, more open but still following the signs that have been made to obtain information in-depth.

2. Participant observation is data collection by observing and recording carefully and systematically. Direct observation made by researchers aimed to observe and record information on cave water resources.

3. Observation of cave water resources was carried out to observe the potential resources and then analyzed with SWOT analysis.

4. Documenting and enhancing information found by examining data sources from current field records.

Data analysis

Researchers used a SWOT analysis followed by the Analysis Hierarchy Process (AHP) to identify cave water resources. A ready-to-eat market around the cave water area, with traditional special snacks on offer, is an alternative policy for sustainable ecotourism development and improving the local economy that the government has planned. The research area is located in two sub-districts, namely Wangi-Wangi District and South Wangi-Wangi District, with ten caves water resources in the strategic urban area of Wangi-Wangi Island, Wakatobi Regency. The topography of Wangi-Wangi Island is at an altitude of 0-200 meters above sea level, with a relatively flat land surface. Overall, Wangi-Wangi Island is a low-lying coastal area with an altitude of 0-200 masl. The land use of Wangi-Wangi Island is varied, consisting of scrublands, forests, airport areas, gardens, mangroves, grasslands, residential houses, and farming. The research location map is shown in the following Figure 3. The analysis method used by researchers is by using the SWOT method. According to Oka A. Yoeti (1996), the SWOT analysis method consisting of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.

a. Strength, namely the strength that tourism has.

b. Weakness, namely all factors that not beneficial to the tourism sector.

c. Opportunities, namely all opportunities that exist as government policies, applicable regulations, or national or global economic conditions that considered to provide opportunities for tourism to grow and develop in the future.

d. Threats, namely all factors that could threaten the development of tourism in Wakatobi regency.

The SWOT formula used in this research showed in the following Table 2.

Table 2. SWOT Matrix (Source: Damanik et al., 2006)

Internal Audit / External Environment	Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	SO	WO
Threatscc	ST	WT

Explanation:
SO: maximize strength to increase opportunities
ST: maximize strength to anticipate threats and to create opportunities
WO: minimize weakness to increase opportunities
WT: minimizing weakness to anticipate threats

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Characteristics and utilization of cave water in Wangi-Wangi Island

The cave water resources in Wangi-Wangi Island are gravitational water sources, which the water level of the cave is higher at high tide and falls at low tide. The source of cave water comes from groundwater, with a stable amount of water discharged during the dry and rainy seasons. As the climate changes, the clarity of the cave water changes slightly during the rainy season because it is influenced by rainwater flowing into the cave water, which is in a lower condition than the surrounding land conditions. The cave water area of Wangi-Wangi Island is an area of alluvium rock, and sediment, and limestone, which originated from frozen breakthroughs of Holocene, meosin and pleosine coral formations. In general, the Wangi-Wangi Island area is a high-density coral rock. The mainland area of Wangi-Wangi Island is below 500 meters above sea level (masl) and is around the equator, so this area has a tropical climate. The physical distribution of cave water appears to be very clear. The depth of the lowest cave water is 1.5 meters, to the deepest is about 2.5 meters. Based on the observation that the cave water area has a different appearance, some are very closed so that some of the cave water does not get sunlight, while at some other place, the condition of the cave water is fully open. The largest cave water area is *Ufe Kontamale* cave water, the most favorite natural bathing area. The cave water is almost always crowded with people for tours or washing clothes. The water caves studied were covered by ten water caves, namely *Ufe Kontamale* cave water, *Ufe Te'ekosapi* cave water, *Ufe Topa Wanci* cave water, *Ufe Lesa'a* cave water, *Ufe Endapo* cave water, *Lia Bete* cave water, *Te'e Ea'a* cave water, *Te'eponu* cave water, and *Topa Mandati* cave water. The water caves are located in the strategic urban area in the capital. Because it is placed in the center of residential areas, so it is very easy for the community to use it. The community can easily access cave water for daily water needs. To clarify the potential beauty of cave water resources can be seen in Figure 3.

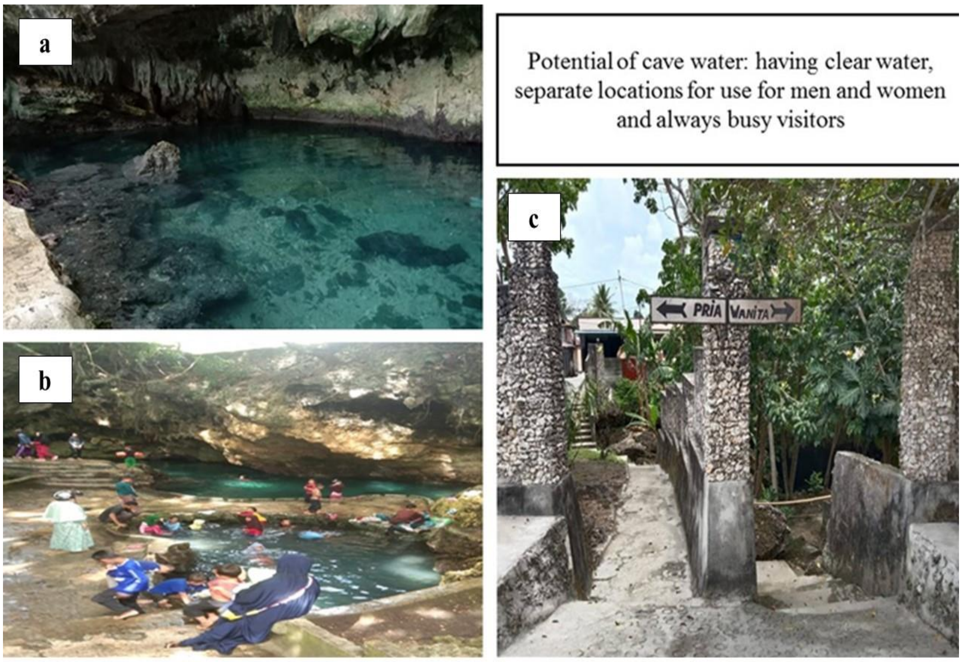

Figure 3. Potential of cave water in Wangi-Wangi Island in the picture (a) the physical condition of the *Kontamale cave water* (b) The atmosphere of the cave water is visited by many people (c) The outside view of the *Topa Wanci* cave water (Source of research, 2021)

2. Types of community local wisdom

An unwritten rule that cave water is essential to the community's well-being develops a conservative attitude that is still widely accepted. Cave water is a source of living water provided by God to supply the island's water demands. The use of cave water supports a unique conservative culture that reflects good values for sustainable cave water management. Sumarmi et al. (2020) stated that behavior in response to the environment is influenced by the community local wisdom. Wanci and Mandati indigenous people, particularly those who lived alongside the cave water, still maintain to the traditions and values of their predecessors, as seen by the community's loyalty to existing local wisdom. The local wisdom that are still preserved by the community are as follows:

a. *Ufe Karia* (Traditional water)

Ufe Karia interprets as traditional water; *ufe* means water, and *karia* refers to a tradition of converting every child to Islam on a large scale in Wakatobi Island. *Ufe Karia* is a method of water management that has been used for centuries to support traditional need. The use of cave water in *Ufe Karia* is a stage in the ancient procession of the Karian tradition, which began with the discovery of cave water. This tradition is carried out in the months of Shawwal, Zulhijah, Safar and Sa'ban in the Hijri year (Islamic Year). *Ufe Karia*, which means "convert to Islam" in the local dialect, is the first of a series of traditional processions that should be preserved. The results showed that at least four required traditions depend on cave water supply traditional requirements, namely: (1) *Ufe Karia Mbo'u Mbo'u*, (2) *Ufe Karia Ntooge/Hoporuku*, (3) *Ufe*

Heraha Kuni and (4) *Ufe Kafi* (Wedding traditional water) (Marlina et al., 2022). The whole tradition has different meaning. The community believes that cave water is highly beneficial for healing, bringing blessings and health, wealth, and soul calmness. The use of cave water for "Ufe Karia" in particular reflects the local community's conservative behavior in preserving the cave's culture, rituals, and water resources. Traditional practices of the Wakatobi community are intended to purify, protect, and Islamize Wakatobi children so that they are prepared to serve their religion, country, and state. The community believes in the benefits of cave water as a result of historical traditions about the arrival of a princess or an angel who bathed in Lesa'a cave water. Interview with traditional leader stated that:

"Jari dimolengo no gaa'a kae te mansuana mai ane ke putri te bijajari no hesofui di ufe Lesa'a iso. Jari no hesofui iso aneke mia umita a mina di atu ai te ufe iso gara no piri sae emo kua ake te jari hekombi, te pa lalesa numaho, gara to dahani emo na guna nu ufe iso jari apa menae ufe iso no pakili torusu e." it menas "Lesa'a cave water has long been thought to have therapeutic characteristics and to magnify the human spirit, according to the stories of a princess or angel who bathed in the water and was seen by the public. As a result, the water is always kept clean" (Interview with Traditional Leaders, 2021).

The Wanci and Mandati indigenous peoples use a specifically selected child to harvest water from the *Lesa'a* and *Lia Bete* caves following traditional rules, namely *Kanalako/Impi Ufe*. Water intake is started by placing the dish in a betel leaf stuffed with gambier, tobacco, lime, and areca nut on a banana leaf plate. The dish is then placed on a rock around the cave water. The child then pulls water on the right using a water storage container (kettle), and after the water is completely filled, the child brings it to the location of the Karia Ritual. The taboo in the process of taking water is not making a sound and not being allowed to respond even if a question is asked on the route to the destination. Mandatory use of *Lesa'a* and *Lia Bete* cave water because they believe in the efficacy of cave water as a healer and repellant to evil. *Lesa'a* refers as soul freedom or heart spaciousness. Drinking and bathing in cave water can help heal and maintain good health. People are aware that maintaining sustainable cave water is critical. If the water is constantly pure, it can also be beneficial to the community.

b. *Imaeka* (Feared)

Human interaction with the environment has the potential to have an effect on the knowledge system and behavioral patterns in life. Local wisdom is a type of intelligence/knowledge or way of life expressed through the activities of local communities (custom, religion, science, economy, communication, and art) to maintain, improve, and develop aspects of their needs while responding to the ecosystem and human resources (Marfa'i, 2012). The responsibility to preserve the environment cannot be separated from the local community's trust. *Imaeka*, which interprets as being terrified in the water, is one form of popular belief in cave water. Imaeka (Feared) is a creature that is visible to the bare sight but is widely believed to exist by the community. Imaeka manifests as Sa'a (Snake), Fulelu (Big Snake), Imbu (Octopus), and Onitu in each waterbody (Guardian Jin). Interview with the community member stated that: *"Sabaene'e na ufe ane ketunggu no, te tunggu ato te jumagae iso an eke sa'a, e imbu, te onitu fane ahu atu, koru o giu, te kita ana topirisae ae mou yako to ita kua toka temanusana mai no elo kua bara di mingku sapoilu miu karena maka nu daolaro na mia jumagae."it means*

"Even though we can not see them, we believe that the water in every cave is protected by creatures like snakes, octopuses, and even people who seem like light. Our parent said to do not do anything reckless in the cave water, and don't get the guardian upset" (Interview with Traditional Leaders, 2021).

The public's belief about feared guards in cave water makes people afraid to let the cave water in a dirty and unmaintained condition. Although the Wakatobi Regency Hygiene Service had previously avoided working in the cave water region, the community worked cooperatively to clean the cave water area every Sunday. The fear of disasters and tragedies that threaten the area motivates complete cleanup activities. The threat starts with the stories of previous generations, which are then passed down to the new generation. Interview with traditional leader stated that:

"Jari paraba'a nu tula-tula mansuana mai kua di ufe iso ane ke sa'a mina di Loba La Honiki, te loba iso no posambu kua ufe topa ana apa te'e kapaa iso, Te loba iso no ido api e te kau pepungo ane eke sa'a no repe'e tee aaka nu kaau. Jari te Sa'a iso no elo kua ara kaluara di junia ana ku tomolo te togo saba'e". It means "A giant tree (Pepungo) provided support for the cave water, according to the parents' legend, and the tree roots constricted the snake underneath. The cave was connected to the water from the Topa Wanci cave to *Te'ekapa*. Snake then claimed that if he left the world, he would swallow an island." (Interview with Traditional Leaders, May 2021). Because of the dangers that could arise if the cave water is not managed, the area is kept clean. The community considers *Imaeka* a real thing and the threat will also become a reality. The proof showed that the cave water is always in a sustainable state, and that the trees surrounding the region have never been damaged by the evil hands of humans. Furthermore, there is a genuine conservation awareness in the concept that water cannot be disturbed or damaged at specific times. *Kontamale* cave will be closed down on Fridays since locals believe that an *imbu* (octopus) called *Imaeka* will play drums in the water, and the sound will be heard by the people. People will choose not to use cave water at that time. Interview with the community member stated that: *"Saga'a ara olo juma'a maka ane te rodongo te rambi nu ganda imbu, Teiso mo na di maeka nu mia kene topiri sae'a antaeda ufe iso ane ke loba to'oge jari tantomo ane ke kadadi umidho kene no jaga mot e ifo iso"*.it means "On Fridays, sometimes we hear the sound of drums being played by Imbu (Octopus). That's what people are afraid of, hence why they think there's a guard in the cave. People belive that this cave must be habitat to several species of animals" (Interview with Traditional Leaders, 2021).

Imaeka, the community's local wisdom, teaches about conservation and wise use of cave resources. Fear of *Imaeka* becomes a particular taboo against society's values and norms. In addition, the existence of imaeka forms social regulations that apply to the use of water to separate its use according to gender. It has been a long time since these special rules apply and are obeyed by the community. The community has quite unique rules, namely regulating special areas for women and special water for men, these rules apply to water points with physical conditions of scattered cave water. This arrangement grew on the basis of the community's belief that mixing between men and women is considered to violate norms and customs. Based on the community belief, it is done that placing men and women in one place is against local customs and norms. The community put the faith to keep the rules. The separation for bathing place is for safety, peace, and comfort. This regulation follows religious values and has become the way of life for the Wanci and Mandati society. The rules did not work for caves with open water resources and had only one pool of water. It can be different in each cave, according to the conditions of the area, such as *Kontamale*, *Tekosapi*, *Te'ea*, *Ufe Lesa'a*, and *Topa Mandati* cave water which have a public bathing place. Apart from being used as a public bathing place, people also use cave water for washing clothes. The activity of washing together has become a habit for the community. This activity is popular because people can chat, exchange information, or discuss so that washing activities become more enjoyable. Besides, washing in the cave is considered energy saving. The community feels more significant benefits from this activity than washing at home because they have to draw water first or use electricity for pumps and washing machines. More clearly about community activities in the use of cave water can be seen in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Community activities on the potential of cave water resources in the picture consist of: (a) Community activities in *Te'e Aa'a* cave water (b) Community activities in *Te'e Kosapi* cave water (c) Community activities in *Topa Wanci* cave water for men –male (d) Community activities in *Topa Wanci* cave water for women (Source of research, 2021)

c. *Sala Piara* (Miscarried)

Another local wisdom about cave water is *Sala Piara* (miscarried). *Sala Piara* comes from two words *Sala* means wrong and *Piara* means to carry. *Sala piara* is interpreted as a form of action that is not carried out because it is not in accordance with what should be either intentionally or unintentionally disturbing the existence of *Imaeka*. *Sala Piara* can develop because visitors to the cave water area disrespect nature and the cave water, conduct immoral behavior in the cave water area, and throw waste. The community believes that when *Sala Piara* activities are carried out, the consequences given can be extremely dangerous, causing visitors to become ill or even lose their lives. Interview with traditional leader stated that:

"Koru'o natu namia fila manga-manga di Ufe Kontamale iso toka nu molinga e na dafu nu imaeka iso jari no sala piara mo, saga'a natu no moho, tei meri ako iso hempia mo na mia molomo di ufe iso karna te salapiara mo iso bai. Jari leama no iso to sarati'e misalno iso to pingi koe mot e imanga di mbafan to iso kene to mbta tata koe mo kua ako mot e dafu nu ufe. Kene uka bara tomolingae ako mara to sai jao di ufe" Interview with Traditional Leaders, 2021. It means "There are numerous incidents of people going on picnics at Air Goa Kontamale but ignoring the restricted area, then will be Sala Piara. Some were sick, some of them even drowned at worst. Thus, it is beneficial to demonstrate appreciation for nature by adding a small amount of food to the water. Also, avoid immoral behavior in the cave water area" (Interview with Traditional Leaders, 2021). Sala Piara indicates serious punishments for anyone who violates the applicable rules. Following to the regulations is the most effective approach to avoid punishment. Sala Piara is highly trusted by the community. The need of prohibitions and recommendations for cave water conservation is important. Furthermore, the ecological benefit of the prohibition is to ensure that the cave water is constantly clean and sustainable. Furthermore, wise use of water resources helps ensure the long-term sustainability.

3. SWOT analysis ecotourism management for prevention of floods and droughts

The first step in planning the development of cave water ecotourism on Wangi-Wangi Island is to recognize its physical and social potential. The steps include (1) physical potential, namely the morphological and hydrological characteristics of cave water resources and the development of regional spatial planning based on cave water distribution, (2) development of facilities and infrastructure to support ecotourism, and (3) management of areas for water conservation. The social potential referred to is social, economic, cultural, local wisdom, and the potential for community involvement around the cave water area. SWOT analysis is used to measure strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to determine cave water potential for ecotourism development. The results of the SWOT analysis are shown in the following Table 3.

Based on the results of the Focus Group Discussion and analysis of internal and external factors regarding the development of cave water ecotourism, it is known that there are 6 strengths with a score of 8.8, there are 4 weaknesses with a score of 7.3, there are 6 opportunities with a score of 8.6 and there are 5 threats with a score of 7.4. More clearly can be seen in Figure 5 about the results of the SWOT analysis for the development of cave water ecotourism. From the results of the SWOT analysis, it is described through quadrants and it is concluded that it is in quadrant 1 with a value (1.50, 1.20). More clearly can be seen in Figure 6 about the position of the quadrant of the SWOT analysis.

Table 3. IFAS and EFAS Matrix of Kontamale Cave Water (Source: Research data analysis, 2021)

Internal factors				**External factors**			
Strengths	**Quality**	**Rating**	**Score**	**Opportunities**	**Quality**	**Rating**	**Score**
Many cave water spots	0.30	4	1.20	The water discharge is quite a lot	0.40	4	1.60
Cleanliness is well maintained	0.20	3	0.90	The water is safe to use for bathing	0.40	5	2.00
Safe and conducive area	0.40	3	1.20	Have regulations managed the ecotourism development	0.30	3	0.90
Suitable to be developed into an ecotourism area	0.30	4	1.20	Get community support	0.40	5	2.00
Easy access to the area	0.40	4	1.80	Large number of visitors	0.30	3	0.90
Strategically located in an urban area	0.50	5	2.50	Allows local economic activity	0.30	4	1.20
Total			**8.80**	**Total**			**8.60**
Weaknesses	**Quality**	**Rating**	**Score**	**Threats**	**Quality**	**Rating**	**Score**
The surrounding area is a little creepy	0.30	4	1.20	Lack of investors to manage	0.40	4	1.60
Lack of promotion from the tourism office	0.40	4	1.60	Garbage that has not been managed properly	0.30	4	1.20
Lack of comprehensive management	0.40	5	2.00	Many people still wash clothes in the cave water	0.40	5	1.80
Lack of facilities and infrastructure	0.50	5	2.50	Less attraction as many other tourist attractions are better	0.30	4	1.20
Total **X = Strengths – Weaknesses = 1.50**			**7.30**	Growth of community settlements in cave water areas	0.40	4	1.60
Y = Opportunities – Threats = 1.20				**Total**			**7. 40**

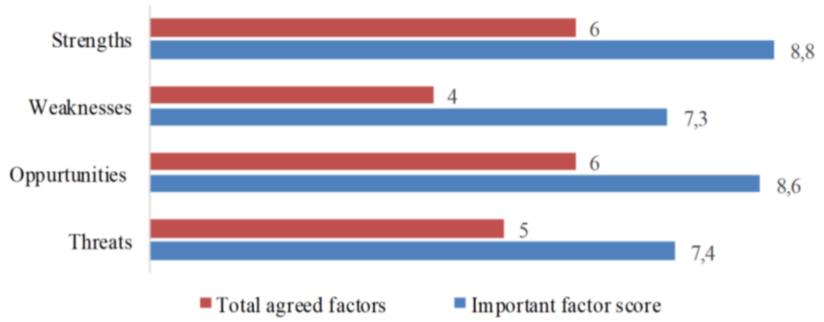

Figure 5. The graph of the results of the SWOT analysis of the development of ecotourism (Source: Research data analysis, 2021)

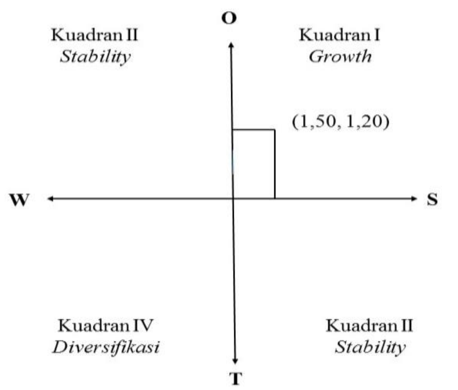

Figure 6. The quadrant of the SWOT analysis (Source: Research data analysis, 2021)

The results of the IFAS and EFAS analysis of cave water are shown in the following Figure 6. The formulation of the X and Y axes is used to determine strategic quadrants' location, which is considered to have high and urgent priority. The X-axis is EFAS (Opportunity - Threat), and the Y-axis is IFAS (Strengths - Weaknesses) which are stated according to the scoring results. Based on the SWOT matrix analysis, IFAS and EFAS are weighted as in Table 3. The X and Y values for the development of cave water ecotourism, it is known that the X value is 1.50 and the Y value is 1.20. The X value is obtained from internal factors (strength - weakness), while the Y value is obtained from external factors (opportunity - threat). The result was placed on quadrant I with x, y values of 1.20, 1.40. It means that cave water ecotourism can be developed. The SWOT results in the quadrant are shown in the following Figure 8. The development of cave water for tourism is in quadrant I, meaning that it has a prospective opportunity to develop the existing potential. A strategy that can be done is to support policies for natural bathing activities to improve the community's local economy around the area. The S-O policies are building tourism facilities and infrastructure, maintaining the area's cleanliness, and making regulations to regulate ecotourism management. The W-O policy is area management by applying conservation rules so that washing clothes in the area does not interfere with tourism activities and increases tourism promotion based on cave water's potential. The policy based on the S-T is to strictly regulate the planning for the construction of people's houses, while the W-T policy is to manage the area and carry out more promotions to invite investors. Strategies that can be taken to develop cave water ecotourism based on the SWOT results include:

1. Manage cave water resources by building facilities and infrastructure to improve the local economy of the people around the cave water area.

2. Strengthening the concept of cave water ecotourism by reducing activities that do not support tourism.
3. Create strict rules regarding the prohibition of development around the cave water area.
4. Encourage business units to support cave water ecotourism and increase regional promotion of cave water tourism.

The results of the analysis show the importance of proper cave water management. The main key to cave water ecotourism on Wangi-Wangi Island is to build infrastructure and enforce strict rules. The advantage that will be obtained is the increase in the community's local economy around the area so that the existence of cave water can become an icon of new tourist attractions that are of interest in Wakatobi. The final result is that cave water ecotourism can develop as water conservation areas for the surrounding area. Konservasi sumber daya air goa melalui pengelolaan ekowisata yang berhasil merupakan usaha yang dapat dilakukan untuk berusaha menjaga kelestarian sumber daya air gua sehingga fungsi air goa dapat optimal sebagai pencegah banjir dan keekringan. Mengingat besarnya potensi air gua sebagai pemasok air utama untuk domestik di Pulau Wangi-Wangi. Maka kelestarian kawasan sangat penting untuk terus dipertahankan. Berdasarkan data potensi sumber daya air gua dari kantor daerah diketahui bahwa air gua telah melayani 1856 Rumah tangga di Pulau Wangi-Wangi. Lebih jelas dapat dilihat berdasarkan tabel 4 Potential of cave water in the Wangi-Wangi Island service area

Table 4. Potential of cave water in the Wangi-Wangi Island service area (Source: RISPAM Wakatobi Regency 2015-2035)

Regency	**Water Capacity**		**SR Number**	**Service Area**
	Water Source	Usage Lit/det		
Wangi-Wangi Island	Wa Gehe-Gehe	40	1824	Wanci and Mandate
South Wangi-Wangi	Te’e liya	10	750	Liya and surrounding area
	Te’e bete	55	1856	Numana and Mola, Wandoka, Sombu, Waha, Koroeonowa and surrounding area

The potential of cave water is needed to be developed. Preservation of cave water resources through ecotourism management is an action to optimize the function of the existence of cave water. The community used of the potential of cave water resources for a variety of purposes. Floods and droughts can be mitigated using cave water related to disaster mitigation. During the rainy season, the cave water serves as a natural infiltration well, collecting large amounts of rain water in a concentrated flow pattern at the cave water point. During the rainy season, the cave water will appear cloudy. The morphological condition of the cave water at *Ufe Lesa'a*, *Ufe Topa Wanci*, *Ufe Te'e A* and *Ufe Te'ea* is lower than other locations, automatically bringing water to the cave water. Interview with the community member stated that:

“*Aram beaka te ane nu ufe Topa ke Lesa’a na amura ta banjiri mo antaeda sabaneeke na ufe mina di gunu iso no mai kuaana, maka uka te kita di kota ana rata-rata tesumee mo laa jari mbeamo na salah nu ufe.”* (Interview with Traditional Leaders and community’s, 2021).

“If it were not for the water from the *Lesa'a* caves, *Ufe Endapo* and *Topa cave* waters, our area might be prone to flooding because all the water, even from the mountains, ends up in cave water, and the average community already uses cement to build houses and level the yard” Interview with Traditional Leaders and community’s, 2021.

The community's gratitude for cave water's existence as a flood prevention strategy in urban areas is expressed through conservation programs. In the recent decade, urban housing development has increased in line with the people's water needs. The potential of cave water resources combined with local wisdom is the environmental carrying capacity that benefits the community surrounding the cave water location. The following is a map showing the distribution of cave water and slope classifications. In Figure 2 it is known that map of slope classification and cave water distribution on Wangi-Wangi Island showed that the cave water point area is in the 0-8% slope class, which is the lowest area compared to the surrounding area. The cave water is in lower condition, with the surface area functioning as the final destination for surface water flow. Therefore, the strategic urban area is very safe from flooding. The strategic position of cave water around community settlements has naturally prevented urban flooding. Moreover, the primary use of cave water resources is to mitigate drought disasters, since the cave water acts as a natural water storage capable of handling the community's household water needs. Certain cave waters remain very pure throughout the wet and dry seasons, with a reasonably constant water discharge, such as *Kontamale* cave water, *Wagehe-gehe* cave water, *Tee Ponu* cave water, *Topa Madanti*, and *Te'e Bete* cave water. Water from *Wagehe-gehe* cave is used to supply the Regional Water Company (PDAM). The direct use of cave water as a supply of raw water for residential purposes demonstrates how critical cave water is to the welfare of the Wangi-Wangi Island. Maintaining and protecting cave water is a vital activity to take, despite the scale of its benefits and functions. The need of appropriate cave water management is a great strategy to challenge conservation in the case of potential flood and drought disasters. Having access to water is critical to life because it is used in many things. Only 1824 houses are provided by PDAM from this water, with service regions including Wanci and Mandati (urban strategic areas).

In addition to having a PDAM to fulfill the demands of the local community, the community around the location manages cave water by building a water pump machine that pumps water through pipes to people' homes. A number of water machines have been constructed around Te'e Ponu cave water, while activities for bathing, washing, and latrines (MCK) continue in the same location. According to the findings of community interviews, the quality of the cave water will not decrease. The water quality in this location has remained consistent for a long period of time. Since ancient times, the community has relied on cave water resources to support the household water needs. The cave water is referred to as *Ufe/Topa* by the locals. The water source comes from ground water from the hill area. The PDAM's cave water usage system is designed to deliver water to people's houses through iron pipes, although some of the cave water is unsuitable for human consumption and should be used just for bathing, washing, and cleaning, and water rain is collected in earthen jars and profile tanks The increase and decrease of sea levels has an effect on the groundwater levels throughout the Wangi-Wangi islands. Along with the groundwater from the hills and the rainwater that is absorbed, there is also some well water, but not a lot.

Figure 7. Utilization of cave water managed by local companies (PDAM) and the community
(a) Topa Wanci cave water pipe, (b) community water machine in Te'ea cave water (c) PDAM water management house,
(d) PDAM water machine and (e) PDAM regional water company piping system (Source of research, 2021)

The number served by PDAM in Wakatobi Regency is 30,750 people or 26.84% of the total population of 114,550 people. PDAMs have attempted to expand service coverage by submitting funding proposals to local and central governments to finance the addition of the main (tertiary) pipeline network, particularly the sub-district capital, by utilizing stalled installed capacity, increasing service hours, reducing leakage rates, planning the procurement of master meters and zone meters, and adding water storage installations (reservoirs). The level of SPAM water consumption in Wakatobi Regency is generally 7.32 m3/year and the average consumption per person per day is 56.99 liters/person/day. As one of the cave waters managed by the PDAM of Wakatobi Regency, the *Wa Gehe-Gehe* cave has a high-water potential.

Ensuring that the cave water is always sustainable is critical for sustainability and achieving water fulfillment in the archipelago. Wa Gehe-Gehe cave water refers to cave water that the government previously used to fulfill regional clean water needs. However, many residents in the area continue to dig wells around their homes rather than constructing PDAM water systems. The direct use of cave water as a source of raw water to meet domestic needs is clear evidence that the existence of cave water is very important for the welfare of the people of Wangi-Wangi Island. Knowing the magnitude of the benefits and functions of the existence of cave water, maintaining and preserving cave water is an urgent action to take. The importance of good cave water management through ecotourism management is a strategic step for cave water conservation so that it can continue to be optimal naturally as a flood and drought prevention.

CONCLUSION

The field data findings expanded our understanding of the critical role of cave water in meeting community requirements, sustaining and preventing floods and droughts on Wakatobi Island. Therefore, the sustainability of water resources is very necessary. Also, the preservation of local wisdoms serves as a regulatory system for sustainable water management. Ecological values, prohibitions, balance, and sustainability achieved by applying local wisdom that contribute significantly to prevent natural disasters. Although the government has not implemented an official management system for cave water, the community has strictly regulated and committed to the local wisdom values. There are 3 different types of community local wisdom involving cave water conservation, namely: 1) *Ufe Karia*, using *Lesa'a* cave water and *Lia* Bete cave to support *Karia* tradition that belief the cave water as a healer and a repellant against evil/bad luck. 2) *Imaeka* is the public belief about a guard that feared people to keep the cave water clear. 3) *Sala piara* is interpreted an action that should not be taken because it could disturb the cave water. Conservation is created when the community recognizes the value of cave water, allowing the environment to continue functioning optimally and preventing floods and droughts.

The results showed that cave water was used by the community for various purposes, such as for public bathing, washing clothes, and besides that, it was used as a water source to meet domestic water needs on Wangi-Wangi Island. The cave water resources on Wangi-Wangi Island have the potential for developing cave water ecotourism. Also, cave water is essential because it functions as a flood disaster control system in strategic urban areas. However, the use of cave water has not been appropriately managed. It is necessary to carry out management based on cave water zoning so that its use can be grouped. The SWOT analysis results show that cave water has the potential to be developed as sustainable ecotourism to improve the local economy of the people around the area and as water conservation on Wangi-Wangi Island.

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FROM TOURISM GEOGRAPHY PERSPECTIVE SALDA LAKE (TURKEY) AND NEAR SURROUNDING

Erol KAPLUHAN[*]
Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University, Faculty of Arts and Sciences,
Department of Geography, Burdur, Turkey, e-mail: ekapluhan@mehmetakif.edu.tr

Viliyan KRASTEV
University of Economics Varna, Management Faculty,
Department of Tourism, Varna, Bulgaria, e-mail: viliank@ue-vana.bg

Aigerim M. KASSYMOVA
Zhetysu University named after I. Zhansugurov, Higher School of Lawööö
and Economics, Taldykorgan, Republic of Kazakhstan, e-mail: aiko_1990kz@mail.ru

Gaukhar B. TASKALIYEVA
Atyrau University named after H. Dosmukhamedov, Faculty of natural and
agricultural sciences, Atyrau, Republic of Kazakhstan, e-mail: g.taskalieva@mail.ru

Büşra OKUDAN
Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University, Institute of Social Sciences,
Department of Geography, Burdur, Turkey, e-mail: busraokudan@icloud.com

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Abstract: Salda Lake, located within the borders of Yeşilova district of Burdur province in the Antalya Section of the Mediterranean Region, is one of Turkey's most popular tourist attractions. Located in the southwest of Turkey and encompassing many lake basins, the "Lakes Region" has been designated as the "Lakes Region Ecotourism Development Region" in the Turkey 2023 tourism strategy and attention has been drawn to the tourism potential of the lakes in the region. Located in the Lakes Region, Lake Salda draws attention with its natural beaches and water sports opportunities, rich flora and fauna, recreation areas and camping areas by the lake, various accommodation opportunities and natural beauties, healing lake waters and rich tourism diversity. Rural tourism, lake tourism, ecological tourism, winter tourism, botanical tourism, health tourism and cultural tourism are the most developed types of tourism in and around Salda Lake. In this research, the geographical location, tourism potential and main tourism resources of both Yeşilova district and Salda Lake were examined. In addition, in this article focused on tourism geography, the negative ecological and socio-economic effects of increasing human pressure and tourism activities around Salda Lake were investigated. In this study, which deals with the examination of Salda Lake and its surroundings in terms of recreation and tourism activities, the natural and human environmental factors of the region are analyzed, and the main tourism advantages and disadvantages of the region are discussed. At the beginning of the most important results obtained from this research, it has been determined that factors such as climate change, uncontrolled and intense touristic flow, increasing environmental pollution and illegal construction threaten sustainable tourism in the Salda Lake basin.

Key words: tourism geography, Turkey, Yeşilova District, Salda Lake, tourism activities

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INTRODUCTION

Along with the economic, political, and technological developments in the world, the usual understanding of vacation is changing and there is a tendency to move away from tourism centers. People with this new tendency want to have a holiday in a clean environment and in businesses that are integrated with nature and respectful to the environment. As a result of the importance of tourism and environment relationship, ecotourism, which is an alternative tourism branch, emerges as one of the main tourism resources (Akpınar and Bulut, 2010). Tourism products consist of six components that include attractions (natural, man-made, artificial, purpose-built, heritage, special events), accessibility (entire transportation system comprising routes, terminals, and vehicles), amenities (accommodation and catering facilities, retailing, other tourists service), activities (all activities available at the destination and what consumers will do during their visits), ancillary services (services used by tourists such as banks, telecommunication, post, newsagent, hospital) and available packages (prearranged packages by intermediaries and principals) (Mohamad et al., 2012; Eichhorn and Buhalis, 2017; Biswas et al., 2020: 1202-1203). Ecotourism, which started with the local farmers opening a part of their houses for tourists going to the Alps for the first time, is defined as enjoying nature and appreciating nature (Bozok and Yılmaz, 2008). Ecotourism

[*] Corresponding author

activities are generally organized to see and learn about the landscape, topography, water, plant and wildlife richness of nature protection areas, where the interesting features of nature are preserved or still slightly deteriorated. Tourism and recreation have a pronounced orientation to the use of natural resources, and recreational activities do not cover individual components of nature, but the entire natural complex (landscape) as a whole (Mukayev et al., 2020: 875).

Ecotourism aims to benefit not only from natural features but also from cultural features. Setting up tents in nature with the recognition of rural life, highland or village houses, local food in ecotourism areas are characteristic ecotourism activities. Ecotourism activities are trying to create awareness of the visitor who preserves, not consumes.

By carrying out these activities directly in the natural environment, it is aimed to create a love of nature in the participants and the awareness of using nature while protecting it (Polat and Önder, 2006). Tourism and recreation have a pronounced orientation to the use of natural resources, and recreational activities do not cover individual components of nature, but the entire natural complex (landscape) as a whole. Even the ancient Greeks and Romans used healing springs and places with a favorable climate in order to improve their health (Tokpanov et al., 2021: 888).

Salda Lake is a lake with an area of 44 km^2 and a depth of 184 meters, located 4 km from the Yeşilova district of Burdur province. Salda Lake and its surroundings have significant tourism potential with their natural and human environmental attractions. The aim of this research is to contribute to the increase of the recognition and development in tourism by introducing the tourism potential values of Salda Lake and its surroundings and by identifying the problems experienced by the area in the tourism sector and offering solutions. For this purpose, methods of applying field observation and documentary data of relevant institutions and organizations were used. Although Salda Lake and its surroundings have a rich tourism potential, reasons such as insufficient transportation and accommodation facilities, various environmental problems around the lake, public and private sector investments, and limited public and private sector investments have contributed to the slow progress of the area's recognition in the tourism sector and its development in tourism. caused. Sustainable tourism planning is an approach that aims to meet the needs of the tourists, improve the living standards of locals, protect the environment, and preserve them for the future generations, and it is possible with the cooperation of stakeholders. Therefore, tourism destinations need both healthy and clean ecosystems, and sustainable tourism planning to a large extent (Çelik Uğuz et al., 2022: 303). Purpose of the study; to reveal from tourism geography perspective of Salda Lake and near surroundings whic his natural tourist destination and protected area, and present solutions based on conservation and sustainability as forward-looking.

LOCATION, LIMITS AND MAIN FEATURES OF THE RESEARCH FIELD

The research area is Salda Lake and its surroundings in the southwest of Burdur province. Salda Lake is a lake located in the Antalya part of the Mediterranean Region, within the borders of the Yeşilova district of Burdur province. Salda Lake lies close to the small town of Yeşilova in south-western Turkey, approximately 150 km NW of the mediterranean port of Antalya (Braithwaite and Zedef, 1996: 991). The lake is surrounded by Yeşilova district of Burdur province in the east, Salda and Güney villages in the southwest, Kayadibi village in the southeast, Doğanbaba village in the north, 4 km from Yeşilova town center, 60 km from Burdur city center, 94 km from Denizli city center and 160 km from Antalya city center (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Salda Lake Location and Topographic View (Source: Temurçin et al., 2019)

1140 m above sea level. Located at an altitude of 44 km^2, the lake is one of the cleanest and deepest lakes in Turkey. Covered with pine and oak forests, which become sparse at certain points, lush at certain points, and surrounded by limestone and serpentine slopes, the lake is of tectonic origin and is one of the deepest lakes in Turkey with a depth of 184 meters (Tozkoparan et al., 2021: 446-447). Salda Lake; clean and clear water, white natural beaches, physical environment that preserves its natural appearance, located on the southwest and southeast coasts, consisting of very special snow-white hydromagnesite deposits and crystal black serpentinite sands; It is a lake with a high tourism potential with its magnificent view and white islands where the contrast of black and white is integrated with turquoise, the water and sand that are said to be good for skin diseases, the magnificent view that emerges as a result of the integration of all shades of turquoise and blue surrounding the lake, and many other features (Tozkoparan et al., 2021: 447). Today, the preferences of tourists are directed towards ecotourism, which is intertwined with nature and includes alternative tourism activities. This situation has been taken into consideration Turkey 2023 tourism strategy and Lakes Region has been determined as “Lakes Region Ecotourism Development Area”. Lake Salda, which is in Lakes Region Ecotourism Development Area, has started to be visited by lots of tourists recently with the effect of its tourism potential appropriate for the tourists and its location (Temurçin and Tozkoparan, 2020: 97).

Salda Lake also creates a very important geographical environment with its lively life and geological and geomorphological features. Located within the borders of Yeşilova district, the lake is 60 km away from the city center of Burdur. Lake Salda, Marmaris ophiolite, which forms the uppermost unit of the Lycian nappes in the region. It is located in a developed tectonic bowl within the Marmaris peridotites of the nappe. Extremely karstic Triassic-Jurassic limestones (Dutdere limestone) crop out in a small area (Kale Tepe) that has been stripped of the cover just to the east of the lake (Senel et al., 1997). According to Altınlı (1955), it was stated that Lake Salda is located in an anticline area and that it was formed by the accumulation of surrounding waters in an area where the fold axes descend. Yalçınlar (1958) stated that Salda Lake (Photo 1) is located in the central part between the mountains forming a circular structure. Akkuş (1986) stated that Salda Lake is a lake of tectonic origin, it started to form at the end of the Neogene and took its present shape with the tectonic movements that occurred later. The Salda Lake basin is a depression with closed basin characteristics, formed by the effect of tectonism that emerged at the end of the Neogene (Pliocene) (Tuncer, 2021: 64). With the regional tectonic subsidences in the early Quaternary, it gradually caused the lowering of the lake basin. These lowerings have caused the formation of old lake terraces, which remained as steps, and steep shores on some coasts. Located at 1135 m elevation (2021), Salda has a maximum depth of 184 meters. and one of the deepest lakes of Turkey (Tuncer, 2021: 64).

Looking at the elevation graph of Salda Lake for the years 1970-2021 (no measurement was made between 1979 and 2012), it is understood that the lake level gradually decreased. The lake level elevation, which was 1143.5 m in 1970, decreased to 1136.5 m in 2013, but although it increased to 1137 m in 2016, it continued to decrease after this year and decreased to 1134.6 m in 2021. The temperature increases and decreasing trends in precipitation of the interglacial period we are in and the excessive use of people on water are very effective in these level reductions (Tuncer, 2021: 64).

Figure 2. Salda Lake (West view from Kale Tepe) (Source: Authors, 2022)

While there are steep shores rising like walls on the south, east and north shores of this tectonic lake, the lake shores are lower in front of the villages of Doğanbaba in the north, Salda in the west, Gökçe in the southwest and Kayadibi in the southeast, and they are covered with magnesian coastal dunes or accumulation plains. The water of Salda Lake is in the category of waters that are not suitable for agricultural irrigation. In addition, Salda Lake, located in the basin, has an extremely high recreational feature due to its natural structure, landscape beauty, water quality and the suitability of the environmental structure (Lise et al., 2013). Salda Lake (Figure 2) basin has the characteristics of a closed basin or a closed hydrological system whose waters cannot reach the sea, due to its general structure. The lake is fed by precipitation waters falling into the basin, continuous and seasonal streams (Karakova, Kuruçay, Doğanbaba creeks) and many large and small springs that reach the lake from different locations of the lake basin. According to the measurements made in 2008-2009, the surface water temperature of Salda Lake varies between 8.5 and 25 °C throughout the year. The light transmittance and dissolved oxygen values of the lake water were quite high, while the phosphate and chlorophyll-a values were very low. With this value, it shows that the water quality is quite good. When the water quality of Salda Lake is evaluated in general, in terms of inorganic substances; high pH (9.3), high bicarbonate

(997.3 mg/l), high carbonate (450 mg/l), high alkalinity (1487 mg/l), high magnesium (328.2 mg/l) and hardness (It is a very high alkaline and hard water lake due to its 1358 $CaCO_3$ mg/l) values (Tuncer, 2021: 65).

Around Lake Salda, which is within the borders of the Lakes region, there are Eşeler Mountain, Eşeler Plateau, Akçaköy-Erle and Irla Plains of the Yeşilova district, and the Sıralı Lake nearby. There are also many streams feeding Salda Lake. In general, there are some differences in climatic characteristics due to reasons such as the high altitude of Salda Lake and its surroundings, which is within the influence of the Mediterranean climate, and the presence of mountains surrounding it. Depending on the average temperature values and climatic conditions of the field, lake tourism, which includes various water sports, especially swimming, can be done in summer. In addition, the annual average wind speed of the site is 1.5 m/ s and the prevailing wind direction is N (north). Depending on the average wind speed of the field and the prevailing wind direction, paragliding can be done from Salda Ski Center to Salda Lake Municipality Public Beach. However, paragliding activities did not develop in the field due to the lack of a facility with the necessary equipment and insufficient advertising and promotion. Salda ski center was established in Tınaz Hill in 2012, as the elevation and terrain slope of Tınaz Hill in the field and the continental climate conditions of the field are suitable for the construction of ski slopes (Eryılmaz, 2019: 2). Although Salda Lake and its surroundings are in a convenient location in terms of transportation, transportation opportunities for the site have not been developed enough. There are highways that provide transportation to the city centers of Denizli, Antalya, Isparta and Burdur from the research area. Various tours and local minibuses provide transportation services to Salda Lake from the provincial centers of Antalya, Denizli and Burdur, and the hours of these tours are quite limited. Those who want to reach by air can reach Denizli Çardak, Isparta Süleyman Demirel or Antalya airports. In recent years, tourism and trade sectors have also started to revive due to the tourism attractiveness of Salda Lake and its surroundings (Eryılmaz, 2019: 5). Magnesium (Mg), sulfate (SO_4), calcium (Ca), chloride (Cl), sodium (Na), bicarbonate (HCO_3) n the composition of the gray colored gel water in the shallow water layer in the beach area of Salda Lake are medically human. It has been understood that it is beneficial for health (Gürdal, 2005: 553).

The discovery that the lake water and the coastal dunes around it have rich minerals has enabled the start of health tourism activities in the form of mud baths around the lake, albeit to a limited extent. Salda Lake is likened to the Maldives in that its water offers a clear, clean and turquoise color feature and is called “Turkey's Maldives” (Figure 3). This situation increases the tourism attractiveness and advertising-promotion potential of Salda Lake. Depending on the diversity of bird species around Salda Lake, bird watching (ornitho tourism) and the presence of endemic plants, monumental trees and botanical tourism potential due to rich vegetation. The Eşeler Plateau, near the Salda Lake, has a highland tourism potential, and this potential cannot be exploited because it is used as a ski resort today. In addition, the potential of bicycle tours, nature walks, mountaineering, air sports (paragliding), safari photography, agricultural tourism (agro tourism), camping caravan and youth tourism depending on lavender cultivation within the scope of sustainable tourism in order to benefit and protect nature around Salda Lake. available. However, due to reasons such as the promotion of these types of tourism and the inadequacy of the necessary organizational studies, their recognition in the field and tourist participation are quite limited.

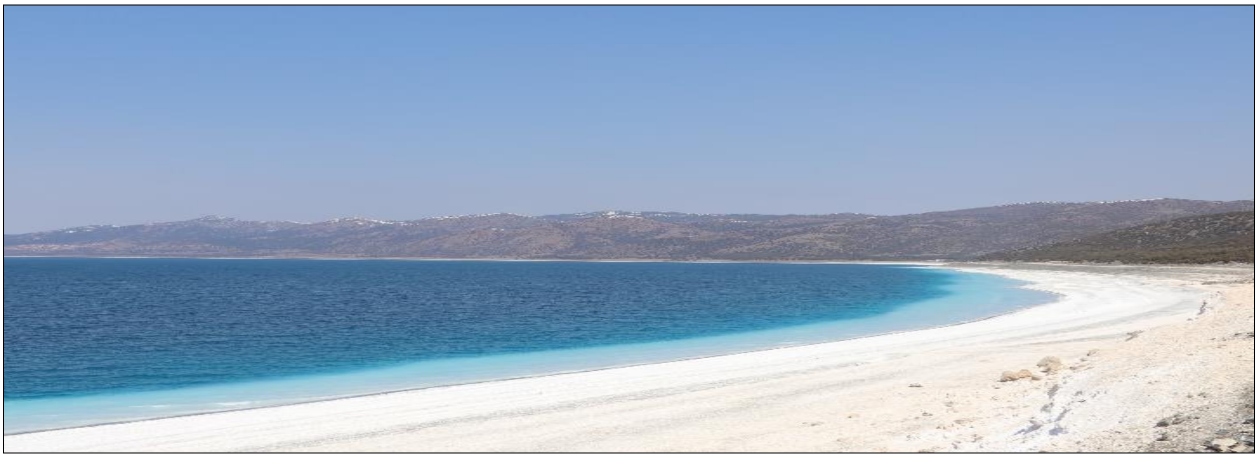

Figure 3. East Shores of Salda Lake, known as Turkey’s Maldives (Source: Authors, 2022)

Figure 3 on the shores of the lake. There are four beaches named Doğanbaba, Salda, Yeşilova Municipality Public Beach and Orman Beach (Nature Park Beach). This situation contributes to the development of summer tourism around the lake. In addition, depending on the lake water and environmental conditions, various water sports activities such as sailing, surfing and underwater diving can be done. Development of rural tourism based on the development of natural, agricultural, social, and local cultural potentials can be a potential development for tourism-based communities (Damayani et al., 2020: 1579). In order to protect the ecology and tourism potential of Salda Lake and its surroundings, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism defined the lake area as a First-Degree Natural Protection Area with the decision of the Izmir Cultural and Natural Heritage Preservation Board in 1989. This decision was amended by a new decision accepted by the Antalya Cultural and Natural Heritage Preservation Board in 1992 and declaring the lake surroundings as a Second-Degree Natural Protection Area. Salda Lake and its surroundings were declared “Tourism Center” in 2006 with the decision of the Council of Ministers numbered 11033 and published in the official newspaper. In addition, Salda Lake was determined and declared as a “Special Environmental Protection Area” with the President’s Decision dated 14.03.2019 and numbered 824 and was published in the Official Gazette dated 15.03.2019 and numbered 30715 (Eryılmaz, 2019: 6-7). The fact that many types of tourism can be done in the same area increases the touristic attractiveness of Salda Lake and its surroundings. However, the geographical features of the area and the recognition rate of the tourism potential in our country and in the world are limited. At the same time, problems such as the transportation and accommodation facilities of the Salda tourism center and the inadequacy of advertising-promotion activities negatively affect the tourism attractiveness of the lake surroundings. In addition, mining activities around the lake, environmental pollution, poaching, illegal construction are among the problems that affect the tourism potential and tourist attractiveness of the area. It is thought that Salda Lake and its surroundings will become one of the important tourism centers with the completion of the promotion, infrastructure and additional facilities.

TOURISM POTENTIAL OF YEŞİLOVA DISTRICT

The establishment of Yeşilova district dates back to the years before Christ. Chalcolithic Period (5000 BC) pottery was found during the surveys carried out in Dereköy and Gençali within the borders of the district. In different periods of history, it was dominated by the Lydians, Persians, Romans and Seljuks. The establishment of the district in its current location; It started after the 1190s and the district passed into the hands of the Turks in 1093 after the 1071 Battle of Manzikert. Although there were small-scale conflicts between the Byzantines and the Turkmen living in this region at that time, the German Emperor Frederik Barbaros came to this region at the head of the crusader army in 1190. Two serdars, named Osman Bey and Hüsamettin Bey, sent by the Sultan of Konya, pressed Aleksi from both directions. Osman Bey pressed the enemy soldiers in the Harmanlı strait near the present-day Harmanlı village, and Çeribaşs named Gençali, Karaatlı and Gökçe made a strong line to the enemy in this region with fierce attacks. The place where the battle was most difficult was around Köpekbeli. Osman Bey, who was seriously injured in the Battle of Köpekbeli, was treated in the infirmary in the place known today as Sultan Spring, on the northeastern ridges of Lake Salda and Mount Eşeler (Anonymous, 2015). For this reason, the spring and the district located here are called Sultan Spring, since the young commander was rewarded with the title of sultan by the Seljuk Sultan. Again, in the same war, the district was called "Satırlar" because of the use of lines while fighting the Byzantine soldiers and the loss of lines to the enemy by throwing lines there (Can, 2008: 231).

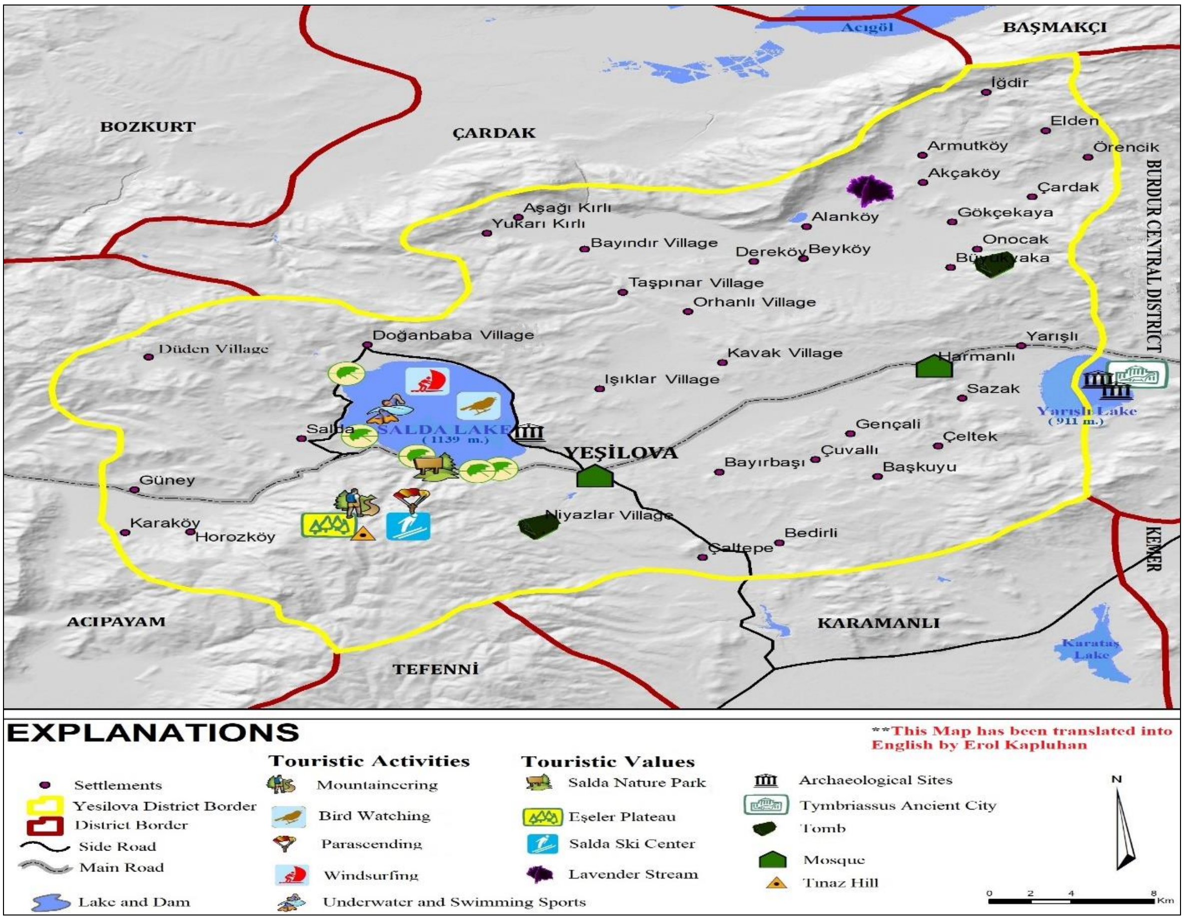

Figure 4. Touristic Values of Yeşilova District (Source: Temurçin et al, 2019)

According to the yearbook dated 1288, the village of Satırlar had 33 houses and a population of 120. In the yearbook dated 1305, 148 guesthouses in the town of Erle. It has been recorded that there are 18 flour mills, 6 shops, 1 inn, 1 restaurant, 26 mosques, 19 infant schools, 8 dervish lodges, 3 tombs, 38 fountains and 26 laundries. Although Erle was mentioned as a district in 1478 and 1522, it was registered as a township in 1568. Although it is the name of the accident, there was no certain settlement named Erle in the mentioned centuries. XV. and XVI. Erle sub-district of Hamit sanjak was formed from two different geographical regions in the 19th century. The first region was the part to the north of the line from Yeşilova to Burdur Lake. The plain between Lake Salda and Lake Race, which is known as Erle plain today, was not connected to Erle accident.

This place was left to Karaağaç, Gölhisar district as Yavice township. The second region consists of the mountainous land in the northwest direction of Salda lake and the Hambat plain, and the settlement in the Hambat plain dates back to ancient times. The mounds on the plain show that the settlement here dates back to ancient times. The Karaağaç Gölhisar district and Elmadağ formed the border of this mountainous land, which included the villages of Söğüt, Düden and Şaryeri, which were the habitats of many Turkmen tribes. Today, this region is included in the borders of Çardak and Bozkurt districts (Ertaş, 2012: 157). Yeşilova district and its surroundings have an important potential in terms of both historical and cultural values. There are mosques, castle walls and castle ruins, tombs, ruins and many mounds in towns and villages. Yeşilova District provides most of the natural, historical, and cultural conditions related to touristic resources, which is one of the basic conditions for the development of tourism in the rural areas discussed above and is located in an accessible location. Yeşilova District, located on the Antalya and Denizli-Pamukkale main tour route, has important natural and historical sites. There are mosques, castle walls, castle ruins, tombs, ruins, and many mounds dating to previous periods in Yeşilova District and its surrounding villages. All these touristic values increase the potential of the district in terms of rural tourism by contributing to the historical and cultural richness of the district, which is rich in natural landscape beauties (Figure 4).

Yeşilova District is one of the oldest residential areas of Burdur Province. During the surveys conducted in Dereköy and Gençali within the borders of the district, archaeological sites and mounds belonging to the Chalcolithic Period (5000 BC) were identified and pottery and pottery dated to this period were found (Burdur Provincial Directory, 2007; Atayeter et al., 2013; Ongun et al., 2016). In addition, in Kayadibi Neighborhood, which is a district of the district center, there are castle ruins on the hill called Asar in Yarışlı Village, which dates to the Late Roman and Early Byzantine periods (Burdur Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism Cultural Inventory, 2007a; Can, 2008; Ongun et al., 2016). In addition to these works, the Harmanlı Mosque, located in the village of Harmanlı belonging to the Turkish-Islamic period, whose inscription is determined to be built in 1207 and Niyazi Baba Tomb, where Niyazi Bey, one of the Seljuk Beys who came from Horasan and took part in the Turkification of Anatolia, is buried, adds value to the tourism potential of the district (Erkan, 2008; Can, 2008; Burdur Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism Cultural Inventory, 2007a; Burdur Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism Cultural Inventory, 2017). It is also 31 km from Yeşilova District, away from Onacak (Veli Dede) Tomb, Onacak Village is in the old settlement area. It is rumored that the tomb belonging to Veli Dede during the Ottoman Empire period in the 14th-15th centuries AD. Today, only the tomb remains, the tomb is in the form of 8 corners and there are 2 sarcophagi inside the tomb. Veli Dede's body lies on the left side of the tomb in a round-topped sarcophagus. Onacak Village Veli Dede Tomb was accepted as a Cultural Heritage with the decision of Antalya Cultural and Natural Heritage Preservation Board dated 21.01.1993 and numbered 1737 (Yılmaz, 2005: 582).

Yeşilova District, which hosts historical and cultural tourism artifacts and ruins from the oldest periods, also has many natural touristic resources that will make significant contributions to the country, region, province and district tourism, which brings the district to the forefront in rural tourism. One of these natural touristic values is the Salda Ski Center, which was established in 2012 in the Tınaz Hill location, which has an important potential in terms of winter tourism, located in a dominant position against Salda Lake (Ongun et al., 2016; Temurçin, 2014). Although Salda Ski Center has a significant potential for winter tourism, it has certain infrastructure deficiencies. The lack of accommodation facilities in the ski resort, especially the arrangement of the transportation route, is seen as the most important problem. Eşeler Plateau, which is located close to the Salda Ski Center, is the most important plateau of the district, and it is an important rural tourism resource that can be planned in terms of rural tourism potential with a project that will include Salda Lake and Salda Ski Center. However, the destruction caused by the many marble quarries operating in the district negatively affects the touristic activities organized in Yeşilova's highlands. Raceli Lake, which is formed in the basin between Salda Lake and Burdur Lake, is an important nature tourism resource owned by Yeşilova District. Covering an area of approximately 1200 ha, Yarışlı Lake offers a habitat for some bird species such as flamingos, squat, spoonbill, lapwing, gray duck and goosetail (Akova, 2013; Ongun et al., 2016). With a high bird diversity and richness, Yayla Lake and its surroundings are an important tourist attraction in terms of rural tourism activities, especially bird watching and photography, especially in autumn (NCNP Yarışlı Lake, 2013b; Atayeter et al., 2018). Salda Lake is the touristic value that attracts local and foreign tourists to Yeşilova District in recent years, especially during the tourism season, and constitutes the most important rural tourism potential of the district. Salda Lake, which has a surface area of 45 km^2, was formed in a closed basin with a width of approximately 6.8 km and a length of 9,186 km (NCNP 2013a; Kesici, 2018). It is 4 km from Yeşilova District Center. away, 1139 m above sea level. Salda Lake, which was formed at an altitude, is the deepest (184 meters) and cleanest lake in Turkey (Akkuş, 1986; Şenol, 2011; NCNP, 2013a; Ongun et al., 2015; Atayeter et al., 2018). The main streams feeding Salda Lake, which has a circular appearance, are Salda, Çitlikli, Değirmendere and Zaferpınar (Doğanay and Zaman, 2016).

Salda Lake, which was determined as a 1st Degree Protected Area in 1989; It is a tourist attraction with the most effective tourism potential of the region in terms of rural tourism with its clean water, natural beaches and beaches, physical environment opportunities that preserve its natural characteristics, various species living in the lake, its availability for water sports, recreation areas by the lake, camping areas, unique scenery and many more. value (Atayeter et al., 2018). In addition to the increase in the promotion of Salda Lake in social networks and social blogs of travelers in recent years, the number of visitors has increased a lot in the last two years due to the fact that it is located on the route of the Antalya-Denizli Pamukkale Main-Tour Road, which is heavily used by tour companies in summer and winter (Table 1).

Although the increase in the number of tourists coming to the district is good for the development of tourism, the existing facilities of Yeşilova District are insufficient to meet the needs of the tourists, especially in terms of accommodation, catering services and social environments (Figure 1). Existing businesses located in the District Center and in the villages around Salda Lake, especially the recreational facilities such as Sultan Spring, Sahil Mola, Municipality Public Beach and Forest Beach established around the lake (Figure 2). It is insufficient in terms of both capacity and service quality in meeting its basic needs such as entertainment (Table 2). Although the official records of the chamber of tradesmen and commerce in the district and field research, it has been determined that 16 apartments and a hotel have been operating in the district as of July 2019, and 47 new businesses have been opened in various areas, but the inadequacy of meeting the needs of the tourists coming to the region continues (Table 3). Many villages in Yeşilova District, especially Salda Village, Doğan Baba Village and Kayadibi District located around Salda Lake, are rural tourism values.

Table 1. Number of Visitors to Salda Lake and Salda Nature Park (2018) (Source: Republic of Turkey Produced from the data of the 6th Regional Directorate of Nature and National Parks and Burdur Provincial Directorate of Tourism and Culture)

White Islands Vehicle Entry (5 Persons Per Vehicle)		Salda Nature Park Number of Visitors		Municipality and Doğanbaba Beaches (Estimated)		Total
292000		97,730		300,000		689,730
2013	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**Total**
6596	34829	20995	36979	67115	95955	262,469

Table 2. Distribution of Businesses Operating in Yeşilova District (Source: It was obtained from the field studies carried out in the Yeşilova (Burdur) Chamber of Craftsmen and the research area)

Accomodation	Salda	Kayadibi	Doganbaba	District Center	Total
Apart-Hostel	9	4		3	16
Hotel	1	1		3	5
Trade					
Food & Beverage	2	1	1	27	31
Touristic Facility	2	2			4
Other	2	3		27	32
Total	16	11	1	60	88

These villages and neighborhoods draw attention both in terms of being located around Salda Lake and in terms of rural tourism with their cultural values, local weavings, local foods. In this respect, considering that these villages are located around Salda Lake in the tourism planning of the region, it is extremely important for the tourism of the region to consider them within the scope of rural tourism activities with their natural, historical and cultural values. Thanks to the accommodation places that will be built in accordance with the texture of the natural environment in these villages, the accommodation problem of the tourists will be solved, the tourists will communicate more with the local people, and the density on the lake will be drawn to the surrounding rural areas. In the field research, it has been determined that the local people, especially in Salda Village and Kayadibi Neighborhood, located around the lake, converted their houses into apart-hotels and opened businesses such as restaurants, cafes and grocery stores, as well as new buildings to be used as apartments (Table 3; Figure 2).

Table 3. Number of Rooms and Capacities of Hotel- Apartments in Yeşilova District (Source: Temurçin et al., 2019: 47; This table has been translated into English by Authors)

Hotel and Apartment Name	Foundation Year	Number of rooms	Bed Capacity	Location
Lagodi Salda Hotel	2015	25	50	Salda
Salda Lake Hotel		10	45	District Center (Kayadibi Neighborhood)
Hotel Berliner	1988	20	40	District Center
Gorsel Hotel	1986	20	1986-2017:30, 2018:45	District Center
Aromatic Hotel	2019	16	39	District Center
Turquoise Apartment	2019	8	20	District Center
Sadic Pension	2019	6	16	District Center
Sarmaşık Pension	2019	8	24	District Center
Ayaz Apart	2018	7	14	Salda Village
Şahan Apart	2018	4	12	Salda Village
Argun Apart	2018	5	15	Salda Village
Salda Lake Apart	2019	3	18	Salda Village
Yildirim Apart	2019	4	16	Salda Village
Erdogan Apart	2019	6	18	Salda Village
Canbazoglu Apart	2018	4	10	Salda Village
Maldives Apart	2019	6	18	Salda Village
Afacan Apart	2019	6	18	Salda Village
Tan Apart	2018	6	12	Kayadibi Neighborhood
Deveci Apart	2019	6	18	Kayadibi Neighborhood
Ece Apart	2019	6	18	Kayadibi Neighborhood
Venus Apart	2014	8	36	Kayadibi Neighborhood
Total	182		493	

The perpetuation of the Yörük Culture by the local people also brings the plateau culture to the fore. Although the plateaus within the boundaries of the district do not have the characteristics of the plateaus in the Black Sea Region today, they are of great importance for excursionists (Yılmaz, 2005: 574). Eşeler Plateau is the most important plateau within the borders of Yeşilova district. In recent years, the number of activities in the plateaus has decreased due to the destruction caused by the marble quarries in the mountains, especially in the villages of Yeşilova district. On the other hand, lavender planting has been started in some villages of Yeşilova, due to the fact that lavender gardens are preferred by tourists and lavender comes to the forefront as an economic value in terms of agricultural production. Because lavender gardens have attracted the attention of tourists in recent years, the Lavender Stream Project has been implemented in Akçaköy Village of Yeşilova, and the local people have started to evaluate lavender not only as an agricultural product, but also as a touristic product that they gain economic gain from within the scope of rural tourism activities. This situation will increase the evaluation of the villages in the lavender-growing fields within the scope of rural tourism and will both protect the natural and cultural values of the villages and make them gain economic gain. Caltepe Rural Accommodation Houses" is a project for those who want to spend their holiday in a village house, explore the environment and get away from the noise of the city, in the village of Çaltepe, located within the borders of Yeşilova district. There are four types of houses in the village, in the old country house style. It is possible to collect fruits and vegetables in the garden of the houses according to the season. In addition, tourists can make local dishes, jams, tomato paste and tarhana.

According to the season, it can make daily trips to provinces and districts within the scope of hunting, hiking, village and cultural tourism (Atar, 2005). Delivering the products produced in the garden directly to the consumer through pick-it-yourself activities significantly eliminates the marketing problems (Kiper and Yılmaz, 2008: 167). It is possible to implement these and similar projects in many villages of the Yeşilova district of Burdur province (Ongun et al., 2015: 106). Especially travel agencies organizing tours to Denizli on the road route, Çaltepe village tourism package programs and tours should be directed to this point, accommodation in the village and sales of products in the gardens should be ensured.

ECOTOURISM POTENTIAL OF SALDA LAKE NEAR SURROUNDINGS

Salda Lake is a lake of tectonic origin, it was formed at the end of the Neogene, then it was exposed to tectonic movements, and as a result of these tectonic movements, gradually descending shores and steep shores in the form of steps were formed around the lake (Figure 5). Low coasts also correspond to accumulation and swamp areas (Güney, 2004: 238; Republic of Turkey Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs, 2013: 29). The stratigraphic units within the study area have different hydrogeological characteristics (Varol et al., 2020: 749). Salda Lake is an important example of the natural storage of CO_2 (Kazancı et al., 2004; Kaiser et al., 2016). The water budget of the lake is under the effect of evaporation to a significant extent. The main recharge of the lake with no runoff meteoric waters (Figure 5; Balcı et al., 2018: 21). Research around the lake (Braithwaite and Zedef, 1996; Russell et al., 1999; Kazancı et al., 2004) determined that the chemistry of the lake water is due to the meteoric waters and the geological structure of the land. Partly serpentinite, belonging to the Upper Cretaceous aged Yeşilova ophiolites, which covers most of the lithological structure of the lake. Harzburgite and dunite outcrops and the interaction of sediments derived from them are lithological factors affecting the lake water (Balcı et al., 2018: 21). The high alkalinity (pH>9) water of the lake water, the white beaches and turquoise color of the current magnesite formations increase the importance of the lake (Akgül et al., 2017).

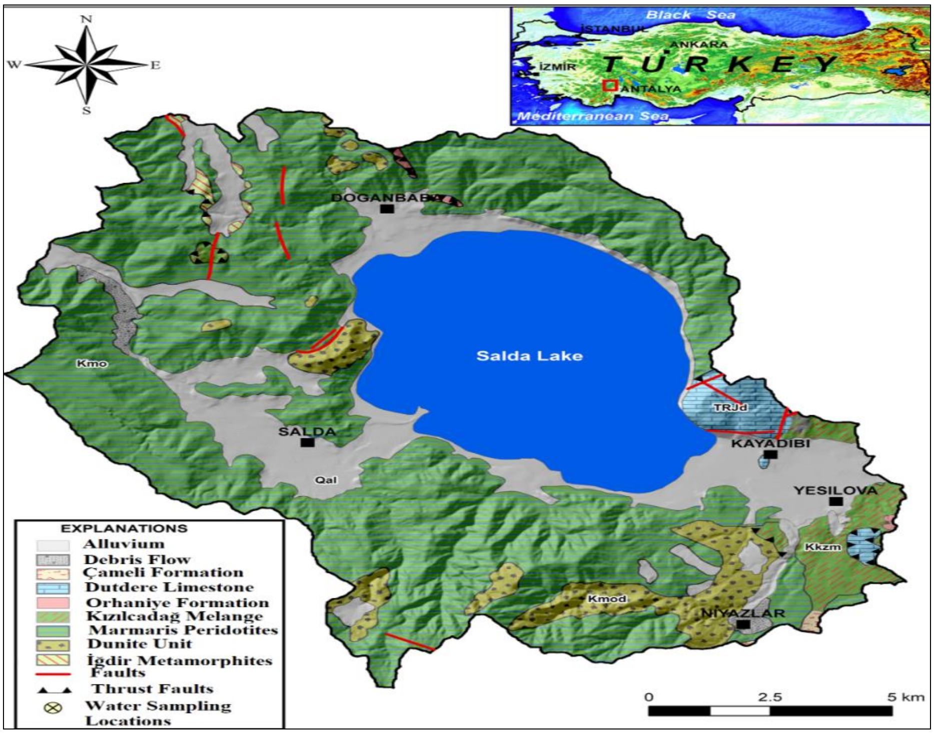

Figure 5. Location and geological map of the Salda Lake Basin (Source: Davraz et al., 2019)

Lake Salda has recently been revisited by Horgan et al. (2020) as an analog for the "marginal carbonates" in Jezero crater, Mars, which occupy a restricted elevation range that tracks the elevation of the delta top, suggesting a possible shoreline deposit for those carbonates (Horgan et al., 2020). At Lake Salda, hydromagnesite precipitates as coatings and cements in nearshore sediment associated with rocky shorelines and deltas (Braithwaite and Zedef, 1996). In addition, hydromagnesite comprises stromatolites in Lake Salda, which provides an analog for possible biosignature preservation on Mars (Braithwaite and Zedef, 1996; Russell et al., 1999). Laminated fabrics of primarily hydromagnesite makes up thrombolites and stromatolites in well studied modern alkaline lake environments within the Las Eras Lake, Spain (Sanz-Montero et al., 2019), Lake Salda, Turkey (Braithwaite and Zedef, 1994), and Lake Alchichica, Mexico (Kaźmierczak et al., 2011).

The water level of the lake increased continuously in the period of 1958-1969, but due to the drought in the period of 1970-1977, the water level of the lake decreased continuously . As a matter of fact, the water level decreased to 47 cm level in 1978. The water level drops between 1985-1999 developed depending on the dry period conditions and the groundwater withdrawals made in the areas around the lake (Kazancı et al., 1999: 36). Today, the use of groundwater for irrigation purposes, evaporation and karst aquifers around the lake have been shown as the reason for the lake water level to change approximately 50 cm per year (Balcı et al., 2018: 21). On the "Municipal Public Beach" operated by the Yeşilova Municipality of the lake, camping can be done with tents and caravans, and recreational activities such as picnics, excursions, swimming, clay mud baths can be carried out. However, since the area has been declared a Special Environmental Protection Area (SEPA), boat, boat and sailing canoe activities are not allowed on the lake. In addition, there are other recreational activities such as a 34 km bicycle tourism route in and around Salda Lake, highland tourism areas with lake views (Eşeler Mountain), winter tourism (Salda Ski Center, Photo 4), photo safari (bird watching), underwater diving and horse walking. There is also the potential to do activities; however, these activities cannot be carried out in the area yet. Entrance fees to the lake are paid by Yeşilova Municipality at the Municipality Public Beach

(Figure 6); It is taken by Yeşilova District Governorship at the entrance of Salda Village. However, with the declaration of the area as a SEPA, the municipality's beach operation permit was revoked after the 2019 October period. Salda Lake, from which the nature park takes its name, offers important economic values for the region, as well as opportunities for recreational activities and water sports, due to its unique natural structure, landscape beauty, water quality and suitability of the environmental structure. Salda Lake Nature Park hosts many visitors especially in summer months. In winter, Salda Ski Center (Figure 8) is the area that attracts the most visitors. Sultanpınarı around the lake is an important cultural value for the local people. The main ecotourism values of the sub-basin; natural areas, archaeological sites and villages (Anonymous, 2013; Kılınç and Kılınç, 2019). Salda Lake and its surroundings, botanical tourism, geomorphological formations, festival tourism, tradition tourism, road tourism, cultural walks, historical and archaeological tourism, faith tourism, balloon tourism, mountain/rock climbing, nature exploration (safari), extraordinary events. Examination, rafting, equestrian trekking, canoeing, surfing/sailing tourism and hot spring/spa (thermal) tourism are not carried out. On the other hand, nature photography, agriculture and farm tourism, bicycle tourism, trekking, climate comfort tourism including swimming and skiing, camping/caravan tourism and bird watching are carried out (Anonymous, 2013; Anonymous, 2018; Kılınç and Kılınç, 2019). Lake Salda visitors positively and negatively.

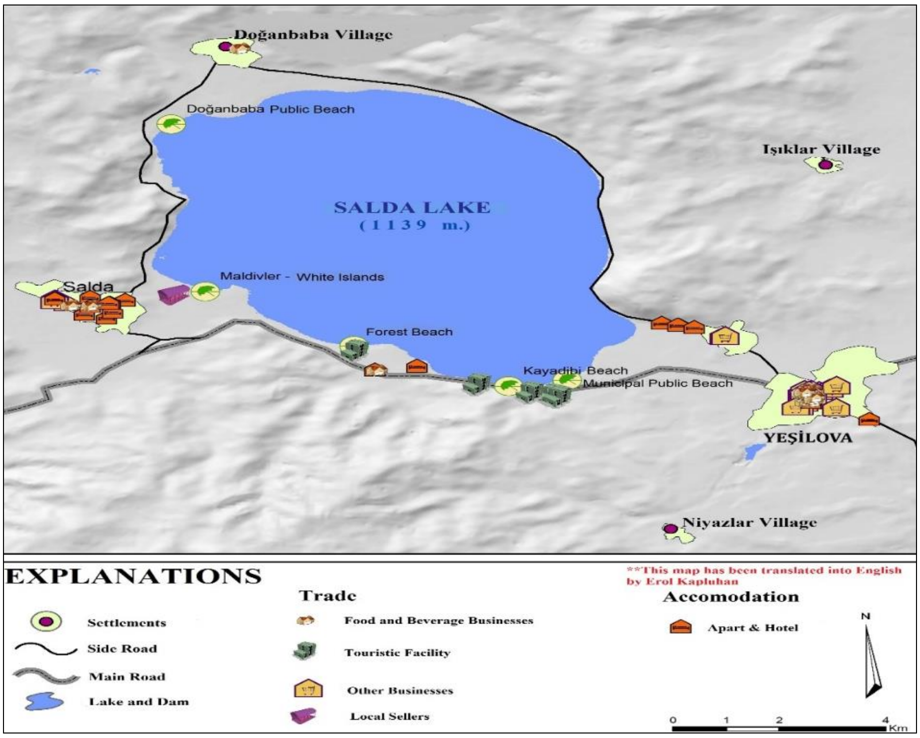

Figure 6. Distribution of Businesses Located in and Around Salda Lake (July 2019) (Source: Temurçin et al, 2019)

The positive experience dimension is natural structure, health, recreational activities, local people, geographical location and gastronomy; the negative experience dimension is the environment, infrastructure and superstructure, information and perceived service quality (Akay, 2020: 535). Lake Salda Nature Park offers a visual feast for photographers with its white sandy beach (Figure 7), forested land and sunset watching. At the same time, the summit of Kale Hill, which is located approximately 1.5 km northwest of Yeşilova district and east of Salda Lake and is very suitable for nature sports such as hiking and mountaineering, provides good opportunities for photography enthusiasts (Anonymous, 2018).


Figure 7. Salda Lake East Shore, Coastal Terraces and Beach (Source: Authors, 2022)

Salda Lake Nature Park, agriculture and animal husbandry opportunities in its nearby villages are other eco-tourism activities. Lake Salda Nature Park, Eşeler Mountain and Kale Hill, offer three different cycling routes for bicycle lovers. These; Yeşilova – Niyazlar – Eşeler Mountain Cycling Route, Yeşilova – Niyazlar Village – Eşeler Mountain – Dereköy Village Cycling Route and Salda Lake Cycling Route (Anonymous, 2013; Anonymous, 2018). Egeler Mountain, which has a wide and high plateau in the west of the Yeşilova district of Burdur province and is covered with forests, is a popular hiking area due to its terrain and climatic features. It has two separate hiking routes (Niyazlar Village - Eşeler Mountain - Tınaztepe Hiking Route and Doğanbaba Beach - Salda Lake White Islands Hiking Route) (Anonymous, 2018).

Lake Salda Nature Park has the Salda Ski Center, which is an important winter tourism area of the region (Photo 4). There are 5 runways, the longest of which is 1,600 m and the shortest of 950 m, and a chairlift line of 860 m in the center. There are Yeşilova Municipality and Doğanbaba Public Beaches, Salda Lake Nature Park, and camping areas intertwined with nature around Salda Lake (Anonymous, 2018; Kılınç and Kılınç, 2019).

Figure 8. Ski Center in Salda (Source: Authors, 2022)

Figure 9. Salda Lake Public Garden (Source: Authors, 2022)

Nation's Garden Project (Figure 9); Among the structures to be built on the beach area, which is planned as a Recreative and Recreation Area in the Conservation Implementation Development Plan, at the first 50th and second 50th meters after the Coastal Edge Line, which is the most valuable part of the lake ; seven kiosks, six dressing cabins, four cafes, three mosques, two nation's coffee houses, two administrative units, eight toilets, two health units, a kitchen, a scullery, two sitting units, two sales units, three small sales unit and covered seating platforms. The tender for the Social Facilities Construction, Infrastructure and Landscaping Work of the Yeşilova District of Burdur Province, Salda Lake Nation's Garden and the Nation's Garden was held on 31.07.2019 with the "Open Tender Procedure" specified in Article 19 of the Public Procurement Law No. 4734. 7 bidders submitted bids for the tender, and after the evaluation process, a contract was signed with the winning firm and the construction of the nation's garden was started. It has been calculated that the cost of the project will amount to approximately 22 million TL. Salda Lake tourism center, can be considered as an alternative tourism activity for tourists who spend their holidays in Antalya during the peak season, extending the stay of tourists and making an economic contribution to Salda Lake. In this direction, Isparta Kovada Lake, Eğirdir Lake-Rose, Lavender and Lily Gardens-Salda Lake were selected by tour agencies and tour guides for the recognition of lavender, rose and lily gardens in Isparta, as well as their cultural and natural attractions in Burdur. The creation of two important tour packages, namely Burdur Sagalassos Ancient City -Rose, Lavender and Lily Gardens-Salda Lake is a good example (Şapcılar et al., 2018: 364).

CONCLUSION

Salda Lake and its surroundings, located within the borders of Yeşilova district, is one of our underdeveloped regions where agriculture and animal husbandry are the main sources of livelihood. However, the region has a rich potential to be the subject of tourism in terms of its cultural and economic attractiveness, especially its natural environmental characteristics. Tourism activities for Salda Lake and its surroundings give clues that the tourism potential of this area can be better evaluated in the future and may be the key to development. Salda Lake and its surroundings offer a rich potential for the realization of various tourism activities. In order to protect the rich ecology and tourism potential of the research area, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism defined the lake as a “First Degree Natural Protection Area” in 1989 with the decision of the İzmir Cultural and Natural Heritage Preservation Board. This decision was amended by a new decision accepted by the Antalya Cultural and Natural Heritage Preservation Board in 1992 and declaring the lake surroundings as a 'Second Degree Natural Protection Area'. In addition, in 2006, Salda Lake and its surroundings were declared as “Tourism Center” and published in the official newspaper with the decision of the Council of Ministers numbered 11033. Finally, today, Salda Lake has been taken under protection as a “Natural Environmental Protection Area” with the President's decision dated 14.03.2019 and numbered 824. However, despite these legal arrangements to protect the site, various environmental problems can still be seen at a level that will harm the natural beauties of the site and its tourism potential. Illegal campfires and barbecues, especially around the lake, cause serious damage to the site. This situation also negatively affects the sustainable tourism activities of the area.

Salda Lake and its surroundings are a suitable area for the realization of various alternative tourism activities, especially lake tourism. Thanks to the natural beaches of Salda Lake consisting of white sand and the water quality suitable for swimming, swimming activities can be carried out. The most common type of tourism in the field is lake tourism. Recognition and tourist attraction of this type of tourism is relatively higher. Due to the swimming-based lake tourism attraction of Salda Lake, the increasing density causes various environmental pollutions on the lake shores and damages the white sandy beach of the lake. This situation creates threats in terms of the future of the touristic attractiveness of the area. In addition, Salda Lake offers a rich potential for water sports tourism such as sailing, surfing and underwater diving, depending on the characteristics of the lake water and the surrounding wind and temperature conditions.

However, activities for water sports tourism have not developed in the field. Among the most important reasons for this is the lack of a facility on the lake shore where various equipment suitable for sailing, surfing and underwater diving can be obtained, and the lack of qualified manpower to provide training for these types of sports. Depending on the natural attractions it has, Salda Lake and its surroundings offer the opportunity to carry out various activities for sustainable tourism. Due to the endemic plants and monumental trees around the lake, it offers a rich potential for botanical tourism. However, due to the fact that this type of tourism is an area that requires special attention and expertise, it could not develop in the field. There are various bird species around Salda Lake and Yarışlı Lake in the research area, and in this respect, they offer a rich potential for ornitho tourism (bird watching). However, there are not various facilities such as observation towers suitable for bird watching in the field, and due to the fact that it is a type of tourism that requires special attention, it could not develop in the field. The area offers health tourism potential as the water of Salda Lake and coastal dunes contain rich minerals. Health tourism can be realized with various activities in the form of mud baths. However, the recognition of this feature of the site by domestic and foreign tourists is limited. In addition, there is no area arranged suitable for health tourism activities on the lake shore or a facility that provides services in this area. This situation causes the recognition of the health tourism potential of the area and the tourist attraction in this area to be insufficient.

There are suitable areas on the shores of Salda Lake for camping and caravan tourism. Especially at Yeşilova Municipality Public Beach, which is close to the lake shore, there is a camping area consisting of tents and caravans. Participation in camping and caravan tourism increases due to lake tourism, especially in summer. However, this type of tourism cannot develop sufficiently around the lake and cannot provide sufficient economic contribution to the site.

Eseler Mountain, located southeast of Salda Lake, and other hilly areas in the area offer attractiveness for mountain tourism. In this context, it is possible to do mountaineering, nature walks, bicycle tours, paragliding, and photo safaris for the scenery. However, these types of tourism have not developed enough because they require special attention and the necessary infrastructure and promotional activities in the field are insufficient. Routes suitable for cycling and nature walks in the field were determined by Burdur Provincial Culture and Tourism Directorate officials in 2018. However, the fact that it could not be determined until 2018 caused the late start and recognition of tourism activities such as cycling, and nature walks in the field. Salda Lake and its surroundings, which have hosted many civilizations from the past to the present, have rich historical past and various historical remains. However, detailed studies have not been done enough to reveal the historical and cultural attractions of the site. For this reason, although the site offers a rich historical tourism potential, it has not developed enough in the historical tourism type. Lavender cultivation is carried out in Akçaköy, which is also located within this area, and the colorful landscapes of lavender in the summer and the lavender harvest works allow both photo safari and agro-tourism (agro tourism) types to be recognized and developed in the field. In recent years, tourism tours have been organized for the lavender fields in Akçaköy from the surrounding city centers such as Denizli and Antalya.

It is important for rural economic development to create a limited number of employment and to make a positive contribution to the unemployment problem with the tourism activities developed around Salda Lake. However, the fact that local governments create a monopoly in tourism businesses and do not allow local people to open business places causes people to criticize this situation and show a negative attitude. In reducing rural poverty, more importance should be given to the involvement of local people in tourism, and this issue should be dealt with in detail in the area management plan being prepared. Salda Lake and its surroundings are a very diverse and rich area with natural and human resources. However, it is seen that these resources are not used well enough in all economic and social fields, especially in field tourism. The stakeholders formed by the relevant institutions, organizations and individuals are of great importance in making the planning and investment decisions for the Yeşilova district and the surrounding of Salda Lake. In addition to the economic, social and cultural development of the Salda Lake environment in the future, especially in tourism, it is also tourism to ensure its recognition in the national and international arena. If the Nation's Garden Operation Tender, which will be held on the edge of Salda Lake, is awarded to outsiders and the local people are kept behind tourism, except for the sale of local products, the view of the local people towards the development of tourism will be more negative. For rural economic development, it is necessary to include the local people in the area management plan of the lake, to encourage them to be in tourism and to eliminate their administrative problems. In other words, it will ensure the sustainability of tourism in the area by identifying the tourism-related problems of the local people and solving these problems. Therefore, for rural development, environmental, social and economic development of the lake area should be evaluated holistically.

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COOPERATION, SUPPLY CHAIN PERFORMANCE AND TOUR OPERATOR PERFORMANCE: A CASE STUDY OF TOURISM SUPPLY CHAIN IN VIETNAM

Van Nam MAI
Can Tho University, School of Graduate, Can Tho, Vietnam, e-mail: mvnam@ctu.edu.vn

Quoc Nghi NGUYEN*
Can Tho University, School of Economics, Department of Marketing, Can Tho, Vietnam, e-mail: quocnghi@ctu.edu.vn

Du Ha Long NGUYEN
Nam Can Tho University, Faculty of Tourism - Hospitality Management, Can Tho, Vietnam, e-mail: longndh27@gmail.com

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Abstract: Cooperation among members in the supply chain is essential and is a core element in the supply chain management strategy. This article uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis methods. Structural equation modeling (SEM) demonstrates the relationship between cooperation, tourism supply chain performance, and operator performance in Vietnam. Research collected data from 242 domestic and international tour operators located in major Vietnam cities such as Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi City, Da Nang City, and Can Tho City. The study has demonstrated that cooperation positively affects tourism supply chain performance and operator performance. Besides, tourism supply chain performance benefits operator performance in the Vietnamese tourism supply chain.

Key words: Cooperation, tourism supply chain performance, tour operator performance, tourism supply chain

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INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, fierce competition occurs in supply chains more than individual enterprises (Zhang et al., 2009). Therefore, supply chain management has been highly concerned as an effective tool to cope with the challenges in the competitive market (Kim, 2010; Tellioglu, 2021). Furthermore, building close linkages among members of the supply chain helps companies improve their performance (Topolšek and Dragan, 2016), reduce supply chain risks (Faisal et al., 2006; Kim, 2010), and improve supply chain performance (Narasimhan and Kim, 2002).

In the fiercely competitive environment of the tourism industry, tour operators have closely connected to improve their efficiency (Dragan et al., 2015). Also, travel agencies focus on building close relationships with other members in the supply chain to share information, resources, and risks (Golicic, 2003). This supports tour operators' performance (Topolšek and Dragan, 2016). According to Qrunfleh and Tarafda (2014), the improvement of the supply chain positively affects the performance of tour operators. Therefore, enterprises in the tourism supply chain need to care about strategic cooperation with suppliers, customers, and competitors to survive and develop (Frohlich and Westbrook, 2001; Flynn et al., 2010). The literature review has shown that there are many studies about the relationship between collaboration, supply chain performance, and enterprise performance. However, most studies have been conducted in developed countries while few studies have been conducted in developing countries with similar contexts to Vietnam. The COVID-19 epidemic has broken the original business network structure and globally affected the tourism supply chains (Haque, 2022). Cooperation in building and developing tourism supply chains is an appropriate approach to limit risks and improve the adaptability and performance of the supply chain's members. Therefore, this study was carried out to demonstrate the impact of cooperation on supply chain performance and operator performance participating in the tourism supply chain in Vietnam. Besides, the study has indicated the correlation between supply chain performance and operator performance participating in the tourism supply chain. The research results are the scientific basis to build a tourism supply chain management strategy.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

1. Theoretical framework

Tourism Supply Chain

The tourism supply chain is a network of tourism organizations consisting of entertainment service providers, transportation companies, accommodation facilities, souvenir shops, tour operators, and public service providers (Zhang et al., 2009). The tourism supply chain represents the cooperation of individuals, organizations, and enterprises in producing and providing tourism services, information, and tangible products to tourists directly or indirectly

* Corresponding author

(Piboonrungroj and Disney, 2009). The tourism supply chain is approached from two aspects: the existence of participants and the cooperation between members in the supply chain to share information, reduce risks, improve business performance, and bring the highest satisfaction to visitors.

Collaboration

Supply chain collaboration is the formation of close and long-term partnerships that work together to share information, resources, and risks to accomplish collective or individual goals (Golicic, 2003). Collaboration brings plenty of benefits to running a continuous supply chain and closely connects its members (Piboonrungroj and Disney, 2009). Collaboration in the supply chain is classified into three dimensions: horizontal, vertical, and multidimensional (Barratt, 2004).

Supply Chain Performance

Supply chain performance is defined as producing and delivering products or services to meet customer needs, thereby enhancing efficiency for the supply chain participants (Vickery et al., 2003; Chen et al., 2004). In addition, supply chain performance is measured by the flexibility, cooperation among members, and responsiveness to customer requirements (Qrunfleh and Tarafdar, 2014). Flexibility is the ability to adapt to market changes quickly and efficiently by supply chain members (Vickery et al., 1999). Collaboration is the degree of coordination among supply chain members in activities, communication, and decision-making (Stock et al., 2000). Finally, responsiveness represents how the supply chain's members respond timely to customer needs (Chen et al., 2004).

Operator Performance

Operator performance reflects how an operator fulfills its financial and market objectives compared with its major competitors (Li et al., 2006; Qrunfleh and Tarafdar, 2014). To measure operator performance, three factors used include financial performance, operational performance, and overall effectiveness (Zhao et al., 2013). In addition to this, operator performance can be measured by sales growth, profit growth, market share growth, productivity growth, and competitiveness improvement (Stock et al., 2000; Narasimhan and Kim, 2002; Chen and Paulraj, 2004; Chang and King, 2005; Petersen et al., 2005; Li et al., 2006; Flynn et al., 2010; Cao and Zhang, 2011).

2. Research hypotheses

Relationship between collaboration and supply chain performance

Supply chain collaboration positively impacts performance (Narasimhan and Kim, 2002). The partnership quality between buyers and sellers positively impacts the supply chain performance (Srinivasan et al., 2011; Ali and Shukran, 2016; Mofokeng and Chinomona, 2019). The close cooperation among enterprises motivates the tourism industry (Theuvsen, 2004). Therefore, the H1 hypothesis is proposed: Collaboration positively affects tourism supply chain performance.

Relationship between collaboration and operator performance

Collaboration has a positive effect on operator performance (Simatupang and Sridharan, 2004). Furthermore, collaboration in the supply chain improves the tour operator's performance (Cao and Zhang, 2011; Huo, 2012). Besides, cooperation in the supply chain beneficially influences the performance of tourism agencies (Dragan et al., 2015). Moreover, the connection of the tour operator with other members of the supply chain has a positive impact on its performance (Topolšek and Dragan, 2016). Thus, hypothesis H2 is as follows: Collaboration positively affects the performance of tour operators.

The relationship between tourism supply chain performance and operator performance

Supply chain collaboration increases the efficiency of information sharing, thereby improving the performance of supply chain members (Rai et al., 2006; Zhang et al., 2006). Also, supply chain flexibility is positively correlated with operator performance (Sanchez and Perez, 2005). Supply chain performance positively affects the performance of its participants (Qrunfleh and Tarafda, 2014). Hence, hypothesis H3 is suggested as Tourism supply chain performance positively influences operator performance. Based on the above literature review and research hypotheses, the study used participatory rural appraisal (PRA) with two supply chain experts and four directors of travel agencies. The result of the assessment helps identify the appropriate evaluating scales. The proposed research model is as below.

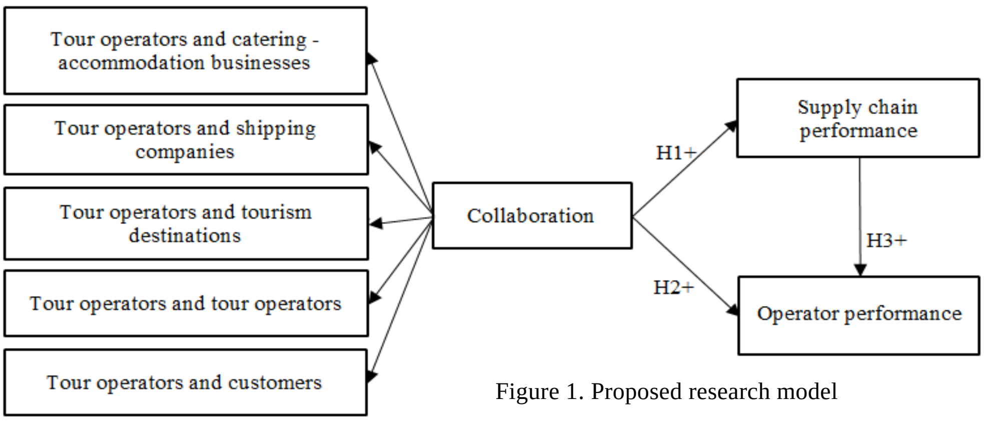


Figure 1. Proposed research model

Table 1. Interpretation of observed variables in the research model

Factor	Observed variables	Scales	References resources
Collaboration between tour operators and accommodation businesses (ACC)	ACC1: We maintain active cooperation with accommodation and catering establishments.	Likert 1-5	Zhao et al. (2013), Li et al. (2006)
	ACC 2: We help accommodation and catering establishments improve their service quality.	Likert 1-5	
	ACC3: We exchange information with accommodation and catering establishments during the product/service design process.	Likert 1-5	
Collaboration between tour operators and shipping companies (SHI)	SHI1: Shipping companies share shipping schedules and shipping capacity with us.	Likert 1-5	Flynn et al. (2010)
	SHI2: We share market information and demand forecasts with the shipping companies.	Likert 1-5	
	SHI3: We help shipping companies improve their services to meet customer needs.	Likert 1-5	
Collaboration between tour operators and tourism destinations (DES)	DES1: We and the tourism destinations keep each other informed about market information and changing demands.	Likert 1-5	Simatupang and Sridharan (2005), Cao and Zhang, 2011, Li et al. (2006)
	DES2: We and tourism destinations make plans for essential events.	Likert 1-5	
	DES3: We and tourism destinations share benefits and find solutions for problems.	Likert 1-5	
Collaboration between tour operators and tours operators (TOU)	TOU1: We and other tour operators exchange information about spare capacity, sales, and market forecasts.	Likert 1-5	Topolšek and Dragan (2016)
	TOU2: We and other tour operators make plans and solve supply chain problems.	Likert 1-5	
	TOU3: We and other tour operators work together to reduce costs and improve operational efficiency.	Likert 1-5	
Collaboration between tour operators and customers (CUS)	CUS1: We keep close contact with our customers.	Likert 1-5	Zhao et al. (2013)
	CUS2: Customers give us feedback on the service quality.	Likert 1-5	
	CUS3: Customers are actively involved in our product design processes.	Likert 1-5	
Supply chain performance (SCP)	SCP1: The supply chain meets the detailed requirements of special customers.	Likert 1-5	Vickery et al. (1999), Chen et al. (2004), Qrunfleh and Tarafdar (2014)
	SCP2: The supply chain provides products meeting the needs of different choices, experiences, and prices.	Likert 1-5	
	SCP3: The supply chain can quickly improve to respond promptly to changing customer needs.	Likert 1-5	
	SCP4: The supply chain quickly introduces new products.	Likert 1-5	
	SCP5: The supply chain has a prompt and flexible response time to customer requests.	Likert 1-5	
Tour operator performance (TOP)	TOP1: Our company has grown in sales.	Likert 1-5	Flynn et al. (2010), Li et al. (2006), Cao and Zhang (2011)
	TOP2: Our company has increased profit.	Likert 1-5	
	TOP3: Our company has grown in market shares.	Likert 1-5	
	TOP4: Our company has gradually improved its competitive position.	Likert 1-5	
	TOP5: The labor productivity in our company has increased.	Likert 1-5	

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Analytical method

To test the proposed hypotheses, qualitative analysis and quantitative analysis are applied (Figure 2). First, the participatory rural appraisal (PRA) is used to identify the appropriate scales for the research model. The quantitative analysis used includes testing the reliability of scales by Cronbach's alpha coefficient, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to evaluate the convergent and discriminant validity, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test the suitability of research data, and structural equation modeling (SEM) to test the research hypotheses.

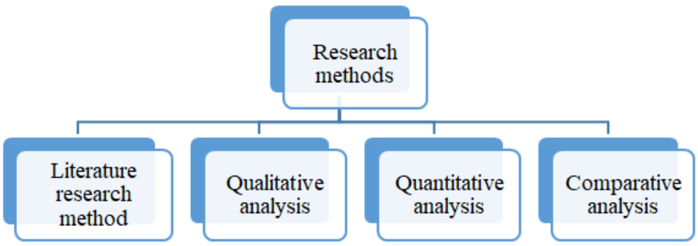


Figure 2. Flowchart of the research methods (compiled by the authors)

2. Data collection method

To ensure the reliability of the SEM method, the sample size should be significant because it is based on the theory of sample distribution (Raykov and Widaman, 1995); it should be 200 observations (Hoelter, 1983; Hoyle, 1995). In linear structural analysis, the appropriate sample size is determined based on the number of factors (Hair et al., 2010); the minimum sample size should be 150 if the number of elements is 7 or less, each factor has more than 3 observed variables with communalities values in EFA are from 0.5 or higher (Hair et al., 2010). Therefore, the sample size must have at least 200 observations based on the proposed research model, the authors surveyed from September 2020 to November 2020 by direct and email interviews. The survey respondents are the Director Board of domestic and international tour operators. The research sample size achieved is 242 operators (177 international and 65 domestic) with headquarters located in major cities in Vietnam such as Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi City, Da Nang City, and Can Tho City. Thus, the sample size is satisfactory, ensuring reliability for the model test.

The demographic characteristics of respondents are shown in Table 2. The proportion of males and females is not too different (53.72% for males and 46.28% for females). The "46 to 60 years old" group accounts for the highest proportion (47.93%). Regarding education background, most respondents have university degrees (54.13%). Respondents who have more than 10 years of experience account for 86.36%. All respondents are members of the board of directors of travel agencies, in which the Chief Executive Officer holds the highest proportion (40.5%).

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of respondents (n = 242)

Gender	**Frequency**	**(%)**	**Years of management**	**Frequency**	**(%)**
Male	130	53.72	Under 10 years	33	13.64
Female	112	46.28	10 - 15 years	77	31.82
Age	**Frequency**	**(%)**	16 - 20 years	92	38.01
30 - 45	52	21.49	Over 20 years	40	16.53
46 - 60	116	47.93	**Position**	**Frequency**	**(%)**
Over 60	74	30.58	Chief Executive Officer	98	40.50
Education background	**Frequency**	**(%)**	Chief Marketing Officer	48	19.83
Intermediate/College	65	26.86	Chief Commercial Officer	52	21.49
University	131	54.13	Chief Operations Officer	44	18.18
Postgraduate	46	19.01			

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Scale reliability test

In this study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient is used to test the reliability of the scales in the research model. Table 3 shows that all the observed variables have the corrected item-total correlation greater than 0.3. In addition, the research scales have Cronbach's alpha values from 0.705 to 0.866. This shows that all research scales meet the reliability requirements (Nunnally, 1978; Peterson, 1994; Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994; Slater, 1995).

Table 3. Scale reliability test

Observed variables	**Mean**	**Standard deviation**	**Factor loading**	**Cronbach's alpha**
Collaboration between tour operators and accommodation businesses (ACC)				0.705
ACC1	3.88	0.560	0.586	
ACC2	3.86	0.658	0.737	
ACC3	3.99	0.562	0.679	
Collaboration between tour operators and shipping companies (SHI)				0.720
SHI1	3.52	0.925	0.508	
SHI2	3.63	0.821	0.888	
SHI3	3.79	0.788	0.549	
Collaboration between tour operators and tourism destinations (DES)				0.792
DES1	3.74	0.754	0.800	
DES2	3.73	0.751	0.818	
DES3	3.67	0.727	0.677	
Collaboration between tour operators and tours operators (TOU)				0.866
TOU1	3.39	0.788	0.660	
TOU2	3.40	0.889	0.872	
TOU3	3.42	0.847	0.867	
Collaboration between tour operators and customers (CUS)				0.749
CUS1	3.66	0.821	0.723	
CUS2	3.67	0.772	0.787	
CUS3	3.36	0.829	0.552	
Supply chain performance (SCP)				0.818
SCP1	3.93	0.654	0.747	
SCP2	3.92	0.758	0.652	
SCP3	3.87	0.705	0.791	
SCP4	3.67	0.750	0.588	
SCP5	3.42	0.842	0.685	
Tour operator performance (TOP)				0.855
TOP1	3.91	0.682	0.680	
TOP2	4.00	0.587	0.744	
TOP3	3.89	0.642	0.793	
TOP4	3.78	0.711	0.706	
TOP5	3.82	0.682	0.778	

Next, the study conducts EFA to test the convergent and discriminant validity of the scales in the research model. The test result proves that the statistical values are guaranteed. (1) The reliability of the observed variables is satisfactory, with the factor loading value higher than 0.5 (Hair et al., 1998). (2) The model suitability test receives a KMO value = 0.816 (Hair et al., 1998). (3) Bartlett's test on the correlation of observed variables meets the requirement with Sig. = 0.000 (Hair et al., 1998). Cumulative variance test = 67.9% higher than 50% (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). These values show that the observed variables included in the model have high explanatory power. The seven factors formed from 25 observed variables are consistent with the scales in the proposed research model. After the EFA analysis, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is used to test the suitability of the research data. The test results are guaranteed as follows: Chi-square/df = 1,717 < 2 with $P = 0.000 \leq 0.05$; TLI and CFI reach 0.911 and 0.925, respectively, all > 0.9; RMSEA = 0.055 < 0.08 (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988; Hair et al., 2014). This indicates that the model fits the market data.

The standardized regression weights of the scale are greater than 0.5, and the unstandardized regression weights are statistically significant, so the factors acquire convergent validity. Besides, the correlation coefficients between the elements are less than 1, and the standard deviations are less than 0.05. Therefore, the research factors receive discriminant validity. The composite reliability (Pc) values are satisfactory, with a minimum of 0.71. Although the average variance extracted from some scales are low (0.4 < Pvc < 0.5), the Pc values of all scales are more significant than 0.6. Hence, the seven scales meet the requirement (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

Table 4. CFA and SEM test results

Evaluating indicators	CFA	SEM	Comparative coefficient	Resources
χ^2	432.685	449.081		Gerbing and Anderson (1988), Hair et al. (2014)
Df	252	265		
χ^2/df	1.717	1.695	≤ 2	
P-value	0.000	0.000	< 0.05	
TLI	0.911	0.914	≥ 0.9	
CFI	0.925	0.924	≥ 0.9	
RMSEA	0.055	0.054	≤ 0.08	

Table 5. Analytical result summary

Factor	Number of observed variables	Composite Reliability (P_c)	Average variance extracted (P_{vc})	Reference resources
Collaboration between tour operators and accommodation businesses (ACC)	4	0.71	0.45	Fornell and Larcker (1981)
Collaboration between tour operators and shipping companies (SHI)	4	0.73	0.47	
Collaboration between tour operators and tourism destinations (DES)	3	0.80	0.57	
Collaboration between tour operators and tours operators (TOU)	3	0.87	0.69	
Collaboration between tour operators and customers (CUS)	4	0.75	0.51	
Supply chain performance (SCP)	4	0.81	0.47	
Tour operator performance (TOP)	4	0.85	0.53	

2. Research hypotheses test

Structural equation modeling (SEM) is used to test the research hypotheses. The results of the analysis are in Figure 3 and Table 6. Based on Table 6, hypotheses H1, H2, and H3 are accepted with a 99% significance level. The relationship between factors is explained below.

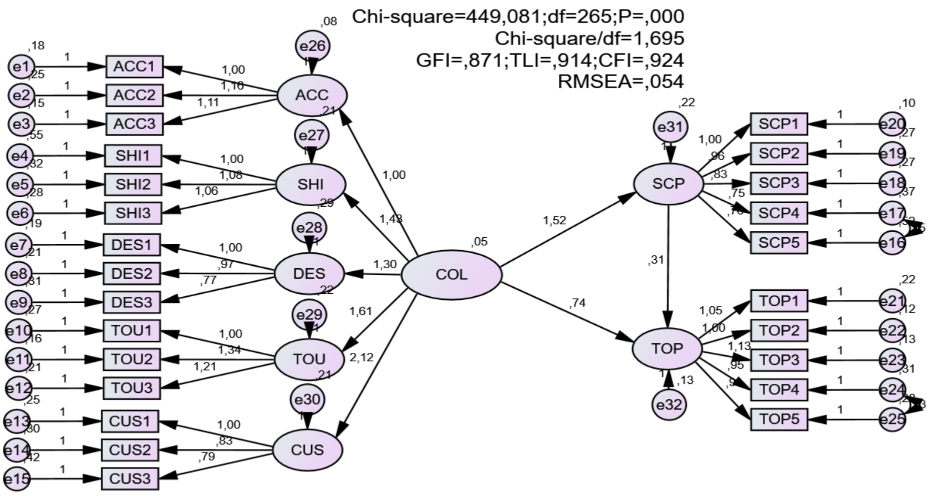


Figure 3. Model Fit SEM

Hypothesis H1: Collaboration positively affects tourism supply chain performance Table 5 shows that collaboration (COL) and tourism supply chain performance have a positive relationship, with a standardized coefficient is 0.575 and a statistical significance of p = 0.000. The result is consistent with studies by Narasimhan and Kim (2002), Srinivasan et al. (2011), Ali and Shukran (2016), Mofokeng and Chinomona (2019). This means that if a tour operator has good cooperation with other supply chain members (accommodation establishments, transportation companies, tourist destinations, other tour operators, or customers), the performance of the supply chain improves. For example, if the tour operator maintains close relationships, shares market information, develops products, and shares risks with other members, the supply chain performance will be enhanced.

Table 6. Research hypotheses test

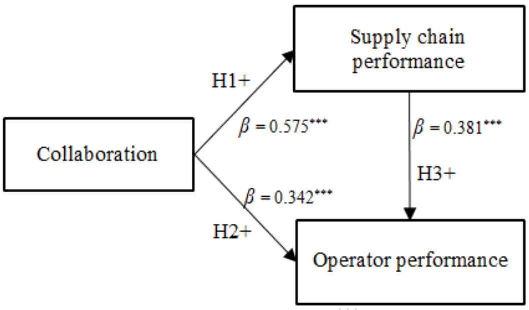
Relationship	Standardized			Standardized estimated value	Significance level	Hypothesis
	Estimated value	Standard error S.E	Critical ratio C.R			
SCP <-- COL	0.593	0.128	4.641	0.575	***	H1: accepted
TOP <-- COL	0.379	0.120	3.159	0.342	***	H2: accepted
TOP <-- SCP	0.410	0.108	3.814	0.381	***	H3: accepted

Hypothesis H2: Collaboration has a positive effect on the performance of tour operators. In this hypothesis, the standardized coefficient = 0.342 and the statistical significance p = 0.000. This demonstrates a positive relationship between collaboration and operator performance. The result is similar to studies by Simatupang and Sridharan (2004), Cao and Zhang (2011), Huo (2012), Dragan et al. (2015), Topolšek and Dragan (2016). The result points out the importance of supply chain collaboration to the performance of tour operators. As the collaboration grows, the supply chain operation ensures continuity (Piboonrungroj and Disney, 2009), limits risks (Golicic, 2003), and improves the operational efficiency of tour operators (Topolšek and Dragan, 2016).

Hypothesis H3: Supply chain performance positively affects the performance of tour operators. The analytical result shows a positive relationship between supply chain performance and operator performance, with the standardized coefficient = 0.381 and statistical significance p = 0.000. As supply chain performance improves, this represents better flexibility and responsiveness to customer requirements (Chen et al., 2004; Qrunfleh and Tarafdar, 2014). Therefore, the performance of enterprises participating in the supply chain raises (Sanchez and Perez, 2005, Qrunfleh and Tarafda, 2014). The ultimate purpose of supply chain management activities is to enhance the performance of its members (Li et al., 2006).

CONCLUSION

The study has demonstrated a strong relationship between collaboration, tourism supply chain performance, and tour operator performance. The cooperation among members supports the tourism supply chain's performance, thereby improving tour operators' performance. The research results confirm the essential role of collaboration in the supply chain management strategy and prove that the close coordination between travel agencies benefits the tourism industry (Theuvsen, 2004). To conclude, it shows that tour operators must cooperate in the supply chain as it is critical in the supply chain management strategy. The research results provide an essential scientific basis for tourism supply chain managers and a basis for strategic planning to connect parties in the supply chain to improve the quality of the supply chain performance and business productivity. Besides, the research results have confirmed the importance of cooperation in supply chain management strategy. Especially in the context of the Covid-19 epidemic and the disruption of the tourism supply chain in Vietnam, the role of cooperation in the tourism supply chain becomes even more critical.



Note: β = path coefficient, *** p = 0.000
Figure 4. Mediation effect (Source: authors)

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POTENTIAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRITOURISM IN THE FOOD SUPPLY ZONE OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN, NUR-SULTAN CITY

Gulnara Sh. OSPANOVA*
L. N. Gumilyev Eurasian National University, Department of Physical and Economical Geography, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, e-mail: ospanova_14@mail.ru

Abdimazhit A. SAIPOV
L. N. Gumilyev Eurasian National University, Department of Physical and Economical Geography, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, e-mail: saipov1954@mail.ru

Aigul M. SERGEYEVA
K. Zhubanov Aktobe Regional University, Department of Geography and Tourism, Aktobe, Kazakhstan, e-mail: sergeyeva.aigul@gmail.com

Kuat T. SAPAROV
L. N. Gumilyev Eurasian National University, Department of Physical and Economical Geography, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, e-mail: k.sapar67@yandex.ru

Miroslava Zh. OMIRZAKOVA
K. Zhubanov Aktobe Regional University, Department of Geography and Tourism, Aktobe, Kazakhstan, e-mail: omirzakovamiroslava@gmail.com

Raushan D. NURYMOVA
Korkytata Kyzylorda University, Department of Agricultural Technologies, Kyzylorda, Kazakhstan, e-mail: rau066@mail.rux

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Abstract: One of the important situations is the agricultural production and sustainable development of the suburban zone of the city of Nur-Sultan, the organization of agritourism. In this regard, this study examines the development of agritourism in the food supply zone of the city Nur – Sultan. The object of the study is the suburban areas of Nur-Sultan. The purpose of the article is to identify the problem of formation and development of agrotourism in the agro-food complex of the metropolis suburban area and to propose a model for the development of the food supply zone of the city of Nur-Sultan. The main research method is a spatial analysis of the location of administrative regions in the food supply zone. In the course of the study, the article gives an integral assessment of the tourism potential of the regions of the food supply zone and identifies priority areas for the development of agricultural routes.

Key words: agritourism, agriculture, food supply zone, agricultural farms, agricultural products, Nur-Sultan city

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INTRODUCTION

Agritourism referred to the activities and practices of using farms to provide recreational and educational services to the population has become the basis of modern tourism literature (Barbieri, 2020). The potential benefits of sustainable rural agritourism growth are economic, socio-cultural, environmental and recreational compared to mass tourism development initiatives (Phillip et al., 2010; Flanigan et al., 2014; Korobova, 2019). With the global integration of agricultural markets, agritourism represents one of the few means available apart from innovative production facilities and tools, access to globalized funds and encouraging farming among younger generations for the long-term economic viability of many small to medium-sized agricultural enterprises (Sieczko et al., 2020; Stroeva et al., 2021a; Montefrio and Sin, 2021b). Agritourism indeed contributes to the creation of more sustainable multi-functional rural areas through farm diversification and conservation of natural and cultural resources. Given the significant implications for the future of the agrarian economy, it is necessary to better define what constitutes the conditions for its success (LaPan and Barbieri, 2014; Polukhina and Rukomoinikova, 2018). Agritourism is a small branch of agriculture. This is the direction of such an activity that allows to involve the masses of the population living in rural areas of the country and at the same time preserve the local, national color, customs, culture (Sergeyeva et al., 2021). The advantage of agritourism is that it is not focused on the simultaneous attraction of large loans. It is able to gradually relying on small investments attracting small financial influences from a variety of sources. Agritourism is a newly developed type of tourism that plays an important role in

* Corresponding author

promoting the sustainable development of the rural economy and the ecological environment. The spatial distribution of agritourism consumption is an important basis for developing an agritourism development plan (Jiang and Wang, 2018). With the growth of the urban population urban living quarters are becoming more and more crowded every year, which leads to many problems such as traffic congestion and life stress. Agritourism has become a favorable choice for the "slow life". Agritourism includes any agricultural operation or activity that brings visitors to a farm or ranch. The existence of cities has led to the accumulation of a powerful reserve of consumer power for the development of agritourism. Agritourism has often been presented as a means of revitalizing a declining rural economy by raising and diversifying household incomes, preventing rural exodus and preserving an agrarian culture. We argue, however, that it may also have a different type of rural revitalization bias that emphasizes the production of spectacle, sometimes at the expense of food production. The key principles of agritourism are a rural hospitality (special atmosphere), traditional and home cooking (delicious food from natural products), new knowledge and skills (teaching tourists a craft), own subsidiary farm or production (livestock farm, fishing, etc.), authentic external and internal appearance of the object (architecture with the preservation of traditional culture) (Kline et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2019). Agritourism allows to cover several important socio-economic and environmental tasks at once, namely environmental protection, maintaining the traditional ways of life in the village, preserving nature and ecology, orienting tourists to proper nutrition and a healthy lifestyle, economic and multiplier effect, increasing the scope of activities of the rural population (Andéhn and Decosta, 2021).

Kazakhstan has the necessary natural and recreational potential to develop all types and forms of tourism, including agritourism. Favorable natural and recreational potential creates opportunities for the development of tourism, including agritourism, only if there is a number of certain socio-economic, environmental, political and other conditions and with an appropriate level of economic development (Seken et al., 2019; Plokhikh et al., 2022). Therefore, tourism as a special area of economic activity is an inseparable element of the country's development. The main reason that Kazakhstan does not use tourism with maximum efficiency is, in our opinion, in addition to objective economic, political, military and other conditions, is a poor understanding of the essence and significance of such a multifaceted concept as tourism and especially agritourism. The country entered into market relations when there were significant changes in the international tourism market. The acquired experience in the development of tourism (agritourism) in the "Soviet period" became clearly insufficient during the period of the market. Therefore, in order to raise the country's tourism industry and make it profitable it was necessary to analyze international experience in the field of tourism and agritourism and the possibility of its application in small towns and in rural regions of the country. The agritourism business is relatively new to Kazakhstan (Kenebayeva, 2014; Wendt et al., 2021). Therefore, the problems of forming the principles of functioning of the agritourism sector in the country in the economic literature are far from sufficiently developed ones. In addition, the legal documents adopted by the government (laws, state programs, decrees, orders, etc.) in the field of tourism, regional development, poverty reduction and economic development as well as the revival recorded in this industry give an additional impetus to the creation of the tourism and hospitality industry countries (Wendt, 2020a; Shaken et al., 2020b).

According to the Committee on Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan, today 57.6% of the country's population lives in cities and about 43% in rural areas, which indicates the existing huge potential for the development of agricultural tourism. For comparison, twenty years ago the share of the urban population was 55.8%. Over the past 10 years, the growth of the urban population in the country has exceeded the growth rate of the rural population by 8 times (Yegemberdiyeva et al., 2020). The current population of Nur-Sultan is 1239886 people (Development Plan of the Akmola region for 2021-2025). This figure reflects only the number of officially residing in the city. Real population figures are higher (people without registration and others). The city Nur-Sultan is the center of the pendulum migration of the region and the center of the agglomeration. Thus, in addition to the city itself, the agglomeration includes Arshaly, Tselinograd, Shortandy, Akkol districts (4 rural districts) of Akmola region. One of the most important principles for the formation of a regional agro-industrial complex is the focus on national and regional needs for food products, taking into account the natural and economic conditions for the development of agriculture in the region. It is worth noting that about 44.7 thousand people arrive in the capital and suburbs every year. The actual population growth has exceeded the projected parameters of the current master plan of the city of Nur-Sultan. According to the current master plan of Nur-Sultan, it was planned that the capital would become a millionaire by 2030, but this happened 10 years earlier. Rapid population growth has forced the development of a new master plan for the city with a population expected to reach two million by 2035. It is also necessary to take into account the population as a whole for the agglomeration, which will also increase. It is necessary to create a developed food supply zone around the city of Nur-Sultan in order to provide the predicted population with food products. In accordance with this principle, the purpose of the article is to determine the potential, specialization and combination of agriculture with tourism, which in turn affects the composition of a particular regional agro-industrial complex.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The theoretical and methodological basis of the study is the methods and results of research by Kazakh and foreign scientists in the field of agritourism and food security. The data on expeditions to the settlements of the Akmola region in 2020-2021 were studied that had been obtained in the Kazakhstan Association of Agro and Rural Tourism. This study was carried out using the methods of comparative geographical analysis, cartographic method, processing of statistical data, official documents and literary sources. The food supply zone of Nur-Sultan includes 17 administrative districts of the Akmola region (1. Akkol, 2. Arshaly, 3. Atbasar, 4. Astrahan, 5. Burabay, 6. Bulandy, 7. Birzhan-sal, 8. Egindikol, 9 10. Esil, 11. Zhaksy, 12. Zharkain, 13. Zerendy, 14. Korgalzhyn, 15. Tselinograd, 16. Sandyktau, 17. Shortandy) and 4 administrative districts of the Karaganda region (18. Abay, 19. Bukhar- Zhyrau, 20. Nura, 21. Osakarov districts).

An expert assessment was made for the blocks of each of the 21 identified zones to determine the agritourism potential of the Nur-Sultan food supply zone. The Delphi method was used for this: a ten-point assessment of factors. Where 1 point is the lowest influence of the factor, 10 is the highest score (the greatest influence of the factor), 6 points is interpreted as an average score, 5 or less are below average scores indicating the need for improvement. We have proposed 3 groups of factors: tourism resources, institutional structure, block of related industries. Tourist and recreational potential include a large number of factors such as the availability of water resources, forest resources, mineral resources, tourist routes, natural and cultural monuments, etc. The institutional structure of the potential includes transport accessibility, accommodation, sanatorium and resort facilities. Related industries consider the presence of ethno-villages (ehtno-aul) in the area as well as the opportunity to purchase souvenirs, the presence of handicrafts in the ethno-village, the production of environmentally friendly products.

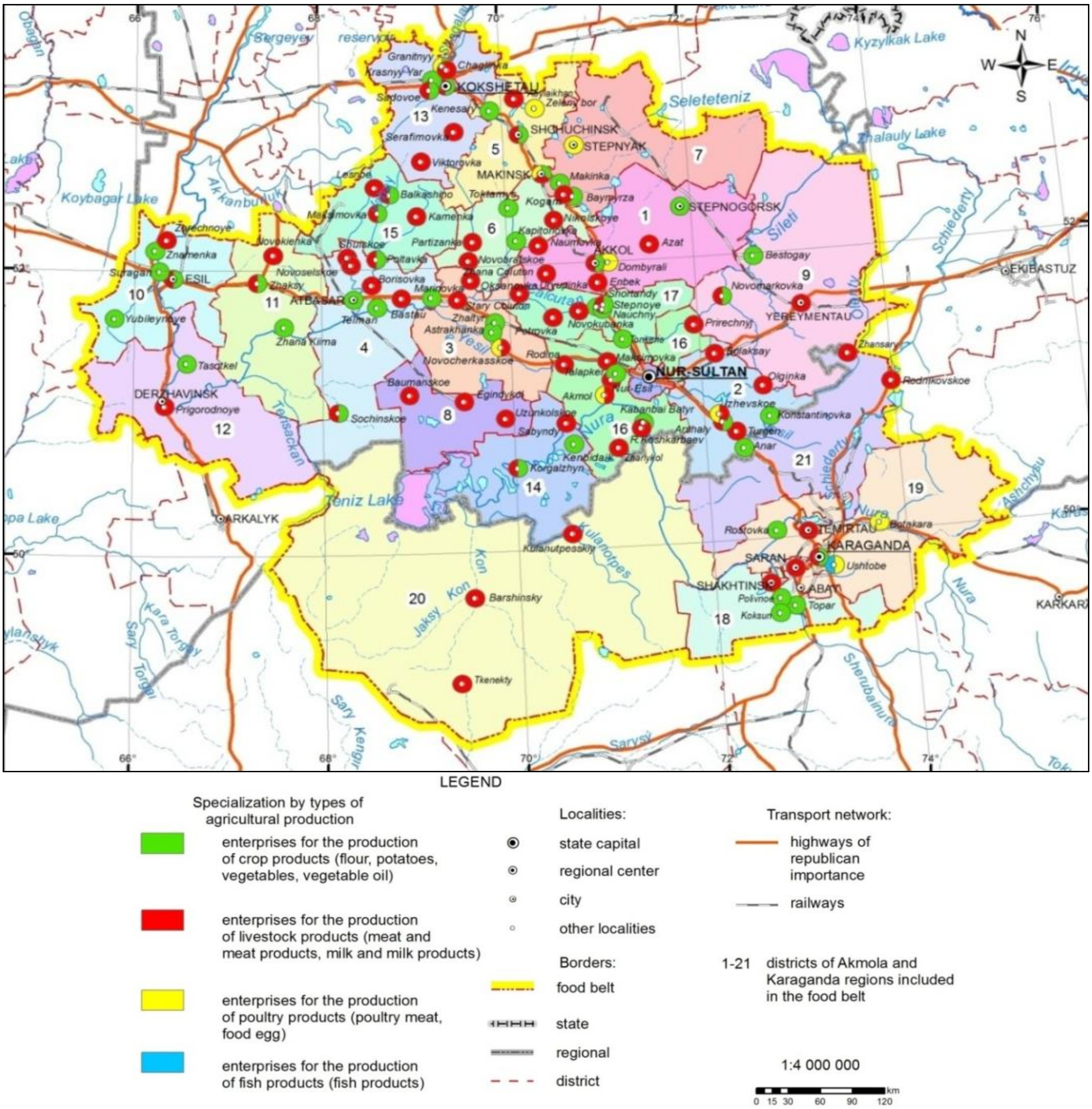

Figure 1. Map of the spatial and territorial distribution of enterprises for the production of agricultural products in the food supply zone of the city Nur-Sultan. (Source: author's development)

The application of this approach to the structure of agritourism potential provides an opportunity to consider both each component separately and the entire system as a whole. The territory of the food supply zone of the city Nur-Sultan is located in the north of the central part of the Republic of Kazakhstan between 53°41' and 48°37' N and 65°21' and 75°07'E. It borders on the North Kazakhstan region in the north, Kostanay region in the west, Pavlodar region in the east, Ulytau, Zhanaarkinsk, Shektinsk, Karkaralinsk districts of Karaganda region in the south. The territory stretches for 482 km from north to south and for 570 km from west to east (Figure 1). Currently more than 150 farms and peasant farms in Akmola and Karaganda regions are engaged in the supply of agricultural products to the city Nur-Sultan as a part of the food supply zone of the capital, including 81 livestock products (meat and meat products, milk and dairy products), 60 crop products (flour, potatoes, vegetables, vegetable oil), 8 poultry products (poultry meat, edible eggs) and one fish product.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Agritourism activity is mainly manifested as purposeful spatial mutual movements of citizens between city centers and suburban spaces (Akay, 2019). Urban centers can be considered as a source of agritourism flow and suburbs can be considered as planes of distribution of this flow, as shown in Figure 2 on the example of the Nur-Sultan food supply zone. The interaction between urban centers and suburban spaces forms the field of agritourism. The concentration and distribution of tourist flows is influenced by the strength of the agritourism field reflecting the spatial interactions between city centers and suburban spaces. Characteristics of the consumption of agritourism by citizens in the suburban areas constitute the field of consumption of agritourism. Thus, the consumption field is an important concept in agritourism and the strength of the consumption field can usually be determined from agritourism spending per area of suburban space.

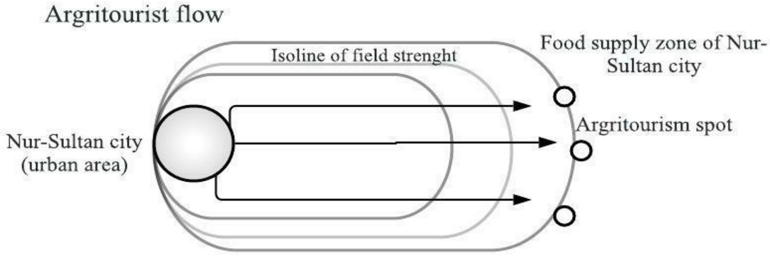

Figure 2. Scope of consumption of agritourism on the example of the food supply zone of Nur-Sultan (Source: author's development)

Table 1. Food supple zone enterprises supplying agricultural products in Nur-Sultan (Source: Result of the study)

№	Name of districts and cities	Name of food industry enterprises	The range of products supplied
1	Akkol district	Akkol delicacies LLP, Aimak trade LLP, farm Argo, SC Food LLP, Karanayza LLP, Enbek LLP, Hleborob LLP, Ush Bulak 2005 LLP, Uryupinsky LLP	Sausages, flour, potatoes, meat, milk, eggs
2	Arshaly district	Agrofirma Poisk LLP, Novo-Vladimirovka LLP, MMK Ayan LLP, Arshaly Tribal Farm LLP, Izhevskoye, Voskhod 2004 LLP, Shamalgan farm Bulturukova farm, Kozganbaev farm, Enbek-1 LLP	Meat, milk and dairy products, pasta, sausages, cabbage, potatoes, vegetable oil
3	Astrahan district	Nur-A APC, APP Astrakhan bird LLP, Ostrogorsky LLP, Koluton-95 CLP, Millhouse LLP, Koluton 04 LLP, Shishov E.I. farm, Oksanovka-1 LLP	Flour, meat, potatoes, cabbage, carrots, beets
4	Atbasar district	Inter Trade LLP, Yntymak LLP, Nan-Abroyy LLP, Klimenko 1 LLP, Agrarnoye LLP, Poltavka LLP, Shuyskoye XXI LLP, Sochinskoye LLP, Bastau LLP, LLP "Alkom Soyuz", Niva farm	Flour, meat, sausages, vegetable oil, potatoes
5	Burabay district	Ayna Dairy Plant, OSKO LLP, Shchuchinsky Meat Processing Plant LLP, Meat Products IP, Kaz Beef LTD LLP, Hottey LLP, Daryn LLP, BIS LLP, Agroinvest 2015 LLP , Omarov farm, Zhas farm	Milk and dairy products, meat, sausages, flour, eggs, kumys (national horse milk), potatoes
6	Bulandy district	Makinskaya poultry farm LLP, Sarytomar farm, Nikolskoye LLP, Partizanskoe-1 LLP, Novobratskoye LLP, Zhuravlevka LLP, Kazfarming LLP	Meat, flour, vegetables
7	Birzhansal district	KazGerKus LLP, Izmailovyh farm, Izmailovyh peasant farm, Sharipov farm, Mahanbet farm	Eggs, meat vegetables
8	Egindikol district	Baumanskoye 07 LLP, Ushakovo-Agro LLP, SHP Sharafutdinov and K LLP	Meat, milk
9	Yerrementau district	Ereymen sut CLP, Ereimen sut CLP, Zhana Bereke LLP, Huanysh IP, Yulyan farm, Gloria farm, Abas group	Meat, milk, dairy products, vegetables
10	Esil district	Esil Butter Plant LLP, Yesil Un LLP, Victoria farm, Surgan and K LLP, Zarechny LLP, Novo-Prirechnoye LLP, Stimul farm	Milk and dairy products, flour, meat, potatoes, vegetable oil
11	Zhaksy district	Aibat LLP, Urozhay LLP, Zolotaya Niva LLP, Otan farm, Novokienka LLP	Milk and dairy products, sausages, canned meat, flour, vegetables
12	Zharkayn district	Molprodzharkain CLP, Temirlan LLP	Meat, milk, potatoes, vegetables
13	Zerendy district	Milk Projest LLP, Agrotrade Kokshe LLP, Viktorovskoye LLP, Bekkozha Farm, Kumis Kokshe LLP, Blic Terminal LLP	Milk and dairy products, vegetable oil, poultry meat, potatoes, vegetables, kumys (national horse milk)
14	Korgalzhyn district	Astana Agro Product LLP, Bytygay Sut LLP, Baltabekov and K LLP, Akmol-2003 LLP	Meat, sausages, potatoes, vegetables, milk
15	Andyktau district	IP Gribov, Lakomka plus LLP, Sandyktau Astyk LLP, Maksimovskoye LLP, Svobodnoe LLP, Kamenka and D LLP, PZ Balkashinsky LLP	Meat and meat products, compotes, salads, flour, vegetable oil
16	Tselinograd district	Capital Project LTD LLP, Zerenda Breeding Farm LLP, Maksimovsky Dairy Plant LLP, AF Rodina LLP, Astana Onim JSC, Endala LLP, Aktyk LLP, Asyl Tukum LLP, Temirbulat farm, Green Star farm	Poultry meat, meat products, eggs, milk and dairy products, kumys, potatoes, vegetables
17	Shortandy district	Molochny 2 CLP, Akpan-17 LLP, Darzhan Group LLP, Astana Agro Group LLP, HPP Tonkeris LLP, Novokubanskoe LLP, Tselina Agro Trade LLP, Aizakhmetov IP, Tabigat TR LLP, Bakhytzhan IP	Milk and dairy products, meat and meat products, potatoes, vegetables
18	Abay district	Toparsky greenhouses LLP, Irrigation farm, Astana Agro LTD LLP, Chance farm	Cucumbers, tomatoes, sweet peppers, potatoes
19	Buhar-Zhyrau district	PK named after Kirov LLP, Karaganda Kus LLP, PTF named after K. Marx LLP, Karaganda-sturgeon LLP, Aknar PF LLP	Potatoes, eggs, fish products, poultry
20	Nura district	Mukhanaliev B.K. farm, A.K. Toleuov farm, Baibol farm, Kaiyrly farm	Meat
21	Osakarov district	Saltanat farm, Kyzyltas farm, Zhanel farm, Nurtileu farm	Meat, grain

Agritourism provides the backbone of tourism spaces and this study explores the process of authenticating these places or the absence through product origin stories. This presents a puzzle in the context of tourism: the destination is invariably also a place, a symbolic assembly with a spatial-territorial relationship, although not always fully crystallized (Ahlawat et al., 2019).

A subsequent implication for agritourism is that the cultural effects of commercial practices in such a space transcend mere boundaries through the combined association of place and product image, thus evoking the notion of product geography. The agritourism space thus becomes a destination in a symbolic market space burdened with competing or complementary marketing activities from similar regions or countries with related products. The main role in the formation of the developed food supple zone of the capital is given to the Akmola region, the territory of which is adjacent to the city of Nur-Sultan from all sides, is one of the main agricultural regions of Kazakhstan, here more than 38% of the able-bodied population of the region is employed in the “agriculture” industry. Much attention is paid to the development of meat, dairy and poultry farming in the region. Akmola region supplies more than a third of dairy, meat products, vegetables to the city of Nur-Sultan, almost completely provides eggs and potatoes. The food supply zone of the capital also includes four administrative districts of the Karaganda region. All four districts have a pronounced agricultural orientation of the economy.

Osakarov district is one of the largest grain-sowing regions of the Karaganda region. In other regions, livestock breeding is mainly developed (Table 1). It follows from the data in the table that in most administrative regions located in the food supply zone, the main branch of agricultural specialization is animal husbandry. In the future there is a huge potential for the development of the agro-industrial complex of the region through the opening of small, medium and large enterprises for the processing of agricultural products, which will create a developed food belt around the capital. It follows from this those agricultural producers included in the food supply zone are potential objects for the development of agritourism. We proposed an assessment methodology in order to assess the agritourism potential of the food supply zone in Nur-Sultan. First of all, we selected 11 factors for each district. According to the results of the rating of the territory of the food supply zone, the areas that received the greatest weight were taken as the basis for further analysis. It should be noted that in some districts there are some empty evaluation data due to lack of resources. The evaluation results are shown in the Table 2.

Table 2. Methodology for expert assessment of the agritourism potential of the food supply zone in the city Nur-Sultan (Source: Result of the study)

Districts	**Expert evaluation by blocks**											**Average score**
	Tourism resources				**Institutional structure**			**Related industries**				
	Presence of historical and cultural monuments	Presence of reservoirs	Attraction availability	Availability of tourist routes	Transport accessibility	Locations	Objects of sanatorium destination	Presence of ethnovilages	Possibility to buy souvenirs	The presence of handicrafts in the ethnic village	Production of environmentally friendly products in the ethnovillage	
Akkol	8	8	4	4	5	5	1	8	8	8	8	6
Arshaly	3	10	3	3	5	4	1	8	8	8	8	5.5
Atbasar	10	7	7	7	5	4	1	-	-	-	-	3.7
Astrahan	5	4	2	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1.3
Bulandy	9	6	3	3	5	3	1	-	-	-	-	2.7
Egindikol	1	3	4	4	5	-	1	-	-	-	-	1.6
Birzhansal	10	8	4	4	-	2	1				-	2.6
Yerrementau	5	10	9	9	3	5	1	-	-	-	-	3.8
Esil	6	4	2	2	2	5	1	-		-	-	2
Zhaksy	7	4	4	4	2	5	1	-	-	-		2.4
Zharkayn	6	5	3	3	5	4	1	-	-	-	-	2.3
Zerendy	10	8	9	9	5	7	1	-	-	-	-	4.5
Korgalzhyn	4	7	10	10	10	3	1	10	10	10	10	7.7
Tselinograd	5	10	8	8	10	4	1	-	-	-		4.1
Sandyktau	8	5	4	4	-	4	1	-	-	-	-	2.4
Shortandy	4	8	1	1	5	2	1	-	-	-	-	2
Burabay	8	9	10	10	9	10	10	10	10	10	10	9.6
Abay	6	6	8	8	6	8	1	-	-	-	-	4
Bukhar-Zhyrau	8	10	4	4	6	4	5	-	-	-		4
Nura	10	8	5	5	6	2	1	-	-	-	-	3.3
Osakarov	10	5	9	9	4	2	1	-	-	-	-	4

Thus, the assessment confirmed that Burabay and Korgalzhyn districts have the highest potential for agritourism development. Akkol and Arshaly districts have a potential above average, Zerendy, Tselinograd, Abay, Bukhar-Zhyrau, Osakarov districts have an average development potential, the agritourism development of other zones of the food supply zone is characterized by low estimates. This indicates a high need to concentrate the development of agritourism in these regions (Figure 3). At present, agritourism in the food supply zone of Nur-Sultan is at the stage of formation and development. At the time of the survey weekend agricultural tours were operating in Nur-Sultan. One of the organizers of such tours was the tourist company "Agrotravel_kz". The tourist company organizes mainly tours to the countryside of the Akmola region, which is an important link in the formation of the food supply zone of the capital. At the time of the study, several agricultural areas were operating such as Borovoye (Burabay district), Rodina-Balkashino (Sandyktau district), Akunchuk tract (Akkol district), Seletinsky Canyon and Sokolinye Gory (Yereimentau district), etc. Most tours are one-day tours, rest in pure nature is accompanied by healthy food and broadening one's horizons by acquiring useful knowledge on the production of agricultural products at local agro-industrial complexes and small agricultural enterprises.

The specificity of agritourism is its spatial dispersal. This along with the relative youth of this type of tourism is the reason that large travel companies have not yet been able to fully establish themselves in a new area. Until a certain time they preferred to take a wait-and-see position when the necessary conditions for their promising activity were created when the greatest centers of attraction to the countryside were determined. Therefore, tourist service has become an important area for the diversification of small and medium-sized entrepreneurs (Pashkov and Mazhitova, 2021).

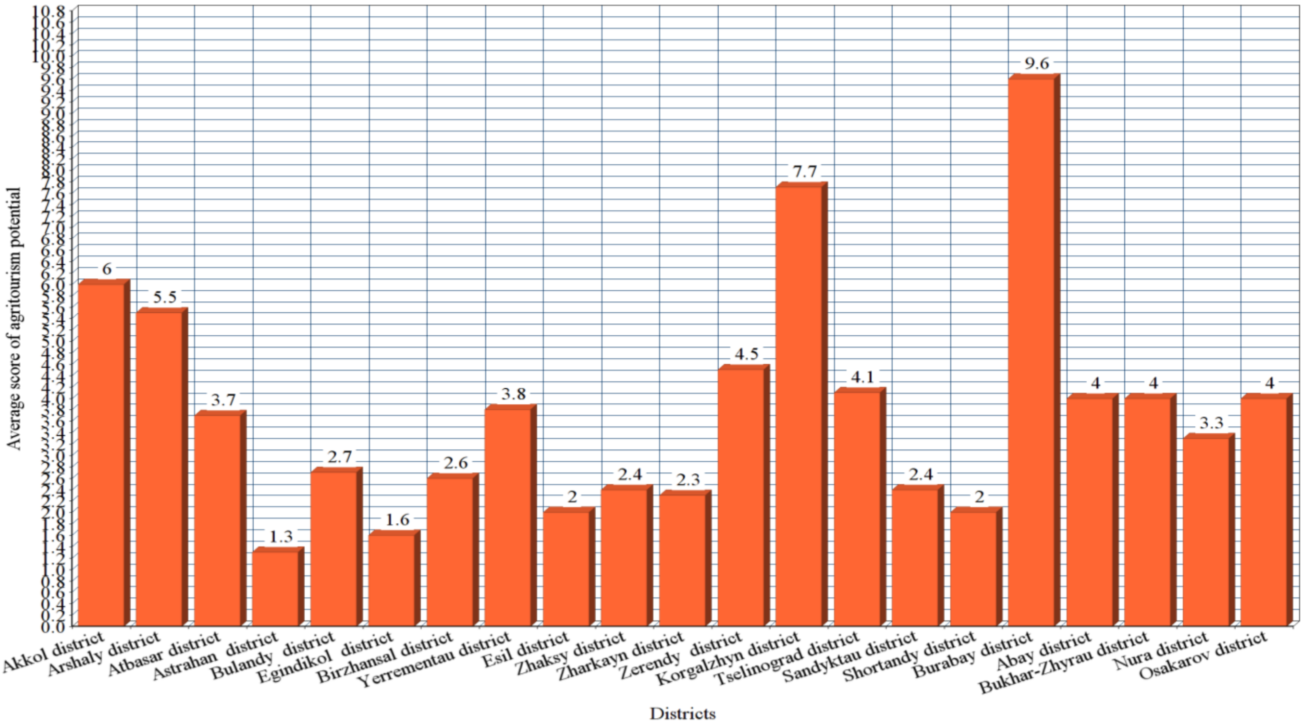

Figure 3. Agritourism potential of Nur-Sultan food supply zone based on the score (Source: author's development)

Another common problem associated with tourism is its seasonal nature. There are peak and off seasons for tourism activity. This means that hotels, transport, and other tourism infrastructure as well as staff remain unoccupied for a significant part of the year. In addition, in rural areas the peak tourist season often coincides with the peak of harvesting and other important activities. However, tourism can be a good addition to other local activities, especially if the peak periods for tourism and agricultural activities are different in time. This is especially true for rural areas where the problem of permanent employment throughout the year is not as acute as in cities. Despite all these problems, agritourism in the country is becoming more and more popular, especially among residents of large cities. A significant impetus to the development of this industry was a pandemic. During the pandemic the values and priorities of tourists were built to fit the new realities. The pandemic and closed borders have provided new opportunities for the development of domestic tourism. Most Kazakhstan people instead of traveling abroad, paid attention to local attractions. Thus, there was a decrease in outbound tourism by 73% and inbound tourism (76%) at the end of 2020. At the same time despite the introduction of restrictions on mass events, there was an increase in demand and supply for recreation within the country. In general, tourists began to be interested in recreation in ethnic villages. In turn, this contributed to the emergence of the need to create ethnic parks in the territories of urbanized zones (Sergeyeva et al., 2020). The economic security of the country is characterized by the state of various fields of activity.

One of its most important components is food security. The strategy for the formation of food security should be based on the development of infrastructure, which constitutes the engineering and transport framework and the basis of the population resettlement system. The creation of developed food supply zones around the largest cities is an important task in shaping the food security of the country as a whole. The results of the research showed that agritourism in Kazakhstan is underdeveloped despite the fact that in the regions of the country there are all conditions and opportunities for the development of this type of tourism. Agritourism should be developed in Kazakhstan, which can solve a number of problems at tourist sites in a number of regions of the country where prices are unrealistically high and the level of service is very low. This situation in the market has developed due to the lack of competition, as a result of which each owner of a tourist facility sets prices independently.

CONCLUSION

Rural tourism is gaining a great popularity every year. However, in Kazakhstan the pace of development of this industry is not high. The tourist potential of the country is not used enough. At the same time, the state support for the tourism industry, which is increasing every year, actively contributes to the development of inbound tourism and is a driver of economic cooperation. Thus, the country has developed a state program for the development of the tourism industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2019-2025 the main goal of which is to ensure that the share of tourism in the total GDP of the Republic of Kazakhstan is 8% by 2025 (BNS ASPR RK, 2021). From January 1, 2022 state support measures to reimburse part of the costs for business entities in the field of tourism provided for in the state program began to operate. The development of agritourism in the food supply zone of Nur-Sultan should have a double positive effect, since the main objects of agrotourism namely agricultural producers participating in the formation of the food belt of the capital will have priority in access to markets and preferential financial products. Thus, rural producers will be interested in supplying their products to the markets of the capital. Additional earnings that agricultural formations will be able to receive from agritourism activities will help improve the financial situation, update technology (improve the quality of products) and increase wages for workers. In conclusion, it should be noted that agritourism activities within the food supply zone will reduce unemployment in the region, improve the economic well-being of the local population, raise the level of service in rural areas and reduce the outflow of the population. It also is necessary to develop the economies of rural areas included in the food belt (especially the agro-industrial complex) in order to achieve a multiplier effect that positively changes the state of all sectors of the region's economy, which in turn increase the level of efficiency of the food supply zone. Strengthening the process of diversification will allow obtaining additional volumes of various products with the standard yield of agricultural crops and livestock productivity.

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LOCAL COMMUNITY PERCEPTION ABOUT TOURISM IMPACT AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR FUTURE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: A STUDY ON SYLHET, BANGLADESH

Md. Abdul HALIM
Leading University, Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Sylhet, Bangladesh, e-mail: mdabhalim09@gmail.com

Mst. Jannatul MAWA
Noakhali Science and Technology University, Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Noakhali, Bangladesh, e-mail: jannatul.thm@nstu.edu.bd

Santus Kumar DEB
University of Dhaka, Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Dhaka, Bangladesh, e-mail: santus@du.ac.bd

Shohel Md. NAFI*
Noakhali Science and Technology University, Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Noakhali, Bangladesh, e-mail: smnafi13@gmail.com

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Abstract: Tourism is a well-established industry and is known as an income-generating sector and it influences the social aspects for developed as well as countries those are developing. The aim of this paper is to assess the local community perception about tourism's impact and their support for future tourism development. To conduct this study, a conceptual framework was developed. Additionally, data were collected from 330 respondents, of which the valid response rate is 78.57%. The projected relationships were evaluated by using Partial Least Squares- Structural Equation Modeling technique (PLS-SEM). The findings show a positive relationship among social, economic, and environmental factors and it also influences the quality of life of the local community. This study also specifies the local community's positive perception towards the development of future's tourism. This study will make a significant theoretical and practical contribution to the development of community-based tourism in Bangladesh.

Key words: local community, community-based tourism, economic impact, quality of life, sustainable tourism, tourism development

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism development is closely associated with community-based transformation and growth. However, the transformation induced by tourism is not limited to economy, instead it extends to socio-cultural and environmental factors in the society. As tourism is a multi-dimensional industry, multiple other small and large industries, directly and indirectly, act as a catalyst to change this booming industry. Tourism has an immense social, cultural, and economic impact on local communities both in positive and negative ways. Having holistic support from host communities is considered to be very crucial to make the destination development process successful. On the other hand, major tourism industries like food, transportation, entertainment, accommodation, and leisure bring opportunities for the locals. As a result, the tourism industry's expansion is critical for economic growth and related businesses' development in an area (Telfer, 2002). Moreover, various studies have shown that tourism has worked as a source of fresh job opportunities, social structure development, tax revenue, revenue generation, and foreign exchange earning sources. The tourism Industry possesses the ability to attract foreign currency and reach the root level of the community generating income for local community (Hanafiah et al., 2010). If the tourism destination development goes unchecked, this growth may lead to the alteration of environmental elements, congestion, social disorder, price hike, unhealthy settlement and many other negative socio-economic impacts. This is the reason policymakers should treat local residents as primary stakeholders of any tourism development plan. Previous studies supported that in implementing any kind of tourism development policies, policymakers should consider the attitude and perception of the natives (Allen et al., 1988; Ap, 1992; Gursoy et al., 2002; Ritchie and Inkari, 2006) concerning with tourism development's impact on their locality from a socio-cultural, environmental and economic perspective.

Andriotis (2000) have identified three groups of people who are significant for the tourism development: local community, business person, and local authority as they are directly involved with the tourism development. That is why, their perception, attitude, and involvement are crucial for tourism. In recent years, numerous studies evaluated and analyzed the importance of tourism development and community participation. However, there has been insufficient research on residents' perceptions regarding expansion of upcoming tourism (Angelkova et al., 2012). Previous studies on local community perceptions of tourism development have primarily focused on the first world countries like New Zealand, Canada, Australia, the USA, and the UK, with only a few researches focusing on developing countries (Rasoolimanesh et

* Corresponding author

al., 2015; Sharpley, 2014). Even though tourism has received significant attention from policymakers worldwide, the host community's perception has always been overlooked. Although scholars have studied the perception of host communities on current tourism development and support (Diedrich and García-Buades, 2009; Gursoy et al., 2017; Hunt and Stronza, 2014; Lundberg, 2015), detecting the shifting of perception is important. Thus, the host community will react positively to tourism development if tourism produces favorable outcomes (Ap, 1992; Gursoy et al., 2017). Nunkoo and Gursoy (2012) stated that if tourism development improves the living status in the area, the natives will respond positively. Previous researches have examined the advantages and pitfalls of tourism development regarding social, economic, and environmental aspects (Zhou and Ap, 2009; Cottrell et al., 2007; Stylidis et al., 2014). Hence, this study tries to shed some light on the view of the host community perception towards the future tourism development of Sylhet, one of the emerging tourism destinations of Bangladesh. This study has also investigated the host community's perception and support for future tourism development. As demonstrated, this study will inspect, exclusively, the perception of the host community about the influence of tourism on their quality of life as well as it will explore the viewpoint of the host community about their cooperation in the development of future tourism.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Early in tourism research, nominal attention was given to the host community's perception of tourism development (Belisle and Hoy, 1980; King et al., 1993; Pizam, 1978) on the other hand, satisfaction of tourists was the prime subject of previous studies. However, in recent decades, the host community's opinion on the growth of tourism is becoming the focal point of many papers in various geographical framework (Andereck et al., 2005; Besculides et al., 2002; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017; Sharma and Dyer, 2009; Tsai et al., 2016; Tsundoda and Mendlinger, 2009; Vareiro et al., 2013; Zaidan, 2016; Roy et al., 2021). The development of tourism cannot succeed if the locals' opinions are ignored and they do not engage in tourism (Pekerşen and Kaplan, 2022). The influence of tourism on the locals have been widely studied and it is the most common phenomenon in tourism research (Moyle et al., 2010), yet despite the surfeit of studies on host community attitudes of tourism, the studies hold disputed conclusions and many studies provide contradicting results (Brida et al., 2011). The primary reason behind this depends on the uniqueness of all communities (Brida et al., 2011; Tosun, 2002), the socio-cultural difference of the community, and environmental issues of the community. However, community perceptions are not static, and these perceptions may change over time (Canavan, 2013), depending on the individual location, societal standards, rules and traditions (Wang and Mirehie, 2022). For that reason, community perception is always a key issue in tourism development due to the dynamism in the relationship between tourism and community people.

1. Social Impact of Tourism

Tourism development influences the social aspects in both positive and negative ways; Travis (1984) identified several social factors including social change of local community, cultural diversification, modernization of local culture, improvement of public service and social amenities, image development of host community, and conservation. However, social impact is acknowledged as a supportive instrument which helped to bloom the tourism within the locals and is an elementary prerequisite for the development of a long-term tourism sector (Ap and Crompton, 1998; Andriotis and Vaughan, 2003; Gursoy et al., 2002; Jurowski and Gursoy, 2004; Nyaupane and Thapa, 2006; Zhang et al., 2006).

Tourism activities may create adverse consequences for the host community like, imbalanced dissemination of revenue earned from tourism (Alam and Paramati, 2016), the increased expense of living (Lee and Back, 2006), unskilled and less-paying employ work (Davidson and Sahli, 2015), deterioration of cultural and natural resources (Bowers, 2016) and increased crime rate (Ap, 1992; Lee and Back, 2006). A variety of side effects, such as higher living expenses, uncertain employment, and disputes over public space, make it difficult for urban inhabitants and younger groups to see the benefits of tourism, all of which casts doubt on the commonly held belief that urban tourism generally enhances the lives of city dwellers (Bornioli et al., 2022). The host community might witness some other consequences as- periodic population oscillations, excessive corporate influence over community matters regarding the selection of decisions, and growing societal, environmental, and economic inconvenience pertaining to safety, contamination, road congestion, deflation, and purchase of undeveloped land. Tourism has tremendous effects on residents' lifestyles, especially on the youth, influenced mainly by tourists' costumes, food habit, and attitude (Bello et al., 2017). Pramanik and Ingkadijaya (2018) identified that the improved tourism environments reinforce the local community's attitudes to welcome the cultural diversities and convert the perception of them to respect other's customs, which as a result assure them a better life. Another study (Zhuang et al., 2019) revealed, as tourism is still in its development, local inhabitants tend to prevent strangers from intervening in their matters; they believe their personal interest will be ruined by excessive tourism development. Some communities felt infrastructures and public facilities are primarily developed from tourist requirements and necessities, tourists hold more influence in community development, and residents' interests are ignored significantly (Franzidis and Yau, 2018). Nonetheless, residents will be satisfied with community welfare if their attitudes toward tourism are optimistic (Kim et al., 2013).

H1: There is a significant relationship between the social impact of tourism and the quality of life of the host community

2. Economic Impact of Tourism

Tourism's economic impact is repeatedly assessed to identify its role in economic progress and development (Comerio and Strozzi, 2019). Around the world, many tourism-based communities and countries are relying upon tourism as an economic instrument to stimulate income, develop infrastructure, to generate employment and public revenue (Franzidis and Yau, 2018). In some communities, tourism is an effective and powerful means of decreasing poverty (Croes, 2014) as tourism creates opportunities to sell local products to outsiders and creates employment opportunities (Lee, 2013; Lepp, 2007). Haralambopoulos and Pizma (1996) discovered that locals who were directly or indirectly reliant on tourism for their means of living were more welcoming than those who did not depend on it. For that reason, residents prioritize tourism development as it links to economic importance (Akis et al., 1996; Husband, 1989; Ritchie, 1988). Among youth, women and people with lower educational qualifications primarily support tourism as they are dependent on tourism regarding their income and employment; on the contrary, people with higher educational qualifications as well as older people are concerned about tourism growth because they care for the actual development without any link to personal gain (Nguyen, 2022). Generally, one of the major reasons for developing tourism industry is to bring macroeconomics benefits for a country or a community (Chase and Alon, 2002). However, it depends on the volume of residents involved in the tourism activities.

Local economies are impacted, both, by the direct and indirect effects of travelers' expenditures (Baiburiev et al., 2018). Tourism improves the local residents' earnings, increases their living standards, and generates new job opportunities (Choi and Sirakaya, 2006; Tosun, 2002). Tourism increases employment opportunities at the regional level as well, especially in the lodging and foodservice industries, and a large portion of them is unskilled labour; hence, educational institutions of tourism have the responsibility to create a qualified workforce to meet the industry requirement (Kronenberg and Fuchs, 2021).

Simultaneously, the development of tourism substantially declines the portion of vulnerable employment, which designates an improved scenario of their socio-economic life by increasing employment opportunities and by generating income (Scarlett, 2021). The local community believes that the development of tourism boosts the regional economy as they are generating different job openings and increasing their income (Bello et al., 2017). The growth of tourism in a community would result in an improvement to the infrastructure as a whole and would remove some obstacles to the launch of new small businesses (Acha-Anyi and Ndolose, 2022). The incoming flow of tourists may have a negative impact if tourism is considered an economic growth tactic and overlooked the tourists' incoming discharge, which in turn result in the boom of mass tourism, which is not eco-friendly (Castilho et al., 2021). In a study (Hrubcova et al., 2016), the economic impact of tourism in Bangladesh was found high among the 35 least developed countries in 2014. Though, local landowners and local businesspeople benefit from tourism development, whereas the local community suffers from increasing expenses in daily life.

H2: There is a significant relationship between the economic impact of tourism and the quality of life of the host community

3. Environmental Impact of Tourism

Swarbrooke (1999) defined the environment aspect in tourism as the physical environment of the destination area, wildlife, infrastructures, and natural resources. Among all other indicators, the environmental factors are the critical determinants of the negative perception of tourism among the local inhabitants, where they perceive that the tourist activities can damage the inherited attributes of the environment (Afthanorhan et al., 2017). Tourism firms and its functions may cause or exacerbate environmental problems through modernization, urbanization, land misuse, technological advancement, and sudden growth of visitors' actions (Çelik Uğuz et al., 2022). The tourism industry, the most booming sector until 2019, has faced devastating challenges due to COVID-19 (Deb and Nafi, 2020a; 2020b). It is forecasted by Yong, (2021) that the development of tourism, which is an evolving flourishing sector in many nations, will move downward by the end of this era because of human development progress and also because the environmental preservation is ignored significantly by the developing countries to achieve economic growth. But according to the EKC theory (Environmental Kuznets Curve), environmental damage climbs up during economic growth and finally shrinks (Stern, 2018). On the other hand, environmental costs and its benefits should also be considered for better tourism development. Tourism may motivate to protect the natural area and environmentally critical area. Therefore, according to Choi and Sirakaya (2005), the advantages of tourism are made upon a number of pillars, and the development of tourism must preserve countries histories and heritages, it should increase social and personal prosperity, and prevent environmental degradation.

H3: There is a significant relationship between the environmental impact of tourism and the quality of life of the host community

4. Quality of Life and Local Resident Perception about Support for Future Tourism

Residents of destination communities are vital actors in tourism for two reasons: firstly, because they serve the tourists, and secondly, tourists use the host community resources to visit a particular destination. However, Franzidis and Yau (2018) stated that tourists and residents are co-dependent companions; they are crucial participants in the understanding of the goods and services offered to the tourist; on the other hand, residents depend on the tourists for their livelihood, especially where the destination has inadequate industry. The perception of the local community about tourism impact is crucial to ensure their participation, involvement as well as their assistance for future tourism development (Almeida-Garcia et al., 2016; Nafi and Ahmed, 2017; Gu and Wong, 2006), which will affect their quality of living (Rojulai et al., 2018). Many destinations witnessed that, local people are not involved in the decision making and management process of tourism activity (Nagy and Segui, 2020). But, Blackstock (2005); Juma and Vidr (2019) stated that local community are inevitable to be authorized for guaranteeing sustainable tourism in the territories they belong to and achieving a better quality of life as quality of living influences and reshapes people's thinking about tourism and its development. Giving host communities more power will encourage them to lend a hand specially festivals and festivals development since giving locals more power is a good way to get them involved (Eluwole et al., 2022). The tourism industry may change the living standards of the inhabitants, either positive or negative. Still, it is believed that they will vote for tourism development if they get benefits from it (Afthanorhan et al., 2017; González-García et al., 2022). The resident wishes to be involved in tourism activities, and their support is considered essential to be successful in developing tourism attractions (Putra et al., 2021). Moreover, the residents will aid tourism development if they are well notified about the social rewards of tourism as the favorable social impact of tourism is a significant factor in determining their happiness (Kim et al., 2013). Tourism ameliorates health and longevity, the number of educated people, conduce economic development by swelling living standards, and enhancing the quality of living is imperative; nevertheless, this requires transcending health and education (Sarpong et al., 2020; Deb et al., 2022). Tourism generates employment opportunities, increases residents' earnings, and raises vehicular traffic and hospitality of the host communities while improving their living standards (Uysal et al., 2012; Wang and Mirehie, 2022). Conversely, the negative impact of tourism may damage the economy, culture, environment, and social structure. Mathieson and Wall (1982); Milman and Pizam (1998, 191) supported that communities may have to experience some of the adverse consequences of tourism on citizens' liveability. However, Jeon et al. (2016); Manohar (2016); Ma and Kaplanidou (2017) discussed that the living standard of the residents will be improved if the tourism development demonstrates affirmative outcomes.

H4: There is a significant relationship between the quality of life of the host community and community support for future tourism development.

5. Theoretical Background

Community perception about tourism's impact and development is a significant issue that has gained considerable attention in tourism studies (Almeida-García, 2016; Nunkoo and Gursoy, 2012; Lee and Jan, 2019). In developing countries, community-based tourism has been offered as an alternative to sustainable tourism development (Lo and Janta, 2020). This study was conducted in Chiang Mai, Thailand: it analyzed the local people involved in tourism, their perception of tourism impacts, and overall sustainability. Nagy and Segui (2020) mentioned the innovative approaches for managing community-based tourism where strong leadership quality is required to maximize the social, cultural, and economic viability. However, it's been observed that, while researching on community-based tourism most people focused on the sustainable tourism dimensions. Thus, community people's perceptions about tourism's economic, social and environmental impacts are identified in previous studies (Lee and Jan, 2019; Lee and Hsieh, 2016; Woo et al., 2015). Additionally, Brunt and Courtney (1999); Lee and Jan (2019) expressed that community-based tourism increases facilities, such as roads, amenities, recreational facilities, cultural facilities for local people that develop their quality of life. Community-based tourism should encourage local economic development, protect the local environment, and respect the local culture and social values that improve the quality of life of local people (Lee, 2013; Kim et al., 2013; Ohe and Kurihara, 2013). Thus, a positive relationship of tourism impact and quality of life of the local people will help in the development of future tourism. If, tourism helps to increase the overall quality of life of a resident, it will also help to extend the community support for future tourism development. Bringing this idea, the present study will be conducted to measure the effect of tourism impact on the quality of life of the local people and their support for future tourism development (Figure 1).

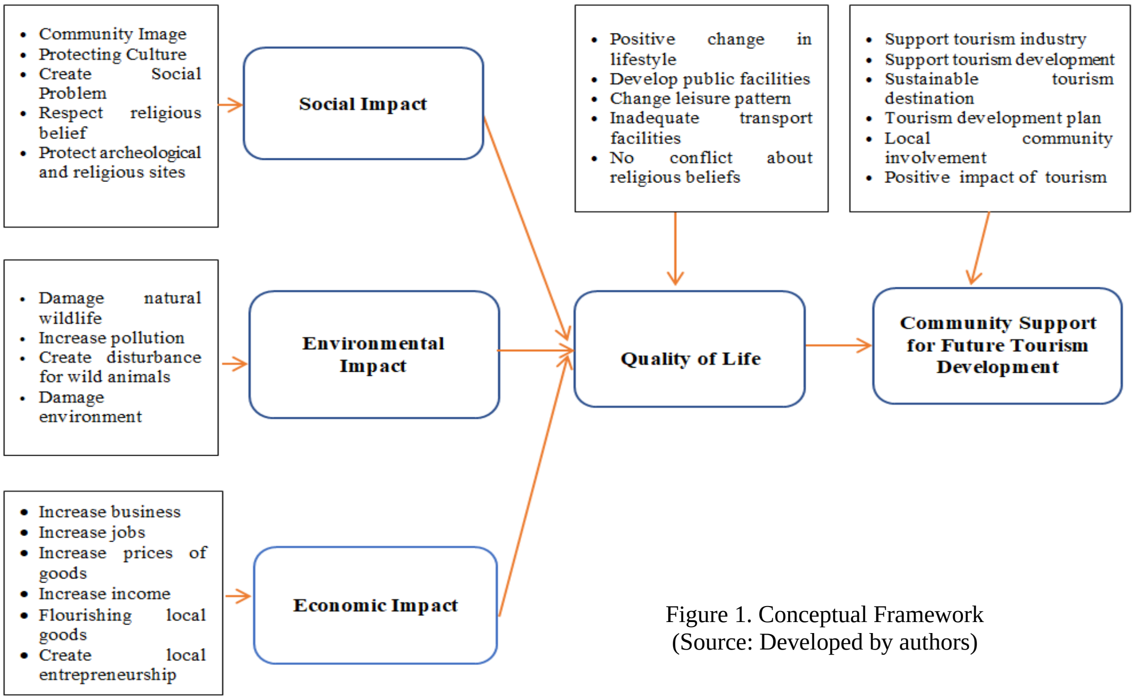

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework
(Source: Developed by authors)

RESEARCH METHOD

This study conducted a quantitative survey among local residents staying at Sylhet, Bangladesh. The questionnaire of this study was developed based on the previous studies related to community based tourism (Eshliki and Kaboudi, 2012; Lee and Jan, 2019; Muresan et al., 2016; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017; Rojulai et al., 2018; Vareiro et al., 2013; Zaidan, 2016), and table 1 shows the list of variables of this study. The questionnaire was divided into three parts: the profile of the respondents, their perception about tourism impact, and community support for future tourism development. Questions are given in the second part and the third part of the questionnaire were responded on 5 points Likert scale ranging from 1 *(strongly disagree)* to 5 *(strongly agree)*. Respondents of the study were sampled from the different villages of Malini Chora tea garden, Ratargul, Bichanakandi, Sylhet City area, Lakatura tea garden, Jaflong and Lalakhal. The questionnaire was organized and developed in English, and then it was translated into Bengali for the understanding of the respondents.

Table 1. List of variables

Variables	Items	Author
Social Impact of Tourism	Community Image, Protecting Culture, Create Social Problem, Respect religious belief, Protect archeological and religious sites	Travis (1984); Alam and Paramati (2016); Bowers (2016); Lee and Back (2006); Franzidis and Yau (2018)
Economic Impact of Tourism	Increase business, Increase jobs, Increase prices of goods, Increase income, Flourishing local goods, Create local entrepreneurship	Choi and Sirakaya (2006); Tosun (2002); Franzidis and Yau (2018); Comerio and Strozzi (2019); Scarlett (2021)
Environmental Impact of Tourism	Damage natural wildlife, Increase pollution, Create disturbance for wild animals, Damage environment	Swarbrooke (1999); Choi and Sirakaya (2005); Afthanorhan et al. (2017)
Quality of Life	Positive change in lifestyle, Develop public facilities, Change leisure pattern, Inadequate transport facilities, No conflict about religious beliefs	Uysal et al. (2012); Almeida-Garcia et al. (2016); Ma and Kaplanidou (2017); Franzidis and Yau (2018); Rojulai et al., 2018
Community Support for Future Tourism Development	Support tourism industry, Support tourism development, Sustainable tourism destination, Tourism development plan, Local community involvement, Positive impact of tourism	Blackstock (2005); Uysal et al. (2012); Jeon et al. (2016); Manohar (2016); Juma and Vidr (2019)

This study has undertaken a face-to-face interview technique for data assembling. Researchers have travelled in different places in Sylhet and delivered the questionnaires to the local people. Respondents have gotten adequate time for completing the questionnaire. A total of 420 questionnaires were distributed following simple random sampling technique. The response rate was 92% (386 questionnaires), and 330 questionnaires were validated for analysis that means the valid response rate is 78.57%. The projected relationships were verified and tested by using partial least squares- structural equation modeling technique (PLS-SEM). This technique is well known in research and used to measure the connection between all the variables in a conceptual model. SEM-PLS is well-known as a renowned method whereas correlation among variables were measured (Chatterjee and Kar, 2020). However, in this study SmartPLS version 4.0 was used to achieve the PLS-SEM analysis.

Table 2. Socio Demographic Profile of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Female	89	27
Male	241	73
Total	330	100.0
Age		
less than 20	26	08.0
20-30	83	25.0
31-40	89	27.0
41-50	109	33.0
Above 50	23	07.0
Total	330	100.0
Educational status		
Primary	7	2.0
High School	43	13.0
Higher secondary	132	40.0
Graduation	148	45.0
Total	330	100.0
What is your monthly income (BDT)?		
Below 10,000	85	26.0
10,001-20,000	20	6.0
20,001-30,000	73	22.0
30,001-40,000	132	40.0
Above 40,000	20	06.0
Total	330	100.0
Involvement with the Tourism		
Yes	257	78.0
No	73	22.0
Total	330	100.0

1. Data Analysis

Most of the respondents in this research were male (73%), belongs to the age group between 41 to 50 (33%), and had a higher educational degree (45%). In terms of income, 40% respondents earn BDT 30,001 to 40,000 taka monthly. Most of the respondents expressed that they are involved with tourism (78%) (Table 2).

2. Model Assessment by using PLS-SEM

The assessment and calculation of the model, by applying smart PLS, are accompanied two (2) step procedures known as measurement model and structural model (Chin, 2010; Hair et al., 2011). The measurement model is a prerequisite for the study to inspect the reliability and validity of the association between latent variables. Chin (2010) and Hair et al. (2011) stated that the structural model measures co-relation between the constructs. The quality and appropriateness of the measurement model were confirmed by directing confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to assure constructs' reliability, discriminant validity and convergent validity of this study. The contemplative measurement model assessed reliability and validity, as dignified by Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) (Chin, 2010; Hair et al., 2011). In evaluating the indicator reliability, the loading of every indicator on its related latent construct should be greater than 0.7 (Hair et al., 2011). A loading between 0.4 to 0.7 can be contemplated if the AVE and R of the connected construct are higher than the threshold (Hair et al., 2011).

Table 3. Measurement items and their reliability

Constructs and their respective items	Factor Loading
Social Impact of Tourism	
SOCIO1- Tourism creates a good image of our local community.	**0.835**
SOCIO2- Tourism development is helpful for protecting our own culture.	**0.880**
SOCIO3- Tourism creates social problems like crime, drug, and prostitution	(dropped)
SOCIO4- Tourists show proper respect to the religious sites.	**0.768**
SOCIO5- Tourism preserves and protects local archeological and religious sites.	**0.863**
Economic Impact of Tourism	
ECO1- Tourism increases the business opportunity for local community.	**0.835**
ECO2- Tourism leads to increase the number of jobs for local people	**0.813**

ECO3- Tourism increases the prices of local goods.	(dropped)
ECO4- Tourism increases household income.	**0.753**
ECO5- Because of tourism, local products get accessed in national and international market	**0.860**
ECO6- Tourism creates opportunity for the entrepreneurs from local people	**0.825**
Environmental Impact of Tourism	
ENV1- Tourism development creates damages to our natural wildlife.	**0.793**
ENV2- Excessive number of tourists led pollution to local environment.	**0.783**
ENV3- Tourism development hampered the wild animals from free-movement.	**0.853**
ENV4- Infrastructural development is decreasing the lifetime of the destination.	**0.662**
Quality of Life	
QOL1- The characteristics of the local people have positively changed because of tourism.	**0.785**
QOL2- Local community gets all public facilities like electricity, gas, security because of tourism.	**0.850**
QOL3- Tourism changes the pattern of spending leisure time of the local community.	(dropped)
QOL4- High flow of tourists in seasonal time leads to inadequate transport facilities for the local people.	**0.747**
QOL5- There is no contradiction between tourism and religious beliefs.	**0.856**
Community Support for Future Tourism Development	
CSFT1- I support tourism industry and tourism industry should be actively developed in my community.	**0.858**
CSFT2- I will support new tourism attraction and facility development that will attract more tourists in my community.	**0.743**
CSFT3- I think, the future of Sylhet as a tourism destination is sustainable.	**0.673**
CSFT4- It is essential to develop plans to manage the growth of tourism for long term benefits.	**0.845**
CSFT5- I think designated authorities will involve the local community in future tourism planning.	(dropped)
CSFT6- I believe that future tourism will positively impact on the local community life.	**0.824**

Table 3 presents that among the 26 items, the value represents 0.673 or more for most of the indicator loadings and four items were dropped as they do not fulfill the threshold. The CFA model shows in Table 3 that the right column indicates the standardized factor loadings and demonstrates that all values are statistically significant, representing the items replicate their original latent construct. According to Anderson and Gerbing (1998), this approves the convergent validity of the measurement model. However, Figure 2 also shows that all the values of the studied constructs' factor loadings are from 0.673 to 0.880.

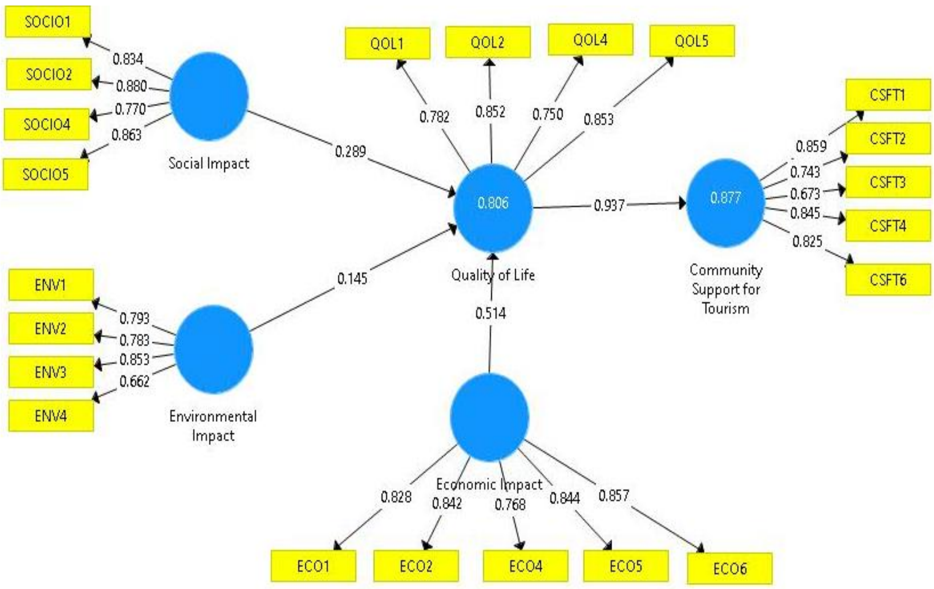

Figure 2. Diagram of the Measurement Model of the study

However, Cronbach's alpha, AVE and CR of every of the factors are also displayed in Table 4. The value of Cronbach's alpha of this studied constructs ranges from 0.777 to 0.886. That indicates values of Cronbach's alpha of all constructs are greater than 0.7 which represent a strong relationship and internal reliability and consistency of all constructs. Though, the AVE essentials to be greater than 0.5 to achieve convergent validity. The result of this study shows that the AVE are between 0.602 to 0.702.

Table 4. Result of a Measurement Model for the study

Construct Reliability and Validity	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Community Support for Tourism	**0.848**	**0.852**	**0.893**	**0.627**
Economic Impact	**0.886**	**0.890**	**0.916**	**0.686**
Environmental Impact	**0.777**	**0.794**	**0.857**	**0.602**
Quality of Life	**0.826**	**0.833**	**0.884**	**0.657**
Social Impact	**0.858**	**0.861**	**0.904**	**0.702**

Table 5. Discriminant Validity

Discriminant Validity	(AVE)	Community Support for Tourism	Economic Impact	Environmental Impact	Quality of Life	Social Impact
Community Support for Tourism	**0.627**	**0.792**				
Economic Impact	**0.686**	0.728	**0.829**			
Environmental Impact	**0.602**	0.609	0.633	**0.776**		
Quality of Life	**0.657**	0.537	0.565	0.435	**0.811**	
Social Impact	**0.702**	0.305	0.499	0.307	0.531	**0.838**

Discriminant validity is the level to which every latent variable is discrete from other constructs in the proposed model of this study (Chin, 2010). The square root of the AVE for every construct has to be bigger than all of the associations among the construct, in addition to the other constructs in the model of this study (Chin, 2010; Hair et al., 2011). Table 5 shows the square root of the AVE for each construct alongside the diagonal and the correlations between the constructs, representing that the model presents satisfactory discriminant validity.

3. Structural Model

This this study, SMART PLS 3.0 software was used to assessment of path investigation through approximating path coefficients consequences. Table 6 displays the summary of the hypothesis testing with t-value and p-value. It indicates the overall goodness-of-fit indices with hypothesized structural model. The first three hypotheses relate to the relationship between tourism impact on the local community and the quality of life. H1, H2 and H3 are supported, proposing positive relationship among social impact, economic impact, environmental impact, and quality of life. Also, H4 is supported that means higher perception about quality of life of respondents have positively impact on the community people support for future tourism development. Above the consequences specify in the figure 3 that local people residents' perception about the tourism impact and their support for future tourism development.

Table 6. Summary of the Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	T Statistics	P Values	Remarks
H1: Social Impact -> Quality of Life	4.363	0.000	**Supported**
H2: Economic Impact -> Quality of Life	8.538	0.000	**Supported**
H3: Environmental Impact -> Quality of Life	2.247	0.013	**Supported**
H4: Quality of Life -> Community Support for Tourism	79.252	0.000	**Supported**

Table 7. Path Coefficient Analysis

	T Statistics	P Values	Remarks
Economic Impact -> Community Support for Tourism	8.298	0.000	**Supported**
Economic Impact -> Quality of Life	8.538	0.000	**Supported**
Environmental Impact -> Community Support for Tourism	2.255	0.012	**Supported**
Environmental Impact -> Quality of Life	2.247	0.013	**Supported**
Social Impact -> Community Support for Tourism	4.366	0.000	**Supported**
Social Impact -> Quality of Life	4.363	0.000	**Supported**
Quality of Life -> Community Support for Tourism	79.252	0.000	**Supported**
CSFT1 <- Community Support for Tourism	39.695	0.000	**Supported**
CSFT2 <- Community Support for Tourism	20.826	0.000	**Supported**
CSFT3 <- Community Support for Tourism	13.977	0.000	**Supported**
CSFT4 <- Community Support for Tourism	31.771	0.000	**Supported**
CSFT6 <- Community Support for Tourism	35.148	0.000	**Supported**
ECO1 <- Economic Impact	32.465	0.000	**Supported**
ECO2 <- Economic Impact	27.654	0.000	**Supported**
ECO4 <- Economic Impact	24.261	0.000	**Supported**
ECO5 <- Economic Impact	31.206	0.000	**Supported**
ECO6 <- Economic Impact	29.517	0.000	**Supported**
ENV1 <- Environmental Impact	29.481	0.000	**Supported**
ENV2 <- Environmental Impact	21.617	0.000	**Supported**
ENV3 <- Environmental Impact	37.352	0.000	**Supported**
ENV4 <- Environmental Impact	13.220	0.000	**Supported**
QOL1 <- Quality of Life	20.230	0.000	**Supported**
QOL2 <- Quality of Life	34.829	0.000	**Supported**
QOL4 <- Quality of Life	23.658	0.000	**Supported**
QOL5 <- Quality of Life	28.924	0.000	**Supported**
SOCIO1 <- Social Impact	30.197	0.000	**Supported**
SOCIO2 <- Social Impact	44.262	0.000	**Supported**
SOCIO4 <- Social Impact	27.018	0.000	**Supported**
SOCIO5 <- Social Impact	43.850	0.000	**Supported**

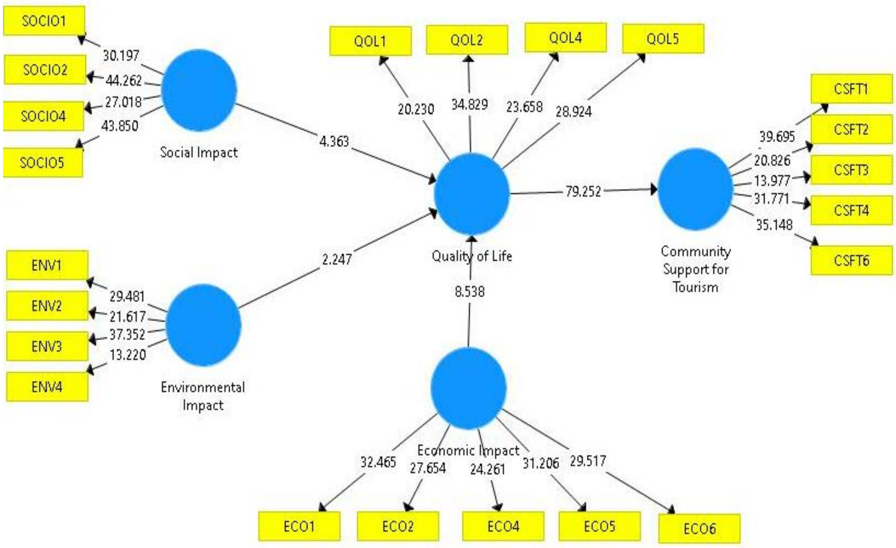

Figure 3. Diagram for the structural model of the study

DISCUSSION

Jurowski et al. (1997) stated that when community transfers as a tourist attraction, the community's lifestyle and living standard, for better or worse way, are influenced by tourism. Hence, satisfaction and dissatisfaction of the local community have been affected by the tourism impact. The study reveals the significant relationship of tourism economic, environmental and social impact with residents' quality of life and their support for tourism development. Based on table 6, the respondents believe that the economic, environmental, and social influence of tourism increases the living status of communities, which in return shows their support for tourism. The findings stated the highest significant relationship between the quality of life of natives and community support for future tourism growth and development. This significance is demonstrated in the relations highest statistical load exhibited in H4= Quality of Life -> Community Support for Tourism (T-Statistics=79.252, P=0.000). Hence, at a conceptual level, the resident's quality of life improvement mainly affects the community perception regarding their support for future tourism activities and development. The fact is, locals will support tourism if business enterprises, government (all levels) actively involve them in developing community, ensure their sustainable benefits and assure them to bring positive outcomes to their life. Alim et al., (2021) also stated community engagement, in managing tourism activities, motivate rural people to support tourism development by reducing misunderstandings and disputes, especially in developing nations.

Similarly, H2 = Economic Impact -> Quality of Life (T-Statistics=8.538, P=0.000) is substantial as well. The economic rewards of tourism, directly and indirectly, improve the life standard by offering business opportunities for communities and households. Tourism is supposed to upsurge community inhabitants' living standards, create job opportunities, and enhance profits for local trades (e.g., Backman and Backman, 1997; Gursoy et al., 2002; Jurowski et al., 2006). In contrast, the authority should adopt policies to control the increasing prices of local goods and develop new attractions and facilities to attract tourists to increase employment availability for all seasons, especially for the host community. Likewise, a similar pattern is observed in H1 between Social Impact -> Quality of Life, where tourism commits to developing a good image of the local community and preserving archeological and religious sites for tourism, which positively affects the residents' quality of life. However, concerning factors need to be considered to protect residents' culture from being damaged and mitigate the social crime, use of drugs, and normalizing prostitution among host communities. Backman and Backman (1997) and Var and Kim (1989) expressed that the communities acknowledged that business premises like shopping malls are developed for tourists also facilitate the locals, since facilities of all sorts supplied to tourists deliver community members as well, and thus tourism provides the drive for community infrastructure improvement and development. However, the model's relationship between Environmental Impact and Quality of Life is the lowest significant in H3 = (T-Statistics=2.247, P=0.013). Although tourism creates awareness among local communities to preserve the environment and natural life, it also endangers the natural wildlife, prevents them from free movement, and leads to pollution to the local environment. In several research, it has been stated that tourism generates broader consciousness and appreciates the necessity to protect the natural habitat and conserve its pristine exquisiteness for tourists (Var and Kim,1989). For this reason, Bubolz et al. (1980) noted, the livelihood of the community depends on the environment.

Implication of the study

This study explored the influence of factors effecting the local communities' perception about the outcome of tourism and their contribution in the development of tomorrow's tourism. Thus, a conceptual framework has been developed and a conceptualized relationship has been showed among social impacts, economic impacts, environmental impacts, quality of life and community support for tourism development. Moreover, most previous studies on residents' attitude and perception about tourism development have been encompassed in the first world countries' perspectives (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2015; Sharpley, 2014) while this study shows significantly different results than developed countries. For example, this study shows that local residents' have positive perception about tourism and cultural development, archeological and heritage preservation, increasing business opportunities, increasing income which are different from previous studies (Alam and Paramati, 2016; Bowers, 2016; Bello et al., 2017). In this regard, this study will contribute meaningful theoretical contribution to the future research in community perception and tourism development literature. Practically, the discoveries of this study are significant to the development of tourism in locals. The architects of tourism sector need to emphasize the long-term planning perspectives with developing the quality of life of the respondents. Environmental issues should be considered actively to reduce the dissatisfaction of local people. The present study shows the host community perception about tourism impacts and how it influences on the quality of life. Tourism planners should incorporate these relationships in the development strategies to ensure a higher satisfaction level and continuous aid for tourism development. This study will also contribute the future studies conducted on community-based tourism.

CONCLUSION

Local residents' attitudes are not always static and may be modified in time-to-time basis (Franzidis and Yau, 2018). However, changes are always different and unique for every destination. Therefore, it is crucial to trace the local residents' perception of tourism development, which will benefit both tourists and local people. Tourism's economic, social and environmental impacts affect residents' quality of life, which alters the community's perception and support for tourism development. Findings reveal that tourism's economic and social rewards ameliorate the residents' living standards rather than environmental. Most likely the residents do not receive adequate benefits from environmental resources which is one of the major causes of their indifference towards preservation. Government officials and concerned persons should emphasis on environmental factors and the conservation of natural settings and wildlife should be given priority. Tourist movement should be restricted in some areas for the comportment of local people or an adequate awareness campaign must be adopted to educate tourists before allowing them to enter community areas.

In order to assist in the growth of the tourist industry in the country, Bangladesh government has been carrying out a number of different development initiatives via the Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC), the country's leading tourism body. In this study, the local community has expressed a positive opinion for future tourism development and expects that tourism will positively impact community life. So, the policymakers need to focus on the community's well-being to ensure the proper expected outcome from the development projects. Community-based tourism development can be an effective tool to maximize residents' benefits and growth of tourism at the same pace. The result of this study will help the researchers evaluate the community perception of the tourism development at the same destination in the future.

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THE METHODOLOGY OF TERRITORY ZONING OF THE UKRAINIAN RIGHT-BANK POLISSIA FOR THE GASTRONOMIC TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PURPOSES

Inna NESTERCHUK
Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University, Faculty of Natural Sciences, Department of Ecology and Geography, Zhytomyr, Ukraine, e-mail: nester_geoek@ukr.net

Eduard BONDARENKO
Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Faculty of Geography, Department of Geodesy and Cartography, Kyiv, Ukraine, e-mail: eduardbondarenko@knu.ua

Anna OSIPCHUK*
Polissia National University, Faculty of Economics and Management, Department of Economics, Entrepreneurship and Tourism, Zhytomyr, Ukraine, e-mail: annaosipchuck@ukr.net

Ruslana ROMANIUK
Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University, Faculty of Natural Sciences, Department of Zoology, Biological Monitoring and Nature Conservation, Zhytomyr, e-mail: melnychenko.ruslana@gmail.com

Oksana TRUSII
Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Faculty of Geography, Department of Economic and Social Geography, Kyiv, Ukraine, e-mail: oktrusij@ukr.net

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Abstract: Scientific research is devoted to the problem of the gastronomic zoning methods of the Ukrainian Right-bank Polissia. The authors use the scientific facts of landscape, ethnographic, and soil science approaches to the gastronomic zoning of the Ukrainian Right-bank Polissia. The methodological basis of the scientific research is the methods of analysis and synthesis, information, classification, cybernetics, and geographic information mapping. The systematic approach is applied in the course of the scientific development, which presents a designed cartographic model of zoning for the purposes of gastronomic tourism. A territory zoning algorithm is created for the gastronomic tourism development, based on the gastronomic potential indicator of physical and geographical areas, taking into account the selected principles. The developed areas are combined on the principle of neighborhood as a result of integrated zoning, and are mostly homogeneous. A synthetic cartographic model of recipe territory zoning of the Ukrainian Right-bank Polissia has been created according to the level of gastronomic tourism development in the scale of 1: 3,500,000.

Key words: gastronomic tourism, gastronomic zoning, the Ukrainian Right-bank Polissia, a cartographic model, gastronomic potential, the principle of neighborhood

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INTRODUCTION

A geographical territory has always aroused great curiosity, so its development is one of the fundamental spatio-temporal characteristics of human activity. The territories development process in socio-cultural formations is the driving cause of district formation, which determines a number of research manifestations. Branch and integrated districts with market specializations are formed in the process of the socio-cultural development. This is the tourist specialization, which organizes the territory (a landscape) for a particular type of tourism including gastronomic. A landscape as a natural factor directly affects the motive of travel, it acts as a simulacrum in the minds of tourism services consumers, who in turn have a universal impact on the development of the landscape, changing it and developing with it.

Formulation of a scientific problem

The concept of *"gastronomic landscapes*" may provoke an initial response in our research. The new research direction is based on the territory zoning methods of the Ukrainian Right-bank Polissia according to the level of the gastronomic tourism development. The author's study of the landscape of the Ukrainian Right-bank Polissia region can play a role in this discussion, as it provides evidence of the links and significance that such policy changes may have, whether agricultural subsidies or responses to urban distribution systems, helping to determine the urban food landscape development. Food and landscape have enormous potential as an interdisciplinary field of study, and there are several interesting initiatives to study

* Corresponding author

the spatial and cultural dimension. On the basis of poststructuralist concepts, such as Gilles Deleuze's "nomadism", Jean Baudrillard's "simulacrum", Volodymyr Volkov's "escapism", a new hybrid strategy of nomadic society has been modeled thanks to the tourism production, which significantly affects the organization of recreation so called "tourist reflections" space.

ANALYSIS OF RECENT RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

The tourist zoning is developed in the fundamental works of Ukrainian scientists (Beydik, 2001; Gorun, 2012; Marinich et al., 2003; Mezentseva and Mezentsev, 2000). Scientific research of the gastronomic territory zoning is less developed, but there are mentions of the enogastronomic zoning (Basiuk et al., 2017). The food historiogenesis theme penetrates into all spheres of mass culture. The trends of gastronomic tourism are considered by both domestic (Samilyk and Kubrak, 2021; Hafurova and Siuiva, 2021; Uliganets et al., 2021) and foreign researchers (Wiastuti et al., 2022; Lucas and Ramires, 2022). Numerous books and periodicals on culinary topics are published.

Historical factors and acquaintance with the cuisine of different peoples are described in the works of domestic and foreign scholars, including Artiukh (1985), Basiuk (2012), Hall et al. (2011), Pesme et al. (2010). Line Gordon et al. (2010), Professor of sustainable food systems, director of the Stockholm Resilience Center (SRC), is the founder of the concept of *"gastronomic landscapes*". Wylie (2007) suggests that food, as well as landscapes become "a reflection in the common and collective circles of cultural meaning". The works of Barham and Sylvander (2011), Bowen and Mutersbaugh (2014), Berriss (2019) demonstrate deep interest in studying the places where products come from. Food products that originate from certain landscapes are called "landscape products" (Ilbery and Kneafsey, 1999).

A classic study of Crouch and Ward's allotments (1988) demonstrates the way how interaction with the land through food cultivation creates rich and distinctive shared cultural meanings, language, and aesthetics. D. Imbert's most recent collection (2015) "Food and the City: Histories of Culture and Cultivation" covers a range of themes and views on symbiotic relationships and connections between food, people, and urban landscapes.

Classical writing and historical descriptions can provide a variaty of choices for those interested in what ways food has helped shape the city's sense of place, meaning, and association. Later works, such as Adele Wessel's (2010) on the "landscape of taste" in Australia, point to the possibility of reading the landscape as a gastronomic text that captures cultural dynamics and change over time. What food we eat, and why we eat it the way we do, shapes the landscape.

Other useful sources include the popular "Food for Free" by Mabey (1972), which is still important to those interested in food production in Britain, while "Wild Foods of Britain" (1941) by Jason Hill provides a less-known but interesting indication of the role, finding food to supplement meager diets and provide enjoyment in Britain during the Second World War. As a result traditional food has become one of the essential aspects of developing culinary tourism (Komariah et al., 2020; Wiastuti et al., 2022; Lucas and Ramires, 2022).

The aim of the article is zoning of the territory of the Right-bank Polissia of Ukraine according to the development of gastronomic tourism in the studied region, which was carried out according to the integral indicator for the physical and geographical regions of the Volyn Polissia, Zhytomyr Polissia and Kyiv Polissia in points. The criteria of gastronomic zoning were based on the factors of the development of gastronomic tourism: physical-geographic, ecological, settlement, historical-cultural, gastronomic, institutional, infrastructural. The hierarchy of gastronomic districts was based on the weight of gastronomic potential. The research task is related to the gastronomic tastes and preferences of tourists, therefore the district-forming features are the objects of gastronomic tourism: gastronomic festivals, gastronomic events, gastronomic objects (for example, monuments dedicated to food), etc., trade, food industry, alcohol establishments, infrastructure, services, means of accommodation, communications, medical infrastructure. So, we relied on the following components in the structure of the map indicated in the legend: food, shops, industrial, alcoholic, festivals.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Working out the territory zoning methodology of the Ukrainian Right-bank Polissia for the development purposes of the gastronomic tourism is based on the *methodology* selected by the authors among general and special methods of scientific research. To form the methodological base of the study, an algorithm for the study of gastronomic tourism was developed: the formation of the task of gastronomic tourism, the construction of a conceptual model of the potential of gastronomic tourism, the implementation and testing of the concept of the potential of gastronomic tourism, the sequence of determining the potential of gastronomic tourism, the implementation of the gastronomic tourism zoning of the Right-bank Polissia of Ukraine, visualization of the cluster model of development gastronomic tourism of the region (Figure 1). The method of analysis and synthesis is used to study the existing experience of zoning, including the gastronomic tourism purposes.The information method and the method

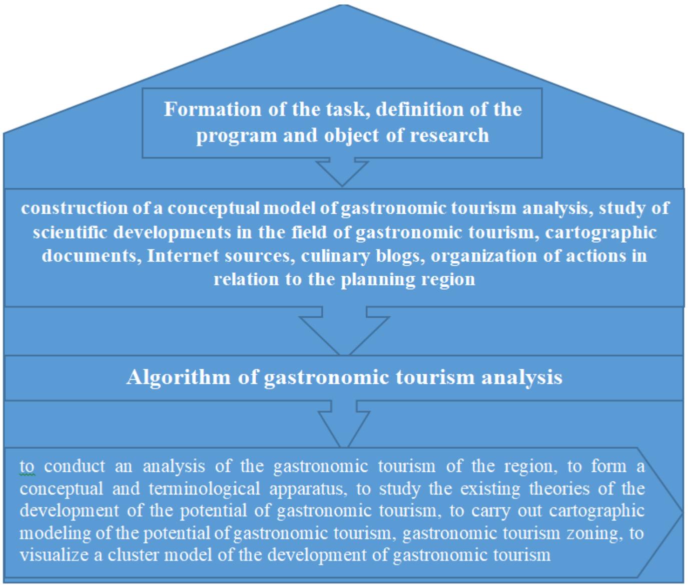

Figure 1. Gastronomy-tourist, landscape information pool
(Source: Developed by Authors)

of classification are necessary for the separation of information support groups in order to substantiate the criteria of the territories zoning on the selected features and further in the creation of synthetic cartographic works.The cybernetic method is used to systematize the primary knowledge about the research area in the form of an information database and its use in the methodological scheme (algorithm) of zoning map development.The method of geographic information mapping is an effective tool for the direct creation of the synthetic cartographic zoning model of the Ukrainian Righ-bank Polissia for the gastronomic tourism on the basis of the geographical information systems (GIS) functionality, which becomes a clear spatio-temporal cartographic result of its further development.At all stages of the research, a systematic approach is applied, which is considered in interrelated aspects through the conceptual basis of creation and use of the applied research methods, including using the developed cartographic zoning model for the gastronomic tourism purposes.The basic materials for the study are previous studies of the authors (Nesterchuk et al., 2020; 2021).

PRESENTATION OF THE MAIN RESEARCH MATERIAL

The essence of the concept of "territory zoning". The term "zoning" is known to refer to the method of cognition and concurrently the method application result. The method of cognition for the zoning process is characterized by a set of techniques aimed at identifying objectively existing areas and the boundaries between them (Rudenko, 2010).

The result of the method of cognition application is the process of synthetic mapping with the creation of a synthetic zoning map, which reflects the integral characteristics of the selected areas on the map by depicting the boundaries of the territories to which these characteristics belong. The result of applying the method of cognition is quite effective for creating a synthetic map with the selection of areas in the Ukrainian Right-bank Polissia for the gastronomic tourism development on the basis of the developed clustering map of the territory.

Principles, approaches, concepts, features, types, taxonomic units of the territory zoning

There are six principles of zoning, which to varying degrees can be taken into account in the territory zoning process of the Ukrainian Right-bank Polissia for the of gastronomic tourism purposes: objectivity; genetic; relative homogeneity of zoning units; territorial integrity; comparability of results; priority accounting of universal laws.

However, it is logical that in the process of zoning not all the selected principles will be observed without exception. For instance, the genetic principle is possible for zoning while identifying territorial units that are characterized not only by similar natural conditions but also, for example, common origin. And while applying the principle of relative homogeneity of zoning units in case of lack of information in the selected territorial units, the existence of "blank spots" is possible, which will not belong to any of the selected areas according to their characteristic (Marynych and Shishchenko, 2006).

Further, two **approaches** (regional, district) are pointed out and three **concepts** are considered in the process of zoning the object of study: descriptive, quantitative, systemic (Ishchuk et al., 2003). In general, the regional approach to zoning is characterized by the totality of all information about the object of zoning, and district one serves as a methodological tool for the consistent application of theoretical foundations, principles, methods and algorithms of zoning (Gudzevich, 2012).

The content of **the descriptive concept** of zoning is to summarize all available materials about the object of study, to reproduce its holistic image with a logical division into a certain number of spatially localized objects of lower order, which act as taxa of zoning. Within this concept, the quality of zoning is determined by the competence of the researcher zoning in this case is rather art than science (Nesterchuk, 2020). The essence of the **quantitative concept** is to formalize the source data, followed by the algorithmic selection of areas using certain statistical criteria. However, the integrity of the object is often lost. In the final stages, elements of the expert approach are usually used (Nesterchuk, 2019).

The synthesis of the two concepts mentioned above with the connection of interdisciplinary developments in the field of the reality cognition forms a **systemic concept**, which is based on the statement that all research operations carried out during zoning (not just the allocation of areas) should be interconnected and interdependent and their choice is made on a modular basis. This ensures the synthesis of any source information and a reasonable reproduction of the integrity of the districts. The key ones are: the mechanism of synthesis of formalized (quantitative) and content (descriptive) cognition in expert systems, postulates of the logical approach, modular organization of the methods system, the strategy of choosing the necessary method (Ishchuk et al., 2003). Zoning is carried out on a number of *features*, some of which the researcher can describe and evaluate. The researchers selected among them those that are considered to be quite important for the characteristics of the model area, reflecting its peculiarities. Features can be considered equal or located in order of importance; if necessary, they are given a "weighting factor". It includes:

- direct measurement of individual components as composites of the system;
- generalization and obtaining by correlation of the object with some classification (for instance, by components of the gastronomic potential of physical and geographical areas: objects of gastronomic tourism, gastronomic festivals, objects of tourists accommodation, objects of communication, services, etc.);
- obtained from directly measurable characteristics according to certain formulas (for example, calculation of weighted average tourist flow);
- related to individual components (for example, the level of use of services by means of communication);
- characterizing the "object-subject" relationship for which these features can be assessed (for instance, the suitability of the area for gastronomic tourism purposes).
- given the set of the zoning features, there are several **types**: partial, sectoral, complex.

Partial zoning is zoning on one basis, which is usually carried out by narrow specialists within the specific task. This is, for instance, the creation of a zoning map on the basis of gastronomic festivals or quantitative parameters of gastronomic tourism facilities.

Sectoral includes zoning by a group of indicators that are tied to a specific territorial unit and characterize each component of the geosystem in different ways from different angles (for example, the distribution of gastronomic festivals by frequency, average duration, etc.). It is also called specialized or component. Complex zoning includes the use of many indicators that characterize the various components of the territory; in particular, this may include all indicators that are part of the integrated index of gastronomic potential of the territory by units of physical and geographical division. If zoning takes into account only the features that characterize the current state of the territory, it is called recent. If historical aspects are taken into account, then zoning is genetic. According to the results of zoning, it is possible to distinguish three types of areas: homogeneous with internal relative uniformity; functional, united by any connections (they can be internally heterogeneous); configurational, concluded between physical boundaries or delineated by a network of previously identified lines and points. In the context of the territory zoning for the gastronomic tourism development puposes the areas of the first two types, which are distinguished by homogeneous and functional zoning, are of sufficient interest.

The principle of homogeneity is similar to the principle underlying any classification, which allows us to consider this type of zoning as its variety. Similarity criteria are used there. Functional zoning is the allocation of interacting territorial elements, united by flows of matter, energy, and information. The criteria for combining sites into one area are the strength of their interaction, the density of communication, and the intensity of flows, expressed in one form or another. Primary zoning units can be combined on the principle of neighborhood, also obtaining a hierarchical structure of increasing area.

The algorithm of the territory zoning of the Ukrainian Right-bank Polissia for the gastronomic tourism development purposes

The zoning algorithm is a complex process formed of a number of logically interrelated elements, which include: choosing a conceptual model, justifying the scale of the research, determining the type of source materials, methods of their use, further formalization of data (if necessary), selection of areas by selected types and interpretation of results.

The gastronomic zoning of the Ukrainian Right-bank Polissia is not carried out on modern scientific principles at all. The authors have used the scientific fact of landscape, ethnographic, soil science approaches to the gastronomic zoning of the Ukrainian Right-bank Polissia. Physical-geographical, ethnographic, and soil zoning have become an ascending platform for the separation of gastronomic regions, areas of the Right-bank Polissia (Nesterchuk at al., 2020).

Delimitation of the gastronomic areas depends directly on biological and geographical factors. Regularities of the geographical shell such as altitude zonation and horizontal zonation are the basis for the gastronomic zoning. Altitude zonation takes into account regular changes in the nature from the foothills to the peak, can be traced in the soil cover, climate change with altitude, location of mountains in latitudinal zones, belts, exposure of slopes, the length of the mountain systems (Gorun, 2012). Latitude varies from the equator to the poles, and leaves an imprint on the geographical zonation, which vividly presents these manifestations in the change of natural complexes. Mountain natural systems are intensively used not only in agriculture and industry; they are becoming attractive sites for the development of the gastronomic tourism. This research relies on the landscape approach to the problem of the gastronomic zoning. Therefore, the main object of method study mentioned above is territorial units, namely geosystems as integrated systems. The landscape is an attractor in essence. Currently, the motivational approach of I. Yakovenko (2002) expresses the recreational needs of the consumer, who chooses certain components of the nature for recreation. The main motivation is not perceived in individual attractions, but rather in a set of environmental, social, economic, and cultural characteristics that identify and highlight a particular gastronomic landscape. S. Dutchak (2014) singles out the definition of "tourist and recreational landscape".

These products are deeply linked to the local identity and landscape of the production sites and are part of a "quality shift" in food consumption by sections of society in Europe and beyond. Examples of these "landscape products" from the Mediterranean region are olive oil produced on the Greek island of Lesbos; ham from pigs fed on acorns raised on wooded pastures in Extremadura, Spain; and wine produced in the Portuguese region of Alto Douro. Although "landscape products" are usually sold in niche markets, they can offer leverage to promote sustainable management of industrial landscapes when they have a high market value and the cultivation is tied to specific regions. In our opinion, the "landscape products" of the Right-bank Polissia can be cranberries, blueberries, cowberries, raspberries, honey, potatoes, carp, lard, meat (Nesterchuk, 2018; 2020). Traditions and identities of food are included in the "marking" and physical form of Polissia landscapes, manifested in the city scene through monuments, place names, allotments, public gardens, outlets, street and farm markets, restaurants, fast food restaurants and their signs. Some of them have changed over time, but food identities can also be developed and used to convey a sense of place for marketing purposes or to engage a certain category of consumers who themselves have a particular food identity. Taking a gastronomic tour within the city is another way to grasp a comprehensive understanding of local gastronomic culture (Zhu and Yasami, 2021). There is a growing interest in the landscapes formation with the help of food production and consumption in the region. Socio-economic, cultural, and technological changes have led to the huge changes in our attitude to food and its perception over the last three to four decades. Food can be viewed as a representation and manifestation of human identity, and this affects the nature of the landscape.

In particular, it can be demonstrated with the ways of local food crops development as a result of the interaction between people and food grown in specific environmental conditions and people culinary practices. Examples of such interactions are a number of "cultural landscapes" recognized by the UNESCO World Heritage List, such as the Alto Douro wine region in Portugal, the Honghe Hani rice terraces in China, the Fry Benthos industrial meat processing landscape in Uruguay and the Winegrau wine landscape. Our aim is to popularize the landscapes and terroir of the Ukrainian Right-bank Polissia, for instance, landscapes of physical and geographical areas: Klesivsko-Rokytnianskyi, Olevsko-Bilokorovytskyi, Slovechansko-Ovrutskyi, Rudniansko-Vilchanskyi, Chystohalivsko-Korohodskyi, where cranberries, blueberries, cowberries, honey, potatoes and related branded products are sold; Verkhnioprypiatskyi, Nizhniostyrskyi, Kolkivsko-Sarnenskyi, Kostopilsko-Bereznivskyi, Horodnytsko-Emilchynskyi, Cherniakhivsko-Korostyshivskyi with cranberries, blueberries, raspberries, potatoes, lard, meat, which represent ethnic foods, etc.

The food production potential in the urban landscape in the industrialized world, including the United Kingdom and the United States, creates "urban gastronomic landscapes". The territory of the Right-bank Polissia is a potential arena for the development, urban planning policy, which increasingly seeks to expel food production to rural and suburban areas, especially when more people whose rural identity, skills, and values are based on food production traditions migrate to cities. This will especially apply to the period of post-war reconstruction of the certain territories of Ukraine. Urban agriculture, in particular, has become a significant area of study for social and economic issues, including community and partnership work, land tenure and social justice. Public gardens, greenhouses, mini-gardens can have consequences for the health and well-being of the urban population, especially for the low-income population groups, through cultivation, cooking and food exchange. Therefore, urban agriculture policy is also essential. Food policy for the sustainable nutrition strategies have implications for landscapes at every level. The authors' research concerns the autochthonous region of the Right-bank Polissia in the context of the landscape space and food prints of the ethnic groups. Although much of the focus of the scientific community, which was on landscapes, food production, has shifted to the city, it is still necessary to study the impact of food production on the rural landscapes as climate change and human processes change and degrade soils, as populations migrate and pressure on the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) is also increasing.

The interest of famous chefs contributes to the growing popularization of the gastronomic landscape and the identity of food for trade and tourism. This provides new opportunities for those who "sell" and "create" the gastronomic landscapes and have important implications for human health and the economy, as well as for animal health and welfare. There is also an increase in interest in fodder, partly as a result of interest in the culinary industry. Although the search for fodder is mostly concentrated in rural areas, where traditional knowledge and practices still exist, there is a growing attention, including the scientific literature, to the potential for food production in urban areas. This has significant consequences for the landscape and biodiversity, as well as for people’s eating habits and possibly for eating due to food poverty.

Gastronomic research is essential for a holistic view of the productive landscapes potential, where productivity is not only about food, but also about tourism and cultural identity. The historical view emphasizes the weight of agricultural innovation and technology as a driving force for landscape change. In recent years, EU agricultural policy and subsidies in Europe have had a huge impact on the landscape. Nowadays in Southeast Asia everything is focused on changing the landscape as a result of the palm oil industry. Padfield et al. (2016) provide an analysis of these transitional landscapes and identify key issues for the study of sustainable land use policies and practices that arise due to their work. Turning to the urban landscape, Roe et al. (2016) offer a landscape framing of the concept of gastronomic landscapes as a potential way to study human interaction, production and consumption of food. Nutrition issues in urban areas are of growing concern to politicians as the world's population becomes increasingly urban. The relationship between public and municipal efforts to develop urban agriculture in Sacramento is covered in the scientific work of Napawan and Townsen (2016). Russell and Hedberg (2016) reveal the ecology of alternative food chains that supply Greenmarket farmers' markets in New York. There is a problem of quality in terms of food and a landscape, which is introduced by Camaioni et al. (2016) while studing vineyard landscapes. The intersection of food and the landscape is covered in different areas, for instance, by artists (e.g. New Bridge Project, Newcastle upon Tyne***), as well as community-based initiatives (e.g. Incredible Edible, Todmorden). The analysis of the interactions between the landscape and food also provides significant opportunities for both qualitative and quantitative research methods.

Mankind has so dramatically changed the biosphere where human societies are embedded that it has undermined it in a way that threatens our very existence. We offer a new field of study that combines the natural and social sciences to write a recipe for a prosperous human society within our planet. Gastronomic tourism will allow us to identify impact points that can transform harmful human behavior, build sustainable food systems, improve human health, and strengthen the resilience of the biosphere. The food systems of the ethnic groups of certain territories are factors that reduce the degradation of the planet. We know that the food we eat or do not eat at all has a profound effect on the planet. The global food system emits one third of all man-made greenhouse gas emissions, accounts for 70% of all human water and accounts for 1/3 of the Earth's surface. Destroying forests to make room to feed livestock, we destroy biodiversity. It is necessary to focus, among other topics, on the gastronomic landscapes to help reduce biodiversity loss. Pastures, forests, wetlands, urban gardens, and coastal areas generate products that promote human and global health.

This focus demonstrates the know-how needed to manage and strengthen the resilience of these landscapes. It also promotes culinary skills and innovation and can improve biosphere management. The research focus is on gastronomic tourism, potential, zoning and gastronomic landscapes as key factors in the sustainable tourism development. The research aims to demonstrate how we can use the "art of eating well", i.e. practices and skills mobilized to choose and cook good food to improve these gastronomic landscapes. Emphasizing the value of ingredients can stimulate interest in aspects of governance such as understanding, caring, and fostering a sense of belonging to the biosphere. These aspects are often ignored in more industrial food systems. There is no one-size-fits-all solution, but rather a mosaic of solutions coming from around the world. We need to use the various best practices and innovations that exist. Divide and Conquer: A Global Analysis of Food Systems. In a truly global style – think globally, act locally. This is clearly confirmed by the SRC 2022 Executive Training program, which focuses on transforming the nutrition system. The food that gets on our plates consumes huge resources and puts more and more pressure on our planet. But this is not necessary. Studying people's behavior and using traditional know-how and modern innovations may be the key to changing our food systems. For this purpose we identify key players in the region, focusing on FoodTech. Online life is rapidly gaining momentum, almost all spheres of human life have gone online. With the advent of touchscreen smartphones, technology has become an integral part of everyone's life. And as a result, a new trend has emerged called foodtech. The word "foodtech" is formed from the fusion of the English words "food" and "technology". This trend means the integration of digital technologies in the food production, cooking, and delivery. However, people mean online food delivery services using the word "foodtech".

Today, the gastronomy is a key part of any travel experience. Sometimes it can be the reason for the trip. Tourists are looking for meaningful experiences when travelling, and one way to do this is to "taste the place." Conversations at the table with food or walks and conversations with producers, acquaintance and participation in production come to the fore. Researchers use anthropological methods to understand food stories, which can reveal much,that traditional sociological methods cannot. According to Craig et al. (2015), we have recently discovered that while studying the archeology of banquets in Stonehenge, UK, we can learn about human behavior and the landscape use (even in prehistoric times) by exploring interactions with food. There is much to learn from past and present practices and interactions between people and the landscape through the prism of food, but most importantly, there is also great potential for the research, especially on the future gastronomic landscapes of the world. Our hypothesis is that the gastronomy and tourism could improve the local sustainable territorial development through an adequate institutional framework that manages collective and individual action. In other words, gastronomic tourism and indigenous gastronomy can benefit local communities with the right set of rules. We set goals to confirm our hypothesis: to describe the territorial transformation of the Right-bank Polissia from a marginal region of Ukraine into a major tourist destination; to study and determine the gastronomic potential and conduct gastronomic zoning, identify clusters of gastronomic tourism in the region and their contribution to territorial development, building cartographic models.

Since the 21st century, the world has seen a significant increase in the number of tourist trips to attract to the ethnographic heritage, acquaintance with indigenous dishes, the magic of cooking and tasting. Accordingly, the Right-bank Polissia is traditionally perceived as a region with significant ethnocultural potential. The inner irresistible urge to nostalgic reconstructions of the world in the gray times of antiquity is also a search for answers to the question of how we should live today, how to project the future. The Right-bank Polissia has long been an oasis of wild nature. The reason for this is impassable and opaque swamps, which have always received enough moisture from the Horyn and the Sluch and from large masses of groundwater on the right bank of the Dnipro, which were unloaded in this place, forming swampy floodplains, lakes, and ditches. Today, almost nothing has survived from this diverse and extraordinary natural complex. Such natural living conditions has also affected the diet of Polishchuks.

The design of the Right-bank Polissia gastronomic zoning is subject to the criteria of selection of tourist regions, districts by two numerous groups that reflect the tourist functions of the territory: natural resources and resources of anthropogenic origin. We have tried to cover the whole territory, based on the concentration the of gastronomic tourism potential in the selection of regions, districts. We have relied on the *principle of perspective*, even where tourism is virtually absent or underdeveloped, but it has certain prerequisites for development, i.e. it is proposed to implement zoning without residue. An ongoing process of expanding the spatial coverage of tourism is a strong argument in support of the principle of perspective. Applying the cluster theory of Enright and Sun Hung Kai (2000), we have identified *the projected gastronomic tourism clusters of the Ukrainian Right-bank Polissia*. It provides typification of the territories to improve opportunities to promote products and traditions of the region through integrated forms and methods of production, trade and tourism in the short and medium term in the long run (Nesterchuk et al., 2021 b). The development of scientific principles of the gastronomic zoning and their further development allows us to identify new recreational resources and other prerequisites for the development of gastronomic tourism in unexplored places; identify and create new gastronomic tourist areas of different order; determine their tourism specialization correctly, transfer the experience of gastronomic tourism from one area to another with similar conditions; provide differentiated attitude to different gastronomic areas.

The gastronomic zoning in our case is based on the main elements that determine the content of gastronomic tourism: gastronomic tourism resources and services, material base, tourist migration, logistics, investment activities in tourism, etc. The gastronomic zoning will provide answers on combining approaches to the landscape ecology and food systems to study the links between different properties of food systems and the different results of the landscape sustainability in the study area, using landscape products as an important link between remote locations and processes. For this reason, we have identified and resolved the following research issues: how Polissia landscape products are characterized on the basis of common attributes of their food systems; what environmental, cultural, social, and economic results of the ecological and economic sustainability of the landscape have these landscape products, and what synergies and trade-offs arise between them; what different types of food systems can be identified and how they relate to the landscape sustainability outcomes.

Gastronomic tourism has been recently established as a form of specific tourism that is constantly evolving and aimed at preserving and developing products, local areas and local dishes, which allows visitors to discover the natural connection between food and its region of origin. Thus, the territory zoning of the Ukrainian Right-bank Polissia for the purposes of gastronomic tourism is carried out on the basis of the proposed algorithm stages using the indicator of gastronomic potential of physical and geographical areas and taking into account the selected principles. The resulting areas on the grounds of integrated zoning, which are mostly homogeneous, are combined on the principle of neighborhood, Figure 2.

The economic basis of territory zoning of the Ukrainian Right-bank Polissia for the purposes of gastronomic tourism development is an essential tool for viability and self-sufficiency substantiation of the tourist destinations. The calculation of the economic efficiency of tourism will predict the tourism destinations outcome. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO**), the growth of international tourist arrivals is 4-5% annually, the tourism sector accounts for 9% of world GDP, 30% of world exports of services and one in 12 jobs in the world.

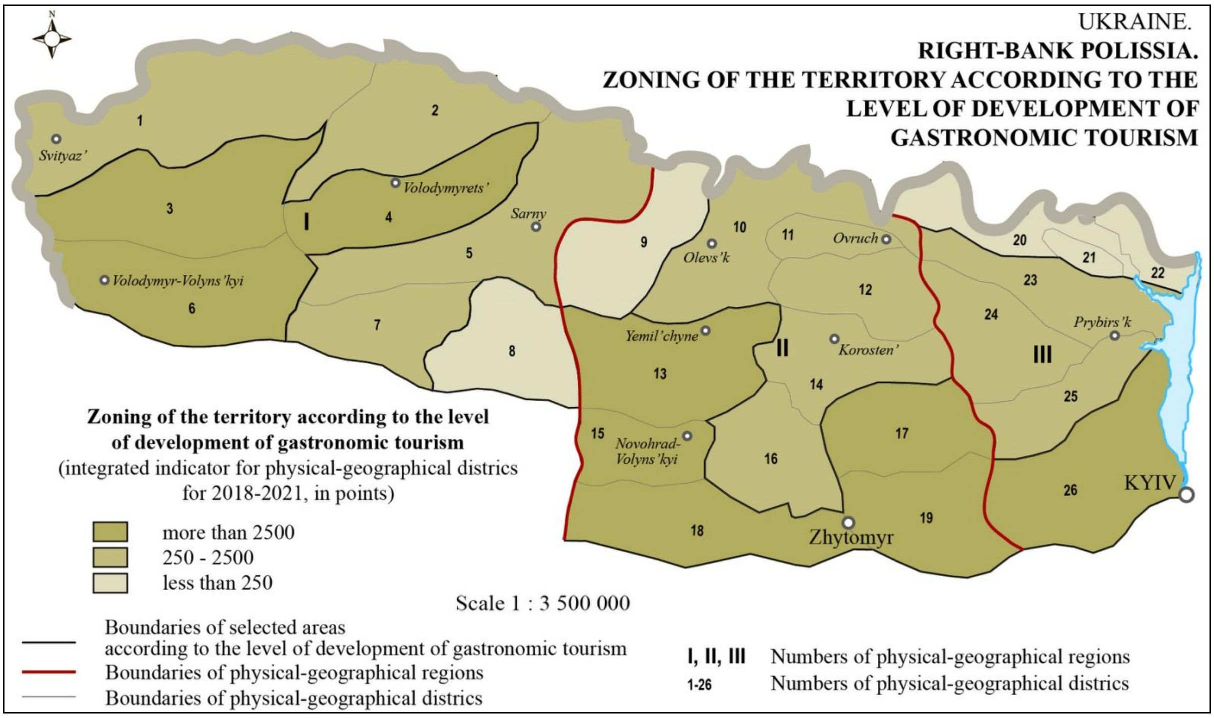

Figure 2. Synthetic cartographic model of recipe territory zoning of the Ukrainian Right-bank Polissia according to the level of gastronomic tourism development (original in scale 1: 3 500 000) (Source: Developed by Authors)

Since the pandemia, gastronomic tourism needs to be set in a new framework, to "re-formulate" the offer for gastronomic tours. This requires an updated list of necessary initial data for assessing integrated indicators of economic and social efficiency of tourism activities at the regional level (for instance, the territory of the Right-bank Polissia) (Table 1).

Table 1. List of necessary initial data for assessment of integrated indicators of economic and social efficiency of tourist activity at the regional level (Source: Mironov and Mironova, 2016)

The indicators set of economic tourism efficiency	The indicators set of social tourism efficiency
Number of tourists per unit capacity of all accommodation, including special, pers. /place	The share of those employed in the field of tourism in the total economically active population of the region, %
The share of those employed in the field of tourism in the total economically active population of the region,%	Volume of paid sanatorium health services per capita of the region, UAH / pers.
Room utilization rate (available rooms)	The average number of employees in tourism-related activities, pers.
Labor productivity, thousand UAH / pers.	Current (operating) costs for environmental protection, thousand UAH
Gross Regional Domestic Product generated by tourism,%	Turnover of public catering per capita in the region, UAH / pers.
Gross Regional Domestic Product generated by tourism,%	
The average number of tourists per capita in the region, pers.	
The share of tourism services in the total amount of paid services to the population of the region, %	

The basis for calculating the integrated indicators of economic and social efficiency of tourism is the indicators set of economic and social blocks. Based on the adapted methodology for assessing the socio-economic tourism efficiency, the following formulas (1-5) developed by Nesterchuk will be used to calculate the integrated indicators of social (ES) and economic (EE) efficiency. Assessing the dynamics of indicators of economic and social efficiency of the study area for a certain period of time should be standardized according to the following formula (developed for the first time by Nesterchuk, 2022):

$$G = \frac{\Delta g}{g_0}, \qquad (1)$$

g_0 is the value of the indicator in the previous period;
Δg is a change of the indicator for the period.

We use formula 1 and calculate for each block an integrated indicator of economic and social efficiency of the block (formula developed in 2022 by Nesterchuk, for the first time):

$$p_y \sum_{y=1}^{m} v_i \, b_{yi}, \qquad (2)$$

y = 1 (a block of economic efficiency indicators);
y = 2 (a block of social efficiency indicators);
p_y is an integrated indicator of economic (or social) efficiency;
b_{yi} is i-normalized indicator from the block y;
v_i is the weight by which the i-index of the y-block is included in the integrated indicator;
m is the number of y-block indicators.

To determine v_i we use an approach based on the calculation of the weights of the indicators by the coefficients of pairwise correlation between them. If r_{ij} is the pairwise correlation coefficient between the i-th and j-th indicators, the weights are determined by the following formula (developed for the first time in 2022 by Nesterchuk I.):

$$v_1 \frac{\sum_{j=1}^{n} r_{ij}}{\sum_{j=1}^{n} * \sum_{i=1}^{n} r_{ij}}, \quad (3)$$

v_i - weights of indicators according to pairwise correlation coefficients between them;
r_{ij} - pairwise correlation coefficient between i-th and j-th indicators.

Thus, the sum of the pairwise correlation coefficients of each indicator with the others is correlated with the total sum of the coefficients throughout the matrix of pairwise correlation coefficients. Due to the fact that the latter reflects the relationship between all indicators, the obtained values of a_i determine the proportion of the i-th indicator in the integrated efficiency indicator for the t-th block. This approach is justified in this case, because each block contains indicators that characterize the same aspect of socio-economic tourism efficiency: economic or social.

Accordingly, the formula for calculating the indicator that characterizes the economic tourism efficiency is the following (formula developed in 2022 by Nesterchuk I., for the first time):

$$E_e = \sum_{t=1}^{7} v_i \, b_{yi} , \quad (4)$$

E_e is an integrated indicator of economic tourism efficiency;
vi - weights of indicators according to pairwise correlation coefficients between them;
byi - i-normalized index from block y.

The formula (developed in 2022 by Nesterchuk I. for the first time) for calculating the indicator that characterizes the social tourism efficiency is:

$$C_e = \sum_{t=1}^{5} v_i \, b_{yi} , \quad (5)$$

C_e is an integral indicator of the social tourism efficiency.
v_i - weights of indicators according to pairwise correlation coefficients between them;
b_{yi} - i-normalized index from block y.

The most vulnerable in tourism is the regional level. Especially the development of gastronomic tourism at the level of the united territorial communities. Gastronomy reflects both natural and climatic, geographical aspects of the region, and cultural, historical, religious features, social practices, norms of behavior, traditions, rituals of the territory. With the expansion of the space of everyday life, with the growth of the processes of demythologization and "magic" of the world, the opposite process occurs, i.e. the creation of new spaces where people can hide from the rationalist, orderly, determined by the agenda reality. The creation of such a reality, both physical and virtual, is based on the practices of simulacra, escapism and nomadism. One of these is the "gastronomic space", despite all the geopolitical and epidemiological changes in the modern world. The standardized model of creation and promotion of a new tourist product in the united territorial communities proposed by Nesterchuk I. for the first time is demonstrated through a step-by-step program (Figure 3).

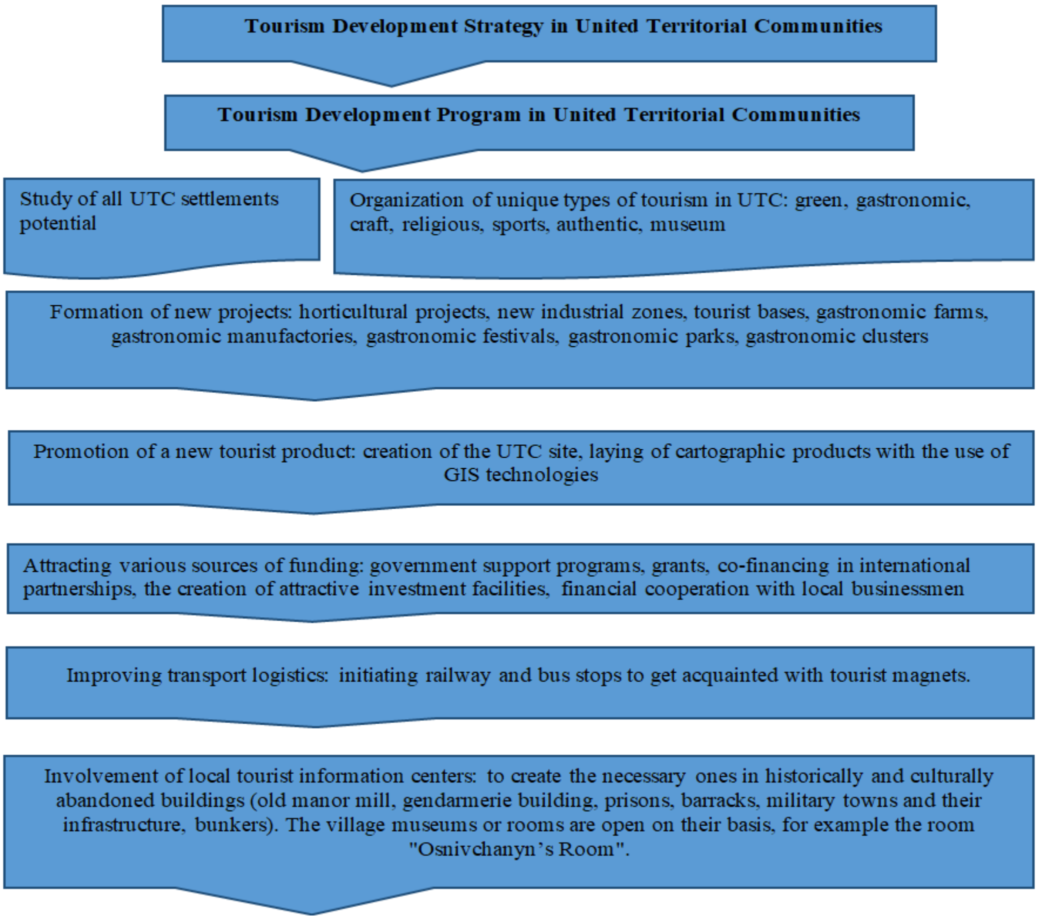

Figure 3. The standardized model of a new tourist product creation and promotion in the United Territorial Communities. (Source: Developed by Authors)

It is appropriate to use the practices of nomadism, escapism, simulacra to meet the needs of modern tourists looking for "exclusive" emotions, impressions and experiences, virtual tours and pseudo-events, the opportunity to participate in rituals, performing certain functions, acquire certain knowledge and skills (Figure 4).

Gastronomic tourism offers a great potential for stimulating the local economy and increasing sustainability and inclusion. It has a positive effect on many levels of the value formatiom chain, such as agriculture and local food and its production, and allows us to explore the potential role of food and wine products in the rural area of the Right-bank Polissia. The offer of food and wine tourism should not be made in addition to typical products: restaurants, hospitality systems, events, thematic routes, corporate museums, local markets. The Right-bank Polissia is a territorial system that bases its offer on typical productions and the quality of their food. The Right-bank Polissia is a territorial system where the gastronomic offer retains a secondary role compared to other types of attractions. The statistical facts of domestic tourism will be visualized in Figures 5, 6, 7, 8. The diagram (Figure 5) demonstrates the structure of the domestic tourism consumption by products and categories of visitors. Tourists are characterized by a relatively even distribution of consumption among the typical services in the field of tourism by categories: accommodation, food, rail passenger transport and road passenger transport. There are no accommodation costs for tourists, as they do not need to find a place to stay; however, a significant part of the costs are food services (30%), rail services (20%) and road passenger transport (20%).

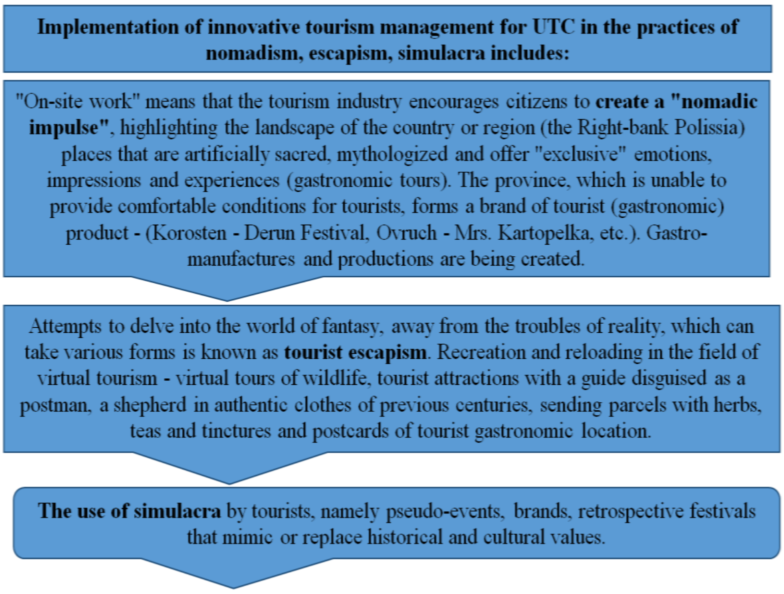

Figure 4. The gastronomic tourism development model in the United Territorial Communities through explication of nomadism, simulacra, espakapism (Source: Developed by Authors)

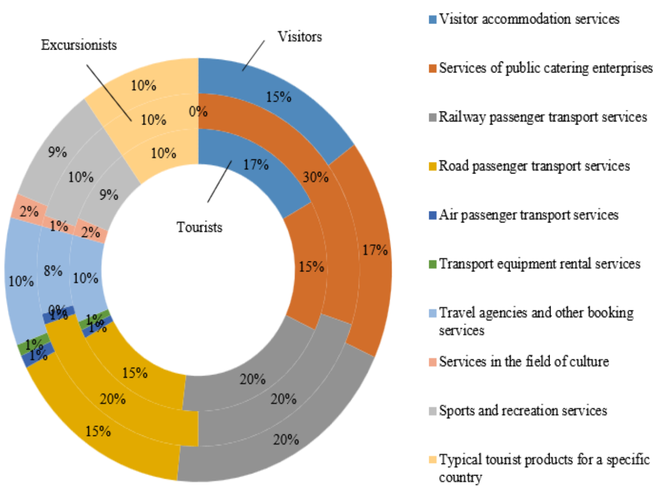

Figure 5. The structure of the domestic tourism consumption

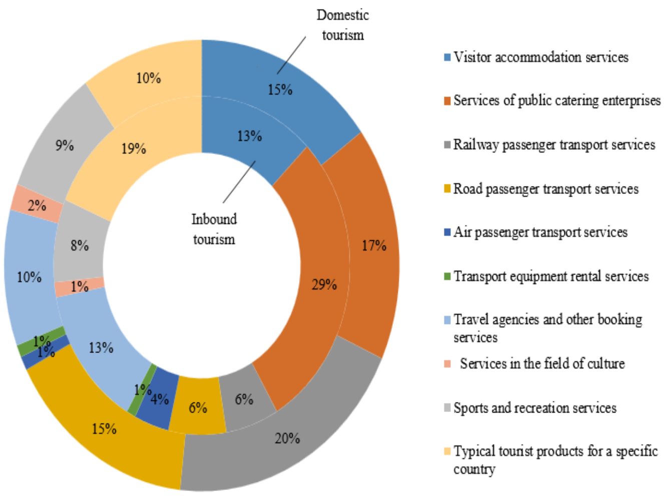

Figure 6. The structure of tourism costs within the country

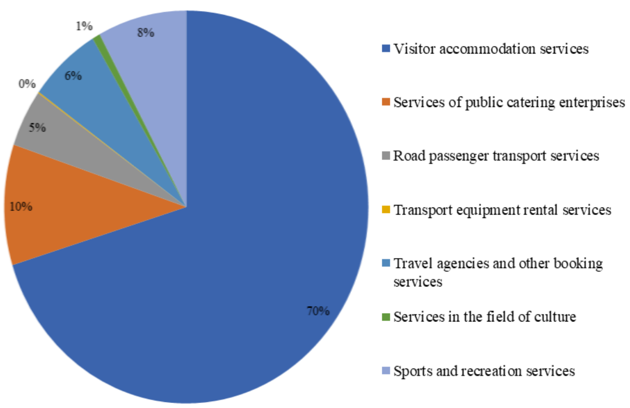

Figure 7. The structure of the internal supply by type of activity in the field of tourism

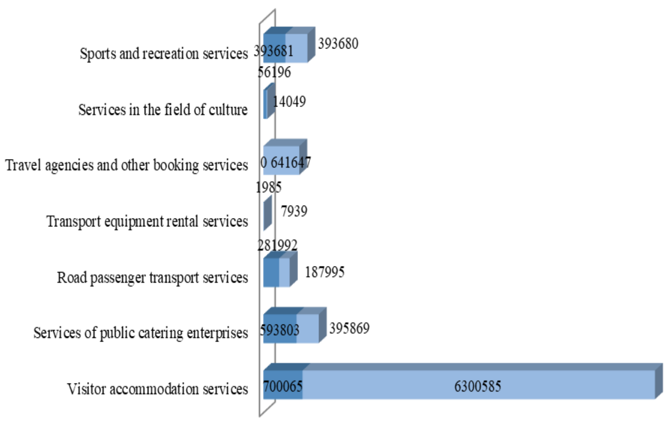

Figure 8. The total volume of domestic supply and consumption of tourism within the country, in consumer prices (UAH)

(Source: Developed by Authors based on Official website of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine)

For visitors, the structure of consumption is similar to tourists. All groups are characterized by the same costs for sports and recreational services (9%) and typical tourist goods for a particular country (10%). Figure 6 proves that for domestic tourists the cost of accommodation and meals is almost the same share (15% and 17% respectively) on a par with rail and road passenger transport services (20% and 15%). The structure of expenditures of foreign tourists is dominated by food costs (29%), a significant part is the cost of typical tourist goods (19%), reservation services (13%) and accommodation (13%). All other costs for both groups of tourists are insignificant.

According to the net valuation of production accounts by types of activities in the field of tourism, there is a clear predominance of accommodation services which share is 70%, the share of catering services is 10%, sports and recreational services are 8%, travel agency services are 6%, and road passenger transport services are only 5%. The total net value is UAH 9,969,486 thousand. The total Gross Value Added for visitor accommodation services is 71%, catering services services is 47%, road passenger transport services is 46%.

The chart above demonstrates that services related to booking and other travel agency services are fully consumed, 90% of the total offer of accommodation services and 80% of vehicle rental services are also consumed by tourists within the country. All other services provided consume less than 50% of the supply by activity in the field of tourism.

CONCLUSIONS

Our scientific research in the field of gastronomic tourism provides further evidence that such initiatives can provide not only high quality food, but also a place for meetings and learning, where exchange and discussion are as important as food itself; interaction with the landscape gives all kinds of benefits. Given the vast opportunities for research and publications in this field, from understanding lost landscape heritage and food practices to technology to create city-wide roofs and vertical urban landscapes, our study focuses on some of the key areas of gastronomic tourism of the growing interest to politicians and practitioners as well as to researchers in many different disciplines.

The offered methodological approach fully reflects the innovative aspects of the study of socio-economic efficiency in the field of recreation and tourism at the regional level, especially at the level of United Territorial Communities through the practices of nomadism, simulacra, espapism. It will be useful in identifying "weak points" in some components of socio-economic tourism efficiency, and parameters, their components, for instance, in the economic aspect of the effectiveness of inter-firm relations, social, blocks of indicators of economic and social efficiency and others.

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE OF GUA PELANGI, JELEBU, NEGERI SEMBILAN, MALAYSIA: ITS POTENTIAL AS A HERITAGE TOURISM SITE

Mohd Hasfarisham Abd HALIM*
Sungai Batu Archaeological Complex, Pengkalan Samak Village, Bedong, Kedah, Malaysia, e-mail: mhasfarisham@gmail.com

Mohd Aziz GORIP
Curator of Negeri Sembilan Museum, Sungai Ujung Road, Seremban, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia, e-mail: azizgorip@gmail.com

Rasydan MUHAMAD
University Sains Malaysia, Center for Global Archaeological Research, Penang, Malaysia, e-mail: rasydan.rm@gmail.com

Shyeh Sahibul Karamah MASNAN
University Sains Malaysia, Center for Global Archaeological Research, Penang, Malaysia, e-mail: shyehsahibul@usm.my

Mokhtar SAIDIN
Chairman, Geopark Implimentation Committee, Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, Penang, Malaysi, e-mail: mokhtarsaidin@gmail.com

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Abstract: Archaeological studies conducted in Gua Pelangi, Negeri Sembilan have been able to find an early civilization aged between 14,000 to 9,000 thousand years ago which was used as a shelter from hot rain and wild animals, in addition to making stone tools and food preparation. The interpretation was based on the findings of 299 lithic artifacts, 52,929 faunal remains and evidence of burning such as ash, charcoal and burning sediments that are still in situ have been recorded. This site is also used as a workshop for the manufacture of stone tools with the presence of hammer stone, cores, anvil, flake, chopper and debitage. Analysis of the fauna remains found clearly shows that this community hunts and collects terrestrial, arboreal/semi-arboreal and aquatic/semi-aquatic vertebrate animals and mollusk shells. Based on the scientific evidence, ecotourism activities involving cave exploration, pioneering and jungle trekking, camping, limestone hill climbing, cooking demonstrations in the forest and visits to local community villages have been carried out. This shows that efforts to develop Gua Pelangi into a tourism product have begun and this is able to develop the economy of the local community in the area.

Key words: Gua Pelangi, excavation, lithic tools, tour packages, ecotourism

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INTRODUCTION

Prior to 2015, national archaeological data relating to paleolithic sites in the southern part of the Peninsula Malaysia had not been clearly recorded. Previous archaeological studies involving evidence of the prehistoric sites are more concentrated in the Lenggong Valley (Isa, 2007; Saidin, 2011 and Bakry, 2017), Bukit Keplu, Kodiang, Gua Tok Sik, Gua Berhala (Omar et al., 2016) and Tingkayu, Sabah (Jalil et al., 2017). The discovery of stone tools (Figure 1) especially on the coast of Tanjung Bunga, Johor (Tweedie, 1953) and the discovery of flake tools in river sediments at Batu 19¼ Jalan Seremban-Kuala Klawang (William, 1951) have opened a new chapter in the possibility of prehistoric evidence being obtained the results of archaeological studies in this area. Based on the stone tool findings obtained in the southern part of the Peninsula Malaysia, a series of archaeological studies involving surveys and mapping were conducted, especially in cave sites. The results of the survey and mapping enable the potential of the Gua Pelangi site to be recorded and archaeological studies conducted in a more systematic manner.

Site Study

Gua Pelangi (Figure 2) is located at coordinates 3°3’7.6782” N and 102°19’40.7334” E at an altitude of 135 meters above sea level and is located in the Semantan Formation (Geological Map of Durian Tipus Shift 96, 1993). It is located in Compartment 81, Pasoh Forest Reserve, Jelebu district, Negeri Sembilan (Muhammad, 2020). According to Muhammad (2020) the Gua Pelangi site can only be accessed through the entrance from the village of Felda Pasoh 4 which is about 4 kilometers south of the site. Based on the topographic map (Syit 96) and geological map (Syit 96) Durian Tipus shows that the Gua Pelangi is located on a steep slope and surrounded by several hills (Geological Map of Durian Tipus Syit 96, 1973; Topographic Map of Durian Tipus Syif 96, 1973). In this area, there is also a record of river flow in the northern part (Lakai River) and the southern part of the cave (Marong River) which are each within a distance of about 200 meters from Gua Pelangi (Muhammad, 2020). The two rivers are connected to Pertang River which is about six kilometers west of Gua Pelangi. Currently, only the river in the northern part of Gua Pelangi is still

* Corresponding author

actively flowing. Near this site, about two kilometers from the northwest, there is a village of the Temuan indigenous people who live around this area. This clearly shows that the environment of Gua Pelangi is still less exposed to the community which allows the archaeological study conducted to be used as an ecotourism product.

Research Objective

Archaeological studies at the Gua Pelangi site generally have several main purposes to complete. Among the purpose of the study at the Pelangi Cave site include:

a) Determine the function and contribution of the Gua Pelangi in the culture of the early society,

b) Identify lithic technology and nutritional diet adapted by the community living in Gua Pelangi and

c) Combine primary data obtained through archaeological studies into a nationally and worldly recognized natural heritage tourism package.

Research Methodology

Archaeological studies at the Gua Pelangi site were conducted based on survey, mapping and excavation approaches that eventually led to the introduction of archeotourism packages. Therefore, in general, this study has involved survey and mapping for the purpose of collecting raw data of the site. After that the actual excavation process is carried out which allows the interpretation of the whole study to be presented. Once the primary data is obtained comprehensively then the development plan of the natural heritage tourism package is designed and implemented in collaboration between the state government and AtoA Adventure Company. Therefore, the Gua Pelangi site can be developed as an ecotourism product based on the discovery of special artifacts and ecofacts based on the classification of Mulaj (2015).

Figure 1. The stone tools found during the excavation at the Tanjung Bunga site, Johor (Source: Tweedie, 1953 and illustrated by author, 2022)

Figure 2. Location of the archaeological site of Gua Pelangi (Source: Google Map, 2022; Field Documentation, 2022)

Excavation Data of Gua Pelangi

The excavation process was carried out after preliminary data related to the potential of the site were recorded through a surface finding which found a Brotia episcopalis shells attached to the cave wall at a height of one meter in addition to bifas, flake, anvil, hammers stone, debitage, fragments of pottery and faunal remains (Muhammad and Saidin, 2015: 2017a, b; Muhammad et al., 2019). Therefore, the Gua Pelangi site has shown positive potential for archaeological research, so the contour mapping was carried out on 13 excavation trench (Figure 3) for the purpose of collecting field data. The contour mapping carried out clearly shows the surface of the sloping area recorded starting from the G8 trench towards the west of the Gua Pelangi site. The other part of the excavation trench that showed that it was on a flat land area inside the cave. Archaeological excavations carried out in Gua Pelangi (Figure 4) only allocated about 16% of the actual area of the cave (Muhammad, 2020) namely in trench A8, B7, B9,

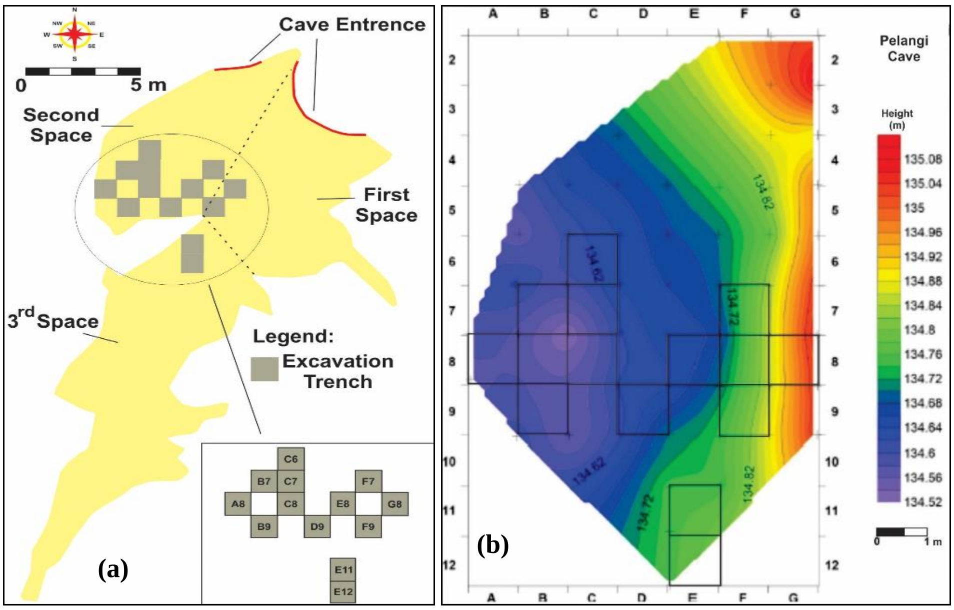

Figure 3. Floor Map plan of the Gua Pelangi site (a) and its contour mapping (b) (Source: Research data analysis, 2022)

C6, C7, C8, D9, E8, E11, E12, F7, F9 and G8. Generally, the archaeological study at the Gua Pelangi site involves two phases of research, Phase I starting on 11 April 2015 to 30 April 2015 while Phase II is on 28 May 2015 to 12 June 2015.

Figure 4. Archaeological excavations at Gua Pelangi (Source: Research data analysis, 2022)

Table 1. Classification of artifacts excavated in Gua Pelangi (Source: Research data analysis, 2022)

Trench	Lithic Tool			Fauna Fragment		Pottery	Sum	%
	Stone Tools	Tools	Debitage	Shells	Vertebrata Remains			
A8	2	1	10	351	288	0	652	1.14%
B7	1	1	15	6	0	1	24	0.04%
B9	5	18	18	1810	1239	4	3094	5.39%
C6	2	5	24	0	37	0	68	0.12%
C7	0	3	9	39	192	0	243	0.42%
C8	4	8	15	1952	2192	4	4175	7.28%
D9	7	13	44	9153	2349	3	11569	20.16%
E8	6	16	49	9654	1763	4	11492	20.03%
E11	0	1	11	134	1107	9	1262	2.20%
E12	0	0	0	43	13	17	73	0.13%
F7	1	11	21	3974	678	0	4685	8.17%
F9	1	8	7	7625	1050	1	8695	15.16%
G8	2	5	19	10463	851	0	11340	19.77%
SUM	34	90	242	45204	11759	43	57372	100%

A total of 57,372 units of artifacts (Table 1) were recorded during the excavation study conducted at this site. The artifacts consist of fauna remains, lithic artifacts and fragments of earthenware. Fauna remains were the dominant artifacts obtained during excavations with a percentage of 99.29% of the total finds as many as 79.36% are freshwater and terrestrial shells while 20.64% are vertebrate waste such as teeth and bone fragments (Muhammad, 2020). The fragment of pottery found was 43 pieces, which reached a percentage of 0.07%. The study conducted on the stratigraphic layer (Figure 5) also showed that the excavated trench were in-situ and the data could be used in interpreting the actual function of the Gua Pelangi site. The 1st layer (10YR, 3/4 dark yellow brown) of compartment A8 has revealed the findings of lithic tools and fauna remains. This layer is not in-situ as it has been interrupted by human activity nowadays. This non in-situ layer is up to 10 cm deep (Muhammad, 2020). The 2nd layer (10YR, 3/3 dark brown) was an in-situ layer that revealed the density of artifacts and ecofacts associated with burning ash at a depth of 11 cm. The thickness of this layer is 20 cm. The 3rd layer (10YR, 5/3 brown) revealed fewer artifact findings compared to the second layer. The soil in the third layer is mixed with burning ash as in compartments B9 and C8. This layer has a thickness between 30-40 cm. Charcoal samples on the layer at spit depth 9 (80-90 cm) were taken to obtain chronometric dating using radiocarbon method. The 4th layer (10YR, 4/6 light brown) is the last layer excavated before finding the base of the cave floor. No artifacts and fauna remains are recorded in this layer (Muhammad, 2020). Only the discovery of charcoal fragments was found and the findings were recorded.

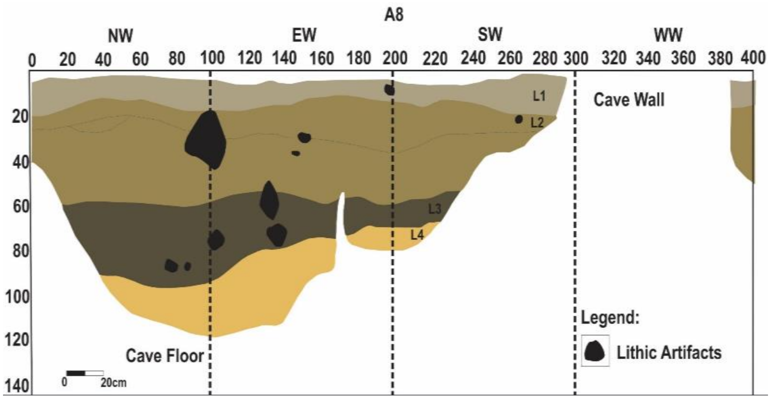

Figure 5. Stratigraphic research in trench A8 showing that it is still in-situ layer (Source: Research data analysis, 2022)

Table 2. Radiocarbon dating data of the Gua Pelangi site (Source: Research data analysis, 2022)

No.	TRENCH /SPIT	LOCATION SAMPLE	DATING	SAMPLE
1	E8/9	3rd Layer	9490±30BP	Shell
2	D9/5		9940±30BP	Charcoal
3	D9/5		10380±30BP	Shell
4	F9/6		10140±30BP	
5	C6/3		10580±30BP	Organic Sediment
6	B9/5		10660±30BP	Shell
7	F7/4		10740±30BP	
8	C7/4		13340±40BP	Charcoal
9	C8/15	1st Layer	12450±40BP	
10	E8/15		13260±40BP	
11	A8/9		13290±40BP	
12	D9/16		14130±50BP	

Excavation at the Gua Pelangi site allowed 12 samples of charcoal, shells and organic sediments to be taken to undergo radiocarbon method to determine the absolute age of the site (Table 2). Based on the dating obtained has been able to determine the age of the Gua Pelangi site is around 14,140 BP to 9,490 BP (Muhammad, 2020). The layer that represents the Holocene culture and also represents the Epi-Paleolithic culture (10,740 ± 30 BP to 9,490 ± 30 BP) in the 3rd layer. This age was determined by shell samples that had given ages of approximately 9,490 ± 30 BP (compartment E8 spit 9), 10,380 ± 30 BP (compartment D9 spit 5), 10,140 ± 30 BP (compartment F9 spit 6), 10,660 ± 30 BP (compartment B9 spit 5) and 10,740 ± 30 BP (compartment F7 spit 4) (Muhammad, 2020).

The dating was supported by radiocarbon dating using charcoal samples especially in compartment D9 at depth 40-50 cm which also revealed an age of around 9,940 ± 30 BP. Even dating using organic sediment samples taken in compartment C7 in spt 3 also revealed an age of 10,580 ± 30 BP. This shows that dating samples from shells, charcoal and organic sediments have been able to determine the absolute dating of the site that took place since the Holocene.

The 2nd cultural layer could not be determined by its absolute date due to the lack of artifacts and ecofacts recorded in that layer. However, based on the dating of the first and third layers, it is suggested that the second layer also represents the Paleolithic/Epi-Paleolithic culture with an estimated age of around 12,000 BP to 10,000 BP (Muhammad, 2020). The 1st layer also did not take a sample of its dating as it was still disturbed. Based on the findings of stone tools that still retain Paleolithic and Epi-Paleolithic features it is suggested that the layer also represents the early-mid-Holocene age.

Classification of Lithic Tools and Fauna Remains

Archaeological excavations by Muhammad (2020) since 2015 have attempted to classify 299 lithic artifacts, 10,717 units of vertebrate remains and 42,212 units of mollusk shells. A total of three main groups of lithic tools have been classified as tools and debitage. A total of 299 units of lithic tools were able to be classification and of the total 26 (8.70%) were stone tools, 74 (24.75) tools and 199 (66.56%) debitage. Stone tools found during the excavation of Gua Pelangi were classified as pabel tools (Figure 6) of 18 units (69.23%), flake tools (Figure 7) of 6 units (23.08%), chuncks (Figure 8) of 2 units (7.69 %), 23 units of anvil (31.08%) (Figure 9) and 43 units of hammer stones (58.11%) (Figure 10).

Figure 6. Stone tools in the bifas category found in the Gua Pelangi (Source: Research data analysis, 2022)

Figure 7. Flake tools at Gua Pelangi (Source: Research data analysis, 2022)

Figure 8. Chuncks found at Gua Pelangi (Source: Research data analysis, 2022)

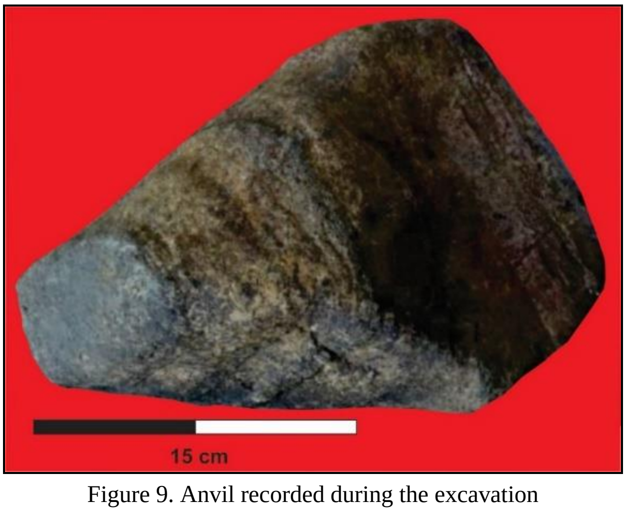

Figure 9. Anvil recorded during the excavation at Gua Pelangi (Source: Research data analysis, 2022)

Figure 10. Hammer stones found during the excavation at Gua Pelangi (Source: Research data analysis, 2022)

Taxonomic analysis of faunal remains findings has recorded the diversity of animal species (mammals, reptiles, aves (birds) and fish) as nutritional diets have been revealed through excavations. The mammal class represents animals of the order Artiodactyl, Carnivora, Primate, Chiroptera, Pholidota and Rodent while the reptile class is represented by the order Squamata and Testudines. The shell species found also show that they represent freshwater gastropod species, terrestrial gastropods and freshwater bibalvia (Muhammad, 2020). Findings of the primate species such as *Macaca fascicularis* and *Macaca nemestrina* (monkeys and apes) during the excavation process revealed that they were hunted as the diet of prehistoric societies. This is because according to Nur et al. (2005) *Macaca sp*. has been recorded inhabiting in primary and secondary forest areas and the edge of the Pasoh Forest Reserve which allows it to be used as an option for hunting activities. Artiodactyl species (wild boar, deer and moth) are also one of the prehistoric animals in the Gua Pelangi and academic studies have also found that the same species is also used in the diet by the Late-Early Holocene Pleistocene community in the Lenggong Valley (Bujeng, 2009) which shows that this species is abundant in the area of peninsular Malaysia. Orders of Carnivores (beavers, foxes and cats) and Rodents (rats and hedgehogs) were also sampled during the excavation process. The presence of such species is not uncommon as the natural habitat of the species inhabiting rivers, mangrove swamps and paddy fields (Lekagul and McNeely, 1977; Abdul et al., 2014) makes it easy to hunt.

Order Pholidota (ants) are also found but in small numbers. This indicates that the species is not the main diet of the community in Pelangi Cave although the species is recorded to inhabit the tropical forests of Southeast Asia (Lekagul and McNeely, 1977). Order Squamata (water lizards and batik pythons) and order Testudines (turtles and spiders) are used as hunting animals because the species inhabit many rainforests, swamps, river banks and bushes (Muslim et al., 2016; Halim et al., 2018; Ibrahim et al., 2018; Bujeng, 2019). Due to the low number of faunal remains found in this species, it is only used as a side hunting for the Pelangi Cave community. Order Aves (jungle fowl) that inhabit lowland areas and near river flows (Javed and Rahmani, 2000) as well as mollusk shells (Families Pachychilidae, Cyclophoridae, Clausiliidae, Camaenidae and Bivalvia) that inhabit river areas with moderate water flow (Köhler and Glaubrecht, 2001) also allow the species to be the main diet of the prehistoric community of Gua Pelangi.

Contribution of Gua Pelangi Research for Prehitoric Data

Archaeological studies at the Gua Pelangi site have revealed important data related to evidence of temporary settlement areas of Pleistocene Late-Early Holocene societies. The data was obtained through the discovery of artifacts and ecofacts that had cultural characteristics at the time. Based on the analysis conducted on the findings of artifacts and ecofacts, it can be concluded that Gua Pelangi is a temporary protection area used on a small scale for the purpose of producing stone tools and food preparation (Muhammad, 2020) for the early community of Gua Pelangi.

The interpretation is reinforced by the findings of burning ash, charcoal and faunal remains at the site. In fact the site is expected to be used up to the Neolithic period based on the discovery remains of pottery decorated with impressions of cordge and without decoration in the 1st disturbed layer which clearly shows the protective structure of this cave was used over a long period of time. Archaeological studies at this site also revealed that the lithic technology adapted by the Gua Pelangi community is very well. Starting with the selection of core that found in the vicinity of the cave allows it to be crushed and smoothed using a hammer stone to get the edge points to make it into a stone tool.

The stone tools resulting from such work include flake tools, flattened bifas pebbles, continuous pebble tools, hand-axes and chopping tools (Muhammad, 2020) which are used as aids to facilitate any affairs of the Gua Pelangi community. The diet of the prehistoric community in Gua Pelangi can also be determined accurately based on taxonomic analysis conducted on the findings of fauna remains. The Gua Pelangi community has generally hunted and eaten a wide variety of animals covering large, medium and small sizes. These animals are included in the categories of terrestrial, arboreal/semi-arboreal and aquatic/semi-aquatic animals. Based on the findings of the artifacts suggest that the environment of the Gua Pelangi during the Late-Early Holocene Pleistocene is the same as today in the environment a dence of tropical rainforest.

Therefore, archaeological studies in Gua Pelangi (Figure 11) until now have recorded evidence of the survival of prehistoric communities in the last part of southern region of Peninsular Malaysia (Muhammad, 2020) which adapted to the environment of limestone caves.

This shows that at the same time prehistoric humans have been in all spaces in Peninsular Malaysia which shows the suitability of climate and environment that can provide basic materials for making stone tools and hunting animals to be used as food sources as the basic and important criteria for an area to be a stopover or settlement.

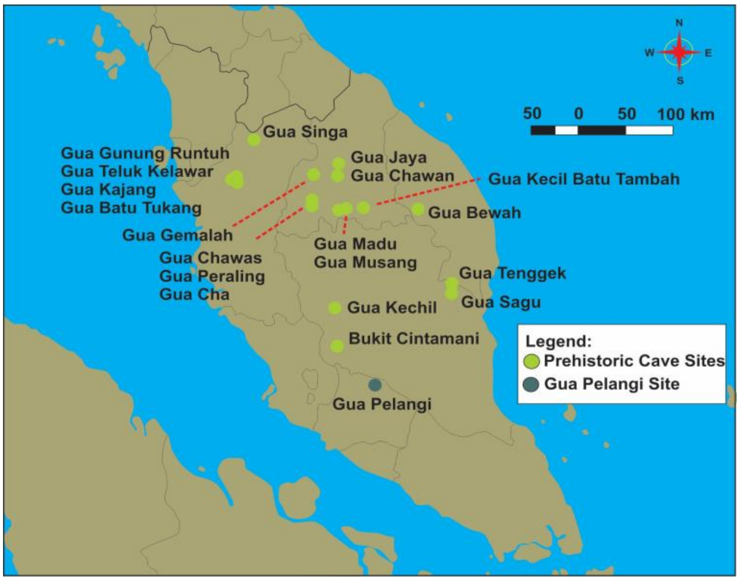

Figure 11.The location of the Gua Pelangi site shows that it is in the southernmost part of Peninsular Malaysia (Source: Tweedie, 1936; Isa, 2007; Saidin and Abdullah, 2007; Majid et al., 1998; Rahman et al., 2012; Ramli, 2019; illustrated by author, 2022)

Potential of Gua Pelangi as a archaeotourism product

At the world level, almost 12 caves sites have been recognized as UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS) category which have been successfully developed as tourist sites. The sites are Vezere Valley, France, Peking Man site, Zhoukoudian, China, Matera Cave site, Italy, Vinales Valley, Cuba, South African Hominid Fossil site, Longman Cave site, China, Atapuerca site, Spain, Mount Carmel, Israel, site Lenggong Valley, Malaysia, Swabian Jura site, Germany, Pont d "Arc Cave site, Ardeche in France and Gorham Cave Complex, United Kingdom (Figure 12) which can be used as a examples of how to develop Pelangi Cave for the international tourism sector.

Figure 12. Location of a UNESCO world heritage site that developed as a successful tourism product (Source: Jelinek et al., 1973; Jia and Huang, 1990; Saidin, 2010; Frediani, 2012; Carbonell et al., 2014; Bourrillon and White, 2015; Conard, 2015; Wikle, 2015; Carlson and Edlund, 2016; Duval et al., 2019; Finlayson et al., 2020: Li et al., 2021; illustrated by author, 2022)

Table 3. Classification of primary data related to cave archeotourism sites (Source: Compiled by Authors, 2022)

NO.	SITE	COORDINATE	PRIVILEGES	REFERENCE
1	Vezere Velley	N 45º3'27" E 1º10'12"	Reveals evidence of rock art representing a masterpiece of prehistoric painting, notably The Venus de Laussel in Marquay, the chevaline frieze in Cap-Blanc and in Lascaux Cave	Bourrillon and White, 2015
2	Peking Man	N 39º41.22'016" E 115º55.21'727"	The discovery of early human evidence specifically the skeleton of the Peking Man representing the group Homo erectus	Jia and Huang, 1990
3	Matera Cave	N 40º39'59" E 16º36'37"	The caves at Matera record evidence of occupation since Paleolithic times	Frediani, 2012
4	Vinales Valley	N 22º37'0.012" W 83º43'0.012"	Reveals a very attractive karst landscape and traditional tobacco farming in its valley. As such the site reveals evidence of the uniqueness and uniqueness of the karst landscape alongside its traditional communities	Wikle, 2015
5	South African Hominid Fossils	S 24º9.30'996" E 29º10.36'984"	Several caves have revealed evidence of early human fossils dating back 3.5 million years, most notably evidence of the Australopithecus group	Carlson and Edlund, 2016
6	Longman Grotties	N 34º28'0" E 112º28'0"	Reveals the carved forms of more than 100,000 Buddha statues, over 60 stupas and over 2,500 inscriptions carved along more than a kilometer on the walls and in limestone caves	Li et al., 2021
7	Atapuerca Archaeological Site	N 42º22'17" W 3º32'50"	Reveals evidence of prehistoric human skeletons from over a million years ago to AD	Carbonell et al., 2014
8	Carmel Mountain	N 32º40'12" E 34º57'55"	Reveals evidence of early human development along with the changing technological advances of its stone tools	Jelinek et al., 1973
9	Lenggong Valley	N 5º4'4.47 E 100º58'20.38"	Reveals evidence of Paleolithic culture as a place to make stone tools since over 1.83 million years ago while the cave reveals evidence of Paleolithic from 14,000 years ago followed later Neolithic evidence and the bronze metal age	Mokhtar, 2010
10	Swabian Jura	N 48º23'16" E 9º45'56"	Reveals prehistoric evidence especially in six limestone caves representing Late Pleistocene life, around 45,000 to 10,000 years ago. In addition to discovering skeletons and evidence of Neanderthal life and Homo sapiens sapiens, the Swabian Jura also reveals works of art in the form of sculptures of animal figures, mixed animals of humans and humans, as well as musical instruments.	Conard, 2015
11	Pont d'Arc Ardeche Cave	N 44º23'15" E 4º24'58"	Reveals the world's oldest rock art, around 32,000 years ago. Records find over 1,000 cave paintings mostly animal motifs along with evidence of Paleolithic life	Duval et al., 2019
12	Gorham Cave Complex	N 36º7'21.61" W 5º20'31.42"	Four caves in the complex reveal important evidence of Neanderthal life in Europe from over 120,000 years ago to the life of Homo sapiens. The site reveals extensive Neanderthal life including evidence of the exploitation of birds and marine fauna, as well as producing cave paintings in abstract form.	Finlayson et al., 2020

Table 4. Classification of primary data related to cave archeotourism sites (Source: Compiled by Authors, 2022)

NO.	SITES	COORDINATE	PRIVILEGES	REFERENCE
1	Tasmanian Wilderness	S 43º7'6.5" E 146º13'50"	Revealing evidence of prehistoric human life in caves and clam hills from the last glacier to the level of Indigenous Australia	Lee and Richardson, 2018
2	Trang An Landscape Complex	N 20º15'24" E 105º53'47"	Reveals evidence of the beauty of karst landscapes and prehistoric dating back over 30,000 years	Cuc, 2019
3	Zuojiang Huashan Rock Art	N 22º15'20" E 107º1'23"	Reveals the rock art of the Luoyue Community from the 5th century BCE to the 2nd century AD. One of the motifs of his paintings is the bronze drum which until now has been a symbol of power in Southern China	Gao, 2017

Table 3 shows the special data of the UNESCO world heritage site that allows it to be a successful and preserved tourist area. In addition, until now at the world level also revealed three cave sites that were conducted archaeological studies and developed as tourism products (Table 4) in the same category as the Gua Pelangi. Based on the primary data, it clearly shows the great potential of Gua Pelangi and its surroundings to be developed as one of the successful eco, cultural and heritage tourism products in the southernmost region of Peninsular Malaysia. Based on the record of success of world eco, cultural and heritage tourism sites that have been successfully developed in a sustainable manner as a tourism product, the tourism marketing process in Gua Pelangi should be carried out. Scientific evidence obtained during the excavation process carried out in Gua Pelangi needs to be seriously developed as a major tourism product in Negeri Sembilan. Then a tourism marketing technique by producing tour package brochures began to be carried out in collaboration between the Negeri Sembilan government, the Center for Global Archaeological Research and the company AtoA Adventure began to be designed (Figure 13). The package involves an accurate, compact and planned tour package offering that needs to be provided to enable tourist visits to the archaeological site to be carried out (Srivastava, 2015). The package is designed by taking into account the aspects of conservation of tourist locations that allow the site conservation process during the visit process (Thomas and Langlitz 2018) to take precedence so that the existing heritage can be preserved. To achieve this goal, AtoA Adventure Company (Anonymous, 2022) has played an active role in providing a combined tourism package between eco, culture and archaeological heritage tourism. Tour packages offered by the company include cave exploration, pioneering and jungle trekking, camping, limestone hill climbing, jungle cooking demonstrations and visits to indigenous villages (Figure 14) as well as special visits to the Gua Pelangi excavation site to experience for yourself is at an archaeological site (Figure 15).

Figure 13. Tourism brochure around Gua Pelangi was created to meet the needs of eco, cultural and heritage tourism (Source: Anonymous, 2022)

Figure 14. Tour package around Gua Pelangi involving cave exploration activities (a); pioneering and jungle trekking (b); hilltop climbing (c); and abselling (d); at Batu Dinding Hill cooking demonstrations at Felda Pasoh Village (e); and visits to indigenous villages (f) (Source: AtoA Adventure Company, 2022)

Apart from that, in this area, a tourism package is also designed which involves forest exploration involving expeditions to the top of Batu Dinding Hill, Batu Lumut Hill and Batu Beras Hill which are around the limestone hill of Gua Pelangi in a radius of less than five kilometers. The expedition to visit the cave also involves cave areas that are within 500 meters of the Gua Pelangi such as Gua Batu Dinding, Gua Kelawar, Gua Waris, Gua Telaga and Gua Tirai. This shows that there are packages that incorporate eco-tourism sites in the tourism package around Gua Pelangi. The tourism package was well received because there was a tourism promotion work carried out to publicize the tourism location. Promotion uses five main channels (Figure 16) such as (i) travel agencies (Marzuki, 2010), (ii) through exhibitions and fairs or tourism festivals (Rahman, 2018), (iii) through professional relationships (Idientee and Choy, 2019), (iv) notes or press conferences (Ahmad et al., 2014) and (v) internet methods (ALsSarayeh et al., 2011) have been streamlined to disseminate information on relevant tourist sites. This is important to do first so that the tourism marketing strategy runs optimally.

Figure 15. Special visit package to the archaeological research site in Gua Pelangi (Source: Research data analysis, 2022)

Figure 16. Promotional channels through travel agencies at Gua Pelangi site (a), exhibitions and fairs or tourism festivals at USM Pulau Pinang (b), professional relations at Royal Chulan Hotel, Seremban, Negeri Sembilan (c), notes or press conferences at oboriginal village (d) and internet (e) have been applied in the tourism marketing process in Gua Pelangi (Source: Anonymous, 2022 and compiled by author, 2022)

CONCLUSION

Archaeological excavations in Gua Pelangi are generally able to show evidence of the population of prehistoric communities in Peninsular Malaysia that are between 14,000 and 9,000 years old. This shows that the environment of Peninsular Malaysia in the past was suitable for habitation with the protective structure of the cave being an option to be used as a temporary settlement for the community. The technology of making stone tools began to evolve from the process of sorting the appropriate type of rock to the process of tapping and crushing into tools.

The diet, on the other hand, shows that this community hunts large, medium and small sized animals. These include terrestrial, arboreal/semi-arboreal and aquatic/semi-aquatic animals as their nutritional diet.

Based on academic studies that reveal high-impact data, Gua Pelangi has begun to be used as a tourism product in the Jelebu district as evidenced by the cave environment in other parts of the world. Several tour packages have been designed involving interesting eco-tourism, cultural and archeological heritage sites involving several tour products that combine Gua Pelangi site visit, hiking, culinary demonstrations and visits to aboriginal villages. Such tour packages can provide an exciting tour experience for tourists who dream of a tour experience in a village setting. Based on these facts, it can be concluded that archaeological studies conducted in Pelangi Cave have enabled high-impact heritage tourism sites to be created and developed as sustainable and successful tourism products in the southern part of Peninsular Malaysia.

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THE MODERATOR ROLE OF TRUST IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COOPETITION AND INCREMENTAL INNOVATION: EVIDENCE FROM TOURISM INDUSTRY

Fatma YAVUZ*
Yıldız Technical University, Business Management, Economics and Administrative Sciences, Istanbul, Turkey, e-mail: fatmayavuz95@gmail.com

Murat ÇEMBERCI
Yıldız Technical University, Business Management, Economics and Administrative Sciences, Istanbul, Turkey e-mail: muratcemberci@gmail.com

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Abstract: With the increasing importance of coopetition in recent days, coopetition has been adopted by companies in order to embark on the changing global market conditions. Cooperation is a variable that arises simultaneously from the concepts of "cooperation" and "competition" that has become increasingly popular in recent years. In cooperation, the attitude of the partners is important. During the competition process, the attitudes and behaviors of the partners towards each other should be within the framework of ethical and moral rules, competence, efficiency and goodwill. It is believed that the efficiency of the innovation process, which takes place together with the coopetition path, will be greater. It is aimed to improve the innovation performance of companies through strong cooperation between companies and synergy in the information of the parties. The element of trust is one of the important factors determining the direction of coopetition activities particular. For this, the trust factor between partners often comes into play. This research questions how innovative firms that conduct R&D and innovation studies affect trust in the relationship between coopetition efforts and incremental innovations in tourism industry. For this reason, it is aimed to examine the moderator effect of trust in the relationship between cooperation and incremental innovation. The analysis of the data collected in the study was tested by hierarchical regression analysis. The positive and significant impact of joint competitive activities on the hospitality industry was further strengthened by the moderator effect of the trust and supported by the results of the resulting field study. As a result, the study was finalized by supporting the assumption put forward.

Key words: coopetition, incremental innovation, trust, innovation, tourism

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INTRODUCTION

Coopetition, which emerges at the point of adapting to changing conditions, sharing information and resources, and adapting to strong competition conditions, brings with it the ability of companies to protect their own assets and simultaneously access additional knowledge, skills and resources (Ma, 1999). On the other hand, firms that put their own interests ahead of their common goals will experience high levels of conflict and will not be able to maintain a coopetition relationship. Therefore, companies that do not have an effective knowledge management policy may encounter problems related to the sharing of their new services. When competition drives a partnership and is predominantly observed, self-interest will be maximized, meaning that the working relationship may be short-lived (Khanna et al., 1998). If one of the factors of cooperation or competition dominates the partnership relationship between firms, profitability will not be optimal (Luo et al., 2007). Since the 1980s, the tourism and hotel industry has shown a significant increase, becoming one of the largest industries in the world (Draskovic et al., 2022).

It has higher risk, capital intensity, leverage and more intense competition compared to other sectors (Singal, 2015). For example, while hotels that rely solely on platforms to acquire their customers can meet their occupancy targets, they also suffer reduced profits due to the high commissions they have to pay to the platforms. In contrast, hotels that rely only on their direct channels (e.g. hotel website) to attract customers and do not choose to list their properties on platforms will also find their profits diminished. This is because these hotels miss a large number of customers booking through the platforms and thus have low occupancy levels (Bahar et al., 2022). Therefore, firms that can maintain a balance of cooperation have a competitive advantage over those that only promote cooperation or competition (Deng et al., 2020).

When viewed in the context of global competition, multinational enterprises often engage in complex and simultaneous competitive cooperative relationships with global competitors. For example, NEC collaborates in R&D and co-production with competitors such as Honeywell, Siemens and Northern Telecom; Philips and Sony continue to collaborate to develop and manufacture new DVD players, but compete intensely in other product categories. Global competitors work together to collectively improve performance by sharing resources through collaborative relationships

* Corresponding author

and adhering to common goals in specific areas (for example, product market or value chain activities). At the same time, they compete by taking independent actions in other areas to improve their own performance (Luo, 2004). On the other hand, Ritala and Hurmelinna-Laukkanen (2009) distinguish three main factors for coopetition in their study. First, companies engaged in coopetition want to increase their existing market size or create a new market. Here, companies pool their resources to improve existing products and services or create new ones. Second, companies aim to improve resource use, reduce risk and share costs. Third, maintaining the market share of rival companies and increasing their competitiveness can be a reason for coopetition (Bouncken and Kraus, 2012).

Although cooperation is a variable arising from the concepts of cooperation and competition, it is thought that the efficiency of the innovation process realized in this way will be higher. Innovation is accepted as a tool to use the synergies in the knowledge bases of the parties with the strong cooperation between the companies and thus to increase the performance of the relevant companies (Ritala and Laukkanen, 2013). In the rapidly developing technology diversity, companies use cooperation to push the technology limit through alliances between competitors and create mutual advantages in sectors with short product life, technology convergence and high R&D costs (Gnyawali, et al., 2008). Studies in the literature provide an example of improving innovation through cooperation in basic research and standards development (Bayona et al., 2001; Tether, 2002). In the relations between organizations following incremental innovations, ideas, information, materials, design, etc. requires mutual exchange in order to improve the existing product or service concept. Belderbos et al. (2004) state the positive effect of collaborative competition on increased innovation. In this study, the moderator effect of trust between firms is questioned. Trust between firms is one of the important factors that determine the direction of coopetition activities. In this transparent competition and cooperation process, firms frequently exchange among themselves and establish relatively strong ties (Gulati, 1995). This tie that has been established can continue its existence trust. In the position of coopetition between organizations, the concept of goodwill in trust in the position of coopetition between organizations expresses honest, trustworthy and trustworthy behaviors between partners (Raza-Ullah, 2021). Therefore, the coopetition relationship plays an important role in maintaining the existence of goodwill in trust. It is very difficult for the relationship between the partners and the exchange of information and resources to take place in an environment where there is no trust and mutual goodwill. Another critical dimension in trust is competence trust. In other words, it is the positive thoughts of the business partner about their skills and abilities to contribute to collaborative projects (Czernek and Czakon, 2016; Deutsch, 1960).

Competence trust is necessary because it is precisely from this perspective that partners are willing to undertake large-scale, technologically complex and resource-intensive projects. In addition, precarious work in hotels today is a global phenomenon. Precarious work is associated with non-standard labor contracts. Fixed-term, temporary and short-term contracts, part-time contracts, agency work, freelance work, on-call employment (Delibasic et al., 2022), contracts to be concluded, including civil contracts, constitute a factor of trust between the parties. Precarious work has weakened the trade union as an organization, as its membership continues to decline (Edralin, 2014). In the literature, there are few studies that investigate the moderator of trust in the relation between coopetition and incremental innovation.

In this study, the moderating role of trust in the relationship between coopetition and incremental innovation is investigated, especially in the hotel industry where an increase has been observed. To be able to adapt to emerging innovations, according to the expectations of individuals, is to shape the innovation process, and the value of jointly participating in the competition at the point of service activities between organizations, it is aimed to contribute to the literature by examining the effect of moderator trust. Any insecurity situation in which the company managers are in encourages companies to be cautious due to the fact that appearance may be deceptive by raising awareness about their potential opportunistic tendencies that may occur in a competitive position jointly with partners (Schul et al., 2008). Therefore, companies that have doubts and reservations about each other at the point of mutual distrust may move away from innovations and steps to be taken by not wanting to take risks that may occur.

Confidence and insecurity at the point of predicting harmful consequences for the performance that may arise affect the steps that companies will take to incremental innovations. It is aimed to contribute to the literature by examining trust factor in the hotel industry, where there is a lot of circulation, the activities of organizations are constantly changing periodically and seasonally and in terms of keeping up with incremental changes and innovations.

Conceptual Background

The theoretical basis of the study is based on the Resource Dependence Theory. Resource dependency theory, which examines the efforts of businesses to gain power and autonomy over other businesses around them, emphasizes that the environment has a strong effect on strategic activities (Jones, 2013). According to the theory, businesses try to manage their interactions with their environment in order to guarantee their access to the resources they depend on (Pfeffer and Salancik, 2003). All businesses are in an open social environment and must obtain the necessary resources to survive and develop (Wu jian-Feng et al., 2007). Therefore, interdependence has become an important motivation for establishing a long-term strategic partnership. For this reason, another factor that has an important role in the coopetition activities among companies is the phenomenon of 'resource dependence'. When viewed in a global context, competition will increase if resource dependence among competitors decreases. Weakened interdependence is likely to reduce cooperation and increase competition (Henderson and Mitchell, 1997). German Vodafone and French Vivendi Universal brands can be given as examples. The two companies have been competing and cooperating for years. Recently, their mutual rivalry in the pan-European mobile phone market has increased significantly due to the weakening of interdependence, with the dissolution of the internet joint venture Vizzavi (Luo, 2007).

1. Coopetition

In the business world, the concept of cooperation was developed by Ray Noorda, the founder of the network software company Novell, by combining the words cooperation and competition to describe the practices of simultaneously competing and collaborating (Ganguli, 2007). This hybrid behavior, which consists of both cooperation and competition elements, has become increasingly popular in recent years (Bengtsson and Kock, 2000), known as coopetition (Bouncken and Kraus, 2012). Concordantly, Nalebuff, and Brandenburger (1995) have managed to attract a great deal of attention, with the use of game theory in a theoretical framework to discuss the importance of coopetition in business. Nalebuff and Brandenburger (1995) defined coopetition as a strategy in which different players apply to create value in order to enlarge the market pie, and then compete to get as much of the pie as possible. Therefore, the method is to cooperate with competitors to gain competitive advantage. This concept, which attracts more and more attention in both business and academic life, has been frequently applied by technology companies that initially wanted to remain competitive in certain areas, but decided to work together in different areas (LeTourneau, 2004).

There are a few studies on the dimensions of coopetition in the literature studies on coopetition (Bendig et al., 2018; Bengtsson and Raza-Ullah, 2016; Luo et al., 2006). Seepana et al. (2020) make functional the coopetition by multiplying the two dimensions of coopetition, the multiplication or product/interaction method approach applied in previous coopetition studies (Seepana at al., 2020). The cooperation variable is measured with five items adapted from Cannon and Perreault (Cannon and Perreault, 1999) in 1999. Competition is measured with a four-item scale adapted from Zhang, Shu, Jiang, and Malter (Zhang et al., 2010). The multiplicative method is ideally interpreted as it represents the simultaneity of both constructs, namely cooperation and competition (Chandrasekaran et al., 2012; He and Wong, 2004; Seepana et al., 2020).

2. Incremental Innovation

Incremental innovation is the innovation that occurs as a result of studies involving improvement, research and development or restructuring processes in the existing product (Dewar and Dutton, 1986; Ritala and Hurmelinna-Laukkanen, 2013). Studies involving these processes are carried out gradually. In other words, collaborative incremental innovation is usually about creating value for the entire industry or a subgroup within it by improving existing products and processes or infrastructure (Von Hippel, 1988; Tether, 2002; Zhang et al., 2010). When incremental innovations are produced through coopetition, firms are likely to use some of their existing fundamental knowledge in the innovation process that underpins their current and future competitive differentiation in end-product markets. For this reason, even if there is a small improvement in the current technologies and general thinking of the companies, they should maintain this knowledge and skills (Ritala and Hurmelinna-Laukkanen, 2013). As a result, knowledge security exchange will be ensured by taking measures to protect the resources that companies have in a coopetition position.

According to the traditional assumption in the literature, firms are expected to benefit from joint innovation by accessing the knowledge and skills of their customers and suppliers. This kind of 'intimate' cooperation has been recognized as a tool to exploit the synergies in the knowledge bases of the parties, thereby increasing the innovation performance of the firms involved (Ritala and Laukkanen, 2013). In this century where technology is developing rapidly, competitors form alliances with each other in a competitive market in order to develop new technologies, share risks and standardize proposed offers. Carayannis and Alexander (1999) emphasize the importance of cooperation for knowledge-intensive, dynamic and complex fields such as technology industries, especially in providing access to information and resources if the players are SMEs (Gnyawali and Park, 2009). SMEs and industries are changing rapidly, and they have a high uncertainty level about their future (Ganguli, 2007). This uncertainty, which already exists, increases the flexibility and adaptability of companies. On the other hand, potential liquidity, limited resource and borrowing capacity problems of small and medium-sized enterprises reduce the possibility of contributing to research and development activities. Collaboration provides an opportunity to more easily adapt to these changes, share important additional information and resources, and mitigate the risks posed by uncertainty.

Achieving a new technological standard or a new market is difficult, although rationally not impossible. If SMEs see great potential to share risks or use complementary resources, they are willing to dedicate resources to their legacy competitors to develop strong innovation. The possibility of appealing to a wider segment in the market motivates the coopetition even more, especially in SMEs that do not have large market power (Bouncken and Kraus, 2012).

3. Trust

The term interorganizational trust is expected to exist in a focal firm in relation to the intentions and behaviors of the partners, together with the connotation of positive expectations when viewed from a mass perspective (Zaheer et al., 1998). The point emphasized here is to act together in the focal company in terms of the intentions and competencies of the parties for the activities carried out and to meet at a common point. In the coopetition process between firms, the use of power over dependent partners is a factor in the context of competition, while the act of individuals to maximize mutual interest is considered as a factor of cooperation (Bouncken and Fredrich, 2012). In this transparent cooperation, firms frequently exchange among themselves and establish relatively strong ties (Gulati, 1995). Therefore, “trust” has a critical value in this cooperation process established in a competitive environment (Farrelly and Quester, 2003). Trust is an element of coopetition, since cooperation is based not only on competition but also on cooperation (Devetag, 2009). Trust can increase interaction between partners and the development of shared values, even when firms compete with each other. Trust dimensions have been conceptualized in different ways in the literature. For example, Dowell et al. (2013) emphasized three dimensions of trust: goodwill, competence and honesty. Other studies used the first two dimensions (Das and Teng, 2001).

Since it is deemed necessary to consider goodwill as a dimension in all of the studies, the second approach is followed. These two dimensions were disabled and adapted from various studies (Connelly et al., 2018; Jiang et al., 2013; Raza-Ullah, 2021) and overall, four for goodwill and three for competence. A seven-item scale was used. The goodwill dimension of trust; The focus consists of four items that capture the firm's decisions about the partner's honesty, reliability, equity consistency, and helping behavior. The competence dimension of trust measures the degree to which the focus firm believes the partner can do its job, serves as an excellent source of truthful information, and has a wealth of professional knowledge and expertise.

RESEARCH MODEL AND DEVELOPMENT OF HYPOTHESES

The initial research model suggests that trust plays a moderator role in the relation between coopetition and incremental innovation as shown in Figure 1.

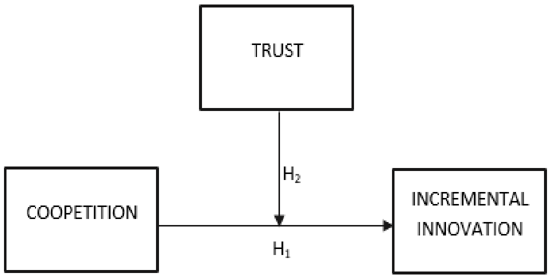

Figure 1. Initial Research Model

1. The Relationship between coopetition and incremental innovation

Incremental innovations includes minor changes to products, technologies and services (Dewar and Dutton, 1986). Additional technical support, new design and packaging activities can be given as examples of incremental innovation. However, incremental innovations are less risky than major changes in new products and technologies (Ali et al., 1993). For this reason, it is more likely to be preferred and implemented for coopetition activities compared to radical innovations. At the same time, the costs will be more limited compared to radical innovations. Belderbos et al. (2004) state the positive effect of coopetition on increased innovation. Based on all this information, the following hypothesis has been developed, considering the positive effect of coopetition on incremental innovation:

H_1: There is a positive and significant relationship between coopetition and incremental innovation.

2. The Moderator Role of Trust

Trust has an important role in coopetition, as coopetition is based not only on competition but also on cooperation (Devetag, 2009). Even in any competitive situation, the interaction and values between the partners of the two companies may increase with the element of trust and affect commercial activities. It will also affect the relationship between trust, collaboration and innovation performance. Under high confidence, collaboration partners gain stronger experience with cross-border new ideas, design concepts and technologies (Bouncken and Fredrich, 2012). Moreover, technology interdependence can create strong bonds between partners and motivate them to work on innovation and push innovation frontiers. Therefore, companies will be able to achieve various innovations and add value to their products by cooperating under the conditions of dependency brought about by high trust and trust. In the light of this information, the following hypothesis was formed:

H_2: Trust has a moderator effect on the relationship between coopetition and incremental innovation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The conceptual model put forward in this study shows the moderator effect of trust in examining the effect of coopetition on radical innovation. Although an empirical research was conducted to test these relationships, it was tried to ensure that at most two people from each company participated in the survey. Participants were not randomly selected, and it was tried to ensure that the authorized managers of the companies in terms of production structures and processes and the authorized people of the companies in the areas of purchasing and financial indicators participated in the survey. The enterprises included in the sample are those operating in more than one sector.

A questionnaire was sent to all of these enterprises. Electronic mail (e-mail) and face-to-face interview methods were used to collect the data. As a result, the data obtained from 212 companies were analyzed in the statistical data processing program. In order to test the relationships between the variables, hypotheses were tested using factor, reliability and hierarchical regression analyses. A multiple-choice scale was used to test the hypotheses. Answers (1= strongly agree to 5= strongly disagree) were measured using a 5-point Likert scale. The scales used in the developed western countries were included in the study questionnaire. Since the questions in these scales were compiled from foreign publications; It was first translated into Turkish, then translated back into English by a different expert and compared with the original. As a result of this comparison, after the compatibility of the original and the translation was confirmed, the questionnaires were sent to the companies. The scales that are the subject of the study were determined after a detailed literature review and included in the questionnaire to be used in the research.

Measures and Sampling

In this study, it is aimed to examine the relationship between coopetition, incremental innovation and trust in the tourism industry. It was aimed to examine the mentioned variables and a research model hypotheses were established. In the research, it has been tried to reach the large-scale hotels operating employees of large companies and SMEs that are deemed suitable for hospitality industry. The survey was conducted with managers and white-collar employees working at various levels in hotels and hospitality companies. Managers and white-collar employees were preferred because of their dominance over business policies and their ability to influence and direct the decisions taken in the company. An average of 1-2 people from each company were surveyed. The survey was completed by contacting some of the participants face-to-face, the majority via e-mail and social media platforms (LinkedIn, etc.). After eliminating the unsuitable questionnaires, the remaining 212 questionnaires were analyzed. While choosing the scale, scales with high validity, which have been used many times in international academic studies, were preferred. The scale consisting of 9 questions developed by Seepana et al. (2020) was used to measure the coopetition variable. To measure the incremental innovation variable, the incremental innovation scale developed by Garcia and Calantone (2002) and consisting of 3 questions was used. And to measure the trust variable, Connelly et al. (2018), a scale consisting of 7 questions was used.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

1. Demography Features

Demographic features of 212 people, consisting of managers and white-collar employees from tourism and hospitality industry participating in the research, are given in Table 1. The majority of the participants are business owners (65 people and 30.66%) and middle managers (58 people and 27.36%). 60.85% (129 people) of the participants are between the ages of 20-44. In terms of gender, 67.92% (144 people) constitute the majority of the participants. The proportion of women who answered the questionnaire is 32.08% (68 people). 57.55% (122 people) of the participants have a bachelor's degree.

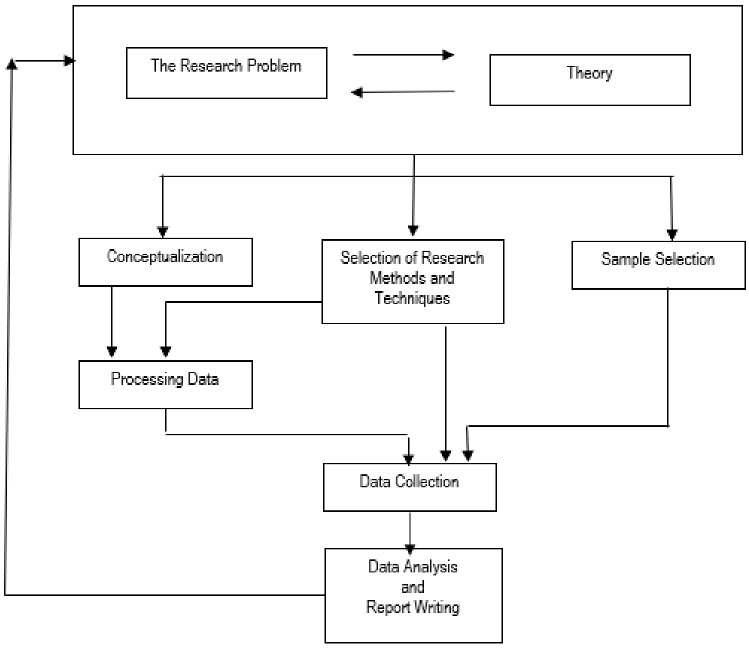

Figure 2. Research Methodology Flowchart

2. Factor Analysis

Factor analysis was carried out in order to find out how many different dimensions the questions in the questionnaire were perceived by the respondents and to divide the independent variables into main groups so that the analyses could be done more efficiently. Varimax method was used as rotation method in factor analysis.

After the results of the analysis, a question was removed from the dimensions of the joint competition variable and the analysis continued.The remaining 18 questions were included in the analysis. As a result of the analysis, the variables were distributed over 4 factors. These factors are Trust (7 items), Competition (4 items), Incremental innovation (3 items), and Cooperation (4 items). With four factors obtained as a result of the factor analysis, it was determined that the explanation rate of the total change in the model was 64.06%, and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of 0.869, which can be considered quite high, indicating that the data used is a homogeneous grouping of the variables, and a significant Barlett sphericity test result has been obtained. The factor structure of the Rotation Factor Matrix obtained as a result of the a nalysis is summarized in Table 2.

Table 1. Demographic Features

	Variables	Numbers of Participants	% (Percentage)
Position	Owners/Employers	65	30.66
	Executive	47	22.17
	Mid-level Manager	58	27.36
	Junior Administrative Officer	17	8.02
	White Collar Employee	25	11.79
Age range	20-44	129	60.85
	45-64	81	38.21
	65-79	2	0.94
	80+	0	0.00
Gender	Female	68	32.08
	Male	144	67.92
Back-ground	Elementary school	2	0.94
	Highschool	13	6.13
	Vocational school	13	6.13
	Graduate	122	57.55
	Master's degree	44	20.75
	Doctor's degree	18	8.49
Depart-ment	Production	34	16.04
	Finance	21	9.91
	HRM	3	1.42
	Marketing and Sales	93	43.87
	Others	61	28.77

Table 2. Factor Analysis

Factors	Items	Factor Loadings				Cronba-ch's Alpha Values
		F1	F2	F3	F4	
Trust	Trust 20	0.849				0.89
	Trust 19	0.787				
	Trust 18	0.748				
	Trust 15	0.728				
	Trust 17	0.695				
	Trust 16	0.672				
	Trust 14	0.644				
Competition	Competition 12		0.847			0.78
	Competition 11		0.796			
	Competition 13		0.783			
	Competition 10		0.504			
Incremental Innovation	Incremental Innovation 26			0.84		0.85
	Incremental Innovation 25			0.84		
	Incremental Innovation 24			0.77		
Cooperation	Cooperation 7				0.76	0.63
	Cooperation 6				0.62	
	Cooperation 8				0.57	
	Cooperation 5				0.56	
Explained Variance (%)		23.36	14.78	14.1	11.75	
Total Explained Variance (%)		64.06				
(i) Varimax Rotated Principal Component Analyses (ii) KMO =0.869; p<0.001						

3. Reliability Analysis

As a result of the reliability analysis, it is shown in Table 2 that the Cronbach's Alpha value of all variables is above the generally accepted value of 0.70. Thus, the research scale has been shown to be reliable.

4. Hierarchical Regression Analysis

In the study, hierarchical regression analysis was performed to determine how the change in incremental innovation, which is the dependent variable, is explained by coopetition as the independent variable and trust as the moderator variable. In order to analyze this effect more clearly, a simple regression analysis in which the coopetition independent variable is handled alone, and the multiple regression analysis, which jointly deals with competition, confidence, and the product variable consisting of the product of the standardized values of both variables, are referred to as Model 1 and Model 2, respectively entered into hierarchical regression analysis. The mathematical representation of the above explanations is as follows:

Table 3. Model Table of Hierarchical Regression Analysis

MODEL 1:	INCREMANTAL INNOVATION = β0 + β1. COOPETITION + ε
MODEL 2:	INCREMANTAL INNOVATION = β0 + β1. COOPETITION + β2. TRUST + β3. TRUST'.COOPETITION' + ε

The hierarchical regression model summaries are shown in Table 4. As seen in Table 3, an increase of 0.07 was observed between the R square value of Model 1 and the R square value of Model 2. As seen in Table 4, the model is generally significant. The coefficients of the variables are summarized in Table 6.

Table 4. Hierarchical Regression Model Summaries

Model	R	R²	Adjusted R²	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.474a	0.224	0.221	0.87523
2	.546b	0.298	0.288	0.83665
a. Predictors: (Constant), Coopetition				
b. Predictors: (Constant), Coopetition, Trust, Çarpım Değişkeni				

Table 5. Anova Results

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	46.503	1	46.503	60.706	.000
	Residual	160.866	210	0.766		
	Total	207.369	211			
2	Regression	61.772	3	20.591	29.416	.000
	Residual	145.597	208	0.700		
	Total	207.369	211			

Table 6. The Coefficients of the Variables

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		β	Std. Error	β		
1	Constant	5.814	.060		96.729	.000
	Coopetition	.469	.060	.474	7.791	.000
2	Constant	5.882	.062		94.641	.000
	Coopetition	.276	.072	.278	3.851	.000
	Trust	.186	.073	.188	2.540	.012
	Çarpım Değişkeni	-.123	.043	-.199	-2.860	.005

As seen in Table 5, the product variable is statistically significant at the 10% significance level. Considering the R square change, the moderator effect of trust was found to be statistically significant.

DISCUSSION

In this study, the moderator role of trust in the relationship between coopetition and incremental innovation has been examined. The H_1 hypothesis assumed that coopetition had a positive effect on incremental innovation and the H_1 hypothesis was supported as a result of the hypothesis test. This finding supported that, in line with previous studies in the literature, inter-firm coopetition positively affects incremental innovation performance. Therefore, incremental innovation performance can be expected to increase as inter-firm coopetition activities increase. The H_2 hypothesis assumes that trust has a moderator effect on the effect of incremental innovation on inter-firm coopetition, and the H_2 hypothesis was supported as a result of the hypothesis test. Therefore, as the trust between firms increases, the effect of coopetition on incremental innovation is expected to increase. Considering the hospitality industry in particular, the trust that organizations will have for each other in order to adapt to the changing and developing technology, seasonal changes and collaborations every day is important. The trust that organizations will have towards each other will be reflected in the work that has been put forward and will increase performance. Therefore, as a result of coopetition activities, the satisfaction of customers' expectations and the trust that organizations will have towards each other can be related.

Incremental innovation is expressed as a type of innovation that occurs as a result of activities that involve the stages of development, improvement, restructuring of the current product and service, which are carried out in stages. For a sector such as the hospitality sector that constantly has to be open to changes and innovations in service, the value of trust will be of critical importance. In situations such as the exchange of resources between partners and each other, the exchange of information, the state of trust that they will form towards each other is vital. The moderator effect of the trust element has been demonstrated for the improvement in performance and changes in innovation at the point of meeting the expectations of the customers. Customer satisfaction, continuity and sustainability, keeping up with seasonal changes, keeping up with incremental technological innovations and therefore ensuring the conditions for customer recovery in the season vary depending on the trust between the partners in the activities carried out. The principle of trust, which can change depending on the principle of transparency, is vital for the continuity of incremental innovations.Along with the good results achieved, the improvement in performance and the reflection of the situation on customers will improve significantly.Therefore, the steps to be taken and the between the parties in the connections to be established and the transparency situation that may change depending on this trust are of great importance.

CONCLUSION

One of the important results of the research for companies in tourism and hospitality industry and managers is that managers should consider the important effect of the trust factor between their partners, with whom they carry out their coopetition activities, on the innovation and product development activities of companies. For this reason, companies facing strong information leakage risks in the cooperation between companies in the tourism and hospitality sectors may find it difficult to realize incremental innovations due to the size of insecurity that may arise. Therefore, for the slightest incremental innovation to be made in their existing technologies or business ideas, firms need to protect their knowledge and skills and protect themselves against the risks of insecurity. Thus, by protecting the resources of the companies in the coopetition position, a secure exchange of information can be provided between the companies in tourism and hospitality industry. In addition, by basing the information system and information sharing of institutions on the theory of resource dependence, it can move its businesses towards establishing longer-term strategic partnership relationships. Thus, it is understood that the trust element of the resource-based theory can be used. Therefore, the trust that the parties will feel towards each other in the process of coopetition between the partners will have an impact on innovation activities that will add value to the resulting products and will significantly contribute to the increase in the level of product performance.

Companies that are aware that taking advantage of incremental innovations and developments will greatly benefit from being able to keep up with and adapt to seasonal changes are aware of the importance of joint coopetition activities and the element of trust that will occur with it. Organizations that can act with this consciousness and take the right steps with the right partners at the right time will be one step ahead in terms of customer satisfaction and continuity.

The hospitality sector is a performance and satisfaction based sector. For this reason, strong collaborations that will be created within the trust environment that will be created will contribute significantly to the companies. It is aimed that the results of our study support this and make a contribution to the literature.

Limitation and Future Research

In this study, the role of trust in the relationship between coopetition and incremental innovation was analyzed. In the research model, only the trust variable was used as the moderating variable. However, in some studies in the literature, distrust is used as a moderator variable (Raza-Ullah, 2021). Therefore, this situation can be considered as a limitation for this study. The role of the distrust variable on the relationship between coopetition and incremental innovation in research models established in future studies can be examined. In addition, the data collection process of the research passed through the data collection difficulties in the Covid-19 Pandemic process. If larger sample sets are reached, re-evaluation of the results of the study may be considered. The research is limited by the moderator effect of trust in the hospitality sector and can also be associated with different sectors in the process of subsequent studies.

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ASSESSING THE POTENTIAL OF COMMUNITY-BASED ECOTOURISM TOWARD SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY IN TUA CHUA KARST PLATEAU – DIEN BIEN – VIET NAM

Nga NGUYEN THI PHUONG[*]
Phenikaa University, Faculty of Tourism Studies, Hanoi, Vietnam, e-mail: nga.nguyenthiphuong@phenikaa-uni.edu.vn

Duy TRAN BA
Phenikaa University, Faculty of Tourism Studies, Hanoi, Vietnam, e-mail: duy.tranba@phenikaa-uni.edu.vn

Linh DO DIEU
Phenikaa University, Faculty of Tourism Studies, Hanoi, Vietnam, e-mail: linh.dodieu@phenikaa-uni.edu.vn

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Abstract: Tua Chua Karst Plateau - a living area of the Mong ethnic group with spectacular natural landscapes, cool weather, and unique indigenous cultural values. They are all prerequisites for tourism development. This study aims to evaluate the potential of community-based ecotourism development in the Tua Chua Karst Plateau. This research uses the AHP method. Evaluation criteria include (i) uniqueness of natural landscape, (ii) indigenous cultural value, (iii) stakeholder engagement, (iv) local tourism development policy, (v) quality of infrastructure, (vi) quality of tourism facilities, (vii) accessibility, (viii) connectivity. The evaluation system includes eight criteria that have classified tourism resources according to each resource point and identified suitable internal and external potentials to exploit the geological value of the plateau and preserve indigenous culture. Results of this study reveal that the indigenous cultural values, the participation of local communities, and the uniqueness of the natural landscape have an important impact on the development of ecotourism. Tua Chua Karst Plateau has great potential for community-based ecotourism development with 14 tourist resource sites, of which 8 are highly appreciated.

Key words: rocky plateau, community-based ecotourism, tourism model, AHP methodology, local community participation

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INTRODUCTION

Ecotourism is a form of tourism developed from the challenges of negative impacts on the natural environment in the early twentieth century. The born of ecotourism has affirmed its mission when linking countries and international organizations around the world to spread knowledge, promote conservation, communication, and sustainable development in tourism. The term "ecotourism" first appeared in the 80s, it expresses the world's recognition type of tourism that is responsible for the natural and social environment and sustainable ecological development. The ecotourism model is a solution to help reduce pressure on national parks and protected areas, and it is also a tool for sustainable forest management and protection (Lien, 2018). Ecotourism is considered a strategy for sustainable development (Whelan, 1991), Groom et al. (2006) identified the potential of ecotourism in the relationship between biodiversity conservation, natural environment protection, and the demands of the development of local communities in rural areas (Ashley and Garland, 1994; Theron, 1995). In particular, it is necessary to mention the role of ecotourism in improving the quality of life for local people, restoring the pride of indigenous people in cultural heritage, develop motivation for the community in protecting natural resources (Brandon, 1993). Some studies suggest that ecotourism development is also associated with indigenous communities. In fact, in the natural area, there are indigenous communities present. Therefore, there is a contradiction between ecotourism development in unspoiled natural areas and this area is the traditional homeland of indigenous communities (Coria and Calfucura, 2012).

Indigenous people's territories are often far from developed areas, which also maintain pristine or vulnerable ecosystems. In addition, indigenous communities always consider the natural ecosystem part of their daily life and culture, forming indigenous knowledge, living on nature, and protecting wildlife for generations. Since then, it forms the principles of ecotourism development, and ecotourism has been created with the identity of the indigenous community. The principles of ecotourism development are also established to ensure tourism activities in protected areas: environmental protection and ecosystem maintenance, conservation and exploitation of indigenous cultural values, environmental education activities, and participation of the local community. With an upholding perspective on the role of local communities in sustainable tourism development in ecologically sensitive areas, the studies have introduced the term “community-based ecotourism” and clarified the difference between this type of tourism and other types of nature-based ecotourism. With community-based ecotourism, most indigenous people consider themselves a part of nature. The material and spiritual life of indigenous people adapts to the changes of nature, which is “traditional ecological knowledge,” i.e., “a

[*] Corresponding author

cumulative body of knowledge, practice, and belief, evolving by adaptive processes and handed down through generations by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings with one another and with their environment (Berkes et al., 2000). Currently, the community's participation in ecotourism development in ecological areas is limited, passive, and primarily owned by tourism businesses outside the community. The benefits shared with the community are negligible. Meanwhile, the term "community-based ecotourism" implies going beyond the above limitations so that the community can participate more actively and proactively. At least some community members must be engaged in tourism-related economic activities, and part or all of the tourism businesses must be owned and managed by the community (Kiss, 2004; Coria and Calfucura, 2012). This is one of the factors that distinguishes community-based ecotourism from other types of nature-based tourism.

The criteria for assessing the potential of community-based ecotourism development are used as a tool to evaluate a tourist destination that is likely to develop community-based ecotourism identified as a control group condition to ensure the natural environment and ecosystems (Mamun and Mitra, 2012). Studies also show that the local community's participation and the indigenous community's willingness to host guests are essential factors influencing the exploitability of an ecotourism resource point (Lien, 2018; Theron, 1995; Masud et al., 2017). The difference in assessing the potential of ecotourism in general and community-based ecotourism is the active participation of local people in tourism activities.

The development of community-based ecotourism could be evaluated based on three criteria: natural landscapes, indigenous cultural values, and sustainability of resources (Dat, 2013). At the same time, assessing the potential of community-based ecotourism is also approached from a social perspective, requiring the participation of stakeholders such as businesses, local communities, local authorities, and tourists. Community-based ecotourism activities can develop when satisfying the demands of the stakeholders based on the role of tourism development policy (Jones, 2005). The cooperation between factors in ecotourism activities focused on community–based, collaboration is defined as the approach method of community–based ecotourism, where community empowerment is considered a key factor to develop community–based ecotourism (Stone, 2015). Assessment of growth potential community–based ecotourism needs to determine the role of natural resources (including forest resources) and indigenous factors are appreciated (Nega, 2019). To assess the potential for community-based ecotourism development relied on two groups of factors: endemic flora and fauna as well as indigenous cultural factors, this is an opportunity to develop this kind of tourism because it will attract tourists. In addition, local agricultural products such as poultry, honey, milk, coffee… handicrafts, custom, and the traditional culture of local people are also factors to attract visitors (Petros Menbere et al., 2017). In mountainous regions and rural areas, community-based ecotourism development also contributes to biodiversity conservation and free trade. Assessing the potential of community–based ecotourism in this area needs to pay attention to the livelihood factor of local people (Kry et al., 2020). In community–based ecotourism, local communities contribute to nature conservation, at the same time, tourism activities improve the livelihood life of people (Teshome et al., 2021). To experience the potential for community–based ecotourism sustainably also need to balance the interests of the parties involved: the local community, and tourists (Kibria et al., 2021). Therefore, to assess the potential for the community–based ecotourism resource-based, the value of local culture, the condition to make sure to serve tourists, the policy to develop tourism, ensure livelihood factors for local people, and the division of interests of the parties involved in tourism activities. This research carries out a potential assessment for community-based ecotourism development towards sustainable development in mountainous regions, therefore, evaluating the attractiveness of the resource, unique value of local culture, and willingness to engage in tourism activities of local people.

Thus, the potential assessment of community-based ecotourism needs to base on resources, indigenous cultural values, conditions to serve tourists, and tourism development policies. After assessing the potential for the community - base ecotourism development, in subsequent studies, the author proposes policy implications for local tourism development.

Characteristics of the study area

Tua Chua karst plateau belongs to Tua Chua district and is located in the northeast of Dien Bien province. The natural area is 68,414.88 hectares, population in 2020 is 61,017 people, with seven ethnic groups. The ethnic minorities account for over 95%, of which the majority is Mong people. Regarding tourism resources, the Tua Chua karst plateau has many conditions for tourism development. It is located at more than 1400m above sea level; 70% of the area is limestone mountains, layers of majesty Rugger rock, and the uniqueness of the natural landscape. The Karst terrain creates stunning caves such as Khau Chua La, Tham Khem, Hau Chua, Xa Nhe to attract tourists. In the south of the plateau, there is the Da River flowing. It makes the Tua Chua karst plateau not as dry as other plateau areas, creating more favorable living and farming conditions for local people. With the diverse natural conditions, the farming activities and indigenous culture of local people have unique features: soil cultivation on rock niches, the stones used in building construction, and stone roofs. In the south of the plateau, the Da River is running through, so the living habits of local people are associated with the river, creating the colors of indigenous culture for the rocky plateau, different from other highland arid resources. Local cuisine is an attractive cultural tourism resource, with local dishes: Mong Pe wine, indigenous black chicken, grilled fish, food from corn, upland rice, and so on, creating remarkable for the plateau.

RESEARCH METHOD

1. Synthetic assessment criteria selection

This research conducted in-depth interviews with 25 experts, using the AHP method to determine the weighting of criteria for assessing the potential of community–based ecotourism. At the same time, using the integrated assessment method of ecotourism resources and classifying resources, thereby identifying resource points with high potential for exploitation into tourism products. The general assessment of potential tourism development is multidimensional and complex, which is influenced by various factors such as the attractiveness of the landscape, the value of indigenous culture, the capacity of the tourist destination, exploitability and accessibility of the destination, sustainability, infrastructure, and technical facilities, local readiness, economic efficiency. It would depend on each assessment, the type of tourism being evaluated, and the actual tourism development of the destination to choose different evaluation criteria. According to Dwyer and Kim (2003), the ability to exploit the potential of a tourist destination does not only depend on tourism resources but the compound impact of other complementary factors (Dwyer and Kim, 2003).

Tua Chua karst plateau is diverse landscapes, including karst landscape, typical terraced fields of low mountains, river landscape, and unique indigenous cultural values. The potential to develop community-based eco-tourism is influenced by aesthetic and artistic value, cultural and historical value, scientific value, sustainability, and uniqueness (Huong and Hai, 2016). In addition, the accessibility, quality of infrastructure and local tourism development policy, and the indigenous community's readiness significantly affect the destination's exploitability.

Therefore, in this study, groups of criteria have been identified to show the internal and external potential of the destination (Huong and Hai, 2016): the uniqueness of the natural landscape, the indigenous cultural value, the accessibility, stakeholder engagement, infrastructure quality, destination scale, and local tourism development policies. For community-based eco-tourism, the participation of stakeholders (tourism businesses, local people, local authorities, tourists) and indigenous cultural values create the specific nature of this type of tourism (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Flowchart of the process of assessing tourism potential in Tua Chua rock plateau – Dien Bien – Viet Nam

The value of the criteria "uniqueness of the natural landscape", "indigenous cultural value", "stakeholder participation," and "local tourism development policy" is divided into degrees: very high, high, medium, and low. The criterion "scale of tourist destination" given is an increased rating with the assumption that the larger the assessment scale of the tourist destination, the larger the scope of exploitation of natural and cultural tourism resources, which is convenient for organizing travel space. The criterion of "quality of infrastructure" is based on the field survey results and the statistics of the General Statistic Office of Dien Bien province. Accessibility represents the degree of convenience of infrastructure in tourism exploitation at each tourist resource point, which is an essential external factor determining the development of a tourist destination. A tourist destination has high internal potential, but complementary factors such as infrastructure or inaccessibility, the tourist destination only exist in the potential form (Dwyer and Kim, 2003; Huong and Hai, 2016). The criterion of "accessibility" is measured by the travel time from each tourist destination to the tourist facilities such as accommodation facilities, food and beverage establishments, service facilities, airports, and modes of transportation.

2. Determining the weight of the evaluation criteria method

To comprehensively assess the tourism potential of a destination, the level of contribution of each criterion and the convenience of each criterion in the particular destination are determined (Saaty, 1990). Therefore, this study determines the weights for the criteria in the potential ranking process and performs the composite assessment. There are many methods to determine weights: weights of factors based on expert opinion, weights of factors determined by regression analysis, weights of factors based on analysis of economic factors, and the weights of the factors are from the analysis of the triangular matrix (Huan, 2005), and the weights are determined by the Analytical Hierarchy Process method (AHP) (Saaty, 1990). The weights make a decisive contribution to determining the importance of the criteria in the evaluation; the criteria show a clear hierarchy and the level of influence on tourism development. AHP analysis method is used in this study to determine the weights of factors to evaluate the potential of community-based ecotourism of in Tua Chua Karst plateau because the AHP method helps research to determine factors, and arrange the criteria according to their level of importance, then find the most reasonable final decision. AHP was developed by Saaty (1990), and it was expanded to determine the weight of the evaluation criteria. To determine the weights for the criteria for assessing community-based ecotourism resources, the research team interviewed 25 experts in ecotourism to compare the importance of these criteria. The process of determining weights by the AHP method is as follows (Figure 2). For synthetic assessment of tourism resources, there are some methods used such as the technical assessment method, Matrix assessment method, CBA-Cost Benefit Analysis method, CVM-6 Contingent Valuation Method, TCM-Travel Cost Method, The average of component scores method (Loi, 1992), or the geometric mean method (Dat, 2013), factor analysis to determine weights methods (Huan, 2005), multi - criteria analysis method (Yu et al., 2002). The multi-criteria analysis method is the most objective and comprehensive to assess the development potential of tourist destinations. The steps of the multi-criteria assessment are carried out from each criteria assessment to the synthetic assessment by formula following (Huan, 2005):

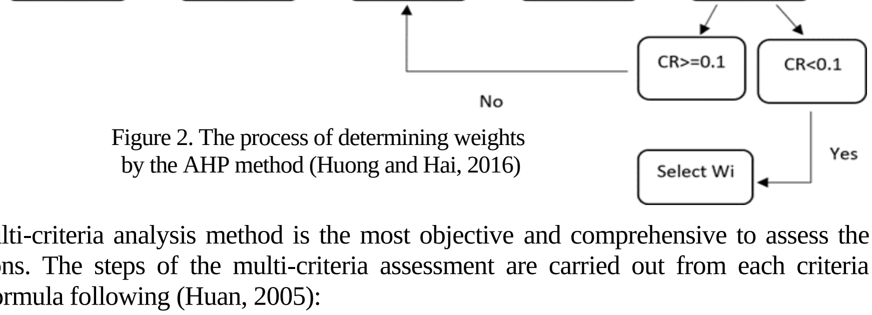

Figure 2. The process of determining weights by the AHP method (Huong and Hai, 2016)

$$S = \sum_{i=1}^{n}(Wi * Xi) \quad (1)$$

In there:

S: the composite evaluation index

Wi: the weight of the i^{th} evaluation criterion

Xi: the evaluation index of the i^{th} indicator

3. Classification of rating results in the synthetic assessment of tourism resource

Once the resource synthetic assessment index has been determined, the resource classification should be carried out. The rating score represents the attractiveness of the resource (the uniqueness of the natural landscape) at the following levels: very high (S1), high (S2), medium (S3), and low (S4) (table 1). The gap in each rating level is calculated according to the formula (Huan, 2005; 25):

$\Delta S = (S_{\max} - S_{\min})/M$ (2) In there:

ΔS : score gap between rating index;

$S_{\max}$: highest synthetic rating index;

$S_{\min}$: lowest synthetic rating index;

M : number level of assessment (M=5).

Table 1. Assessment indicators of potential community-based ecotourism in Tua Chua Karst plateau - Dien Bien – Vietnam (Source: Synthetic to Dat, 2013; Huong and Hai, 2016; Huan, 2005)

	Indicators	Rating scales	Point
Internal potential (Y1)	The uniqueness of the natural landscape (X1)	Very high	10
		High	7
		Average	4
		Low	1
	Indigenous cultural value (X2)	Very high	10
		High	7
		Average	4
		Low	1
	Stakeholder engagement (X3)	Very high	10
		High	7
		Average	4
		Low	1
	Local tourism development policy (X4)	Excellent	10
		Good	7
		Medium	4
		Poor	1
External potential (Y2)	Quality of infrastructure (X5)	Excellent	10
		Good	7
		Medium	4
		Poor	1
	Quality of facilities for tourism (X6)	Excellent	10
		Good	7
		Medium	4
		Poor	1
	Connectivity (*connection with other tourist destinations in the region*) (X7)	Very high	10
		High	7
		Average	4
		Low	1
	Accessibility (*travel time from destination to the nearest accommodation, dining, airport, etc.*) (X8)	>3 hours	10
		2 - 3 hours	7
		1- <2 hours	4
		0 - <1 hour	1

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Results of weights according to the AHP analysis method

The study carried out in-depth interviews with 20 experts on ecotourism who know well about the Karst plateau area. The interview results were used to determine the weights for the criteria for assessing the potential for community-based eco-tourism of the Tua Chua Karst plateau by the AHP method. The indicators show the internal potential to play a vital role in determining local tourism development. The external potential shows the impacts on tourism development, in which quality of infrastructure and the quality of facilities have more impact. Specifically, as follows: The criteria of indigenous cultural values occupy the most substantial impact on the development of tourist destinations with a weight of 0.16 (16%), the criteria of the uniqueness of the natural landscape and the participation of local people weight of 0.14 (14%), the criteria of local tourism development policy weight 0.13 (13%. In the group of potential external criteria, accessibility plays a vital role with a weight of 0.09, followed by quality of accommodation with a weight of 0.07 (Table 2).

Table 2. The average weight of criteria for assessing potential community-based ecotourism

Criteria	Average Weight
The uniqueness of the natural landscape	0.14
Indigenous cultural value	0.16
Stakeholder engagement	0.14
Local tourism development policy	0.13
Quality of infrastructure	0.06
Quality of facilities for tourism	0.07
Accessibility	0.09
Connectivity	0.05

Table 3. Hierarchizing the potential for community-based ecotourism development towards internal and external potentials

Hierarchy	Low	Medium	High
Internal potential	<2	2-<3	>3
External potential	<1	1-1.5	>1.5

Table 4. Classification of potential development of tourism

Index	Resource classification
>8	Very high exploitation ability
5- <8	High exploitation capacity
3-<5	Average exploitation Ability
<3	Low exploitation ability

The potential development of community-based ecotourism is governed by internal and external factors, thereby formulating a community-based ecotourism development policy suitable to each resource, and the level of impact is expressed in the following equation (Huong, 2016): Y = Y1 +Y2 (3)

In there: Y1 = 0,14*X1+ 0,16*X2 + 0,14*Y3 + 0,13*X4 (4); Y2= 0,06*X5 + 0,07*X6 + 0,09*X7 + 0,05*X8 (5)

Combining both internal and external potentials, and based on the total evaluation score, resource points can be divided into 4 groups as follows (Table 3, Table 4): 1. High internal and external potential; 2. High internal potential and average external potential; 3. Average internal potential and average external potential; 4. Medium internal potential and low external potential. At the same time, the study also determines the exploitation level of each resource point based on the results of synthetic assessment and classification according to the table below.

2. Results of synthetic assessment potential of community-based ecotourism in Tua Chua Karst plateau - Dien Bien – Vietnam

The assessment results of the potential for community-based ecotourism in Tua Chua Karst plateau show that internal potentials play a decisive role (ratings range from 2.9 to 4.6 points), and external potential has a lower level of impact (rated scores range from 0.8 to 1.9 points). The evaluation results are shown in the following table (Table 5, Table 6). The results show that the resource sites with high internal and external potentials include: Ta Phin plateau landscape, Ta Phin ancient rock, De De Hu Terraces, Muong Dun ancient Bauhinia variegata forest, Xa Nhe market, Ta Sin Thang market, the Da River landscape along Huoi So, Son La hydroelectric lake. The tourist resource sites with high internal and medium external potentials include Son La hydroelectric lake, Kho Chua La Cave, Tham Khen Cave. Resource site with medium internal and low external potential is Pe Rang Ki Cave. The study shows that the exploitation capacity of tourist resources of community-based ecotourism is influenced by the uniqueness of the natural landscape, the local cultural values, stakeholder engagement, and destination accessibility. Tua Chua Karst Plateau has a majestic, wild landscape, along with unique indigenous cultural values of the Mong people, such as the tradition of cultivation on rock niches, unique cuisine (Mong Pe corn wine, Ban chicken, fish, etc.) They are the factors that need to focus on preserving, conserving, and exploiting to become the strength of tourism development of the locality. For community-based ecotourism, the Indigenous cultural value and the readiness of the local community have an important influence on the formation and development of this type. Because of the closure to natural, tourists' requirements on the facilities for tourism are not too high (accommodation, services), but they request high quality of experience.

Table 5. Results of the synthetic assessment of community-based ecotourism potential in Tua Chua Karst plateau (Source: Analysis results of the authors)

				The average score of criteria						**Potential (Y)**	
No	**Resource**	**X1**	**X2**	**X3**	**X4**	**X5**	**X6**	**X7**	**X8**	**Y1 (Internal)**	**Y2 (External)**
1	Hang Xa Nhe	0.959	0.928	0.833	0.7735	0.294	0.2695	0.4545	0.26	**3.4935**	**1.278**
2	Kho Chua La Cave	0.77	0.808	0.854	0.8515	0.312	0.2905	0.4275	0.2525	**3.2835**	**1.2825**
3	Pe Rang Ki Cave	0.497	0.608	0.518	0.5005	0.177	0.1855	0.3195	0.185	**2.1235**	**0.867**
4	Tham Khen Cave	0.875	0.952	0.791	0.715	0.294	0.3115	0.4545	0.26	**3.333**	**1.32**
5	Ta Phin plateau landscape	1.127	1.288	1.169	1.0465	0.438	0.3955	0.5895	0.335	**4.6305**	**1.758**
6	Ta Phin ancient rock	0.917	1.024	0.959	0.9295	0.411	0.3955	0.5355	0.3125	**3.8295**	**1.6545**
7	De De Hu Terraces	1.022	1.216	1.085	0.8905	0.375	0.3115	0.5085	0.3125	**4.2135**	**1.5075**
8	Vang Long Wall	0.371	0.832	0.749	1.0465	0.429	0.2275	0.3735	0.2525	**2.9985**	**1.2825**
9	Muong Dun ancient Bauhinia variegata forest	0.644	1.048	0.959	0.8125	0.357	0.3955	0.5625	0.335	**3.4635**	**1.65**
10	Sin Chai ancient tea	0.791	1.024	1.211	1.0465	0.411	0.2695	0.5085	0.305	**4.0725**	**1.494**
11	Xa Nhe market	0.686	1.312	1.19	1.0075	0.411	0.4795	0.6435	0.3425	**4.1955**	**1.8765**
12	Ta Sin Thang market	0.749	1.264	1.148	1.0075	0.411	0.469	0.657	0.35	**4.1685**	**1.887**
13	the Da River the landscape along Huoi So	0.707	0.76	0.917	0.8905	0.348	0.4165	0.603	0.32	**3.2745**	**1.6875**
14	Son La hydroelectric lake	0.665	0.88	1.001	0.9685	0.447	0.5005	0.657	0.3425	**3.5145**	**1.947**

Table 6. Result of potential of community-based ecotourism resources in Tua Chua Karst plateau (Source: Analysis results of the authors)

		The average score of criteria									
No	**Resource**	**X1**	**X2**	**X3**	**X4**	**X5**	**X6**	**X7**	**X8**	**Total Score**	**Ranking of exploitation potential**
1	Hang Xa Nhe	0.959	1.016	0.861	0.8385	0.312	0.3045	0.4545	0.26	**3.4935**	**1.278**
2	Kho Chua La Cave	0.77	0.808	0.854	0.8515	0.312	0.2905	0.4275	0.2525	**3.2835**	**1.2825**
3	Pe Rang Ki Cave	0.497	0.608	0.518	0.5005	0.177	0.1855	0.3195	0.185	**2.1235**	**0.867**
4	Tham Khen Cave	0.875	0.952	0.791	0.715	0.294	0.3115	0.4545	0.26	**3.333**	**1.32**
5	Ta Phin plateau landscape	1.127	1.288	1.169	1.0465	0.438	0.3955	0.5895	0.335	**4.6305**	**1.758**
6	Ta Phin ancient rock	0.917	1.024	0.959	0.9295	0.411	0.3955	0.5355	0.3125	**3.8295**	**1.6545**
7	De De Hu Terraces	1.022	1.216	1.085	0.8905	0.375	0.3115	0.5085	0.3125	**4.2135**	**1.5075**
8	Vang Long Wall	0.371	0.832	0.637	0.9256	0.315	0.2275	0.3735	0.2075	**2.9985**	**1.2825**
9	Muong Dun ancient Bauhinia variegata forest	0.644	1.048	0.959	0.8125	0.327	0.3955	0.522	0.275	**3.4635**	**1.65**
10	Sin Chai ancient tea	0.791	1.024	1.211	1.0465	0.411	0.2695	0.5085	0.305	**4.0725**	**1.494**
11	Xa Nhe market	0.686	1.312	1.19	1.0075	0.411	0.4795	0.6435	0.3425	**4.1955**	**1.8765**
12	Ta Sin Thang market	0.749	1.264	1.148	1.0075	0.411	0.469	0.657	0.35	**4.1685**	**1.887**
13	the Da River landscape along Huoi So	0.707	0.76	0.917	0.8905	0.348	0.4165	0.603	0.32	**3.2745**	**1.6875**
14	Son La hydroelectric lake	0.665	0.88	1.001	0.9685	0.447	0.5005	0.657	0.3425	**3.5145**	**1.947**

CONCLUSION

Thus, there are many factors that impact on the development of a tourist destination. Based on the geographical characteristics of the Tua Chua Karst Plateau area; consulting experts and assessment works, the topic has selected 8 criteria to assess the potential of community-based ecotourism at Tua Chua Karst Plateau. These criteria are divided into 2 groups: the internal potential group and the external potential group. The AHP weighting method shows that in the 8 selected criteria, the criteria showing the internal potential play a more important role than the criteria on the external potential. The results of the synthetic assessment for tourist destinations have shown that Tua Chua Karst Plateau is a potential area for the development of community-based eco-tourism with 14 tourist resource sites. In which eight tourist resource sites are evaluated as capable of exploiting tourism at a high level (Ta Phin plateau is the most capable of exploiting site), and five tourist resource sites are evaluated as a medium level of exploitation. Although Tua Chua Karst Plateau has high internal potential in tourism, it still lacks a system of supporting infrastructure for tourism, and the quality of services and tourism marketing activities are not high. It leads to limited visits from tourists.

For tourism development, Tua Chua needs to be invested in the infrastructure system, promote tourism image, preserve traditional cultural values of ethnic minorities, and strengthen linkages with nearby tourist spots to increase the attractiveness and diversity of tourism types. This research carried out a community-based ecotourism potential assessment, thereby developing others studies in this area. On the basic potential analysis, it is necessary to assess the needs of tourists for community-based eco-tourism and target tourists, identify target markets, research community-based eco-tourism products, suggest tourism development models for the locality, contribute to the sustainable development of the local economy, hunger eradication and poverty alleviation for ethnic minorities in this region.

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SPATIAL ORGANIZATION OF INDUSTRIAL TOURISM OBJECTS: CASE OF THE KEMEROVO REGION – KUZBASS

Olga A. BREL
Kemerovo State University, Department of Geology and Geography, Kemerovo, Russian Federation, e-mail: brel_o_a@mail.ru

Anna I. ZAYTSEVA*
Kemerovo State University, Department of Geology and Geography, Kemerovo, Russian Federation, e-mail: lit-ani@mail.ru

Philipp Ju. KAIZER
Kemerovo State University, Department of Geology and Geography, Kemerovo, Russian Federation, e-mail: filipp.kaizer@yanex.ru

Aleksandr S. MIGAL
Kemerovo State University, Department of Geology and Geography, Kemerovo, Russian Federation, e-mail: mig.alexander99@gmail.com

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Abstract: In recent years, the industrialized regions of Russia have faced the need to diversify the economy and develop new industries. The advantage of such regions is that they can use their industrial heritage to develop primarily industrial tourism. The purpose of the article is to analyze the spatial organization of industrial tourism objects on the territory of the Kemerovo region – Kuzbass. The authors analyze the approaches to the essence of the concept of "industrial tourism", study international and Russian experience in the development of industrial areas and assess the state of industrial tourism in the region with the help of SWOT-analysis method. Authors also identify the potential objects of industrial tourism and analyze their spatial organization. With the help of the QGIS 3.20 program, thematic map-scheme of the location of industrial tourism objects has been made. The conclusions about the prospects and directions of development of industrial tourism in the Kemerovo region – Kuzbass are made.

Key words: industrial tourism, industrial heritage, spatial organization, Kemerovo region, Kuzbass, enterprise

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INTRODUCTION

Recently, tourism has received increasing attention from the perspective of the concept of sustainable development. This is due to the fact that tourism can contribute to the sustainable development of territories, as the territories themselves are part of an interactive, integrated and responsible economic, social state of nature on which they depend. There are different types of tourism. Usually, the type of tourism that receives the greatest development is the one for which the necessary prerequisites have developed in a certain area. For example, a rich cultural heritage is necessary for historical and cultural tourism, unique and diverse natural resources – for nature-oriented species, a large number of existing and former industrial enterprises – for industrial tourism, etc. Tourism is the most obvious and traditional way of capitalizing industrial heritage sites, which has long been actively used by a large number of foreign countries to ensure a return on investment in the reconstruction and maintenance of these sites. The tourism sector is therefore fundamental for the recovery of urban spaces and vital in the regeneration of cities (Zarrilli, 2021). Industrial tourism can become an effective tool for the development of industrial regions of Russia. At a relatively low cost, it can make a significant contribution to economic growth.

A large number of projects have been implemented in Russia to preserve industrial heritage and develop industrial tourism. Extensive experience in the preservation of industrial heritage has been accumulated in the regions of central Russia, the Urals and Siberia. The Kemerovo region - Kuzbass is one of the most important industrial regions of the country. First of all the history of Kuzbass is connected with the development of coal and metallurgical industries. A large number of objects associated with its industrial past have been preserved on the territory of the region. Some of them are identified as the objects of display for tourists and already used in industrial tourism projects. The other part may have the potential for further development of this type of tourism and diversification of the tourist offer. The purpose of the research is to analyze the spatial organization of industrial tourism objects on the territory of the Kemerovo region – Kuzbass.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In foreign studies on the conditions and factors for the development of industrial tourism, two terms are widely used – “industrial heritage tourism” and “industrial tourism”. Most of foreign studies think industrial tourism means “industrial heritage tourism”. It is developed from the protection of industrial heritage (Wang and Fu, 2019). The documents of the International Committee for the Preservation of Industrial Heritage (TICCIH) note that industrial heritage consists of material objects of industrial and technical culture, created for production, and not for the purpose of

* Corresponding author

possessing historical, technological, social, architectural and scientific value. Industrial heritage sites are predominantly functional, they were created to ensure maximum productivity (Duet, 2016; Ifko and Stoki, 2017).

In modern Russian and foreign literature, there is no unified approach to identifying criteria for classifying objects of industrial heritage and industrial tourism, respectively. The principles, classification criteria, types of industrial heritage objects as well as different countries and regions' experience are discussed in the works of Marot and Harfst (2012), Otgaar (2012), P. Kitay (2014), Hu and Hassink (2015), Zapariy and Zaitseva (2017), Lin (2017), Belot (2020), Price (2021) and other authors. An analysis of the works allows us to note the main criterion for industrial heritage. It is, first of all, documentary evidence of its extraordinary nature in human history. An object begins to be classified as an industrial heritage, as soon as it ceases to be used for its intended purpose, its technologies and equipment become obsolete.

As the main parameters, according to which the object can be attributed to the industrial heritage and in the future become a resource of industrial tourism, it is worth noting:

a) the value of the object, its uniqueness, authenticity, physical integrity;

b) historical, social, technological, artistic, architectural, territorial significance;

c) the possibility of reconstruction, renovation, conversion, adaptation;

d) level of preservation, viability and social significance, legal situation, security. Based on the essence of the concept of industrial heritage and approaches to the classification of objects, most foreign, and, following them, Russian authors understand industrial tourism as:

- visits to operating companies (industrial production tourism) - organizing and conducting regular excursion programs to existing industrial enterprises for educational purposes;
- visits to inactive (once operating) enterprises (industrial heritage tourism) - thematic tours to inactive production, industrial facilities in order to explore the territory and its industrial heritage sites, study the technology for creating a particular product, familiarize with the history of industrial enterprises, visit industrial zones or cities seeking to a functional transformation to achieve urban regeneration.

The definition of industrial tourism is used in official documents. For example, the Strategy for the Development of Tourism in Russia until 2035 (2019) and the National standard of the Russian Federation "Tourism services. Industrial tourism. Service provision" (2017) includes both types mentioned above: "visits to operating companies and exploring of industrial heritage sites". It is noted in the literature that in order to increase revenues generated from the positive emotions of customers within the impressions economy, many enterprises have become involved in industrial tourism by transforming their structure. From this point of view, industrial tourism is a tourism activity that includes excursions to manufacturing plants, company museums, brand parks, etc. in order to show the production process of the enterprise, the features of the product produced and the history of the company (Otgaar, 2012). Industrial tourism emerged largely as a result of the global crisis of the industrial regions of developed countries. This crisis is mainly related to the exhaustion of natural resources, the rising cost of mining, environmental problems, etc. World experience shows that the way out of this situation is the diversification of the economy with its subsequent reorientation to the tertiary sector of the economy. That is why the study of conditions and opportunities for the development of industrial tourism is quite relevant for industrial regions.

Industrial tourism is declared as one of the main directions of the strategic development of tourism in the Russian Federation and increasing its investment attractiveness. In 2017 the Council for the Development of Industrial Tourism in the Russian Federation was established in order to achieve this goal. The objectives of the Council are to stimulate the development of interregional routes of industrial tourism, to strengthen the links between industrial enterprises of Russia and tourist companies engaged in cognitive tours, including visits to industrial sites, in obtaining access to industrial sites, the formation of a unified map of industrial tourism in Russia. The tasks of the Council include stimulating the development of interregional industrial tourism routes, strengthening ties between industrial enterprises in Russia and tourist companies involved in educational tours, including visits to industrial facilities, obtaining admission to industrial facilities, the formation of a unified map of industrial tourism in the Russian Federation, etc. During the work of the Council more than 20 cross-border and dozens of interregional routes have been formed.

It is necessary to note the Udmurt Republic, Sverdlovsk, Chelyabinsk, Volgograd, Nizhny Novgorod and Vologda regions among the leading regions for the development of industrial tourism in Russia. A certain achievement in the direction of developing theoretical and methodological foundations for the development of industrial tourism in the Russian Federation can be considered the appearance of the official document "Guidelines for the organization of industrial tourism" (2020). It was developed with the support of the autonomous non-profit organization "Agency for Strategic Initiatives to Promote New Projects". Recommendations for the development of industrial tourism in the regions of the Russian Federation are a practical guide for organizing a new area of tourism business, a step-by-step instruction for creating excursions to industrial enterprises. Industrial tourism can become an efficient and cost-effective tool for promoting the goods of these enterprises, popularizing the brand and building consumer loyalty.

The development of industrial tourism in the regions of the Russian Federation contributes to the solution of a number of socio-economic problems: increasing the investment attractiveness of the regions; increasing the competitiveness and promotion of local brands and regional goods; creating an effective vocational guidance system for schoolchildren and students; increasing tourist attractiveness and tourist flow; organization of experience and knowledge exchange between specialists of enterprises, establishment of industry relations; organization of business missions for professional buyers and promotion of export potential; development of domestic and inbound tourism in the regions of the Russian Federation.

Despite some practical success, the issues of further development of industrial tourism are still poorly worked out. Until now, there is no clear interaction between industrial enterprises, state and municipal authorities, educational organizations and commerce and industry chambers in terms of coordinating joint efforts to implement it at the regional level (Kosyakova, 2016). Old-industrial regions with a rich industrial heritage, as well as industrial centers, whose economic base has undergone significant changes in recent decades, can be primarily interested in the development of industrial tourism. The practice of developing industrial tourism shows that its success requires the participation of the manufacturing enterprises themselves, state and regional authorities, population, public and educational, organizations and cultural institutions, taking into account the views of all interested parties (Tankiyeva, 2020).

There are prerequisites for the development of industrial tourism in the Kemerovo region – Kuzbass – a typical industrial region, where the history of the formation of the coal and metallurgical industries can become the basis for the development of industrial tourism. So in the region there are examples of successful museumification of the mining and coal heritage in the region. For example, expositions demonstrating the coal wealth of the subsoil of the Kuznetsk coal basin with varying degrees of depth and information content are presented in the museum-reserve "Krasnaya Gorka" (Kemerovo) (Zaitseva et al., 2018). The purpose of this study is to identify industrial tourism sites and determine the features of their territorial organization in the Kemerovo region using GIS technologies. The main research methods were content analysis of the materials of industrial enterprises' websites, comparative geographical, descriptive, analytical (SWOT-analysis) and cartographic methods. The authors' publications on the research topic, strategies and programs for the development of domestic and inbound tourism in the Kemerovo region, as well as other open sources (tourist Internet portals, blogs, etc.) were the information base and materials for this study. The study took place in several stages.

Stage 1. Conducting a primary analysis of the current state of industrial tourism in the Kemerovo region using the methods of descriptive, comparative geographical and SWOT-analysis.

Stage 2. Identification of industrial objects suitable for the development of industrial tourism. Compilation of a database of enterprises, their grouping by industry, identification of enterprises that have conditions for receiving tourists and are already actively receiving tourists.

Stage 3. Determination of the spatial organization of industrial tourism objects using GIS technologies, construction of map-scheme reflecting objects of interest for the development of industrial tourism in the Kemerovo region. Drawing up recommendations for the effective development of industrial tourism in the Kemerovo region based on the results obtained.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Stage 1

To identify the current state and determine the prospects for the development of industrial tourism in the Kemerovo region, a SWOT-analysis was carried out. Its results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. SWOT-analysis of the current state and prospects for the development of industrial tourism in the Kemerovo region (Source: authors)

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
- Rich history associated with the industrial development of the territory; - A large number of industrial enterprises of different specialization (coal, metallurgical, food, etc.); - Availability of museums and other tourist facilities that can be included in industrial tourism programs; - The presence of educational organizations that train personnel in tourism and hospitality field; - The absence of world-class competitors in the field of industrial tourism (a free niche that can become a "highlight" of the region); - The novelty of this type of tourism; - Benefits for industrial enterprises in terms of advertising and promotion of their products and services; - Stimulation of sales of goods and services of enterprises that receive tourists; - Interest of authorities and representatives of the tourism industry in the development of industrial tourism in the region, etc.	- Geographical location (distance from the main tourist flows); - Outdated equipment in many industries, requiring additional costs for the arrangement of industrial facilities attractive to tourists and for the organization of excursion services; - Lack of a comprehensive tourism infrastructure at enterprises – potential objects of industrial tourism; - Lack of tourist personnel who understand the specifics of the organization of industrial tourism; - Unwillingness and weak interest of industrial enterprises in receiving tourists (including due to the need to ensure the safety of tourists); - The prevailing negative image of Kuzbass as one of the most polluted regions of Russia; - Lack of guarantee of safety of tourists when visiting enterprises, etc.
Opportunities	**Threats**
- Increasing the tourist flow due to the development of domestic tourism; - Promotion of Kuzbass as a center of industrial tourism in Russia; - Formation of the region's brand; - Construction of the Krapivinskaya HPP as a potential object of industrial tourism; - Increasing the investment attractiveness of the region; - Modification of a purely industrial image of the region into an industrial and tourist one; - Preparation of local regulatory documents aimed at the development of industrial tourism; - An additional source of income for enterprises and companies involved in the organization of industrial tourism; - Government support for enterprises developing industrial tourism; - Creation of a system of career guidance work with schoolchildren and students.	- Deterioration of the environmental situation, which may reduce the attractiveness of industrial tourism; - Accidents at industrial enterprises, including during excursions; - The emergence of competitors involved in the development of industrial tourism in other industrial regions of Russia; - Decrease in the number of tourists due to the specifics of the type of tourism (non-mass character, narrow orientation towards industrial objects lovers); - Reduction of display objects due to the closure of enterprises; - Competition from other types of tourism.

The results of the SWOT-analysis showed that the industrial Kuzbass is a region in which industrial tourism has the conditions, prerequisites and prospects for development. Strengths and opportunities allow us to develop a competitive tourism product despite all the threats and shortcomings. But which objects of industrial tourism may be of the greatest interest for tourists and, thus, are the most promising? The experience of which countries and regions of Russia can be used as a guideline? The old industrial centers of the world, which were able to use their industrial heritage for the reorganization of the territory, can become indicative for Kuzbass.

Such illustrative examples include the Ruhr, formerly the coal-mining center of Germany; the Blanavon industrial landscape in Wales, shaped by the massive production of iron and coal during the industrial revolution; former coal basin Nord-Pas-de-Calais in northern France, and now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, etc. It is unlikely that Kuzbass will be able to repeat the experience of one this region in the near future at the current level of development.

However, it is important to understand that the reorganization of these industrial territories took place over several decades and was carried out in connection with the need to overcome the crisis. The Kemerovo region has the opportunity to avoid entering into the deepest crisis associated with its dependence on raw material rent by reorienting to the tertiary sector of the economy. Diversification and orientation towards industrial tourism can be the way out. In addition, comprehensive work on the development of industrial tourism will contribute to the sustainable positioning of the industrial potential of the entire region in domestic and foreign markets.

Stage 2

To identify the objects of industrial tourism, a primary database was compiled indicating enterprises and objects that are promising for the development of industrial tourism. A grouping of objects and facilities by industries was carried out, the amount of enterprises ready or not ready to receive tourists were marked (Table 2).

Table 2. Amount of industrial tourism objects and enterprises grouping by industries (Source: made by authors)

Industry	**Amount of objects / enterprises**	
	ready to receive tourists	**not ready to receive tourists**
Electric power	2	7
Chemical	2	6
Mechanical engineering	-	11
Coal mining	4	others
Metallurgical	3	4
Food and processing	8	13
Oil refining industry	-	3

It follows from the table that only a small part of enterprises is ready to receive tourists. The enterprises of food processing and coal mining industry are the most prepared for the organization of excursions.

For example, some open pit mines have observation decks. There are some objects of special interest except for enterprises mentioned in the table. They can also be the potential objects of industrial tourism, and some of them already accept or are ready to accept tourists as part of organized tours and excursions.

Stage 3

In the QGIS 3.20 program, a schematic map has been compiled. It reflects potential objects of interest for the development of industrial tourism in the Kemerovo region. This map-scheme shows the most promising objects of industrial tourism in Kuzbass. Analyzing the location of objects in terms of the possibilities for the development of industrial tourism, we can talk about their concentration in the two largest cities of the Kemerovo region – Kemerovo and Novokuznetsk (Figure 1).

Figure 1. The map-scheme of potential objects of industrial tourism in the Kemerovo region – Kuzbass (made by the authors)

The results of the study demonstrate the presence of a large and diverse base of objects for the development of industrial tourism in the Kemerovo region – Kuzbass. For example, observation decks have been organized at some existing open pit mines (Bachatskiy, Kedrovskiy and others), while inactive ones become the basis for the creation of diving centers (for example, the flooded Temir-Tau quarry) or the recreation areas (lakes Aprel'ka and Tolstochikha). Excursions are organized and conducted at numerous enterprises of various industries.

However, the examples given are isolated cases of organizing tourism activities for industrial enterprises, which indicates the need to develop this area, including because of the growing need for the development of domestic tourism.Industrial tourism in the Kemerovo region should be conditionally divided into two areas – the actual industrial and industrial-historical tourism. Both of these areas are potentially beneficial for development.

The first direction includes excursions to coal mines, chemical, metallurgical and food enterprises in different cities of the Kemerovo region, a number of which are already actively accepting tourists.

The second direction includes visiting the sights associated with the history of the industrial development of Kuzbass. Krasnaya Gorka Museum-Reserve, the Monument to the Miners of Kuzbass in Kemerovo, the Memorial Museum of Military and Labor Glory of Kuznetsk Metallurgists, the Garden of Metallurgists, the monumental composition "Steelworkers", the Museum of Mining Glory of the Kolchuginsky Mine, the Scientific and Technical Museum named after Academician I. P. Bardin in Novokuznetsk and much more are among such attractions.

Both directions of industrial tourism are included in the branded route “Kuzbass. Fire in the heart”. The route provides an opportunity to visit the most significant places of the Kemerovo region, including the Krasnaya Gorka Museum-Reserve of Industrial History, created on the site of the discovery of the Kuznetsk coal basin. An excursion to the coal mine, acquaintance with the technology of coal mining and the experience of the enterprise in the biological reclamation of technogenically disturbed lands are also included in this route.

CONCLUSION

At first glance, industry as a phenomenon is opposed to the concept of sustainable development, because it is based on exhaustible natural resources – coal, iron ores, oil, etc. However, a closer look, including international experience, makes it clear that the industry can become the basis for the transition to the development of the tertiary sector of the economy thanks to tourism. It is tourism that can solve the problems of resource exhaustibility, the negative image of the region, limited jobs, etc. The ways of moving from raw material rent to more stable in the long term sources of financing are very important for Kuzbass. Tourism, in our opinion, is one of such ways. This is especially relevant and necessary in the context of the intensification of external factors, including the pandemic, when there is a need for domestic tourism.

The special role of tourism, including industrial tourism, in diversifying the economy of Russian regions is beyond doubt. The diversification effect of tourism is also revealed in stimulating the country's economic growth and accelerating regional development, increasing tax revenues, creating new jobs, improving the quality of life of the local population through the manifestation of positive economic and social effects (Brel et al., 2020).

Industrial tourism is an effective tool for promoting the brand of the region and the prospect of import substitution in domestic tourism, which is confirmed by tourism development strategies adopted in different regions of the Russian Federation for the coming decades, which also include the development of industrial tourism. Many Russian cities can become centers of industrial tourism. The objects of the industrial heritage of these cities are of significant historical, economic and educational interest. Due to the scale of production, they are not inferior to the European center of industrial tourism.

In addition to contributing to the region's economy, industrial tourism is also useful in that it performs an educational function. During the excursions to industrial enterprises, tourists can get acquainted with their history, with the features of the production of a particular product, with modern technologies, as well as problems and prospects for the further development of the enterprises. Moreover excursions to industrial enterprises contribute to the patriotic education of the local population, play an important role in professional orientation and help in the professional self-determination of youth. Creative understanding of the territories of former industrial sites provides a link between times and generations, creates new jobs, contributes to the creation of a positive image, and attracts tourists (Alekseeva, 2017).

To improve the efficiency of the development of industrial tourism in the Kemerovo region, we consider it expedient to solve the following tasks:

- museumification of industrial heritage objects, including the use of modern digital technologies;
- conversion of old industrial buildings for use in modern socio-cultural purposes;
- development of regional tourism products, including excursions to industrial enterprises and sights related to the industrial history of the region, as part of complex tours of the cities of the region;
- optimization of the system for organizing excursions to industrial enterprises;
- expansion of contacts between tourist firms and industrial enterprises;
- improvement of marketing activities to promote regional tourism products, including industrial tourism;
- improvement of the legislative framework, development of state programs for the development of industrial tourism, etc.

So, for many industrial regions of Russia, industrial tourism is an effective marketing tool for the territory and a promising direction for the diversification of their economy. The role of industrial tourism may become even more significant in the future. The potential of industrial regions, due to the existing industrial heritage objects is a solid basis for the development of industrial tourism in Russia, including the Kemerovo region – Kuzbass.

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CUSTOMER SATISFACTION TOWARDS COMMUNICATION SKILLS OF FRONT OFFICE STAFF AT THE HOTEL (CASE STUDY FIVE STARS HOTELS IN AQABA)

Omar JAWABREH*
The University of Jordan, Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality,
Department of Hotel Management, Aqaba, Jordan, e-mail: o.jawabreh@ju.edu.jo

Ra'ed MASA'DEH
The University of Jordan, Department of Management Information Systems,
School of Business, Jordan, Amman, Jordan, e-mail: r.masadeh@ju.edu.jo

Tayseer Al FAYOUMI
The University of Jordan, Department of Hotel Management,
Undergraguted Student, Aqaba, Jordan, e-mail: alfayoumi@yahoo.com

Abdullah BAREYA
The University of Jordan, Department of Hotel Management,
Undergraguted Student, Aqaba, Jordan, e-mail: bareya@yahoo.com

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Abstract: This research will serve as a realistic guideline for hotel administration, particularly for the front desk staff. The findings of this research will help front office employees improve their communication skills, allowing them to better fulfill the requirements of their clients and increase their happiness. If the outcome revealed that the service had received a high rating, the hotel owner would be pleased. A low score would, on the other hand, prompt the hotel owner to improve the service and set up a training program for his or her employees.The technique that was used in the present investigation there are many components on this document: the research model, operational definitions of the study's independent and dependent variables, research hypotheses, as well as a data collecting instruments, research population, and research sample.The components of this study are developed on the basis of prior literature, which may be either theoretical or empirical in nature. Indeed, the factors utilized in this research are often found in the literature on tourist development. In this case, the skewness values were within the normal range (from -1.0 to +1.0), indicating that the data from the independent variables is normal. The VIF values were smaller than the critical value (10) that was shown to be the most frequent across the majority of research, indicating that there was no multicolinearity issue among the independent variables in this study.

Key words: cultural skills, language skills, body language skills, handling skills

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INTRODUCTION

All service companies, particularly the hotel sector, are working hard to enhance their communication skills in order to make consumers happy with their services. In order to fulfill the fundamental requirements and expectations of consumers, hotel owners are increasingly focusing more on communication skills. Hotel owners are more likely to anticipate and satisfy their clients' needs and desires if their requirements are well recognized and understood (Juwaheer, 2004; Abuhashesh et al., 2019; Mahmoud et al., 2021). Customers who are pleased are more inclined to return or extend their stay at the hotel (Choi and Chu, 2001; Al Khasawneh et al., 2021). Hotel guests in Jordan seem to have high expectations and want great service at the moment (Alananzeh et al., 2019; Jahmani et al., 2020; Jawabreh, 2021). Hotels have upped their competitiveness, and instead of only having a beautiful room to attract guests, they now have a high-quality staff. Owners and managers competing with hundreds of others place the greatest emphasis on guest happiness, and personal service is at the top of travelers' lists of the most essential factors to consider when choosing a hotel to stay in (Wipoosattaya, 2001).

The hotel business employs a wide range of people, from top management to front-line workers (i.e. Housekeepers, receptionists, front cashiers). When it comes to choosing whether or not to return, promote the hotel, or demonstrate loyalty to a certain hotel, the front desk personnel is regarded a supporting element (Kandampully and Suhartanto, 2000; Masa'deh et al., 2018). Furthermore, according to Watt (2007), the front desk is an essential role for clients interact with front desk personnel at the hotel's focal point. They help visitors, fulfill their requirements, and satisfy their desires.

According to Hogan (2006), the front desk is the nerve center of all hotels, and it is critical to maintain track of what is going on in other parts of the hotel. As previously stated, communication skills were evaluated by a subjective comparison made by consumers between their expectations for a service and their impression of how the service was delivered

* Corresponding author

(Jawabreh, 2017; Masadeh et al., 2019; Alshurideh et al., 2021). The front office staffs are essential to the hotel's ongoing performance as major drivers of client satisfaction. They provide continuous guest contact and the hotel's most varied operational exposure. The front desk personnel, on the other hand, will represent the hotel's image to consumers, and they will have a strong sense of anticipating guests' requirements and exceeding their expectations. Based on the above, this research aims to demonstrate customer satisfaction with the hotel's front-desk staff's communication abilities in a variety of ways (languageskills, body language skills, cultural skills, handling skills). The hotel's front desk is the most noticeable department. Even in difficult circumstances, front-line employees must be able to get along with a wide range of individuals. Furthermore, when visitors have issues at the hotel, front desk personnel should be able to manage certain problems, deal with complaints, or resolve specific challenges. When interacting with consumers, good communication skills are needed, as is a desire to address issues as they occur. In light of this, the study's issue may be summed up in the following question: What is the client's opinion of the hotel's front-desk staff's communication abilities and how do these affect customer satisfaction?

This research will serve as a practical reference for hotel management, particularly the front desk staff. The findings of this research will improve the communication skills of front-office personnel in order to fulfill the requirements of clients and ensure their happiness. The hotel owner would be pleased with the service if the outcome indicated a high score. If, on the other hand, the outcome revealed a poor score, the hotel owner would enhance the service and set up a training program.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Most hotel researchers are focused on increasing customer satisfaction since happy customers are more likely to return and generate revenue for the hotel. Client satisfaction is defined by Hernon and Whitwan (2001) as a measure of how the customer views service delivery. Customer satisfaction, according to Liu (2000), is a function of service performance in relation to customer expectations. As a result, it's critical to comprehend how client expectations are created in order to discover the variables that influence service satisfaction. Varied consumers have different expectations depending on their understanding of a product or service, as Reisig and Chandek (2001) highlighted. This may imply that a client can guess what service performance would be like or think about what service performance should be like. Customers will be pleased if the service performance meets or surpasses their expectations. Customers, on the other hand, are more likely to be disappointed if service performance falls short of expectations (Jawabreh and Al Sarayreh, 2017; Alrowwad et al., 2020; Al Fahmawee and Jawabreh, 2022). As previously said, a higher number of pleased clients will increase the hotel's performance and profitability.

Why is customer service so important to businesses? Why are businesses more focused on the quality of their workers' services and eager to teach and improve their customer service skills? Simply said, as they increase in popularity, their market's development and stability are more reliant on the presence of a devoted client base. Furthermore, providing exceptional customer service is no longer a choice or a set of slogans, but rather a necessity forced by the nature of situations and factors in today's corporate world. We just want tourists to return to the hotel or our tourist facility when they experience the services and products of their happiness, and they usually want to repeat the visit (Jawabreh, 2020). The employee at the reception may assure them that their experience began with satisfaction. We can do this by providing excellent individual talents. Good verbal and nonverbal communication is important, as is ensuring that the welcome grin is always part of the service. Always remember that every visitor contributes to your pay, giving you another incentive to want to return. The majority of visitors are not challenging. Wen enjoys a pleasant stay in a familiar setting.

In all languages of the globe, there are phrases of appreciation and gratitude that should be repeated by each individual when the service is given the first invitation or present. But when are words of gratitude required and when are they optional (Kasavana, 2005). Communication is the process of passing information, meanings, and ideas from one person to another or others in such a way that the facility's or any group of people's social goals are met. As a result, they act as lines linking any facility's building or organizational structure. It is impossible to imagine a group of any type of activity without also picturing the process of communication that happens between its divisions and members, bringing them together as a single unit with a degree of integration that enables various actions to be carried out. Communication happens in any institution or organization in line with formal regulations as well as in the informal organization, which may or may not be felt by officials in the facility or part of it, but has an effect that may surpass the intensity of formal communication.

According to psychologists, 60 percent of speech and communication between people is done nonverbally, that is, through gestures, overtones, and symbols rather than speech and tongue (this method is said to have a powerful effect, five times stronger than the effect that words leave), and the grave mistakes that we all make are ignoring body language and gestures in trying to understand what one, one, one, one, one, one, one, one, one, one, one, one, one, one, one, one, one However, since we do not properly compute the language of gestures, we spend hours studying the words that were given to us without recognizing their importance. The most prominent and most successful approach to achieving the success of the institutions to reach their goals and the highest levels of product quality and since the basic outputs of the hotel establishments took the institutions themselves to see the appropriate way through which they can achieve their desired goals and effective communication approach is the most prominent and most successful approach to achieving the success of the institutions to reach their goals and the highest levels of product quality and since the basic outputs of the hotel establishments took the institutions themselves to see the appropriate way through which they can achieve their desired.

The fact that communication is the network via which information may be gathered, which is necessary for successful decision-making, demonstrates the significance of efficient communication (Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons, 2000; Obeidat et al., 2019). It is the method by which information regarding decisions is communicated, and it is necessary for decision implementation and communication in administrative organizations, whether written or spoken, formally or unofficially. Official, focused on accomplishing one of the institution's major goals and ensuring its achievement within the institution's priorities of work. Its overall aim is to guarantee high-quality performance at all levels, resulting in the execution of decisions and other organizational objectives. Previous study examined customer satisfaction with all aspects of the hotel's service quality in order for the hotel to evaluate the customer's impression (Jawabreh et al., 2020). This research looked at the communication abilities of front-desk employees, as well as the customers' expectations and perceptions of these skills in Aqaba's five-star hotels. The findings of this quantitative evaluation of communication abilities may shed light on how consumers evaluate communication skills and measure customer satisfaction at Aqaba's five-star hotels.

The hotel's front desk personnel play an essential role. They are the first to meet and welcome visitors when they arrive. They have greater interaction with visitors than employees in other departments, and they must offer service that meets the customers' requirements and expectations. Reservationists, receptionists, front cashiers, telephone operators, night auditors, guest relation officers, and bellboys are among the front office staff. The front desk, as previously said, is the most visible department of the hotel. Even in difficult circumstances, front-line employees must be able to get along with a wide range of individuals. The following credentials are required of these individuals:

To begin, the front-desk personnel should have a pleasant demeanor and be well-dressed and tidy. Individuals who are properly dressed convey authority and prestige; therefore, the initial impression is just one aspect of establishing a good connection between the hotel and its guests.The front office personnel, according to Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons, 2004), must offer an immaculate external image to clients.

Second, the personnel should be capable. They should be familiar with the hotel's fundamental product knowledge, accommodation types, and hotel amenities. According to Philip et al. (1982), front desk personnel should be familiar with a variety of accommodation types and be able to describe each one, including single rooms, double rooms, twin rooms, suites, connected rooms, and neighboring rooms.

Third, visitors may speak English with varying accents, and certain terms may be difficult for front-office employees to comprehend owing to the various nations, especially for reservations or operators who interact with clients over the phone. According to White and Beckley (1988), front-office personnel should utilize an alphabetic system similar to that employed by travel agencies and airlines. Tanpipat (1994) proposed an alphabet, such as M for Mike, N for Nancy, and P for Peter. Furthermore, White and Beckley (1988) said that while answering the phone, telephone operators should identify themselves and declare the hotel's name with the addition of. Greetings, 1 or. With the proper tone, say "good evening." The insertion of the words. Is it possible for me to assist you? 1 will create the appearance of eagerness to assist, which is crucial in a hotel.

Furthermore, front-desk personnel should be competent to manage certain issues, complaints, or other challenges that customers may have while staying at the hotel. As noted by Harrington and Akehurst (1996), strong communication skills are needed while interacting with consumers, as well as a desire to address issues as they occur. Finally, front-desk employees should make their customers happy and pleased. The front desk personnel is essential to the hotel's ongoing performance as a major driver of client happiness. They provide continuous guest contact and the hotel's most varied operational exposure (Abdullah and Hamdan, 2012). The front desk personnel, on the other hand, will represent the hotel's image to consumers, and they will have a strong sense of anticipating guests' requirements and exceeding their expectations.

Meanwhile, in their study titled "Toward an integrated approach to creating service experiences," (Stuart and Tax, 2004) stated Theatre has taught me a lot." The delivery of a memorable personal experience is a key component in developing a new service and eventually attaining customer pleasure and loyalty, especially for competitive services with a high consumer–service provider interface. Because many of these services depend on aspects of theatre-like performance, this study looks at the process of selecting, designing, and developing theatre plays in order to get a better understanding of how performance excellence is achieved. Because of their lengthy history of mastering the essential components of performance staging and a reputation for opening on time and at near peak performance levels, theatre plays were selected as the foundation for research. The theatrical play process is explained, implications are extracted, and a matching management process model is provided using a case-based, qualitative research method. The implications of research and management for innovative service design and service delivery excellence are discussed.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section provides the methodology applied in the current study. It consists of the research model, operational definitions of the study's independent and dependent variables, research hypotheses, besides data collection tool and research population and sample.

Hypotheses of Study

1 - There is no significant relationship between language skills of front office staffs in five stars hotels in Aqaba and customer satisfaction.

2 - There is no significant relationship between body language skills of front office staffs in five stars hotels in Aqaba and customer satisfaction.

3 - There is no significant relationship between cultural skills of front office staffs in five stars hotels in Aqaba and customer satisfaction.

4 - There is no significant relationship between handling skills of front office staffs in five stars hotels in Aqaba and customer satisfaction.

Research Model

The elements of this research are established based on preceding literature, either theoretically or empirically. Indeed, this study used variables that are common in tourism development literature. Figure (1) represents a model for the study that shows the independent variables, the dependent variable, and the proposed relationship between them.

Operational Definitions

Adapted from Sekaran and Bougie (2013), the current research considers four independent variables within the construct of Communication skills of Front office staff (i.e., Language skills, Body Language skills, Cultural Skills, and Handling Skills) which were measured in the research questionnaire through five, eight, four, and nine items respectively; one dependent variable which is adapted and measured through eight items.

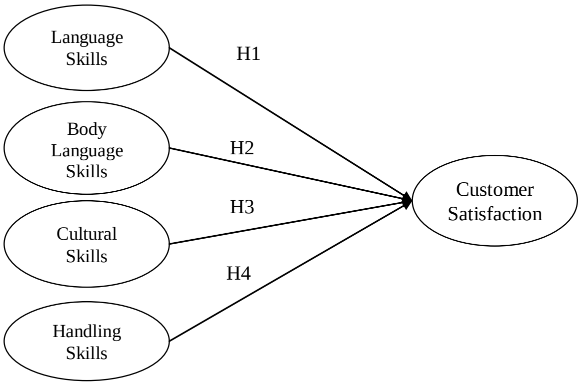

Figure 1. Research Model

Research Hypotheses

In order to test the research model, the study is hypothesized as follows:

H1: There is a significant relationship between language skills of front office staffs in five stars hotels in Aqaba and customer satisfaction.

H2: There is a significant relationship between body language skills of front office staffs in five stars hotels in Aqaba and customer satisfaction.

H3: There is a significant relationship between cultural skills of front office staffs in five stars hotels in Aqaba and customer satisfaction.

H4: There is a significant relationship between handling skills of front office staffs in five stars hotels in Aqaba and customer satisfaction.

Population and Sampling

The study population consisted of all spectrums of the community interested in tourism in Aqaba city includes all age levels (from 18 to 40 years and above). 1000 questionnaires were distributed and considered 600 of them for statistical analysis, thus the response rate was 60% which is high for the community of the city of Aqaba.

Data Analysis and Results

In order to explore the impact of quality of food services towards patient satisfaction, in which these variables have been measured using 5-points Likert scale that varies between strongly disagree =1 and strongly agree =5. Also, reliability and validity analyses were conducted; descriptive analysis was used to describe the characteristic of sample and the respondent to the questionnaires besides the independent and dependent variables. Also, multiple regression analysis was employed to test the research hypotheses.

Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are two important measures to determine the quality and usefulness of the primary data. Validity is about accuracy and whether the instrument measures what it is intended to measure while reliability is about precision; it is used to check the consistency and stability of the questionnaire. Indeed, the researchers depended on scales and items that were previously developed and used by other researchers with similar interest. Also a draft of the questionnaire was formulated, and then it was reviewed by three academic lecturers –who have a sufficient knowledge and experience in this scope- to insure that each item is measuring what is intended to be measured, and to avoid the ambiguity and complexity in the phrasing of questions. The reliability of the instrument was measured by the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Further, some scholars (e.g., Bagozzi and Yi, 1988) suggested that the values of all indicators or dimensional scales should be above the recommended value of 0.60. Table (1) represents the results of Cranach's alpha for the independent and dependent variables. Cronbach's alpha coefficients of all the tested variables are above 0.60 which suggesting the composite measure is reliable.

Table 1.The Cronbach's alpha coefficients of study variables

Variables	Number of items	Cronbach alpha
Language skills	5	0.650
Body language skills	8	0.693
Cultural skills	4	0.624
Handling skills	9	0.701
Customer satisfaction	8	0.869

Table 3. Overall mean and standard deviation of the study's variables

Type of Variable	Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level	Order
Independent Variables	Language skills	3.48	0.68	High	4
	Body language skills	3.63	0.68	High	3
	Cultural skills	3.74	0.77	High	1
	Handling skills	3.69	0.67	High	2
Dependent Variable	Customer satisfaction	3.49	0.90	High	

Table 2. Description of the respondents' demographic profiles

Category	Category	Frequency	Percentage%
Gender	Males	48	50.0
	Females	48	50.0
	Total	96	100
Age	Less than 20	7	7.3
	20 years - less than 30	43	44.8
	30 years - less than 40	24	25.0
	40 years - less than 50	14	14.6
	More than 50 years old	8	8.3
	Total	96	100
Nationality	Jordanian	52	54.2
	Non-Jordanian	44	45.8
	Total	96	100
Length of hotel stay	Less than 1 week	43	44.8
	1-2 weeks	32	33.3
	More than 2 weeks	21	21.9
	Total	96	100

Respondents Demographic Profile

As indicated in Table (2), the demographic profile of the respondents for this study showed that they are typically males and females, Jordanian and Jordanian residents, most of them between 20-40 years old, and most of them stayed 2 weeks and less in the investigated hotels.

Descriptive Analysis

In order to describe the responses and thus the attitude of the respondents toward each question they were asked in the survey, the mean and the standard deviation were estimated. While the mean shows the central tendency of the data, the standard deviation measures the dispersion which offers an index of the spread or variability in the data (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013). In other words, a small standard deviation for a set of values reveals that these values are clustered closely about the mean or located close to it; a large standard deviation indicates the opposite. The level of each item was determined by the following formula: (highest point in Likert scale - lowest point in Likert scale) / the number of the levels used = (5-1) / 5 = 0.80, where 1-1.80 reflected by “very low”, 1.81-2.60 reflected by “low”, 2.61-3.40 reflected by “moderate”, 3.41-4.20 reflected by “high”, and 4.21-5 reflected by “very high”. Then the items were being ordered based on their means. Tables (3) and (4) show the results. As presented in Table (3), data analysis results have shown that hotels' customer satisfaction in Aqaba is applied to a high level in which the mean score is 3.49.

Also, all dimensions toward communication skills of front office (i.e. Cultural skills, Handling skills, Body language skills, and Language skills) do exist highly and respectively. Table (4) demonstrates the mean, standard deviations, level, and order scores communication skills of front office towards hotels' customer satisfaction items for each variable.

Table 4. Mean and standard deviation of the study’s variables

Language skills	**Mean**	**SD**	**Level**	**Order**
Pronounces words clearly so that they are understood first time.	3.25	1.257	Moderate	5
Speaks at an appropriate volume level – not too loud and not soft.	3.44	1.113	High	4
Talks at a speed which enables everyone to understand what they are saying.	3.53	1.305	High	3
Uses easily understood everyday words and expressions that everyone is familiar with.	3.50	1.231	High	2
Avoids the use of jargon and technical language.	3.71	1.230	High	1
Body language skills	Mean	SD	Level	Order
Has direct eye contact when they speak to people.	3.53	1.305	High	5
Looks at people when listening to them.	3.50	1.231	High	7
Uses hand movements and gestures to reinforce the points they are making.	3.49	1.205	High	8
Expresses themselves face to face in a concise way so that people can easily understand them.	3.76	1.194	High	3
Communicates with a tone of voice that varies to emphasize key points.	3.79	1.160	High	1
Varies their body language to gain rapport with people.	3.52	1.281	High	6
Uses silence rather than interrupts when listening to others.	3.69	1.190	High	4
Matches and ‘mirrors’ other people’s body language.	3.78	1.198	High	2
Cultural skills	Mean	SD	Level	Order
Understands cultural norms.	3.71	1.123	High	2
Is sensitive when communicating with people from different cultures.	3.68	1.129	High	3
Varies their style of communicating to fit in with different cultures.	3.63	1.199	High	4
Varies their use of language and behaviors to appeal to people from other cultures.	3.96	1.360	High	1
Handling skills	Mean	SD	Level	Order
When solving problems with others they find out the current situation.	3.71	1.230	High	5
Sells the benefits of their ideas spelling out the ‘win’ for others.	3.71	1.230	High	5
Asks the right questions to gain a complete understanding of people’s problems.	3.90	1.183	High	2
Summarizes the thoughts of others to ensure understanding.	3.52	1.273	High	7
When consulting with others they are careful to fully understand and agree their needs.	3.81	1.217	High	3
Priorities people’s needs and sells their ideas to match those needs.	3.24	1.296	Moderate	8
When providing help to others they identify the key issues to be addressed.	3.67	1.228	High	6
Is persuasive when handling questions and/or objections from others.	3.73	1.165	High	4
Knows when to use closed questions to get ‘Yes/No’ answers.	3.96	1.360	High	1
Customer satisfaction	Mean	SD	Level	Order
The front office staff knowledgeable and professional.	3.72	.801	High	6
The front office staff responds to my inquiries in a timely manner.	3.87	1.708	High	3
The front office staff polite and helpful.	3.83	1.148	High	4
Overall, I am satisfied with language skills of the front office staff in hotel.	3.99	1.234	High	1
Overall, I am satisfied with the body language skills of the front office staff in hotel.	3.94	1.196	High	2
Overall, I am satisfied with the cultural skills of the front office staff in hotel.	3.65	.807	High	7
Overall, I am satisfied with the handling skills of the front office staff in hotel.	3.60	.927	High	8
overall, I am satisfied with the communication skills of front office staff in hotel	3.76	.737	High	5

Table 6. Result for the study model (b)

Variable	**r**	**R^2**	**f**	**Sig (f)**	**β**	**t**	**Sig (t)**
Language skills	0.811	0.658	113.718	0.000a	0.201	1.991	0.041
Body language skills					0.279	2.410	0.000
Cultural skills					0.256	2.341	0.020
Handling skills					0.232	2.133	0.030

b. Dependent variable: Customer satisfaction

Table 5. Skewness and VIF for the independent variables

Variables	**Tolerance**	**VIF**	**Skewness**
Language skills	0.425	2.353	0.647
Body language skills	0.417	2.400	0.902
Cultural skills	0.495	2.022	1.089
Handling skills	0.339	2.948	1.046

a. Predictors: (Constant), Language skills, Body language skills, Cultural skills, Handling skills

Hypotheses Testing Results

The current research is mainly seeking to investigate the impact of communication skills of front office in terms of Cultural skills, Handling skills, Body language skills, and Language skills towards customer satisfaction in Aqaba city in Jordan. Consequently, in order to test the hypotheses developed for this study, multiple regression technique was used.

Further, the level of significance (α-level) was chosen to be 0.05 and the probability value (p-value) obtained from the statistical hypotheses test is considered to be the decision rule for rejecting the null hypotheses (Creswell, 2009). If the p-value is less than or equal to α- level, the null hypothesis will be rejected and the alternative hypothesis will be supported. However, if the p-value is greater than the α-level, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected and the alternative hypothesis will not be supported. In addition, normality of the independent variables and the absence of multi co-linearity problem (a case of multiple regression in which the independent variables are themselves highly correlated) were checked. According to Pallant (2005), most of the values should be inside the adequate ranges for normality (i.e. -1.0 to +1.0). For this purpose, skewness and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) were investigated; table (5) includes the results. As can be noticed from table (5), the skewness values were within the normal values (-1.0 to +1.0) suggesting that the data of the independent variables is normal. The VIF values were less than the critical value (10) which is most common among the most studies, suggesting no multi co-linearity problem among the independent variables. However, the results of testing the four hypotheses on the impact of resident support towards sustainable tourism development are demonstrated in Table (6). Refer to Table (6) the multiple correlation coefficient R = 0.811 indicates that there is a positive correlation between the independent variables (Cultural skills, Handling skills, Body language skills, and Language skills) and customer satisfaction. The R2 indicated the generalizability of the model. It allows us to generalize the results taken from the respondents to the whole population. In this case it equals 0.658.

The results showed that F-ratio for these data is equal to 113.718, which is statistically significant at $p<0.05$. Therefore, we conclude that there is a statistically significant impact of the independent variables on customers' satisfaction.The β indicates the individual contribution of each predictor (independent variable) to the model, if other predictors are held constant. Table (6) shows the standardized coefficients for each independent variable. The value of β for Body language skills, Cultural skills, Handling skills, and Language skills are 0.279, 0.256, 0.232, and 0.201 respectively, which are positive and have high values. The level of effect of these variables depends on the β value, the higher β value the higher effect on dependent variable. We can infer from the values of beta that the variable that has the highest contribution in the model is Body language skills.

CONCLUSION

In light of the results of the study, answers questions and test hypotheses have been reached following results. The study results showed that the hypotheses that have been accepted by the researchers were accepted by reference to Table (6). Thus, H1, H2, H3, and H4 were accepted.This research will help hotel management, particularly the front desk staff. This research will improve front office employee communication skills to better fulfill client requirements and satisfaction. The hotel owner would be pleased with the outcome if it was high. If the outcome was poor, the hotel owner would enhance the service and organize training. the present study's approach. There is also a data collection tool along with a research population and sample. This study's components is based on prior literature, both theoretical and empirical. This study utilized factors often used in tourist development research. When itcomes to the R value, which is the amount of connection between the variables, it shows that there is a strong link between customer satisfaction and the independent variables (cultural skills, handling skills, body language skills, and language skills). The R2 pointed to the model's generalize ability. This software gives us the ability to extrapolate findings to the whole population. It equals 0.658. This data revealed that the F-ratio was equal to 113.718, which is statistically significant at the p 0.05 level. As such, we can state with confidence that there is a statistical correlation between consumers' happiness and the independent variables.

When other predictor variables are kept constant, the represents the effect that each independent variable has on the model. The standardized coefficients of each independent variable are shown in table (6). For the Body Language, Cultural, Handling, and Language abilities, the values of are 0.279, 0.256, 0.232, and 0.201 correspondingly, and these values are both positive and have high values. These factors impact the dependent variable to different degrees depending on the value. Based on the results of the beta test, it is possible to deduce that the variable with the greatest influence on the model is body language abilities. It is commonly known that other people can determine if we are comfortable with them only by watching their body language, tone of voice, and symbols, not just by listening to their words.Personal reasons and motives may greatly influence someone's reaction to the same message. Therefore, two individuals who have lived their lives in very different settings have reacted to the same piece of information. An enthusiastic staff member who has a need for rapid development in the company. It is generally believed that when the president smiles, he is a beloved person, and he will get a reward. Someone who is lacking in progress and has a pessimistic outlook may hear the same comment from the director and interpret it as something critical and unrelated to the subject. For successful hotel administration, institutions need to know how to accomplish their goals and have a solid communication strategy in place. Additionally, while dealing with parties involved directly and indirectly, that affects the institution's ability to achieve its objectives, the administrative body had to have knowledge of the various forms of effective communication to use for each situation and their clients (Qandah et al., 2020). Communication is important to successful decision-making since it is the network through which information is gathered. The means by which information regarding choices is disseminated is also necessary for the execution of decisions, and administrative organizations, whether via written or oral communications, use a combination of methods to communicate information. An official with a goal-oriented orientation toward accomplishing one of the major goals of the organization and helping guarantee its success. It is designed to help with all levels of performance and provide the highest quality standards, which result in choices and other corporate objectives being implemented.

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THE ROLE OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT ON THE RELATIONSHIP OF LEARNING ORGANISATIONS AND EMPLOYEES' BEHAVIOR IN THAILAND'S HOTEL INDUSTRIES CRISIS

Sarun WIDTAYAKORNBUNDIT*
Kasetsart University, School of Integrated Science, Bangkok, Thailand, e-mail: Lts.sarial@gmail.com

Tanapoom ATIVETIN
Srinakharinwirot University, Center of Under Graduate Programs, Bangkok, Thailand, e-mail: tanapoom@swu.ac.th

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to find solutions to the epidemic crisis by using knowledge management (KM) and learning organization (LO) to assess their work engagement and organizational commitment in employees. The sample group in this study is 392 management personnel in the hotel industry in Bangkok, Thailand. The study uses the quantitative research methodology and the structural equation model analysis. The results of the study revealed that KM has a direct influence on the intermediate variable, namely, LO, and an indirect effect on LO with a correlation to work engagement and organisational commitment ($p < 0.05$). The study represented almost variables has impact to each other. Human resource development could take into account the context and adapt the organization to be flexible and enthusiastic about learning amid changing circumstances, as well as understanding the condition of personnel in the organsation.

Key words: knowledge management, learning organisation, organisation commitment, work engagement, hotel management

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INTRODUCTION

The service industry is the main economic factor that drives the country. Hotel business is considered to be one of the main revenues of the tourism industry as it is the center of service for foreign tourists. In 2019, the revenue generated from the hotel industry amounted to more than 200 billion baht (the data retrieve from the Ministry of Tourism and Sports in Thailand: www.mots.go.th, within 2020 tourism statistic). However, in 2020, the hotel business value has declined due to the epidemic crisis, causing foreign tourists to be unable to travel to Thailand. The issuance of an epidemic prevention policy affects tourists in Thailand and abroad. The hotel management has changed in order to adapt to the current situation, taking into account the survival of the business, so there must be a new approach for human resource management in the service industry. Particularly, this involves working from home and applying technology at work, which is a trend of management that is expected in the years ahead. This study emphasizes the importance of knowledge management for employees in the epidemic situation, and explores the behavior resulting from the changing working style.

This study uses human resource development approaches as independent variables for studying how to transfer or generate new knowledge, being regarded as specific approaches for current knowledge management. During the crisis, the organization needs new knowledge and internal adaptation, and applies external knowledge to cope with change, including effective use of knowledge (Selivanovskikh et al., 2020). Knowledge management still generate organization performance by transfers and sharing knowledge among employees (Lai et al., 2022). This is linked to the science of organisation management that members of the organisation have to report arising problems and involve in dealing such problems.

It is the principle of the learning organisation that enables its members to access learning at all levels and to engage in learning as required by the organisation (Sinclair, 2017). The learning organisation is often influenced by knowledge management because the process of creating knowledge or applying knowledge is the source of formulating the policy or practice of managing the learning organisation (Chawla and Joshi, 2011). The outcome applied in this research is organisation commitment and work engagement. Organisational commitment is a sense of a dedication to the organisation when the organisation supports its employees properly (Rawashdeh and Tamimi, 2020).

The work engagement is the result of work experience of employees whose perception is an outcome of the organization's job design or the appropriate assignment (Mostafa, 2019). The aforementioned behaviour is an indicator of the impact of management science on the attitudes towards the defined work and organization. External changes would affect the system of the organisation. Therefore, the research aims to find how to survive in a crisis along with developing personnel in the hotel industry. The sample consisted of 392 hotel executives or managers in Thailand who apply organisation knowledge management to the process of adjustment among staff under their supervision in the epidemic crisis. The intermediate variable is the learning organisation that affects organisational commitment and work engagement. The objective of this study is to find suitable models for crisis management in the hotel industry in Bangkok, and to further expand the results to other key service industries in order to justify the use of the learning management model.

* Corresponding author

LITERATURE REVIEW

Knowledge Management

Knowledge management is a modern concept that enhances the interaction between technology and human so as to raise awareness necessary for self-knowledge management and to present knowledge to general public (Tergan et al., 2006), becoming a new perspective of learning and innovation by integrating technology with knowledge transmission into an absorptive capacity (Yoo et al., 2016). Knowledge management in the organisation must generate and transfer knowledge to members. The knowledge management concept can create new knowledge and work experience through employee behaviour (Martínez-Martínez et al., 2022). This involves the process of bringing information into the knowledge management system so as to enable learners to access learning resources as much as possible (Klerkx et al., 2011; Li and Herd, 2017). Knowledge management is a strategy that is a multidisciplinary integration, or contextually adapted to provide relevant personnel with the necessary information and to build on the effectiveness gained from organisational learning (Ammirato et al., 2021). It can be said that knowledge management is a guideline for managing information to support human capital to utilize the organisation's resources to the fullest potential. To ensure its consistence with a business context requires taking into account the resource perspective theory which addresses the economic management of the organisation in accessing resources to gain a competitive advantage (Helfat and Peteraf, 2003). Knowledge management in the business sector is in a form of network learning in which knowledge acquisition is associated with knowledge exploitation to create an advantage for development, or create innovations for the organization's business (Ngwenya and Hagmann, 2011). Particularly, when economic values change dynamically, knowledge is an important asset, regardless of being information used in the network, knowledge sharing, or the relationship between both external and internal networks (Sulaiman et al., 2011). Knowledge management is therefore required to disseminate the knowledge available in both people and system to general public in a structured manner so that people in the network can apply their resources to the organization's context to their full capacity (Irma, 2001). Knowledge management seems to be the immune system against the effects of changes that knowledge within the organisational network works in line with supply chain management, with an adaptive pattern of knowledge management that allows knowledge flow and knowledge sharing between departments, leading to learning in a network and rightly judging the acquired knowledge (Kalogeraki et al., 2018). The knowledge management purpose is considered the business environment context to find the crucial role that encourage organization for sustainable competitive advantage

Learning Organisation

The organisational learning is like learning behaviours of people who acquire knowledge to drive organisational growth. Thus, the learning organisation provides a chance for personnel to continuously learn together (Senge, 2006) and coordinate to develop work at all levels of the unit of analysis (Sun, 2003). This will lead to the prosperity of the organisation through the learning process that is the essence of the evolution of human capital to drive the organisation towards success (Lau et al., 2017). This concept is a management principle that takes into account the organisational approach to adapt to the changing environment by developing the capability of personnel in the organisation in a sustainable manner. This adapts to learning culture in the organisation which might influence to the organisational behaviour and performance (Tan and Olaore, 2022). However, learning has to be reinforced. The use of the learning process is often reinforced by the origin of knowledge. To make it practical, it must be controlled and stabilized. Thus, the implementation of a learning organisation should emphasise knowledge management in all aspects, including the transformation of learning to become progressive and practical all the time (Chang et al., 2017). The study of Jung (2016) adopted the said concept to stabilise the organisational learning of different cultures in the organisation, and adapt the communication model from internally accumulated information to the unique organisational structure and the values that drive distinguished organisations so as to be applied by the management of the organisation for sustainable efficiency and effectiveness. Guidelines for the interaction of people within the organisation are therefore the exchange of knowledge for mutually developing the organisation. This is consistent with the study of Sidani and Reese (2020) which stated that the arrangement or meeting held to find a solution to the problem contributes to the psychological safety. In this regard, problems can be solved by knowledge workers who contribute to smooth operations. It could be said that the learning organisation responds positively to its members through the exchange of information, especially the knowledge essential for work. The identity of the acquired knowledge must be considered and classified to make it suitable for the members in the particular group.

Organisational Commitment

Organisational commitment (OC) is referred to as a model that creates values among people in the organisation, places an emphasis on organisational goals, organisational values, including the creation of corporate benefits (Buchanan, 1974). Employee engagement is an important factor enabling productivity growth which is an indicator of performance in an organization. This is consistent with Ennis et al. (2018) describing the effects of organizational commitment that employees with emotional ties have a high demand to be a part of the organization because of their feelings without being forced by others. The forms of engagement describe the commitment to the organisation, depending on the individual characteristics making each individual feel satisfied with being a member of the organization, so the forms of engagement vary according to the management style of the organisation or various situations in the organisation. Therefore, adapting to changes in mission makes the engagement even more specific (Fayda-Kinik, 2022). The definition of organisational commitment differs from person to person, and depends on the linkage between the personal identity and proactive behaviour of the organisation in the management of all work environments. The functioning of organisational commitment is considered a psychological model of the relationship between the characteristics of employees and the organisation, and whether employees would be a part of the organisation. OC has therefore become the reason for other sequential behaviours, such as satisfaction, resignation, or loyalty, and so on. Creating an emotional attachment to the organisation is a challenge in management, for instance, making investments in employees, promoting goals and values to the organisation at the same time, including the unity between people and organisations (Huynh and Hua, 2020). Organising an environment or practice that is appropriate for people in the organisation will help create the OC, especially the human resource management approach, ranging from selecting the right man for the right job, boosting knowledge of people in the organisation, to implementing labor relations guidelines, all of which are complementary functions that help ensure work satisfaction of people in the organisation. This is the fundamental emotion in the OC that complements other emotional relationships (Guzeller and Celiker, 2020; Widtayakornbundit and Phinaitrup, 2021). The operations of the OC can be both emotionally responsive to organisational performance and can be an indicator of performance.

Work Engagement

Work engagement (WE) differs from employee engagement in its emphasis on the willingness to achieve the job, while employee engagement often focuses on organisational membership and satisfaction. The demand to achieve the job will provide additional incentives to ensure that the job meet the requirements (Håvold et al., 2020). It is a good attitude at work that will enable employees to continue working in the organisation through individual experiences, namely, vigour, dedication, and absorbing (Wirawan et al., 2020). Moreover, the impact of work engagement does not only affect the internal systems of the organisation, but also affects the productivity delivered to customers as a result of perceiving what customers want and how to achieve outcomes of the job (Yoo et al., 2020).

The definition of work engagement often focuses on the experience while working as perceived by employees. A positive attitude should result in good behaviour through work engagement. This concept responds to the idea of managing people that need to connect the organisational working systems together in order to determine the direction in which employees feel they can work without the internal obstacles (Kulkarni et al., 2022).

A single factor, such as work engagement, is often ineffective. Rationality is the explanation for the influence of the outcome of work engagement. For example, a study of Douglas and Roberts (2020) which examines the effects of age on work engagement reported that work engagement is high among older people because they have gained experiences from work, and the investment of the organisation in these human capitals are inputs that enhance individual motivation and satisfaction, or due to the challenging work. The use of knowledge or empowerment in making a decision encourages employees to have self-esteem, and perform behaviors of work engagement (Rai and Maheshwari, 2020). These studies show that work engagement is more often a linkage between independent and dependent variables because it helps raise understanding about the context of the research study. The independent variables applied in the study mostly make employees feel positive with themselves (Garg and Singh, 2020). The work engagement is a process, working in the form of the behavioural expansion as required for economic or internal employee outcomes (Guo and Hou, 2022).

THORETICAL FRAMWORK

KM is an important factor in behavioural design because it is responsible for human resource management in all organisations. Because the creation of knowledge or the accumulation of knowledge is applied by the organisation as a tool to measure the development of people in the organisation - this is to complement the work of a learning organisation that integrates between people, knowledge, and technology together (Yee et al., 2019), relationships are built by using knowledge that produces an LO as a situation-based integration that motivates employees. It is similar to a system that supports the integration of people with the necessary new knowledge. Another perspective of the relationship is the focus of the vision and mission by having organizational leaders present a strategy of organisational learning equipped with the knowledge necessary for the decision-making process (Chawla and Joshi, 2011). Knowledge transfer between people from different organizations can adapt and respond quickly to changing environment. This structural relationship raises the researcher's awareness of learning in the crisis when working in a learning organization evolves from an organisational context.

KM and LO's behavioural approaches tend to focus on improving employee retention because investments in employees usually have conditions about the different use of valuable resources. Learning arrangement for employees would expect long-term results. The study of Jha et al. (2019) describes the perception of the investment in human development by the organisation for employees, knowledge and skill enhancement through psychological agreement for logical outcomes and that is included in the KM process. Since the transfer of knowledge between people, groups and organisations brings about coordination and cooperation all the time, the use of KM (maturity) that adapts the requirements of the organisation to suit the development of individual knowledge will establish a sense of institution, and affect organizational ties as referred to the fact that if the organisation achieves its goals, an individual is deemed to achieve success as well (Marques et al., 2019). The study of the influence of employees on their assignment and the organisation must be linked to human resource development practices. The LO is the creation of continuous learning. Creating a supportive learning environment would increase the potential of work both on and off duty (Eldor, 2017). This is in line with the LO culture that drives personnel competencies in accordance with the organisational development (OD) by managing the appropriate environment to stimulate knowledge along with enhancing organisational competence (Joo et al., 2019), followed by the work improvement and emotional attachment to the organisation based on attitude awareness. Therefore, this type of relationship is an ongoing relationship in which LO is the mediator between human resource development practices and behaviours that arise from employee emotions towards work and the organisation.

The hypotheses based on the research framework and study paradigm can be identified from the Figure 1 as follows:

H1: Knowledge management of the organisation influences the creation of a learning organisation for the personnel in the organisation.

H2: Knowledge management of the organisation influences organisational commitment.
H3: Knowledge management of the organisation influences changing work engagement.
H4: Learning organisation of the organisation influences organizational commitment.
H5: Learning organisation of the organisation influences changing work engagement.

Table 1. Assessment of discriminant validity (Fornell-Larker criterion)

Variable	CR	AVE	$\sqrt{AVE}$	KM	LO	WE	OC
KM	0.890	0.539	0.734	1			
LO	0.909	0.589	0.767	0.209	1		
WE	0.837	0.796	0.776	0.172	0.415	1	
OC	0.870	0.734	0.634	0.169	0.583	0.585	1

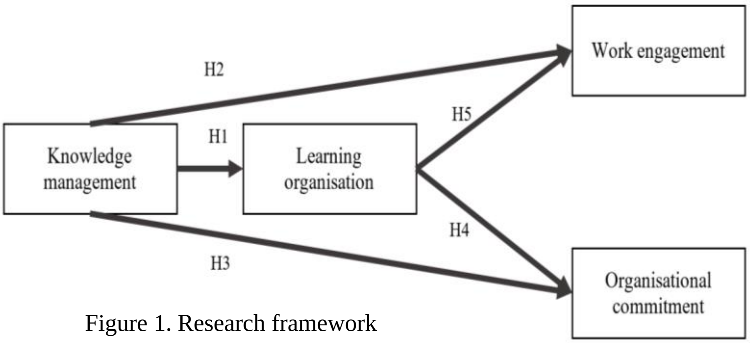

Figure 1. Research framework

METHODOLOGY

Research design – This research utilizes a survey method to determine the relationship between the independent variable, i.e., knowledge management, the intermediate variable, i.e., learning organisation, comprising 7 dimensions: continuous learning, inquiry and dialogue, team learning, embedded system, empowerment, system connection, and strategic leadership, and the dependent variables, i.e., organisational commitment, and work engagement. The unit of analysis in this study is service workers in the hotel industry at the management level, managers, or entrepreneurs who have previously operated the business in normal conditions for more than 1 year and the hotel business has remained in service. This research uses the survey method at a particular time in the form of a cross-section data. The hypothesis testing is based on the scores of a questionnaire with a Likert scale. Then, the SEM statistical analysis is conducted to analyze the CFA to determine the factor loading values and adjust the studied variables. Afterwards, the multiple regression analysis and path analysis is conducted to find correlation between variables, while summarizing the results from the statistical analysis.

Population - The population used in this study are 392 entrepreneurs, executives, or managers in the hotel industry in Bangkok. The selection is based on the inclusion criteria as follows: Must have more than 1 year experience in hotel management and must operate the business in normal conditions before the epidemic; have at least a bachelor's degree or a high vocational certificate in hospitality field in order to comply with the criteria of the Thai Hotels Association. Then, the probability sampling is employed by using purposive sampling and convenient sampling to collect data. Such data collection has a minimum sample limit based on the number of variables used in SEM analysis, consisting of 4 latent variables. The number of samples included in the study is 40-80. However, when using the maximum likelihood method, the minimum of the research sample must not be less than 200 for the SEM analysis purpose.

Instrument - The questionnaire is the primary tool for collecting this research data. The possible variables are identified by the questionnaire type, so the operational variables derived from the survey are taken into consideration. Then, the validity and reliability testing are conducted. The questionnaire is prepared in the Likert scale format to measure opinions and attitudes towards research variables, comprising 5 levels as follows: (1) strongly disagree - (5) strongly agree. Measurements in each variable are taken from the review of relevant literature and theories, translated into Thai questionnaires, and applied to the context in Thailand. The measurements can be divided as follows: The measurement from the independent variable, i.e., KM, is applied from the questionnaire on KM acquisition process of Gold et al. (2001), and 7 items are applied after the adjustment. The intermediate group, i.e., LO, is developed from DLOQ (Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaires) of Song et al. (2009) containing 21 items, and the dependent variable, i.e., organizational commitment, is adapted from the commitment scale (Angle and Perry, 1981) containing 10 items, including work engagement which is developed from Utrecht work engagement scale (Vallières et al., 2017) totaling 9 items. The number of items in the questionnaire is derived from the reliability test and the factor loading analysis using the CFA method.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the average variance extracted (AVE) value may exceed 0.5. If AVE value is yield below 0.5, The composite reliability (CR) for the each construct must greater than 0.6 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Nunnally, 1967). This values are derived from the CFA analysis, with the values of each variable being not less than 0.5 based on the criteria of (Hair et al., 2010). As for the construct validity from the multitrait-multimethod analysis is for verify convergent validity. The assessment of the square root of the AVE testing, an acceptable level required to be higher than the correlation value, in order to imply that the latent variable had suitable discriminant validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) (Table 1)

The results of the structural equation analysis can be reported as follows: CMIN/DF is 2.150; p-value is 0.000; GFI is 0.960; CFI is 0.980; AGFI is 0.933 and RMSEA is 0.054. The results meet the required criteria as follows: Chi-square/df value is not more than 5.00; GFI, CFI, and AGFI is greater than or equal to 0.90; RMSEA value is less than 0.08; and HOELTER .05 value is 249 > 200. This indicates that the sample size is suitable. Therefore, it can be concluded that the structural equations using the independent variable of KM with the intermediate variable of LO are harmonized with the empirical data. Thus, the measurement model fits the theoretical model at an acceptable level. All values meet the criteria. It means that the structural equations of this model have a good fit according to the specified criteria. The estimated value from the square multiple correlation value indicates that KM model affects work engagement at 18% and organisational commitment at 48.2%. It can be explained that this model can predict the effect on organisational commitment which has more influence than work engagement. Nonetheless, the path coefficient of KM towards work engagement is 0.087 with a p-value of 0.087, and the path coefficient of KM towards organizational commitment is 0.011 with a p-value of 0.750, which shows a significance level of higher than 0.05. The findings revealed that there is no causal significance between KM and work engagement. The table showing the path coefficient describes that there are three levels of significance (p = *.05, **.01, ***.001). In case of achieving a significance level, such as LO, the standardized regression weight for organisational commitment is greater than work engagement (0.413>0.397). All of these are shown in the Table 2.

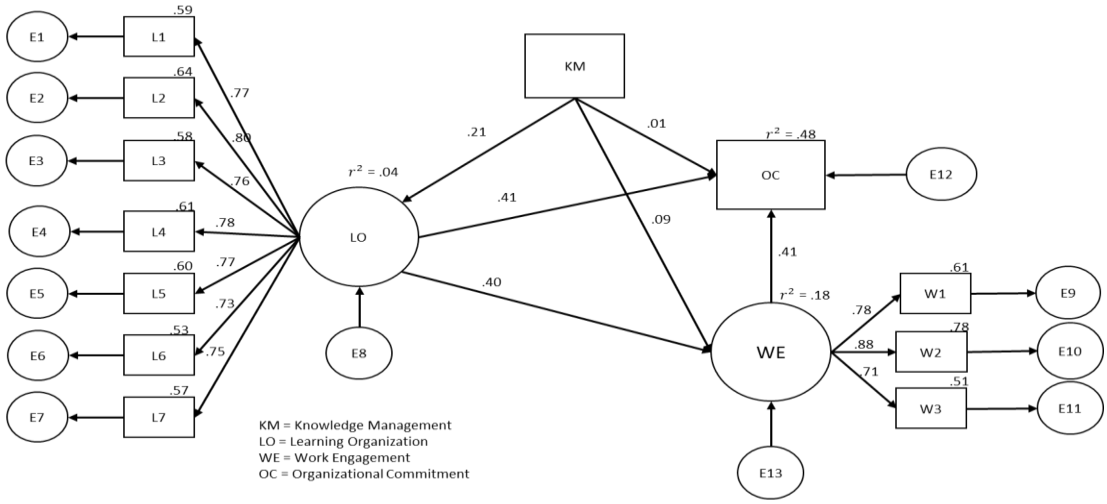

Figure 2. Model Test Result

Table 2. Explained Variance: Knowledge management model

Variable			standardized regression weight	regression weight			
			Path Coefficient	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P-value
Knowledge management	---- >	Learning organisation	0.209	0.165	0.042	3.909	***
	---- >	Org. commitment	0.013	0.011	0.034	0.314	0.754
	---- >	Work engagement	0.089	0.087	0.051	1.709	0.087
Learning Organisation	---- >	Org. commitment	0.413	0.441	0.055	7.981	***
	---- >	Work engagement	0.397	0.513	0.075	6.822	***
Work engagement	---- >	Org. commitment	0.413	0.369	0.045	8.228	***
Note: * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001							

The results are consistent with the hypotheses: H1, H4, H5 and not consistent with the hypotheses: H2 and H3, while both hypotheses have no relationship between KM of the company and organisational commitment (p < .05) and work engagement (p < .05). However, KM has a direct influence on LO which achieves a significance level.

As a result, it is acceptable that the direct influence arising in H1 and LO continues to affect H4 and H5, demonstrating the direct effect of LO on organisational commitment and work engagement which achieves a significance level. This means the consistent with the hypotheses (H4 and H5) encouraged the relationship from KM through LO that influenced to organisational commitment and work engagement.

DISCUSSION

This study found that knowledge management through an intermediate variable, i.e., the learning organisation, has an effect on employee behavior, including both work engagement and organizational commitment. The analysis of structural equations is conducted to examine whether the used model is appropriate with the current context.

As a consequence, the model has a very good fitness index. If there is an intermediate variable, i.e., a learning organization, implementing knowledge management that is passed on to employees, it will be a reinforcement of behavior that enables employees to adapt their work experience to the epidemic crisis. Thus, management is a form of integrating personnel and organizations to advance simultaneously. KM is like a resource that will support LO to ensure full work efficiency (Chawla and Lenka, 2015; Sahibzada et al., 2022). As for working with the KM process during the crisis, the knowledge can be acquired by interacting through the information system. Therefore, the KM model has to be done through LO which reinforces teamwork and executes strategies quickly, using the human resources approach and technological structure (Caputo et al., 2019). When facing the economic recession in the crisis and the rising unemployment rate, utilizing existing knowledge workers is an essential way to reduce costs of the company. It is better to retain employees and enable them to adapt to their existing jobs rather than recruiting new ones in the current situation.

This is because despite a crisis, there are still great challenges of globalisation, and the organisation needs survival and sustainability. To encourage existing workers to develop based on experience should be less vulnerable than recruiting new personnel without knowledge on the working system. To support continuous learning helps enhance work engagement among personnel and add value to the organization (Malik and Garg, 2017). To make the learning organisation possible requires having commitment and coming up with an idea that the organizational success is also their success. In a crisis, the courageous to express an opinion to solve a problem is to contribute to the organisation (Delić et al., 2017). This study proves the correlation of human capital management, using limited space to share knowledge and transfer experiences in solving problems to one another for the survival of organizations in a crisis. This clearly demonstrates the concept of KM in LO through the behavioural expression of organisational members.

CONCLUSION

The KM and LO foundations are difficult in critical situations if lacking members' behaviour. If a good organization has previously built the foundation for their members, the development of human capital will be able to adapt to changes. Building a learning culture will strengthen the development of necessary competencies. In addition, the working environment management of the organization will help create a unity. All of these things are interdependent and serve as an immune system for the organisation to overcome the current crisis.

The mechanism of the organization is driven by economic principles. It is undeniable that human capital plays a vital role in working and giving services both directly and indirectly. The knowledge provided by the organisation creates a cycle of experience that human capital takes and return knowledge to the organisation through their real experience. Taking a deep consideration, working is a social exchange that results from interactions with organizations and outside entities. The behavior of employees is something to be learned by the organisation, as well as creating blueprints to build the stability of the working system for the organisation.

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GASTRONOMIC HERITAGE: A CONTRIBUTOR TO SUSTAINABLE LOCAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Baiba RIVZA
Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies, Institute of Economics and Regional Development, Jelgava, Latvia, e-mail: baiba.rivza@llu.lv

Diana FORIS
Transilvania University of Brasov, Faculty of Food and Tourism, Brasov, Romania, e-mail: diana.foris@unitbv.ro

Tiberiu FORIS
Transilvania University of Brasov, Faculty of Economic Sciences and Business Administration, Brasov, Romania, e-mail: tiberiu.foris@unitbv.ro

Donatella PRIVITERA*
University of Catania, Department of Educational Sciences, Catania, Italy, e-mail: donatella.privitera@unict.it

Evija ULJANOVA
Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies, Institute of Economics and Regional Development, Jelgava, Latvia, e-mail: evija.uljanova@inbox.lv

Peteris RIVZA
Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies, Department of Computer Systems, Jelgava, Latvia, e-mail: peteris.rivza@llu.lv

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Abstract: Gastronomic heritage is undergoing significant developments, creating a need for competitive strategies to develop food tourism in certain regions. The research explores food culture and tourism in three case studies of Latvia, Romania, and Italy. The article focuses on the information about gastronomic heritage that food lovers request, and the critical components required at a destination for food tourism to flourish. A survey of people involved in gastronomic tourism (151 in Romania, 112 in Italy, 126 in Latvia) using a simple random sample. Based primarily on respondent observations, descriptive and qualitative analysis and nonparametric method are used to explain the phenomenon. SPSS software (26 version) was used to analyze the statistical data. The findings show that people need of information and a new kind of interaction between tourist/consumers and home producers that they can trust. Many of the information are hidden and there is a lack of voice about the gastronomic heritage specially on home producers. The promotion of home producers could be successful if emphasis is placed on attracting tourists and on their visits to home producers, as well as on attracting tourists from abroad. In different countries does not actively promote the opportunity to experience at home producers. A digital food resource and the role of home-organized markets is encouraged in destinations that is promoted to focus the lens on the gastronomic heritage and all its experiences.

Key words: food tourism, sustainability, food culture, Italy, Latvia, Romania

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INTRODUCTION

Rural areas play a critical role in economic and social cohesion, in the resilience of regions and in the contribution of countless services in various local ecosystems, including food production, to strengthen them, socio-economic prosperity, the capacity for innovation, to achieve a sustainable and inclusive welfare economy. Food and farming have an important role to play in the future of the rural economy, inachieving national net zero targets, and in improving a range of other environmental outcomes. The types of policies promoted in the countries conceive agro-ecological practices as an intangible collective heritage, with a significant potential for transformation towards local sustainability, in line with the objectives of the European Green and Social Deal, the Next Generation EU recovery package and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (WTO, 2017). Specially, in line with SDG 2 aimed to "end hunger, achieve food security and nutrition, promote sustainable agriculture", which includes the fact that the sustainability of tourism involves the gastronomic heritage and local products (Kyriakaki and Kleinaki, 2022). Gastronomy is an essential component of cultural heritage for tourists (Martín et al., 2020) and a fundamental pillar for tourists to discover the cultural potential of the places that they visit (Medina-Viruel et al., 2019); it is a key of local development that includes tradition and modernity, as well as authenticity, pervasiveness and sustainable tourism development (Vodenska, 2020). Ultimately, building sustainable and resilient urban food systems in the face of ecosystem changes, ethics, liability, green orientation, sustainability are some of the new models that people seek, and

* Corresponding author

consider by also subjecting their food choices to continuous reflection within the existing food system at multiple scales. In fact, for many consumers and also tourists, in defining the behavioural patterns that come from information-awareness aspects, from the relationship between food and health, respectively healthy eating, the cultural aspect is fundamental (Nicolosi et al., 2019). In addition, many studies show the temporal evolution of the literature on gastronomic heritage in parallel with UNESCO's actions on cultural heritage (Bessière, 2013; Okumus et al., 2018). However, survey in this area has grown substantially. Okumus (2021) finds that key research topics in food tourism address: unique food experiences and how they are offered, authentic food experiences, destination marketing by focusing on food tourism and sustainability; considers that future research studies should follow a multidisciplinary approach and that both qualitative and quantitative research methods should be used. Recently scholars have found a correlation between the tendency to visit leisure destinations and the discovery of local food experiences or cultural events (Klosse, 2021). That has emerged as a means of improving the image of food systems, adding knowing to gastronomy heritage and giving consumers/tourists renewed pride in their city.

Actually, the diversity of services and products offered and the preferences of tourists, continuous changes and new approaches to tourism destinations are needed (Foris et al., 2020). In fact, the expansion of research could be influenced by a systematic analysis of tourism and gastronomic cultural heritage. Specially, gastronomic heritage could be the value of culture as a tourism system component, and here tourism is the value of the national economy as a component of the ecosystem.

The manifestations of this interaction and the benefits of each of the actors involved in the interaction are increasingly becoming the aims of research studies. Climate change, the expansion of digitalization and changes in the social and cultural value systems bring a lot of new visions in the ways tourism is organized and managed. Consequently, it could result in an increase in the value of gastronomic heritage in the system of national cultural heritage as such. The research results prepared for publication focus on one of the selected ways of interaction between tourism and gastronomic heritage – the desire of groups of people and some individuals for and practical contacts with home producers to buy their gastronomic cultural heritage products. In fact, further research to gain a deeper understanding of the role these factors play is needed.

The study aims to explore and identify: firstly, the descriptions of gastronomic tourism by representatives of the studied countries (Romania, Italy and Latvia) and, secondly, the similarities and differences in views and actions regarding the value of gastronomic heritage. The authors will attempt to answer the following question: is gastronomic heritage become a resource and component of economic, social, cultural opportunities? How may it be a source of regional and local development?

The three countries were chosen to find out differences in culture since they all represent different parts of Europe and also cultural backgrounds. For this purpose, it is relevant to focus on the manifestations of the values of the gastronomic cultural heritage in geographically distinctive territories in European countries.

A survey of people in these three countries involved in gastronomic tourism, using a sample, enable us to get an insight into the importance given to the gastronomic heritage in each of them. This knowledge may help to develop the gastronomic and food tourism. In addition, to formulate the most effective way to develop gastronomic tourism and home production in order to continue to increase the demand for these values. It is relevant to offer strategic changes to ensure economic and sustainable activity in the local communities.

DIMENSIONS OF FOOD TOURISM, CULTURAL IDENTITY AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT. LITERATURE REVIEW

The establishment of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals highlighted the need for research, policy, and practice on tourism development to incorporate economic, social, and environmental dimensions (Yoopetch and Nimsai, 2019). In this regard, special attention has been paid recently to sustainable tourism where scholars and researches addressed various aspects of this broad topic: aspects regarding cultural heritage (Jeroscenkova et al., 2016; Gica et al., 2021), sustainable tourism development, tourism's contribution to environmental/socio-technical/economic sustainability (Panzer-Krause, 2019; Hall, 2019), as well as the interdependence relationship between tourism and local/regional sustainable development Rinella and Epifani, 2021). The tourism industry as a critical component of the global economy can play an important role in influencing consumers to participate in sustainability through their food consumption choices (Higgins-Desbiolles and Wijesinghe, 2019). The European Parliament states that gastronomy constitutes a part of our identity as well as European cultural heritage and recommended that gastronomy should be included in cultural initiatives and programs (EP, 2014). "Gastronomy is one of the elements incorporated in a new concept of cultural heritage and cultural tourism, driven by growing trends of a well-being lifestyle, authenticity, environmental protection and the need to have a high-quality experience" (Rivza et al., 2017).

Food tourism, or gastronomic tourism, is an emerging phenomenon that has expanded so much so that it has become one of the most dynamic segments of tourism in the world (Peira et al., 2018). Food tourism has been defined as a mix of activities of knowing and visiting food producers or restaurants, of participating to food festivals, for which food tasting and/or experiencing local foods are the primary motivating factor for travel (Hall and Sharples, 2003), and "any tourism experience in which one learns about, appreciates, or consumes branded local culinary resources" (Smith and Honggen, 2008). Gastronomic tourism relates to food and eating experiences of travellers (Marine-Roig et al., 2019). The relationship between food and tourism from the perspective of food as part of a reflection of local culture has been analysed by several authors (Getz and Brown, 2006; López-Guzmán et al., 2018; Ghanem, 2019; Fusté-Forné, 2022). The traditional gastronomy has an important role in preservation of the local traditions and the cultural values. Raji et al. (2020) consider that integration of the relationship between food and tourism destinations has become an important issue in the current food tourism study.

Nowadays individuals are interested in traditional foods, the techniques of preparing the foods and the traditions of consuming them (Kruzmetra et al., 2018). A traditional food product represents an important part of the local culture through education and learning about food preparation; it focuses on showing unique products to tourists or consumers in the territory where they are produced; its development to understand the knowledge on authentic recipes through also workshops and cooking (Vanhonacker et al., 2010), also a vacation in agritourism (Plokhikh et al., 2022).

Local food, usually traditional, is an instrument for tourists looking for authenticity and is often defined as "authentic products that vividly demonstrate the traditional local culture" (Sims, 2019); as "an expression of destination cultural attractions", in the context in which local food highlights stories, traditions, legends, and symbols (Zhang et al., 2019).

Tasting local food is a way for tourists to explore local culture (Viegas and Lins, 2019), giving them clues about what and how locals eat, how they prepare their food, the ingredients used and the taste of local food. Food is part of culture, and people often consume it as part of the touristic experience (Chang et al., 2010). According to Jaeger et al. (2022) perceived (or subjective) wellbeing is regarded as key to understanding consumer and tourist food choices and the development of strategies to promote desirable eating habits. The newer forms of culinary tourism demonstrate the need of collaborating experiences in culinary heritage tourism. Examples include city culinary tours, restaurant tours, wet market tours, and cooking courses, with the approach of providing an engaging voyage, hands-on experience, storytelling, and customization (Chiu and Huang, 2022). Gastronomic trails are a phenomenon in the context of gastronomic tourism and are typically themed around different types of food or beverages (Roy et al., 2019). Also, they are increasingly popular tourist products to help get knowledge of gastronomic heritage and an approach in terms of consumer opinion, for understanding the gastronomic tourist. Food cultures and people's engagement with healthy food production and consumption are key contemporary concerns, with a growing sustainable hospitality and tourism literature (Moskwa et al., 2014).

Authentic lifestyles lead to changes in the tourist food supply chain. In this sense, the small food businesses are catalysts for common good, an aspect that has considerable local tourism influence and impact (Carrigan et al., 2017). The sustainability of gastronomy needs to consider more than simply protection or conservation, and it needs to focus more widely than the food producer (Richards, 2020). The diversity of food, food culture, food traditions, and nutritional knowledge has influenced the cultural traditions, architectural and landscape heritage in Europe (Elss et al., 2020).

Considering the actual model of the agri-food systems, based on agroecology and food sovereignty, as cultural heritage to support sustainable local development and food cultures (Richards, 2012; Privitera et al., 2020), a wide range of agro-ecological practises allow collective identities to emerge around characteristics of rural space, strengthening local life, focusing on the coevolution of the society-ecosystem of local identity (Scarpato, 2002).

Travellers' gastronomic experiences have multiple implications and hold a dynamic feature that justifies scientists' attention. Regarding the importance of the role of local food in tourism, Kim and Eves (2012) developed a measurement scale for tourist motivation to taste local food and identified five underlying motivational dimensions of local food consumption: cultural experience; interpersonal relationship; excitement; sensory appeal; and health concern. Ellis et al. (2018) consider that food tourism or gastronomy and tourism has emerged as a major theme for recent tourism research, and conclude that the literature on food tourism is dominated by five themes: motivation, culture, authenticity, management and marketing, and destination orientation. To better appreciate the local culture, tourists choose to eat ethnic food (Ting et al., 2019) or street food as a local food. Considering that gastronomic tourism is linked to the concepts of local, rural, tradition and history, it is important to understand whether for tourists, exploring regions where they can visit local food producers and experience the local traditional cuisine is interesting, and what their motivations are for such experiences. Reis (2020) analyzed the scientific production regarding issues which refer to local foods as vectors of the tourist experience, found that local cuisine represents and transmits local culture, providing memorable experiences for tourists. Gastronomic heritage is recognized as a relevant component worldwide for the number of benefits it brings to a destination, such as economic development or the promotion of local culture through food or territories (Bolborici et al., 2022).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The survey instrument was to be designed to find out customers' needs and interest in the local food tourism development possibilities. In addition, to understand the importance of gastronomic heritage as well as a resource and component of economic, social, cultural opportunities of regional and local development.

This study is based on a qualitative investigation where the three countries were chosen because to find out differences in culture. Although the three EU Member States have many common features, they are geographically very different: Latvia is located by the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea, Italy - in the southern part of Europe by the Mediterranean, while Romania - in the south-eastern part of Central Europe by the Black Sea. The areas and the populations of the countries are different. At the second phase, a survey of people involved in gastronomic tourism (151 in Romania, 112 in Italy, 126 in Latvia) was conducted to identify the views and analyse the results obtained, while the Eurostat and OECD databases were used to describe the countries. In addition to the choice of Italy, Latvia and Romania have been chosen as a research area because they are destinations that have won the title of the region of gastronomy award, designated as Sibiu (Romania) the European Gastronomy Region for the year 2019, East Lombardy (Italy) in 2017 and Riga Gauja Region (Latvia) in 2017. All of these are tourism areas with relevant potential for gastronomic and food tourism because of their outstanding cuisine-related heritage. All this was confirmed by the International Institute of Gastronomy, Culture, Arts and Tourism (IGCAT) to contribute "to better quality of life by raising awareness about the importance of cultural and food uniqueness; stimulating creativity and gastronomic innovation; improving sustainable tourism standard; highlighting distinctive food cultures and strengthening community well-being" (IGCAT, 2021). The samples were required and identified by two main factors – firstly the survey was done among persons who already are doing local food tourism to see what is motivating them and secondly – among those who may be a potential tourist to find out the factors that could stimulate their wish to visit local food producers.

The survey was conducted through the formulation and administration of a semi-structured questionnaire with free and/or reformulated answers to consumers/tourists available for the interview and intercepted in the three countries. The interviews were carried out in the period between March and October 2020, in particular during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The interviews were conducted "face to face". Based on interviews, observations, policy documents, and related materials, in our fieldwork, we centred the interviews around the following questions: the conditions that influence the behaviour and motivations for purchasing local products; points of interest and places to visit to know local food producers; the motivations for culinary experiences and events; the opportunity to obtain sufficient information about gastronomy products and sustainability; the socio-demographic characteristics of the interviewed subjects (gender, age; level of education, employment, income). Subsequently, consumer responses were processed in relation to purchasing habits and the motivations that guide their choices on gastronomic products.

The number of respondents was selected using a simple random sample. The survey results were analysed and the data processed by applying methods of descriptive statistics (frequencies, central tendency and crosstabs analysis), data visualization methods and a nonparametric method - the Chi-square test, the Cramer's V coefficient, Kendall's Correlation Coefficients -. SPSS software (26 version) and MS Excel 2016 were used to analyse the statistical data (Cohen, 1988).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Tourism diversification

There are two basic ways of visiting and getting to know a country's rural areas: either participation in a group tour, which is usually carried out under the guidance of a guide and according to a plan, or a person develops an individual tour plan, which includes a visit to a home producer. In the three countries, both ways were used for sightseeing and examining the countryside. The difference lied in the choice of a way. In Romania and Latvia, the individual tour was strongly predominant, while in Italy the two ways were almost in balance in terms of preference, which was probably determined by its historical experience. There was also a category of people in the three countries who visited the Rural Traveller website for information to choose a way, which included visits to home producers (Figure 1).

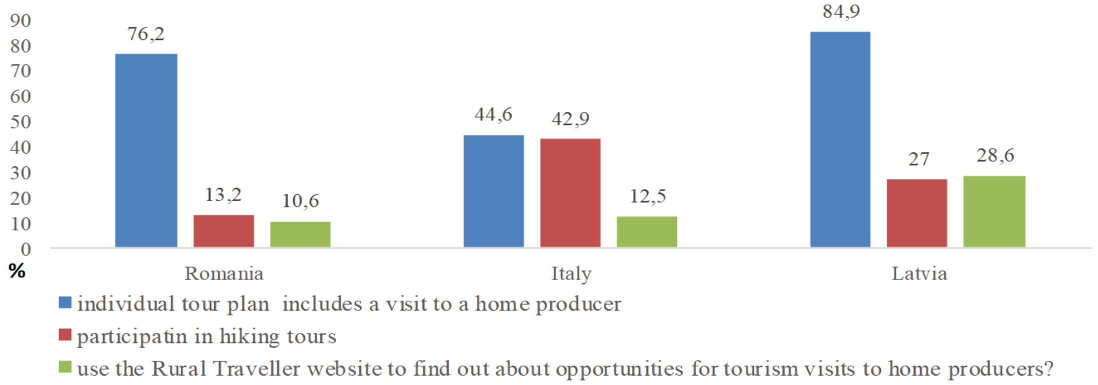

Figure 1. Percentage (%) breakdown of respondents' replies regarding their ways of visiting rural areas (Source: Research results of the authors of the article, 2021)

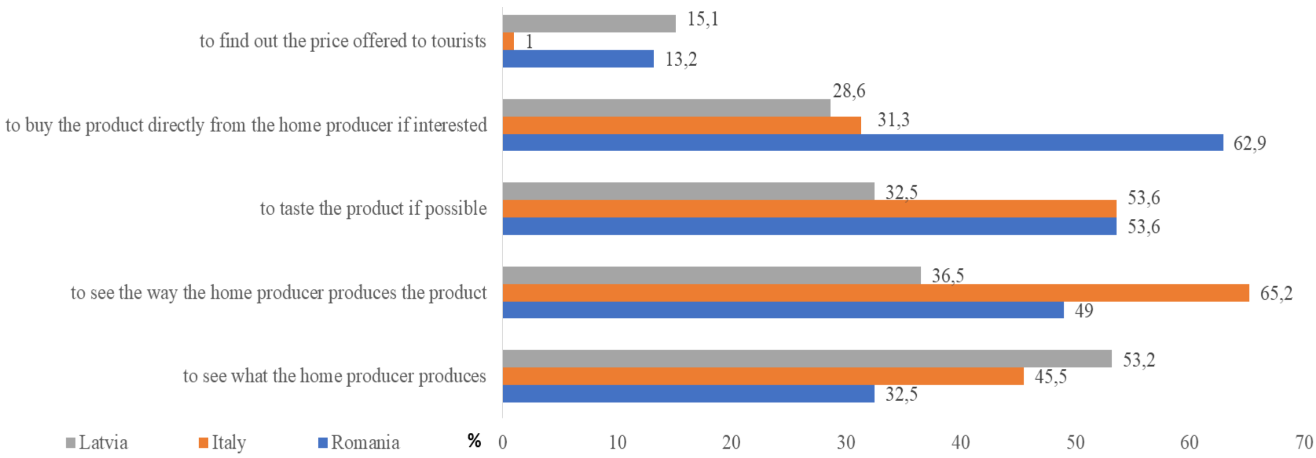

Figure 2. Percentage (%) breakdown of respondents' replies regarding their motivations for visiting home producers during tours (Source: Research results of the authors of the article, 2021)

In all the three countries, the most popular way is to go to the home producer individually, using the information available on the Internet, but the second most popular way is to take part in hiking tours with the home producer. However, there are significant differences between the countries as indicated by the Chi - square test ($\chi2$ =60.53> $\chi20.05$ =9.49, df=4, Sign. = 0.000, n=621). The numerical value of Cramer's V-factor (Cramer's V = 0.22, df = 4, sign, = 0.000 taking into the account the number of degrees of freedom) also indicates a large response of the associations to this question with the country from which the respondents came. There is enough information on home producers, and opportunities for household tours could be found on the Internet. To confirm this, one could refer to some of the rural tourism programs in each of the countries included in the research. Each of the programs, more or less, includes also visits to producers of gastronomic heritage products.

According to the survey, a large segment of the society looks for information about the opportunities for visits to home producers, and this indicates that the share of gastronomic tourism in total tourism could increase. If the demand for this kind of tourism tends to increase, then, logically, a question arises - what motivates people to visit home producers and get acquainted with food products produced in such a way. At the same time, if a home producer is involved in the sales network, of course, s/he needs to know exactly what tourists who visit his/her farm pay the most attention to (Figure 2).

According to the respondents, their key interests in home production as such were to see what the local producer produced, how the local producer produced the product and, possibly, to taste the product as well. If a visitor also wants to buy what s/he saw during the visit, it is important for the tourist to know whether the product is only demonstrated or it is also for sale. If a product is for sale, a question might be asked about the price of the product; however, according to the survey, this was not the most important criterion. Even in Latvia, according to the respondents, it did not exceed 15.0% (Figure 3). Accordingly, the motivation for visiting a home producer and often also buying a product was not financial, but gastronomic. The interest in the home produced itself was equally strong or perhaps even stronger, which can motivate the visitor to buy it. Here, too, there are statistically significant differences between countries, as indicated by the Chi - square test (χ^2 =49.41> $\chi^2_{0.05}$ =9.49, df=4, Sign.=0.000, n=1025). The numerical value of Cramer's V-factor (Cramer's V = 0.16, df = 4, sign, = 0.000 taking into the account the number of degrees of freedom) also indicates a medium response of the associations to this question with the country from which the respondents came.

The respondents were interested in the ingredients that made up the basic part of the product and also in the set of added spices, as the quality of gastronomic heritage was significantly more important among the criteria. The quality of the product was the most important criterion for the respondents in Latvia, and it took first place (53.2%), while for the respondents in Romania it was even more important (84.8%). The respondents in Italy ranked the quality of the product in second place (43.8%), preferring the set of ingredients (56.3%), which was, basically, the same main factor determining the quality of the product (Fig. 5). In general, the difference in views is also indicated by the Chi - square test (χ^2 =63.2> $\chi^2_{0.05}$ =9.49, df=4, Sign.=0.000, n=1253). The numerical value of Cramer's V-factor (Cramer's V = 0.16, df = 4, sign, = 0.000 taking into the account the number of degrees of freedom) also indicates a medium response of the associations to this question with the country from which the respondents came. Examining the correlations between the answers to the questionnaire revealed a high correlation between" What motivates you to visit some home producer if it is offered on a tourism website?" and "What are the most important criteria for choosing homemade products?" (Kendall's Correlation Coefficients >0.90, Table 1).

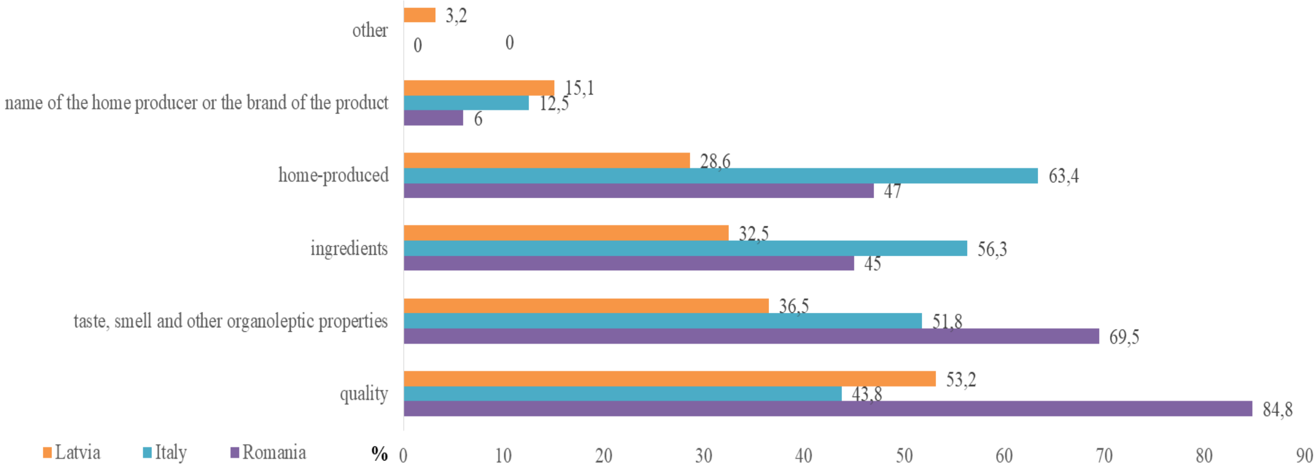

Figure 3. Percentage (%) breakdown of respondents' replies regarding the most important criteria for choosing homemade products (Source: Research results of the authors of the article, 2021)

Table 1. Kendall's Correlation Coefficients (Source: Research results of the authors of the article, 2021)

What motivates you to visit some home producer if it is offered on a tourism website	What are the most important criteria for choosing homemade products?				
	Quality	Taste, smell and other organoleptic properties	Ingre-dients	Home-produced	Name of the home producer or the brand of the product
to see what the home producer produces	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.82	0.96
Sig.(2 tailed)	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.22	0.00
to see the way the homeproducer produces the product	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.82	0.33
Sig.(2 tailed)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.22	0.60
to taste the product if possible	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.82	0.33
Sig.(2 tailed)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.22	0.60
to buy the product directly from the homeproducer if interested	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.82	0.33
Sig.(2 tailed)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.22	0.60
to find out the price offered to tourists	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.96	-0.33
Sig.(2 tailed)	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.00	0.60

Based on the interaction between tourism and gastronomic heritage, visiting a home producer expands the tourist's knowledge about home production as such. If the tourist likes a product, s/he also increases the knowledge about the way the product is produced and an opportunity to buy it via an e-commerce site. The home producer, however, promotes the product as a high-quality product on the market and might increase sales via the e-commerce site, but if not, the home producer at least contributes to the demand for the product at home producers' markets. If the home producer hears a critical remark about the product, s/he can consider improving the composition of the product, which means also an improvement in the quality of the product. As the number of tourists interested in visiting home producers and buying their products increases, and at the same time the home producers have an opportunity to promote their products and obtain information that can help them to improve the quality of their products and increase sales of their products, the interaction between this kind of tourism and gastronomic heritage as a component of cultural heritage becomes apparent. Tourism diversifies, and the recognition of and uses for gastronomic heritage as homemade products tend to increase.

Gastronomic heritage in daily life

The results of the survey revealed that gastronomic heritage represented not only an object of tourism interest but also sufficiently important foods in general. This was pointed out by the respondents in all the three countries surveyed (Fig. 4). There were people in each of the countries who considered the availability of such products to be very important – in Italy, even ¾ of the respondents. For the second largest group of respondents, it was not always the most important criterion. This group of respondents in Latvia was the largest, 42.1% of the total. According to the respondents, there were also people for whom the origin of the product was not important. The respondents in both Romania and Latvia referred to such individuals. In Italy, 5.3% respondents did not answer this question; therefore, it was not possible to identify their attitude towards homemade products – perhaps they considered this to be irrelevant, but maybe they had no opinion on this matter. Those who, in one or another way, had visited home producers and seen the conditions of home production and also the process of creating the products themselves definitely had an opinion. The Chi - square test (χ^2 =31.33> $\chi^2_{0.05}$ =9.49, df=4, Sign.=0.000, n=542) indicates the different views between the countries. The numerical value of the Cramer's V coefficient (Cramer's V = 0.17, sign, =0.000) indicates also a relatively low response of the associations to this question with the country from which the respondents came. If individuals have a positive attitude towards homemade products, it is also important for them to know where to buy such products. The respondents from all the three countries regarded the existence of home producers' markets as important, besides, at well-known places that are not relocated. In Latvia, there is a home producers' market on Kalciema Street in Riga (Figure 5b). Such markets also operate in Romania (Figure 5a) and Italy.

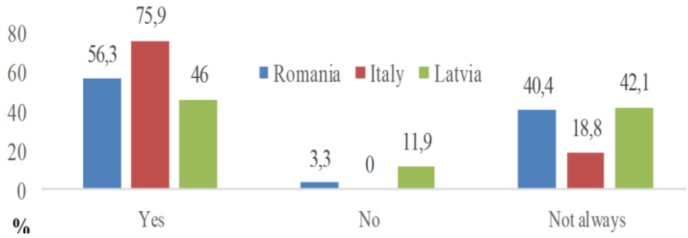

Figure 4. Percentage breakdown of respondents' replies regarding the importance of availability of homemade products (Source: Research results of the authors of the article, 2021)

Figure 5a[1] and 5b[2]. Home producers' markets in Romania and Latvia (Sources: [1] and [2], 2022)

However, a new kind of interaction between tourism and home production is slowly emerging. This, of course, is caused by the expansion of digitalization and e-commerce (Figure 6). If before the buyer (tourist) used to go for the product, now the home producer (gastronomic heritage) goes to the tourist. If the tourist (buyer) is satisfied with the product and its delivery, such a kind of contacts becomes permanent and so-called customer groups emerge. One of the customer group members becomes the maintainer of the group and the e-commerce platform. Although the summaries of respondents' answers to this question are similar between the countries, the Chi - square test (χ^2 =24.75> $\chi^2_{0.05}$ =9.49, df=4,

[1] https://www.dreamstime.com/timisoara-romania-november-aspects-street-christmas-fair-traditional-products-maramures-area-specific-image165624055
[2] http://www.kalnciemaiela.lv/lv/kalnciema-kvartals/telpu-noma/

Sign.=0.000, n=958) shows a smaller but still statistically significant difference. The numerical value of Cramer's V-factor (Cramer's V = 0.11, df = 4, sign, = 0.000) (taking into the account the number of degrees of freedom) also indicates a medium response of the associations to this question with the country from which the respondents came.

The opposite way of cooperation is as follows: the home producer delivers the product ordered to the consumer at his/her place of residence. As the demand for homemade products grows, a logical need arises: the potential buyer must be informed about the availability of such products and services as soon as possible. Many customers are better acquainted with local producers in the immediate vicinity (their region). Latvia is a small country, and that is why it is important to inform potential buyers from neighbouring countries what homemade products and services we supply.

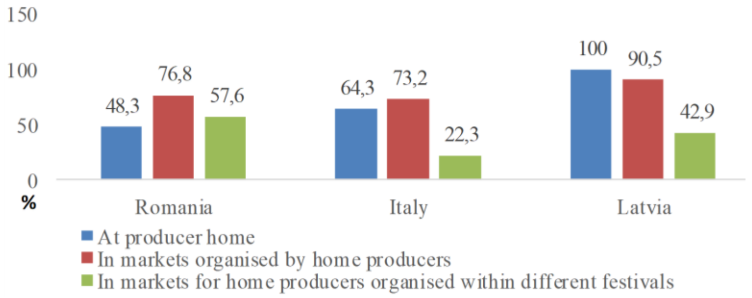

Figure 6. Percentage breakdown of respondents' replies regarding the most suitable places for purchasing homemade products (Source: Research results of the authors of the article, 2021)

CONCLUSION

The food and gastronomy heritage of every country is a valuable asset that should be conserved and promoted. All territories and local communities are rich in gastronomy and food culture. Tourism offers great potential for community revitalization and destination development: it is the value of the national economy as a component of the ecosystem. Especially the gastronomic cultural heritage is the value of culture as a system component. Consequently, the gastronomic cultural heritage connects destinations, entrepreneurs, consumers, tourists and key stakeholders to focus on the business of culinary tourism development and promotion (Table 2). It is clear from the survey that the consumers/tourists of the countries involved see gastronomic tourism as a process of sustainable development, where the importance of availability of homemade products is relevant. The model of culinary tourism that is suggested here provides a framework for seeing the varieties of interfaces in which local eating occurs as instances of negotiating individual and social perceptions.

Table 2. Link between tourism and gastronomic cultural heritage (Source: Personal documentation of the Researchers, 2022)

Tourism - the value of the national economy as a component of the ecosystem		Gastronomic cultural heritage – the value of culture as a system component
Gives: Additional tourist destinations. The goal of tourism: processes in global development and overcoming the problems caused by Covid-19		Gives: Promotion of home producer products; improvement in communication with consumers (tourists); enhancement of information about the home producer
Receives: New tourists who are interested in touring the rural areas of their country and thus discovering the unknown in their gastronomic cultural heritage		Receives: More knowledge about national and cultural heritage; acquaintance with the cultural wealth of the nation and country in practice and increasing love for the homeland.

When popularizing gastronomic tourism, it is necessary to identify current trends in tourist motivation for visiting home producers. The market development and popularization of gastronomic heritage could be effectively promoted by identifying and analysing the current motivations and timely updating this information in all sources for gastronomic tourism. That is a new modern experience based on local tradition in a leisure context. In view of exogenous factors (e.g. Covid-19), as well as the attraction of potential tourists under various conditions, the development of modern technologies and e-commerce is necessary, so that the potential gastronomic tourists can easily and conveniently find information about both tour opportunities and opportunities to visit home producers and purchase their products both in person and remotely, thereby popularizing the national gastronomic heritage. Evaluating the consumer criteria of Italy, Romania and Latvia, it can be unequivocally concluded that the main criteria for choosing the products of home producers are the quality, organoleptic properties and ingredients. When promoting gastronomic tourism to home producers, it is necessary to emphasize the high quality of products in order to promote the successful development of their market. As consumers in Romania, Italy and Latvia point out that the main place where consumers buy home-made products is home-organized markets, it is necessary to include such markets in travel itineraries, together with details of when the markets are open.

Contribution to Practice

It is important to examine and analyse the experience and practices of various countries and nations in order to find the most effective way to develop gastronomic tourism and home production through expanding this market and making it efficient for both tourists (customers) and home producers. These finding could be helpful for producers, organizers and policy-makers in order to overcome some still existing issues in many regions. If we consider that gastronomic cultural heritage plays a key role in attracting residents and visitors into a region and in particular their key interests in home production as such to see what the local producer produced and how and possibly to taste it as well, it seems appropriate to state that these findings could be generalized also to other regions and contexts. To promote and popularize gastronomic tourism, it is necessary to do it outside the local region. The promotion of home producers could be successful if emphasis is placed on attracting tourists and on their visits to home producers, as well as on attracting tourists from abroad. Definitely, we can assume that gastronomic cultural heritage can effectively represent an enhancer for regional tourism, if well-grounded at the stage of experience economy. One point of strength of the findings is that the gastronomic tourism offers a multisensory experience that encompasses the general sounds of the places visited in addition to the culture heritage one encounters.

Limitations

The current study is not free from limitations, but the work leads the authors to a series of theoretical questions for exploration. It's true, the gastronomy heritage of each country is a valuable asset and local foods should be conserved and promoted in all the world, so is a limitation analyze a specific studied context and the generalizability of results may still be limited. Future studies may employ a cross-cultural approach to compare the attitudes of tourists in different countries. From a tourist standpoint, gastronomy represents an opportunity to know more about a local or a region. It also represents a way to know how people live and eat, its culture, and way of life. It also represents a way to know how people live and eat, its culture, and way of life. Indeed, the role of the most suitable destinations and countries where to travel and buy food local appear be interesting to explore with more depth. It's true our analysis has importance only in Italy, Romania, and Latvia so we recognize the limitations with characters of a specific social context.

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PLACE ATTACHMENT, HOST TOURISTS' INTERACTION AND RESIDENT WELCOMING ATTITUDE: A POST COVID-19 ASSESSMENT TOWARDS TOURISM RECOVERY IN LANGKAWI, MALAYSIA

Ataul Karim PATWARY*
Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Faculty of Hospitality, Tourism and Wellness, Kota Bharu, Kelantan, Malaysia, e-mail: raselataul@gmail.com

Mohd Fadil Bin Mohd YUSOF
Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Faculty of Hospitality, Tourism and Wellness, Kota Bharu, Kelantan, Malaysia, e-mail: fadil@umk.edu.my

Lina Munirah KAMARUDIN
Universiti Utara Malaysia, School of Tourism, Hospitality and Event Management, Sintok, Kedah, Malaysia, e-mail: linamunirah@gmail.com

Derweanna Binti Bah SIMPONG
Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Faculty of Hospitality, Tourism and Wellness, Kota Bharu, Kelantan, Malaysia, e-mail: derweanna@umk.edu.my

Gazi Md Nurul ISLAM
Universiti Tun Abdul Razak, Graduate School of Business, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, e-mail: gazinurul236@gmail.com

Muhammad Khalilur RAHMAN
Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Faculty of Entrepreneurship and Business; Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Angkasa-Umk Research Academy (AURA), Kota Bharu, Kelantan, Malaysia, e-mail: khalilur.r@umk.edu.my

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Abstract: The most recent COVID-19 pandemic has posed a risk to the world economy that has never been seen before. Therefore, the welcoming attitude of the residents in tourist destinations has become a concern for post-COVID-19 tourism recovery. There seem to be many issues concerning the interactions of hosts and tourists as Covid-19 fear exists. Thus, this study aims to examine the role of place attachment and host tourists' attractions on the welcoming attitude of the residents in Langkawi, Malaysia. The researchers conducted a quantitative method and cross-sectional approach in this study. Researchers distributed 600 questionnaires to the respondents in Langkawi, Malaysia, and 461 usable questionnaires were returned and proceeded for further analysis. This study used structural equation modelling to use Smart PLS version 3 software. In structural equation modelling, the measurement and structural model of the study were reported. The study found that place attachment and host tourists interaction play a significant role in maximizing residents' welcoming attitude. The practitioners and academicians will be benefited from the outcome study while exploring tourism recovery strategies and post-Covid tourist arrival.

Key words: Place Attachment, Host Tourists' Interaction, Residents Welcoming Attitude, Post-Covid 19, Tourism Recovery, Langkawi, Malaysia

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INTRODUCTION

Today, tourism is considered one of the most important economic activities in the world and is heavily dependent on foreign investment (Sthapit et al., 2018). Even though travel and tourism have always involved some level of risk, the primary concern for most tourists while visiting destinations or hospitality businesses is a health risk (Shin and Kang, 2020). In particular, the hospitality industry is proving to be the one that is being impacted the hardest by the COVID-19 epidemic (Nhamo et al., 2020; Popov, 2020). The severe health risks associated with travelling during and after the COVID-19 epidemic are to blame for the low takeup of air travel. As a consequence, the recovery of the hotel market is expected to be a long time in coming. Scholars are aware that rapid, sustainable tourism and the growth of new types of tourism may lead to tensions between tourists and locals (Quevedo et al., 2021; Tampakis et al., 2019; Wassler and Talarico, 2021). Tourist developments might cause people to feel uncomfortable, especially if they have a low degree of involvement in their community. Therefore, encouraging the local community to participate in tourist development is critical to ensuring the

* Corresponding author

long-term development of the country's economy. However, the amount of research done to date is somewhat restricted. Noh et al. (2020) claimed that very few research projects are taking place globally. A strategy for tourist development that considers the desires of residents is essential to ensuring the viability of the island's tourism business (Li et al., 2021). Cognitive, affective, and behavioural attitudes are the most common three types. Yet, most research on residents' attitudes has concentrated on their behaviour alone, with little attention to their cognitive or emotional well-being.

Locals' attitudes toward tourism development are influenced by interactions between local inhabitants and visitors (Kim et al., 2020; Liang et al., 2021), as do tourists' spending and satisfaction at locations. Therefore, practitioners and researchers generally support efforts to foster pleasant interactions between locals and visitors. This is because researchers and practitioners regard residents' hospitality and goodwill toward tourists to be vital for tourism development (Lai and Hitchcock, 2017; Li et al., 2021). On the other hand, many of the encounters between locals and tourists might result in moderate to large annoyances for the locals (Jordan et al., 2021). According to observations made by Lai and Hitchcock (2017), locals may experience sentiments of aggravation due to mass tourism and the ensuing negative opinions of tourist development. Residents of those destinations will act as hospitable hosts toward tourists, regardless of the benefits that residents believe they will receive from local tourism development. Thus, this study aims to examine the role of place attachment and host tourists' attractions on the welcoming attitude of the residents in Langkawi, Malaysia. The study further investigated the mediating role of host tourists’ interaction between place attachment and residents welcoming attitude.

1. Theoretical underpinning

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), developed by Ajzen in 1985, is one of the most influential examples of anticipating the behaviours of individuals based on the beliefs and attitudes of that individual. The theory of reasoned action (TRA), in which attitudes and subjective norms anticipate behaviour, served as the foundation for the original version of this idea. As a result, Ajzen (1985) added a new variable to the TPB, perceived behavioural control, because it lacks explanatory power for behaviours that are affected by numerous factors (Bae and Chang, 2021). According to the TPB, a person's behavioural intention is influenced by various factors, including attitude, subjective norms, and a sense of behavioural control. An individual's favourable or negative evaluation of a specific incident or behaviour is their attitude (Ajzen, 1985). Since it persists for a long time once it is created, an individual's attitude frequently serves as a reliable predictor of their behavioural purpose (Razali et al., 2020). Subjective norms focus on the social influences that promote or discourage individuals from engaging in a specific behaviour. Ajzen (1991) noted that when family or friends have a favourable attitude toward a specific behaviour, the likelihood of an individual performing that action to fulfil their expectations increases, and vice versa. Perceived behavioural control refers to an individual's view of his or her abilities in terms of the skills, time, and money necessary to carry out a specific action (Ru et al., 2012). It refers to a person's confidence that will be able to monitor a situation and effectively manage the resources necessary to carry out a specific task.

Numerous areas, including psychology, health, marketing, physical education, and tourism, have extensively used the TPB (Demirel and Ciftci, 2020; Choe et al., 2021). As several scholars have attempted, TPB's explanatory power can be improved by including more variables. The TPB has recently expanded to include risk-related variables. According to Newby et al. (2020), perceived danger and uncertainty have decreased interest in travelling to Australia. Their study found that visitors' perceptions of risk and uncertainty influenced their views, as did visitors' perceptions of behavioural control. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has sparked the chaos, upset established standards, and prompted the need to anticipate travellers' future behaviour. The TPB model was supplemented with a new variable based on the COVID-19 crisis case data. Utilizing HBM, which emphasises how people tend to adopt health-protective behaviours when faced with perceived hazards, this new component of the TPB model may be rationalised. This study anticipated that people's risk perceptions about the COVID-19 problem prompted them to engage in untactful tourism behaviours. The study did not include particular HBM factors in our research design because the primary goal was to evaluate the association between COVID-19 risk perception and behavioural control toward tourism. Rather, the study employed eTPB variables to retain the focus of this investigation.

2. Place Attachment and Resident Welcoming Attitude

Those are the two aspects that residents employ to set themselves apart from their place attachment. Previous research on residents' perspectives has been generally exploratory and descriptive. Residents' place connection is mostly influenced by residents' welcome attitude (ATT) (Soler et al., 2019). In a research of 418 Cape Verdeans, Khanra et al. (2021) discovered that their ATT effects substantially impacted their connection to their home.

According to Shen et al. (2015), Zhuhai City citizens' ATT strongly impacted their attitude toward tourism in China. Kamata (2022) studied the views of 300 Mauritius inhabitants about the impacts of tourism. Eusébio et al. (2018) discovered that people's opinions toward place marketing were favourably connected in tourist areas, using a sample of 766 people from three different destinations. ATTT research on residents' ATTT is critical since it focuses on the host-guest interaction (Tse and Tung, 2022). On the other hand, earlier research has mostly focused on the ATT of residents (Woosnam et al., 2018; Shen et al., 2021). According to Woosnam et al. (2018), emotional solidarity is influenced by one's level of identification with another person. The author also indicated that all three sub-dimensions of emotional solidarity highly influenced the ATT of residents. According to VG et al. (2021), ATT was a significant predictor of communities' openness to tourists. Meyer et al. (2021) also found that a resident's ATTT could influence their ATT. Existing studies don't have the capacity for this kind of research. Thus, we propose the following hypotheses:

3. Host Tourists Interaction and Resident Welcoming Attitude

Social exchange theory states that residents who have a favourable view of tourism are more likely to participate in tourist-related activities. When citizens know that they would benefit from tourism without incurring extra costs, they will be more inclined to engage and contribute to community-based tourism development initiatives (Lo and Janta, 2020; Patwary et al., 2022). According to the research on tourism, the host-to-tourist interactions and their outcomes have received insufficient attention (Eusébio et al., 2018). Nevertheless, The number of articles published in this area has increased in recent years. Personal encounters between tourists and hosts in specific locations are often called host–tourist interactions (Alrawadieh and Kozak, 2019). Tourists and hosts may come into contact in many ways. In most tourist destinations, social contact between residents and visitors is brief and non-repetitive, open to deception and exploitation, superficial and commercial, and asymmetric in meaning for both performers (visitors and hosts) (Eusébio et al., 2018; Oxenswardh, 2018). Despite these traits, the literature on this topic shows that interactions between tourists and hosts can influence visitors' and residents' opinions and pleasure. While some research has focused on how host-tourist interactions affect host views about tourism, others have looked at the elements that may influence these interactions (Tabaeeian, 2022; Patwary et al., 2020). According to a small number of studies, inhabitants' perceptions of the negative effects of tourism are linked to host-tourist interactions. Tu and Ma (2021) stated that inhabitants who interact with tourists frequently view tourism much more favourable. Based on this perspective, it is projected that residents' perceptions of favourable tourist benefits will be positively correlated with the intensity and pleasure of their social contacts. Various things can affect how residents and visitors interact socially. As shown in Figure 1, the research framework was developed basen on the literature on this topic which emphasises the importance of cultural differences and personal traits in influencing the outcomes of encounters between visitors and local people (Li et al., 2022; Rabiul et al., 2022; Tse and Tung, 2022).

RESEARCH METHOD

Sample and Data Collection

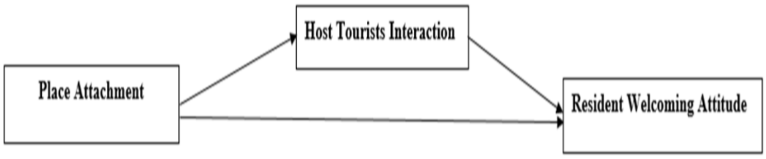

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

According to Thompson (2012), a sample size of 461 cases is considered adequate to test the hypotheses for an unknown population. Following the above suggestions, our sample size is 461 is sufficient as the tourists in Malaysia are unknown and vary yearly. Data were collected from September to December 2021. Previous research (e.g., Nulty, 2008) has suggested that a more than 50% response rate is satisfactory for a pen-paper survey. Therefore, 600 questionnaires were distributed to tourists using the purposive sampling technique to obtain at least 461 responses. Each questionnaire was directly handed to the participating tourists in a sealed envelope with a pencil. After removing incomplete questionnaires with missing data and outliers, 461 responses were considered valid for testing the hypotheses.

DATA ANALYSIS

We have applied PLS-SEM, the appropriate tool to test theory and path analysis (Nitzl et al., 2016; Rasoolimanesh and Ali, 2018). SEM measures and accommodates observed variables to represent any ambiguity in a construct of latent variables and explains casual relationships among latent and observed variables simultaneously (Hair et al., 2020). Besides, some of the measurement errors prevalent in tourism resources can be solved using PLS-SEM with many latent variables (Dijkstra and Henseler, 2015; Rasoolimanesh and Ali, 2018; Henseler et al., 2015).

RESULTS

1. Outliers, Multicollinearity, and Normality

First, multivariate outliers were also checked out and deleted with a significance level of more than 0.001, as Lynch (2013) recommended. Given the single source of the data, both procedural and statistical remedies were applied to avoid potential common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2012). Variable measurements were placed randomly in different places, such as corporate social responsibility, green human resource management, inclusive leadership, and proactive pro-environmental behaviour (Podsakoff et al., 2012). Further, Harman's single factor test was also applied, indicating a single factor explained only 16.54% out of the total variance of 63.23%. Since this value this less than 50%, it can be established that the data does not have a common method variance (Podsakoff and Organ, 1986). To confirm no multicollinearity in the variables, the variance inflation factor (VIF) was checked in Table 1.

Table 1. Collinearity diagnosis

	Host Tourists Interaction	Residents Welcoming Attitude	Place Attachment
Host Tourists Interaction	-	1.050	1.00
Place Attachment	1.000	1.050	-
Residents Welcoming Attitude	1.050	-	1.050

Table 2. HTMT (Heterotrait & Monotrait) ratio criterion for discriminant validity

	Host Tourists Interaction	Place Attachment	Residents Welcoming Attitude
Host Tourists Interaction			
Place Attachment	0.229		
Residents Welcoming Attitude	0.289	0.236	

2. Construct validity, reliability, and model quality

Figure 2 displays that all items in constructs were acceptable loadings between 0.766 and 0.926 (Dijkstra and Henseler, 2015; Hair et al., 2020). Besides, AVE values were more than the suggested values of 0.50 (see Figure 2 in white circle). The CR values were for host tourists' interaction (0.894), place attachment (0.927), and residents welcoming attitude (0.914), respectively. Thus, all the constructs meet the criterion for convergent validity (Dijkstra and Henseler, 2015; Hair et al., 2020). Further, to confirm discriminant validity, discriminant validity for all variables was found satisfied, as shown in Table 2. We measured standardized root mean residual (SRMR) and coefficient of determination (R^2) to understand the quality of the model (Henseler et al., 2015; Hair et al., 2020). SRMR is lower than 0.08 for the good model in PLS (Hair et al., 2020). Although R^2 of 0.10 indicates satisfaction. Therefore, 0.045 and 0.85 indicate weak and moderate influence, respectively (Hair et al., 2020). Table 3 present the detailed values and evaluation of SRMR and R^2 (Hair et al., 2020).

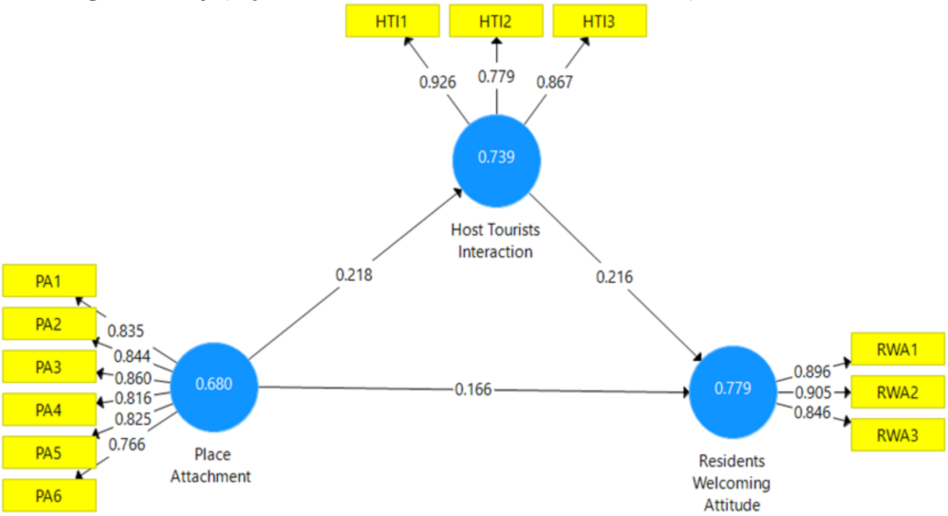

Figure 2. Measurement model (loading and AVE)

3. Hypothesis testing

The study has used statistical methods (i.e. p-values, t-values) and bootstrapping suggested by Nitzl et al. (2016), Zhao et al. (2010) and Rasoolimanesh et al. (2021) to test the direct and indirect effects (Table 4). For example, for direct effects, as shown in Table 4 and Figure 3, host tourists' interaction (T= 4.347, P=0.000) and place attachment (T= 2.753, P=0.006) has a significant relationship with residents welcoming attitude. Besides, place attachment (T= 4.009, P=0.000) also positively impacts host tourists' interaction. Therefore, all the hypotheses are supported. For indirect effect, Table 4 shows that the host tourist's interaction (T = 3.030; P = 0.003) is used as a mediator between place attachment and residents' welcoming attitude and H3 is also supported.

Table 3. Quality of the model

Variables	Adjusted R^2 (coefficient of determination)	SRMR (standardized root mean residual)
Host Tourists Interaction	0.045	
Residents Welcoming Attitude	0.085	0.062 (good)

Table 4. Direct hypotheses

No	Hypothesis	β	Std. Dev.	t-values	p- values	Supported
H1	Host Tourists Interaction -> Residents Welcoming Attitude	0.216	0.050	4.347	0.000	Yes
H2	Place Attachment -> Host Tourists Interaction	0.218	0.054	4.009	0.000	Yes
H3	Place Attachment -> Residents Welcoming Attitude	0.166	0.060	2.753	0.006	Yes
	Indirect hypotheses					
H4	Place Attachment -> Host Tourists Interaction -> Residents Welcoming Attitude	0.047	0.016	3.030	0.003	Yes

Note: *p≤0.001 or t≥3.29; **p≤0.01 or t≥2.58; ***p≤0.05 or t≥1.96; β= path coefficient. ns=not significant

Figure 3 describes the structural model of the study. T-values show high efficiency in the structure of the model. The relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable is significantly positive. To examine the direct effects, the bootstrapping method was performed in Smart PLS 3.

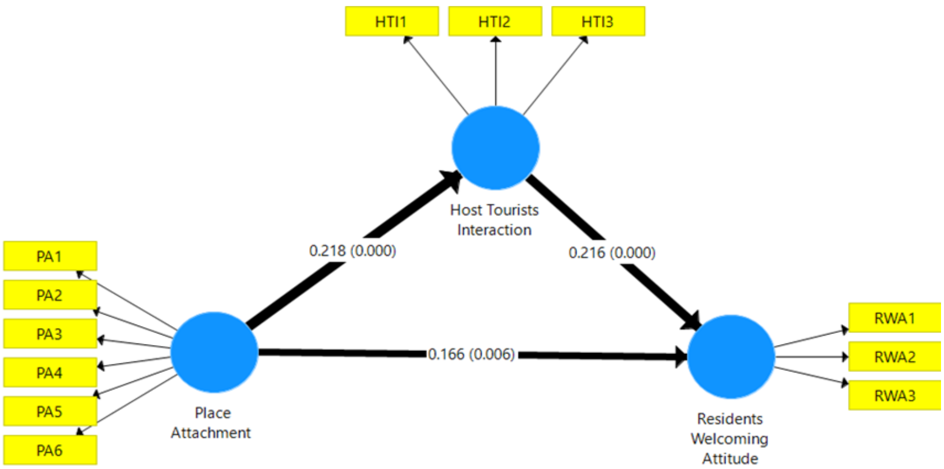

Figure 3. Structural model (p-values and path coefficients)

DISCUSSION

In this research, a structural model is developed and tested for the impact of host–tourist interactions, place attachment, and perceived tourism impacts on residents' views toward tourism development. The model contains factors that have gained little attention from scholars and managers alike (such as the relationship between hosts and tourists and devotion to a particular region). It was tested and found that research is scarce compared to the remarkable performance of tourism (Nian et al., 2019). Findings of hypothesis one suggests that host tourists' interaction is positively related with residents welcoming attitude.

While the host and tourists have got more interaction, the residents most likely to welcome the tourists more. The findings also in line with previous studies of Joo et al. (2018). The second hypothesis triggered that place attachment of the tourists is positively related with host tourists' interaction. The tourists with more place attachment with the destination is likely to increase their interaction with the hosts. The findings also in aligned with previous findings of Patwary et al. (2020) and Sthapit et al. (2017). Third hypothesis found that place attachment has positive and significant relationship with residents welcoming attitude. This finding reconfirms the previous findings of Aleshinloye et al. (2020) and Alom et al. (2019). For the mediating relationship in this study, the findings of hypothesis found that, host tourists' interaction significantly mediates the relationship between place attachment and residents welcoming attitude. The mediating role of host tourists' interaction was previously investigated by Jensen (2010). The people who live here have a strong sense of place attachment. These findings indicate several recommendations that may be useful to implement in the tourism development model. A tourist destination's residents are one of its most significant assets. As a result, it must give more advantages than expenses to gain local support for tourism growth. The kind and welcoming nature of the residents should be incorporated into the Langkawi island's tourism development plans. To ensure the long-term viability of the tourism industry, residents should be involved in the planning process.

CONCLUSION

Residents and tourists alike will be happier if they can interact in pleasant ways. As a result, tourism development should be done in tandem with and for the local population. According to Woosnam et al. (2018), the development of destinations necessitates the coordination of efforts by the actors involved in preparing and promoting beneficial connections between residents and visitors. To break this loop, the tourism development model must be adjusted immediately. The implementation of concepts of sustainable development is directly linked to the success of this tourist attraction. As a result, all stakeholders must participate in this monumental undertaking.

1. Theoretical contributions

COVID-19 has a significant impact on the behaviour of travellers in this exceptional epidemic. It has various theoretical implications based on the precise data gathering and analysis at the pandemic's peak. This study aims to analyse a subject that is currently roiling global society and the lives of individuals. The second wave of COVID-19 is anticipated this fall following a temporary respite from the global spread. This study's findings are critical for future longitudinal studies looking at visitors' short and long-term behavioural alterations, as proposed by Gössling et al. (2020). A unique pattern of behaviour among visitors was seen during the pandemic, which was explained by applying the notion of tourism.

Third, this study added risk perception to the notion of planned behaviour. Despite earlier studies that mostly examined it from a technological standpoint, it was proposed to represent a new normal in tourism behaviour, satisfying people's residual desire to travel even amid the pandemic while decreasing their perceptions of disease risk. It was done in this report post-corona research that could focus on people's non-tactile behaviours employed for health-protection goals. The findings of this research will help us better understand how tourists behave when there is an outbreak of an infectious disease.

2. Practical Implications

The findings of this research have practical implications for both the domestic and international tourism industries. Health authorities have highlighted the second wave COVID-19 crisis. They also stated that environmental changes would lead to recurrences of diseases like COVID-19 every four to five years (Kim et al., 2020). To meet the needs of both travellers and tourism professionals, tourism may need to be considered a new paradigm. It's not just about getting rid of service encounters. Instead, it might be a high-end service with a lot of customizability built-in. Customers usually used to flock to the breakfast buffets at high-end hotels, but room service garnered no attention.

In contrast, room service of the buffet breakfast has been increasingly popular since the onset of COVID-19, as customers seek to protect their areas. Most tourists would rather reserve a spot in a small group for specific tours. To protect the safety of its guests, hotels may need to offer a room that is tailored to their specific needs. Services, locations, and rigorously approved programmes for their protection would suit the growing demand for untactful tourism.

3. Limitations and Future Research Directions

The findings of this study are not without flaws. Cross-sectional data is the first type of data examined in this study. After the conclusion of Covid-19, the pandemic's behavioural aim may change. For a long-term study of the issue, scholars would need to discern data over some time. In this scenario, examining the relationship between a person's stated intentions and their actual actions might also be done. This study's results were based on Malaysian people, and the research model needs to be tested in various settings to ensure that the findings are accurate. For instance, to evaluate the outcome, it is necessary to grasp the specific Malaysian environment in which strong pressure to comply with social standards has been exerted. There was a tremendous surge in confirmed cases and a huge social cost, which sparked public outrage and a fear of social shame for not cooperating with authorities. Third, in this area of tourism, more research is needed. As a starting point, researchers would need to categorise tourism based on its relationship to technology and its components. In addition, it's important to dig further into what makes tourism so appealing. The COVID-19 epidemic necessitates a wide range of perspectives from travellers, industry, and academia to better understand this alternate kind of tourism.

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OUTDOOR TOURISM DEMAND SEGMENTATION: A CASE STUDY FROM NORTH OF PORTUGAL

Elaine SCALABRINI[*]
Instituto Politécnico de Bragança, UNIAG, Bragança, Portugal, e-mail: elaine@ipb.pt

Alexandra CORREIA
Instituto Politécnico de Viana do Castelo, UNIAG, CITUR, Viana do Castelo, Portugal, e-mail: acorreia@estg.ipvc.pt

Alcina NUNES
Instituto Politécnico de Bragança, UNIAG, Bragança, Portugal, e-mail: alcina@ipb.pt

Cláudia VELOSO
University of Aveiro, GOVCOPP, ESTGA, Águeda, Portugal, e-mail: cmv@ua.pt,

Elvira VIEIRA
Instituto Politécnico de Viana do Castelo, UNIAG, ISAG-EBS, CICET-FCVC, Viana do Castelo, Portugal, e-mail: evieira@esce.ipvc.pt

Fernanda FERREIRA
School of Hospitality and Tourism of P. Porto, UNIAG, Vila do Conde, Portugal, e-mail: faf@esht.ipp.pt

Goretti SILVA
Instituto Politécnico de Viana do Castelo, UNIAG, CITUR, Viana do Castelo, Portugal, e-mail: goretti@estg.ipvc.pt

Manuel FONSECA
Instituto Politécnico de Viana do Castelo, Viana Do Castelo, UNIAG, Portugal, e-mail: manuelfonseca@esce.ipvc.pt

Paulo CARRANÇA
Instituto Politécnico de Viana do Castelo, Turismo do Porto e Norte de Portugal, Viana do Castelo, Portugal, e-mail: paulo.carranca@portoenorte.pt

Sónia SANTOS
Instituto Politécnico de Viana do Castelo, Viana do Castelo, Portugal, e-mail: ssantos@esa.ipvc.pt

Paula Odete FERNANDES
Instituto Politécnico de Bragança, UNIAG, Bragança, Portugal, e-mail: pof@ipb.pt

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Abstract: This research aimed to segment the market of visitors who practise outdoor activities in the North region of Portugal based on their motivations. An online survey was conducted between June to September of 2021, with a sample of 200 tourists who realised the region's outdoor activities during this period. The data collected allowed determining factor analysis and the clusters. Two factors: services/hospitality and nature experiences, and three clusters: soft practitioners, radicals, and enthusiasts were delimited. The results show that these groups differ in motivations and practised activities. Segmentation of outdoor tourism demand in North of Portugal should set out marketing and promotion strategies in different destinations, attracting demand from outside the region, and according to their preferences.

Key words: outdoor tourism, outdoor activities, motivations, visitor´s profile, clustering

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INTRODUCTION

Outdoor tourism has been practised substantially in the last few years, particularly in the pandemic period when outdoor activities increased considerably (Silva et al., 2021). Outdoor tourism can be understood as the realisation of outdoor activities (Ferreira et al., 2021) classified as hard or soft (Tsaur et al., 2020; UNWTO, 2014). These activities often take place in nature, protected areas, urban parks, and rural areas (Derek et al., 2019). Furthermore, outdoor tourism is considered one of the fastest-growing subcomponents of tourism and a trend in line with the principles of sustainability and environmental awareness (Valizadeh and Khoorani, 2020). In past years, with the increase in demand for outdoor activities,

[*] Corresponding author

studies on this subject are in evidence. Leisure, recreation, and tourism are often themes of the studies (Pomfret and Bramwell, 2016). Otherwise, outdoor tourism (e.g., Anna et al., 2021; Du et al., 2016; Hao et al., 2016; Ito, 2021) can encompass studies about Outdoor Recreation (Bailey et al., 2017; Beery and Jönsson, 2017; Gamborg and Jensen, 2017; Schirpke et al., 2018), Adventure tourism (Beedie and Hudson, 2003; Chen et al., 2020; Pomfret and Bramwell, 2016; Tsaur et al., 2013), Nature-based tourism and protected areas (Beedie and Hudson, 2003; Chen et al., 2020; Pomfret and Bramwell, 2016; Tsaur et al., 2013), sport and tourism (Ito, 2021). Despite these themes, we can notice outdoor tourism requires further investigation (Pomfret and Bramwell, 2016), specifically in outdoor tourism demand segmentation. Were identified articles segmenting the tourists in rural areas, nature-based tourism (e.g., Tangeland, 2011) and adventure activities (e.g., Pomfret and Bramwell, 2016; Tsaur et al., 2013, 2015, 2020), but scant research exist specifically about outdoor tourist. But who is the outdoor tourist? We can consider the person who practices outdoor activities. In this sense, this tourist can be segmented by considering traveller features, travel behaviour, soft and hard adventure, cultural learning or exchange, physical activity and interaction with nature (Pomfret and Bramwell, 2016), and they are motivated by different factors (Pomfret and Bramwell, 2016). Moreover, the participants have different skill levels, from beginner to expert and the different skills influence the participants' motivations (Buckley, 2007). Based on motivations, this research aimed to segment the market of visitors who practise outdoor activities in the North region of Portugal.

This region supports the potential for the development of outdoor tourism, considering the diversity and uniqueness of natural resources (Martins et al., 2021). The increased demand for outdoor activities demonstrates the importance of understanding the tourist's segmentation of the Northern Region of Portugal. This can facilitate tourism planning, determining more effective policies in this segment. Moreover, it can also make marketing actions more effective, reaching different outdoor tourist groups' needs and desires (e.g., Ito, 2021; Liu et al., 2022). In this sense, this paper is organised into five sections. After the Introduction, section 2 will survey a literature review regarding Outdoor Tourism and tourists' motivations. Section 3 describes the research method used to collect and analyse the data. The results and discussion are presented in section 4. Finally, section 5 summarises the results and presents some policies and managerial implications.

Theoretical Framework

The modern lifestyle and the urbanisation of big cities make people look for alternatives to escape from this rhythm of life, and therefore they choose outdoor activities, especially in nature (Beames et al., 2018). The connection between physical activities and nature is recognised and has a positive effect (Bácsné-Bába et al., 2021), contributing to the well-being of the people (Silva et al., 2021). The pandemic period increased the practice of activities in natural places and made outdoor space more valued by visitants and tourists. Thus, in this period, the demand for rural and nature-based tourism increased (Silva, 2021). Based on previous studies, we consider these tourism segments as outdoor tourism, described as a destination product, combining tourism with natural, cultural, and human resources (Hao et al., 2016). Furthermore, outdoor tourism is considered one of the fastest-growing subcomponents of tourism and a trend in line with the principles of sustainability and environmental awareness (Valizadeh and Khoorani, 2020).

Nonetheless, the concept of outdoor tourism is not closed, and different authors use different terms. Nature-based tourism (e.g., Beedie and Hudson, 2003; Chen et al., 2020; Pomfret and Bramwell, 2016; Tsaur et al., 2013); ecotourism (e.g., Lee et al., 2021); outdoor recreation (e.g., Bailey et al., 2017; Beery and Jönsson, 2017; Gamborg and Jensen, 2017; Schirpke et al., 2018); adventure tourism (e.g., Beedie and Hudson, 2003; Chen et al., 2020; Pomfret and Bramwell, 2016; Tsaur et al., 2013); mountain adventure tourism (e.g., Beedie and Hudson, 2003; Maroudas et al., 2004) are some concepts found in the studies about this subject. However, the term outdoor tourism can be an opportunity to approach as an overarching concept.

Outdoor tourism can involve different activities. Some approaches segment these considering the geographic characterises, in other words, land-based, air-based, or water-based activities (Dereck et al., 2019). Another way to segment is by considering the risk involved; in this sense, activities may be classified as hard or soft (Tsaur et al., 2020; UNWTO, 2014). Radical activities tend to involve risk and danger (Zhou et al., 2020), like bungee jumping, downhill and others. Soft activities involve little risk, such as hiking or fishing (UNWTO, 2014). As the demand for outdoor tourism increases, the studies about this are more evident. In the meantime, few studies analyse the segmentation of outdoor tourists.

Motivation is one of the aspects considered when there is the segmentation of tourists and is an important factor in studies of tourism segmentation. Motivation can be described as the process of decisions made by tourists (Bansal and Eiselt, 2004) and what can influence a person in choosing a destination or activity. Some authors developed studies considering motivation to segment tourists of outdoor tourism. Palacio and McCool (1997) related four motivations to nature-based tourism: escape, learning about nature, healthy activities and cohesive and identified five types of tourists, including nature escapists, ecotourists, and comfortable naturalists passive players. Beh and Bruyere (2007) defined motivations as general viewing, nature, culture, adventure, mega-fauna, escape, learning and personal growth and three types of tourists the escapists, the learners and the spiritualists. Tangeland (2011) identified four purchase motivations: quality improvement, skill development, new activity and social. Furthermore, he identified six types of tourists: social, want-it-wall, try a new activity, performer and unexplained. Recently, similarly to the aim of the present paper, the mentioned authors have also segmented the practitioners of outdoor activities Povilaitis et al. (2020) identified the profile of tourists of outdoor programmers of summer camps. They classified four psychographic profiles: Enthusiast, Ecologist, Dabbler, and Constrainer. Humagain and Singleton (2021) identified the motivations of outdoor recreationists during COVID-19.

They classified the motivations as enjoying nature, autonomy, physical fitness, rest, escaping personal-social-physical pressure, family and friends, novelty experience and COVID-built motivations. Besides these studies, Derek et al. (2019) segmented the tourists using activity-based segmentation. In this sense, six types of tourists were determined: angling sailors, non-angling sailors, cyclists, anglers, water recreationists and passive tourists, based on activities such as sailing, motorboating, angling, walking, cycling, observing wild animals, and others. Analysing these studies, it is evident that the main motivations for the practice of outdoor activities are basically living new experiences, escapism and being amid nature, and so it is important to consider motivation as a segmentation factor for outdoor tourists in the Northern Region of Portugal.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study site

Northern Portugal is a region with diversity and uniqueness of natural resources. The area consists of eight micro-regions known as NUTS III. This area has mountains, rivers, and protected areas, including natural parks, regional natural parks, national reserves, local nature reserves, and regionally protected landscapes with characteristics and infrastructure conditions for outdoor activities (Martins et al., 2021; Silva et al., 2021). Peneda-Gerês National Park and Montesinho Natural Park are important outdoor areas located in Northern Portugal, which attract practitioners of different activities, such as hiking, cycling, canoeing, mountaineering, and others. The coastal area, with its beautiful beaches, is attractive for water-based sports. And there are also different options for adventure activities throughout the Northern Region. Considering the potential for Outdoor and nature-based tourism, this segment was identified in the strategic plan "Portuguese Tourism Strategy 2027" (Turismo de Portugal, 2017) and it is also a strategic product of Turismo Porto e Norte (TPNP), an entity responsible for promoting and developing the value chain of tourism in the Porto and North Region of Portugal (TPNP, 2015). In this regard, there is a need for knowledge of the tourist profile of outdoor tourism to contribute to tourism planning and marketing strategies.

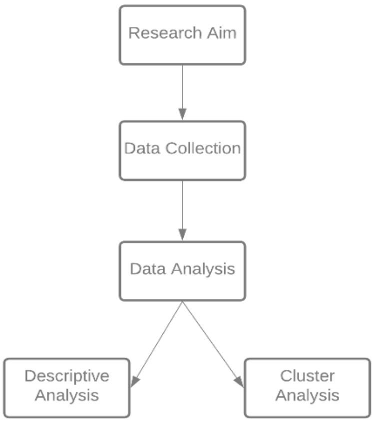

Figure 1. Methodology Flowchart

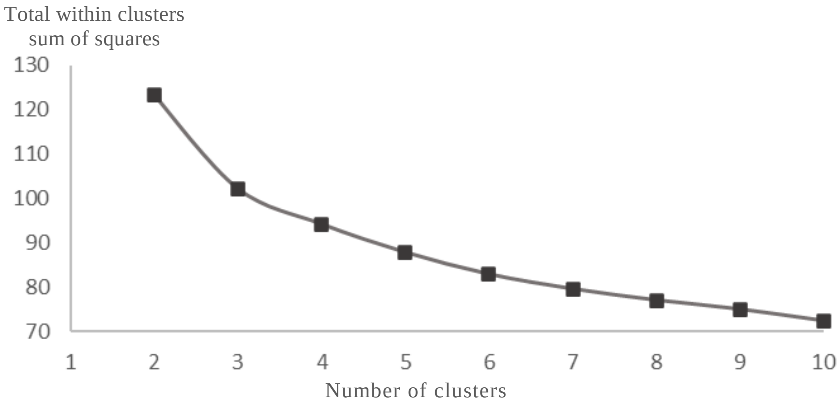

Figure 2. The number of clusters indicated by the Elbow position

Data collection

The methodology followed the steps presented in Figure 1, which will be detailed in this topic of the paper. Based on the purpose, the first step was to apply a survey to tourists and visitants who practised outdoor activities in the Northern Region of Portugal. Due to the pandemic period, it was used the Microsoft Forms tool to apply an online questionnaire between June and September 2021. Portuguese and English versions were available. Thus, a non-probabilistic snowball sample was chosen, where each respondent indicated a new respondent. A total of 236 answers were received, and after discarding 36 incomplete questionnaires, 200 valid responses were analysed. A pre-test was conducted to validate the questionnaire that was carried out with 100 elements in the period from April to May 2021.

From the pre-test, some improvements were made, namely the adequacy of the qualitative measurement of the scales regarding the knowledge about the activities practised and regarding the issues related to loyalty. Filters were also inserted between the questions to facilitate their understanding and after these the questionnaire was applied. The questionnaire was designed with 42 open and closed questions and was splited into three parts. The first part consisted of twenty-five questions to characterise the visit and the outdoor activity performed. One of the sections identified the motivations, which was measured by fourteen items on a 5-point Likert Scale (1=not important, 5=extremely important). Part two presented questions with items on a 5-point Likert Scale, concerning thirteen items to importance (1=not important, 5=extremely important), thirteen items to satisfaction (1=very unsatisfied, 5=very satisfied), two items to perceived value (1=very bad, 5=very good), and six items to behavioural attitude (1=definitely not, 5=definitely yes). The last part of the questions consisted of thirteen questions that sought to understand the sociodemographic profile of the sample. Previous research influenced the statements presented in the questionnaire.

Data analysis

The first step was the descriptive analysis, being possible to identify the sociodemographic profile of the sample. Next, the motivations were correlated, using Pearson Correlation Coefficient. Afterwards, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) with varimax rotated principal component analysis was used to generate dimensions of tourists' motivations for outdoor tourism. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin – KMO - (0.909) surpasses the recommended cut-off of 0.5 (Field, 2018) and Bartlett's test of sphericity (1565.357) revealed the data was properly for EFA.

All the fourteen motivation items presented Eigenvalues above .50 and were accepted for item inclusion in dimensions. Results obtained a two-factor solution, explaining 59.5% of the total variance. The Cronbach´s Alpha values of both dimensions (Dimension 1 = 0.884 and Dimension 2 = 0.878) indicated acceptable reliability. After this, hierarchical clustering was carried out using Ward's method, where the variance of clusters is analysed instead of measuring the distance directly. The retained clusters have the smallest error sum of squares (Hair et al., 2014). This method tends to produce more homogeneous clusters, better separated from each other (Marôco, 2021).

The Squared Euclidean distance, using the squared distance as a measure of dissimilarity between cases (Hair et al., 2014), was adopted in this study. This is the recommended distance to Ward´s Method (Hair et al., 2014). In this case, three clusters were found. Also, a visual method was applied, known as Elbow Method, that is used to identify the correct number of clusters (e.g., Humaira and Rasyidah, 2020; Shi et al., 2021).

As it can be observed in Figure 2, it was it was considered the total within clusters sum of squares, so the cost drops to 1, 2 and 3 clusters, and after that, it reaches a plateau; in this case, three is the optimal number of clusters. A combination using the hierarchical approach followed by a non-hierarchical clustering method is often advisable (Hair et al., 2014), known as K-means, which transfers an individual to the cluster whose centroid is located at the shortest distance (Hair et al., 2014). In this step, the three clusters were confirmed. Considering the hypothesis of this study that there are significant differences per cluster regarding the motivation, the decision of the hypotheses wearied parametric tests. Assuming the normality of the data, ANOVA was run *(accommodation, gastronomy, climate, hospitality, history and local/regional culture, touristic attractions, new experiences, find adventure, events/festivals, tourism entertainment activities*) assuming the significant level (0.05) and homogeneity of variances.

On the other hand, it was applied the non-parametric test Kruskal-Wallis to variables that did not present normality (*the environmental resources, safety, nature/landscape and outdoor activities*) and also evidenced a significant level (0.05). To define the clusters' names, activities were divided into soft and hard, similar to a study developed by UNWTO (2014), who engage in outdoor activities based on their motivation and in the type of activities. Some examples of soft activities are circuits/tourist routes, equestrian tours, interpretative trails, walks, guidance, and others. On the other hand, activities such as BTT, slide, rafting, kitesurf, and mountaineering were considered as hard.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sample profile

Regarding sociodemographic characteristics, the sample profile is slightly more women (50.5%), the majority aged between 18-40 years (66.3%). Predominantly (70.5%) had higher education levels, were single (53.3%) and Portuguese (94.5%), with an average monthly income between 601€ and 2400€ (74%). Most reside in Porto Metropolitan Area (25%), in Tâmega and Sousa (17.5%) and in Terras de Trás-os-Montes (13%), all of them located in the Northern region of Portugal. Relating to outdoor activities, most of the sample occasionally (35.5%) practice these activities in their residence, and 20% practice 1 or 2 times a week. The activities most practised were walking/hiding (28.8%), running (11.7%) and cycling (9.5%).

Table 1. Dimensions of Outdoor Tourism Demand

Factor/Motivation	Components 1	Components 2
Services and hospitality		
Hospitality	0.808	
Gastronomy	0.777	
History and local/regional culture	0.761	
Safety	0.711	
Nature/landscape	0.685	
Touristic attractions	0.637	
Accommodation	0.557	
Climate	0.502	
Nature Experience		
Find adventure		0.840
Tourism entertainment activities		0.738
Events/festivals		0.731
New experiences		0.676
Outdoor activities		0.617
Environmental resources		0.571
$\bar{X}$	3.94	3.73
σ	0.751	0.811
Cronbach's Alpha	0.884	0.878
Eigenvalue	7.140	1.190
% Variance Explained	51.0	8.5
% Variance Cumulative	51.0	59.5
KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin)	0.909	

Table 2. Social and Demographic profile per cluster

Characteristics	Clusters: Soft Practitioners	Radicals	Enthusiasts
(n;%)	(n;%)	(n;%)	(n;%)
Gender (200; 100%)	Female (40; 56.3%)	Female (14; 51.9%)	Male (49; 52.7%)
Age (199; 100%)	18-40 years (44; 62.9%)	18-40 years (21; 77.7%)	18-40 years (63; 67.7%)
Nationality (200;100%)	Portuguese (69; 97.2%)	Portuguese (23; 85.2%)	Portuguese (89; 95.7%)
Marital Status (200;100%)	Single (44;62.0%)	Single (14;51.9)	Single (45;48.4%)
Educational level (200;100%)	Higher education (56;78.9%)	High school (14;51.9%)	Higher education (71;76.3%)
Average monthly income (200;100%)	To 601€ and 1200€ (25;35.2%)	To 1201€ and 1800€ (14;51.9%)	To 601€ and 1200€ (26;28.0%)
Residence Area (NUTS III) (200;100%)	Tâmega and Sousa (19;26.8%)	Tâmega and Sousa (8;29.6%)	Porto (32;34.4%)
Frequency of outdoor activities in place of residence (200;100%)	Occasionally (27;38.0%)	3 to 5 times a week (11;40.7%)	Occasionally (36;38.7%)
Activities practised (200;199%)	Soft (50;76%)	Hard (10;47.6%)	Soft (56;67.5%)

$\bar{X}$= mean; σ = standard desviation; Bartlett's test of sphericity: 1.565.357; Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis; Rotation Method: Varimax; Cronbach´s Alpha-Internal consistency (0.924)

Exploratory factor analysis

The exploratory factor analysis (Table 1) revealed two dimensions (with loading greater than 0.5) that motivate the practice of outdoor tourism. The first dimension was called Services/Hospitality, accounted for 51% of the total variance and incorporated eight motivations items with different aspects of the structure and services of the local chosen (accommodation, gastronomy, climate, hospitality, history and local/regional culture, touristic attractions, safety, nature/landscape). The mean value score of this dimension is 3.94 points (±0.751)

Nature experience, the second motivation dimension, explains 8,5% of the total variance and includes six items related to the experiences in the local (environmental resources, new experiences, find adventure, events/festivals, tourism entertainment activities, and outdoor activities). This dimension presented 3.73 points (±0.811) as the mean of items.

Cluster analysis

To segment the Outdoor Tourism demand, a K-means cluster analysis was performed. A total of three clusters were identified and named, considering the realised activities, grouped in hard or soft. The first group was the Soft Practitioners (37.2%), the second was radicals (14.1%), and the last one was the Enthusiasts (48.7%). Table 2 shows each group's social and demographic profile. According to their main characteristics, the clusters are described below.

Cluster 1: including 37.2% of the sample, this group was named Soft Practitioners, because they tend to occasionally practise soft and land-based activities. Consists predominantly of women (56.3%), between 18 and 40 years (62.9%). Most of the practitioners had completed higher education (78.9%), with an average monthly income of 601€ and 1200€ (35.2%). Almost 27%resides in Tâmega and Sousa Region. Regarding the visit and the practitioner characteristics, most are practitioner untrained (77.5%) with moderate knowledge about the activity practised (45.1%). The largest number of respondents travelled with friends (49.3%), with an average of 6.21 (±6.220) people accompanying. Finally, most did not acquire the activity with anyone; in other words, they performed autonomously (54.3%).

The practitioner of this cluster occasionally practises outdoor activities in their residence area (38.0%). Notably, this group prefers activities classified as soft (76.9%) and opts for land-based activities (72.3%). This cluster presented the highest motivation means in both dimensions: Services/hospitality and nature experience. Noteworthy is that all the motivation means in this group are much higher than the general mean of the study sample. Nature/landscape was the main motivation, with a mean of 4.90 points (±0.300). The averages for opinion and likelihoods show similar results to those for motivation, and they are much higher than the study sample. Regarding the quality/price ratio of the outdoor activity practised the members of this group rated with an average of 4.03 (±0.803) and when asked about the quality/price ratio in the Northern Region, the average was similar (4.02±0.712). About the likelihood, this group tends to repeat the practice of outdoor activity (4.53 points±0.570) and, also, recommends the Northern Region (4.73 points±0.561).

Cluster 2: Radicals, which is the smallest group, involving 14.1% of the sample and the group with the highest number of hard activities practisers, which justifies its name. Women account for 51.9% of the sample, aged between 18 and 40 years (77.7%). Also, 76.3% are holders high of education with an average monthly income of 1201€ and 1800€. This group of practitioners practise outdoor activities 3-5 times a week (40.7%) in their residence area, which is Tâmega and Sousa (29.6%). In this group are the majority of trained practitioners (33.3), with high knowledge about the practised activity (40.7%). They travelled alone (34.6%), and those who had companions indicated an average of 4.89 (±11.375) people together to them. Like cluster 1, the practisers performed autonomously (40.7%) the activity in this cluster. However, 33.3% of respondents indicated that they acquired the activity from the club/association. This may justify the Standard Deviation of the mean of companions since some respondents may have practised the activity in groups.

Almost half of the practitioners (47.6%) of this cluster practised hard and challenging activities, and it was the group with the highest percentage (28.6%) of participants in aquatic activities. In this group, the motivation means are much lower than the sample means, which may show the practisers are motivated for the activity and not for the other factors presented. Nonetheless, the highest average of the motivations was in accommodation (2.85 points±1.027).

Considering the opinion and likelihood, we noticed that the averages presented similar results to the motivations; they are much lower than the sample averages. The low average concerning returning to the North Region (3.28±1.173) and the possibility of speaking positively about the Northern Region (3.32±0.900) is worth noting. This can demonstrate the need for solid work to improve the image of the North Region before this group of outdoor activities practitioners.

Cluster 3: this is the largest cluster with 48.7% of the sample, named Enthusiasts, by the activities practised, mostly softs and by means of their motivations. Differing from the other clusters, most visitants in this cluster were males (52.7%), aged between 18-40 years (67.7%), and higher education is the most cited educational level in this group (76.3%), with an average monthly income of 601€-1200€ (28.0%). Additionally, 34.4% of them reside in the Porto Region, and outdoor activity in the residential area is occasional. Analysing the characteristics of the visit, the majority are untrained practitioners (83.9%), with a moderate level of knowledge (45.2%), practising the activity with friends (47.3%) and not previously acquired the activity (58.1%). Interesting, however, is that in this group is the highest percentage of practitioners who acquired the activity with a holiday activity company (20.4%).

Similar to Cluster 1, the enthusiasts practise soft (67.5%) and land-based (72.3%) activities. Among the cluster, the highest motivation mean was for nature/landscape (4.40 points±0.592), followed by security (4.19 points±0.784).

About the opinions, in this cluster, the quality/price ratio of the outdoor activity practised had a mean of 3.77 points (± 0.870), and the quality/price ratio in the Northern Region presented 3.90 points (±0.895). In terms of likelihood, the members of this cluster tend to recommend the Northern Portugal Region (4.49 points ±0.751) and to return to the region (4.40 points ±0.932). The characteristics of clusters 1 and 3 are quite similar; however, the main difference between them is the average motivations. Enthusiasts presented a behaviour similar to that of the general study sample. Table 3 presents the characteristics of the visits made, while Tables 4, 5 and 6 show the correlation between the motivation variables and the averages between the motivation factors and the intentions and probabilities of indicating the activity and the destination.

Table 3. Visits characteristics per cluster

Characteristics	Clusters		
	Soft Practitioners	Radicals	Enthusiasts
(n;%)	(n;%)	(n;%)	(n;%)
Level of Expertise (200; 100%)	Practioner untrained (55; 77.5%)	Trained practitioners (9; 33.3%)	Practioner untrained (78; 83.9%)
Level of knowledge (200; 100%)	Moderate (32; 45.1%)	High (11; 40.7%)	Moderate (42; 45.2%)
Travel Companion (199; 100%)	Friends (35; 49.3%)	Alone (9; 34.6%)	Friends (44; 47.3%)
Where purchase the activity (200; 100%)	Did not cquire/autonomously (38; 54.3%)	Association/Club (9; 33.3%)	Holiday activity company (19; 20.4%)

Table 4. Motivations Correlation Matrix

	$\bar{X}$	σ	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1	3.85	0.729	1.000														
2	3.80	1.037	.543	1.000													
3	3.99	0.937	.749	.525	1.000												
4	3.69	0.926	.638	.200	.429	1.000											
5	4.07	0.960	.813	.383	.672	.532	1.000										
6	4.08	0.986	.785	.239	.489	.544	.637	1.000									
7	3.95	0.942	.720	.318	.614	.402	.686	.583	1.000								
8	3.96	0.888	.773	.425	.538	.503	.612	.563	.630	1.000							
9	4.22	0.926	.745	.378	.565	.467	.620	.555	.472	.535	1.000						
10	4.34	0.908	.790	.398	.566	.438	.645	.641	.537	.587	.663	1.000					
11	3.98	0.973	.786	.384	.509	.389	.564	.577	.444	.606	.546	.671	1.000				
12	3.81	0.971	.748	.320	.418	.385	.486	.583	.336	.442	.487	.576	.724	1.000			
13	3.34	1.002	.613	.273	.385	.341	.362	.406	.354	.450	.359	.319	.469	.485	1.000		
14	3.60	1.010	.714	.337	.408	.392	.491	.500	.415	.525	.421	.422	.506	.629	.633	1.000	
15	3.91	1.001	.740	.270	.474	.457	.587	.630	.474	.439	.512	.516	.514	.685	.361	.547	1.000

1= Motivations; 2=Accommodation; 3=Gastronomy; 4= Climate; 5= Hospitality; 6= Environmental resources; 7= History and local/regional culture; 8= Touristic attractions; 9= Safety; 10= Nature/landscape; 11= New experiences; 12= Find adventure; 13= Events/festivals; 14= Tourism entertainment activities; 15= Outdoor activities. $\bar{X}$ = mean; σ = standard desviation.

Table 5. Means Motivation per cluster/dimension

Motivation	Total			Clusters					
	$\bar{X}$	σ	*p*-value	Soft Practitioners		Radicals		Enthusiasts	
				$\bar{X}$	σ	$\bar{X}$	σ	$\bar{X}$	σ
Services and hospitality									
Accommodation	3.80	1.037	<0.001	4.31	0.872	2.85	1.027	3.69	0.932
Gastronomy	3.99	0.937	<0.001	4.66	0.533	2.56	0.577	3.89	0.827
Climate	3.69	0.926	<0.001	4.13	0.773	2.56	0.641	3.69	0.821
Hospitality	4.07	0.960	<0.001	4.73	0.446	2.44	0.698	4.04	0.706
History and local/regional culture	3.95	0.942	<0.001	4.46	0.693	2.63	0.792	3.95	0.757
Touristic attractions	3,96	0.888	<0.001	4.51	0.694	2.78	0.801	3.88	0.657
Safety	4.22	0.926	<0.001	4.80	0.401	2.78	0.751	4.19	0.784
Nature Experience									
Nature/landscape	4.34	0.908	<0.001	4.90	0.300	2.63	0.792	4.40	0.592
Environmental resources	4.08	0.986	<0.001	4.72	0.484	2.56	0.934	4.04	0.765
New experiences	3.98	0.973	<0.001	4.75	0.553	2.52	0.700	3.82	0.691
Find adventure	3.81	0.971	<0.001	4.62	0.544	2.56	0.801	3.56	0.714
Events/festivals	3.34	1.002	<0.001	3.99	0.837	2.56	0.934	3.08	0.850
Tourism entertainment activities	3.60	1.010	<0.001	4.39	0.621	2.59	0.931	3.28	0.826
Outdoor activities (nature, adventure, or nautical activities)	3.91	1.001	<0.001	4.62	0.517	2.48	0.849	3.77	0.809

Table 6. Means Opinion/Likelihood per cluster

Opinion/Likelihood	Total			Clusters					
	$\bar{X}$	σ	*p*-value	Soft Practitioners		Radicals		Enthusiasts	
				$\bar{X}$	σ	$\bar{X}$	σ	$\bar{X}$	σ
Quality/price ratio of the outdoor activity practised today/recently	3.81	0.893	0.003	4.03	0.803	3.36	1.036	3.77	0.870
Quality/price ratio in the Northern Region	3.87	0.867	0.002	4.02	0.712	3.38	0.983	3.90	0.895
To repeat the practice of the outdoor activities	4.16	0.809	<0.001	4.53	0.561	3.35	0.977	4.13	0.733
To speak positively about the outdoor activity	4.16	0.851	<0.001	4.52	0.685	3.40	1.118	4.12	0.728
To speak positively about the Northern Region	4.14	0.889	<0.001	4.53	0.684	3.32	0.900	4.08	0.856
To recommend the outdoor activity practised	4.33	0.918	<0.001	4.64	0.671	3.46	1.179	4.33	0.857
To recommend the Northern Region	4.43	0.862	<0.001	4.73	0.570	3.40	1.118	4.49	0.751
To return to Northern Region	4.32	0.939	<0.001	4.60	0.680	3.28	1.173	4.40	0.832

The main objective of this study was to segment the market of visitors who practice outdoor activities in the North of Portugal. This study introduces the discussion about outdoor tourism segmentation, an indeed underestimated topic.

Two dimensions were identified based on the motivations: services/hospitality and nature experience. Furthermore, this study identified three segments of outdoor tourism practitioners: soft practitioners, radicals, and enthusiasts. Although there are not many differences in the socio-cultural characteristics of the groups, the most significant difference is in the motivations and activities practised. This was more evident in group 2. As aforementioned, two dimensions resulted from the Factor Analysis. Nature Experience dimension was also determined in previous studies (e.g., Beh and Bruyere, 2007; Carvache-Franco et al., 2019; Palacio and Mc Cool, 1997), which can be justified by the characteristics of outdoor activities. In contrast to earlier findings, no evidence of a service/hospitality dimension was found. This can be explained by the indicators used to measure these motivations that were different from previous studies. The current research was focused on indicators such as accommodation, gastronomy, climate, hospitality, history and local/regional culture, touristic attractions, and safety. It identified two similar clusters (1 and 3), but they were differentiated by the variables of motivations and the activities practised. Related to the motivations, it was evidenced that cluster 1, composed essentially of women, overvalued all the variables; while cluster 3, with more male elements, presented an opinion very similar to the general sample of this study. A point to highlight concerning the sociodemographic profile is that participants in outdoor activities in the North of Portugal have a high level of education likewise Tangland (2011), Carvache-Franco et al. (2019) and Dereck et al. (2019) studies. Radical activities tend to be practised more by men (e.g. Elsrud, 2001; Lewis, 2004; Terzić et al., 2021; Zhou et al., 2020), although the study is composed of a majority of women (Cluster 2) who practice more radical activities. It is not possible to identify the reason for this difference. In this case, a suggestion for future studies is to identify the gender difference in the practice of outdoor activities.

CONCLUSION

Motivation is a useful way to segment demand, and this study has also proved to be efficient in the outdoor tourism segment. Knowing the activities and preferred locations of the practitioners is also interesting to assist in marketing campaigns' planning and development processes. Although this study has evidenced a few sociodemographic differences between Clusters 1 and 2, it was clear that there are differences between the preferences for the activities practised in the three clusters found. Another issue is that most practitioners have no training in the activity practised; however, it was evidenced in cluster 2 a higher percentage of participants with training. In this case, the question is whether the practitioners' training in the practised activity makes them more critical, which caused the motivational averages to be lower than the other groups. Although this work has some limitations that must be addressed. The study was conducted using the snowball sample, thus, it is not a random process. In this sense, we cannot consider a representative of outdoor tourists, but exploratory research aimed to introduce this discussion.

The pandemic period potentiated the practice of nature-based activities, and many practitioners have discovered this practice and will continue. In this sense, knowing the profile and segmentation of these visitors is an important marketing tool that companies and those responsible for planning tourism in the destinations can use. In addition, this study can contribute to the discussions on this subject. In future studies, expanding the sample and applying the analysis in different regions is suggested to establish comparisons between practitioners of different activities and in the different regions.

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AN EXPLORATION OF TOURIST GUIDES' COMPETENCIES TO CREATE MEMORABLE TOURIST EXPERIENCES

Matome G. KAPA*
Tshwane University of Technology, Faculty of Management Sciences, Department of Tourism Management, Mbombela, South Africa, e-mail: KapaMG@tut.ac.za

Engela P. de CROM
Tshwane University of Technology, Faculty of Science, Department of Nature Conservation, Pretoria, South Africa, e-mail: decromep@tut.ac.za

Uwe P. HERMANN
Tshwane University of Technology, Faculty of Management Sciences, Department of Tourism Management, Pretoria, South Africa, e-mail: HermannUP@tut.ac.za

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Abstract: Tourist guiding in South Africa is a sector of the tourism industry that is subject to regulation to acquire competence and skills to meet the guiding standards and to provide quality services to tourists. The research aims to explore the skill sets perceived by tourist guides as the most important in their professional practice to create a memorable tourist experience to ensure that skills perceived to be most important are considered during the guiding training course for present and future tourist guides to prepare them for both employment, long-life learning and enhance their performance to attain the highest level of customer satisfaction. This study made use of a descriptive quantitative research approach through an online survey research design to collect data. A non-random sample of 320 tourist guides was selected to participate in the study. Data from the online survey was coded into numerical representations and captured in Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistics together with a confirmatory factor analysis were used to analyse and interpret the results. The results showed various skill sets perceived as the most important from the tourist guides' perspective, including honesty and reliability, ethical skills, time management, customer care skills, health and safety skills and communication skills.

Key words: tourist guides, skills, employability skills, tourist experience, personal skills, hard skills

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INTRODUCTION

The National Department of Tourism (NDT) in South Africa governs the guiding sector of the tourism industry. In order to operate professionally to work as a qualified and legally registered tourist guide, a guiding qualification is required that is accomplished through a certified learning institution in the country. All licensed learning institutions that offer such qualifications in South Africa are required to register with the Culture, Art, Tourism, Hospitality and Sports Sector Education and Training Authority [CATHSSETA] (FGASA, 2019). This national authority is responsible for vocational and applied learning programmes within the sector.

The skills required by a tourist guide to be employable include both hard skills and soft skills. Hard skills are the technical expertise and knowledge needed for a job. Soft skills are interpersonal qualities, also known as people skills, attitudes, habits and personal attributes that one possesses or skills that make someone a good employee and compatible to work with (Vasanthakumari, 2019). According to James and James (2004), hard skills are no longer seen as the single most important skill set and Nealy (2005) supports this by stating that soft skills are often considered more important for productive performance in the modern tour operator sector. While technical skills are a part of many educational curricula, soft skills need further emphasis in curricula so that students learn the importance of soft skills early in their academic programs before they embark on a business career (Wellington, 2005). Much research has been done on the importance of soft skills in the workplace (Klaus, 2010; Mitchell et al., 2010; Nealy, 2005; Smith, 2007) but is scant in the realm of tourist guiding. This study aimed to determine the level of importance of the various skills of tourist guides from the perception of these professionals in South Africa because tourist guides' competencies play an important role in what feelings and knowledge visitors will develop at the end of guided tours which may lead to customer satisfaction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourist guides are one of the most important components of a tourist's experience at a destination. Uys (2009) states that a tourist guide is a multi-skilled individual that contributes by creating an experience for tourists through interpretation.

* Corresponding author

Tourist guides are frontline staff who provide the ‘moment of truth’ for tourists and may make or break the trip (Zhang and Chow, 2004; Melia, 2012; Salazar, 2006; Hoang, 2015; Hurombo, 2016). The services of tourist guides may influence the quality of a traveller’s experience, length of stay, and the resulting financial benefits for a local community (Chilembwe and Mweiwa, 2014). Therefore, tourist guides who provide high quality services to tourists essentially ensure that they are satisfied and as a result, they may be willing to pay more and stay longer at a destination (Chilembwe and Mweiwa, 2014). In addition, the higher the service quality perceived by a tourist, the more opportunities the local individuals may have to improve their financial return due to increased spending and more time spend by tourists at a destination.

The tourist guide is defined as unofficial ambassadors of their countries, tourism companies, tourist destinations and employers who are required to possess moral, intellectual and professional qualities to be able to deliver memorable tourist experiences to the tourits in an interesting way (Kassawnh et al., 2019). Moral qualities include being authenticity, showing a sense of humour, self-respect and trustworthiness, Intellectual qualities include being knowledgeable with full information, for example, more information related to cultural matters, improved logical skills, life – long learner, commitment to continuous learning, and personal enrichment and professionalism qualities: the ability to plan, organise, coordinate, communicate and direct with ease (Sandaruwani and Gnanapala, 2016; Thompson, 2012; Kassawnh et al., 2019).

Tourist guides may be self-employed or find employment through travel agencies and tour operators. Thus, they require employability skills to be hired to be able to provide the best services to the tourists. The term skill refers to “the ability of somebody to do something well which is usually only gained through training and experience” (Uys, 2009, p.18). According to Robles (2012), business executives in the modern workplace perceive soft skills with increasing importance. Soft skills include interpersonal qualities, attitudes, habits and personality of individual, which one can acquire through educational, work and life experiences and personal attributes that one possesses, whereas hard skills are the technical abilities and knowledge that one possesses (Robles, 2012; Binsaeed et al., 2017). Soft skills consist of a variety of skills including communication, interpersonal ability, stress management, problem solving, self-management, time management, customer service skills, decision-making skills, leadership skills, cognitive skills and teamwork skills (Singh and Jaykumar, 2019). Furthermore, Robles (2012) states that employers consider new employees who have both strong soft skills and hard skills as more employable. The major soft skills perceived as the most important by business executives, also applicable to those in the tourism industry, include integrity, communication, courtesy, responsibility, social skills, positive attitude, professionalism, flexibility, teamwork, and work ethic (Robles, 2012). Robles (2012), Grančay (2020) and Čuić Tanković et al. (2021) indicates the required important personal attributes and skills of employees, including tourist guides, which are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Ten soft skills and attributes of employees Source: Robles (2012); Grančay (2020); Čuić Tanković et al. (2021)

Skills and attributes	Example	Type
Communication	Oral, speaking capability, written, presenting, listening and ability to deliver information clearly, negotiate and resolve conflict.	Skill
Courtesy	Manners, etiquette, business etiquette, gracious, says please and thank you, respectful.	Character
Flexibility	Adaptability, willing to change, lifelong learner, accepts new things, adjusts, teachable.	Character
Integrity	Honest, ethical, high morals, has personal values, does what is right and gives important, accurate and true information.	Character
Interpersonal skills	A sense of humour, friendly, nurturing, empathetic, disciplined, patient, social skills and tolerant of people.	Character
Positive attitude	Optimistic, enthusiastic, encouraging, happy, confident.	Character
Professionalism	Professional, well dressed, neat appearance, poised.	Character
Responsibility	Accountable, reliable, accomplished, resourceful, self-disciplined, wants to do well, conscientious, common sense.	Character
Teamwork	Cooperative, congenial, agreeable, supportive, helpful, collaborative.	Skill
Work ethic	Hard-working, loyal, self-motivated, punctual, good attendance.	Character

Table 2. Soft skills Source: Cleary et al., (2006); Čuić Tanković et al., (2021)

Soft skills	Example
Basic/fundamental skills	Technical, knowledge of the task, hands-on ability
Conceptual/thinking skills	Planning, collecting and organising information, problem-solving
Business skills	Innovation and enterprise
Community skills	Civic and citizenship knowledge
People-related skills	Interpersonal qualities, such as communication and teamwork
Personal skills	Attributes such as being responsible, resourceful, and self-confident

Robles (2012) states that even though all of the personal attributes and interpersonal qualities appear to be very important, not all are perceived to be equally important; some skills are more important when comparing them with other personal skills. The skills that travel and tourism employers including travel agents and tour operators want from their employees to foster and enhance their performance to attain the highest level of customer satisfaction include soft skills which are transferrable in many jobs (Clearyet et al., 2006; Čuić Tanković et al., 2021). Furthermore, Čuić Tanković et al., (2021) state that in the travel and tourism industry, soft skills are considered important compared to other skills. Table 2 provides an overview of general employability skills. People skills are a core component of soft skills (Klaus, 2010). People skills are the interpersonal attributes that characterise a person’s relationships with other people to enable someone to engage and get along with the people around them both on a personal and emotional level. They give someone the power to express their feelings effectively and, equally, they allow people to understand and connect with others (Thompson, 2021).

Some researchers note that interpersonal skills are the most important skills at all levels of the job (Sheikh, 2009; Smith, 2007) and may be very relevant to a career that involves significant elements of interpretation. While authors equate interpersonal skills with soft skills (James and James, 2004; Perreault, 2004), interpersonal skills are only one facet of soft skills. In addition to interpersonal skills, soft skills include personal qualities and career attributes (James and James, 2004; Nieragden, 2000; Perreault, 2004). Personal attributes might include one's personality, character traits, aptitude, values, and attitudes, for example, likeability, time management prowess, and organisational skills (Parsons, 2008; Malimas, 2017). Career attributes can include communication, teamwork, leadership, and customer service (James and James, 2004).

People skills are the foundation of good customer service, and customer service skills are critical to professional success in almost any job. Tourism businesses want resourceful employees with soft skills and employability skills at all levels, regardless of their position and industry. Employability skills are a set of skills, which employers expect from their employees, regardless of their position and industry. These skills are related to communication, teamwork, leadership, conflict management, the ability to negotiate, professionalism and ethics (John, 2009; Timm, 2005; Kiryakova-Dineva et al., 2019; Nikitina and Lapiņa, 2019; Donina and Lapiņa, 2020), in addition, employers seek employees with interpersonal qualities who can collaborate, motivate, and empathise with their colleagues (Rodas, 2007; Klaus, 2010). Mitchell et al. (2010) found ethics and general communication skills as extremely important, with time management and organisational skills as extremely important. Uys (2009) states that skills required for tourist guides may depend on the type of guiding that is being conducted. Table 3 indicates six (6) important skills identified, specifically for tourist guides, from literature.

Table 3. Skills required by tourist guides (Source: Reisinger and Steiner, 2006; Salazar, 2006; Uys, 2009; John, 2009; Suryana, 2022)

Skills	Description
Research skills	Being able to find information to share with tourists and display a willingness to know things
Organisational skills	Being able to be on time, follow a programme and manage the smooth running of a tour
Communication skills	Ability to deliver information, listen, negotiate and resolve conflict
Map reading	The ability to find and keep direction and using a map or a Global Positioning System (GPS).
Leadership	Ability to lead a group
Cultural sensitivity and awareness	Awareness of cultural diversity and the various backgrounds of tourists.

A tourist guide is required to undertake formal and informal research to update his or her guiding skills as well as knowledge related to the industry. Formal research relates to reading relevant textbooks, undertaking formal courses of study such as nature conservation, reading industry reports, attending industry-based events, while informal research relates to reading general media articles, speaking with tourists or visitors and visiting destinations, sites and attractions (ASEAN, 2015). One can thus comfortably argue that the ability to conduct research, as similarly propounded by Salazar (2006) is also a very important competence needed by tourist guides to excel in their field.

One of the soft skills considered more important in the tourism workplace is communication skills (Wesley et al., 2017; Jiang and Alexakis, 2017). Communication and culture are inseparable, tourist guides need to possess effective communication skills to be able to communicate with tourists from different cultural backgrounds. Because of their daily face-to-face interactions with tourists whose ethnic, social, religious and cultural backgrounds are different from their own, their communication competency needs constant improvement. Good communication skills need to be learnt and maintained through daily practice. Effective communication skills can lead to higher levels of tourist satisfaction, destination loyalty and more positive word-of-mouth advertising (Leclerc and Martin, 2004).

Moreover, authors such as Baum et al. (2007), suggest that tourist guides contribute to the destination image, as well as marketing and branding through an effective interpretation of a destination. An important associated principle of effective communication is effective listening. Listening to what others say is one of the most important aspects of good communication and helps to understand what people say, especially in terms of receiving feedback. Listening to customers enables the guide to understand what exactly they want and consequently to respond in a manner to satisfy their needs. Truly listening to what others say is a skill in itself and needs to be learnt.

Therefore, a guide needs to practise and develop good listening skills to enrich tourists' experience. Listening, show your interest and awareness using non-verbal communication with tourists (Reisinger and Steiner, 2006; Uys, 2009). Hurombo (2016) indicates that tourist guides need to demonstrate a passion for their work to show enthusiasm which can be expressed through effective communication with a good knowledge of the destination and products when dealing with tourists. A good tourist guide also needs to listen carefully to what the tourist says and try to remember details. Listening implies caring for their needs (VUSSC, 2006).

Being on time means being able to arrive at a meeting point, complete tasks and meet obligations at or by a designated time (Oxford Dictionary, 2019). To be punctual shows that a person is reliable, organised, dependable and can be trusted. In addition to that, being punctual as a guide shows a sense of respect for the tourists, the workplace and the industry. Furthermore, it demonstrates that a guide values other people's time and respects important social rules and conventions, increasing the credibility of the guide. Being late for an appointment of any nature is taken to be a sign of disrespect by many international cultures. As a guide, it is important to be the first one to arrive at the meeting point and to stay on time with the itinerary. Punctuality is not universal and varies from culture to culture.

For example, USAID (2012) states that German and French tourists arrive early for every excursion that being late is taken to be a sign of disrespect. It is also considered very rude to be late by 10 minutes for an appointment with North American tourists. Spanish, South American and African tourists do not pay attention to set times or deadlines. It is important for all tourist guides working in a new area to have the ability to read a map and use GPS to find directions.

The ability to interpret a map is important in terms of orientation, directing, developing an itinerary for a tour group about where they go, what they do, how long they spend in an area or on activity and having to make changes to the intended route. It is important to make use of a map to orientate yourself in a new area of operation as a tourist guide (Uys, 2009). Being able to use GPS can prevent tourists and a tourist guide from getting lost in an unfamiliar destination and can help to show the quickest route to take to get to the destination, therefore, understanding GPS functioning and other technological advances are equally/more important to tourist guides.

The vital role of a tourist guide is to lead and escort a group of tourists, take charge of the tour and take responsibility for the group. In addition, a guide should also ensure the comfort of the group and guarantee their safety and security so that when an emergency arises or when there is a need to take decisive action to address and solve unexpected circumstances and respond to their individual needs, preferences and wishes as a leader of a guided tour. It is important to know how to lead and manage the tour group to ensure no one gets lost and all participants get maximum value from the tour (ASEAN, 2014; Demirović Bajrami et al., 2020; Suryana, 2022).

Donohoe (2011, p. 37) states that "Cultural Sensitivity is the extent to which those who implement, support, and participate in ecotourism: minimize impacts to the natural and cultural environments, foster intercultural awareness and respect, contribute to the protection of built and living cultural heritage, foster the informed participation and empowerment of local and indigenous peoples, and respect the socio-cultural value systems of the host community". Tourism companies packaging guided tours, tourist guides and host destinations or countries are encouraged to be aware of the cultural backgrounds of their tourists to ensure that there is no cultural break between the host community and visitors (Lashley, 2017). Therefore, considered to be essential for a tourist guide to have a good Intercultural communication to be able to communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds without offending them.

Melia (2012), Hoang (2015) and Hurombo (2016) assessed the roles of tourist guides, the impacts of tourist guides' performance on foreign tourist satisfaction and the skills required to co-create memorable tourism experiences. This study is similar to the study that has been conducted in the past in different countries, for example, Čuić Tanković, et al. (2021) conducted a study based on tour guide's competencies as predictors of tourists' sustainable behaviour – evidence from the national park. In addition, this study is also similar to the study conducted by Grančay (2020) which aimed to assess the competitiveness of Slovak tourist guides using Slovakian licenced tourist guides as a case study.

Lastly, similar to the study conducted by Demirović Bajrami et al. (2020) based on tour guides' competencies as predictors of tourists' sustainable behaviour – evidence from national parks. Therefore, the methodology, questionnaires and literature review were adopted from previous studies (Melia (2012; Hoang, 2015; Hurombo, 2016). Very limited research has examined how tourism frontline staff should be nurtured to become co-creators of memorable tourist experiences, particularly tourist guides. Studies conducted previously by authors such as El-Sharkawy (2007), Vasanthakumari (2019), Hine (2020), Demirović Bajrami et al. (2020) and Čuić Tanković, et al., (2021) identified a set of skills perceived to be more important than others at workplace and by tourist guides, including organisational skills, problem-solving skills, leadership, time management, customer care skills, health and safety skills, communication skills, knowledge of the destination and tourism products, right attitude concerning service, honesty and trustworthiness.

METHODOLOGY

This study made use of an exploratory quantitative research approach. The target population included all registered tourist guides of South Africa. A non-probability sampling procedure, more specifically convenience sampling, was applied. Authors developed the survey, based on previous studies conducted by Melia (2012), Hoang (2015) and Hurombo (2016). A questionnaire was distributed among licensed tourist guides in South Africa by means of a survey link (electronic survey) which was e-mailed to guides listed on provincial databases, and 320 completed questionnaires were returned. The empirical data was gathered from 15 August until 28 September 2018.

Online surveys have the advantage that respondents in dispersed geographical areas may be included in the target population, it may be completed at the respondent's own time and anonymity of the respondents are ensured, lastly it allows respondents to navigate through questions based on answers. Inbuilt data validation rules ensure that people get the right questions based on the previous answers (Glover and Bush, 2005; Siva Durga Prasad Nayak and Narayan, 2019). This was useful due to the geographic dispersion of tourist guides in the country. In addition, online surveys give the capability to transfer study responses directly into a database and translation mistakes are reduced (Andrews et al., 2003).

Information from the online survey was coded into numerical representations and captured in Microsoft Excel. The collected information was factually dissected by utilising the Program (STATA) Version 15 program. Descriptive insights were utilised in this study as well Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's tests were conducted to look at the adequacy of the test and the reasonableness of information for factor analysis. The survey was particularly planned for this study and the reliability of the questions within the survey posted to the test and was tested by utilising the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results provide an insight into the various skills considered important as perceived by tourist guide respondents. The reviewed literature demonstrated that many researchers emphasise the important skills required for any employee including tourist guides such as organisational skills, ethical skills, customer care skills, time management skills and communication skills for building a good relationship with visitors and the image of the site they show to visitors.

The respondents were required to rate the importance of each personal skill, trait and knowledge in contributing to the quality of a guided tour experience.

The importance of personal skills for the tourist guide

Respondents were required to rate the importance of each skill from Table 4 on the scale provided where 1 equates to not important at all and 5 to extremely important.

Table 4. Perceived personal skills, traits and knowledge

Importance personal skills, traits and knowledge for a guide	Not important at all	Less important	Important	Very important	Extremely important
Knowledge of the destination’s culture	0%	0.65%	18.30%	33.01%	48.04%
Knowledge of a destination’s history	0%	3.27%	19.93%	34.97%	41.83%
Sense of humour	0%	1.31%	24.26%	37.70%	36.72%
Knowledge of local people’s lifestyle	0%	1.31%	19.28%	38.89%	40.52%
Briefing tourists in advance about the local culture and norms	0%	3.92%	18.95%	37.91%	39.22%
Ability to anticipate tourist needs	0%	0.33%	12.79%	35.08%	51.80%
Strong sense of ethics	0%	0.99%	8.25%	32.34%	58.42%
Willingness to help clients	0%	0%	5.56%	25.16%	69.28%
Ability to remember the names, faces of clients	0%	4.93%	28.62%	32.24%	34.21%
Learning other people’s language	2.94%	26.14%	35.62%	22.88%	12.42%
Ability to conduct the tour in the language of the tour group	3.27%	26.80%	23.86%	21.57%	24.51%
Ability to handle customers’ complaints	0.33%	0.33%	13.11%	37.05%	49.18%
Ability to solve any conflicts during the tour	0%	1.64%	8.85%	31.48%	58.03%
Time management	0%	0.66%	8.22%	25.00%	66.12%
Educating clients about environmental protection issues	0%	2.31%	15.84%	29.37%	52.48%
Appearing neat and tidy	0%	0.65%	12.09%	29.41%	57.84%
Ability to answer all the questions from the tour group	0.66%	5.25%	28.52%	34.43%	31.15%
Ability to pay attention to detail	0%	0.65%	20.92%	33.99%	44.44%
Enthusiasm	0%	0%	7.84%	28.76%	63.40%
Ability to coordinate a group	0%	0.33%	11.48%	35.08%	53.11%
Taking good care of customers’ needs	0%	0.33%	9.18%	30.82%	59.67%
Ability to entertain	0.33%	4.26%	32.79%	30.82%	31.80%
Knowledge of the destination and tourism products	0%	0.33%	13.07%	35.62%	50.98%
Tolerance	0%	1.31%	15.08%	30.82%	52.79%
Honesty and reliability	0%	0%	3.28%	19.34%	77.38%
Ability to understand and manage others’ emotions	0.66%	2.30%	19,.02%	37.05%	40,98%
Listening skills	0%	0.33%	9.80%	27.45%	62.42%

Table 4 shows different skills, traits and knowledge of tourist guides' competitiveness that were pre-selected based on literature (Zhang and Chow, 2004; Reisinger and Steiner, 2006; Salazar, 2006; John, 2009; Melia, 2012; Robles, 2012; Hoang, 2015; Hurombo, 2016; Čuić Tanković et al.,2021; Suryana, 2022). It can be seen that tourist guides themselves consider moral skills to be the most important part of their competence. Respondents rated the following top six personal skills, traits and knowledge as ‘very important’ to ‘extremely important’ (Table 4) and the rate at which each skill was rated by the respondents was indicated in percentages.

- Honesty and reliability 97%
- Willingness to help clients 94%
- Enthusiasm 92%
- Strong sense of ethics 91%
- Time management 91%
- Taking good care of customers’ needs 91%

The findings of this study in relation to the personal skills and knowledge required for the tourist guides correspond with much of the literature. The results support previous findings on the importance of soft skills (Robles, 2012; Binsaeed et al., 2017; Hurombo, 2016; Singh and Jaykumar, 2019).The literature highlight the following knowledge, traits and skills as very important to extremely important for the professional tourist guides to do their work effectively:

Being ethical, honest and reliable includes providing accurate and true information during any guided experience and being honest create better relationships with tourists was also noted as a vital guiding skill by Uys (2009) and Mitchell et al. (2010). Willingness to help clients was found to be one of the most important skills required by tourist guides in their profession. The study conducted by ASEAN (2014) agrees with the findings of this study and shows a willingness to help clients considered an important skill for professional tourist guides, furthermore states that tourist guides, who show a willingness to assist, demonstrate care for tourists. Taking good care of customers’ needs was also considered an important skill needed by tourist guides. Customer care includes listening to customer needs and anticipating their needs (VUSSC, 2006; Uys, 2009).

Enthusiasm had initially been theorised to be part of personality traits and character for tourist guides. This skill also emerged as one of the most important skills needed by the respondents to demonstrate a passion for their work and to do their work successfully. This research confirms findings by Hurombo (2016) who indicates that tourist guides need to demonstrate a passion for their work to show enthusiasm which can be expressed through effective communication with a good knowledge of the destination and products when dealing with tourists. In addition, Demirović Bajrami et al. (2020) state that being enthusiastic and energetic during the tour can encourage visitors to take some actions or behave the same way when the tour is over. Time management also emerged as one of the most important skills needed by the respondents. Several authors support these findings and organisations including Zhang and Chow (2004), Uys (2009), Mitchell et al. (2010), USAID (2012) who all indicate that time management is an important skill for tourist guides. Being punctual means being on time or being able to arrive at a meeting point, complete tasks and meet obligations at the designated time. Being on time demonstrates that a tourist guide values other people's time.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

A CFA was employed to affirm the components that were loaded into three factors including emotional intelligence, cultural intelligence, and personality traits that were extracted from the study conducted by Hurombo (2016). The factor analysis was conducted using the Principal Component Analysis (PCA). Burton and Mazerolle (2011) state that Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's tests is conducted to look at the adequacy of the test and the appropriateness of the information for factor analysis, therefore the stated test was conducted for this study to confirm the adequacy of the test. Cooper and Schindler (2014) expressed that the suitability of the correlational network for factor analysis is benchmarked at 0.5 for the KMO test whereas less than 0.05 is measurably critical for Bartlett's test of Sphericity (<.05) and is satisfactory. The KMO test for factor analysis had a critical KMO measurement of 0.93, which was over the minimum required score of 0.5, The Bartlet test measurement was p= 0.000. These two conditions, hence, qualified the suitability of factor analysis for this study (Hurombo, 2016). Field (2009) states that factor analysis may be a procedure utilised to distinguish whether the relationship between a set of observed factors stems from their relationship to one or more idle factors within the data. Field (2009) further proposes that factor analysis is valuable for examining build legitimacy, and it is known as a demonstration for measuring idle factors, which cannot be specifically measured with a single variable.

In agreement, Rummel (2012) adds that factor analysis tries to distinguish fundamental factors that clarify the pattern of relationships inside a set of observed factors. For the expressed reasons, the factor analysis was performed to distinguish the fundamental clusters or sets of tourist guide qualities that can be utilised to clarify much of the change under perception for this study. The STATA Software was used to apply a principal component factor analysis using an orthogonal rotation.

The pattern matrix of the principal components factor analysis identified three factors that were labelled according to similar characteristics. Table 5 outlines the results of the factor analysis. A PCA of the remaining items using Orthogonal Varimax revolution was conducted, resulting in a total variance of 52%. All variables had high-reliability coefficients extending from 0.8 the least to 0.9 most elevated. As prescribed by Field (2009), only factor loadings above 0.40 and the suggested Cronbach's Alpha measurement of 0.7 were extricated and displayed in Table 5. The results of an orthogonal revolution of the arrangement appear in Table 5. When loadings less than 0.40 were avoided, the analysis yielded a three-factor arrangement straightforward structure (calculate loadings =>.40).

Table 5. Factor analysis results (Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis (PCA).)

Perceived most important personal skills, traits and knowledge	Factor Loadings	Cronbach Alpha	Rank-Sum	Rank-Mean
Factor 1: Moral qualities		**0.9003**	**182343.00**	**595.89**
Ability to anticipate tourist needs	0.5498	0.8907		
Strong sense of ethics	0.5966	0.8967		
Willingness to help clients	0.6730	0.8885		
Ability to handle customers' complaints	0.6059	0.8906		
Ability to solve any conflicts during the tour	0.6082	0.8904		
Time management	0.5840	0.8950		
Enthusiasm	0.6734	0.8901		
Taking good care of customers' needs	0.5834	0.8896		
Tolerance	0.7038	0.8920		
Honesty and reliability	0.8072	0.8909		
Listening skills	0.5675	0.8912		
Factor 2: Professional qualities		**0.8541**	**131715.00**	**430.44**
Sense of humour	0.4941	0.8455		
Ability to remember the names, faces of clients	0.4683	0.8502		
Educating clients about environmental protection issues	0.4810	0.8425		
Appearing neat and tidy	0.4628	0.8390		
Ability to answer all the questions from the tour group	0.6775	0.8346		
Ability to pay attention to detail	0.6806	0.8294		
Ability to coordinate a group	0.4814	0.8383		
Ability to entertain	0.7091	0.8345		
Ability to understand and manage others' emotions	0.5139	0.8345		
Factor 3: Intellectual qualities		**0.8189**	**107763.00**	**352.17**
Knowledge of the destination's culture	0.8295	0.7806		
Knowledge of a destination's history	0.8465	0.7763		
Knowledge of local people's lifestyle	0.7182	0.7821		
Briefing tourists in advance about the local culture and norms	0.6895	0.7817		
Learning other people's language	0.5684	0.7959		
Ability to conduct the tour in the language of the tour group	0.4783	0.8381		
Knowledge of the destination and tourism products	0.4808	0.8089		

The factor analysis (Pattern Matrix) identified three factors, which retained 52% of the variation data and based on Table 5, they are intellectual skills, moral skills and professional skills. For each of the factors, Cronbach's Alpha was determined (Table 5). Sandaruwani and Gnanapala (2016), Thompson (2012) and Kassawnh et al. (2019) state that tourist guides must possess moral, intellectual and professional skills, which include the following:

Factor 1: Moral skills

Sandaruwani and Gnanapala (2016) state that moral skills are multifaceted. It is composed of many distinct traits such as trustworthiness, humility, pride, validity, a sense of amusingness, respect and reliability. Other traits include kindness, justness, courage, and self-control. Therefore, it was found that the variables loaded onto Factor 1 are closely associated with moral traits. This factor was labelled as moral skills.

Eleven items were loaded onto factor 1. The majority of these eleven variables were to do with the visitor guide's capacity to get the tourists' needs. The factors that loaded in this factor included resilience, conflict determination skills, foreseeing traveler needs, trustworthiness, honesty and reliability, taking good care of customers' needs, time management, ability to handle customers' complaints, listening skills, enthusiasm, willingness to help clients, and a strong sense of ethics. The ethical qualities factor had the most elevated Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.90 which affirmed the reliability and inner consistency of the factor under study. All items loaded onto factor 1 are linked to communication skills, positive attitude, integrity and Interpersonal skills from the top ten skills identified in the literature review.

Factor 2: Professional skills

The variables that emphatically connected in this factor included a sense of humour, ability to remember the names and faces of clients, educating clients about environmental protection issues, showing up flawless and clean, the ability to answer all the questions from the tour group, the capacity to pay consideration to detail, the ability to coordinate a group, the capacity to engage, and the capacity to understand and oversee others' feelings. This factor was labelled as professional qualities and included the tourist guide's ability to plan the tour, coordinate with the tourists, communicate and direct with ease. The factor's Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.85 implied the reliability and inside consistency of the factor scale. Professionalism is one of the top ten skills identified in the literature review by Robles (2012), who indicated how professional should appear and all items loaded onto this factor are related to professionalism skills.

Factor 3: Intellectual skills

Intellectual skills relate to interest in information and cultural matters, commitment to continuous learning and personal enrichment (Sandaruwani and Gnanapala, 2016). Therefore, in this factor, seven variables were loaded including information of the destination's culture, information of a destination's history, information of nearby people's way of life, and briefing sightseers in progress almost the nearby culture and standards. Other variables included in this factor are learning other people's language (vocabulary, grammar), the ability to conduct the tour in the language of the tour group, and information of the destination and tourism products. Factor 3 had a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.82 implying inner textures and reliability of the factor. Intellectual skills are based on the knowledge of a tourist guide when providing a guided tours. The results from Table 5 show that moral skills were perceived as the most important factor or key factor for the respondents to be able to provide better-guided experiences.

The rank mean is 595.89 when compared with the other two factors namely, professional skills and intellectual skills. Therefore, moral skills were considered the most important factor for the tourist guides to perform their job professionally, most of the qualities, attributes, and skills classified under moral skills are rated to be the most important when compared to other skills. The intellectual qualities factor, be that as it may, had the least rank mean value of 430.44 which appears that it was valued by the respondents to be of the slightest significance.

Implications of the research

Tourist guide performance is one of the keys concern to the success of a guided package tour. The results of this study suggest several implications for tourist guides, tour managers and tour operators. The study provides some guidance on strategies from the tourist guide performance perspective. The current research has also indicated that good tourist guides are based on six components: time management skills, ethical skills, enthusiasm skills, customer care skills, health, safety skill, and communication skill. Moreover, tourist guide performance is significantly and positively related to tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty. Firstly, in terms of organisational skills, tourist guides should concentrate on improving their ability in time management and activities organisation by understanding deeply about the package tour they are guiding. Secondly, it contributes to career awareness to help guiding students and curriculum designers, to be aware of the expected personality, character traits, aptitude, values, and attitudes of tourist guide from a tourist guide perspective. Lastly, the study also shows an implication for the people who are leaders in the tourism industry in South Africa. In a company with the endeavour of tourist guides and the support from tour managers and tour operators, there should be a new and innovative system/certificate to evaluate a qualified tourist guide for the inbound market. That system/certificate has to stress the significant knowledge and skills of a tourist guide, including the knowledge of the culture and history of destinations, the knowledge of the understanding culture of foreign tourists, the skill of solving problems and conflicts, the skill of time management and activities organisation, and the skill of introduction traditional food and entertainment places. This not only fulfils the tourist guide attributes but also enhances the level of tourists' satisfaction with a package tour and increases their level of destination loyalty.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Relating to the importance of tourist guiding in the tourism industry researchers suggest that tourist guides need to be carefully selected, trained, motivated, monitored and regularly evaluated. The findings of this study suggest that both tourists, tourism employers and future tourism professionals are aware of the importance of soft skills in the tourism industry as a people-based industry, which requires multiple skills to deliver the best service. The study proposed a multidimensional construct consisting of six competencies of tourist guide performance which include time management skills, ethical skills, enthusiasm skills, customer care skills, health and safety skill and communication skill. This competence can be found as the most effective factor for building tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty. The positive image of tourist guide performance is not only positively and significantly related to the satisfaction of tourists but also is one of the factors that determine the destination loyalty of customers. Tour operators, travel agents and other tourism employers may consider interpersonal skills as a very important attribute in job applicants. They can employ honest and reliable employees who can communicate well, get along with others, and work hard.

The study, moreover, has proposed several suggestions for both tourist guides, tour managers and tour operators to identify the advantages and disadvantages of tourist guide attributes in a tourism company, and then to foster and enhance the performance of employees to reach a higher level of customers' satisfaction as well as their destination loyalty. The suggestions, in addition, also help the policymakers in South Africa to set up an innovative standard system of qualifications for inbound tourist guide staff that appropriated worldwide standards from a global perspective. Tourist guide performance is not only the factor that affects the success of a package tour but also plays an important role to build the image of the tourism industry in South Africa. Based on the results, the researcher recommends that it is a necessity to prepare tourist guides in South Africa very well to enable them to deal with tourists skilfully and professionally.

Organisations need to train current employees to enhance their soft skills. Soft skills and hard skills should be integrated to create a well-rounded business graduate. Further research is needed to study interpersonal skills and determine if other soft skills are deemed as important as the attributes found in this study. Firstly, this study focused only on tourist guide competencies. Therefore, future studies should explore the competencies of the different frontline employees in the tourism industry for example, in the hospitality sector to compare and validate the results from the present study.

Limitations of the research

The main obstacle encountered during the study was the lack of a database to be able to contact the respondents regarding the study. It was found that some of the respondents' contact details from the National Department of Tourism (NDT) database were incorrect. Due to a restricted time frame, it was merely possible to conduct the study from the 15th of August until the 28th of September 2018 to be able to complete the study within the time frame. This study focused on the importance of professional tourism employees' skills from the perspective of tourist guides. The weakness of this research is that the study was conducted with tourist guides only. A study for visitors would have given the details about a tourist‘s point of view of the interaction between visitors and tourist guides to confirm whether tourist guides apply the skills they consider to be more important in their profession of guiding. This considers centres on the tourist guide as the key figure. Hence, a study of the visitors was not conducted. The needs and expectations for employee skills change over time, so longitudinal research should be employed to monitor the changes in skills perceived to be more important.

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THE INFLUENCE OF MEMORABLE FESTIVAL EXPERIENCES ON ARAB VISITORS' REVISIT INTENTION TO THE JERASH FESTIVAL OF CULTURE AND ARTS (JFCA) IN JORDAN

Mu'ath Hesham AL-AZZAM*
Universiti Utara Malaysia, School of Tourism, Hospitality and Event Management, Sintok-Kedah, Malaysia, e-mail: muath_hesham_metl@gsgsg.uum.edu.my

Ahmad Edwin MOHAMED
Universiti Utara Malaysia, School of Tourism, Hospitality and Event Management, Sintok-Kedah, Malaysia, e-mail: edwin@uum.edu.my

Lim Khong CHIU
Universiti Utara Malaysia, School of Tourism, Hospitality and Event Management, Sintok-Kedah, Malaysia, e-mail: lkc@uum.edu.my

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Abstract: The main objective of this study is to investigate the influence of memorable festival experiences (MFEs) on revisit intention from the perspective of Arab visitors in the context of the Jerash Festival of Culture and Arts (JFCA) in Jordan. The quantitative research method was used in the research. Questionnaires were used to collect the data. Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was used in the data analysis to test the research hypothesis. The study found that MFEs influence Arab visitors' revisit intention. It also confirmed the validity of Event Experience Scale (EES) that constitutes four dimensions: affective engagement, cognitive engagement, physical engagement, and experiencing novelty, in the context of Arab visitors. Theoretical and managerial implications are discussed. Theoretically, the study provides insight into the influence of MFEs on Arab visitors' revisit intentions. It also evaluates the reliability and validity of EES for the first time in the context of Arab cultural festivals. Practically, the study paved the way for JFCA organisers, planners, managers, and marketers to plan, develop, and market useful festival tourism strategies. It is also envisaged that the information obtained in this study will help promote the enhancement of visitors' experiences at JFCA to attract and retain more visitors in the globally competitive event industry.

Key words: memorable festival experiences, revisit intention, event experience scale, Jerash Festival of Culture and Arts, arab visitors

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INTRODUCTION

Festivals play a crucial role in tourism marketing by attracting tourists and creating festival tourism (Getz, 2010). Festival tourism contributes to destination marketing by forming destination image, branding destinations, attracting off-season tourists, stimulating specific areas or attractions, and catalysing urban and economic development (Getz, 2010; Ziyadin et al., 2019). With the emergence of events and festivals as major tourist attractions and important sources of outbound tourism worldwide, the number and scope of events and festivals have increased in Asia and the Middle East/North Africa (Weber and Ali-Knight, 2012). As a part of these two regions, Arab destinations are investing aggressively in tourism to show their capability to the outside world in developing diversification strategies away from commodities toward festivals (Weber and Ali-Knight, 2012). Therefore, organizing festivals and cultural events to enlarge and enrich tourism and support infrastructure has emerged as a new trend in the Arab world, including Jordan (AL-Hamarneh, 2005). Festivals are one of Jordan's culture and heritage subsector products (Shahateet and Partale, 2019). They are an important feature of cultural tourism, which accounts for the largest share of Jordan's tourism and remains the primary motive for visiting the country (Shahateet and Partale, 2019). In addition, festivals are used as an organised and supported tool to encourage domestic tourism in Jordan to contribute to the tourism balance of payment (Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MOTA), 2016). For instance, between 2010-2016, cultural events in Jordan decreased tourism spending and reduced the number of departures by 18% and 48%, respectively (MOTA, 2016).

Numerous cultural festivals are held monthly and annually in Jordan. Among these festivals, the Jerash Festival of Culture and Arts (JFCA) is widely recognised as the most significant and well-attended international-level cultural event. It attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors worldwide, particularly Arab tourists, to view a wide range of performances, including cultural, singing, acting, dancing, literature, poetry, and much more (Harahsheh, 2009; Al-Khasawneh, 2016).

Festival tourism has emerged as an important research area in festival studies and remains a mainstream research topic today due to the increasing number of festivals that attract potential tourists (Choo et al., 2016; Getz, 2010; Getz and Page, 2016). Because of the fierce competition between festivals and the significance of festivals in developing or rejuvenating tourist destinations, researchers and practitioners alike have been particularly interested in studying and understanding a tourist's revisit intention towards festivals (Osti et al., 2012). Marketing initiatives are often devoted to generating and sustaining repeat visitations, which may be of paramount importance as festivals depend largely on repeat tourists (Choo et al.,

* Corresponding author

2016; Lee et al., 2009). Therefore, studying visitors' revisit intention towards a festival has attracted researchers' attention and remains an under-researched topic (Al-Azzam et al., 2022; Boo and Kim, 2022). However, there is surprisingly little knowledge about it in the context of the Arab nations (Al-Azzam et al., 2022; Al-Dweik, 2020; Abdelazim and Alajloni, 2016). Thus, this research seeks to address this gap. A review of the literature resources on revisit intention in the context of festivals (e.g., Akgunduz and Cosar, 2018; Choo et al., 2016; Jung et al., 2015; Kim et al., 2016; Kruger and Saayman, 2018; Rivera et al., 2015; Thrane, 2002; Supriono and Yulianto, 2021; Vesci and Botti, 2019) revealed several factors influencing attendees' revisit intentions, such as festival quality, satisfaction, motivation, emotions, and perceived value. However, researchers unintentionally disregard studying the influence of memorable festival experiences (MFEs) on revisit intention (Ribeiro et al., 2022). As a result, limited studies have investigated this influence, although prior tourism studies confirm the essential effect of memorable experiences on tourists' revisit intentions to destinations (e.g., Kim, 2018; Mittal et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2018). Therefore, Huang et al. (2019) and Chiengkul et al. (2022) recommend examining the influence of MFEs on the revisit intention.

In addition to the above, reviewing the literature revealed that two studies examined visitors' revisit intentions within the context of cultural festivals in Jordan. The first study by Al-Dweik (2020) investigated the influences of event and destination image on visitors' revisit intentions in the context of the Jerash and Fuheis festivals. The second study by Muala (2020) investigated the effect of Jordan's image, price fairness, service climate, and satisfaction on tourists' loyalty (revisit intention and recommendation intention) to JFCA from the perspective of international tourists. Thus, the effects of MFEs have not been evaluated yet in the Arab context, especially in Jordan. Therefore, this study aims to fill this research gap by investigating the influences of MFEs on revisit intention in the context of Arab cultural events, i.e., JFCA.

Memorable experiences have received growing attention in the tourism literature to understand how tourists remember their tourist experiences based on their subjective evaluations (Castellani et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2012). Memorable experiences are equally important in a festival setting (Chiengkul et al., 2022; Morgan, 2008; Ribeiro et al., 2022). They are an important criterion for festivals' success (Morgan, 2008). Understanding how festival attendees construct and remember their experiences is critical because once the festival is over, attendees primarily access their experiences through memories and recollections that potentially influences their behavioral intentions (Wood and Kinnunen, 2020). Therefore, identifying what MFEs consist of and how experiences are shaped and remembered is particularly important for managing such experiences (Cao et al., 2019; Wood and Kinnunen, 2020). Drawing on cognitive psychology, event or festival experience is theoretically conceptualised as having three experiential domains: cognitive, affective, and conative, which are modified with level of engagement (Getz, 2007; Pettersson and Getz, 2009; Geus et al., 2016). These components are "critical to a better understanding the design, staging, and evaluation of memorable event and festival experiences" (Benckendorff and Pearce, 2012: 8). Therefore, Getz and Page (2016) asserted the importance of investigating what makes event and festival experiences memorable by considering the three dimensions of experience: cognitive, affective, and conative.

Given the memorable nature of events and festival experiences, Geus et al. (2016) developed an Event Experience Scale (EES) based on the conceptualization of the event and festival experiences mentioned above. Based on the exploratory factor analysis (EFA), the researchers identified four components or dimensions: cognitive engagement, affective engagement, physical engagement, and novelty. EES has been extensively used by researchers in conceptualization and measuring event and festival experiences and has been verified to be robust across various types of events such as sport events and cultural festivals (e.g., Coetzee et al., 2019; Hermann et al., 2020; Richards, 2019; Richards and King, 2022). However, given the importance of these four dimensions in creating memorable experiences for event or festival settings (Coetzee et al., 2019; Benckendorff and Pearce, 2012; Getz and Page, 2016), to the best of the researchers' knowledge, no attempt has been made to conceptualize and measure MFEs using these four dimensions offered by EES. Thus, this is another research gap that this study aims to fill by using EES in conceptualising and measuring MFEs.

The main objective of this study is to investigate the influence of MFEs on Arab visitors' intention to revisit JFCA in Jordan. It also tests the validity of EES in a new context, i.e., Arab countries, and sample, i.e., Arab visitors.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHSES DEVELOPMENT

Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

The theory of planned behaviour (TPB) is a social-psychological theory that was developed by Ajzen (1985) as an expansion of the theory of reasoned action (TRA) created originally by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975). TPB aims to provide a comprehensive basis for understanding the predictors of human behaviour (Ajzen, 2015). A key element in the TPB is the behavioural intentions to execute the behaviour in question (Ajzen, 1985, 2015; Ajzen and Driver; 1992). TPB has been studied widely used in tourism research to predict tourists' behavioural intentions (Ulker-Demirel and Ciftci, 2019; Yuzhanin and Fisher, 2016). According to TPB, behavioural intentions are preceded by three determinants: attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. However, Ajzen (2020) stated that TPB is "open to the inclusion of additional predictors" (p. 3019). Therefore, several researchers extended the TPB model by adding additional variables to the original TPB construct to study tourists' behavioural intentions (e.g., Alonso et al., 2015; Han et al., 2019; Hsu and Huang, 2012; Vesci and Botti, 2019). On the other hand, some researchers (e.g., Huang and Hsu, 2009; Coudounaris and Sthapit, 2017) used the TPB model to investigate the factors affecting tourists' behavioural intentions without applying the model directly to the studies. They instead used other variables that influence tourists' behavioural intentions. For example, Coudounaris and Sthapit (2017) examined the influences of visitors' memorable experiences on their behavioural intentions based on the TPB. Thus, this study chooses to study memorable festival experiences (MFEs) as an important influencing factor on festival tourists' revisit intention. The previous research on memorable experiences in different tourism settings confirmed the vital role that memorable experiences play in influencing tourists' behavioural intentions, especially revisit intention (Hosany et al., 2022; Hosseini et al., 2021).

Revisit Intention

Revisit intention refers to the tourists' future behavioural intention towards a destination or event (Chen and Tsai, 2007; Lee et al., 2007). Tourists' behavioural intentions are a result of the post-visitation evaluations of their experiences (Chen and Tsai, 2007). Accordingly, a tourist's behavioural intention refers to one's predicted future travel behaviour, which is thought to be an important factor that is closely related to actual travel behaviour (Chang et al., 2014). In the festival context, tourists' behavioural intentions are crucial for marketing and festival organisation and is also a useful market segmentation tool (Kruger and Saayman, 2017; 2018). Revisit intention is a popular topic in tourist research. Most of the researchers have paid attention to RI because of its importance and benefits in tourism marketing (Viet et al., 2020). It is a specific aspect of tourists' post-consumption behaviour and is an important factor in tourist loyalty (Loi et al., 2017; Seetanah et al., 2020). Studies that examine visitors' intentions to revisit festivals are considered an important area of study. Indeed, scholars have continued to debate the variables that influence revisit intention. These variables include revealed several factors influencing visitors' revisit intentions, such as festival quality, satisfaction, motivation, emotions, and perceived value (e.g., Akgunduz and Cosar, 2018; Choo et al., 2016; Jung et al., 2015; Kim et al., 2016; Kruger and Saayman, 2018; Rivera et al., 2015; Thrane, 2002; Supriono and Yulianto, 2021; Vesci and Botti, 2019).

Memorable Festival Experiences (MFEs)

Memorable experiences are those experiences that tourists selectively construct from their experiences and can be remembered and recalled after an event has occurred based on their subjective evaluations (Kim et al., 2012). This means that not all experiences can be necessarily translated to memorable experiences (Kim et al., 2012; Zhang et al., 2018). Memorable experiences have received growing attention in the tourism literature to understand how tourists remember their tourism experiences after consuming them based on their subjective evaluations (Kim et al., 2012; Kim and Ritchie, 2014). Memorable experiences are equally important in festival settings (Morgan, 2008). They are an important criterion to festivals' success (Morgan, 2008). Understanding how festival attendees construct and remember their experiences is critical, because once the festival is over, attendees primarily access their experiences through memories and recollections that potentially influence their behavioural intentions (Wood and Kinnunen, 2020). Additionally, memorable experiences increase the visitors' likelihood of recommending festivals to others, and eventually becoming loyal to them (Cole and Chancellor, 2009; Huang et al., 2019). For organizers and planners, facilitating memorable experiences for festival attendees is the main goal they strive to achieve (Cole and Chancellor, 2009). As a result, memorable experiences enable festivals to differentiate themselves from one another and create a competitive edge, which is necessary for festivals to substantiate their long-term sustainability (Kinnunen and Haahti, 2015). Festival experiences are often viewed as a special or memorable experiences in event management research because its distinctive nature compared to everyday life (Geus et al., 2016), in addition to its ability to generate multiple psychological outcomes, i.e., cognitive, affective, and conative, for attendees (Benckendorff and Pearce, 2012; Getz, 2007, 2008). These outcomes are more likely to access the attendees' memories and eventually constitutes memorable experiences (Kim et al., 2012). Thus, the extent to which the attendees evaluate their experiences as memorable is based on these outcomes (Benckendorff and Pearce, 2012; Coetzee et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2012). To this end, festivals provide attendees with a space and time away from everyday life in which intense memorable experiences can be created and shared (Morgan, 2008). Therefore, positive, MFEs are likely to result from abundant choice, shared experiences, moments of amazement, and local distinctiveness (Morgan, 2006). Some researchers have more recently termed a memorable experience in the festival domain as "memorable festival experience" (Kinnunen, 2018; Ribeiro et al., 2022; Semrad and Rivera, 2018), as such, the term will be used in the context of this study.

Measuring Memorable Festival Experiences (MFEs)

Existing studies on MFEs have used different measurement scales that originally adapted from tourism research to measure MFEs. For example, Ribeiro et al. (2022) measured memorable festival experiences on a five-items scale adapted from Kim's (2018) study. These items reflect tourists' assessment of their festival experiences that are memorable and represent to what extent the experiences were enjoyable, meaningful, novel, revitalised, and have a sense of local culture. In addition, Wiarti (2018) adapted a seven-dimensions scale of memorable tourism experiences (i.e., hedonism, refreshment, local culture, meaningfulness, knowledge, involvement, and novelty) developed by Kim et al. (2012) to explore the memorable experiences of tourists attending a festival in Bali, Indonesia. The study's findings revealed that memorable festival experiences consist of five components: novelty and hedonism, local culture, knowledge and involvement, refreshment and revitalisation, and meaningfulness. Huang et al. (2019) measured memorable experiences of festival tourist by two-items scale which indicated to what extent the tourists' experiences at a festival were perceived as positive and unforgettable. Similarly, Chiengkul et al. (2022), Rivera et al. (2015), and Semrad and Rivera (2018) have utilised three-items scale to measure MFEs. These items have measured the perceptions of festival attendees on their experiences. They have measured the extent to which festival attendees have wonderful memories of experiences and remember those experiences. On the other hand, Geus et al. (2016) developed the EES in an attempt to measure event experiences based on the experience's outcomes related to cognitive, conative, and affective dimensions modified by level of engagement. The analysis's results revealed the 18-item scale, comprising four dimensions: affective engagement, cognitive engagement, physical engagement (conative) and experiencing novelty, which has emerged as additional dimension of event experience in line with the extraordinary nature of event experiences (Geus et al., 2016). Affective engagement refers to experiences related to feeling and emotions, preferences, and values. Cognitive engagement describes the actual behaviour, representing activities and things attendees do. Finally, experiencing novelty refers to the attendees' sense of distinctiveness, unfamiliarity, and uniqueness of events. Novelty is a crucial component to tourists to receive and evaluate their experiences as memorable (e.g., Manthiou et al., 2014; Skavronskaya et al., 2020).

Previous studies have extensively utilised this scale to measure event and festival experiences and has been verified to be robust across various events and festivals (e.g., Coetzee et al., 2019; Hermann et al., 2020; Richards, 2019; Richards and King, 2022). However, no study has yet conceptualised MFEs in terms of cognitive engagement, affective engagement, and physical engagement (conative), and experiencing novelty. Based on the above discussion, MFEs in this study is defined as positive experiences that can be remembered and recalled after the festival has occurred (Kim et al., 2012). It indicates the psychological responses of festival tourists to their interaction with the festival environment (Benckendorff and Pearce, 2012; Geus et al., 2016). This study conceptualizes MFEs as having four dimensions, including cognitive engagement, affective engagement, physical engagement, and experiencing novelty.

The Influence of Memorable Festival Experiences (MFEs) on Revisit Intention.

Numerous research in several tourism contexts have indicated that memorable experiences positively and significantly affect tourists' revisit intentions to a destination (e.g., Hosany et al., 2022; Kim, 2018; Mittal et al., 2021; Tsai, 2016; Zhang et al., 2018). For instance, Tsai (2016) found that tourists with memorable experiences are more likely to revisit the same destination. Kim (2018) and Zhang et al. (2018) also discovered that tourists who evaluate their experiences as memorable are more likely to revisit the same destination in the future. On the other hand, very few studies have been conducted on the influences of memorable experiences on revisit intention (Carissa et al., 2020; Huang et al., 2019; Ribeiro et al., 2022; Rivera et al., 2015) in the context of festivals. These studies have found that visitors with high memorable experiences are more likely to revisit the same festival. Huang et al. (2019) investigated the influences of between memorable experiences on behavioural intentions, i.e., revisit intention and recommendation intention. The study's findings showed that there is a positive and significant influence exerted by memorable experiences on visitors' behavioural intentions.

In general, the majority of studies that have examined the effect of memorable experiences on revisit intention concentrate on tourism experiences rather than festival experiences (Hosany et al., 2022).

Following the preceding debate, the following hypothesis as Figure 1 shows was formulated:

H1: MFEs significantly and positively influence revisit intention.

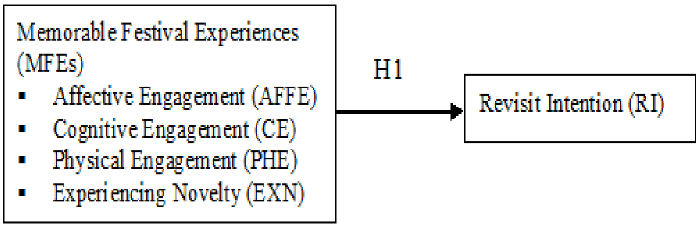

Figure 1. The conceptual framework

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Site

JFCA takes place in Jerash, Jordan, which is approximately 48 kilometres from Amman, the capital of Jordan (Al-Khasawneh, 2016). JFCA is an annual celebration of the Arab and other cultures held at the end of July for 10 days. The festival has become the most significant and well-attended cultural event internationally, attracting hundreds of thousands of spectators worldwide to watch various performances, including cultural, singing, acting, dance, poetry, literature, and much more (Al-Khasawneh, 2016). For example, the Jerash Festival Management Department (JFMD) reported that the number of attendees attending the JFCA reached 115,000 in 2015 and over 125,000 visitors in 2016. Moreover, JFCA plays a crucial role in enhancing Jordan's image as a tourist destination by promoting Jordan's culture abroad, developing tourism in Jordan and particularly in Jerash city, extending the tourism season, generating direct and indirect economic impact for Jordan and the Jerash local community, as well as attracting large numbers of tourists to the Jerash archaeological site (Albattat et al., 2018).

Research Approach and Sample Size

As indicated in Figure 2, the research implemented a quantitative approach to analyze the influence of MFEs on RI. The population of this study are visitors who have visited JFCA in 2021. The sample size was determined according to the total number of attendees to the festival in 2019. JFMD (2019) estimated that 80,000 visitors visited the festival in 2019. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), the sample size of the total number of attendees in this study is 384.

Measurements and Questionnaire Translation

This study measured the following two constructs: MFEs and revisit intention. The measurement of MFEs uses EES proposed by Geus et al. (2016) which constitute of four dimensions and an 18-item scale, namely: affective engagement (6 items), cognitive engagement (6 items), physical engagement (3 items), and experiencing novelty (3 items). MFEs are conceptualized as a second-order formative construct with reflective dimensions in the first level. Revisit intention is measured by four items (Song et al., 2012). To ensure its content validity, the study instrument was judged by a panel of five academic experts in tourism to ensure that the measures include an adequate and representative set of items that tap the concept (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). Clear definitions of MFEs and revisit intention was stated at the beginning of the expert evaluation sheet to avoid confusion (Kim, 2012). Based on the given definitions, the experts were asked to assess the construct deficiency and construct contamination for each item and to what extent these items are suitable to measure the MFEs and revisit intention. The experts were also asked to evaluate the constructions' faults, ambiguity, flow, and sequencing. In addition, the experts were asked to clarify the items and provide suggestions on reinforcing the representativeness of measurements. After the researchers received the experts' comments on the scales, a consensus analysis was undertaken to compare the comments from the five experts. Minor modifications for the scale were made based on agreements between two or more experts. As a result, it was concluded that a total of 18 items of EES best measured MFEs with minor modification of the scale. The experts suggest that the last item of the CE subscale, "I reflected on ideas that I got and discussed this with others", was divided into two items to avoid ambiguity. Therefore, the researchers of this study follow the experts' suggestions to finalise the instrument design. All items were measured on seven-point Likert scales, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. The questionnaire was developed in English and translated to Arabic by a native Jordanian. It was then translated back to English, as recommended by Dimanche (1994).

Data Collection Procedure and Sampling Technique

An onsite survey was conducted to collect the data for this study. The data was collected during JFCA, which was held for ten days from September 22nd to October 2nd, 2021, at the Jerash archaeological site in Jerash city. Well-trained enumerators were hired to distribute the questionnaires. Systematic random sampling of every 5th visitor was used to collect the data (Coetzee et al., 2019; Mehmetoglu, 2001; Schneider and Sonmez, 1999). The visitors were intercepted at all entrances to the festival once they arrived at the festival site. The focus of the data collection targeted Arab tourists because 79% of the visitors were Arabs (Al Muala, 2020). Another study held by Schneider and Snonmez (1999) in JFCA also mentioned that more than 96% of the festival population consist of Arab visitors. Respondents were asked to fill out the questionnaires after the festival was over. A total of 580 questionnaires were distributed to increase the sample population's representativeness. A total of 516 questionnaires were finally returned to be considered for further analysis. However, out of 516 returned questionnaires, 64 were undelivered, 29 were incomplete because a substantial part of the questionnaires was not properly filled by the participants, and the remaining 487 usable questionnaires were used for analysis. This accounted for an 84% valid response rate which is considered high and appropriate for subsequent analysis in this study (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016).

Data Analysis

Prior to the data analysis, a data screening was completed as it is a necessary step to ensure that the data is free of errors (Pallant, 2016). The data was screened prior to analysis using SPSS software to examine the data file for accuracy, missing values, outliers (univariate and multivariate), multicollinearity, and normality (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2013). After ensuring that the data was free of errors, Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was used to analyse the latent constructs and Smart-PLS 3.0 was utilised to test the hypotheses. PLS-SEM is more adept at handling complex models, small sample sizes, non-normal data distribution, formative measures, as well as exploratory and predictive research (Hair et al., 2011). In this study, PLS-SEM was used as a formative construct, i.e., MFEs is a part of the structural model.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents' Profile

The total number of respondents were as follows; 206 for men (42.3%) and 281 for women (57.7%). The majority of respondents (71.3%) were Jordanians, while 29.7% were from other Arab nationalities. The largest proportion of respondents were aged between 20 to 29 years old (47.0%), had a bachelor's degree (54.7%), their monthly income was less than 1000 dollars (41.9%). They attended JFCA one time previously (49.1%) and visited JFCA with their families.

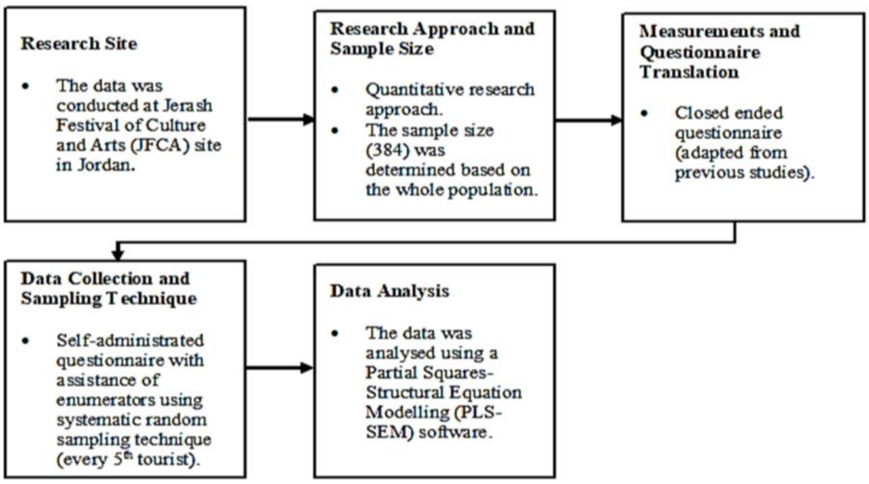

Figure 2. Research methodology flow chart

Testing the Measurement Model

The measurement model was evaluated by internal consistency reliability and constructs validity of the measurement scales (Hair et al., 2017). The internal consistency reliability of the measurement scales was assessed through composite reliability. As a result, Table 1 shows that the values of composite reliability ranged from .851 to .941, indicating that all scales were reliable as values exceeded the threshold of .70 (Hair et al., 2017). To test the validity of the measurement scales, both convergent and discriminant validity were used (Hair et al., 2017). Convergent validity was measured by assessing indicator reliability and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). As shown in Table 1, all AVE values for every latent variable were higher than the recommended threshold of .50 (Hair et al., 2017) and ranged from .567 to .836, indicating that convergent validity was proven in this study. In terms of indicator reliability, it was assessed by checking the indicator's outer loading. Ideally, the cut-off point for individual item loading should be above .70 (Hair et al., 2011), or .708 or higher (Hair et al., 2017). However, "indicators with outer loadings between .40 and .70 should be considered for removal from the scale only when deleting the indicator leads to an increase in the composite reliability or the average variance extracted" (Hair et al., 2017: 107). Accordingly, the findings revealed that all indicators' loadings were within an acceptable range (.550 and .934) as Table 1 shows. The discriminant validity, which indicates the degree to which each latent variable is different from another, was assessed using cross-loadings, Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criterion, and Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlations (Hair et al., 2017). Tables 2, 3 and 4 show that each item correlates weakly with all other constructs. Thus, the discriminant validity for all indicators is supported in this study.

Table 1. Construct validity and reliability

		Indicator	FL	CR	AVE
MFE	AFFE	AFFE1	0.550	.885	.567
		AFFE2	0.664		
		AFFE3	0.775		
		AFFE4	0.870		
		AFFE5	0.826		
		AFFE6	0.788		
	CE	CE1	0.757	.941	.696
		CE2	0.798		
		CE3	0.867		
		CE4	0.878		
		CE5	0.874		
		CE6	0.841		
		CE7	0.816		
	PHE	PHE1	0.618	.851	.662
		PHE2	0.880		
		PHE3	0.911		
	EXN	EXN1	0.916	.939	.836
		EXN2	0.898		
		EXN3	0.929		
RI		RI1	0.924	.938	.792
		RI2	0.932		
		RI3	0.934		
		RI4	0.756		

Note: LVs=latent variables, FLs=factor loadings, CR=composite reliability, AVE=average variance extracted, AFFE=affective engagement, CE=cognitive engagement, PHE=physical engagement, EXN=experience novelty, MFE=memorable festival experience, RI=revisit

Table 2. Cross-loadings of indicators

Indicator	AFFE	CE	EXN	PHE	RI
AFFE1	**0.550**	0.222	0.266	0.234	0.168
AFFE2	**0.664**	0.230	0.231	0.253	0.205
AFFE3	**0.775**	0.290	0.337	0.312	0.236
AFFE4	**0.870**	0.414	0.483	0.357	0.341
AFFE5	**0.826**	0.477	0.449	0.338	0.296
AFFE6	**0.788**	0.514	0.528	0.343	0.377
CE1	0.497	**0.757**	0.582	0.420	0.411
CE2	0.440	**0.798**	0.605	0.440	0.430
CE3	0.473	**0.867**	0.653	0.408	0.479
CE4	0.394	**0.878**	0.658	0.457	0.427
CE5	0.377	**0.874**	0.613	0.377	0.440
CE6	0.356	**0.841**	0.620	0.385	0.452
CE7	0.403	**0.816**	0.680	0.437	0.446
EXN1	0.501	0.689	**0.916**	0.591	0.529
EXN2	0.449	0.660	**0.898**	0.563	0.494
EXN3	0.513	0.722	**0.929**	0.517	0.595
PHE1	0.164	0.256	0.297	**0.618**	0.187
PHE2	0.384	0.455	0.557	**0.880**	0.246
PHE3	0.416	0.476	0.581	**0.911**	0.304
RI1	0.366	0.511	0.547	0.290	**0.924**
RI2	0.362	0.489	0.579	0.294	**0.932**
RI3	0.332	0.495	0.555	0.301	**0.934**
RI4	0.279	0.378	0.412	0.203	**0.756**

Table 3. Fornell and Larcker's criteria

	AFFE	CE	EXN	PHE	RI
AFFE	**0.753**				
CE	0.503	**0.834**			
EXN	0.535	0.756	**0.914**		
PHE	0.413	0.5	0.606	**0.813**	
RI	0.378	0.53	0.593	0.309	**0.89**

Note: Diagonals (**in bold**) represent the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE), while the off diagonals are correlations among constructs.

Table 4. Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT)

	AFFE	CE	EXN	PHE	RI
AFFE					
CE	0.537				
EXN	0.579	0.826			
PHE	0.497	0.596	0.731		
RI	0.409	0.574	0.648	0.369	

Establishing and Validating the Second-Order Constructs

MTEs was conceptualised as a second-order formative construct in this study. The two-stage approach was used to establish the second-order construct as preferred and recommended compared to the repeated indicator approach when establishing this type of construct (Sarstedt et al., 2019). Hence, following Sarstedt et al. (2019), the disjoint two-stage approach was utilised to establish and assess the second-order construct in this study (Figure 3). In the first stage, the first order constructs of AFFE, CE, PHE, and EXN, which represent higher-order construct (MFEs), were directly connected to RI without including the second-order construct in the PLS path model (Sarstedt et al., 2019). In the second stage, the scores of only the first-order components that resulted from the first stage were saved and used as indicators to measure the second-order construct.

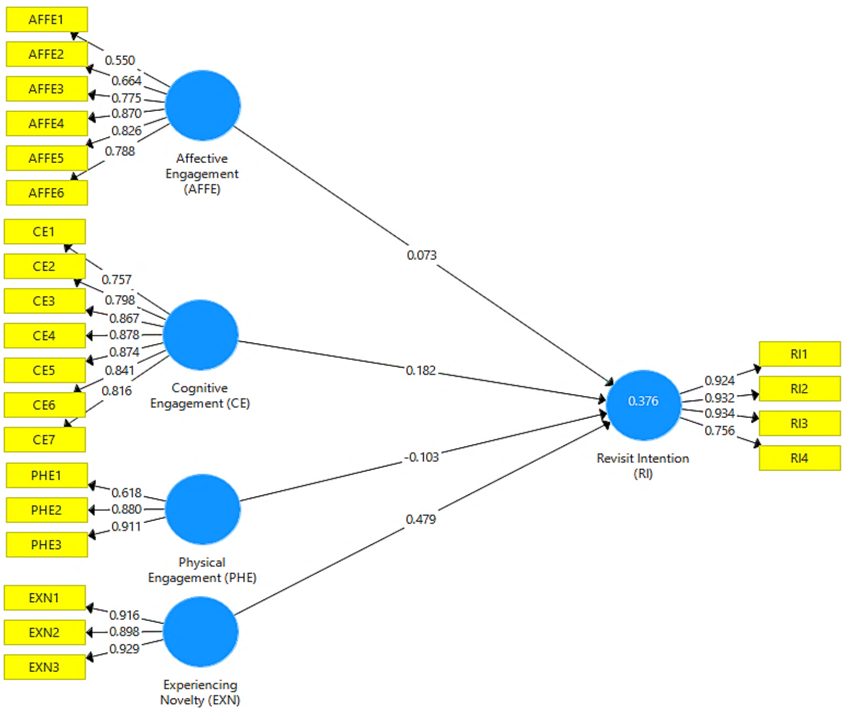

Figure 3. Measurement model using two disjoint stage approach

Thus, MFE's measurement model comprises four formative indicators representing the latent variable scores of AFFE, CE, PHE, and EXN resulting from the first stage. After establishing the formative second-order construct, the measurement quality of the formative model was assessed by examining the collinearity between the formative indicators, and significance and relevance of the outer weight of formative indicators (Hair et al., 2017). Collinearity was assessed by the variance inflation factor (VIF). Table 5 shows that all VIF values of AFFE (1.447), CE (2.415), EXN (4.722), and PHE (3.328) are below the recommended threshold of 5 (Hair et al., 2011, 2017), indicating that there was no collinearity issue. Next, bootstrapping with 5000 subsamples was run to assess the significance and relevance of outer weights of the MFE's formative measurement model. The results found that the weights and path coefficients for CE and EXN were .284 and .589 respectively, and significant ($p<.05$). Meanwhile, AFFE's and PHE's weights were much smaller and nonsignificant (Sarstedt et al., 2019). However, as indicators' loadings were larger than .50 and significant (.000), which was below .05 (Hair et al., 2017), both AFFE and PHE were retained to the formative measurement model as recommended by Hair et al. (2017) and Sarstedt et al. (2019).

Table 5. VIF of the second-order formative construct

Constructs	VIF
Affective engagement	1.447
Cognitive engagement	2.415
Experiencing novelty	4.722
Physical engagement	3.328

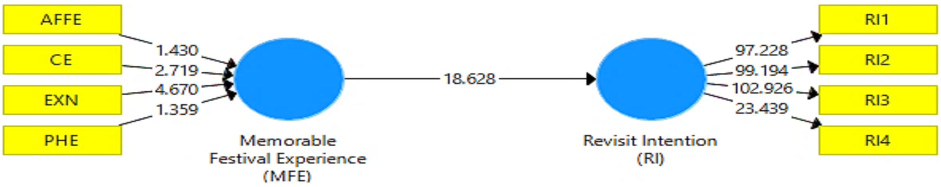

Figure 4. Structural model

Assessment of the Structural Model

The structural model of this study was evaluated by coefficients of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), and predictive relevance (Q^2) as recommended by Hair et al. (2017). Table 6 illustrates that R^2, f^2, and Q^2 values were acceptable. The R^2 value of RI (.372) was considered as substantial in this study (Cohen, 1988). The effect size (f^2) of MFE on RI was .593, indicating a medium effect (Cohen, 1988). The predictive relevance (Q^2) of the model, which refers to the model's capability to predict, was tested by using a blindfolding procedure (Hair et al., 2017). The Q^2 value was .288, indicating that the model has sufficient predictive relevance. Finally, after the evaluation of the structural model, bootstrapping procedure was employed to examine the proposed relationship between MFE and RI (Figure 4).

Besides that, the significance level was set at $p<0.05$ and $p<0.01$ (1-tailed) in testing the hypothesised relationship. The results of the analysis of the structural model to test the hypothesis are presented in Table 10, which indicates that relationship between MFE and RI was significant (β = .425, t = 7.728, *p* = .000). Therefore, the hypothesis was supported.

Table 6. Results of the structural model *(Note: *Significant at 0.01 (1-tailed)

Relationship	Path coefficient	Std. Error	*t*-value	*p*-value	Confidence intervals		R^2	F^2	Q^2	Decision
					LLCI 5.0%	ULCI 95.0%				
MFE -> RI	0.61	0.033	18.628	0.000	0.541	0.653	.372	.593	.288	Significant

DISCUSSION

As stated previously, although tourism research emphasises studying memorable experiences and their influences on tourists' revisit intention in various tourism settings, the extant literature is limited to tourism experiences. Thus, the current study is motivated by the need for research to investigate the influence of memorable experiences on revisit intention in the context of festivals. The structured relationship between the two variables was examined to achieve the main objective of this study, which is to investigate the influence of MFEs on revisit intention to JFCA from the perspectives of Arab visitors. The results of this study show that the relationship between MFEs and revisit intention is statistically significant and positive (β = 0.153; p = 0.000; t = 18.628). It indicates that MFEs have more impact on revisit intention; Arab visitors who received and evaluated their experiences as positive and memorable are more likely to revisit the festival in the future. These findings are consistent with previous research that supported the positive and significant influence of memorable experiences on revisit intention (e.g., Huang et al., 2019; Mittal et al., 2021; Rivera et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2018). Festival visitors who had memorable experiences during the festival because of their affective, cognitive, and physical (conative) engagement in the festival activities and experiencing novelty are more likely to return in the future (Coetzee et al., 2019). The significant influences of MFEs on revisit intention may demonstrate that JFCA provides Arab visitors with memorable experiences and has become one of the annual awaited cultural events (Carissa et al., 2020). According to Hidayat et al. (2019), the availability of cultural activities, such as festivals, for Arab tourists is part of selecting tourist destinations. Engaging in such activities thus makes their experiences more memorable (Kim, 2014).

The possible explanation of this finding could be attributed to the fact that Arab visitors acquired positive and favourable experiences during their visits to the JFCA, which influenced their memories and were stored in these memories, thereby constituting memorable experiences. During the decision-making process to attend the festival, the visitors remembered these experiences and used them as information sources. Upon recalling these experiences, the attendees were encouraged to revisit the festival (Kim and Jang, 2016). This explanation is in line with Kim et al.'s (2012) claim that tourists tend to recall their experiences of tourist activities to understand better what to expect on their next visit. Although experiences can be both positive and negative (Kim et al., 2012), tourists tend to remember positive experiences more than negative ones, as supported by the prior research findings of Kim et al. (2012) and Tung and Ritchie (2011). All respondents to this study were repeated visitors, indicating the importance of visitors' previous experiences as a valuable source of information which affected Arab visitors' decisions to revisit the festival (Kim, 2018; Kim, 2010). In other words, Arab visitors' intentions to revisit the festival were strongly induced by their memorable experiences. This finding supports Kim et al. (2010) and Coudounaris and Sthapit (2017) that memorable experiences significantly influence tourists' intention to revisit.

CONCLUSION

This study has several theoretical contributions to the literature on MFEs. Firstly, this study provides insight into the influence of MFEs on Arab visitors' revisit intentions. The study also emphasises how crucial it is to understand Arab visitors' behaviour during cultural festivals in Arab countries. This relevance stems from the fact that Arabs share various characteristics and values that distinguish them and shape their identities (Harb, 2016). Arab visitors may therefore be influenced by their culture, which impacts how they experience the festivals (Abdelazim and Alajloni, 2016; Al-Azzam et al., 2022). Secondly, this study is in response to Geus et al.'s (2016) call to evaluate the reliability and validity of EES across multiple studies and samples. EES is a four-dimensional, 18-item scale comprising affective engagement, cognitive engagement, physical engagement, and experiencing novelty. These dimensions are connected to MFEs, according to prior research. However, EES has not yet been used to conceptualise and operationalise memorable festival experiences. Therefore, the second theoretical contribution of this research is to validate the EES employed in this study to conceptualise and operationalise MFEs in the context of Arab visitors to JFCA. The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) results supported the scale as a valid measure of MFEs in a cultural festival, owing to the scale's reliability and validity being statistically upheld in the study's results. To the best of researchers' knowledge, this is the first study that used EES in measuring MFEs.

The study's findings have practically paved the way for JFCA organisers, planners, managers, and marketers to plan, develop, and market festival tourism strategies. Based on the findings of this study, it is envisaged that the information obtained in this study will help promote the enhancement of visitors' experiences at JFCA to attract and retain more visitors in the globally competitive event industry. Focusing on Arab visitors will enable festival organisers, planners, managers, the host place, and the local community to comprehend visitors, their needs, and what makes their experiences memorable, which will aid them in their future positioning and communication and promotional efforts.

As with all studies, the present study is not free of limitations:

1. The data for this study was obtained from Arab visitors, which may not be generalisable to tourists of other cultures. Therefore, the framework of this study can be replicated and assessed in a different cultural context and from various cultural perspectives.
2. This study was applied to a cultural event in Jordan, i.e., JFCA, which can limit the generalisation of the findings to similar cultural events. Therefore, further research should test the current proposed model in different types of events in the future to establish further support for the influence of MFEs on revisit intention.
3. The influence of MFEs was examined only on revisit intention as a behavioural outcome. Therefore, the effect of MFEs on other behavioural outcomes such as word of mouth and intention to recommend would be interesting to investigate.

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APPLICABILITY OF ANTI-COVID-19 MEASURES AND THEIR IMPACT UPON THE PERCEPTIONS ON THE SAFETY AND IMAGE OF THE STRUCTURE OF TOURISM CASE STUDY; ALBANIA

Nevila ÇINAJ
Aleksandër Moisiu University, Department of Tourism, Business Faculty, Durrës, Albania, e-mail: nevilacinaj@yahoo.com

Elda ZOTAJ
Aleksandër Moisiu University Durrës, Department of Political Science,
Faculty of Political Science and Law, Durrës, Albania, e-mail: eldazotaj@yahoo.com

Jostina DHIMITRI*
University of Tirana, Department of Geography, Faculty of History and Philology, Tirana, Albania, e-mail:jostina.dhimitri@unitir.edu.al

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Abstract: At present, Albania lacks original studies that examine the role of safety and security as an important factor in the competitiveness of a tourist destination. In order to fill this gap, the article aims to measure the perception level regarding the recognition of the Safety and Security pillar and its standards, to assess the role of the image of Albania as a significant component in tourism development and to analyse the relationship of the image of Albania to security and performance of the state institutions. The methodology used combines information collected from interviews of the actors contributing to the Albanian tourism sector with the related official documentation and literature reviews. The paper supports application of the factor analysis method regarding perception of the actors and interest groups involved in the tourism sector. The findings indicate that the Safety and Security pillar standards are not familiar to the actors contributing to the sector of tourism in Albania. The main performance components in the tourism sector are the security and performance of the state institutions.

Key words: safety and security, Albania, tourism development, Anti-Covid-19 measures, state institutions

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INTRODUCTION

Peace, safety, and security are the primary conditions for successful tourism development (Mansfeld and Pizam, 2006). Studies related to these aspects highlight the fact that: "tourists spend money and time to have comfort, fun and peace" (Bayar and Yener, 2019), thus security is considered a prerequisite for tourism (Kővári and Zimányi, 2010). Researcher Peter E. Tarlow described the modern-day tourism as "... the world's largest peacetime industry", but once tranquillity/peace is broken, tourism is the first fragile industry to be affected by insecurity (Tarlow, 2014:1).

Various studies attest the importance of security in terms of "safety destination", especially the role of authorities and institutions regarding safety in pandemic for a tourism destination (Sigala, 2020; Gössling et al., 2020; Hall et al., 2020). The tourism industry has suffered from the pandemic mainly as a consequence of actions implemented by governments to mitigate the virus spread (Preko and Gyepi-Garbrah, 2021). The issue of safety and security is also important to the image of a tourist destination and for visitor satisfaction (Hamarneh and Jeřábek, 2018). The perception that a tourist destination is safe has been seen by researchers as a tool for tourism marketing as well. This is about trust, whether a place is safe or not (Tarlow, 2014). Considering the ambiguity of the terms "tourism" and "travel and tourism", we should not be surprised that in a complex industry, such as tourism, the expression "tourism security" also suffers from the lack of a precise definition as stated by David Beirman.

The lack of a clear definition as regards terminology does not mean that tourism security practitioners are not aware of their primary responsibility, which is Safety and Security. What he means is that often there are questions about who makes what and determination of the boundaries of different roles (Tarlow, 2014).

According to Beirman, "The holistic approach to tourism security starts with development of the sense of consciousness concerning tourist security during the travel" (Tarlow, 2014). Further on, it extends to every link of the tourist industry chain, starting with those providing services of accommodation, food, transport, events, tourist areas and tourist etiquette and manners (Tarlow, 2014); (Tasnim et al., 2022). Technically, the term 'Safety and Security' covers the main threats to tourists. Very often in the travel and tourism literature, it is divided between health, security and protection. This division mainly reflects the background and orientation of the various disciplines operating in this field (Mastroianni, 2013: 6). Given that the definition of tourism security is similar to the lexicon of the Albanian language, we referred to this definition in our paper.

* Corresponding author

The appearance of the world pandemic COVID-19 has raised sharp and urgent issues that are directly related to life safety and world security in general. The violation of security is also reflected in the performance of the economy and its sectors. Despite the measures taken to deal with the pandemic as an international and national response, the tourism sector turns out to be the most affected by this pandemic. In these circumstances, in front of Albania as a new tourist destination and under development is the necessity of preserving, strengthening and increasing competitiveness in tourism to face the strong regional and global competition, while maintaining the image of a safe destination. Promoting an image of a safe destination for health has a different effect on the psychology of local and incoming tourists (Metaxas et al., 2022).

During the pandemic (Caber et al., 2020) found that the safety image of Greece positively influenced tourists' choices. It is precisely the relationship between the perception and the trust of tourists that has recently attracted the attention of researchers (Metaxas et al., 2022). According to (Artigas et al., 2017), trust is a multidimensional construct that includes tourists, locals, and public and private institutions of a destination that are expected to be honest, benevolent, and competent. Thus, different methods are required to approach these two market segments (Metaxas et al., 2022) and to measure the critical impact of tourists' safety perceptions regarding the destination on their travel intention and their health protective behavior. Our findings highlight the critical impact of tourists' safety perceptions regarding the destination on their travel intention and their health protective behavior.

There is a gap in the tourism literature due to the limited studies related to the impact of safety and security on the image of a tourist destination during the development of the global COVID-19 pandemic, and even less for new tourist destinations such as Albania. Even the few studies that have been developed during the pandemic focus on historical tourist destinations. Based on the above, in the conditions when the development of the pandemic was at its peak and social distancing made contact with international tourists impossible, we found it appropriate to measure the level of perceptions of employees of all job categories in the tourism sector that simultaneously are potential domestic tourists, related to the role of security as an important factor in the performance of the tourism sector and the impact that the security and performance of state institutions in the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic has on strengthening the image of Albania as a country with security in tourism .

Our effort is focused on finding the links between the applicability of anti-Covid-19 measures and the impact they have on perceptions of safety and the image of the tourist structure, keeping in mind that the effective management of the pandemic by the government significantly affects the travel intentions of tourists (Zheng et al., 2021) and tourists do not hesitate to visit crowded events or places as long as health protocols are respected (Rončák et al., 2021).

The analysis of these events is correlated with security aspects, which is a contemporary and current approach and have dominated research designs over the past few decades (Spencer and Tarlow, 2021; Wang et al., 2019). Furthermore, the International Association of Tourism Safety and Security (IATSS) reports on a lot of uncertainties about safety and security in tourism destinations (IATSS, 2020). Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to understand the importance of the perception of the "safety and security" component in creating credibility, increasing the image as a reliable destination and the performance of the tourism sector in Albania under the conditions of the development of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is in the same line with the argument that researchers give that the trust in the effective management of the pandemic by the government significantly affects the travel intentions of tourists (Zheng et al., 2021).

Likewise, (Jensen and Svendsen, 2016) asserted that social trust motivates tourists' visit intentions to destinations and contributes to perceptions of destination safety. Independent of this argument, there are also attitudes like that of (Abraham et al., 2020) who argue that local tourists may lose their confidence and avoid local destinations if their government fails to manage the pandemic. Health protective measures mitigate reduced travel intentions during health crises (Lee et al., 2012).

The objectives that guide this study are:

1. To distinguish the degree of recognition of technical safety and security and its standards by employees in the tourism sector.

2. The reliability of foreign tourist operators compared to the information conveyed by Albanian tourist operators on the safety of tourism in Albania.

3. To analyze the degree of influence of variables such as political instability/inter-institutional conflicts/crime rate/road accident rate/the role of the media in the image of Albania/and political choices that affect the increase of the image for tourist safety in Albania.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Considering that, in general, security is about preventing injury or harm to people and / or groups (Wilks, 2003a) and knowing that terms used in the field of security and protection can have different meanings in different countries, then we first defined the term "Safety and Security" according to the lexicon of the Albanian language. According to the English-Albanian dictionary, the word “safety” is translated "siguri" (Stefanllari, 1999). According to the lexicon of the Albanian language (Thomai et al., 2006), for the name "security" there is an easy answer; the name security indicates a situation without any sudden danger or harm, absence of any doubt, to be safe, without any hesitation, and the term "security" according to the dictionary of the Albanian language is translated "safety", the name safety in the Albanian language means the set of measures taken to protect against the dangers and accidents at work. Regarding the meaning of the concept "Image", according to the dictionary of the Albanian language (Thomai et al., 2006), it is about the opinion or imagination created for something, in this case the imagination related to the image of Albania as a safe destination tourist. This concept is inevitably associated with the good name / reputation that produces "safety" for tourism in Albania. This concept is inevitably associated with the good name / reputation that produces "safety" for tourism in Albania.

In many communities, tourism serves as an important contributor to local, regional and national economies, and in some cases, it is the main contributor to the foreign exchange earnings (Mayer and Vogt, 2016). Due to the fact that security incidents can have a huge impact on the economy, they are considered to be of great concern to local, regional and national governments. Such a concern may affect the change of government policies in the tourism sector, its relative role in the economy and the level of involvement that governments wish to exercise after realizing the fragility and potential instability of this economic sector. Host governments at affected destinations typically monitor and assess the impact of security incidents on a dynamic basis. In addition, these governments:

(a) begin implementing new and / or improved security measures aimed at preventing and / or reducing the occurrence of future security incidents occurring in tourist areas;

(b) assist in the damage control process, when the security situation deteriorates;

(c) provide ad hoc financial assistance to cope with all major negative consequences of safety-induced tourism crises.

Taking into account that “the phenomenon of tourism has to do with unique perceived experiences, and “Safety and Security” has more to do with our perceptions of them rather than with concrete data (Tarlow, 2014), the paper was based on the application of the factor analysis method in respect of the perception of the actors or interest groups involved in the tourism sector. Below are given the steps followed on the realization of this paper as in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The flowchart method

The data collection method for this research was: Online questionnaire for reasons of application of anti-COVID measures, such as social distancing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; Review of existing literature; Data obtained from state institutions, reports, studies; The sampling determination was based on Cochran formula

$$n = (P(1-P)\,z^2)/(e)^2 \quad \text{(Cochran, 1977)}$$

This formula is used when the population is large and unknown (Uakarn et al., 2021). Assuming the maximum variability, which is equal to 50% (p =0.5) and the different confidence level, described in Table 1, precision sample sizes can be different.

According to the last official data on 2017, the number of employees in the tourism industry was 93.500 (MTE, 2019). Due to factors such as migration, informality, Covid-19 and others, this figure may have changed. The size of the sample (n) received and analyzed was 200 questionnaires, deemed acceptable for the study. The target population for the study / survey / questionnaire are employees of all categories of work in the tourism sector as: a) waiter, (front line employees), b) bartender, c) hall manager, d) guide, e) entrepreneurs in the tourism sector, f) officials of public administration of tourism sector, g) local administration employees, h) CSO, and i) academic staff. For the data processing, the SPSS Version 2020 program and model “Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method; with Kaiser Normalization” were used. The structure of the questionnaire is organized in four parts:

Table 1. Sample Size Calculation
(Source: Sarmah and Hazarika, 2012)

	Sample size (n)		
Confidence level	e =.03	e =.05	e = .1
95%	1067	384	96
99%	1849	666	166

The first part comprises the data on the gender and age of respondents, because the INSTAT data show that the number of women employed in the tourism chain has increased in recent years, and a substantial part of the persons employed as supporting staff in the tourism sector in Albania are students from the vocational high schools of hotel and tourism management belonging to the age group over 15 years. In addition to age and gender information, there was also collected information on the educational level of the respondents in relation to the job they perform within the structure of the tourism sector and the degree of the position they hold in the tourist chain.

The second part of the questionnaire aims to collect data on the level of perception by all stakeholders regarding the recognition of the "Safety and security" pillar and its standards. To measure the perception degree the Likert scale with seven points was used, which includes options like; strongly disagree, disagree, somewhat disagree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat agree, agree and strongly agree. The seven-point whipping was chosen because its use ensured ease of use, more accuracy in response, and getting a better reflection of respondents’ true evaluation.

The use of the Likert scale aims to measure the degree of perception of respondents regarding the extent of the impact of variables, such as political instability / inter-institutional conflicts / crime rate / road accident rate / role of media in the image of Albania / and political elections, held in April, which coincides with the preparations for the opening of the new summer tourist season and the signing of contracts with foreign operators who bring tourists from different European countries during the summer season in Albania. The Likert scale also measures the degree of perception of stakeholders regarding natural disaster variables, such as the November 26, 2019 earthquake and the global COVID-19 pandemic and their economic impact on tourism enterprises.

In the third part of the questionnaire, using the same measurement scale, they are asked about their perception of the drafting of the anti-covid protocol package and the impact of its application on tourism services, on strengthening the image of Albania as a safe country in tourism, as well as on the costs incurred by tourism enterprises.

In the fourth part, the questionnaire, again through the Likert scale, collects data from the perception of foreign tour operators regarding the implementation of "Safety and Security" standards in Albania and the impact of the national political climate, road safety, crime rate and corruption on the conclusion of contracts for the foreign tourist flows in Albania as well as on the extent these variables affect the image of Albania in relation to tourism security.

The questionnaire was completed during an eight-week period, which corresponded to:

first - holding of the general political elections;

second - at the height of the pandemic development in the country;

third - the time when all the segments of the tourism sector are preparing for the opening of the new tourist season, especially the time when travel agencies enter into contracts and close bookings for the arrival of foreign tourists in Albania for the summer season. To cover the entire target group with a questionnaire, we contacted the selected sample via e-mail.

Sample Characteristics

The respondents' answers indicate that in the Albanian tourism sector the most active part of the working population is employed, since 56.1% belong to the age group 15-30 years and 29.9% to the age group 30-45 years. 85% of the employed live in the urban areas, and out of these 64.7% are women. Less than half of the respondents, 46.2% hold a Bachelor's degree, while the respondents holding a Master's degree of the second level have an equal share of 17.7% in both the Professional Master and the Master of Science. About 30.2% the respondents turn out to have work experience in tourist enterprises from one to 5 years of work, while 25.8% of the respondents turn out to have over 10 years of work experience, and 23.6% less than one year of work. These data show that about 60% of the sample has considerable experience in the tourism sector making their perception take value in the study output. Referring to employment categories, it results that about 75% of the sample are directly associated to the tourism sector. Specifically, about 25.3% of them are managers of tourist companies; 22.5% are supporting staff in the tourism sector (waiter, bartender, hall manager, sanitary, tour guide, etc.); 13.2% are entrepreneurs in the tourism sector; about 25% of the sample represent others, for whom we have no knowledge of the job position they perform or their connection to the tourism sector.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Recognition of the term "Safety and Security"

Regarding the question: Do you know the term "Safety and Security" in tourism, 47% of the respondents say they do not know, of which 20.5% do not know at all, whereas 26.5% are not sure. Of the 53% of the respondents who state that they know the term, about 30.9% of them are not familiar with the standards ISO 9001 (Quality Management Systems), ISO 14001 (Environmental Management), HACCP (Risk Analysis), ISO 22000 (Food Safety Management), ISO 27001 (Information Security) contained in this pillar. While 28.4% recognize only ISO 9001 (Quality Management Systems) standard, 11.7% ISO 14001 (Environmental Management), 13% HACCP (Risk Analysis), and standards ISO 22000 (Food Safety Management), ISO 27001 (Information Security) contained in this pillar are recognized by 8% of the respondents for each. The findings show that about 80% of the samples do not know the standards of the "Safety and Security" pillar. Referring to the characteristics of the sample the results indicate that at least 50% of the employed in the tourism sector are not aware of the standards. From the data analysis, it is noticed that 28.4 of the respondents know ISO 9001 standard that relates to Quality Management Systems. The small-scale knowledge of the two standards that are closely related to tourism sector, such as Environmental Management and Food Safety Management, seems to be problematic, where the data are extremely low 11.7% and 8%. From the findings, it turns out that the connoisseurs of the standards belong to the category of tourism venture entrepreneurs and managers.

1.1. The level of the request for information from foreign tour operators regarding the fulfillment of the "Safety and Security" pillar in tourism, in Albania.

From the data processing (Figure 2) it is ascertained that 60.5% of respondents state that before concluding contracts for the new tourist season with foreign operators, they are required to provide information regarding the level of fulfillment of the Safety and Security standards in Albania, and 19.5% of them affirm that they have no request in this regard, while 20% don't have information regarding the question.

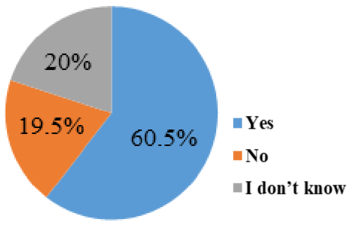

Figure 2. The level of the request for information from foreign tour operators regarding the fulfillment of the "Safety and Security" pillar in tourism

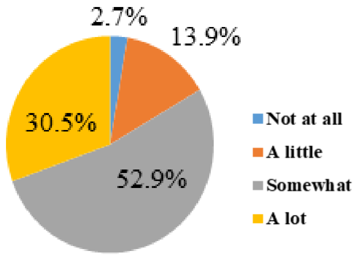

Figure 3. Trustfulness of foreign tour operators versus the information provided by the Albanian tour operators on tourism safety and security in Albania

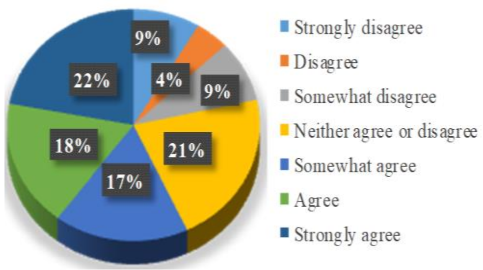

Figure 4. The impact of pandemic management perception on improving Albania's image. Respondents in %

1.2 . Trustfulness of foreign tour operators versus the information provided by the Albanian tour operators on tourism safety and security in Albania Regarding the question:

Do foreign tour operators trust the information you convey on tourism safety in Albania? 52.9% of the respondents express themselves "somewhat", 35% say they trust them "a lot", and 13% of the respondents affirm "a little", as in Figure 3.

1.3. The impact of pandemic management on improving Albania's image as a safe haven for tourism.

From the survey data processing (Figure 4), it is noticed that 22% of the respondents think that it is absolutely true that management of the pandemic has affected improvement of the image of Albania as a safe country in tourism, 17.7% think that it is mostly true, 17.2 % think it's true to some extent. But there are also others making up 21.5% of the respondents who think they cannot say right or wrong. Whereas 8.6% of the respondents think it is absolutely untrue.

1.4. The drafting of the anti-COVID protocol and its application in tourism services influenced the strengthening of Albania's image as reinforce of the idea that Albania is a safe country in tourism.

The perception of the respondents (Figure 5) that: The drafting of the anti-COVID protocol and its application in tourism services strengthened the image of Albania as a reinforce of the idea that Albania is a safe country for tourism, shows that 25% of them think it is somewhat true, 19.8% mostly true and 16.6% absolutely true, but 17.1% cannot say whether this is true or false, while 9.6% of the respondents perceive it as somewhat untrue.

1.5. Increased financial costs from implementation of the anti-COVID package in tourism enterprises.

Regarding the perception of the increased costs of tourist enterprises because of implementation of the anti-COVID package, 26.1% of the respondents think that their costs have increased by 5% -10%, 18.3% think they have increased by 20%, 17.8% consider an increase by 10-20%, but 18.9% think the increase to be less than 5%, and the same percentage, i. e 8.9% think that application of the protocol has had no costs at all (Figure 6).

1.6. Assessment of revenue losses from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pandemic losses for 44.9% of the respondents are estimated to be at over 40%, 12.8% of the respondents estimate it at 30-40% and 17.6% estimate it at 20-30%, while 8% of the respondents consider it 10-20%. There is a category of the respondents, 7.5% of them, who estimate the extent of losses to have another value, but they cannot determine it (Figure 7).

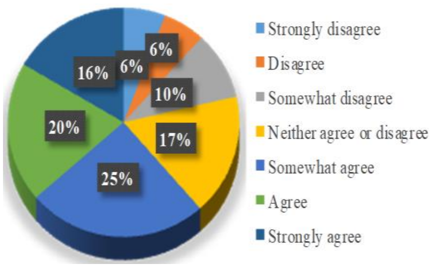

Figure 5. The Anti -COVID Protocol as a tool for strengthening Albania's image as a safe country in tourism. Respondents in %

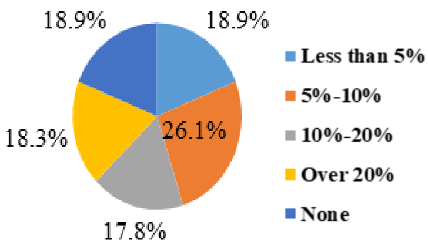

Figure 6. Increased financial costs from implementation of the anti-Covid package in tourism enterprises

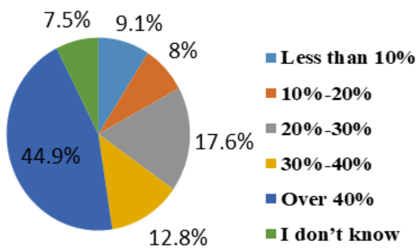

Figure 7. Assesment of revenue losses from the Covid 19 pandemic

2. Factor analysis of research data

We have used SPSS; as a statistical software suite developed by IBM for data management, advanced analytics, multivariate analysis, 'IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, version XX (IBM Corp., Armonk, N.Y., USA) (Gouda, 2015) "Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method; with Kaiser Normalization, through the "Eigen-value" method, it turns out that there are two main components of performance in the tourism sector: Security and performance of the state institutions. Table 5 in the following presents the groups of variables where it is possible to identify these two most important components. The first set of questions identifies security as the main component with the most significant weight in the performance of the tourism sector.

Table 5. Structure matrix -variance explanation questionnaire variables on the safety and image of the structure of tourism case study: Albania

Structure matrix -variance explanation questionnaire variables on the safety and image of the structure of tourism case study: Albania	**Component**	
	1	2
Drafting anti-COVID protocol and its implementation in tourism services influenced on strengthening the image of Albania as a reinforcer of the idea that Albania is a safe country in tourism	.863	.298
Has the pandemic management had an impact on improving Albania's image as a safe haven for tourism	.817	.260
The support provided by the Albanian government for the recovery of the damages from the November 26 earthquake and the measures taken affected promotion of the country's image as a place with a safe tourism.	.780	.288
Albanian media has played a positive role in the image of Albania as a safe place for tourism.	.650	.325
How do you evaluate the impact of the political climate in Albania as an important factor for tourism security.	.602	.391
The ongoing conflicts between the executive and the presidency have shaken Albania's image as a safe destination in the last three years.	.331	.817
The lack of cooperation among state institutions has shaken the image of Albania as a safe destination in the world.	.280	.750
Holding general elections one month before the opening of the summer tourist season affects the tourist image of Albania as a safe destination.	.443	.657
Has the earthquake of November 26 affected the image of Albania as a safe tourist place	.165	.501
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.		

While in the second group of questions, another important factor is identified, that affects the success or performance in the sector of tourism. Referring to Table 3, both factors: security and political stability (performance of state institutions) explain 53.3% of performance in the tourism sector (39.072% of performance in tourism is determined by safety and security and 14.3% by performance of state institutions).

Table 3. Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings[a]
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	3.517	39.072	39.072	3.517	39.072	39.072	3.216
2	1.282	14.247	53.319	1.282	14.247	53.319	2.411
3	.914	10.159	63.478				
4	.756	8.399	71.877				
5	.657	7.300	79.176				
6	.588	6.534	85.711				
7	.528	5.867	91.578				
8	.451	5.007	96.585				
9	.307	3.415	100.000				
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis							
a. When components are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance							

Confirmed by "KMO and Bartlett's Test", the results provided in Table 4 are considered important. This indicates that the respondents' answers to the questionnaire content were approximate.

Table 4. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.832
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	442.627
	df	36
	Sig.	.000

DISCUSSIONS

Albania is a very new tourist destination compared to other countries in the Mediterranean tourist region that have a tradition, such as Spain, France, Italy, Greece and Turkey, as well as other countries in the Balkan region, such as Croatia and Montenegro. Referring to the data provided by the World Economic Forum in the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index, 2019, all Albania indicators related to competitiveness in the field of tourism show improvement (WEF, 2019). The report displays an increase in performance measurement parameters from 3.2 points in 2015 and 3.4 points in 2017 to 3.6 points in 2019 (WEF, 2019). Of the 14 indicators measured, the Safety and Security pillar has the highest performance with 5.8 points out of 7 points which is the maximum rating (WEF, 2019). Regarding the Safety & Security pillar, Albania has performed very well compared to countries in the region, increasing competitiveness with highly developed tourism countries, such as Italy or Greece, as in Figure 8.

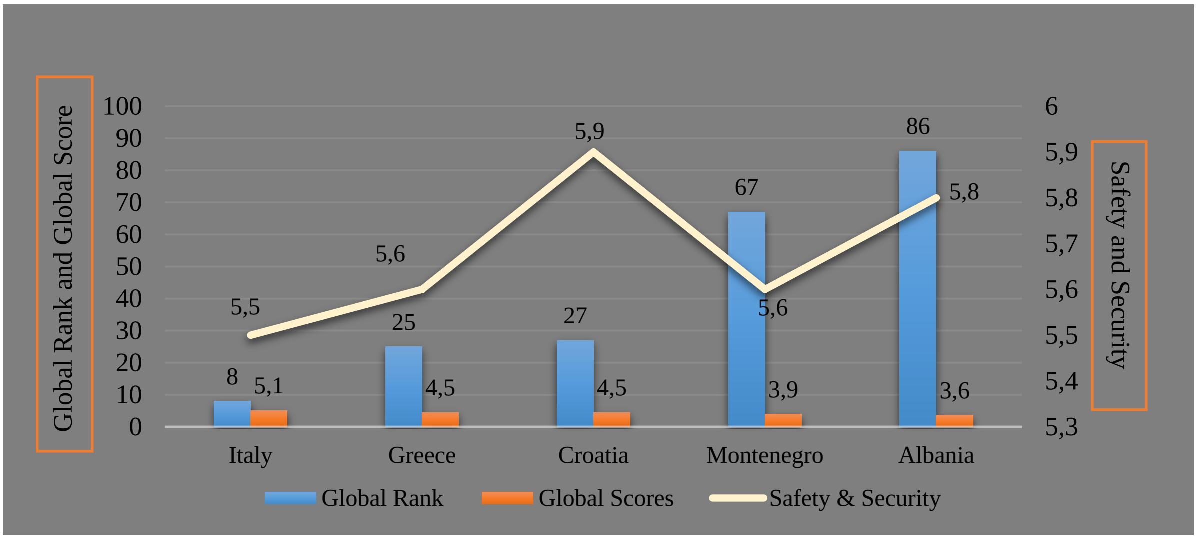

Figure 8. The Safety & Security Pilar Performance
(Source: Built by the authors according to Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index 2019 data; World Economic Forum, 2019)

Data obtained from INSTAT show a substantial increase in the number of visitors from European countries, and in particular from the region during the last decade. In the period 2014-2018, the number of foreign visitors with overnight stays (including visitors who stay at least one night in a hotel or other accommodation facilities, at their relatives' homes, etc.) reached about 21 million, with an increase of 10.7% in 2018. Whereas, the number of daily visitors for the period 2014-2018 reached about 1.7 million. Only during 2018, the inflows of foreign citizens were 15.8% more than in 2017 and in this regard, the local tourism entrepreneurs state that this year is considered the best one for Albanian tourism in the last three decades (INSTAT, 2019). Tourism contributes to the economic development of the country with a direct contribution of 8.5% to GDP and an indirect added value of 26.2%. Tourism is also the sector with the highest employment potential, where 93,000 were directly employed and over 291,000 were the total employees in the sector during 2017 (MTE, 2019). In some areas of Albania, economic development is deeply dependent on the tourism sector. The actors that influenced on the growth of Albania's image as a favourite tourist destination are:

1. The 2013 elections marked a turning point in the country's political image, because of the normal transfer of the country's administration from one political force to another. Referring to the political stability index for 2014, Albania reached a maximum of 0.49 points, thus reflecting political stability. Monitoration of this indicator shows that the maximum score obtained in relation to political stability was achieved in 2014, considering that the average for the whole period is -0.1 points[1].

2. In 2014, Albania gained the status of a candidate country for the achievements in the undertaken reforms (EC, 2019).

3. From 2015 onwards, incentive policies have been implemented accompanied by "promotional campaigns with foreign tour operators and foreign media" (Anadolu Agency, 2015), as a result of announcing tourism a strategic target for the economic development of the country on the part of the government.

The above-mentioned factors contributed to improvement of Albania's image as a safe and stable destination up to the threshold of the COVID-19 spread, which was a fatal threat to billions of people in the world, severely shaking public safety. During the pandemic, governments often concluded that the preventive and mitigation action programs they had adopted were ineffective, prompting a change in approach to ensuring public safety (Kowalski, 2020). Matilda Hellman's doctrine, states that it is necessary to update the measures taken, writing that "the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed a demand for an updated overview of the nature, functions and limitations of social control policies in the 2020s" (Hellman, 2020). This doctrine finds application in the case of Albania, when the Albanian government drafts the protocol to be followed by the travelers entering the territory of Albania during COVID-19 (MEFA, June 2020) after the three-month period March-May of total closure. According to the protocol "Albania has opened the borders on June 1, 2020" and notifies all citizens crossing the territory of the Republic of Albania by land that:

The obligation of 14-day quarantine is not applied, except in special cases by order of health authorities;

- No specific documents are required at the entry border points to enter the Albanian territory;
- At the entry border points, it will be measured only the temperature, which should not exceed 37.5 degrees. If this figure is exceeded, then it will not be possible to continue the journey;
- In case of entry into Albania from the land borders, information on the regulations of other countries, where it will be crossed during the trip, should be taken into account, as they vary from country to country.
- Citizens traveling by land to Albania should obtain prior information at the Embassies of the countries through which they will transit, to be clear on the rules set by these countries in the context of the pandemic;
- Individuals must be equipped with masks to enter the Mother Teresa Airport terminal;

Children under 6 years of age and persons, who for health reasons cannot wear a mask, are exempt from this rule; The opening of the borders by the Albanian state took place at a time when countries in the region, such as Montenegro, required for the entry of passengers to submit a negative PCR test not older than 48 hours, Greece and Croatia required the fulfillment of self-quarantine for 14 days. Travelers entering Croatia for tourist reasons were required to submit a confirmation of accommodation, with payment at one of the accommodation facilities in that country or fees and contracts for permanent stay at a seaport. Undoubtedly, the protocol of June 1, 2020 was an advantageous measure aimed at stimulating Albanian tourism compared to countries in the region in order to minimize the damage caused by COVID-19 pandemic. These measures confirm the finding of the questionnaire that the performance of institutions in pandemic management impacted improvement of Albania's image as a safe country in tourism together with the drafting of the protocol of Anti COVID-19 measures dedicated to tourism industry.

Drafting the protocol of antiCOVID-19 measures for tourism industry

According to Kowalski, "it is the national governments that bear the main burden of fighting the epidemiological threat and not international organizations, such as the WHO" (Kowalski, 2020). This is confirmed in the case of the Albanian government that committed to health insurance at the national level. The Albanian government, faced with the constant and growing demand from the representatives of Albanian tourism enterprises for the reduction or minimization of the economic damages caused to them during the lockdown period, and which would continue during the tourist season May-September 2020, drafted the protocol of anti-COVID-19 measures and its application in tourist services.

The findings indicate that this protocol is considered as the variable that has had the greatest impact on consolidation of Albania image alongside with promotion of the idea that Albania is a safe country for tourism. The package of measures was drafted through cooperation between the two state institutions (MTE and MHSP, 2020) and representatives of the interest groups. It is a public document that was made available to all tourism enterprises, enterprises that provide accommodation, food / beverage, beaches, recreational activities, transportation of domestic and / or foreign tourists, tourist guides, etc., including all their staff, full-time and / or part-time.

Its implementation was mandatory not only for tourism enterprises, but also for tourists, visitors and vacationers since the beginning of the 2020 tourist season. The primary goal was to ensure the protection of public health of employees and tourists from the risk of COVID-19 infection, to prevent its spread and secondly, to guarantee the successful running of the allowed tourist activity. It contains the preconditions, conditions and rules to orient and recommend the tourism industry for the necessary measures to be taken during the period of presence of COVID-19.

Some of the innovations of this protocol were: Appointment of an administrator in the accommodation unit, who would monitor the process and staff regarding the observance of hygiene measures and physical distance. The

[1] The index margin of the political stability is -2.5 (weak) and 2.5 (strong) www.theglobaleconomy.com/rankings/wb_political_stability/

administrator is considered the person who would link the suspected case in the structure with the National Emergency 127 and the local government employees of the respective local unit, which the tourist enterprise belongs to; Hygienic-sanitary measures during the registration process in the accommodation structure; The management of tourism enterprise should promote food safety and hygiene for the persons who prepare and distribute food.

The service rules in bars and restaurants included determination of customers' movement corridors and the 1-2 distances between the backs of two chairs. The employees of bars and restaurants were required to know and follow the rules of personal hygiene set by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection.

The protocol was implemented in connection to and in compliance with the protocols issued by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection. It was open to any change depending on the development dynamics of COVID-19 infection. The above case supports the theoretical basis that changes and amelioration of the security measures level enhance the reputation of security in the tourist destinations. The fact that the protocol played the role of guarantor of security in tourism is confirmed by another survey output. 60.5% of respondents say "yes" when asked "whether before conclusion of contracts between Albanian and foreign tour operators on arrival of foreign tourists in Albania, information on the degree of implementation of "Safety and Security" standards in tourism is required. The need for security arose not only from the demands for tourist security from the domestic tourism market, but also from the foreign tour operators, who local operators cooperate with. The latter, in turn, were under the pressure of tourist demands from tourist groups that had expressed their desire and interest to have holidays in Albania during the 2020 summer tourist season.

The impact of security was reflected in the number of the tourists who visited Albania in the summer tourist season 2020 and 2021. According to the INSTAT data, only during August 2020, the number of foreign nationals who entered Albania was 575,559, around 41 % of the entries made in the period January-August 2020 in Albania (INSTAT, 2020). The data on the foreign citizens' entries showed that even in the conditions of COVID-19 pandemic, during the summer tourist season the tourists who visited Albania came mostly from the neighboring countries. Such a fact indicates that the origin of tourists in Albania preserved the historical trends, where the major weight in Albanian tourism is held by tourists from the neighboring countries. Of the foreign tourists, who entered Albania in August 2020, 61% were from Kosovo, 15% from the Northern Macedonia, 3.6% from Greece, 3.3% from Italy and 1.8% from Poland.

According to INSTAT publications, 96.9% of them declare that they have entered for the purpose of vacation, visit to relatives, health treatment, etc. Vacationers from Kosovo played a key role in supplying the tourist market during the tourist season 2020 and 2021 (INSTAT, 2020). The presence of the tourists coming from Kosovo can be explained by the relaxation of the measures for border crossings. As the highest representative of the hoteliers' association, its chairman Mr. Topuzi states that "The main reason that has driven the increase in the number of foreign tourists is related to the fact that Albania applied an open door policy "COVID Free" during 2021 for all those who wanted to visit it, while the world was closed and EU countries set additional rules for entry or exit to their countries, going to extreme measures, such as the mandatory quarantine in return (Maho, 2021). Compared to 2019, which is also the best historical year of tourism, the figure for 9 months of 2021 is 10.7% less, while in August this difference was only 1.3%, clearly reflecting the recovery of tourism in the first post-pandemic year (Maho, 2021).

Tourism managed to overcome the effect of the pandemic in 2021, approaching the figures to the best historical year that was 2019. Tour operators and experts in the field point out that this increase is related to the open door policy, which meant no restrictions at all for the tourists. In terms of the organized tourism, what stood out was the growing interest of Poles, Belarusians and Ukrainians, while Italians, Germans and French came individually and independently. The novelty of the season was the market from the Middle East (Maho, 2021).

Direct involvement of the Albanian government in tourism marketing

Tourism is more about perceptions than realities (Tarlow, 2014). In general, negative events that occur as a result of natural disasters tend to be forgotten fairly quickly. For this reason, risk management in tourism should always consider negative publicity as a risk factor (Tarlow, 2014). This can justify the direct involvement of the Albanian state in tourism marketing during the summer tourist season of 2020. In cooperation with the state of Kosovo, initiatives were taken for advertising campaigns with the slogan "Pusho Shqip # unerrinëshqipëri"–"Have Albanian holidays # istayinalbania" (Ballkanweb, 2020). The day when the publicity campaign was launched coincides with the application of the protocol for the entry of passengers in the Republic of Albania and the opening of the summer tourist season, on July 1, 2020. Albania was the first country in the region to open its borders and did so exactly by the border of the Republic of Kosovo. The symbolism of the opening and the content of the slogan clearly show the involvement of the Albanian state in concrete actions to help the national tourism economy in order to promote domestic tourism demand, promote rural tourism in Albania as the best alternative form in terms of COVID-19 infection. The period July-August 2020 coincides with the lowest number of infections in Albania. This indicator is assessed by respondents as an act of good pandemic management, which undoubtedly leads to security. Such an initiative has been in line with the directives proposed by the OECD for the promotion of domestic tourism for tourism development (OECD, 2020).

CONCLUSION

The results of this paper show the lack of knowledge of the term "Safety and Security" by employees working in the first line of the tourism industry in Albania in terms of the development of the COVID-19 pandemic. The actors that contribute to this sector reflect the low level of the vocational education, while the results of the questionnaire show a constant demand of foreign tour operators to meet the standards of tourism safety. Therefore, it is urgent to train the staff working in the structures of accommodation, food, and transport with the concepts of safety and security and the standards that belong to this pillar. Contrary to the low level of staff qualifications, the management of the COVID-19 pandemic and the drafting and implementation of the anti-COVID measures protocol highlight the Albanian government's commitment in the field of public safety and health protection as an important factor in tourism safety, strengthening the idea that the image of Albania as a safe destination is an important factor in the development of tourism. Through law enforcement institutions, measures were taken which increased / strengthened the trust of the actors in the tourism industry to ensure security. The involvement of the state in concrete actions to promote domestic tourism demand, in order to provide assistance to the tourism economy, strengthened the perception that Albania is a safe destination for tourism. Health safety and the implementation of the ‘COVID Free’ open door policy during the tourist season 2020 and 2021 ensured a successful tourist season in the conditions of the development of the COVID-19 pandemic. In conclusion, we can say that in the field of tourism security in Albania there is an imbalance between the level of qualification and engagement of actors that contribute to the development of Albanian tourism.

The limitations of the study are:

1.In the Albanian scientific studies related to tourism sector the literature on safety and security field is missing. Such a fact has limited our work while making the comparative analysis of our findings to similar studies. In the future, this paper would contribute to deepening related studies.

2. Literature and other sources of information referring to issues of safety and security and health security in particular, in the tourism industry, are very few for developing countries.

3. The lack of support from the institution and the missing of financial funds for the conducted research have influenced the limitation of the sample size.

4. Distribution of the questionaries by the authors has been accomplished in compliance with the social distance rules. This affected the time extension in regard of questionnaire fulfilment, and as a consequence affected reduction of the number of respondents during the accomplishment period.

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT TRUST, ECONOMIC EFFECTIVENESS AND SATISFACTION IN A TOURISM EVENT CONTEXT: THE CASE OF THE LIMBE CULTURAL ARTS FESTIVAL, CAMEROON

Tembi Maloney TICHAAWA*
University of Johannesburg, School of Tourism and Hospitality,
College of Business and Economics, Johannesburg, South Africa, e-mail: tembit@uj.ac.za

Love Odion IDAHOSA
University of Johannesburg, School of Tourism and Hospitality,
College of Business and Economics, Johannesburg, South Africa, e-mail: loveio@uj.ac.za,

Robin NUNKOO
University of Mauritius, International Center for Sustainable Tourism and Hospitality;University of Johannesburg, School of Tourism and Hospitality, College of Business and Economics, Johannesburg, South Africa, e-mail: r.nunkoo@uom.ac.mu

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Abstract: This study evaluates the relationship between community perception of government's effectiveness and trust in government at the local level. Using the Festival of Arts and Culture hosted in Limbe, Cameroon, the study evaluates how citizens' experiences of a service delivery influence their trust in the government, and the mediating effect of economic, social, and political factors. Trust is evaluated using three measures: competency, integrity, and responsibility. A framework that distinguishes between broad and narrow measures of economic effectiveness is proposed and tested using an ordered logit model. Findings from data generated from 324 event attendees indicate that citizens' perceptions of broad measures of economic effectiveness is influenced by the social and political environment, which in turn influences their trust in the local government. They are, however, able to separate the socio-political context from the economic when asked about narrow measures of economic effectiveness. These findings are relevant for political planners, analysts, and policymakers seeking to foster political trust and support.

Key words: events tourism, community trust, local government, effectiveness and satisfaction, Cameroon

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INTRODUCTION

Government backed repetitive cultural events like the Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) hosted annually in the city of Limbe, Cameroon, have the potential to transform the local economy via job creation and revenue generation (Tichaawa, 2016; Tichaawa and Idahosa, 2020). This cultural event is a form of tourism/leisure public service rendered by the government to the community and, as such, has potentials for influencing citizens' perceptions of the government and their trust levels (Christensen and Lægreid, 2005), as relevant research in tourism development studies have shown (see for example Nunkoo, 2017; Nunkoo and Smith, 2013; Tichaawa et al., 2021; Wong et al., 2021; Wong and Lai, 2022). The trust that citizens have in their political actors and governmental institutions is crucial, especially for developing economies seeking economic recovery and development. Policy-making and reform implementation, if they are to be successful, typically require some form of short-term sacrifices on the part of the citizenry, even where the long-term benefits might not be immediately tangible. It is logical to assume that citizens will only make such sacrifices if they are confident in the governance structures and if they believe that it would be in their best interest. Understanding the drivers of trust might, hence, facilitate increased sensitivity and responsiveness on the part of policy makers and government actors towards the expectations of the citizenry (OECD, 2013). Drivers of trust in government have been identified in the literature to include issues such as the organisation of public administration and interpersonal trust among individual citizens (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007).

Given Cameroon's current socio-political crisis with the Anglophone faction (of which Limbe is a part) seeking to secede from the government citing marginalisation in the ruling administration (an evidence of mistrust in the government), (Harilal et al., 2021), any attempt to resolve the crisis and rebuild trust will require a thorough understanding of the underlying issues that affect political trust. In this paper, the relationship between perceptions of effectiveness, satisfaction with service delivery and trust in government is evaluated within the context of a specific service provided by a local government – the Limbe FESTAC festival. In this paper, we demonstrate the relationship between citizens' trust in the local government and two key constructs: government's economic effectiveness, and citizens' satisfaction with service delivery – moderating for the effects of demographic characteristics. Economic effectiveness is captured using four variables: perceptions of effectiveness in dealing current economic problems; future economic problems; poverty and

* Corresponding author

unemployment. Based on the theoretical literature, a conceptual model is developed which groups these four variables into broad and narrow measures of effectiveness. Satisfaction with service delivery is captured using respondents reported 'overall satisfaction' with the FESTAC festival. Trust in government is captured using three measures: competency, integrity and responsibility. The findings of this study provide evidence of citizens' ability to dissociate government effectiveness in accordance with the level/tiers of governance, as well as to separate the socio-political context from the economic when asked about narrow measures of economic effectiveness. These findings are relevant for political planners, analysts, and policy makers seeking to foster political trust and support, especially in conflict and post-conflict economies like Cameroon.

THEORETICAL AND LITERATURE CONTEXT

Political Trust and Governance

Political trust refers to the confidence that citizen have in the governance and political structures to produce desired outcomes. Political trust matters in that it shapes citizens' behaviour and public support (Blau, 1964; Easton, 1965). As a concept predicated on the social exchanges between citizens and their political actors and structures, political trust is a product of the congruence of citizens' preference and expectations with their observation and/or perception of government's actions and policies (Bouckaert and Van de Walle, 2003; Nunkoo and Smith, 2013). Given that preferences and expectations are mutable products of unique individual experiences and are diverse, encompassing various criteria, it holds that individual perceptions of what is acceptable would vary. This points to the intangible nature of political trust in that it is not dependent on "actual performance of government but on its perceived performance" (OECD, 2013: 21). This, therefore, implies that it is constantly evolving, driven by various factors and is highly context and geography specific.

Within various economic and political contexts, numerous studies have evaluated what these determinants of trust are. These drivers vary from impersonal experiences like economic booms and downturns and news of major corruption scandals in government to more personal experiences such as human rights violations, crime, and human losses due to perceived government negligence (Gray, 2017; Kim and Voorhees, 2011). This suggests that political trust can be approached from various angles. The OECD proposes that it be viewed as "a set of interrelated process components" which encapsulates citizens' expectations from the public sector. These trust components include (OECD, 2013: 29):

- "Reliability: the ability of governments to minimise uncertainty in the economic, social and political environment of their citizens, and to act in a consistent and predictable manner.
- Responsiveness: the provision of accessible, efficient and citizen-oriented public services that effectively address the needs and expectations of the public.
- Openness and inclusiveness: a systemic, comprehensive approach to institutionalising a two-way communication with stakeholders, whereby relevant, usable information is provided, and interaction is fostered as a means to improve transparency, accountability and engagement.
- Integrity: the alignment of government and public institutions with broader principles and standards of conduct that contribute to safeguarding the public interest while preventing corruption.
- Fairness: in a procedural sense the consistent treatment of citizens (and businesses) in the policy-making and policy-implementation processes."

The reliability of the government speaks to their *competence* in addressing economic, social and political issues. *Integrity* encompasses confidence in the government's commitment to ethical and moral accountability to the citizenry while responsiveness, fairness, openness and inclusiveness, can be said to address citizens' expectations of the government's *responsibility* towards them and is dependent on citizens' exchanges and interactions with the government (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007). These components are, however, interdependent so that they often move in congruent directions, influencing and being influenced by each other. The literature has theorised various discourses on political trust and the factors which influence it. These are further discussed. Kim and Voorhees (2011) approach political trust as a function of the citizens' *subjective evaluation* of the government's effectiveness in dealing with economic and socio-political issues. Perceptions of effectiveness is, hence, subjective and can vary with various factors ranging from historical contexts to cultural acceptability of issues; extent of democratic and capitalist practices, and individual idiosyncrasies. In the literature, there are two key competing theories on the sources of these factors which influence political trust– the institutional theory and the cultural theory (Nunkoo and Smith, 2013). The institutional theory presupposes that trust in government is a function of individuals' assessment of the performance of government institutions in relation to their expectations, while the cultural theory views political trust as external to the political environment, being a product of socio-cultural norms and values which projects themselves to the political sphere (Blind, 2006; Mishler and Rose, 2005).

The institutional theory, which this paper focuses on due to the characteristics of the data available, emphasises that political trust is influenced by an interaction of occurrences in the social, political, and economic environment. It identifies three dimensions of the factors which influence institution-based trust in government: the citizens' perception of the economic performance of government; their perceptions of the political performance of government structures, and their level of power/influence in their political environment (Blind, 2006; Nunkoo and Smith, 2013). Economic performance refers to the effectiveness of governmental institutions in meeting citizens' expectations in terms of economic wellness, and in addressing economic issues like unemployment and poverty (Mishler and Rose, 2001; Nunkoo and Smith, 2013; Tichaawa et al., 2021). As determinants of trust in government, political performance/effectiveness looks to issues of corruption; responsibility to citizens and respect for their rights; democracy; transparency of agenda, and in inclusion of all communities, among others (Nunkoo and Smith, 2013); while power and influence focuses on power inequalities, especially with regard to citizens' involvement in decision making. These factors are interdependent, and critical in swaying trust in governmental actors and institutions (Christensen and Lægreid, 2005; Nunkoo, 2017).

Bouckaert (2012), however, posits that the interdependence of the social, economic and political environment in influencing institution-based political trust can be analysed at three levels – the macro, meso and micro level (as cited by OECD, 2013). The macro level focuses on trust as a function of the performance of political institutions and the functioning of democracy (which can be associated with national governance activities); the meso level looks to policy making strategies especially as it affects current experiences and future expectations of socio-economic issues and challenges (associated with the activities of governmental arms like central banks and the legislative and judicial institutions); and the micro level considers "citizens' experience with government through the delivery of public services" (which typically occurs at the level of local governance) (OECD, 2013: 33). The OECD (2013) report provides evidence of the ability of citizens to differentiate between different levels of the public sector, with the highest level of trust occurring at local levels and the lowest at national levels. This highlights the importance of distinguishing between various governmental levels when analysing the interplay of citizens' expectations and political performance. Furthermore, this implies that trust in government can be influenced by the political actors at different levels and is not entirely dependent on the national occurrences. It further emphasises the opportunity for local governments, as the lowest tier of governance, to create positive impacts through their delivery of services to communities.

Bouckaert and Van de Walle (2001) propose the 'performance theory' in evaluating trust at the micro level of service delivery associated with local governance. They argue that in citizens' subjective valuation of their trust in government based on their satisfaction with the quality of services it provides, two angles of the performance theories come into play: the broad performance theory and the narrow performance theory. The broad performance theory focuses on actions and activities that has to do with the populace and general public reforms. It focuses on issues like economic growth, national employment and inflation which affect each individual citizen, regardless of the activities at the different levels of governance. The narrow performance theory emphasises people's immediate experience of specific public services in relation to their social position and socio-political integration and involvement (Christensen and Lægreid, 2005).

Bouckaert and Van de Walle (2001:17), however, find evidences from the literature which highlight the complexity of the broad perspective in that it typically encompasses issues beyond the direct cause of political trust/distrust, accommodating "general tendencies in society, which also have an impact on government". This makes the broad perspective unsatisfactory, and maybe even inappropriate, for evaluating the determinants of political trust. This, hence, suggests that the narrow perspective enshrined in the micro performance theory is a preferred perspective as citizens would only evaluate the government on issues that they hold government responsible for (which includes quality of life and socio-economic concerns). Another key discourse on trust in government is the time-dependence hypothesis which posits that trust is based on intertemporal and time-dependent experience. That is, it is influenced by current experiences, future expectations, as well as a cumulative of experiences over a period of time (Bouckaert and Van de Walle, 2001; Christensen and Lægreid, 2005). Hence, individuals' current experiences of the performance of governmental actors and institutions, economically and socio-politically, would play a role in how much they trust the government. Individuals, however, not only focus on their current experiences, but also take into consideration their historic experiences, as well as their future expectations when evaluating trust. While these might work collectively to influence trust, they would each have independent and unique contributions to the individual's overall trust in the government (Kim and Voorhees, 2011).

Rose and Pettersen (2000) also propose the satisfaction with service-delivery theory which reasons that in evaluating the factors which influence trust in government, a customer/consumer-focused role of people as opposed to the citizen-focused role should be considered (as cited by Christensen and Lægreid, 2005). They argue that individuals perceive themselves as consumers of goods and services provided by the state/government, hence, their trust in the government would be dependent on their satisfaction with service delivery. This is supported by the findings of Gustavsen et al. (2017: 3) that while the 'user-consumer' individual cannot be spearated from the 'citizen-voter' individual, people tend to adopt the consumer focus much more than the citizen focus when evaluating politics at the local level. In this dimension, trust in local government should be assessed as a function of satisfaction with specific services delivered such as health care, education, tourism, municipal operations and citizens welfare (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007).

The literature, however, highlights the challenge in evaluating the relationship between government performance and trust because of the ambiguity in measuring these two constructs (Yang and Holzer, 2006). This ambiguity stems from the idea that assessing the performance of government would need to take into consideration a plethora of performance dimensions, subject areas and criteria. Furthermore, citizens' trust in government is not necessarily fixed and all-encompassing of the various actors, institutions, and arms of government, but will vary with each micro-level entity being evaluated (Christensen and Lægreid, 2005; Van de Walle et al., 2002). To address this ambiguity, this study focuses on a specific government structure – the local government, and on a specific service delivered – an annual festival. Within this micro-environment, the impact of performance, service satisfaction and demographics on trust is evaluated.

Governance in Cameroon

Cameroon is divided into two main political factions based on language – the Anglophone speakers and the Francophone speakers. In the last 3 years, tensions have escalated between these two groups with Anglophone speakers calling for a secession from the country due to perceived marginalisation in the distribution of power by the ruling party (which is of the Francophone speaking side of the tension) (Fanso, 2017; Taoua, 2018). Cameroon operates under a decentralised governance regime based on the Law of Decentralisation introduced in 2004. Having only two tiers of government – the national and the local (CLGF, 2018), local government play a crucial role in the governance structure in the country. At the local level, there are 374 local government councils, 14 of which are city councils and the rest municipal council. The local governments are responsible for delivering services like primary education and literacy, utilities, town planning, health care, tourism, leisure, and social services via funding received from the national government and from local taxes and levies (CLGF, 2018; Commonwealth Governance, 2018). This study was conducted in Limbe, a coastal town in the Fako division of South-West Cameroon, close to the Cameroon-Nigeria border. The key economic sectors in the area are the oil sector (Limbe hosts the only oil company in the country) and the tourism sector (Ngade et al., 2017). About 35% of the population are relatively poor with about 39% of rural dwellers earning less than 30000 CAF per month compared to about 31% for urban dwellers and less than 25% of the total population earning more than CAF 100000 per month (MiaVita, 2011). Since 2016, the governing structure of Limbe has hosted and promoted the annual FESTAC festival, a decision which has crucial socio-economic and political significance for the town. Politically, while Limbe is predominantly Anglophone and associates with the marginalised minority seeking secession, the local government leader, known as the government delegate to Limbe, is a member of the ruling party (Ngonmenyui, 2018).

This breeds grounds for an extension of the tension and mistrust of the national government to the local government. Given the tourism potential of Limbe as the second largest economic activity in the area (as is the case of tourism in Cameroon generally - see Kimbu and Tichaawa, 2018; Tichaawa, 2017 and 2021); the low level of socio-economic welfare of Limbe residents, and the government's dedication to hosting and promoting FESTAC in the area, a unique opportunity to explore the role of a tourism service delivery on the political dimension of trust in government is presented.

The Intersection of Perceptions of Government Effectiveness and Trust in Government in the Economic, Social and Political Environment

In developing the hypotheses tested in this study, a conceptual framework based on the prevailing economic, social, and political climate in Cameroon is developed. In keeping with the theoretical literature, the study proposes economic effectiveness and event satisfaction, moderated by demographic characteristics, as important determinants of government's trustworthiness (Figure 1). Trust in government is assessed within the confines of the FESTAC festival and is captured by three variables: trust in local government to do what is right in FESTAC without citizens having constantly to check on them (i.e. the confidence in *integrity* of the government); trust in elected officials to make the right decisions about FESTAC (i.e. confidence in decision making *competency* of elected officials), and trust in the local government to look after the interests of the community in relation to FESTAC (confidence government's *responsibility* community to interests). These variables are based on the OECD's (2013a) categorisation of the components of trust.

The conceptual framework portrays the economic and socio-political environment surrounding trust in the local government and perceptions of their efficiency with specific reference to the service delivery of the 2016 Limbe FESTAC festival. It iterates that trust and perceptions of effectiveness operate within the economic, social and political space. All trust measures are continually interacting, influencing, and driving each other, and are jointly influenced by perceptions of different measures of economic effectiveness. The relationship between these measures of economic effectiveness and trust are, however, influenced from various portions of the economic and socio-political space. Narrow measures of economic effectiveness (i.e. poverty and unemployment) influence the relationship specifically from the economic space, while the broad measures influence the relationship from an intersection of all three spaces (i.e. economic, social, and political).

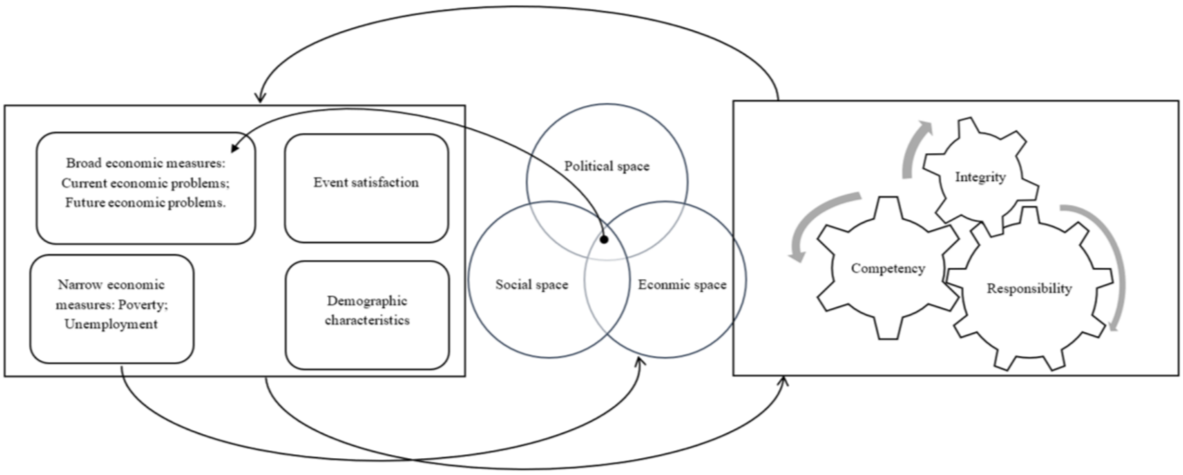

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework for study - the intersection of perceptions
of government effectiveness and trust in government in the economic, social and political environment

This premise is justified by the background on local governance in Cameroon as discussed. Given this background, it can be anticipated that the results picked up in this study will not be consistent with anecdotal expectations[1]. Owing to the political tensions in the area, it is prudent to anticipate that respondents might perceive the government as effective in dealing with current economic issues but will distrust them if they feel that they are part of the ruling party from which they are attempting to secede, especially if they ascribe such effectiveness to access resources due to party connections. Likewise, citizens will trust a government even if they perceive them to be ineffective in addressing current economic

[1] The premise was developed from informal discussions of the unexpected result with Anglophone Cameroonians. A qualitative study which investigates this would be an invaluable contribution to existing knowledge

problems if they opine that such ineffectiveness is as a result of marginalisation from resource access due to non-party affiliation. This is especially true for Cameroon where the current political tensions are centred around power sharing dynamics, access to resources and corruption (Fanso, 2017). In the same vein, citizens will only trust the current government, regardless of its political affiliation, if they believe/perceive that the government is actively working towards providing them with the political future they desire. For Limbe citizens, it is safe to infer that this future would be linked to their secession plans given that their assessment of economic issues is intertwined with the socio-political environment.

Given the tensions between the Francophone members of the ruling party and the Anglophone community, a scenario where the citizens will trust a leader of the opposition party is where they perceive such a leader to be transparent, fair, and effective in their leadership style and in the execution of their duties. For narrower measures of economic effectiveness, this study hypothesises that they would yield more specific information on its impact on trust in government, untainted by socio-political occurrences. Two narrow measures of economic effectiveness are used: effectiveness in using the festival to *reduce unemployment* and effectiveness in using the festival to *reduce poverty*. We propose that, as opposed to the broad measures which asked questions relating to broad economic problems, the specific wording of these economic problems (i.e. poverty and unemployment as narrow measures of economic effectiveness) would allow respondents to separate them from broader socio-political problems. Also, we assume that this narrow definition would represent a more specific measure of economic effectiveness for respondents as they can immediately tell if there is any change in their livelihoods as a result of the festival service delivery, without making links to broader issues of politics.

Based on this framework, the following general hypotheses are tested:

- H1_0: There is a relationship between political trust in LG and citizens' perceptions of LG's effectiveness in addressing economic problems.
- H1_1: Broad measures of economic effectiveness have a different effect on trust levels when compared with narrow measures of economic effectiveness.

Also, in line with existing literature which demonstrate a relationship between trust levels and citizen satisfaction with service delivery, the following hypothesis is also tested:

- H1_2: There is a relationship between political trust in LG and citizens' satisfaction with the festival.

Finally, the impact of demographic characteristic on LG trust is tested using the following hypothesis:

- H1_3: There is a relationship between political trust in LG and citizens' gender, age, education, income category, employment status and community residency status.

Figure 2. Respondents' reported trust levels in the local government

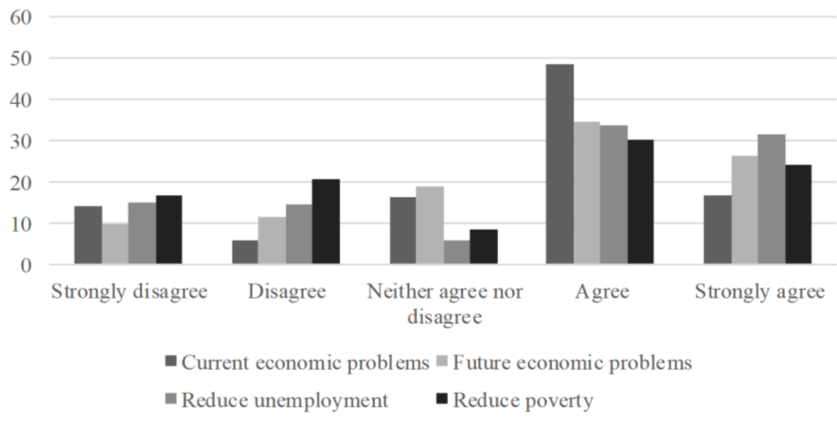

Figure 3. Respondents' perception of LG effectiveness

Table 1. Summary statistics of demographic characteristics of respondents

	N	%
Gender		
Male	100	30.86
Female	224	**69.14**
Age group		
18-24 years old	208	**64.2**
25-34 years old	90	27.78
35-44 years old	20	6.17
45-54 years old	6	1.85
Highest education		
Less than high school	29	8.95
High school	115	35.49
Apprenticeship or trade certificate	13	4.01
College	40	12.35
University	127	**39.2**
Income group		
Less than CFA 1 million	141	**46.23**
CFA1.1 million to CFA 1.5 Million	47	15.41
CFA 1.6 million to CFA 2 million	21	6.89
CFA 2.1 million to CFA 2.5 million	28	9.18
CFA 2.6 million to CFA 3 million	25	8.2
CFA 3.1 million to CFA 3.5 million	13	4.26
CFA 3.6 million to CFA 4 million	12	3.93
4.1 million or more	18	5.9
Employment status		
Student	182	**56.17**
Unemployed	23	7.1
Employed	119	36.73
Residency status		
Non-resident/visitor	45	13.89
Resident	279	**86.11**

Data and Methodology

To test the stated hypotheses, the data collected from 324 attendees at the 2nd annual Limbe FESTAC was used. Given that the population size of festival attendees could not have been known prior to the festival, a spatially-based purposive sampling technique was used (Hattingh and Swart, 2016). The questionnaire administered to attendees was developed in consultation with existing literature with similar research focus and vetted by local stakeholders and tourism practitioners. The questionnaire captured, among other information, attendees' satisfaction with FESTAC, their return intentions, trust level in the LG, perceptions of the LG's effectiveness and respondents' demographic characteristics.

The summary statistics of respondents' perceptions of the government's economic effectiveness and event satisfaction levels are presented in Figures 2 and 3 and a description of their demographic characteristics are provided in Table 1. Figure 2 indicates that most respondents have high trust in the government (i.e. trust them a little or trust them completely), for all three measures of trust relating to the FESTAC festival.

Figure 3 indicates that, for all four measures of economic effectiveness with regard to the festival, respondents believe the local government to be effective in using FESTAC to address both broad and narrow measures of economic issues.

Table 1 indicates that the pool of respondents was gender-biased towards females (69.14%) and adults between the ages of 18 and 24 years old (64.2%). It also reveals a well-educated respondent pool since majority of respondents had at least a high school certificate, with the highest proportion (55.55%) having a university or college degree. For employment status, the majority of respondents were students (56.17%) and in the 'less than 1 million CFA' income category (46.23%).

To test the hypotheses postulated, the data collected was evaluated within the generalised model specified in Equation 1 below. This model is based on the conceptual framework developed in section three.

$$\text{Trust in government}_i = f\,(\text{Broad Economic Measures}_i, \text{Narrow Economic Measures}_i, \\ \text{Even Satisfaction Level}, \text{Demographic Characteristics}) \quad \ldots \text{ Equation 1}$$

Trust in government is estimated using three trust measures (competency, integrity, and responsibility) and all three trust measures are ordinal in nature, measured by an evenly spaced, 5-level, Likert scale (from '1- Do not trust them at all' to "5- Trust them completely').

For the regressors (i.e. independent variables), broad economic measures are approximated by perceptions of government's effectiveness in using FESTAC to deal with *current* and *future* economic problems, respectively, whereas narrow economic measure are approximated by perceptions of government's effectiveness in using FESTAC to reduce *poverty* and *unemployment*; respondent's satisfaction levels are measured by their response to the question: 'overall, how satisfied are you with this visit?', and the demographic characteristics evaluated include respondents' age, gender, education, income levels, employment status and residency status. The broad and narrow measures of economic effectiveness, and event satisfaction levels are captured by a 5-level Likert scale: from '1- Strongly disagree' to '5- Strongly agree' and '1-Very dissatisfied' to '5-Very satisfied', respectively. In testing the hypotheses, respondents' reasons for being at the festival (i.e. to attend FESTAC for business reasons, and for other reasons), as well as whether they benefit economically from the festival (i.e. yes or no), are controlled for. Given that all regressands (i.e. dependent variables) are ordinal with equal and sequential increasingly spaced values, such that successive values are higher than the immediately preceding ones, the ordinal logit model is appropriate for evaluating the model in Equation 1 (Jeliazkov and Rahman, 2012; Winkelmann, 2008).

The Ordinal Logit Model: Effectiveness, Satisfaction, and Trust in Local government

Each regress and, represented as Y, is measured by an ordered 5-category trust scale (1-Do not trust them at all, 2-Do not trust them very much, 3-Neither trust them nor distrust them, 4-Trust them a little, and 5-Trust them completely). Where the categories are represented as g = 1,2, … ,n (i.e., n=5), then, the probability of each ordered category occurring is:

$$P(Y-g) = \theta^{(j)}, \quad (g = 1,2, \ldots, \mathrm{n})$$

the 'n – 1' cumulative probabilities for the ordered logistic model are:

$$\gamma^{(j)} = P(Y \leq g) = \theta^{(1)} + \ldots + \theta^{(j)} \text{ for } g = 1,2, \ldots, n-1$$

where $\gamma^{(n)} = P(Y \leq n) = 1$ always.

For the three regressand measures (Y_i) and regressors ($X_{1i}, \ldots, X_{ki}$), the ordinal logistic model for $\gamma_i^{(j)} = P(Y_i \leq g)$ for each i and g = 1,2, …, n-1; "the ordinal logistic model considers a set of dichotomies, one for each possible cut-off of the response categories into two sets, of "high" ($Y > g$) and "low" ($Y \leq g$) responses" for (g = *1,2,…, n-1*) (Benoit, 2012: 26; Hosmer and Lemeshow, 2000). It is, hence modelled as:

$$\log\left(\frac{\gamma_i^{(g)}}{1-\gamma_i^{(g)}}\right) = \log\left(\frac{P(Y_i \leq g)}{P(Y_i > g)}\right) = \alpha^{(g)} - (\beta_1 X_{1i} + (\beta_k X_{ki})$$

For the trust levels regressands, these cut-offs are: 'Do not trust them at all' vs. all other four levels of trust; 'Do not trust them at all' or 'Do not trust them very much' vs. all other three trust levels; 'Do not trust them at all', 'Do not trust them very much' or 'Neither trust them nor distrust them' vs. the other two trust levels; and 'Do not trust them at all', 'Do not trust them very much', 'Neither trust them nor distrust them', or 'Trust them a little' vs. 'Trust them completely'.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the ordered logistic regression model as specified in Equation 1 are presented in Table 2. All results are interpreted based on the standard *ceteris paribus* assumption of economics and econometrics where in interpreting the coefficients of one regressor, all other regressors are assumed to be held constant. Furthermore, the assumptions and specification of the ordered logit model implies that the coefficients reported are the ordered log-odds units indicating the effect of a unit change in the independent variable on the dependent variable in the ordered log-odds scale (IDRE, 2017).

Broad measures of economic effectiveness

For the 'current economic problems' regressor variable, decreasing positivity in the agreement that the LG is effective in leveraging FESTAC to deal with *current* economic problems is associated with significantly increasing odds of high trust in the local elected officials to make the right decision about FESTAC (i.e. Competency); to do what is right without constant citizen supervision (i.e. integrity); and to look after the interest of the community in relation to FESTAC (i.e. Responsibility). This implies that the more positive individuals are in their perception of how effective the government is in addressing current economic problems using FESTAC, the less trust they have in the government's competency and accountability.

Table 2. Order Logit Analysis (Robust standard errors in parentheses (Legend: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1)

	(Competency)		(Integrity)		(Responsibility)	
	1a	1b	2a	2b	3a	3b
Dealing with current economic problems	-1.113***	-0.704***	-1.292***	-0.664***	-1.902***	-1.040***
	(0.194)	(0.197)	(0.242)	(0.181)	(0.289)	(0.243)
Dealing with future economic problems	0.682***	0.509**	0.313	0.0751	1.325***	0.733**
	(0.197)	(0.216)	(0.217)	(0.212)	(0.308)	(0.323)
Reducing poverty	0.655***		0.873***		1.315***	
	(0.194)		(0.173)		(0.207)	
Reducing unemployment	-0.129	0.262	0.0546	0.520***	-0.384	0.409**
	(0.242)	(0.163)	(0.139)	(0.124)	(0.285)	(0.200)
Overall event Satisfaction	0.889**	0.831**	1.259***	1.166***	1.893***	1.868***
	(0.415)	(0.404)	(0.403)	(0.371)	(0.449)	(0.377)
Gender: (Base: Male)						
Female	3.317***	3.645***	2.616***	2.981***	3.877***	4.404***
	(0.445)	(0.443)	(0.471)	(0.450)	(0.416)	(0.460)
Age group: (Base[2]: 18 – 24 years old)						
25-34 years old	-0.446	-0.800**	0.0338	-0.284	-2.245***	-2.326***
	(0.471)	(0.393)	(0.270)	(0.235)	(0.424)	(0.343)
35-44 years old	-0.894	-1.060	-0.503	-0.605	0.279	0.545
	(0.865)	(0.889)	(1.147)	(1.096)	(0.936)	(0.982)
45-54 years old	4.847***	5.393***	4.749***	5.539***	4.420***	6.487***
	(1.057)	(1.067)	(0.841)	(0.795)	(0.963)	(1.009)
Highest completed education: (Base: < high school)						
High school	1.091	1.088	0.445	0.651	-0.398	-0.128
	(0.981)	(1.025)	(0.996)	(0.865)	(0.713)	(0.542)
Apprenticeship or trade certificate	0.136	0.774	0.100	1.128	-7.037***	-4.812***
	(1.264)	(1.248)	(1.067)	(0.868)	(0.931)	(1.176)
College	-0.790	-0.869	1.766	1.554	0.450	0.485
	(0.885)	(0.969)	(1.106)	(0.998)	(1.004)	(0.866)
University	-1.736**	-1.648*	-1.225	-1.029	-5.300***	-5.286***
	(0.841)	(0.899)	(1.197)	(1.052)	(0.942)	(0.937)
Income Category: (Base: Less than CFA 1 million)						
CFA 1 million - CFA 3 million	-0.393	-0.0870	-0.972***	-0.527*	-0.251	0.342
	(0.390)	(0.324)	(0.341)	(0.308)	(0.397)	(0.382)
More than CFA 3 million	-0.903*	-0.848	-1.364***	-1.055***	-2.838***	-2.622***
	(0.540)	(0.541)	(0.437)	(0.391)	(0.589)	(0.736)
Employment status: (Base: Student)						
Unemployed	2.810***	2.592***	0.303	0.135	2.155***	2.208***
	(0.674)	(0.685)	(0.636)	(0.608)	(0.605)	(0.516)
Employed	1.878***	1.992***	0.969**	1.180***	6.475***	6.508***
	(0.478)	(0.482)	(0.405)	(0.380)	(0.627)	(0.940)
Residency status: (Base: Non-resident)						
Resident	0.601	0.813	-0.763	-0.362	4.943***	5.185***
	(0.550)	(0.574)	(0.486)	(0.538)	(0.609)	(0.607)
Constant cut1	3.414*	3.804*	-0.734	-0.0156	5.346**	6.669***
	(2.041)	(2.128)	(2.037)	(1.997)	(2.213)	(1.783)
Constant cut2	4.200**	4.564**	2.118	2.847*	7.702***	8.748***
	(2.024)	(2.107)	(1.738)	(1.712)	(1.956)	(1.671)
Constant cut3	5.322***	5.631***	4.670***	5.204***	10.83***	11.38***
	(2.045)	(2.113)	(1.767)	(1.737)	(1.884)	(1.731)
Constant cut4	7.970***	8.110***	7.046***	7.380***	14.66***	14.72***
	(2.147)	(2.160)	(1.823)	(1.789)	(1.974)	(1.846)
Observations	**324**	**324**	**324**	**324**	**324**	**324**

In all model specifications, respondents' reasons for being at the festival (i.e. to attend FESTAC, for business reasons, and for other reasons), as well as whether, or not, they benefit economically from the festival, are controlled for but not reported here.This result is inconsistent with anecdotal expectations but is consistent with the proposition that citizens associate the ability to be effective in dealing with current economic crisis with access to resources which is a function of ruling party

[2] Refers to the 'base' category

affiliation. As such, although the attendees of the Limbe FESTAC perceive the government to be effective in dealing with current economic problems, they do not dissociate this effectiveness from the political affiliation of the local government leader which grants him access to resources. Their trust perception is hence, influenced not only by the economic environment, but also by the social and political environment. For the 'future economic problems' regressor, increasing positivity in the agreement that the LG is effective in leveraging FESTAC to deal with *future* economic problems is associated with significantly increasing odds of high trust in the local elected officials to make the right decision about FESTAC (Competency), and to look after the interest of the community in relation to FESTAC (Responsibility). This finding is consistent with the premise put forward in the conceptual framework. The more respondents feel that the current government is transparent, fair, and effective in addressing their future economic problems (in this case, creating enabling environment for their secession agenda), the more trust they will have in the government. The is supported by the descriptive statistics in Table 2 where the majority of the citizens agree that the current government is very effective in addressing future economic problems.

Narrow measures of economic effectiveness

For the *poverty* specific economic variable, results reveal that increasing positivity in the agreement that the LG is effective in leveraging FESTAC to *reduce poverty* is significantly associated with increasing odds of high trust in the LG's competency, integrity and responsibility to the people. Consistent with the conceptual framework, citizens are able to immediately identify the effectiveness of the LG in tackling poverty using FESTAC (e.g., in the creation of temporary employment, money invested in the locality by the government and private sector as a result of the festival, etc such that there is an immediate financial/otherwise effect on the livelihood of locals) which, expectedly, positively influences their trust levels. This suggests that the political affiliation of the leadership does not influence citizens' association of effectiveness and trust when the economic issue is specific. For the *unemployment* specific economic variable, the results indicate that for all three measures of trust in the government, there is no significant relationship with perceptions of government effectiveness in using the festival to *reduce unemployment* by creating employment opportunities. We propose that this unemployment reduction effect is masked by the poverty reduction effect, as such, we re-ran the model again, but excluded the poverty variable. The model results mostly remained the same in sign and significance for all other regressor variables. However, for the unemployment variable, the proposition is confirmed as the results become positive and significant for all but the responsibility dependent variable, implying that a more positive perception of the government's effectiveness in addressing unemployment with FESTAC is associated with higher positive levels of trust in the government.

These results confirm hypotheses H1_0 and H1_1 and demonstrates that citizens' perceptions of economic effectiveness significantly influence trust in government. It also confirms that perceptions of broad measures of economic effectiveness is influenced, not only from the economic space, but also from the social and political environment. However, specifying narrow definitions of economic issues allows respondents to easily distil economic effects/impact without confounding them with socio-political issues yields different results from when broad specifications are used. Furthermore, it demonstrates the intertemporal nature of citizens' perceptions of government's economic effectiveness and their trust in the government. Citizens make decisions about how much trust they have in the government at various points in time based on their perceptions on economic effectiveness both at the current time, and in anticipation of future performance.

Event satisfaction

Confirming the hypothesis put forward in H1_3, higher levels of overall satisfaction with the festival is significantly associated with increasing odds of higher trust levels in the LG for all three dependent variables, confirming hypothesis H1_1. This implies that, consistent with the findings of Kampen et al. (2006), attendees' satisfaction with service delivery has significant positive impact on citizens' trust in their local government. This provides unique evidence for the importance of annual tourism events in influencing trust in government. Hence, investing in understanding what the drivers of satisfaction with this event are would be worthwhile for the government of Limbe if they are seeking to improve trust levels.

Demographic variables

The results show that there are some differences in the level of trust in government based on age categories. When compared to respondents in the 18 to 24 years age group; those in the 45 to 54 years age group have significantly higher levels of trust in the government for all three measures of trust; the 35- to 44-year-olds do not demonstrate any significant difference from the 18 to 24 year olds; and the 25 to 34 year olds have significantly lower trust in the LG's competency and responsibility to the society. The analysis also picks up a strong positive gender effect for trust in government. Females have higher trust in the government for all three dependent variables when compared to men. This could be explained by the fact that men tend to be more engaged in political issues than women, especially in developing countries. This exposes them to negative experiences with the government structures, especially in conflict environments like Cameroon. This potentially influences their trust in government. In terms of educational qualification, there are no significant differences in trust levels (for all three trust measures) for individuals with a college degree compared to individuals with less than a high school qualification. Individuals with apprentice or trade certificates have significantly less trust in the government to look after their interests (i.e. government's responsibility) when compared to those without a high school degree. For other trust measures, the two groups are similar. This suggests that those in the informal trade and crafts market feel neglected by their local government. It is, hence, recommended that the LG in Limbe call together these group of citizens in order to understand their challenges, especially given their significant contribution to the tourism industry. Finally, individuals with university degrees, while similar to those with less than high school certificates in term of trust in the government's integrity, have significantly less trust in the government's competency and responsibility. This is consistent with the OECD's presupposition that more educated people are more critical of the government (OECD, 2013a). This negative higher education effect should be a cause for concern for the local government. Whether it is the case that university graduates do not feel that the government is responsible to them, or that their higher education exposure makes them have higher expectation from the LG; this result calls for an improvement in the Limbe officials' governance strategies such that it gains the approval of the intellectual community. These results are interesting as they suggest that educational qualification has no relationship with trust in the government's integrity, implying that perceptions of government's corruption are not influenced by increasing levels of education in this community.

Across the three income categories, there is no significant difference in the respondents' level of trust in the Limbe officials' competency. However, for the *integrity* dependent variable, both the two higher income categories have significantly less trust in the LG's integrity when compared to the lowest income category. A significant difference in trust in government's responsibility is only picked up for the highest income category when compared to the lowest category. These results indicate that those in the lowest income category are more trusting of the government, in general, when compared to those in higher income categories. This is consistent with the high positive perception of the government's effectiveness in tackling issues of poverty and unemployment. The results also indicate that for the three employment categories, students exhibit the least level of trust in the LG when compared to the unemployed and employed. This effect is strongest and most consistent for the competency and integrity variables. This suggests that the students are not very impressed with the government's decision making and overall commitment to their interests. Finally, residents and non-residents have similar trust levels in the government's competency and integrity, but differ significantly in their levels of trust in the government's responsibility to their interests, with residents having significantly higher trust levels than non-residents. This is suggestive of non-residents' perception of the commitment of the government to their interests/welfare which indicates that the government could do more to boost the hospitality of the location for visitors to the festival. This is especially important for boosting the tourism potential of Limbe and FESTAC.

CONCLUSION

This paper provides unique insights into the relationship between governments' service delivery and political trust. It tests three hypotheses on political trust and its association to perceptions of economic effectiveness and event satisfaction, moderated by demographic characteristics. We analyse data from 324 attendees of the 2016 Limbe FESTAC festival using a ordered logit model based on a conceptual framework on the intersection of perceptions of government effectiveness and trust in government in the economic, social and political environment. The results find evidence of citizens' differentiation between narrow and broad specifications of economic issues in their perceptions of government's economic effectiveness and how each has its own unique relationship with political trust. It confirms the conceptual proposition that perceptions of broad measures of economic effectiveness is influenced, not only from the economic space, but also from the social and political environment, whereas, narrow measures of economic effectiveness allow respondents to easily distil economic effects/impact without confounding them with socio-political issues, yielding different results from broad measures. The results also demonstrate the intertemporal nature of the relationship between citizens' perceptions of government's effectiveness and their trust in government such that they are able to separate current realities from future expectations.

Furthermore, results confirm the proposition by the literature of existing research that satisfaction with a service delivery has significant positive impacts on citizens' trust in their local government in the case of an annual festival event. This provides unique evidence for the importance of annual tourism events in influencing trust in government and highlights the need for governments to invest in understanding the drivers of satisfaction for this event. The variation in trust levels among different social demographics is also explored with significant recommendations for government intervention in Limbe. The study finds a gap in the LG's relationship with citizens in informal trade and recommends that the LG calls together these groups of citizens in order to understand their challenges, especially given their significant contribution to the tourism industry. The study also highlights the need for the Limbe LG to address the negative perceptions of visitors to the festival with regard to their interests/welfare in order to boost the tourism potential of Limbe and FESTAC.

The generalisability of the findings is, however, limited to the unique event and geographical context of the study. It is plausible that analysis in a different context, for example a Francophone one, will yield different results given differing socio-economic and political atmospheres which could influence perceptions. Consequently, studies that capture observations over time, and in various geographical contexts, perhaps, even a wider context would be relevant to testing the applicability of the model proposed in this study. It is also acknowledged that the scope of the data available limits the number of factors included at effect-exerting antecedents on trust. Other factors like prior experience of conflict, or support for a differing political party, could potentially affect the results obtained in this study, but are not controlled due to data unavailability. That said however, this study still provides both theoretical and practical insights relevant to policy analysts, political planners and policy makers seeking to foster political trust and support, especially in conflict and post-conflict economies like Cameroon.

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PANDEMIC-INDUCED CRISES IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY – AN INDIAN CONTEXT

Bindi VARGHESE
CHRIST - Deemed to be University, School of Business and Management, Bengaluru, Karnataka, India, e-mail: bindi.varghese@christuniversity.in

Jitendra Mohan MISHRA[*]
Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Department of Tourism Management, Amarkantak, Madhya Pradesh, India, e-mail: jitenban@gmail.com

Smitha BABOO
CHRIST - Deemed to be University, School of Business and Management, Bengaluru, Karnataka, India, e-mail: smitha.baboo@christuniversity.in

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Abstract: This paper aims to examine the pandemic-induced crises psychological and physical distress experienced by the employees during the Covid19 pandemic and the implications on job loss and job characteristics from all domains of the hospitality industry in India. The study is designed to explore the pandemic-induced tourism crisis along with emotional, mental, and physical effects. An in-depth qualitative exploration was used and a tool comprising of data sets include representatives from aviation, resorts and hotel segments, tour operators, and travel agents. The researchers used a semi-structured questionnaire that had two sections and explored industry concerns, HR strategies, and employee distress through a multi-stage process involving coding and content analysis. The study analyzed the pandemic-induced crises at the micro and macro levels and grouped them under three essential dimensions such as; organizational and industry concerns, organizational HR policies, and employees' psychological distress. The subthemes under these dimensions can contribute to scale validation. The subthemes grouped under the three major dimensions have come out as a theoretical model of how the pandemic has affected professionals at these three levels. The findings as items can be validated through descriptive research in quantitative terms forming the future scope. The study analyzed the perceptions of professionals in the tourism and hospitality business amid the pandemic and concludes that a proactive HR policy can minimize employees' psychological distress.

Key words: Psychological distress, job loss, job insecurity, covid-19, HR Strategies

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INTRODUCTION

Job loss and job security are the key elements that affect the psychological and physical function of a person. The Covid -19 outbreak has generated a crisis of epic proportions which has affected almost all the industries. Psychological distress has been identified as an important trigger in the mental health and emotional distress among the employees of hospitability businesses (Drapeau et al., 2012; Mirowsky and Ross, 2003; Payton, 2009). Inadequate insurance and compensation also lead to psychological distress (Tam et al., 2004).

The global implication of COVID-19 on the tourism industry is destructive (Ghosh, 2020). Due to the sudden spike of COVID-19, international travel restrictions started to widen geographically. With this, people started to cancel and drop their travel plans considering the high level of uncertainty in both safety and restrictions (Donthu and Gustafsson, 2020). Tourism was the first to be affected and the last to recover among the industries. Furthermore, the imposition of lockdown measures to stop the spread of the deadly virus, made the situation worse (Chaudhary, 2020). The global economy plunged into a recession from early 2020 until the end of 2021, dampening the confidence of tourists.

With zero growth expectations, the economy of Asia-Pacific reached a new low in the past sixty years (Ugur and Akbiyik, 2020). The economy of the top ten countries with high tourism receipts has declined by 6.8 percent. Business in the tourism sector has been drastically reduced, with all jobs in the tourism sector being impacted badly (Hoque, et.al. 2020). Millions of employees with a stable revenue pre-covid are at risk of going into poverty (Kaushal and Srivastava, 2021). The tourism sector has the most informal way of working (Sharma and Nicolau, 2020), more than three out of four workers in the tourism sector are found to be working in the informal category (Niewiadomski, 2020). Survival strategies are being implemented by most of the companies that led to layoffs and reduction in salary (Solanki, 2020). The psychological implications due to unemployment, especially at the time of a crisis like COVID-19, can include increased stress levels, exhaustion, anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts (Lord, 2020). Unemployment may cause a rise in mortality because of ensuing health problems that stand as the biggest impact (Carroll, 2007).

The COVID-19 pandemic caused the global crisis and had imposed larger emotional and psychological distress. The crisis and vulnerability of jobs in tourism and aviation demand a much more strategic outlook on its psychological impacts and depression (Bubonya et al., 2017). Primarily hospitality sector employees face panic and anxiety, due to global

[*] Corresponding author

uncertainties (Price et al., 1998). Global health worries and quarantine process, overburdened with financial pressures, created mental blocks. Folks from different walks of life; were facing psychological issues in the testing times (Abal et al.,2018). The restrictions imposed in the global crisis situations impacted the economy across the globe (Blustein et al., 2020). Communities that were more volatile were impacted the most (Joyce and Xu, 2020).

Study Settings

Earlier studies while narrating the impact of the pandemic on the tourism and hospitality sector, have failed to address the employee's distress as a product of sectoral and organizational issues. This study primarily aimed at the psychological and physical impact of job loss on an employee in India. The vulnerability in the work and considering the worst affected industry, the hospitality industry members are emotionally, mentally, and physically impacted. The data sets include representatives from aviation, resorts and hotels, tour operators, and travel agents from India. This investigation triggers extreme vulnerability witnessed among the tourism and hospitality business from an Indian perspective (Kulakhmetova et al., 2022). The study revealed the major socio-psychological challenges at multiple levels navigating newer dimensions to handle the tourism business. Human resource management operations are a crucial part of the entire organization, especially during the current situation of the pandemic (Prayitno et al., 2022). It is significant that recognizing and executing proper HR policies and smart approaches to remote working have become the biggest and most important challenge. Pandemic has revised and initialized various new practices and is seeking new models to break the glass of ideas for survival (Dwomoh et al., 2020). Forward-looking leadership is very significant to concentrate more on mutual wellbeing. It will develop a scenario where employees and consumers will become more helpful and productive (Caliguri et al., 2020). The companies are changing the HR policies by the way of flexible work plans, protecting their employees with healthcare facilities, and improvising the local management like temporary closure, allowing work from home, and providing safety equipment, the culture of open communication at all levels, and, cross-cultural training (Joseph et al., 2021). Seasonality and vulnerability are the fundamental behavior of the tourism industry affecting every aspect of the contemporary hospitality industry (Donthu and Gustafsson, 2020).

METHODOLOGY

Research Setting

An in-depth qualitative method was implied to explore the experiences of the tourism and hospitality personnel who have been severely affected due to the Pandemic. The qualitative method examined employees' experiences and measured the perspectives. To achieve the purpose of the study, telephonic interviews were conducted with the managers, operational, sales, and contracting head, customer service officer of the hospitality and the aviation sectors from India. This study considered a purposive sample wherein a group of people was specifically sampled (Creswell, 2007).

The researchers assessed the diverse group of officers across the country. To restrict generalizations, participants were deliberately interviewed based on the profile of the work (Brewis, 2014; Robinson, 2014). Literature substantiated (Okumus, 2004; Olsen, 2004; Rumelt, 2012) and themes were developed. A semi-structured questionnaire with two sections was developed to measure the objectives of the study. The primary segment consists of ten questions measuring the experiences of psychological distress, challenges, and concerns, the commitment of the organization, support systems, HR strategies and policies, financial stability, and the traumatic experience of the employees due to the Covid 19 pandemic. The second segment of the schedule reported the demographic characteristics of tourism and hospitality personnel.

Sample and Data Collection

Purposive sampling was adopted to reach out to the respondents from tourism and hospitality. The purposive sampling technique was used considering the 'a priori' (Robinson, 2014). The qualitative approach used indicated statistical assessment on the scale. The salient characteristics of a qualitative method implied precision and rigor. Firstly, participants were from the tourism and hospitality segment. Secondly, the participants narrated perceptions and experiences (Bernard, 2002). Besides, the sample was drawn considering their demographics and backgrounds.

To connect with the participants, the snowball sampling method was applied. To complete the scientific procedure, the duration was three months from June 2020 to August 2020. The respondents involved in the study include representatives, who are occupied in a strategic role in the business such as; group sales heads of aviation, resorts and hotels, travel agency & tour operation businesses. Overall, 24 personnel from the tourism, hospitality, and aviation sectors were covered as the sample (Table 1). At this number, the data saturation was noticed, and further, no add-on information was observed in the dataset (Fusch and Ness, 2015).

Data Analysis

Each author primarily examined and administered the interview questions and developed specific categories based on the existing studies (Flint et al., 2013). 'Member checking' was applied first for the accuracy of transcripts and for data validation (Birt et al., 2016). The authors consented by cross-examining the coded themes; whenever there was a disagreement. For the study, a blended approach was used, which is theoretically driven and has inductively oriented the data analysis. The data was then manually analyzed as the authors used their expertise and experience in the data assessment process for an interpretative approach. The data analysis process implied a 'five-phase model' (Watkins, 2017).

Primarily, a data table was created, and the authors individually reviewed the data and noted the experiences of different participants due to the pandemic. Once the initial review was completed, overall research questions have been formed:

A. What are the different experiences faced as an employee amid Covid 19?
B. What are the concerns and challenges associated with job loss/job insecurity?
C. What are the strategies adopted to overcome psychological distress and other related concerns?

The Authors cross-examined the tables and had consented in the making of a consolidated table. In the next stage, the consolidated table indicated open codes. In order to reach the abstract realm of inquiry; authors connected the open codes and cross-connected with the theoretical concepts. In the last phase after contemplating on the individual findings, the conceptual frame that emerged from the data set led to different themes. In the following section, the findings are presented with the supporting evidence of the participants.

Table 1. Profile of participants

Code	Age / Gender	State Sector	Position in the Organization	Years of experience
Participant 1	41 / M	Kerala	Hospitality, Sales Head	18
Participant 2	42 / F	Madhya Pradesh	Aviation, Operations Executive	20
Participant 3	40 / M	Karnataka	Hospitality-Holidays, GM	18
Participant 4	41 / F	Tamil Nadu	Senior Manager, Inbound	17
Participant 5	42 / M	Kerala	Head of Contracting, DMC	18
Participant 6	38 / F	Maharashtra	Team Leader – Holidays	15
Participant 7	26 / F	Maharashtra	Customer Service Officer – Aviation	2
Participant 8	25 / M	Kerala	CRE, Leisure Travel Outbound	3
Participant 9	44 / M	Maharashtra	Deputy GM, Aviation	15
Participant 10	40 / F	Karnataka	Team Leader – Holidays	15
Participant 11	36 / M	Gujarat	Manager – Holidays Inbound	11
Participant 12	33 / M	Rajasthan	Manager – Contracting Leisure	10
Participant 13	25 / F	Delhi	Customer Service Manager – Hotel	3
Participant 14	28 / M	Delhi	Front Office Executive	6
Participant 15	39 / M	Karnataka	Associate Vice President, MICE	17
Participant 16	26 / M	Tamil Nadu	Assistant Manager, Holidays	6
Participant 17	27 / F	Karnataka	Assistant Manager, Inbound	6
Participant 18	33 / M	Karnataka	Manager, Leisure Travel	12
Participant 19	47 / M	Karnataka	Managing Director	26
Participant 20	24 / M	Madhya Pradesh	Assistant Manager, Holidays	3
Participant 21	26 / M	Tamil Nadu	Assistant Manager, Outbound	6
Participant 22	42 / M	Delhi	Managing Director	19
Participant 23	37 / M	West Bengal	Deputy Manager, Holidays	15
Participant 24	33 / F	Kerala	Hotel Sales	11

Findings and Discussion

The data revealed that the travel professionals faced enormous pressure due to the pandemic and the tourism business taking a toll with economic downfall. Further, the experience of the stakeholders was governed by the feeling of temporariness and the hope that situations will get back to normalcy. The in-depth interviews indicated some of the emerging patterns as discussed below.

I. Key Organizational and Industry Concerns

All participants expressed personal and fond memories of their work experience and a pandemic shift scenario and dissonance with the organizational decisions affecting their carrier and personal life. Further, the service industry professionals were sharing their hope of travel business getting back in shape in the post-Covid scenario.

"Most of us are aware that this is the worst thing that happened to the humanity and tourism is the first affected and last to be recovered"- (Participant 1)

The employees categorized themselves as the worst affected group and expressed a state of helplessness at this juncture. Many of them have shared their thoughts on the present and about the relieved employees and were concerned about the tourism industry as a whole.

"In the long run, I don't see the travel industry picking up in the next 2 years. My friends in the industry are all suffering. Many lost their jobs and some have pay cuts. Condition is so bad in travel fraternity" – (Participant 10)

Hospitality sector personnel shared the current situation as 75% of the workers were asked to leave the position and the other workers were left with a 50% salary cut. They also feared that this 50% salary is what they may get for three more months and after which it would be uncertain and expected a letter of termination at any point of time asking them to leave.

"The salary for the March month is paid. The company will be in a position to pay us the 50% salary for around 3 more months. After which I don't think that there will be any money left in the bank. It becomes extremely difficult for the company to look after even the employees on the payroll" – (Participant 15)

In the airline sector too, the majority of the people were asked to leave the organization. The frontline staff in aviation experienced a lot of stress as they were directly exposed to the passengers, and considered a threat to life itself. In the aviation sector, the layoff of staff usually happened at a low level and is also based on performance. However, this pandemic brought higher-level employees too into the risk of losing jobs.

"Looking at the threat, pandemic itself is a great threat for our life as an employee's life and the passengers also because we don't know from where we are affected" (Participant -7)

"Initially they started with lower levels. One of the reasons why they lay off is they will look into the performance. So, if they are taking their jobs casually not meeting the responsibility of a particular post then they would target them. They have moved to entry-level and senior-level employees. They have given targets to remove people" (Participant -13).

Table 2. Number of Times the Responses Occurred from the Participants

Emergent Sub Themes Broad Queries	Critical Concerns – A	Key Challenges – B	Industry Learning – C	Employee Distress – D	Organizations' Impact – E	Crisis Management – F	Workforce Continuation – G	Way Ahead for Future Employees – H
Global Scenario (I)	23	21	16	24	24	24	18	09
Helplessness (I)	21	24	-	24	12	19	-	-
Uncertainty (I)	24	-	19	24	18	19	24	19
Troublesome Thoughts (II)	23	21	06	24	16	21	24	21
Future Consequences (I)	21	12	09	23	18	12	12	18
Ethical Practices (II)	19	10	04	-	15	14	17	08
Ethical Flaws (II)	21	14	08	13	18	11	05	-
Retention (II)	23	18	05	17	09	12	06	05
Personal (II)	19	23	10	14	17	11	09	11
Commitments (III)	21	08	11	21	12	23	17	12
Proactive Thoughts (III)	05	07	11	17	09	17	08	10
Alternatives (III)	11	09	-	06	-	-	08	08

Broad Queries – Questions Posed to the Participants

A – What were the critical concerns that you dealt with when you lost your job amid the global pandemic?

B – What were the key challenges you encountered with the industry during the crisis?

C – What are the HR policies and commitment of your organization for the employees?

D – Do you see the workforce in psychological & physical distress amid the current global pandemic?

E – What are the key challenges for the industry due to this crisis?

F – What are the personal challenges faced during the crisis? How did you strategize to overcome it?

G – Do you see the workforce becoming redundant if the pandemic effects continue for long? What alternatives do you have with your organization's HR policy?

H – What are the expected measures taken by your organization to cope with the pandemic?

Note: I= Key Organizational and Industry Concerns; II= Human Resource Management; III= Psychological Distress

The literature on the Covid-19 pandemic suggests that pandemic is a natural phenomenon, (Zenker and Kock, 2020), however, the issue of complexity in tourism regarding the effects of the pandemic is still not well-established (Pennington-Gray, 2018). Literature such as; chaos theory and system theory (Faulkner et al., 2007) are distinctive narratives on the effect of the pandemic. System theory focuses on the economic, political, and societal systems as non-linear, spontaneous, and highly interrelated structures. The dynamics of the tourism system are inevitably random or disordered (Speakman and Sharpley, 2012). The tourism industry for instance often suffers from innovative capabilities for crises recovery (Hjalager, 2002). The small-time tour operators and hotels considered the backbone of the industry, are volatile (Sundbo et al., 2007). During the Covid -19 pandemic, both macro level and micro level collaborations are required, and collaborative action is of strong importance in the hospitality business during and post-Covid 19 (Johannisson and Olaison 2007). Many of the participants expressed that the tourism industry is affected first and last to recover.

"Tourism industry is first to hit and last to recover. Be it other industries like retail, IT, manufacturing, etc. even if they come back in 6 months, tourism will take 1-1.5 years is what I understand as of now" (Participant-5).

At this time the role of the company is very important. The employee is not looking for salary as the only thing from the Job, Yes salary is important but the eventual communication, that if the company tells the employees what is happening and the decisions are taken by the company it will help people to get clarity (Participant-20).

Looking into the pandemic-hit industry many of the business plans were abandoned because of the less revenue. The employees were skeptical about the revival, "even though we expect that things may change in the new season, it is just a hope. We have to wait for the time to come to see the reality".

"We had a lot of plans and everything stopped because of no revenue. Maybe when the upcoming holiday season starts there will be passenger movement but still it is just a hope" (Participant -4).

Many were trying to move to academics but competition is higher in the academic sector also. People who have moved to academics also are not sure whether they will stick to this profession or not or whether to return back to the industry itself after the pandemic. There is a lot of competition during the pandemic (Participant-19).

There were concerns about the changing scenario as the b2b and b2c establishments from different countries and their business was affected. Corporates were contemplating new strategies as the market would be tougher and everything would start from scratch. The companies would then require sound investment for marketing to communicate about the changes to the customer.

"My main market is the Italian market. Now we know that even if we go and meet we know that 50% of their business is cut down. So they have to do B2C and then only we will get the business. So our marketing part is going to be tough. We have to start from scratch. To bring in B2C we have to invest in money for marketing during this tough time but fear of COVID has to go" (Participant - 13).

Inbound tourism too was affected badly and the senior citizens would be afraid of traveling due to the pandemic. The other area of concern was domestic tourism and more specifically religious tourism. The incident that fourteen of the pilgrims at Tirupati were reported Covid positive, had affected the senior citizen's travel. The honeymooners too avoided travel since their parents would suggest them otherwise. As a whole, the tourism industry experienced a disastrous situation.

"The major set of domestic tourism is religious tourism. Now 14 people from Tirupati got affected and now nobody will go there. The same scenario will come to every place. Honeymoon travel mostly parents make decisions so they will not let the couple travel during this time. So it is difficult to develop again in the tourism industry" (Participant – 9).

Most of the people to lose jobs, were operational staff, airport staff, safari drivers, and excursion teams in the airline's sector. The organizations adopted the strategy of paying only 10% of the salary which was insufficient for someone who lived with families in the metropolitan cities. The way out from the loss for the company was to cut down the salary or layoffs. A 'hope' was the only yardstick for the ones who were psychologically down in this pandemic. The scenario also changed gradually till the end of 2021.

"So the management has categorically told us that we can only give you 10% of what we have said in the agreement because no passenger or customer is coming to the hotel. The psychology behind this is that in big cities like Delhi and Bombay people coming in the junior grade with less salary have to survive now they cannot have luxury life because they have their family commitments and all. These cities are expensive. If somebody is getting 45000 salaries in such big cities in which half of the salary is going for rent then remaining will go in other things. But when a company can give only 10% of the salary it is very difficult for staff to survive" (Participant-14).

II. Organisational HR Policies

Tourism is a people's business. The success of the tourism business depends mostly on quality and experienced staff. Sound HR policies aimed at retention of experienced staff through the troubled times of pandemic would not only help the organization when the industry returns to business but also build confidence amongst clients as a trusted brand in the market. Most of the participants during the study were observed to have felt that the organization expressed commitment towards employees' prospects and took appropriate measures for their survival. The organizations started adopting measures to take care of the employees by starting COVID centers, by ensuring that they were safe and protected. Conversely, to the above statement participant, 3 stated the flaws in the organization and shared the thoughts on the better practices of the organization.

"Management should have handled it in a better manner. In my scenario, I was informed that it was my last day working on the last day and I realized that my income stopped from that moment onwards. So I was not prepared, looking for other ventures or medical coverage. One fine day everything is stopped for you, which could have been better handled by HR or the organization" (Participant – 11).

"Organization could have given clarity about its operational intentions; as the company at the beginning of pandemic was very unclear and increased individual pressure …as I was not sure if I had the job or are they going to abruptly stop my service… I felt it is important to give clarity to the employees as utmost priority. This helps to be prepared at the individual level" (Participant – 19).

Some of the participants stated that the decisions about the layoff were taken lightly by the organization. The decisions were mostly for the survival of the business than the employees. The organization won't function without experienced employees considered to be the drivers in the business. The organization paid 50% salary for March and April 2020 and from June the decisions were made to have layoffs and with long leave options. These decisions favored those, who could survive without or with a 50% percent salary. There were decisions to lay off those employees first who were new and worked for less than 6 months in the organization, as for them, it could be easy to find a job.

"Lay off was based on their survival and not the targets achieved. Even if we protect people with a 50 % salary, maybe one day we will have to lay off. At the same time, people who joined 6 months back know that they can get jobs in other industries so they were asked to go first. We never wanted to send anyone outside but because of scenario we were forced to send" (Participant – 3).

Many of the participants were happy with the HR policies of their respective organizations for taking the appropriate decisions and expressing collegiality, as they were genuinely concerned about their organization's survival in the worst hit of the pandemic.

III. Employee's Psychological Distress

Holistic perception of the global scenario was something very prominently expressed by the participants as the entire world witnessed the pandemic. Workers across the world experienced a salary cut or loss of job which caused huge stress on their pockets and family commitments (Fatoki, 2022).

"This is something which is a global pandemic. Everyone is impacted, not only the tourism industry, everyone's salary is impacted and their morale is low. What I suggest is there are lots of people who lost their jobs or got salary cuts. This has got huge pressure on them to take care of expenses, EMI, etc. People have been working with us for 4-5 years and these people have been working and having fun with us. This is a very difficult task to explain about why they are removed that is another level of stress" (Participant – 12).

"I tried maximum not to quit the Job and somehow survived the year 2020, was analyzing about the job crisis and I made up my mind that this pandemic will make the majority of the people jobless and the travel agencies have to face lots of job crisis" (Participant – 17).

Overall, the concerns, perceptions, and experiences of the employees due to the pandemic were alarming and the levels of stress and uncertain situations, emerged in the themes as outlined in the findings.

Table 3. The Coding Process

Exemplary Quotation	Code	Sub-Theme
"The worst thing happened to the humanity and tourism industry. Industry that is the first affected and last to be recovered" (Participant -1)	Key Organizational and Industry Concerns	Global Scenario
When the manager asked to leave the job it was difficult for me because I worked there for 9 years and all of a sudden they asked me to leave".. (Participant -8)	Key Organizational and Industry Concerns	Helplessness
"..Not only me, even when I spoke to many of my friends in the tourism industry most of them have the same feeling, in the beginning, we thought it is for 3-4 months, but now the case is increasing, and we don't know when it is going to end and subside"..(Participant -3)	Key Organizational and Industry Concerns	Uncertainty
"The question is when I can start because in the tourism industry Apprehensive things will not be normal anytime soon. Maybe it will take another 1.5 year or 2 years it will take"(Participant -4)	Human Resource Management	Troublesome Thoughts
"..Also when you look for opportunities at this time there are not many openings because every industry is affected. Every industry is cutting down and my experience is fully in tourism Hmm"(Participant- 13)	Key Organizational and Industry Concerns	Future Consequences
"Almost 80% are local brands in Kerala which are locally grown and local entrepreneurs, unlike Taj and Hyatt. With 100% confidence I can say that 95% of them have said goodbye to all their employees" (Participant-14)	Human Resource Management	Personal
"There was so much of pressure built up on employees by the Organization to get sales, knowing the fact that the whole industry was shut. We were giving 100% efforts & dedication but there was no outcome." (Participant-18)	Key Organizational and Industry Concerns	Helplessness
"We depleted personal assets to retain the employees. We part paid them for about 6-8 months & eventually had to let go few of them when there was no sign of revival in the near future (Participant-19)	Human Resource Management	Ethical Practices
"Company has a very decent HR structure. It's good enough HR Policies of the Organization and our HR is decent. They always try to understand the employees" (Participant-6)	Human Resource Management	Ethical Practices
"To help & sustain the employees we reimbursed the grocery bills of the teammates to support livelihood as weren't in a position to pay them salaries either full or part"(Participant – 22)	Human Resource Management	Ethical Practices
"..In my scenario, I was informed that it is my last working the last day and I realized that my income stopped from that moment onwards"(Participant – 12)	Human Resource Management	Ethical Flaws
"By June it's decided to lay off and long leave. The rest goes on with 50% salary. Our Decision was based on who are the people able to survive without salary or a 50% salary. I decided to leave because my husband is a government employee so I can sustain (Participant -5)	Human Resource Management	Sustenance
"As a sole bread earner I came from a rural environment to support my family financially. The company didn't even think once how these people will survive or manage commitments. Initially we worked without pay & there was no update on the job." (Participant -20)	Human Resource Management	Ethical Flaws
"There is stress. People who worked for 18 years will have a lot of liabilities, like loan, credit card payments, school fees, and other repayments"(Participant -9)	Psychological Distress	Commitments
"It is a very tough time and which has to be handled efficiently" (Participant – 11)	Psychological Distress	Proactive Thoughts
"People who have asked to leave have started a partnership organization with 10 other employees who were laid off" (Participant – 7)	Psychological Distress	Alternatives
"Most colleagues who worked together have changed the stream but I want to continue in the same industry. I am positive that as soon as the industry revives there will be plenty of job openings" (Participant – 24)	Key Organizational and Industry Concerns	Future Consequences
"Initially we were asked to work from home without pay but after few months the company just decided to shut operations without any compensation" (Participant – 23)	Psychological Distress	Ethical Flaws
"As soon as the lockdown was declared the management announced about their temporary closure till Sep 2020. Thereafter there was no communication from them to restart the business." (Participant – 21)	Psychological Distress	Ethical Flaws
"As my family wasn't dependent on me financially, I wasn't much affected but for few colleagues who were with commitments & single earning member were in high distress as the future of the industry was uncertain" (Participant – 16)	Psychological Distress	Helplessness
"Years of serving & contribution didn't matter to the organization. The management was selfish to look after their needs against their employees'" (Participant – 17)	Human Resource Management	Ethical Flaws

Implications

The contribution of this research to the existing theories; is in the pattern of various sub-themes that can be examined as significant factors illustrating the concerns of pandemic hit in the organization and factors of employee distress and constraints. From the 12 sub-themes (Table 2) derived the participants' key responses on three major themes labeled as; key organizational and industry concerns; organizational HR policies, and employees' psychological distress.

The findings of the research would contribute to establishing the relationship between macro issues concerning the industry with organizational and individual distress. The success of the tourism business depends mostly on quality and experienced staff. Sound HR policies aimed at retention of experienced staff through the troubled times of pandemic would not only help the organization when the industry returns to business but also build confidence amongst clients as a trusted brand in the market.

Limitations and Future Research

The study was conducted during the peak days of the pandemic and the opinions of the respondents in the present study reflect the contemporary behavior. The responses thus may vary, as restrictions on mobility, are eased and travel resumed thereafter. However, the variables summarized from the study can help future researchers to verify them through quantitative research (Joseph et al., 2020). The industry is expected to bounce back in summer 2022, with new entrepreneurship replacing debt-burdened medium and small-sized companies. The present study would help in the HR planning and strategies of such new ventures in attracting and retaining experienced staff.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework-on Post Crisis Organizational Climate (source: developed by the authors, 2021)

CONCLUSION

In the first quarter of 2022, it is unclear if the COVID-2019 is here to stay. The situation is dynamic and any future projection is short-lived in the pandemic scenario (Varghese et al., 2022). Any business strategy to recover from the slumber has to be a collective behavior of the industry through coordinated action taken at macro and micro levels. Here the findings of the present study can contribute, to a conceptual model having sub-themes arranged under industry concerns, organizational HR policies, and employees' distress. Organizational and industry concerns backed by appropriate business strategies have utmost importance for smooth functioning in tourism (Speakman and Sharpley, 2012).

Organizational strategies need to evolve with new dimensions for HR policies to bring in flexible work plans, and workforce management plans. The proactive HR strategies amidst the irrepressible effects of the pandemic would bring in newer dimensions for new norms in the work order as a future direction of research.

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THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE TOURISM SECTOR IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Amir IMERI
University for Business and Technology, Faculty of Economics, Pristina, Kosovo, e-mail: amir.imeri@ubt-uni.net

Luis A. GIL-ALANA*
University of Navarra, Faculty of Economics, Pamplona, Spain;
Universidad Francisco de Vitoria, Facultad de Ciencias Juridicas y Empresariales, Madrid, Spain, e-mail: alana@unav.es

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Abstract: In this study, we examine the degree of persistence in tourism in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on it. The series investigated are foreign arrivals and overnight stays for the time period from January 2008 to December 2021. The methodology used is based on fractional integration. The results indicate that the impact of COVID-19 has been strong on the series, removing the significance of the time trend, increasing the level of persistence and reducing significantly the seasonality factor in both arrivals and overnight stay series.

Key words: Bosnia and Herzegovina, fractional integration, non-parametric technique, persistence, tourism

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INTRODUCTION

Since it started, the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on all sectors in the economy including, above all, the tourism sector. Each country, with its own strategies for a COVID-19 exit, tried to give economic support to citizens and organizations as well as to carry out actions to control the extent of the pandemic. The impact in the tourism sector manifested itself in a decrease in the number of foreign tourist arrivals and overnight foreign tourist stays by 74% globally during the year 2020 compared to the year 2019. This drop was as a result of travel limitations for foreign tourists. Consequently, there were major financial implications, including export revenues decreasing by about USD1.3 trillion globally which was more than eleven times worse compared to the last economic crisis in 2009 (UNWTO, 2021).

Accordingly, this study analyzes if the components of time series linked with foreign tourist arrivals and overnight foreign tourist stays in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina have changed during the period of COVID-19. Bosnia and Herzegovina, also known as Bosnia, is located in the Balkans region at the crossroads of south and southeast Europe. It is not fully landlocked since in the south it has a narrow coastline of about 20 km on the Adriatic Sea. Tourism in Bosnia has increased significantly in recent years. This is shown in the highlights of United Nationals World Tourism Organization (2018), which ranks Bosnia in first place among the fastest developing tourist destinations in Europe, registering 14% year-on-year growth in 2018 while in 2019, Bosnia and Herzegovina registered the highest number of foreign tourist arrivals, reaching 1.2 million and the number of foreign tourist overnight stays were 2.4 million (Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2022a). According to the World Bank data (2022), the tourism sector comprises about 6.3% of the country's export revenues for the year 2021. Additionally, Bosnia and Herzegovina is perceived as being one of those nations with the possibility of being among the 8 fastest growing tourist destinations in Europe (World Atlas, 2019).

According to the Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2022b) the share of tourism in gross domestic product (given in vertical axis) has undergone a small decreasing trend in the period 2000-2019, recording only 2.08% in 2019, reflecting a very low contribution to the economic development of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Figure 1).

The new Covid-19 pandemic is still advancing and can currently be found in 224 countries and territories in the world (Worldmeters, 2022). In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the first positive cases of COVID-19 were identified on March 5, 2020 and the pandemic is still progressing (Arapovic and Skocibusic, 2020). As in other countries, in Bosnia and Herzegovina the pandemic had an impact on both the population and the economy and this led to certain measures being introduced by the government such as various types of financial support to certain categories of citizens and companies. Additionally, part of the measures including the emergency situation, a lockdown and restrictions in movements of people were imposed in late March 2020. With the purpose of helping the affected residents, part of the government support was earmarked to cover salaries and their social security contributions for specific sectors, giving vouchers for accommodation, controlling prices, decreasing rental leases, facilitating reimbursement in loans and subsidizing health sector expenditure (OECD, 2021).

Similarly, additional support was given to affected sectors including tourism sectors by allocating vouchers for accommodation for about 50 Euro per person to be spent on domestic tourist facilities (OECD, 2020). Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the tourism sector suffered severely from a decrease in the number of foreign tourists in Bosnia and Herzegovina. There is a remarkable gap in forecasting its future impact of COVID-19 on Bosnian tourism. This sparked interest and is the

* Corresponding author

objective of the article to explore the level of persistence from the COVID-19 pandemic in the tourism sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Therefore, the article tries to answer the subsequent research questions: did the level of tourism persistence in Bosnia and Herzegovina for foreign tourist arrivals and overnight foreign tourist stays changed during COVID-19? In other words, the aim of the paper is to examine the degree of persistence in the tourism data of Bosnia and Herzegovina by using fractional integration methods and with the aim of determining if shocks in the series have permanent or transitory effects.

Figure 1. Share of tourism in GDP in % in Bosnia and Herzegovina for 2000-2019
(Source: Built by the authors according to Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2022b)

LITERATURE REVIEW

The global spread of COVID-19 resulted in an increase in studies on its effect on tourism (see Candra and Rekha, 2020; Korinth and Ranasinghe, 2020; Lim and To, 2021; Matiza and Slabbert, 2021; Molinero et al., 2021; Rogerson and Rogerson, 2020; Skare et al., 2021; Williams, 2020; Tellioglu, 2021). Additionally, many studies claim that the COVID-19 pandemic changed positively the market behavior in general, and more specifically brought the transformation of tourism in the planet (see Abbas et al., 2021; Alkhawaldeh, 2022; Donthu and Gustafsson, 2020; Kinczel and Müller, 2022; Lew et al., 2020; Sharma et al., 2021). Whereas some researchers have concluded that COVID-19 has brought new possibilities so that tourism sector can be reorganized and more sustainable as a substitute for the traditional growth model as had previously been practiced (see Deb and Ahmed, 2022; Desbiolles, 2021; Ertac and Cankan, 2021; Florencio et al., 2021; Grandi et al., 2022; Sobaih et al., 2021). Additionally, the changes in tourism sector from COVID-19 have been analyzed widely, there have been very few studies that have investigated the impact of Covid-19 in the level of persistence in tourism industry (see Payne et al., 2021; Gil-Alana and Poza, 2020; Yucel et al., 2022).

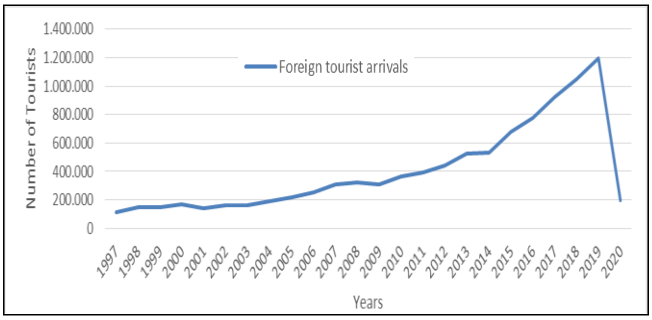


Figure 2. Foreign tourist arrivals in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1997 – 2020) (Source: Built by the authors according to World Bank data, 2022)

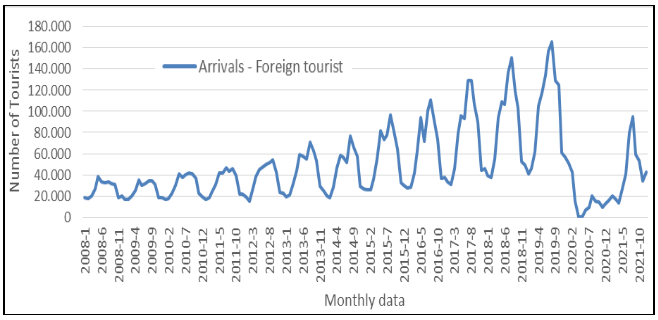


Figure 3. Foreign tourist arrivals in Bosnia and Herzegovina (January 2008 - December 2021) (Source: Built by the authors according to Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2022a)

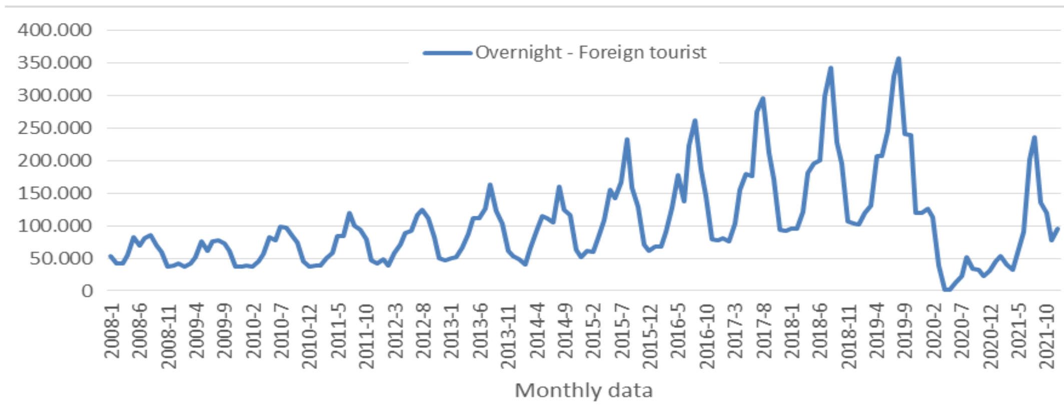


Figure 4. Foreign overnight stays in Bosnia and Herzegovina (January 2008 - December 2021)
(Source: Built by the authors according to Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2022a)

The repercussions of shocks, be they short or long lasting, created by the level of persistence are significant for all parties involved in tourism sector with the purpose of improving the situation and increasing the number of foreign tourists.The level of persistence estimates the range of transformation where current economic situation influences long-lasting transformation. Under the expectation when the results of the study show a negative short-lasting shocks, it is not necessary to make drastic changes in policies, while if results show a negative shock as long-lasting than it is necessary to implement major changes in policies of the country. The research of Payne et al. (2021) for Croatia shows a decline in both the number of foreign tourist arrivals and overnight foreign tourist stays and an increase in the degree of persistence in tourism indicators because of the shock of the COVID-19 pandemic in spite of the fact that the new pattern evolved at a much lower level when compared with the pre-pandemic pattern for the predefined tourism indicators. Similar outcomes are found also by Gil-Alana and Poza (2020) showing huge impact of Covid-19 in tourism sectors in Spain, where the degree of persistence resulted to be high, that shifted from transitory, short lasting shocks in the period before the pandemics to long lasting shocks during the pandemic Covid-19. However, as far as we know, there are no studies using fractional integration in the analysis of tourism in Bosnia and Herzegovina or investigating the impact of COVID-19 on the persistence on tourism-related series in this country. These represent the principal commitments of the study.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

In an endeavor to examine the level of persistence changes in the tourism industry in Bosnia and Herzegovina, monthly data for foreign tourist arrivals and foreign tourist overnight stays were used. The data were attained from the Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina and stretch from January 2008 to December 2021. They show the robust negative relationship of COVID-19 with foreign tourist arrivals and foreign tourist overnight stays in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a relationship that is reflected in Figures 2, 3 and 4. Figure 2 displays annual data from 1997 until 2020, published by the World Bank (2022), reaching an all-time high in 2019, with about 1.2 million foreign tourist arrivals and a record low of 197,000 in 2020. Figures 3 and 4 show respectively monthly data for foreign tourist arrivals and foreign overnight stays from January 2008 until December 2021, reaching a historical high of 165,000 foreign tourist arrivals and 358,000 overnight stays in August of 2019 and falling to an all-time low of 268 foreign tourist arrivals in April of 2020 and 1,670 overnight stays in May of 2020. With regard to the methodology and with the purpose of studying the level of persistence in tourism for foreign tourist arrivals and overnight stays, the following fractional integration model (Granger, 1980; Granger and Joyeux, 1980; Hosking, 1981) is used:

$$(1-L)^d z_t = u_t, \qquad t = 1, 2, \ldots, \qquad (1)$$

where L represents the lag operator, i.e., $L^k x_t = x_{t-k}$, and where u_t is supposed to be at most a weakly dependent process, e.g., ARMA. To allow for some deterministic terms, and in particular to determine if time trends are present in the data, we suppose that z_t can be the errors in a regression model with an intercept and a linear time trend, i.e.,

$$x_t = \alpha + \beta t + z_t, \quad t = 1, 2, \ldots, \qquad (2)$$

and given that we use monthly data and seasonality seems to be present, a simple monthly AR (1) process is used for u_t in (1), i.e,

$$u_t = \rho u_{t-12} + \varepsilon_t, \qquad t = 1, 2, \ldots, \qquad (3)$$

where ε_t is a white noise process.

Based on the above parameterization (Robinson, 1994), *d* addresses the level of persistence essential in the given time series; x_t stands for the perceived time series (in logs); α represents a constant; β stands for a linear time trend; and the parameter ρ stands for the seasonal AR coefficient. The appraisal method is applied and is created on a basic version of a suggested test of Robinson (1994) for unit root and other non-stationarity hypotheses. This test is further studied by Gil-Alana and Robinson (1997) concluding that the test is proficient and allows any real value of *d* to be tested (see equation 1 above), following the standard N (0,1) limiting distribution. The test is not dependent on the insertion of deterministic situations nor from disturbance situations of seasonal autoregression. The difference with standard unit root tests is with the parameter d, that can have values of 0 that are stationary or 1, which is first-difference stationary, whereas in the fractional integration model, the values of parameter d can vary from 0 until 1, or also can be less than 0 or higher than 1. In the case the value of d turns out to be less than 1, this indicates mean deterioration and the existence of shocks that are temporary in nature. Whereas, if the value of d turns out to be equal or more than 1, it shows the absence of mean deterioration and the existence of shocks that will bring a lasting impact, creating a new trend for the time series.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on equations (1), (2) and (3) the examined model is

$$x_t = \alpha + \beta t + z_t; \quad (1-L)^d z_t = u_t, \quad u_t = \rho\, u_{t-12} + \varepsilon_t, \qquad (4)$$

where x_t refers to the observed data (in logs). We start by presenting the results with the data ending at December 2019, i.e., a couple of months before the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Table 1 displays the estimates of d (and in parenthesis, their associated 95% confidence bands) for the three standard cases examined in the unit root literature in connection with the deterministic terms (Bhargava, 1986; Schmidt and Phillips, 1992). Thus, in column 2 we focus on the case where α and β are both set up equal to zero, so no deterministic terms are presented in the model; in column 3 we report the results with β = 0 a priori, so a constant term is only included in the model; finally, in column 4, both coefficients, α and β are estimated from the data along with the rest of the parameters in Eq. (4). We choose the specific model using the t-values of the estimated coefficients, reporting in bold the selected model for each series. In connection with the disturbance term, in panel i) we impose that the seasonal coefficient, ρ, is equal to 0, so u_t is a white noise process; in panel ii) we allow for some degree of autocorrelation by using a non-parametric approach due to Bloomfield (1973) that approximates AR structures in a way that fits very well in fractionally integrated contexts; finally, in panel iii), seasonality is permitted as in the last equality in equation (4). The same structure holds in Table 2 but includes data ending at December 2021, that is, a further 24 observations which include the present pandemic that has affected the world.

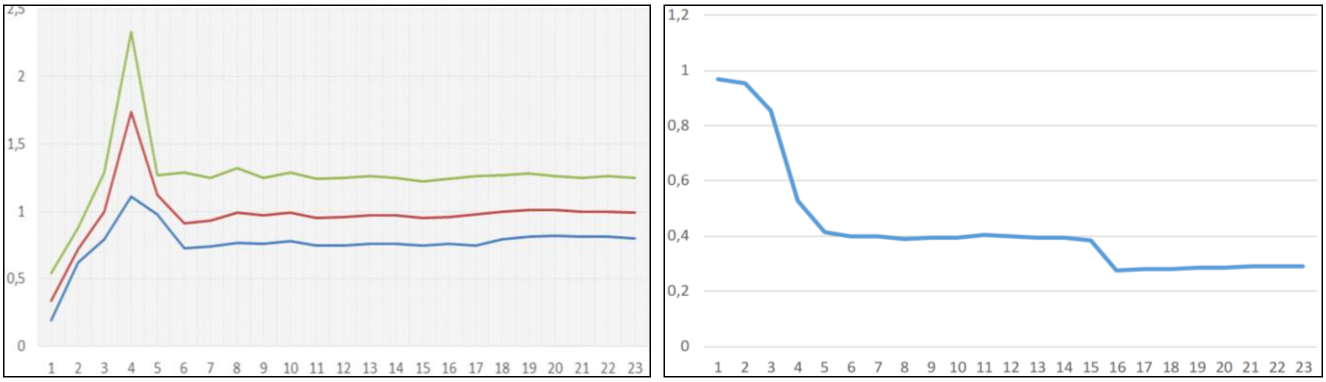
Table 1. Estimates of d with data ending at December 2019 (Source: Built by the authors)

Series ending at December 2019	No terms	A constant	A constant with a time trend
i) White noise errors			
ARRIVALS	0.97 (0.86, 1.12)	**1.27 (1.03, 1.52)**	1.27 (1.03, 1.53)
NIGHTS	0.95 (0.85, 1.10)	**1.18 (0.95, 1.41)**	1.18 (0.95, 1.41)
ii) Bloomfield autocorrelated errors			
ARRIVALS	0.86 (0.70, 1.10)	0.39 (0.26, 1.01)	**-0.24 (-0.51, 1.01)**
NIGHTS	0.87 (0.71, 1.11)	0.42 (0.26, 1.16)	**-0.19 (-0.44, 1.16)**
iii) Seasonal Monthly autocorrelated errors			
ARRIVALS	0.96 (0.84, 1.11)	0.61 (0.56, 0.68)	**0.39 (0.27, 0.55)**
NIGHTS	0.94 (0.83, 1.09)	0.61 (0.55, 0.69)	**0.35 (0.24, 0.49)**

Table 2. Estimates of d with data ending at December 2021 (Source: Built by the authors)

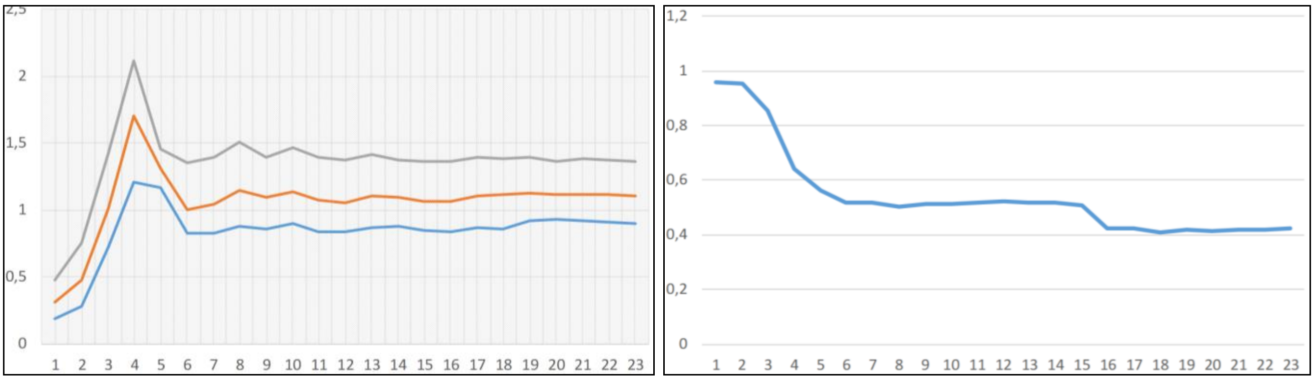
Series ending at December 2021	No terms	A constant	A constant with a time trend
i) White noise errors			
ARRIVALS	1.00 (0.89, 1.15)	**1.02 (0.81, 1.30)**	1.02 (0.81, 1.30)
NIGHTS	0.99 (0.89, 1.13)	**1.12 (0.89, 1.41)**	1.12 (0.89, 1.41)
ii) Bloomfield autocorrelated errors			
ARRIVALS	0.84 (0.67, 1.03)	0.28 (0.12, 0.52)	**0.26 (0.10, 0.52)**
NIGHTS	0.86 (0.70, 1.06)	0.33 (0.18, 0.61)	**0.33 (0.14, 0.61)**
iii) Seasonal Monthly autocorrelated errors			
ARRIVALS	0.99 (0.88, 1.14)	**0.99 (0.80, 1.25)**	0.99 (0.80, 1.25)
NIGHTS	0.98 (0.86, 1.12)	**1.10 (0.91, 1.36)**	1.11 (0.91, 1.36)

The first thing we observe in Table 1 is that the time trend is required in the two series in panels ii) and iii); however, imposing white noise errors (in panel i)), only the intercept is required. Surprisingly, the results vary substantially depending on the assumption made on the error term. Thus, if u_t is white noise (panel *i*), the estimated values of *d* are higher than 1, (1.27 for the arrivals and 1.18 for the overnights) and the unit root null hypothesis, i.e., d = 1 is rejected in the former series in favor of d > 1. If autocorrelation is permitted throughout the model of Bloomfield (1973), what we observe is that the coefficients are now both negative and the I(0) hypothesis of stationarity cannot be rejected; finally, if seasonality is permitted, which is the most realistic assumption based on Figures 3 and 4, the estimated values of *d* are 0.39 and 0.35 respectively for the arrivals and the overnights, and both hypothesis d = 0 and d = 1 are rejected in the two series.



i) Degree of persistence (Estimates of d across time) ii) Seasonality (Seasonal coefficient across time)

Figure 5. Recursive estimates in the logged number of arrivals. (Source: Built by the authors)



i) Degree of persistence (Estimates of d across time) ii) Seasonality (Seasonal coefficient across time)

Figure 6. Recursive estimates in the logged number of nights. (Source: Built by the authors)

Next, we repeat the analysis but this time for the sample including the data of 2020 and 2021. The first thing we observe is that the time trend is now only required for the case of Bloomfield (1973) errors. The unit root null hypothesis (d = 1) cannot be rejected for the case of white noise errors; the estimates of *d* are in the range (0, 1) with Bloomfield, and the estimated values of *d* are close to 1 if seasonality is permitted. In this latter case, the values are 0.99 for the arrivals and 1.10 for the overnights and the unit root null cannot be rejected in either of the two series. Nevertheless, comparing these results with those in Table 1 (panel iii) there is a substantial increase in the values of *d* and thus, in the degree of persistence in the data. In order to further investigate the change in persistence, we re-estimated *d*, starting with the sample ending at December 2019, and then successively adding one observation (month) each time until completing the sample in December 2021. Figure 5 reports in panel i) the estimated values of d (along with the 95% confidence intervals) for the case of the number of arrivals, while panel ii) displays the estimated seasonal AR coefficients for the same subsamples. Figure 6 reports similar values but for the overnight data. The first thing we observe in Figure 5 is that there is a continuous increase in the estimate of *d* during the first four months in 2020. Thus, the estimate of *d* for December 2019 is 0.39 (Table 1) and it increases up to 1.74 in April 2020; then *d* decreases to 1.12 the following month and stabilizes around 1 by August 2019 until the end of the sample. Thus, comparing with pre-Covid values, which were smaller than 0.5 and showing thus mean reversion, the pandemic has substantially increased the estimates of *d* to values around 1, thereby showing a lack of mean reversion. Focusing on the seasonal coefficient, we observe a sharp decrease during the first four months of the 2020 year; subsequently, it stabilizes until March 2021 and then starts decreasing again to a value around 0.3 when it includes the last months in the sample. Looking at the overnights, in Figure 6, the same picture emerges, with an increase in the estimate of *d*, from 0.35 in December 2019 to 1.70 in April 2020, and then decreasing and being stable and slightly above 1 till the end of the sample in December 2021. For the seasonality issue, the same pattern as with the arrivals holds, observing a continuous decrease from values of ρ close to 1 to values slightly above 0.4 in 2021.

CONCLUSIONS

In this study we have explored the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on foreign tourist arrivals and overnight stays in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the time period from January 2008 until December 2021. We provide an empirical framework for evaluation of persistence in tourism following the Covid-19 pandemic. Confirmation in the wake of time series data assessments demonstrates that the Covid-19 pandemic had negative impacts on the tourism industry which reached a historically low number of foreign tourist arrivals and overnight stays in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Considering the example of the tourism sector of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the conclusions from this study for the data ending at December 2019, i.e., a few months before the Covid-19 pandemic erupted, the value of d is much lower and so the degree of persistence in the data, compared to the data ending at December 2021 that also includes the data of 2020 and 2021, the months when the Covid-19 pandemic reached its peak; show a substantial increase in the values of *d* and thus, in the degree of persistence in the data.

To delve further into the change in persistence, *d* is re-assessed, using the data for number of arrivals until December 2019, and then progressively adding one month each time until December 2021, revealing that, in contrast to pre-Covid values, which were less than 0.5 and thus indicating mean reversion, the Covid-19 pandemic has significantly expanded the d to values around 1, consequently showing absence of mean reversion. Additionally, we notice a sharp fall during the initial four months of the year due to the seasonal coefficient; at which point, it stabilizes until March 2021 and subsequently begins to diminish again to a value of 0.3. Regarding the change in persistence using the data for number of nights, the value of d increased from 0.35 in December 2019 up to 1.70 in April 2020, afterwards diminishing and remaining steady and a little over 1 until the last analyzed observation (month) in December 2021. As for the seasonality issue, this has a similar pattern as the number of arrivals, registering a continual drop from values near 1 to values slightly above 0.4 in 2021. A limitation in this study is that the outcomes allude to Bosnia and Herzegovina and cannot be applied to different neighboring countries that have totally different essentials. These results are reliable with the outcome of preceding studies resulting with the degree of persistence to be high from COVID-19 (Payne et al. 2021, Gil-Alana and Poza, 2020). However, endeavors to combat the spread of the pandemic have concentrated on managing the crisis by moderating the effect on the economy through various forms of government support, there is a need to re-modify the traditional tourism growth model towards a more sustainable one. This recommendation is also given by UNWTO through its sustainable development goals. The study focuses on the persistence of tourism in Bosnia and Herzegovina, hence persistence of tourism in major or regional touristic areas has not yet been answered. Hence, the persistence analysis of tourism covering different cities or regions is left to future investigations. Further area for future work would be the utilization of persistence in monthly tourist spending data in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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EXAMINATION OF HOLIDAY HABITS IN HUNGARY, WITH SPECIAL REGARD TO RURAL TOURISM

Ferenc DARABOS
Széchenyi István University, Faculty of Business, Department of Tourism and Hospitality, Győr, Hungary, e-mail: darabos.ferenc@sze.hu

Csaba KŐMÍVES*
Széchenyi István University, Faculty of Business, Department of Tourism and Hospitality, Győr, Hungary, e-mail: komives.csaba@ga.sze.hu

Elisabeta Ilona MOLNAR
Partium Christian University, Faculty of Economics and Social Science, Department of Economics, Oradea, Romania, e-mail: elis@partium.ro

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Abstract: The paper aims to examine the demand for rural tourism, targeting the design of offers following the period of the pandemic. The topic of the present study, is the examination of the holiday habits of the Hungarian population focusing on rural tourism. Following the theoretical background regarding rural tourism, rural tourism destination and tourism motivation, the primary research investigates the holiday habits of various age groups and the differences between these, the frequency of traveling and planned overstays, and the optional programs as recreational and gastronomic activities, their willingness to spend for the offers that form an integral part of the rural tourism. The survey method was chosen and the respondents were assigned via a random sample. The collected data was processed via IBM SPSS 25 program, in which unary and binary operations, correlation analysis was done. The study highlights that there is a high demand for rural tourism in the countryside in the post-pandemic period, is a general need for recreation irrespective of age, educational background, or residence. The respondents would participate in a genuine rural program irrespective of age, educational background, or residence. It was also proven that there is a significant difference between the travelling frequency of the various groups, according to which, the middle-aged respondents travel most frequently to the countryside, followed by the seniors and the youth.

Key words: rural tourism, tourism destinations, tourism motivations, holiday habits

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INTRODUCTION

The sector of rural tourism shows continuous development. Besides the potential that lies in nature, folk traditions, and gastronomy, innovation has its role in this sector too. The spirit of hospitality, and that of the entrepreneurial farmer both mark the rural tourism product. Destinations with the possibility of active tourism in nature combined with a healthy diet are favoured by the tourists conscient of the importance of a healthy lifestyle (Demirović et al., 2018). The unique characteristics of a natural potential found in a territory are considered positively determining factors for the respective environment (Plokhikh et al., 2022). Today's tourism is much more accessible than in other periods, the population travels more and finds information about destinations and services, so when choosing a holiday, many choose a natural and sustainable environment (Kyriakaki and Kleinaki, 2022). The motivation for rural tourism can be define as naturalistic and cultural orientation. Consequently, tourist demand is directed to products with local rural elements (gastronomy, events, traditions, etc.). A broad significant motivation is the desire for relationships “to establish an empathic relationship with residents, through their involvement in their daily life” (Belliggiano et al., 2021:3).

Just like the natural landscapes, the rural image is constantly changing also and, depends a lot on the rate of change of visitors' perceptions regarding rurality and its relationship with sustainability (Panzer-Krause, 2020). The transformation of the tourist, respectively the influence of the decision for a specific destination is facilitated by the liminality of the destination, also the perception of difference is another factor to be taken into consideration (Pung et al., 2020). To facilitate tourist decision-making, marketing could play an important role. Rural tourism needs online marketing, so it could ensure an extension of the season and even activity in the off-season (Su et al., 2022). Inspired by rural diversity and multi-functionality, the organizers’ objective should be creating travel packages with programs based on tourist supplies combined with sights, and attractive elements of neigh boring villages in favour of the tourists who prefer tourist packages against individual tours (Panyik et al., 2011). Both rural heritage and cultural heritage are a component of rural tourism which is a link between past and present offering historical legacy and a model in an ever-changing world (Soare et al. 2011). Cultural routes, landscape and rural tourism are tight connected with each other (Bambi et al., 2019).

Identifying trends of the market, the tourists’ needs as well as their degree of satisfaction must be a continuous aim: “Long term success requires constant adaptation to the changing environment” (Raffai, 2013:759).

* Corresponding author

LITERATURE REVIEW

The definition is the best illustrated by UNWTO "a type of tourism activity in which the visitor's experience is related to a wide range of products generally linked to nature-based activities, agriculture, rural lifestyle / culture, angling and sightseeing." (UNWTO - Rural Tourism) Altogether, rural tourism services and entertainment programs are offered by hosts - who could be residents of that given area- in order to attract tourists to their region and thus, get some extra income. In this respect, rural tourism does not include only agrotourism and providing accommodation, but the potential of near-nature holidays, the rural atmosphere and further services such as gastronomy, festivals, hobbies (horse-riding, fishing, cycling, etc.), sales of handicraft products or agricultural goods, or even rural health tourism. In fact, in this value chain, rural lifestyle plays a central role (Gannon, 1994). As the study focuses on rural tourism in Hungary, it is worth mentioning that Hungarian Government Decree No 239/2009 (x/20), modified and republished, on the activities of accommodation categories only the villages with inhabitants below 5.000 (100 persons/km2) can be considered settlements part of rural tourism that it presents rural living conditions, local rural tradition and culture, agricultural traditions in a complex way, together with related services where appropriate, and that may provide f ood for guests as an alternative services, while maintaining the rules on home-based catering. Accommodation in the private and other systems is grouped to others accommodation categories (239/2009) (X. 20). According to Negelchenko et al., (2021) rural tourism can be categorized as active tourism and can be implemented in four areas in terms of recreation:

"- agritourism: recreation based on the rural households involved in agricultural production: horticulture, gardening, milking cows, caring for horses, sheep shearing, etc.

- staying in the village: the pastime of tourists in the rural house with the provision of additional services: cooking in the Russian oven, the power from the infield, learning various crafts

- hunting: leisure tourists, as the host-mediated and direct participation in the extraction of the hunting resources; - gathering mushrooms and berries: leisure tourists, as the host-mediated and direct involvement in gathering mushrooms, berries, and fruits" (Negelchenko et al., 2020:446).

Logistics plays an important role when carrying out rural tourism activities. The quality and the efficiency of tourism services depend on the existence and proper functioning of logistics processes ensuring the development of rural tourism offers. Analyzing rural tourism, we can observe different supply chain structures which depend on the stage of development of the region (Tadić and Veljović, 2020). According to Machado & Almeida, tourists would appreciate if investments and improvements were made in terms of outdoor activities in nature, but are willing to pay only small amounts of money which contributes only to a very small extent to a return to the investment (Machado and Almeida, 2021).

Rural tourism providers do not display an active attitude in terms of marketing, thus, giving rise to discontent as far as their businesses are concerned, they become pessimistic, do not invest in their business, and all this may cause great frustration (Pato and Kastenholz, 2017). However, to be competitive in rural tourism, they must identify the opportunities available, to create offers having in mind both the local and regional potential at hand that can be harnessed. Travel intention is determined by several evaluated factors that influence the travel and travel behavior in an individual way (Jang et al., 2009). It is influenced by information and experiences from previous trips influencing people's perceptions and travel motivation (Zheng et al., 2021). In terms of motivational factors for rural tourism, the following categories of tourist can be identified: tourists who want to rest and recreate, tourists who are looking for contact with nature, tourists who would like to experience cultural activities and traditions, and tourists interested in gastronomy (Devesa et al., 2010). Some categories may share these motivations, while others do not, depending on the one hand on their social status, age, or educational background, on the other hand, on the tourist destination offers. Studies show that in various regions motivation of women and men differs in terms of rural tourism. In India, for example, the main reason for rural tourism both for men and women is socializing, however, for women relaxation is equally important (Kumar, 2019). According to Zheng et al., familiarity represents an important motivation and it influences decision making when choosing a tourist destination (Zheng et al., 2021). Thus, the relationship between "socializing" and "familiarity" may be significant in rural tourism and it is worthwhile studying it in the future.

Darabos also supports the above: "The main motivation in favor of rural areas is the free-time tourist products and their combinations. The role of gastronomy plays a particularly important role in rural hospitality" (Darabos, 2020:10). During pandemic period the gastronomy habits was also reevaluated, peoples' eating habits have changed, the priority has been limited only lunch or dinner (Kőmíves, 2022). The whole humanity faces many challenges nowadays, one of them being the change in eating habits. Rural areas are the ones that produce food, so many research is focused on analyzing the functions of these areas, food production having a primary role. (Novák et al., 2020) Depending on the information already available before the trip or based on the experience experienced on the spot, tourists will benefit from certain local products encountered during their stay. Tourists buy local products and spend more on them than on holiday or other services during their stay (Skuras et al., 2006). The wine-growing areas usually located in rural areas represent also an important attraction factor for rural tourism, thus also can be a component element of the rural tourism offer (Bento, Marques and Guedes, 2022) Relaunching the wine-route as a tourism product, with adequate strategies, can be a solution for the sustainable development of viticulture, implicitly of rural tourism (Ingrassia et al., 2022). For hospitality - the concept that covers a wide range of activities needed to do rural tourism - the literature in the country offers numerous alternative definitions. Act No. CLXIV of 2005 defines it in the following way: "the distribution of ready-made or locally made food and drinks, predominantly to be consumed locally, including related entertainment and other service activities" (Act No. CLXIV, 2005).

At this point, the significance of the rural welcome table as an item of supply must be mentioned which stands for the presentation of the activities connected to gastronomy traditions and domestic groceries produced for home-made, family meals, and the sales of these self-made products for at least fifteen visitors a day (Szalók, 2016). In order to be able to offer a rural welcome table, hosts must have a primary producer certificate and must have the special, host infrastructure prescribed by The National Food Chain Safety Office (NÉBIH). The pig-killing rituals (pig slaughter), for example, can only take place using domestic animals kept at the private premises based on prescribed housing conditions.

Regarding this regulation from 1 January 2022, the legislation 239/2009 was modified and is very important for rural accommodation providers. According with the new rule the rural accommodation service providers can also provide catering services to the guests as an alternative service, subject to the rules governing catering in the home. Identifying these natural and cultural resources, traditions, and gastronomy, along with other attractions that can be found at a destination must be implemented before starting a rural tourism activity. Depending on the resources, a tourism product can be created targeting a segment of tourists with precise motivation. The tourism market is in a permanent change, and having in mind the situation created by the pandemic, on a global level, tourism is undergoing an unprecedented crisis. According to Korodi et al., (2020) it is necessary to differentiate the tourist packages in terms of the customer segment, respectively the age groups that travel either individually or together (Kóródi et al., 2020). Also, the lifestyle of a person or group is different, consequently the needs will be different. Thus, the lifestyle of young people, for example, is an essential factor in choosing a tourist destination (Ramadania et al., 2021). As in other fields, innovation is present in rural tourism. Studies conducted in Romania show that innovation is the result of personal experience and concerns, and that the source of inspiration is the tourist and his needs, but not neglect the competition from neighbours (Cosma et al., 2014). The rural tourism product includes nostalgic elements, with a positive effect on the consumer, because " Nostalgia brings back positive memories from our past, from our past childhood, and the life that was in the villages" (Christou et al., 2018:45). Through their wishes, tourists contribute directly to the formation of the tourist product, and through local and authentic experiences, the tourist destination becomes popular (Csurgó and Smith, 2021). Rural areas have their own authenticity, and the perception of this authenticity by tourists through the tourist experience helps to form the identity of the place, thus becoming a destination (Wang et al., 2022)

Although rural tourism has been considered a factor contributing to local development (Iorio and Corsale, 2010), nowadays, this sector joins the other branches in tourism and holds a spot on the tourism market. Thus, the offer and the demand in the sector are factors that contribute to the existence and the development of this branch of tourism. In this respect, marketing activities can be essential. It is important the participation and involvement of local communities in making decisions regarding tourism development and "host communities' positive perceptions of tourism impacts have a significant direct effect on community participation in tourism decision making" (Alim et al., 2021:1479). Rural tourism has an economic and social impact on local and regional communities. The factors involved in organizing rural tourism, public and private institutions play an important role, and in these cases a lack of knowledge of the way the system works in various cultures as well as their specific character (Billore, 2018). „Local culture may also be used as a primary element of the tourism" (Awasthi, 2018:160). The tourist activity offers to the local community economic benefits, but it has an important contribution to the preservation of the natural and cultural heritage, thus creating quality at the level of the individual life, implicitly of the family and of the community (Obradović et al., 2021). In rural areas, visiting heritage monuments contributes to local economic development, but the social effect must also be taken into account, to be carried out in a sustainable form and without disturbing the local serenity (Caciora et al., 2021). The development of tourism in inappropriate conditions could have a negative outcome on tourist destinations on a demographic, economic, and socio-cultural level. To avoid and minimize the unfavourable effects on a local or regional level responsible decisions must be taken throughout the entire development process (Stankova, 2010). In Hungary, according to the 2020 report on tourism trends released by the Hungarian Tourism Agency (Magyar Turisztikai Ügynökség - MTÜ) (the distribution of overnight stays in rural tourism and other private accommodation was 39% in the surveyed year, while that of hotels was 41% (pensions 7%, campsites 5%, hostels 5%, holiday homes 3%). (MTÜ Turisztikai Trendriport 2020, 2021). The opening of the summer season in the period following the pandemic raised small-capacity, but safe, accommodation facilities to the level of hotels (MTÜ, 2020).

In general, the period of the pandemic has caused great damage to the tourism industry, the rural tourism sector has suffered fewer losses, since domestic tourism was the first sector that had been relaunched in the period immediately following the lifting of the restrictions. Being perceived and promoted as "safe," rural destinations, protected areas, and places "off the beaten path" were destinations more in demand in this period (Đorđević-Milošević and Hyvaerinen, 2020).

As far as sustainable development of rural tourism is concerned, opinions vary. Research shows that some believe that rural tourism would not improve the quality of life, while others confirm the belief that rural tourism serves economic growth and in the long run, it helps to hold the risk-benefit balance on an economic-social level, the aims that many settlements and regions struggle to attain (Polukhina et al., 2021). The sustainability of the activity in rural tourism is different and depends on several factors. The seasonality has an important role, with an impact on the economic and social development in case of a high seasonality. A high level of seasonality would increase the pressure on destinations during the peak season, but low season with reduced activity, could ensure continued activity with lower profits (Martinez et al., 2019). Given that the segment of individual tourists has a high degree of awareness of sustainable tourism, these tourists are more open to conventional rural tourism (Panzer-Krause, 2020). Rural tourism means nature. The nature has always been friendly with people, it just needs to be found. We need a more harmonious and balanced relationship with nature. Knowing our environment will help society meet challenges, be they unknown to the environment, social or economic (Agnoletti et al., 2020). Tourism professionals are constantly challenged in compiling tourism programs that meet the expectations of tourists. The activities in natural areas "help position tourism and travelling as a tool to promote happiness and wellbeing both at an individual and societal level" (Pung et al., 2020: 10).

Creative tourism has an extremely important role in rural tourism diversification, these can ease attracting new typology of tourists, for instance the urban tourist. Creativity, the ability to offer an active way for them to participate in educational activities, could lead to tourist number expansion (Sasu and Epuran, 2016). Creativity can manifest in many ways in rural tourism. For example: incorporating local specifics and resources, traditions and natural factors as well, creating by them an authentic local based tourism product (Morgan et al., 2009). The visitors are looking for authenticity, uniqueness, friendly environment (Kastenholz et al., 2012), active lifestyle, but also for traditional arts, gastronomy, and in most cases the travellers' searching ways for participate in these activities and to provide connection with local communities, to take part of the living culture (Jarábková and Hamada, 2012). The accommodation infrastructure in rural tourism often offers diversified tourist products (holiday at a winemaker, active holiday at a village house/cycling, nature trips) all in an organized form. Product development sets the course for defining target groups and product success. (Darabos and Printz-Markó, 2018) Based on this principle, it can be seen that one of the most basic tourist motivations is getting rid of the daily routine, the demand for new experiences, self-seeking and enrichment, exploration, learning and recreation as well (Streimikiene and Bilan, 2015). During the SARS Cov-2 pandemic, rural tourism was considered the least affected, the determining factors being the lower population density, free space, nature). Thus, it is expected that rural tourism will receive more attention from public policy in the future (Duro et al., 2021).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data for the present research was gathered during the period of the SARS CoV-2 pandemic, more precisely between January-June 2021. The mixed methods research was used. The survey aims to examine demand in rural tourism focusing to be able to design optimal offers in the period following the pandemic.

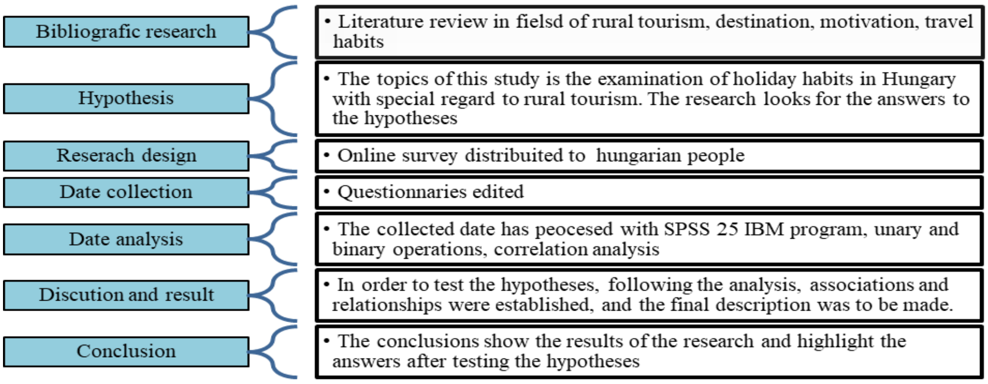

Figure 1. The adopted methodology (source: authors)

The topics of this study is the examination of holiday habits in Hungary with special regard to rural tourism. The research looks for the answers to the hypotheses below:

H1. Various age groups holiday habits to rural areas show a significant difference.

H2. The length of time various age groups stay at rural destinations does not show a significant difference.

H3. Willingness to spend money on accommodation in rural areas by the various age groups do not show a significant difference.

H4. Willingness to spend money on optional complementary services - free-time activities- in by the various age groups does not show a significant difference.

The survey method was chosen and the respondents were assigned via a random sample (with cluster sample). Besides the query on demographic and educational dates, the questions cover the following main areas.

• The holiday habits of the respondents,
• The preferences regarding the length of holiday time in rural areas
• The willingness to spend money on accommodation in this time
• The preference of complementary services as optional programs in the rural area, especially for gastronomic and recreational activities.

The questionnaire consisted of twenty-eight scaled questions (20 had 4-level Likert items, while 8 had 8-level Likert items, in which 1 stood for strongly agree, while 4 or 8 stood for strongly disagree), 12 multiple-choice closed questions, and an open one. The Likert scale was chosen to obtain quantitative data regarding attitude, frequency and importance. (Joshi et al., 2015). The data was processed via IBM SPSS 25, in which unary operations (descriptive statistical analysis, situation indicators, average, mode, dispersion measures, standard deviation, variability), and binary (cross-tabulation) ones, correlation analysis were done. The reliability of the questionnaire (exemption of random errors), consistency was tested with Cronbach's alpha. The procedure measures all possible combinations of the questions the questionnaire contains, the coefficient of reliability can be a number between 0 and 1. The closer the coefficient is to 1, the more reliable the data of the survey are. If the coefficient is between 0.9 and 1, they are excellent, between 0.8 and 0.9 they are good, between 0.7 and 0.8 they are acceptable, between 0.6 and 0.7 they are acceptable, between 0.5 and 0.6 they are week, and a coefficient below 0.5 is considered unacceptable (Sajtos and Mitev, 2007).

In interpretation of the evaluation criteria of tourists have basically not changed, but the satisfaction has improved significantly; the gender, age, occupation, education level and family structure of consumers have no significant impact on whether they choose leisure agricultural travel (Shuai et al., 2021), which is not yet widespread in Hungary.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the survey participate 764 respondents, and have been validated 762. Three different age groups were defined. Based on the biological criteria, young respondents belonged to the group between 16 and 30 years (20.68 %) the second group was that of middle-aged respondents between 31 and 50 (51.58 %), and senior respondents belonged to the third group (27.74 %). The respondents were 61.52 % female and 38.48 male, from city 74.21 and from town and village 25.79 %.

H1. The frequency of the various age groups travelling to rural areas shows a significant difference.
The hypothesis was tested with cross-tabulation analysis. Considering that the expected variation differences were placed on a high scale, it was considered appropriate to use the Pearson chi-square test. The Chi-Square value is above the 5% tolerance (.211) therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected (Table 1.). Of all the three categories, the middle-aged travel is the most frequent, they are followed by the seniors and the youngsters. All age groups are mostly in favour of travelling twice a year, and the second and third most common travel frequency was the one or three times per year (Figure 2).

Table 1. The significance level of various groups' frequency of traveling to rural areas (Source: authors own research)

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	20.208[a]	16	.211
Likelihood Ratio	19.719	16	.233
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.708	1	.054
N of Valid Cases	762		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.73.

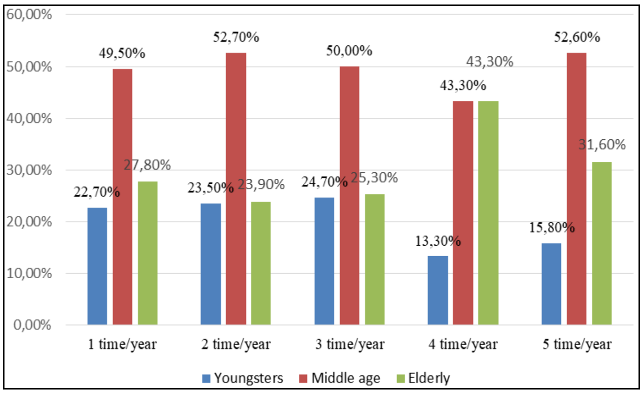

Figure 2. The frequency and the distribution of rural holidays of various age groups (Source: authors research) The case processing summary N = 764, but valid only N=762 (99,70%)

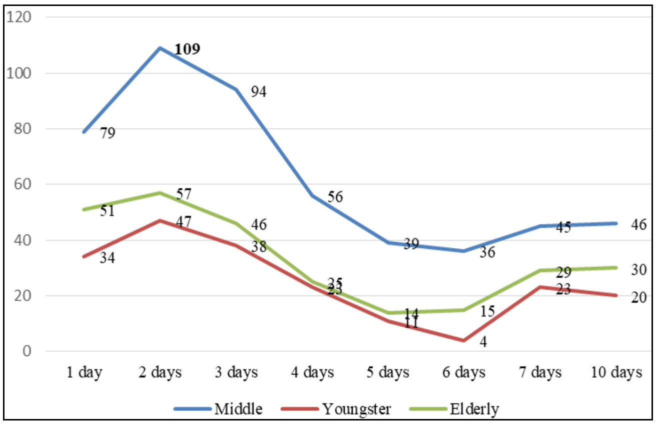

Figure 3. The level of significance of the length of time various age groups stays at rural destinations (Source: authors research)

Regarding to the above-mentioned result, it is worth examining who are most commonly travelled for rural tourism purpose. The present research question, received only 762 valid answers (167 young 21.90%, 385 middle age 50.50%, 210 elderly 27.60%). It can be observed that the frequency in rural tourism is differentiated: the middle age group occupies the first place for all frequencies, then the elderly with 4 -5 time/year, and then the youngsters in similar proportion between 1-3 time/year.

H2. The length of time various age groups stay at rural destinations does not show significant difference.

The hypothesis was tested with cross-tabulation analysis; the hypothesis has been partly rejected, as there is a significant difference between age groups in terms of the length of stay, except the one-day one. In this case, the value of the Chi-Square is 0.011, therefore, there is no significance. In each category, the order of distribution is middle-aged, seniors, and youth, but it is worth mentioning, that in case of 2-day-long stay, the middle age category has in its category the highest-level N=109, after elderly N=57 and young N= 47, also the major traveler chose the 2 days period of stay in rural tourism (Figure 3).

This result support the others research results in tourism area, for example before pandemic, in Romania the correlation between the motivation and travel time in wellness tourism is very low (Molnar and Gulyas, 2022). The main motivation for this type of tourism is "well-being", which can also be experienced in the natural environment, in the rural tourism also.

Considering the table below, the present research can show a clear picture of how many days (length of stay) tourists prefer and are willing to spend on a trip. Among the younger generation, 10, 7, 6 and one-day trips have the highest values, while the least popular option for them is the period of three days for travelling. Examining the same issue, the majority of the middle-aged respondents prefers 10, then 7 and then one-day trips. Three-day trips are also the least common ones in this age group. In contrast with the mentioned, the older generation prefers 10, 7, 1, and 6-day trips, while the 3-day trips are also the least popular among them. Summarizing the results obtained most commonly the travelers are willing to spend 7 to ten days in a rural tourism destination while the most unfavorable choice was the three day long stay (Table 2).

Regarding to the present research sample, it is worth mentioning that 21.90% of the 762 respondents is considered as youth, 50.50% is considered as middle aged, and last but not least 27,6% is considered as elder persons. Regarding to this information, youngsters from the percentage of total sum are highly interested in 10 and 7 days long stay, the middle-aged generation is interested in 10 days and 4-day long period of stay and the elderly generation from the percentage of total sum is the most interested in five and four day long stay.

H3. Willingness to spend money on accommodation in rural areas by the various age groups does not show a significant difference.

To test the hypothesis cross-tabulation analysis has been used. Since the Chi-square value is above the limit value of 5% (.781), the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is to be accepted, according to which there is a difference between how much the various age groups spend. Thus, the hypothesis has been rejected (Table 3).

The youth (highest N = 57) are willing to spend €10,50, the middle-aged group would spend €13.15 (highest N=129), while the seniors prefer to spend also €13,15 (highest N=71) on accommodation per day. In the survey, Forint, the Hungarian national currency was used, however, in the present study, this was converted to Euro (1 Eur. = 380 Huf.).

Table 2. The preferences of age groups in terms of the length of rural stay (Source: authors research)

Age groups		1 day	2 days	3 days	4 days	5 days	6 days	7 days	10 days
Young	Mean	4.60	3.87	3.28	3.34	4.24	4.90	5.44	6.32
	N	167	167	167	167	167	167	167	167
	Std. Deviation	2.724	2.171	1.919	1.724	1.565	1.510	2.130	2.546
	% of Total N	21.9%	21.9%	21.9%	21.9%	21.9%	21.9%	21.9%	21.9%
	% of TotalSum	21.2%	20.4%	20.9%	19.8%	22.3%	22.8%	23.3%	23.3%
Middle age	Mean	4.89	4.27	3.48	3.81	4.09	4.59	4.98	5.89
	N	385	385	385	385	385	385	385	385
	Std. Deviation	2.816	2.250	2.073	1.764	1.696	1.669	2.259	2.618
	% of Total N	50.5%	50.5%	50.5%	50.5%	50.5%	50.5%	50.5%	50.5%
	% of TotalSum	51.9%	51.9%	51.1%	52.0%	49.5%	49.1%	49.2%	50.2%
Elderly	Mean	4.64	4.16	3.50	3.78	4.29	4.81	5.11	5.71
	N	210	210	210	210	210	210	210	210
	Std. Deviation	2.945	2.216	2.017	1.766	1.626	1.689	2.199	2.726
	% of Total N	27.6%	27.6%	27.6%	27.6%	27.6%	27.6%	27.6%	27.6%
	% of TotalSum	26.9%	27.6%	28.0%	28.2%	28.3%	28.1%	27.5%	26.5%
Total	Mean	4.76	4.15	3.44	3.70	4.18	4.72	5.12	5.94
	N	762	762	762	762	762	762	762	762
	Std. Deviation	2.832	2.226	2.024	1.764	1.649	1.644	2.219	2.638
	% of Total N	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total Sum	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 3. The significance level of the willingness to spend of age groups in terms of rural accommodation (Source: authors research)

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.217[a]	6	.781
Likelihood Ratio	3.181	6	.786
Linear-by-Linear Association	.757	1	.384
N of Valid Cases	762		
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 22.57.			

Table 4. The significance level of age groups' willingness to spend in terms of rural gastronomic and recreational programs (Source: authors research)

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	11.304[a]	10	.334
Likelihood Ratio	11.585	10	.314
Linear-by-Linear Association	.050	1	.823
N of Valid Cases	762		
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.92.			

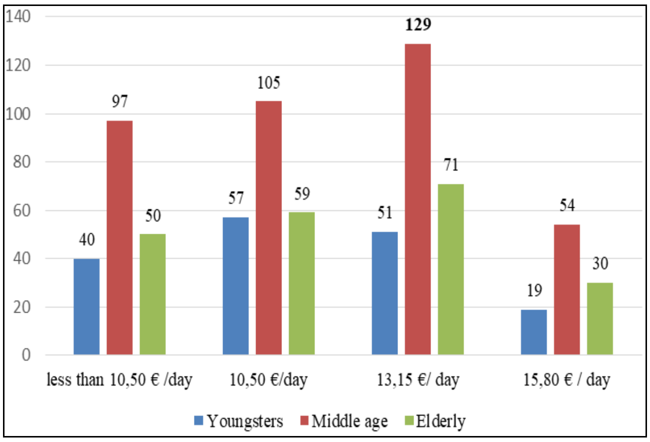

Figure 4. The frequency and distribution of the age groups' willingness to spend (Source: authors research)

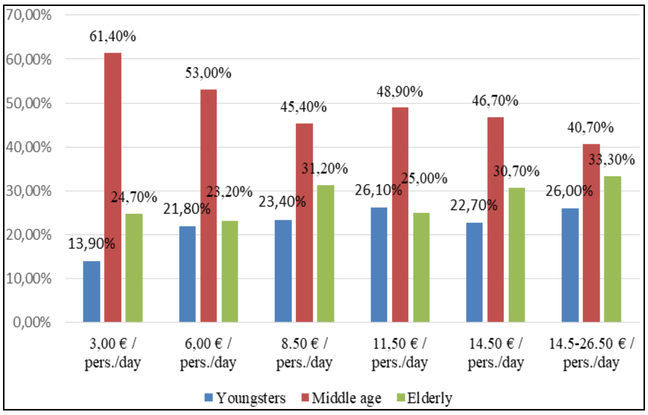

Figure 5. The frequency and distribution of age groups' willingness to spend in terms of rural gastronomic and recreational programs (Source: authors research)

H4. Willingness to spend money on optional programs in the country by the various age groups does not show a significant difference.

To test the hypothesis, cross-tabulation analysis has been used. Since the significance value of the Chi-square is 0.334, which is above the 0.005 limit, what can't be accepted, but there is still the alternative hypothesis according to which various groups are willing to pay different amounts of money for free-time activities. Having this in mind, this hypothesis has been rejected (Table 4). Middle-age reckon with additional costs between 3.00€ and 6.00€, seniors calculate on 8.50€, and youngsters take into account an over-expenditure of 11.50€, it is pensioners who would spend 14.50€, while middle-aged respondents would spend over 14.51€ on free-time activities calculated per person/day. The survey results regarding age groups show that in the case of all three age groups, respondents are willing to spend more than 6.00€ a day for one person, to complement the expenses of participation at the offers of gastronomic and leisure-time activities, all presented in Figure 5.

CONCLUSION

The research shows that following the period of pandemic - considering the self-regenerating effect of the industry - rural tourism staff, owners of guesthouses and new enterprises have high-priority tasks. The statement above is supported by the idea that 92.8% of the respondents would participate in a genuine rural program irrespective of age, educational background, or residence. It was also proven that there is a significant difference between the travelling frequency of the various groups, according to which, the middle-aged respondents travel most frequently to the countryside, followed by the seniors and the youth. All three age groups prefer mostly two rural holidays a year in terms of holiday habits.

In terms of the length of stay during rural holidays, it is also the group of the middle-aged respondents that is the most active one. In terms of the length of stay, the hypothesis has been rejected (partly accepted) because the length of time the respondents would participate in rural programs differs significantly, for 1 day, all ages would go to the countryside equally. In the case of 2-10 days stay, the group of the middle-aged dominates, their average and most common length of stay for rural tourism focused holiday is 6 days, while in the other groups, the most popular period is the three-day stay.

It is a relevant aspect to consider that the urban nature of the place of origin carries significantly more possibilities than rural areas as far as participation in rural tourism is concerned. The willingness to spend shows a significant difference. The middle-aged group would spend the most on guesthouse accommodation 13.15 €/day, followed by the seniors with the same amount 13.15€/day and the youth with 10.50€/day. Considering the middle-aged respondents' purchases, it is in their case that the prices of the room can be high, followed by the expenditure on accommodation of seniors and young respondents. All age groups would increase their expenses on gastronomic and recreational programs most of all age group with 6.00€/day. Middle-aged people are willing to have additional costs of 8.50€/day, the youngsters take into account 11.50€/day over-expenditure, pensioners would spend an additional amount of 14.50€/day, while mostly the middle-aged respondents would spend over 14.50€/day on free-time activities. When designing program packages, business owners can rely on the general support of the demand side. In the elements of marketing communication mix, it is worth focusing on respondents who are middle-aged (with family), and the senior group because they travel the most frequently.

The study has limitation. The date collected is limited and need to be observe others elements with high importance on decision making for rural tourism, special regarding a sustainability concept. This analysis will be subject to futures studies.

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ANALYZING EFFECTIVE INDICATORS OF POLITICAL MANAGEMENT OF SPACE IN TEHRAN METROPOLIS

Saeid KHATAM
Tarbiat Modares University, Faculty of Humanities, Department of Political Geography, Tehran, Iran, e-mail:s.khatam@modares.ac.ir

Zahra AHMADIPOUR*
Tarbiat Modares University, Faculty of Humanities, Department of Political Geography, Tehran, Iran, e-mail:ahmadyz@modares.ac.ir

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Abstract : Spatial policies can be thought of as the interrelationships between functions identities, and physical perspectives. Many experts argue that public-private participation is the key to the success of good governance in the political management of space. The present work aims at examining the effective indicators in the political management of the metropolitan area of Tehran using the fuzzy dimethyl technique, which is descriptive in terms of practical purpose and data collection, being based on the causal method. The sample size was composed of70 university professors and senior managers of political space management, leading to the identification of23factors as well. It was found that regional and spatial relations had the greatest impact on the political management of space ; the existing laws that cause the inefficiency of the political management of space had in contrast the least impact.

Key words: political management of space, urban management, governance, Fuzzy DEMATEL method, Tehran Metropolis

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INTRODUCTION

The global applications of urban cities are based on some criteria the most important of which are digitization and technological development in the city, and the extent to which tourism contributes to the functions of the urban city; other factors are represented by the elements of natural, economic and social sustainability in the management of smart cities (Kahlil, 2022). Spatial policies can be considered as outcomes of the reciprocal relations between functions, representations, identities, and physical perspectives (Ruoso and Plant, 2018). Good governance is the perfect basis for achieving a sustainable development strategy. Decentralization, in addition to accountability, predictability, and transparency, is in turn an effective mechanism that relies on good governance (Thanh and Chien, 2022).

Researchers have so far conducted extensive comparative studies on governance and political management of space in metropolises, in order to analyze some important variables such as privacy and security, utility and application, content, services, citizen participation, and so on. Nevertheless, some main variables such as political management of space and efficiency and effectiveness of interrelationship between governmental institutions and organizations have been overlooked (Biswasa et al., 2018; Dehghanan et al., 2021). The relationship between government, rulers and ruled, and the manner of political management of space is indeed of great importance. Iran is a country that has had a structured political system for about a century and has experienced and tested various institutional models for the political management of space in its metropolises. The daily life of people in metropolitan areas is largely influenced by the political management of space and decisions of the urban management system. The city is considered as a source of development and the place of urban management has a very important and decisive role in the process of urban development and improvement of urban settlements. Thanks to the ever-growing influence of cities around the world, local governments are then considered as other major players in the public policy domain (Noring et al., 2021). The ongoing urbanization is replete with both positive and negative externalities (Agyemang et al., 2017). Since e-government initiatives in developing countries are still in the early stages of development and face significant challenges, a slew of roadblocks is then preventing the widespread usage of technological services on a larger scale (Mustafa et al., 2022; Moezzi et al., 2012). Over the past decade, the rapid development of new information and communication technologies (Gheitarani et al., 2022b; Hashemzadeh et al., 2011; Hakkak et al., 2021; Jahanshahi et al., 2020; Vafaei-Zadeh et al., 2021) and social media, and other developments in urban domains have revolutionized both the traditional governance and its transition to a smart one (Jiang et al., 2021).

The mayor of the metropolis, as an executive director, must have various activities and connections with the administrative structure outside his/her own realm, and the same leads the urban management and mayors of metropolises, especially the one in Tehran, to be political. A review of figures who have been elected as the mayors of Tehran shows that the political view has had a significant impact on the selection of urban and political management of space in Tehran. In other words, the weight of political choices is much greater in Tehran metropolis. The concentration of government organizations and institutions in Tehran along with the urban management complex has led to some sort of incompatibility in the political management of the metropolitan space. Urban spaces are among the most important and prominent geographical spaces significantly expanded

* Corresponding author

due to increase in the number of cities and urbanization. These changes as well as increase in urban spaces indeed require efforts to organize them in order to increase urban resilience and make life in urban spaces more feasible for residents.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Several thinkers and philosophers in the history sought to systematize and provide a model for the political management of human society, such as Plato, Aristotle (Moore et al., 2022). The urban areas are major centers for economic, social, and political growth in any country, and they have proven to be the most attractive places for the generation of wealth, job opportunities, creativity, and innovation (Allal et al., 2022). Today, cities are deemed important areas for sustainable development, economic growth, technological innovation, and social cohesion (Hanifah et al., 2021; Gheitarani et al., 2022a; Taherinia et al., 2021; Gharleghi et al., 2018; Etemadi et al., 2022: Hakkak et al., 2022: Khaksar et al., 2011; Jahanshahi et al., 2019; Gogheri et al., 2013; Dehkordy et al., 2013). Since urban actors are increasingly involved in changing their potential abilities and roles, there is a new wave of experiments in cities, which has turned them into governance laboratories or urban experiments in governing and ruling domains (Raven et al., 2019). As a result of these developments, new structures for space management, whether at local or at national level, were gradually formed. Accordingly, with the aim of politically managing the space, a diverse spectrum of governments was formed, ranging from federal states with broad local powers to simple centralized states. Every political structure that manifests itself in the form of a country needs mechanism to achieve its goals, in addition to being compatible with the spatial structure, must also have sufficient dynamism compatible to temporal changes; hence, the government is a collection of executives, political, and military entities (Skocpol, 1979) for which special application is conceivable. The purpose of political organization of space is the political administration and management of space in order to achieve national goals with a comprehensive, forward-looking, and strategic perspective. In this regard, along with other various goals and functions (social, environmental, economic, political, and administrative) with which the political organization of space provides the grounds for public participation in national, regional and local decisions are also among the main goals of political organization in urban space (Ahmadipour et al., 2019). In the past, researchers of urban affairs could study politics using a "space-free" approach, which is no longer possible nowadays. Concentrating on urban areas and spatial patterns produced by external factors consistently differentiates between the new approach and the previous one, and leads to a focus on the space factor. However, such a mechanism is not specific to the urban scale. This approach can be used to interpret international and national relations. The urbanization has its own advantages and drawbacks regarding metropolises; on the one hand, metropolises have proven to be key assets in international competition and have growing importance for national wealth. Metropolises' success challenges the existing balances and thus cohesion at local, regional, and national scale: they are simply running ahead of the other regions and thereby create new tensions (Damurski and Andersen, 2022).

Governance in Metropolitan City

As the local governance is being diversified based on the status of local government, nature of society, state, and local environment, it is worth and relevant to know the status of local governance subjectively, incorporating policies and practices based on national, regional, and local planning (Subedi and Subedi, 2021). Metropolitan areas are among the most important and influential phenomena emerged in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, leading to a new and diverse pattern of urbanization, housing, city extension, and spatial structure and organization in a new era. The growth of such areas is closely related to the globalization process, worldly structure of cities, the role of metropolises in their hierarchical network so that the complex trends, processes, and forces of globalization have brought in competition among these regions by accelerating the developmental process of metropolitan areas as an engine of the global economy, and also in favor of the capitalist system (Nelles, 2012). As such, the emergence of diverse actors in urban politics and the effects of globalization have become important factors in devising a governing theory in cities. Since the 1970s, higher government expenditure has been cited as one of the reasons of inflation rising in the Keynesian economic model; reduction in public spending to stabilize the government's share from GDP was also considered as an acceptable option, a policy that paved the way for the emergence of the concept of spatial governance. In this model, decentralization and transfer of policy-making tasks and responsibilities to social actors and institutions, and the need for power sharing are all taken into account (Hassall, 2012). A permanent gap between traditional administrative boundaries and metropolitan areas has led to various theoretical approaches and suggestions for the ideal model of urban governance. Each of these approaches lends support the alternative forms of governance in metropolises (institutional reform, intercity competition, and flexible arrangements) with different normative goals (efficiency, democracy, equality, and economic competition) at different (local and metropolitan) scales (Tomas, 2016). For example, one of these approaches was to divide the metropolitan areas into smaller, then more manageable units, which means separating the inner city from its suburbs and satellite cities and multiplying small units of local autonomy in all such different places. One of the most famous schools of economic thought originated in the United States believes that the fragmentation of the metropolitan government into countless small local competencies creates a set of municipalities, each of which has special packages of public goods with their own tax rates. According to this argument, metropolis citizens are in search of an area with better public goods deliveries and lower taxes. Unfortunately, this school of economics was not compatible with real life. A metropolis is a single, indivisible entity which should not be subdivided into smaller parts.

Political Management of Metropolitan Space

Over the past forty years, there has been a significant international trend away from centralized development-oriented approaches by national governments and their replacement by a set of local or location-based development strategies initiated by the sub-national layers of government (Christian and Jayne, 2019). Usually, the growth of metropolitan areas leads to non-compliance of interdependencies between municipalities and existing institutional arrangements for coordinating policies such as public transportation, waste management, land use, and housing planning. In response to this non-compliance, different types of governance and political management have accordingly emerged in many metropolises with different results in terms of effectiveness. From the 1990s onwards, in particular we see the emergence of a very different perspective on governance and political management of metropolitan areas (Zimmermann, 2014). International organizations, including the World Bank, the European Union, recognize tourism as a promising development sector in governments. This can be a powerful tool for good management in developing countries (Lahcene et al., 2022). Urban development is directly associated with increase in impervious areas. Given the growing population concentration in urban areas particularly in developing countries, it is essential to plan and control expansions to minimize their adverse impacts on hydrological cycle components (Vasconcelos et al., 2022). The first and foremost condition of success is good governance, meaning that processes are inclusive, accountable, and place-based. By increasing the agency of people most connected to the environments, good governance creates space for nature to thrive (Wilkes, 2022).

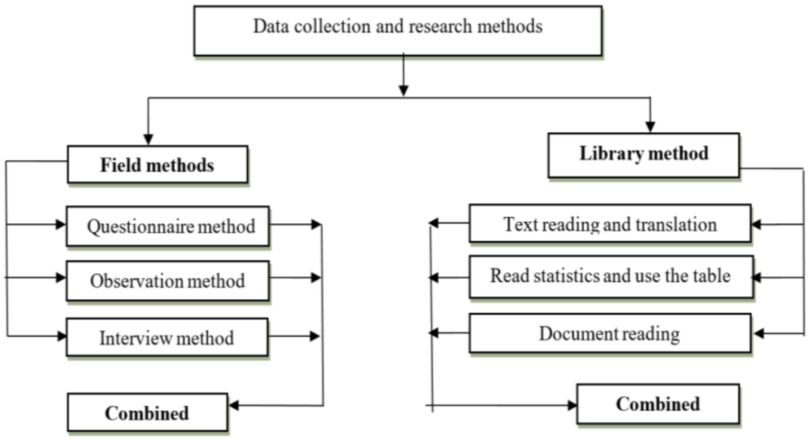

Figure 1. Methodological Diagram (Source: Authors)

Table 1. Final criteria using fuzzy DEMATEL technique (Source: Authors)

Symbol	Dimension	Symbol	Components
C1	Political-Security Indicator	S1	Organizing political space in Tehran metropolis depends on security-political considerations
		S2	Political considerations of officials in organizing political space in Tehran metropolis
		S3	Political-security considerations in electing the mayor of Tehran
		S4	Competition of political factions in choosing urban management complex
		S5	Political-security considerations can cause inefficiency in organizing political space in Tehran metropolis
		S6	The concentration of political institutions in Tehran can cause issues in communication with organizing political space
		S7	Tehran city officials have sufficient independences in political decisions for the metropolis
		S8	Political-security institutions affiliated to the government provide necessary cooperation in organizing political space for the urban management complex
C2		S9	Organizing political space in Tehran metropolis requires taking into account geographical principles
		S10	Organizing political space in Tehran metropolis through spatial and territorial indicators
		S11	To what extent can the geographical-communication indicator affect the political organization of space in Tehran metropolis?
		S12	To what extent do regional, spatial, and territorial relations affect the political organization of space in Tehran metropolis?
C3		S13	To what extent do socio-cultural issues play role in organizing political space in Tehran metropolis?
		S14	Individual characteristics and habit of system to focus on organizing political space in Tehran metropolis
		S15	The extent of spirit of cooperation of city managers and government officials in organizing political space in Tehran metropolis
		S16	The extent of civic participation of citizens on organizing political space in Tehran metropolis
		S17	Effect of existence/non-existence of non-governmental organizations in Tehran metropolis on the way of organizing political space in Tehran metropolis
		S18	Role of organizations, institutions, and socio-cultural authorities in organizing political space in Tehran metropolis
C4		S19	To what extent does the existence of a centralized political system in the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran play role in organizing political space in Tehran metropolis?
		S20	To what extent do the existing laws related to the division of the country impact the political organization of space in Tehran metropolis?
		S21	Existing laws with regard to relationship between government and urban management in Tehran metropolis
		S22	Existing laws cause inefficiency in organizing political space in Tehran metropolis
		S23	The legal relationship between the municipality and the government in the current situation can improve the performance of the political organization of space in Tehran metropolis

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The DEMATEL method was used to reveal the effect and cause criteria, and to increase the model applicability in terms of linguistic variables combined with triangular fuzzy numbers. As a multi-criteria decision-making method, DEMATEL contributes to a different view of risk assessment literature by providing an evaluation that enables modeling cause-effect relationships among the risk factors and exposing the degree of relation or the strength of influence analytically (Seker and Zavadskas, 2017). In this sense, fuzzy logic, appropriate to deal with situations of uncertainty and subjectivity, would be a good alternative to cope with the problem of productivity analysis. Many measures of a qualitative and ambiguous nature can be described subjectively through linguistic terms, which is not possible via using traditional approaches to performance evaluation (Jatoba et al., 2018; Takalo et al., 2013), integrated fuzzy logic and the system's dynamic approach to choose a sustainable supplier. They provided a new model for integrating information on the supplier's behavior in a fuzzy environment with a dynamic system modeling technique that results in a reliable and responsive support system (Izadyar et al., 2021). Data were collected by taking into account the view of experts who were selected through purposive sampling. After identifying and analyzing effective indicators on the political management of space in Tehran metropolis, a fuzzy DEMATEL technique was used to evaluate the status of causal relationship between these factors. Likewise, the research is applied in terms of purpose and descriptive in terms of data collection, and is based on a causal method. The statistical population of this study consists of experts and professors familiar with the field of political space management. The number of 70 university professors and senior managers of political management of space in Tehran metropolis were selected and asked to comment on the impact of the given factors in each line and column at five levels ranging from ineffective to very effective. In this study, 23 factors using the 70 sampled people were identified as shown in Table 1. In the second part, using the opinions of the 70 sampled people, the superiority of each of the 23 indicators was determined and compared to each other.

Findings

Democracies are experiencing historic disruptions affecting how people engage with core institutions such as the press, civil society organizations, parties. These processes of citizen interaction with institutions operate as a democratic interface shaping self-government and the quality of public life (Bennett et al., 2018). In response to both the very large scale of metropolitan spatial frameworks, and critiques of their ineffectiveness, several metropolitan municipalities in South Africa have been exploring ways to ground their spatial plans. Initiatives include, inter alia, attempting to link spatial planning to infrastructure planning (Spaliviero et al., 2019). Urbanization is defined as the process of growth or increment in the number of people in localities being classified as urban, or it could be regarded as the growing concentration of population and activities in urban and metropolitan areas, or the rapid growth and movement of people into urban areas. Government and city officials are entreated to identify new ways of providing for the overpopulated cities by strategically using the available limited resources without inflicting further harm on the natural environment (Antwi-Afari et al., 2021). Still, the overall aim is to build a resilient city, to minimize human and economic losses. This implies that as more urban residents in the DCs can adapt to the hazard, the more chances the society has to harness its natural potential towards a sustainable urban development (Nkwunonwo et al., 2020).

Step 1: At this stage, the evaluation factors that are causal in nature and usually involve a large number of complex situations were compiled. To deal with the ambiguity of human judgment, a fuzzy verbal scale was accordingly designed based on the model given in Table 2.

Table 2. Fuzzy verbal scale pattern: effect of variables on each other (Source: Authors)

Verbal Expressions	Without Effect	Very Low Effect	Low Effect	High Effect	Very High Effect
Numerical Scale	0	1	2	3	4
Triangular Fuzzy Numbers	(0.00, 0.00, 0.25)	(0.00, 0.25, 0.50)	(0.25, 0.50, 0.75)	(0.50, 075, 1.00)	(0.75,1.00, 1.00)

Step 2: At this stage, experts' opinions were obtained and their average was also calculated. Considering P the number of experts, we had Z^1 Z^z Z^p of matrix P, each of their knowledge was identified by the corresponding fuzzy numbers.

Step 3: Next, through standardizing relationship, scales of indicators were transformed into the comparable ones. In this regard, matrix X is called the fuzzy matrix of standardized direct relations. It should be noted that for the sake of brevity, the matrix of the average opinion of experts and the normalized matrix were accordingly ignored.

Step 4: In this stage, the fuzzy matrix of the total relations T was obtained. Here, $x_{ij} = \left(l'_{ij}, m'_{ij}, u'_{ij}\right)$ and the elements of the matrices X_1, X_m and X_u contain the values l', m' and u' in matrix X, respectively.

The next step is to determine the importance of indicators $(\tilde{D}_i + \tilde{R}_i)$ and the relationship between the criteria $(\tilde{D}_i - \tilde{R}_i)$. If $\tilde{D}_i - \tilde{R}_i > 0$, the relevant criterion is then effective; if $\tilde{D}_i - \tilde{R}_i < 0$, the relevant criterion is impressionable, as shown in Figure 4.

Step 5: The acquired values for D+R and D-R were fuzzy numbers that had to be defuzzified to obtain a causal graph; to draw this, the values $(D+R)^{def}$ and $(D-R)^{def}$ were required. The center surface method was used for defuzzification. In the causal graph, the X axis involves $(D+R)^{def}$ whose values are always positive, indicating their weight or importance; and the Y axis includes $(D-R)^{def}$, whose positive value means that the effective index is definite; otherwise, its impressionism will be definite, which is remembered as the effect ratio in the system. In this step, the fuzzy numbers $\tilde{D}_i + \tilde{R}_i$ and $\tilde{D}_i - \tilde{R}_i$ obtained from the previous step are de-fuzzy (Authors).

Table 3. Causal relationship pattern Of subcomponents (Source: Authors)

D-R	D+R	R	D	
-0.460	3.893	2.176	1.717	S1
-0.152	3.622	1.887	1.735	S2
0.353	3.727	1.687	2.040	S3
-0.055	3.325	1.690	1.635	S4
0.093	3.303	1.605	1.698	S5
0.333	3.809	1.738	2.071	S6
-0.524	2.740	1.632	1.108	S7
-0.105	3.364	1.735	1.630	S8
-0.232	3.791	2.012	1.780	S9
-0.363	2.917	1.640	1.277	S10
-0.180	3.576	1.878	1.698	S11
1.169	4.042	1.436	2.606	S12
0.735	3.309	1.287	2.022	S13
-0.370	3.595	1.983	1.613	S14
-0.251	3.310	1.780	1.529	S15
0.008	3.139	1.565	1.573	S16
-0.504	2.609	1.600	1.096	S17
0.332	3.808	1.738	2.070	S18
-0.525	2.739	1.632	1.107	S19
-0.105	3.365	1.735	1.630	S20
-0.232	3.792	2.012	1.780	S21
-0.37	2.910	1.640	1.270	S22
-0.769	3.979	1.874	1.105	S23

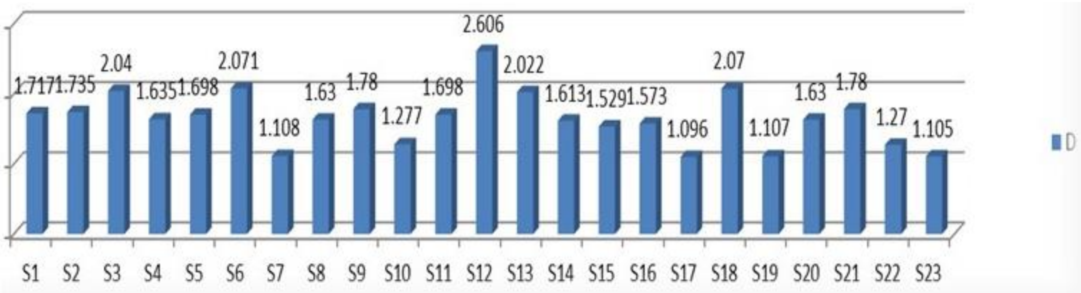

Figure 2. Priority of sub-criteria influence with each other (Source: Authors)

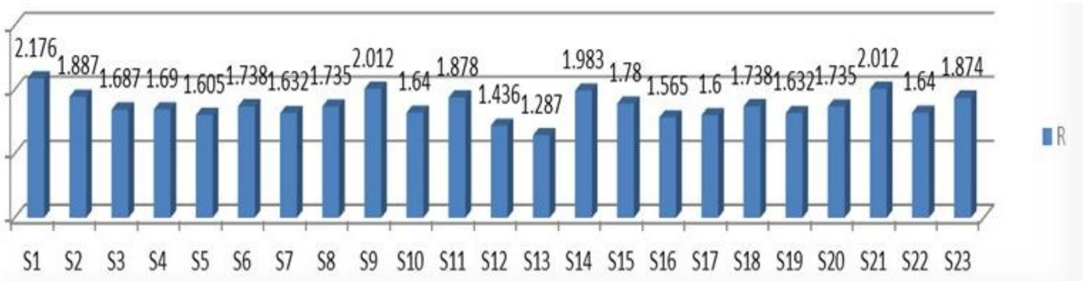

Figure 3. Priority of sub-criteria impressibility with each other (Source: Authors)

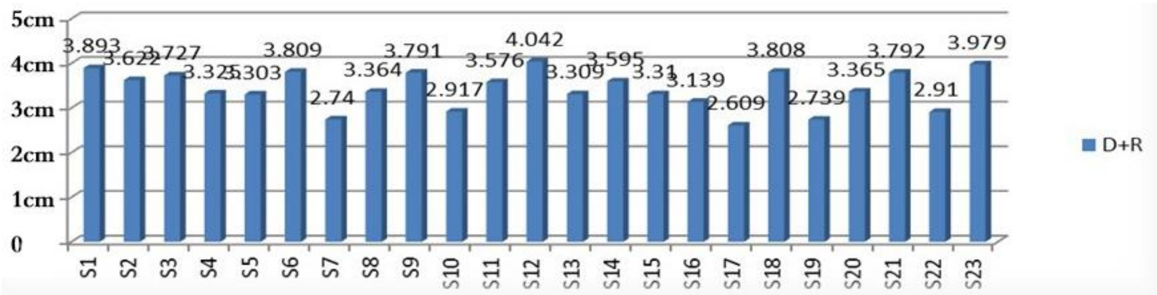

Figure 4. Priority of sub-criteria interaction with each other (Source: Authors)

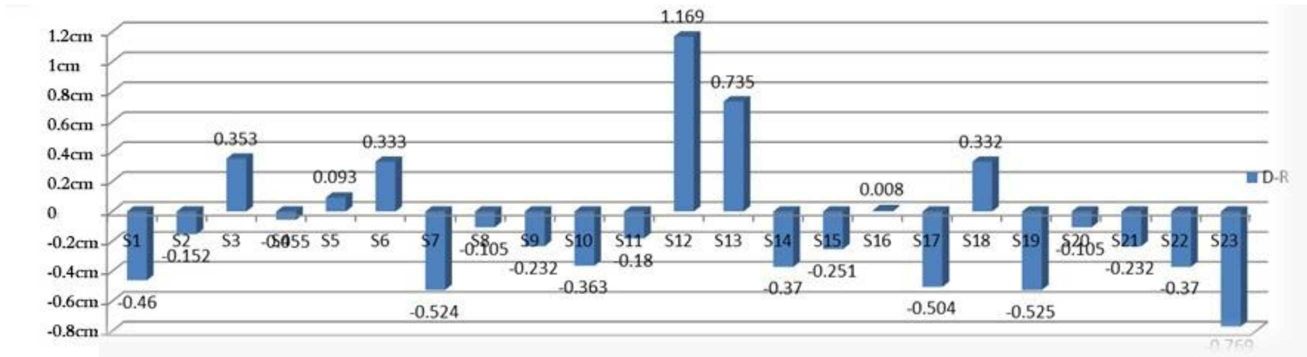

Figure 5. Priority based on net effectiveness/impressiveness of sub-criteria (Source: Authors)

CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this study was to analyze the indicators affecting political management of space in Tehran using the fuzzy DEMATEL technique. The regional, spatial, and territorial relations showed the largest impact on the political management in Tehran metropolis. Existing laws have caused inefficiency in the political management of space in Tehran, but according to the present results, it (political management of space) has the least impact. A number of threatening factors including increasing political-economic concentration, disregard for cultural geography of the country, formation of local and regional competition, formation of government cavities, infiltration of informal factors in the political management of Tehran metropolis, disregard for public participation and a single-agent political management space were also investigated. It was found that the criterion of political space management in Tehran depends on security-political considerations and enjoys a very high degree of effectiveness. Socio-cultural issues in the political management of space in Tehran also showed the least impression compared to the other criteria. The criterion of regional, spatial, and territorial relations on the political management of space in Tehran also showed the strongest interaction with the other criteria. The criterion "presence/absence of non-governmental institutions in Tehran metropolis on the manner of political management of space" showed in contrast the weakest interaction with the other criteria. The criterion of regional, spatial, and territorial relations on the political management of space in Tehran was also found to be the cause of net effect.

The concentration of governmental organizations and institutions in Tehran alongside the urban management complex has created a kind of incompatibility in the political management of the metropolis. As a result, once there is no proper and rational management in urban and political spaces, lack of some factors including transparency, law, use of facilities for personal purposes, equal access, and responsibility and accountability of managers have led to lack of development of political management of space in Tehran metropolis. Therefore, it can be inferred that inefficient, centralized, top-down management causes a lack of attention to long-term and strategic plans, the weak structure and place of the Islamic city council, non-operational of local councils and non-participation of citizens in the administration of city affairs. These are indeed different from the reasons underlying the weakness of municipalities and government organizations, important to achieving political management of space in cities and metropolises.

To improve the political management of space, the present work proposes the following measures: strengthening judicial oversight bodies, fighting against administrative and organizational corruptions, making people-centered urban plans, segregation of duties and clarifying the scope of authority of Tehran municipality and governmental organizations, and preparing the ground for stronger interactions between people and city managers.

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PROMISING DIRECTIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPORTS TOURISM IN THE ALMATY REGION USING THE EXAMPLE OF ROCK CLIMBING

Nurzhan BATYRBEKOV*
Kazakh Academy of Sports and Tourism, Department of Tourism and Service, Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan, e-mail: batyrbekovn22@mail.ru

Tatyana IMANGULOVA
International University of Tourism and Hospitality, Department of Tourism, Turkestan, Republic of Kazakhstan, e-mail: tanya_geo@mail.ru

Anastassiya GUBARENKO
International University of Tourism and Hospitality, Department of Tourism, Turkestan, Republic of Kazakhstan, e-mail: gerseda@mail.ru

Madina ABDIKARIMOVA
International University of Tourism and Hospitality, Department of Tourism, Turkestan, Republic of Kazakhstan, e-mail: madina.abdikarimova@gmail.com

Dinara YESSIMOVA
Toraighyrov University, Department of Geography and Tourism, Pavlodar, Republic of Kazakhstan, e-mail: dika-73@mail.ru

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Abstract: The aim of the study was the process of studying the phenomenon of rock climbing development as one of the promising areas of sports tourism in the Almaty region of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which has a wide range of tourist resources systematically involved in various types of tourism. The research method was a large-scale, extended analysis of the tourist attractiveness of the region, and thus defined the most popular tourism destinations, as well as the persistent association of the Almaty region with mountain and foothill terrain, sports tourism and rock climbing. As a result of the research, the authors have formed a clear understanding of rock climbing as one of the promising areas for the development of sports tourism, which is currently becoming increasingly popular among both the local population and tourists of different ages. Sports tourism, rock climbing on natural and artificial (specially created) terrain, requires significant resource provision with respect to both the rock climbing sites, and professional personnel in the field of tourism who possess competencies in the field of sports tourism, ensuring the implementation of this tourist service. The results of the research presented in this article are based on the professional activities of the authors and allow them to have a qualitative impact on the process of training the sports tourism personnel, and contribute to the development of different-level routes for tourists wishing to engage in rock climbing, expand the involvement of tourists and contribute to the development of touristic attractiveness of the regions of the country.

Key words: tourists, sports tourism, professional personnel, educational trajectory climbing

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INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Kazakhstan is the world's ninth largest country by land area (Issakov et al., 2022), with its lots of significant sites of both natural, and historical and cultural heritage, systematically involved in the tourist activities of the country's regions. Since tourism was declared as one of the priority directions of the development of the modern economy of Kazakhstan, where the development of regional tourism becomes an important element in building a competitive tourist business at the international level and quite rightly positions itself as one of the most promising branches of development of modern society (Mironova and Kalinkina, 2020). The Republic of Kazakhstan has a wide range of objects of interest to tourists from all over the world, these are objects of both national and international significance. The country has almost all bioms, from deserts to perennial snow, the relief is represented by a variety of forms, lowlands, plains, hills, low-mountain and high-mountain areas, etc., five UNESCO World Heritage Sites are located here: the Mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi, Petroglyphs within the Archaeological Landscape of Tamgaly, Saryarka – Steppe and Lakes of Northern Kazakhstan, Silk Roads: the Routes Network of Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor , Western Tien-Shan (Aldybayev et al., 2021), other authentic and unique sites of national and regional significance which reflect the cultural diversity of multi-ethnic Kazakhstan. The country also has natural wealth preserved and

* Corresponding author

carefully involved in tourist activities through the organization of specially protected natural territories, the amount of which is currently increasing. They are ten nature reserves, fourteen national parks, seven wildlife reserves, fifty natural, zoological and biological wildlife areas, conservation areas, natural monuments, botanical gardens, etc., located in all regions of Kazakhstan and characterized by a wide diversification.

Now the Republic of Kazakhstan is divided administratively into 17 regions and 3 cities of republican significance, according to the decree of the President of the country, the previously existing 14 regions by their division were supplemented with three more regions. Each region has its own characteristics, so, until recently, the Almaty region was the largest one. Its land area decreased due to the separation of the Aksu, Alakol, Eskeldy, Karatal, Kerbulak, Koksu, Panfilov, Sarkan districts, as well as the cities of Taldykorgan and Tekeli. The Almaty region has a rather complex physical and geographical characteristic, represented by both plain-like and mountainous areas. The distance between Kapshagay water reservoir to Zailiyskiy Alatau is about 1000 kilometers, but this one-hour-driving route involves climatic zones from deserts to Arctic ice (Saparova, 2022) (Figure 1). This region has natural, cultural, historical, and ethnographical assets, as well as man-made tourist areas specially created for tourism development purposes, and which represent the tourist and resource potential of the Almaty region.

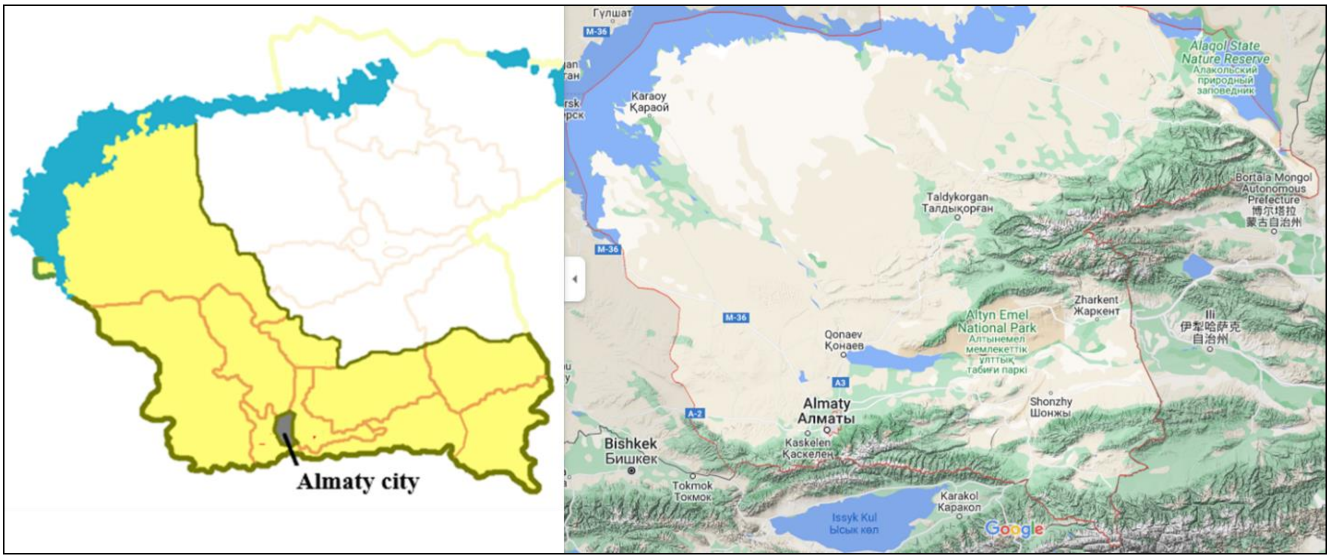


Figure 1. Almaty region, location and relief (Source: Google Maps)

The city of Almaty and the Almaty region are among the most tourists-visited territories of Kazakhstan, as they have significant potential for promoting almost all types of tourism: from ecological and agrotourism (Plokhikh et al., 2022) to business one (Nikolaev, 2022). Their development involves activities to improve the tourist infrastructure; constant work is underway to simplify the visa regime, etc. The Almaty region under the "Program for the development of the tourism industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2019-2025", is a "mountain tourism cluster" and is among the top 10 priority objects for the development of the tourism industry. The region has outstanding facilities for the promotion of active types of tourism (Makogonov, 2015), sports tourism (Kenenbai et al., 2020) in such areas as ski tourism, mountaineering, rock climbing, equestrian tourism, cycling and much more. From mountaineering to skiing, trekking to climbing, mountain-biking to canyoning, wildlife observation to recreational activities at medicinal mineral water sources and spas, the spectrum of opportunities for mountain tourism is particularly broad (Debarbieux et al., 2014). Mountains with their spectacular scenery, majestic beauty, and unique amenity values, are one of the most popular destinations for tourists (Mukayev et al., 2022). With the emergence of alpine wellness (Weiermair et al., 2007), research in the field of mountain tourism has become increasingly branched, i.e. interest in organizing tourist trips in mountainous areas contributes to the creation of an increasing number of tourist offers. An exceptional feature of the mountainous terrain of the Almaty region is its close location to the metropolitan city of Almaty (Gubarenko et al., 2020), surrounded by plenty of various-height rocks, Forestry, Asian rocks, Butakovsky waterfall, Tuyuk-Su, Tamgaly-Tas, etc. Thus, there is an excellent resource potential for the development of rock climbing as one of the promising areas of the country's tourism industry. Rock climbing can be divided into athletic and nonprofessional one, where athletic one involves reaching of certain speed and categorical norms (Mitrofanova, 2016), the nonprofessional is leisure and tourism in its purest form, as it is one of the means of organizing tourist entertainment, combined with visiting the natural attractions of the region. It is rock climbing that is quite a popular type of sports tourism (Kolotukha et al., 2022), which the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) includes in the concept of "sports tourism": "active sports tourism", "event sports tourism" and "nostalgic sports tourism", requiring professional training of instructors capable of preparing and implementing a high-quality tourist product, providing a high level of security even for novice tourists.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The development of a certain type of tourism in the region requires two main elements – a tourist resource potential and highly qualified specialists with professional competencies in various areas of tourism. Resource potential is one of the key factors in the formation of a powerful tourist offer (Amirkhanov and Arakelov, 2013) and sightseeing routes (Gubarenko, 2021). It is the basis for the development of tourism in the country, in accordance with the scientific approach, it includes objects directly or indirectly involved in tourist activities, i.e. natural-climatic, historical and cultural sights and infrastructure (Imangulova and Gubarenko, 2018). The stages of assessing the tourist and resource potential of the area (Kuskov et al., 2005) consist of qualitative identification and study of resources located on the territory of the country in the regional context, their systematization, development of maps and schemes, as well as the formation of new and innovative tourist products. The analysis of the resource potential of the city of Almaty and the Almaty region was carried out in several stages: over 2017-2019 - the study of tourist resources of the city of Almaty (Zakiryanov et al., 2018), over 2018-2021 - the research of tourist resources of Almaty region (Zakiryanov et al., 2020) (Imangulova et al., 2019), the subsequent publication of the results of the study, their introduction into the professional activities of subjects of the tourism industry and organizations that train specialists in tourism. The field research method was actively used in this process (Vinober, 2019), in which the analysis of resources was carried out in natural conditions, at their location to obtain reliable and up-to-date information.

The next part of the research was the development and conduct of a survey among visitors and residents of Almaty and Almaty region to form a clear idea of promising areas in the development of tourism in the region. The survey as a method of collecting information from a wide range of respondents (Shapiro, 2017), the analysis of which allowed us to determine the further direction of the study. So, the authors regularly conduct the surveys, both in face-to-face (verbal) and online formats (Google form). The last survey conducted in May-June 2022 showed the high relevance of the research direction outlined in this article. The analysis of tourist and recreational resources and the survey made it possible to identify one of the quite popular areas in the development of active types of tourism in the region, namely rock climbing. It is in the city of Almaty and the Almaty region where there is mass of rocks – a natural relief for climbing, as well as climbing walls – specially created routes for indoor climbing. The next stage of the study was the analysis of available professional human resources (Pestova et al., 2021), which are the basis for the formation of an innovative tourist climbing product.

The analysis of educational programs "Tourism" of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the platform of the Unified Higher Education Management System "ESUVO PLATONUS KZ", as well as educational programs of the CIS as well as far and near abroad countries, became the method of assessing the current state of the availability of specialists with professional skills in the field of rock climbing. Based on the data obtained, a climbing instructor training program was developed, which is a component of the educational program "Tourism" for higher educational institutions. Routes along the rocks for novice tourists have been created and presented graphically using the modeling of routes. It is the modeling as a method of routes visualization (Tolk, 2015) allows them to use the received developments as a ready-made tourist offer, if they have the relevant equipment, as well as a specialist with the required competence in the field of active types of tourism and climbing.

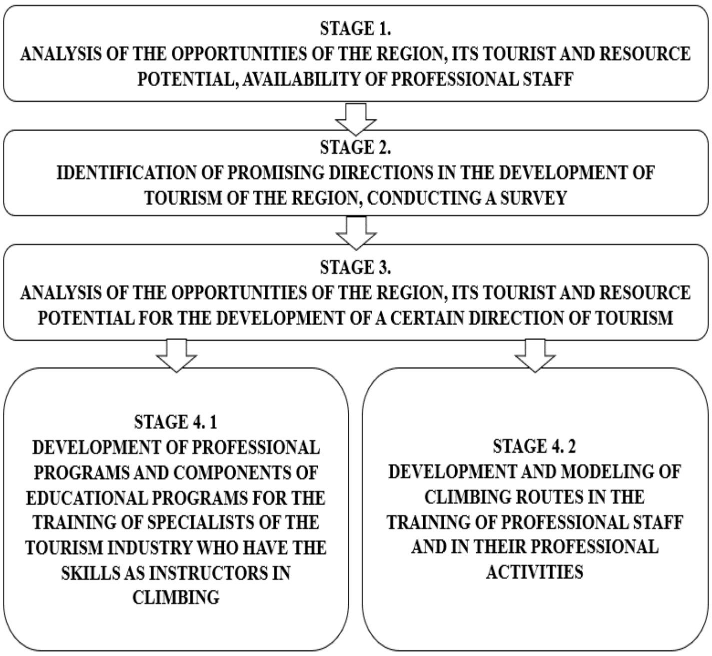


Figure 2. Research methodology (compiled by the authors)

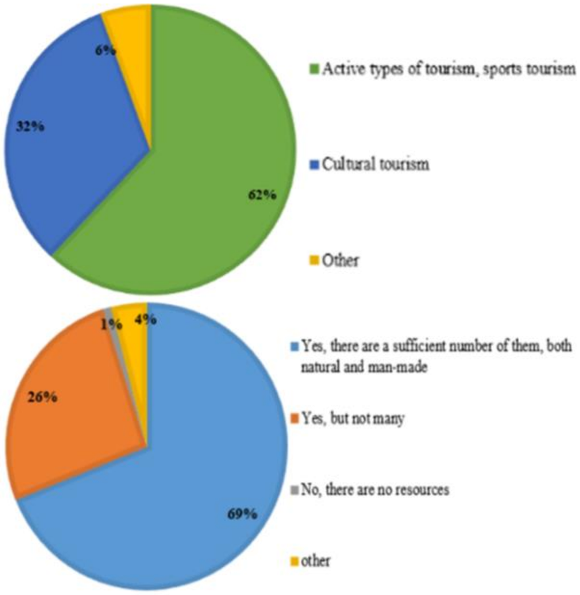


Figure 3. Analysis of responses to the survey named "Almaty through the eyes of a tourist" (Datasource: the authors conducted the survey using Google forms)
(Note: 1. Analysis of respondents' answers to the question «What type of tourism, in your opinion, in the most promising to develop in the city of Almaty and the Almaty region»;
2. Analysis of respondents' answers to the question «Do you think there are resources for active sports, sports tourism and rock climbing in Almaty and Almaty region».)

Thus, this study is the implementation of a step-by-step methodology, including both general scientific methods (analysis, synthesis, scientific search) and practical methods (field research, modeling, experiment), and can be formed in several stages:

Stage 1. Conducting a large-scale analysis of the tourist and recreational potential and tourist opportunities of the region in order to identify the most resource-rich areas for tourism development. The analysis also included human resources, their quality and quantity.

Stage 2. Identification of promising directions in the development of tourism in the region, which is carried out by means of a survey and questionnaire of specialists in the tourism industry, residents and visitors of the region, as well as all those who are potentially involved in the process and interested in the results of the study. After identifying promising areas for the development of tourism in the region (it is rock climbing in our study), the next stage begins.

Stage 3. Analysis of the region's capabilities, its tourism and resource potential for a specific tourism direction (in our study, this is rock climbing), which makes it possible to define strong and weak positions, work on which will allow the development of a certain type of tourism.

Stage 4. It is practical, and is divided into two necessary sub-stages: 1. Development of professional programs and components of educational programs in the field of tourism, necessary for the high-quality training of specialists who have the skills to organize a specific direction of tourism (it is rock climbing in our study); 2. Development and modeling of routes that represent both a practical part to train specialists and ready-made tourist offers (in our study, this is the development and modeling of the routes for climbing in the region).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Rock climbing, as one of the promising areas of sports tourism, began its active formation in the middle of the twentieth century, since then this type of tourism has begun to spread and has become popular in many countries (Temereva, 2015), as an independent direction or part of the organization of tourist services. Today, rock climbing is becoming more and more popular in the tourism industry. To confirm this statement, a survey was conducted within the framework of this study, which involved more than three hundred people, among which were both residents of the city and the region, as well as tourists, citizens of Kazakhstan, specialists in the tourism industry, teachers and students of tourist specialties. So, the absolute majority of respondents when they were asked "What do you associate the city of Almaty and the Almaty region with?" replied that they associate the city with mountains, mountain relief, which indicates a high recognition of the region in terms of all types of mountain tourism. Except that, the respondents qualified the active types of tourism (sports tourism and rock climbing) as one of the most promising areas (65%), for which there is a sufficient number of both natural and man-made sites (69%), and mentioned the most recognizable tourist objects of Almaty and Almaty region: the Medeo skating rink, Shymbulak ski resort, Tuyuk Su glacier, mountain resort "Forest fairy tale", climbing walls, "Butakovsky gorge", Alma Arasan gorge, Ayu Say gorge, etc. (Figure 3). Thus, tourist climbing is one of the most popular types of tourism, and the region has all sorts of resources for organizing this type of recreation activity.

Currently, rock climbing is developing in two directions: sports (as a separate sport that has certain standards and categories) and leisure, touristic (as an element of the formation of a tourist product, or as its key service). The development of each direction requires resources as follows:

1. The place where the service will be implemented. They are natural rocks and climbing walls for rock climbing;
2. Infrastructure and complexes necessary for the implementation and provision of climbing services to tourists;
3. Professional personnel (instructors, tourism managers, accompanying personnel, etc.) who have completed relevant training and who were officially qualified.

The tourism and resource potential for the development of rock climbing in the city of Almaty and the Almaty region includes all the necessary elements: natural mountain terrain, rocks, climbing walls, recreation areas, transport, specialists in active types of tourism, climbing instructors and educational institutions that train them. So, in the city of Almaty, the most popular and high-quality indoor climbing facilities are one of the largest climbing walls of the Kazakh Academy of Sports and Tourism, Skala Boulder, Skala Climbing gym, as well as climbing walls located in the entertainment and sports centers, recreation areas, clubs and schools. The most high-quality sites in the open space are natural rocks near the city of Almaty: Tamgaly Tas, a mountain tract with the preserved petroglyphs of different eras, and the relief is a tract with rocks of varying complexity; Tuyuk-Su, a climbing area with a wide variety of both simple and complex routes; Butakovsky Waterfall, a mountain tract with vertical routes; rocks near the Medeo ice rink, etc. It is on these rocks where both tourist programs and practices for climbing specialists are conducted. One may master the climbing instructor skills both during specialized courses and within the framework of higher education in the field of tourism (Figure 4).

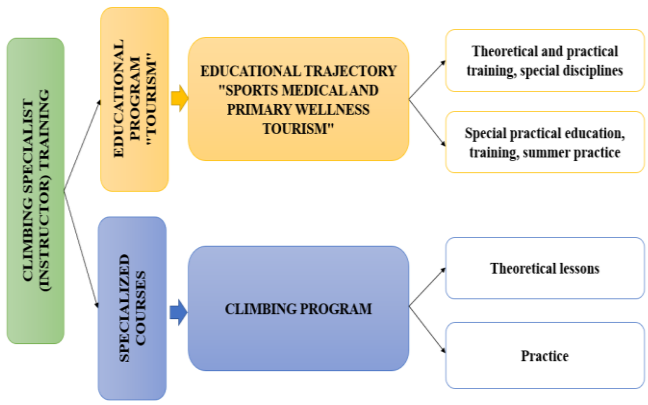


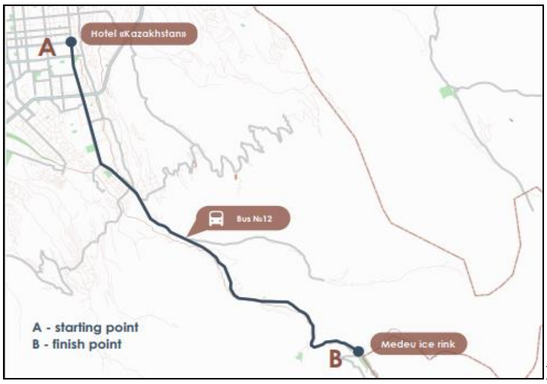
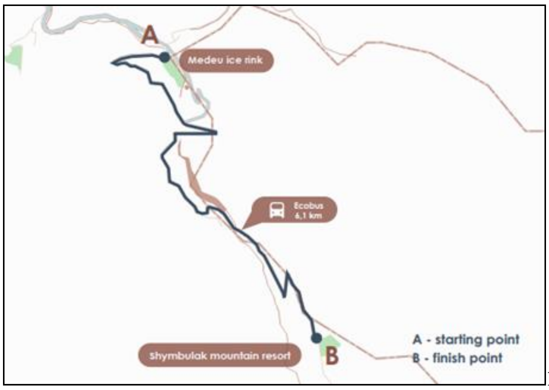
Figure 4. Methods of mastering professional competencies in the field of rock climbing, with the receipt of supporting documents (Source: compiled by the author)

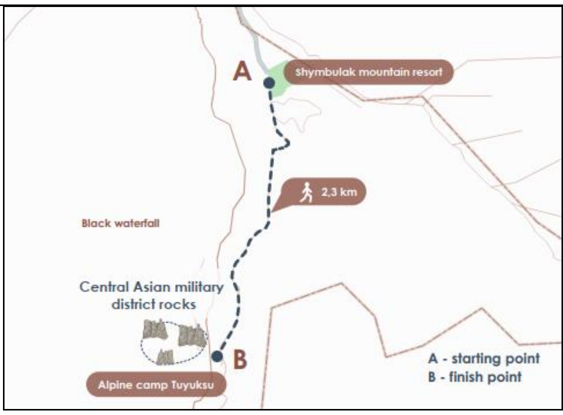
Figure 5. Structure of the "Initial training in rock climbing" program

Thus, the authors have developed a unique professional trajectory "Sports, primary wellness tourism ", which gives students the opportunity to study under the educational program "Tourism", at the Kazakh Academy of Sports and Tourism to obtain additional qualifications "Tourism Instructor", through special disciplines "Active types of tourism", "Moral and psychological training of a tourist", "Children's and youth tourism", "Methods of training a tourism instructor", "Fundamentals of topography and orientation on the terrain", "Special types of tourism" and others, which are aimed at the specialization of students in obtaining additional qualifications – a tourism instructor, which allows graduates to work in the field of active types of tourism and rock climbing in the territory of Kazakhstan in the future. During the training under the trajectory of "Sports and primary wellness tourism ", students pass the qualification tests for categorical and non-categorical hikes by types of tourism that pass through the territory of Kazakhstan. During the hikes, students consolidate their knowledge in practice while studying specialized disciplines of the trajectory, acquire practical skills and abilities. After the hikes, they are assigned sports categories, depending on the category of difficulty of hikes by type of tourism. Students with athletic titles can receive (according to the professional standards "Tourism" of the National Qualifications Framework) the qualification "Tourism Instructor" by types of tourism (Sardarov, 2020). The methodology of training a tourism instructor - the course provides complete information about the functions, status and rights of a tourism instructor, the rules for organizing and conducting hiking trips on the territory of Kazakhstan. Reveals the specifics of the work of a sports tourism instructor, teaches how to plan and organize hiking trips, gatherings and competitions in sports tourism. This educational trajectory is fully implemented in the educational program "Tourism" of the Kazakh Academy of Sports and Tourism at the Faculty of Tourism and is highly appreciated by the UNWTO TedQual international certification (Zakiryanov et al., 2019).

As a result of their research and professional activities the *a*uthors are developing a training program for rock climbing specialists with the assignment of appropriate qualifications, which is currently undergoing specialized certification. This program "Initial training in rock climbing", developed in accordance with regional and international requirements is aimed at training those engaged in the system of further education and at realizing the needs for physical improvement and a healthy lifestyle. The program is aimed at the formation of professional skills in the field of rock climbing, the development and improvement of physical qualities, motor abilities through sports climbing. The program includes recommendations on the structuring, support and organization of the training process of climbers at the initial level of training. The program material is combined into an integral system of sports training and assumes the solution of the following main tasks: - promoting physical development and strengthening the health of those involved; - preparing young climbers for competitions at the city, regional and Republican levels; - characterizing the basics of sports climbing development in the Republic of Kazakhstan; - developing the motional abilities necessary for a climber: flexibility, legerity, strength, motion coordination abilities, balance; compliance with control standards; - education of strong-willed, courageous, disciplined climbers with a high level of activity and responsibility; identification of potential, abilities and athletic talent. The Program consists of several main blocks: Theoretical training in rock climbing; General physical training; Special physical training; Technical training; Tactical training; Compliance with standards; Participation in competitions; Rehabilitation activities, during which the formation of a high-class climbing specialist takes place (Figure 5).

Table 1. Tourist climbing routes, their location and description

Site location	**Route description**
 1.1	Route, part 1. (Figure 1.1) The location of point "A" is bus stop No.12, across from the "Kazakhstan" hotel, the place of departure. Geographical coordinates are 43°14'41"N 76°57'23"E . Point "B" Medeu Alpine Sports Complex", geographical coordinates are 43°09'31"N 77°03'30"E. "Medeu Alpine Sports Complex" - is an outdoor speed skating and bandy rink. It is located in a mountain valley (Medeu Valley, or the valley of Malaya Almatinka River) on the south-eastern outskirts of Almaty, Kazakhstan.
 1.2	Route part 2. (Figure 1.2) Point "A" location: "Medeu Alpine Sports Complex", geographical coordinates are 43°09'31"N 77°03'30"E. Point "B" Ski resort "Shymbulak", geographical coordinates are 43°07'42"N 77°04'49"E "Ski resort "Shymbulak" is a ski resort near Almaty. It is the largest ski resort in Central Asia. It is located in the upper part of the Medeu Valley in the Zailiisky Alatau mountain range, at an elevation of 2,200 metres (7,200 ft) above sea level. The resort area is about 25 kilometres (16 mi) south of Almaty city by Medeo road.

 1.3	Route part 3. (Figure 1.3) The location of point "A" is the ski resort "Shymbulak", coordinates 43°07'42"N 77°04'49"E. Point "B" - the Rocks of the Central Asian Military District, geographical coordinates are 43°06'35"N 77°04'10"E Tuyuk-Su Gorge is located in the central part of the Zailiyskiy Alatau. This is the largest northern ridge of the Tien Shan. There are many rocks in the area suitable for rock climbing. Central Asian military district rocks are suitable for tourists with different levels of training.

An important part in the training of a climbing specialist is the practical one, which should be given a sufficient amount of time while training. The practice-oriented nature of all areas of sports tourism, including rock climbing, allows instructors not only to work with all groups of tourists qualitatively, but also to develop routes for them. A good example of such activity is four routes for rock climbing developed by the authors during their study, where climbing instructors are trained and which is also treated as a tourist service. Arranged in accordance with all requirements and standards, these four routes today are fully implemented in the educational and tourist activities of the Almaty tourist region.

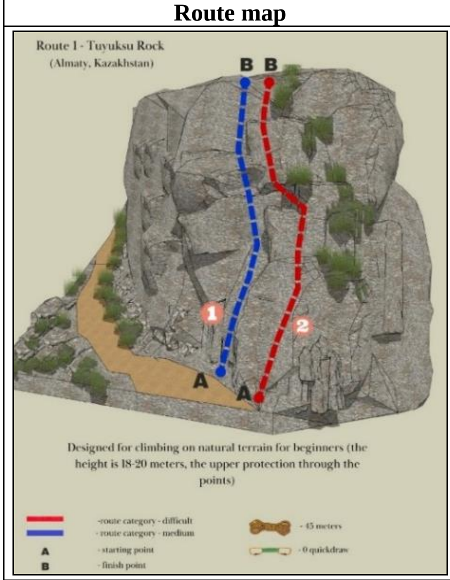
The main stages of the climbing routes arrangement, both for those trained and tourists, are the following:

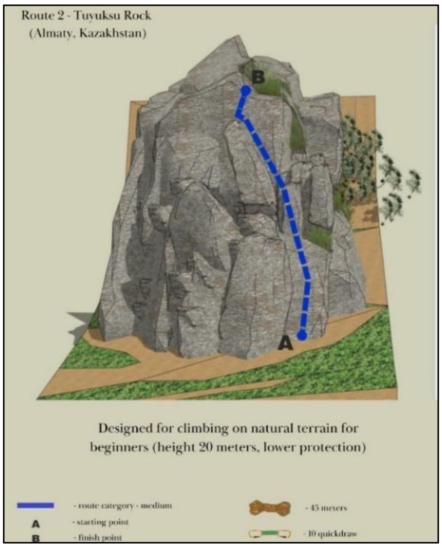
1. Determination of the existing tourist and resource potential for rock climbing in the region, using maps, GIS technologies. The analysis of maps, cartographic schemes of the territory, involving various technologies, is carried out to identify the presence and diversity of objects of the tourist and the resource potential of the territory necessary for the formation of climbing routes. Identifying objects for which it is potentially possible to create routes becomes the first stage in the development of promising tourist offers for rock climbing;
2. Visiting potential sites for rock climbing, object analysis. A full-fledged study of potential objects for the formation of tourist offers for climbing occurs during field research, when the research group goes to the object, analyzes its condition, and forms variable routes and trails;
3. Arrangement of routes along the rocks, analysis of their complexity, initial development of routes, determination of necessary technical means. After the initial on-site visit and the collection of field information, a detailed data analysis and the compilation of routes, trails and stocktaking takes place, as well as the preparations are made for the practical testing;
4. Working out and describing routes for rock climbing, routes mapping. This stage is carried out on the ground in field conditions, when the prepared routes are tested in the field environment, their detailed description and mapping take place, which allows providing the service to tourists in a safe and unified form (Table 2).

Introduction of the developed routes into the professional activities of subjects of the tourism industry and tourism education. The developed routes and trails, formed into a practical guide in graphic form with text interpretation (Table 2), allow the subjects of the tourism industry to implement this service, if there are specialists, instructors with appropriate qualifications.

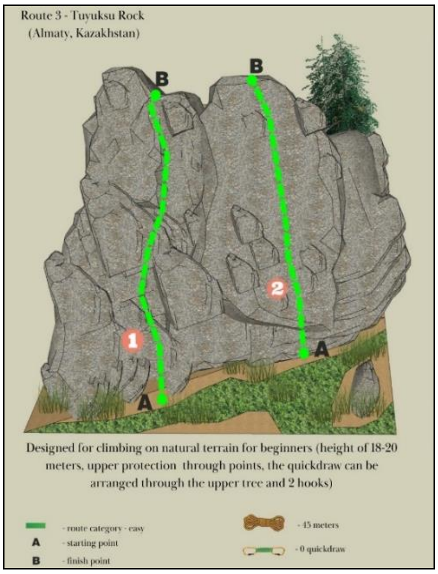
Thus, these routes are the result of the experienced work of the authors and are actively being introduced into the practical activities of the subjects of the tourism industry and tourist education of the Almaty tourist region. The purpose of these routes arrangement is their subsequent implementation within the framework of climbing development as the direction of sports tourism.

Table 2. Tourist climbing routes, their location and description

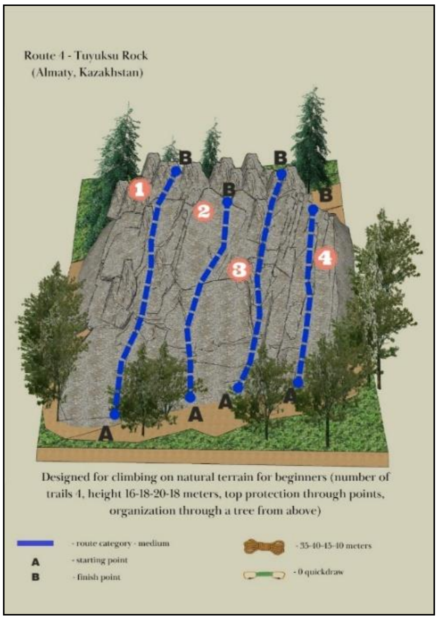
Route map	**Route description**
	Route 1 – Tuyuk-Su Rock (Figure 1.4) This route is good for climbing on natural terrain for beginners and tourists. The route height is 18-20 meters. The top-rope climbing is carried out through points B. The route is divided into two trails as follows: - blue, the route category is medium, suitable for beginners and tourists without special climbing skills. Route description: the route start is a little difficult because there are mostly crimps (i.e. small edges for the legs), then the movement can be carried out through a small crack, with careful movements during stemming (i.e. climbing corners with a right foot pushing into one wall and a left foot pushing into another) we go to the middle of the route. In the middle of the trail there is a small shelf where you can relax a little and climb further using magnesium powder. Further, the trail becomes easier, since there are convenient edges so we can continue moving up. All along the way, do not forget about the footwork, it is necessary to put your feet carefully not to fall down. - red, the route category is hard, suitable for tourists who have a fundamental understanding of climbing. Route description: the route begins slightly to the right of trail – 1 as described above, the beginning is hard with crimps, then climbing is carried out on the plate using cracks and small hollows for fingers and toes, from the middle of the route we move to the right corner of the cliff, using the corner we stem to the shelf and just like on the trail - 1 using ledges finish the trail– 2. Equipment: rope 45 meters.



Route 2 – Tuyuk-Su Rock (Figure 1.5)
This route is good for climbing on natural terrain for beginners and tourists.
The route height is 20 meters. Protection for lead climbing.
The route has one trail as follows:
- blue, the route category is medium, suitable for beginners and tourists without special climbing skills; Equipment: rope 45 meters; 10 quickdraws.
Route description: Climbing on a trail of medium difficulty, mostly movement occurs through cracks, leaning back a little from the rock, with the work of arms and feet, arms work with lateral grips, feet rest on cracks or soles on comfortable areas of the rock, knowing the correct movement and the correct clicking of the quickdraws, you can easily get to the end of the trail. It is necessary to avoid too high a position of the legs when moving along the crack since the main load will be on the arms, but climbing is carried out by short alternate movements of the arms and legs. The route start is not very hard: with light movements we get to the first crack, having clicked 2 quickdraws, we continue to move along the crack. Movement along the crack is carried out by careful changes of grasps and a clear placing of the feet. Having clicked 4 more quickdraws, we go up on the shelf and rest a little. After that, we also move along the crack, clicking the remaining 4 quickdraws and go out to the end of the trail. This route is good for practicing with protection for lead climbing since the quickdraws are on the left side and on the right for clicking with both arms.



Route 3 – Tuyuk-Su Rock (Figure 1.6)
This route is good for climbing on natural terrain for beginners and tourists.
The route height is 18-20 meters.
The top-rope climbing is carried out through top points, the quickdraw can be clicked through the upper tree and 2 anchors.
The route is divided into two trails, both suitable for beginners and tourists with minimal training.
Equipment: rope 45 meters.
Route description: Climbing on these routes is not very hard, as there are convenient holds and there are good places for putting feet. When climbing, the walking technique is used, alternating the movement of the arms and legs, since the rock has a positive angle of inclination, the so-called "Recumbent" (*i.e. rock or a section of rock having a positive angle of inclination less than 90°*). Various types of grasps are used jugs, cracks, undercling. On the trail, it is possible to organize speed climbing, putting your feet correctly and taking hold of the edges correctly, you can quickly climb the route. There are several shelves with cracks on the left trail, which makes it much easier to climb, as can be seen from the line, the route has a zigzag pattern, when climbing such trails, the technique of cross changes of grasps and foot positions is used.



Route 4 – Tuyuk-Su Rock (Figure 1.7)
This route is good for climbing on natural terrain for beginners and tourists. The route height is 16-18-20 meters. The top-rope climbing is carried out through the top points.
The route is divided into four routes as follows: Trail – 1 – It has good holds for changing arms and setting feet, climbing is carried out using movements on the toes standing on good ledges, in some areas have loose stones, it is necessary to check the holds and ledges well. There are chimneys and cracks all over the rock where you can put your arms and feet. Trail - 2 – A very good start has convenient holds for arms and feet, there are convenient shelves throughout the entire route, when climbing these shelves, you need to squeeze out all the way on one arm, while the legs should clearly and steadily stand on cracks or ledges, then with a smooth and neat movement we throw one leg on the shelf, it is especially important to maintain balance and coordination. Trail - 3 – The movements are performed sequentially one leg above the other. Then they stand with one foot on one hold, grabbing a convenient hold with both arms and placing the toe of the other foot sideways on the hold. Then push off with your back foot, put the toe of your front foot on the next hold going up. If necessary, you can hold on to the ledge, but the correct execution of the technique allows you to put your arms down. After that, you can repeat the movement and quickly climb up without realizing the distance traveled. Trail 4 – A convenient start with ledges climbing with the help of a walking technique with alternating different grips, under the finish section you need to lean back with a sidepull on the hold on the crack, you can transfer your body weight to the heel of the foot if the hold where the foot is placed is located almost at the same level with the hold used by the arm or at a short distance from it. (leaning back with a sidepull is an element of movement in rock climbing for climbing the outer corners of a wall or rock). Route description: Trail description: climbing on these 4 trails is the easiest, unlike all the trails on the rocks of the Central Asian Military District. Due to the ease of these trails, it is possible to organize speed climbing. With the right position of feet and properly grasping the hold, you can quickly get to the end of these trails. All these trails are close to each other, the only difference is the holds on the rocks, in some places they are easier in some more difficult, but in general they are all passable and will not make any difficulty.

CONCLUSIONS

The study, the results of which are presented in this article, made it possible for the authors to make the following conclusions:

1. Rock climbing today represents a quite promising and high-demand direction both among tourists and all categories of citizens as high-quality leisure in the future. The Republic of Kazakhstan, namely the Almaty tourist region, has all the necessary natural resources for the development of rock climbing. There are both natural landforms in the region, on which routes are being arranged, and climbing walls that allow indoor climbing.
2. Currently, there is a need to train tourist personnel with a wide range of additional competencies in the most popular and promising areas of tourism. To this end, the authors have developed and put into practice: the trajectory for the educational program "Tourism" - "Sports, primary wellness tourism" and the training program for climbing instructors, which are now actively used in the training of tourism specialists;
3. Rock climbing is of a clear practice-oriented nature and requires constant enhancement of professional knowledge of specialists. Thus, during their working activities, they must constantly improve their skills and arrange the routes for rock climbing. The article presents a methodology for creating routes on natural terrain, and an example of its application is the "Route Map." This map has been gradually introduced into the practical training and improvement of climbing instructors' skills and is being implemented as a ready-made tourist offer.

Acknowledgments

The development of tourism in the Republic of Kazakhstan plays a strategically important role in the formation of the national economy of the country. Having a wide variety of tourist resources, Kazakhstan can develop each and every field of tourism. Regionally, the country is distinguished by various combinations of tourist attractions, the Almaty tourist region is a mountain tourist cluster and the development of all areas of this tourism is undoubtedly a priority. Rock climbing as one of the directions of sports tourism allows not only to get acquainted with the unique nature of the region, but also contributes to the physical recovery of all groups of tourists. The authors of this article have carried out active and fruitful work on the development of programs for training and practical improvement of climbing instructors, as well as tourism industry specialists who have climbing skills. The results of the research work presented in the article are being actively introduced into the practical and professional activities of the subjects of the tourism industry and tourism education.

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SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF HOST COMMUNITIE'S SUPPORT FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE HERITAGE DESTINATION OF PURI, INDIA

Smitashree SWAIN
National Institute of Technology Raipur, Architecture Department, Raipur, Chhattisgarh, India, e-mail: swain.phd2018.arch@nitrr.ac.in

Swasti STHAPAK*
National Institute of Technology Raipur, Architecture Department, Raipur, Chhattisgarh, India, e-mail: sswain.phd2018.arch@nitrr.ac.in

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Abstract: The study aims to examine the role of socio-demographic characteristics on the host community's perception of tourism impacts in heritage tourism destinations of a developing country. The variables discussed are age, gender, religion, level of education, length of stay in the community, and involvement in the tourism sector. A questionnaire survey method was adopted, and 450 samples were collected from three host communities of Puri, a heritage destination in eastern India. The analysis was carried out using descriptive methods like distribution of the mean, frequency, etc., and statistical techniques like t-test, one-way ANOVA, post-hoc test, etc. were used. The findings revealed religiosity as the most significant variable influencing the host community's perception. The study also found level of education, and length of stay in the community as significantly influential variables. The study's findings will contribute to the literature on tourism impact assessment for heritage destinations in developing countries. It also offers practical implications for policymakers and destination managers in planning tourism development strategies.

Key words: socio-demographic variables, influence, attitude, perceptions, host communities, tourism impact

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism development plays a significant role in the upliftment of the tourism destination (López et al., 2018). It brings numerous opportunities and challenges for the destination and its stakeholders (Uslu et al., 2020). The host communities are direct recipients of tourism impacts as they are integral to tourism destinations (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017). The host community's support and cooperation are essential for sustainable tourism development (Nunkoo, 2016; Raj Sharma et al., 2022; Sharma and Gursoy, 2015). Previous studies have confirmed that the host community is not homogeneous and the community members can have varying perceptions of the same tourism impact (López et al., 2018; Sinclair-Maragh, 2017). Deery et al.(2012); Sharma and Gursoy (2015); Uslu et al. (2020) have associated this difference in perception and attitude with the socio-demographic characteristics of the individual like age, gender, religion, level of education, length of stay in the community, etc. This aspect has been researched for quite some time (Sirakaya et al., 2002), but most of the studies focused on the host communities from developed countries (Papastathopoulos et al., 2020), and significantly less attention has been given to South Asian regions like India. Sirakaya et al.,(2002) also opined that residents' perceptions and attitudes are likely to differ in developing and developed countries. Ramchander (2006); Twining-Ward and Butler (2002) emphasised the need for additional research on different geographical locations and destinations with varying socio-economic conditions. Khoshkam et al. (2016) suggested that this will improve the understanding of various impacts of tourism development in developing countries and contribute to the formulation of an inclusive, grand model or theory of tourism (Papastathopoulos et al., 2020). Responding to the need of research in tourism destinations of developing country, the present study attempts to examine the influence of socio-demographic characteristics of the host community on their perception of tourism impacts on heritage tourism destination of Puri, India. Puri is selected for this study as it is an important Hindu pilgrimage site and an emerging tourism destination of eastern India. Limited study on host communities has been done in this region; Sahoo and Mohanty (2022) have recently examined the impact of the demographic variable for tourists, but not the host community. The present study will also investigate the influence of religiosity and other socio-demographic variables. The influence of variable religiosity is rarely examined in tourism studies.

LITERATURE STUDY

Sharma and Gursoy (2015); Xu et al. (2016) found the host community's socio-demographic characteristics as the most determinant factors influencing their perception. These factors influence the host community's level of support and attitude towards tourism development (Bhat and Mishra, 2021; Papastathopoulos et al., 2020).

Previously studies have established a linkage between host community's perceptions and socio-demographic variables like *age* (Látková and Vogt, 2012; Sinclair-Maragh, 2017), *gender* (Brougham and Butler, 1981; Mason and Cheyne, 2000;

* Corresponding author

Nunkoo and Gursoy, 2012; Xu et al., 2016), *ethnicity* (Deery et al., 2012), *educational background* (Deery et al., 2012; Long and Kayat, 2011), *length of stay in the community* (Bhat and Mishra, 2021; Khoshkam et al., 2016), etc.

Brougham and Butler (1981); Long and Kayat (2011) found *age* as the most influencing variable. They claimed that the younger population perceives tourism impacts more positively than the older because the participation rate of younger people in tourism activity is comparatively more. This is consistent with the findings of Bagri and Kala (2016) . While several studies have contradicted this and claimed that the older population is more favorable than the younger one as they understand the benefits they gain from tourism (Deng et al., 2011; Látková and Vogt, 2012; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017). Therefore, the following hypothesis is framed:

H1: Age significantly influences host community's perception of tourism impacts.

Brougham and Butler (1981); Mason and Cheyne (2000) found gender as the most influential variable. Nunkoo and Gursoy (2012) associated the variation in perception within the gender with their biological and psychological differences. Mason and Cheyne (2000); Tichaawa and Makoni (2018) found male respondents comparatively more positive as they are more exposed to tourism development. Uslu et al. (2020) found moderate effect of gender on the attitude, whereas Bagri and Kala (2016); Rasoolimanesh et al.,(2017) could not find gender as a significant determinant influencing host community's perceptions and attitudes. Based on these discussions following hypothesis can be framed:

H2: Gender significantly influences host community's perception of tourism impacts.

Religion is a cultural attribute that influences an individual's perception, attitudes, values, and behaviour (Eid, R. and El-Gohary, 2015). However, the religiosity of the host community has received relatively lesser attention as a variable to date (Zamani-Farahani and Musa, 2012). Shtudiner et al. (2018), suggested that examining the influence of religiosity on the attitude of the host community is necessary, especially for religious tourism destinations. As the study area in religious heritage by characteristics, religiosity needs to be examined. So, the following hypothesis is framed:

H3: Religiosity significantly influences host community's perception of tourism impacts.

Deery et al. (2012) claimed education was the most influencing variable. Sinclair-Maragh (2017), found that with a higher level of education, individuals evaluate the benefits of tourism in a better way, at the personal and community level. Long and Kayat (2011) found that the enthusiasm level toward tourism development increases with their level of education. This has been contradicted by Tichaawa and Makoni (2018). They found that the higher the level of education, the more negative the respondents tend towards tourism impacts due to increased awareness levels. Therefore, the following hypothesis can be framed based on the above discussion:

H4: Education level significantly influences host community's perception of tourism impacts.

Eslami et al. (2019); Khoshkam et al. (2016) found length of stay in the community as one of the most influential variables as it is associated with community attachment. The community member with a longer stay in the community, evaluate the economic impact positively and socio-cultural negatively (López et al., 2018; Stojković et al., 2020). But Papastathopoulos et al. (2020); Long and Kayat (2011) failed to find any significant relationship between these two variables. Whereas several studies claim that attitudes towards tourism development are negatively correlated with the length of stay in the community (Khoshkam et al., 2016). Therefore, the following hypothesis is framed:

H5: Length of stay in the community significantly influence host community's perception of tourism impacts.

Slabbert et al. (2021), found that host community's involvement in tourism activity which leads to socio-economic benefit is an important variable influencing the host community's perception. Henderson (2000); López et al. (2018); Sharma and Gursoy (2015) also confirmed that involvement in tourism is an important variable that influences the host community's perception positively as it enables them to articulate more accurate perceptions of the benefits and costs of tourism (Eslami et al., 2019). Most of the study to date have focused on direct participation of the host community in planning and development of tourism, however (Slabbert et al., 2021) emphasized that host communities involvement in tourism related activities also influence their perceptions . From this, following hypothesis is framed:

H6: Involvement in tourism activities significantly influences host community's perception of tourism impacts.

The study examines these six hypotheses for the host communities of Puri region, India.

STUDY AREA

Puri region is an important heritage tourism destination in Eastern India. It houses some important heritage sites like Sri Jagannath Temple, Konark Sun Temple, Chilika lake, etc. Sri Jagannath Temple is one of the important Hindu pilgrimage destinations. Konark Sun temple is an UNESCO world heritage site known for its magnificent architectural monument. Chilika is Asia's largest brackwater lagoon. These unique attributes attract numerous tourists to this region throughout the year mostly for pilgrimage purpose.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

The flow chart of the research methodology for this study is shown in Figure 1. The research gap was identified through a literature study. The aim and objective of the study was framed to address the research gap. The literature study is also utilized to select the variables (socio-demographic), factors (tourism impact statements) for this study, and a set of hypotheses are framed accordingly.

Population and Sample Size

The study's sample size is 450 (using Cochran's formula). The communities were selected from three important tourist destinations in Puri region: Puri town, Konark town, and Satapada village (a small fishing village near Chilika Lake). The survey was conducted from mid of August to the end of November 2022. A simple random sampling technique was used for the survey.

Survey Instrument

The survey instrument is the questionnaire method. The questionnaire was prepared by adopting questions from several surveys conducted on host community's attitudes towards tourism impact. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first section consists of inquiries related to the socio-demographic information of the respondents; the second section comprises questions measuring respondents' perceptions of tourism impacts; the third section of the questionnaire contains questions related to respondents' general perception of tourism development. The questions of second and third section are measured with a five-point Likert scale (scale ranging from: '1= completely disagree' to '5= completely agree').

Data Analysis Methodology

The data were analysed using Statical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) and MS Excel. From the literature review, 21 impact statements were selected. By performing Factor Analysis, these 21 items are grouped into seven set of factors, based on their underlying relationships. One-way ANOVA and t-tests were conducted to compare the means values of socio-demographic variables with respect to these seven sets of factors. Post Hoc tests were carried out for further comparison within the subgroups of the socio – demographic variables. Based on the outcomes of these tests, hypothesis was tested. Lastly, the results are discussed followed by conclusion.

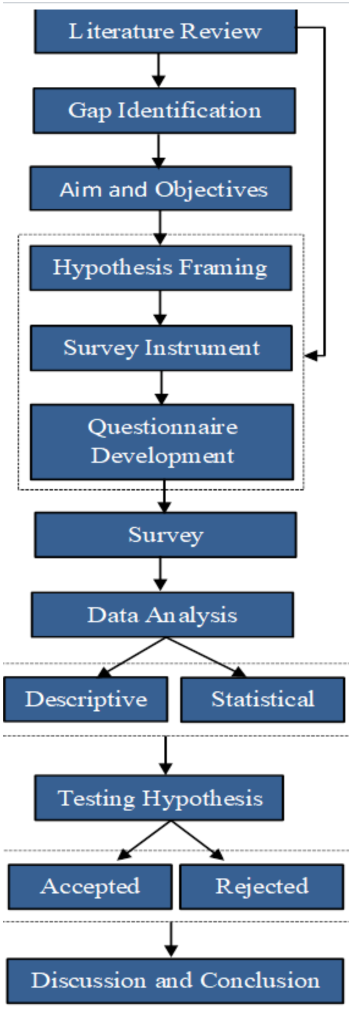

Figure 1. Flow chart of research methodology (Source: Author, 2022)

FINDINGS

1. General Profile of Respondents from three Communities

The respondents are predominately male (72%). Most of the respondents belongs to working-age group (78%), i.e., 18 years to 60 years. Hinduism is the prevalent religion followed by the respondents (94%). The low participation of respondents from other religions is because the population of people from other religions is meager in the Puri region. The education level of most of the respondents is secondary level (34%) and higher secondary level (35%). Most respondents have lived in the community for more than 10 years (63%). Even though tourism is the most important sector in the region, only 30% of the respondents are engaged in the tourism sector. The rest of the respondents (70%) are involved in sectors like agriculture, household, service, etc. Respondents with high dependence on tourism are 22%, whereas 55% of respondents have moderate or low economic reliance on tourism, whereas 23% of respondents are not at all dependent on tourism.

2. Host Community's Perception of Tourism Impact

From the literature study, 21 tourism impact items were selected. Factor analysis segregated these items into seven groups (Table 1). These seven groups are referred as seven factors, that are: Factor 1: *Support for Tourism Development (STD),* Factor 2: *Economic impact (ECI),* Factor 3: *Positive socio-cultural impact (PSC),* Factor 4: *Development and maintenance of heritage and infrastructure (DMI),* Factor 5: *Image of the region (ITR),* Factor 6: *Negative socio-cultural impact (NSC),* and Factor 7: *Environmental issues (ENV).*

The positive factors *ECI, PSC, DMI,* and *ITR* have a mean value of more than 3. This indicates that the respondents agree on the positive impacts of tourism. *ECI* has the highest mean value (3.9), indicating that the respondents recognise the income-generating power of tourism and they feel that tourism development is responsible for rise in property price. *DMI* has a mean value of 3.6, indicating that the respondents agree that lots of development and maintenance work are taking place in their region because of tourism. They also recognise the positive socio-cultural impact (mean value 3.1) of tourism development in their region. Also, they agree that tourism has improved the region's image (mean value of 3.1). The impact factor *NSC* and *ENV* have a mean value of less than 3, and the respondents disagree with the occurrence of negative impacts of tourism in their region. The factor *STD* has a mean value of 3.3, which indicates that the three host communities agree that tourism contributes to their region's upliftment and development. They are also in favour of more tourism development in their region.

3. Socio-Demographic Variables and Host Community's Perception

To examine the influence of socio-demographic characteristics on the host community's perception of tourism impacts, a series of one-way ANOVA and t-tests were conducted.

3.1. Age

One way ANOVA result revealed that *age* significantly influences the perception of four factors that are *STD, ECI, PSC,* and *ITR* ($p \leq 0.05$) (Table 2). This indicates a significant difference in perception within different age groups for these four factors. However, no significant differences in perception were found for the different age groups for *DMI, NSC, and ENV* ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, the *H1 hypothesis is partially supported* (as *age* does not influence all seven impact factors but only *STD, ECI, PSC,* and *ITR*).

Table 1. Factor set after Factor Analysis Five-point Likert scale is used for all the impact statements
(The Likert scale ranged from 1= completely disagree to 5= completely agree) (Source: Author, 2022)

	Impact Statement	Mean	SD	Reliability Coefficient
Factor 1	**Support for Tourism Development (STD)**	**3.3**	**0.80**	**0.816**
Impact 1	Tourism has made a significant contribution to the development of my region	3.12	0.99	
Impact 2	Tourism is an integral part of my region	3.31	0.93	
Impact 3	There should be more tourism in my region	3.57	0.88	
Factor 2	**Economic Impact (ECI)**	**3.9**	**0.96**	**0.93**
Impact 4	There are more economic opportunities in my region	3.92	1.03	
Impact 5	Local business is thriving in my region	3.92	1.01	
Impact 6	The price of property has increased	3.92	1.05	
Factor 3	**Positive Socio-Cultural Impact (PSC)**	**3.1**	**0.95**	**0.827**
Impact 7	There are many interesting things to do in my region.	3.06	1.14	
Impact 8	Tourism provides the opportunity to interact with tourists and know other culture	3.08	1.08	
Impact 9	Tourism helps in the revival of the cultural heritage of my region (folk dance, music, local cuisine)	3.13	1.08	
Factor 4	**Development And Maintenance of Heritage and Infrastructure (DMI)**	**3.6**	**0.77**	**0.835**
Impact 10	New facilities and infrastructure have developed, which improved the appearance of my region	3.55	0.95	
Impact 11	The local bodies are promptly maintaining the public facilities	3.79	0.91	
Impact 12	There is better shopping, dining, and recreational opportunity in my region	3.5	1.01	
Impact 13	The local government is interested in maintaining and preserving the built and natural heritage (temple, monument, lake, etc.)	3.55	0.89	
Factor 5	**Image of the Region (ITR)**	**3.1**	**1.21**	**0.874**
Impact 14	Due to tourism, my region is more popular, and it showcases my region in a positive light.	3.07	1.23	
Impact 15	Tourism has made me feel proud of my region and culture	3.04	1.35	
Factor 6	**Negative Socio-Cultural Impact (NSC)**	**2.6**	**0.93**	**0.871**
Impact 16	Crime, alcohol consumption, illegal gaming, drugs, prostitution, etc. have increased in my region	2.46	1.08	
Impact 17	Customization of cultural practices, rituals, festivals, etc. is taking place to fulfil tourist demand	2.78	1.05	
Impact 18	Artificial culture is developing in my region, which leads to cultural erosion in the region	2.66	1.09	
Impact 19	The behaviour and value system are changing negatively among the youth	2.52	1.14	
Factor 7	**Environmental Issues (ENV)**	**1.8**	**0.97**	**0.794**
Impact 20	Due to tourism, my region is more crowded	1.85	1.07	
Impact 21	Due to tourism, my region is more polluted	1.75	1.05	

Table 2. One-way ANOVA and Post Hoc test results for Age
Note: Only significant results (i.e., p ≤ 0.05) are shown in the table (Source: Author, 2022)

Factors	F - value	p-value	Overall Mean	Age (I)	Age (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)		Sig.
Factor 1: *STD*	26.22	0.000	3.3	< 20 Yrs.	41 to 60 Yrs.	0.446	(I > J)	.002
					> 60 Yrs.	1.202	(I > J)	.000
				20 to 40 Yrs.	> 60 Yrs.	0.907	(I > J)	.000
				41 to 60 Yrs.	> 60 Yrs.	0.756	(I > J)	.000
Factor 2 *ECI*	8.26	0.000	3.9	< 20 Yrs.	> 60 Yrs.	0.714	(I > J)	.001
				20 to 40 Yrs.	> 60 Yrs.	0.716	(I > J)	.000
				41 to 60 Yrs.	> 60 Yrs.	0.548	(I > J)	.001
Factor 3: *PSC*	10.14	0.000	3.1	< 20 Yrs.	41 to 60 Yrs.	0.478	(I > J)	.009
					> 60 Yrs.	0.974	(I > J)	.000
				20 to 40 Yrs.	> 60 Yrs.	0.646	(I > J)	.000
				41 to 60 Yrs.	> 60 Yrs.	0.497	(I > J)	.003
Factor 5: *ITR*	2.56	0.020	3.1	20 to 40 Yrs.	41 to 60 Yrs.	-0.347	(I < J)	.037

For analysing the mean differences (refer to column *I – J*, Table 2) within the subgroups, the Post Hoc test was conducted. The result of the mean difference shows that the perception of the younger age group towards tourism impacts *ECI* and *PSC* is comparatively more positive. Finding confirms that the younger age groups favour tourism development (STD) more. This is in line with the findings of Andriotis and Vaughan (2003); Huh and Vogt (2008); Long and Kayat (2011), that younger people in the community are more favourable, especially towards economic impact, compared to the older population.. The younger members display comparatively more positive attitude towards tourism development as they are more engaged in tourism activities, enjoy the social changes and modern facilities. Whereas the older age group associate these changes with the change in characteristics of the region.

3.2. Gender

The t-test gave a mixed result. There is a significant difference in perception within the gender for three factors that are *STD, NSC*, and *ENV* ($p \leq 0.05$), whereas no evidence of a difference in perception is found for *ECI*, *PSC*, *DMI, and ITR* (as $p > 0.05$) (refer to Table 3).

Therefore, the *H2 hypothesis is partially supported* (as *gender* does not influence all the impact factors).

Table 3. t-test result for Gender Note: Only significant results (i.e., $p \leq 0.05$) are shown in the table (Source: Author, 2022)

	Factors	t - value	p - Value	Overall Mean	Male	Female
					Mean	Mean
Factor 1	*STD*	2.69	0.007	3.3	3.39	3.17
Factor 6	*NSC*	- 5.64	0.000	2.6	2.46	2.99
Factor 7	*ENV*	- 2.31	0.038	1.8	1.74	1.97

The mean value of both gender (refer to Table 3) confirms that males are more favorable towards tourism development than females, whereas females are comparatively more concerned about the negative impacts of tourism. This is in line with the findings of Long and Kayat (2011). Females perceive negative socio-cultural and environmental impacts more than males. The findings of Mason and Cheyne (2000); Andriotis (2004) also supported that females are more concerned about environmental and socio-cultural impact than males. Sinclair-Maragh (2017) has associated these differences in perception with the biological differences between the gender.

3.3. Religiosity

The t-test result confirms that religiosity has a significant correlation ($p \leq 0.05$) with all seven factors (Table 4). It is the only variable that influences all seven factors.

Therefore, the *H3 hypothesis is completely supported as religiosity significantly influences all seven impact factors.*

Table 4. t-test result for Religiosity (Note: Only significant results (i.e., $p \leq 0.05$) are shown in the table) (Source: Author 2022)

	Factors	t - value	p - Value	Overall Mean	*Hindu* Mean	*Other religion* Mean
Factor 1	*STD*	5.91	0.000	3.3	3.4	2.5
Factor 2	*ECI*	5.63	0.001	3.96	4.0	3.0
Factor 3	*PSC*	5.42	0.000	3.1	3.2	2.2
Factor 4	*DMI*	3.86	0.000	3.6	3.6	3.1
Factor 5	*ITR*	-2.08	0.037	3.1	3.0	3.5
Factor 6	*NSC*	-2.5	0.013	2.6	2.6	3.0
Factor 7	*ENV*	-2.55	0.011	1.8	1.8	2.3

The mean values show that the community members following the region's prevalent religion, i.e., Hinduism, highly recognize the benefits of tourism *ECI* and *PSC* (Table 4). In contrast, the community members practicing other religion (Christianity, Islam, etc.) somewhat disagree with *STD* and *PSC* (mean value < 3) and agrees more with tourism's negative impacts, i.e., *NSC* and *ENV*. This finding is congruent with Hu Xin Lei and Huang Rong (2019) that community members following the prevalent religion of the region have a comparatively more positive attitude towards tourism, especially in the case of religious tourism. Zamani-Farahani and Musa (2012), in the study of Iranian cities, also confirmed the positive relationship between religiosity and perceived socio-cultural impacts of tourism (Shtudiner et al., 2018).

3.4. Level of Education

The one-way ANOVA test confirmed that *level of education* is an influential variable towards host community's attitudes for six factors (Table 5) except for *ITR* (as $p > 0.05$). This means that the perception of tourism impacts significantly differs with the level of education. Therefore, the *H4 hypothesis is supported by the level of education* for all impact factors except *ITR*.

Table 5. One way ANOVA and post hoc test for Level of Education
(Note: Only significant results (i.e., $p \leq 0.05$) are shown in the table) (Source: Author 2022)

Factors	F - value	P - value	Overall Mean	Level of Education (I)	Level of Education (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)		Sig.
Factor 1: *STD*	33.54	0.000	3.3	No school	Matric lvl.	-0.692	(I < J)	0.000
					Higher Secondary lvl.	-1.133	(I < J)	0.000
					Graduation lvl.	-1.150	(I < J)	0.000
				Matric lvl.	Higher Secondary lvl.	-0.441	(I < J)	0.000
					Graduation lvl.	-0.458	(I < J)	0.000
Factor 2: *ECI*	16.7	0.000	3.9	No school	Matric lvl.	-0.811	(I < J)	0.000
					Higher Secondary lvl.	-1.039	(I < J)	0.000
					Graduation lvl.	-1.144	(I < J)	0.000
				Matric lvl.	Graduation lvl.	-0.333	(I < J)	0.024
Factor5: *PSC*	8.57	0.000	3.1	No school	Matric lvl.	-0.677	(I < J)	0.000
					Higher Secondary lvl.	-0.819	(I < J)	0.000
					Graduation lvl.	-0.765	(I < J)	0.000
Factor4: *DMI*	13.26	0.000	3.6	No school	Matric lvl.	-0.775	(I < J)	0.000
					Higher Secondary lvl.	-0.777	(I < J)	0.000
					Graduation lvl.	-0.823	(I < J)	0.000
Factor 5: *NSC*	3.36	0.019	2.6	No school	Graduation lvl.	0.457	(I > J)	0.043
Factor 6: *ENV*	3.12	0.026	1.8	Matric lvl.	Higher Secondary lvl.	0.304	(I > J)	0.028

The post hoc test result shows that support for tourism and perception of positive impacts are more significant for people with higher education levels (Table 5). People with lesser education (no schooling or matric level) are comparatively less supportive of tourism. This is in agreement with Long and Kayat (2011); Haralambopoulos and Pizam (1996) that community members with higher education levels are more supportive of tourism development as they understand the benefits incurred because of tourism development.

For the negative impacts of tourism, only a single comparison is significant, i.e., for *NSC*: *No school vs. Graduation level* and for *ENV*: *Matric lvl. vs. Higher secondary lvl*., which makes it difficult to conclude.

3.5. Length of stay in the community

The one-way ANOVA confirmed that *length of stay in the community* significantly influences the perception of the host community for *STD, ECI, PSC, DMI, NSC,* and *ENV* (as $p \leq 0.05$); however, *ITR* is not influenced (as $p > 0.05$) (refer Table 6). Therefore, the *H5 hypothesis is supported for length of stay in the community* for all the factors except ITR.

Table 6. One way ANOVA and post hoc test for Length of stay in the community
(Note: Only significant results (i.e., $p \leq 0.05$) are shown in the table) (Source: Author 2022)

Factors	F - value	p - value	Length of stay in the community (I)	Length of stay in the community (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)		Sig.
Factor 1: *STD*	49.33	0.000	< 10 yrs.	21 to 30 Yrs.	0.249	(I > J)	.029
				Above 30 Yrs.	1.189	(I > J)	.000
			10 to 20 Yrs.	21 to 30 Yrs.	0.284	(I > J)	.005
				Above 30 Yrs.	1.222	(I > J)	.000
Factor 2: *ECI*	19.49	0.000	> 30 Yrs.	< 10 yrs.	-1.044	(I < J)	.000
				10 to 20 Yrs.	- 0.929	(I < J)	.000
				21 to 30 Yrs.	- 0.836	(I < J)	.000
Factor 3: *PSC*	18.48	0.000	> 30 Yrs.	< 10 yrs.	- 0.911	(I < J)	.000
				10 to 20 Yrs.	- 0.972	(I < J)	.000
				21 to 30 Yrs.	- 0.694	(I < J)	.000
Factor4: *DMI*	8.50	0.000	> 30 Yrs.	< 10 yrs.	- 0.489	(I < J)	.000
				10 to 20 Yrs.	- 0.549	(I < J)	.000
				21 to 30 Yrs.	- 0.333	(I < J)	.026
Factor 5: *NSC*	3.96	0.000	> 30 Yrs.	< 10 yrs.	0.483	(I > J)	.005
Factor 6: *ENV*	4.51	0.004	> 30 Yrs.	< 10 yrs.	0.529	(I > J)	.003
				10 to 20 Yrs.	0.461	(I > J)	.009
				21 to 30 Yrs.	0.448	(I > J)	.017

The post hoc test confirms that the concern level towards the negative impact of tourism (i.e., *NSC* and *ENV*) is relatively high for community members with a longer stay in the community (refer Table 6). Khoshkam et al. (2016); Stojković et al. (2020) also found that the community members with a longer stay in the community are comparatively more sensitive towards the negative impacts of tourism specially the socio-cultural impact. The post hoc test result also confirms that the community members with lesser tenure are more supportive of tourism development. Sinclair-Maragh (2017) associated this with the economic opportunities they get from tourism development.

3.6. Involvement in Tourism related activities

The t-test result for *involvement in tourism related activities* has confirmed significant influence on three factors: *DMI, ITR,* and *NSC* (as $p \leq 0.05$) (Table 7), whereas no evidence of significant influence on impact factors *STD, ECI, PSC,* and *ENV* was found. Hence the *H6 hypothesis is partially supported as Involvement in tourism activity significantly influences the perception for only three factors not all.*

The comparison of the mean values of the two groups indicate that the community members involved in the tourism sector are relatively more positive towards the impact factor: DMI and

Table 7. t-test result for Involvement in tourism (Note: Only significant results (i.e., $p \leq 0.05$) are shown in the table) (Source: Author 2022)

	Factors	t - value	P - value	Overall Mean	Involved Mean	Not involved Mean
Factor 4	*DMI*	0.52	0.001	3.6	3.79	3.32
Factor 5	*ITR*	2.46	0.014	3.1	3.27	2.96
Factor 6	*NSC*	- 3.52	0.000	2.6	2.37	2.7

ITR, and they are comparatively more in disagreement towards the negative impact, i.e., *NSC*. Slabbert et al. (2021) also found in their study that the more community members are involved in tourism activity, the more positive their attitudes towards tourism development are.

Host community's involvement in tourism planning and development enable them to articulate more accurate perceptions of the benefits and costs of tourism (Eslami et al., 2019; Sharma and Gursoy, 2015), whereas when they are involved in tourism-related activities like taking part in fare, visiting public areas like shopping mall, garden, experiencing good facilities etc., they themselves behave like a tourist and view tourism facilities from a different prospective (Henderson, 2000). This may be a reason that they became more positive towards tourism development.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study was to examine the role of socio-demographic characteristics of the host community concerning their level of support for tourism development for heritage tourism destinations of a developing country. The findings suggest that the host community's attitude is favorable towards tourism development and want more tourism as they look at tourism as an engine of growth and prosperity for themselves, their community, and the entire region.

The study confirms that the socio-demographic variables influence the perception of the host community, this is in agreement with the findings of Andriotis and Vaughan (2003); Huh and Vogt (2008); Long and Kayat (2011). The study also confirms that the community comprises of several groups of individuals (based on socio-demographic characteristics) with varying perceptions. Previously Long and Kayat (2011); Haralambopoulos and Pizam (1996); Brougham and Butler (1981) also agreed that the perception of the community members are not homogeneous.

The study revealed that the degree of influence is not same for all the socio-demographic variables. The variable '*religiosity'* is the most influential variable as it affects the host community's perception of all impact factors. Shtudiner et al. (2018), in studying the sacred city of Jerusalem, also found '*religiosity'* as an essential variable, especially for religious tourism destinations, and associated this with the "Social Distance Theory". This theory describes the level of acceptance between individuals based on their degree of similarities for dimensions like social, ethnicity, occupation, and religion (Zamani-Farahani and Musa, 2012). This confirms that *religiosity* is an essential variable for the study of heritage tourism destinations in India.Other variables that highly influence the perception of host communities are *education level* and *length of stay*. At the same time, the study found moderate impact of *age*, *gender,* and *involvement in tourism activities* on the perceptions of the host community. The findings show that the host community supports tourism development as they perceive the positive impacts of tourism. This confirms the applicability of "Social Exchange Theory" (developed by Ap, 1992), which states that if the perceived positive impacts of tourism (economical, socio-cultural, or environmental) are more than the perceived negative impacts, then the host community tends to support the tourism development in their region. Haralambopoulos and Pizam (1996), Long and Kayat (2011), Sinclair-Maragh (2017) also agreed that the exchange is not only economic; it can be socio-cultural or environmental. In the present study, most community members are *not involved in tourism,* but the rate of agreement and support for tourism development is relatively high. This indicates that even though the individuals may not get any personal or direct benefit from tourism, they still support tourism development. This can be because these community members recognize that tourism benefits their community and region. However, for sustainable tourism development, stakeholder's involvement in the decision-making process and engagement in the tourism sector is essential (Bornhorst et al., 2010; Kurniawan et al., 2021), so that they can receive the benefits of tourism and provide continuous support for tourism development.

The outcome of this study reveals a significant relationship between the socio-demographic variables and the perception of tourism impacts on the host communities of heritage tourism destinations in a developing country. The findings suggest that the tourism planners need to consider the host community's socio-demographic variables' role in supporting tourism development. The study's findings have academic significance and provide practical implications for understanding the host community's attitudes and perceptions. Accordingly, government, destination managers, and policymakers can develop sustainable tourism development strategies.

The study contributes to the knowledge of tourism development for a heritage tourism destination of a developing country. The researchers suggest further studies in heritage destinations of developing countries to generalize the relationship between the socio-demographic variables and their relationship with tourism impacts.

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COMMUNITY BASED-TOURISM (CBT) MANAGEMENT DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC ALONG THE ANDAMAN COAST OF THAILAND

Prawit KHUNNIKOM*
Prince of Songkla University, Faculty of Environmental Management, Songkhla Province, Thailand, e-mail: kunnikom@gmail.com

Umaporn MUNEENAM
Prince of Songkla University, Faculty of Environmental Management, Songkhla Province, Thailand, e-mail: umaporn.m@psu.ac.th

Phen SUKMAG
Prince of Songkla University, Health Impact Assessment Research Center,
Public Policy Institute, Songkhla Province, Thailand, e-mail: sphen013@yahoo.com

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Abstract: Community-based tourism (CBT) have been challenged in the Coronavirus 2019 era. This qualitative research aims to explain the CBT management during the Coronavirus 2019 pandemic in five communities of five provinces along the Andaman coast of Thailand. The data were collected via online in-depth interviews and online focus group discussions, from totally 10 key informants of CBT entrepreneurs (two from each province/community). The data were analyzed by using content analysis. The results revealed that the CBT management during the Coronavirus 2019 pandemic was based on the communities' cultural and natural resources. The tourism operation was focused on building confidence and safety for tourists.

Key words: Community Based-Tourism (CBT), Coronavirus 2019, Pandemic, Andaman Coastal Area, Thailand

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism has been a consistently growing branch of industry since the beginning of the 21st century (Dogru et al., 2021). This industry has a significant positive impact by stimulating the economy globally, including consumption, trading, investments, and domestic and international employment (Pyke et al., 2016; Qian et al., 2018). However, obvious trends of healthcare and safety changes, as well as environmental and natural resource changes, have strongly impacted the world's tourism industry, resulting in transformative tourism. Its platform and management can thus lead to improved tourist well-being (Pung et al., 2020). Due to the heavy Coronavirus 2019 pandemic during 2019-2020, movements of and travel by people, whether for tourism or for business, were considered factors contributing to the pandemic (Shi and Liu, 2020).

Besides, expansion of businesses, infrastructure, and other facilities has affected the limited environment and natural resources (Agarwal et al., 2019). Therefore, this dramatic situation provided a chance to review tourism industry and to reset the system of tourism development for a better future (Koodsela et al., 2019). The new direction of tourism could be dominantly community-based tourism (CBT), and it is expected to gain popularity (Sirivejjabhandu, 2022). This is because the community-based tourism framework focuses on rights as well as benefits of communities and their people (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020), and it could help to reduce poverty over communities efficiently (Croes, 2014), provide employment in tourism (Lee et al., 2018), and generate equality of incomes and resources (Giampiccoli, 2020). The community-based tourism is considered a way to develop communities in terms of resource management by applying local culture and society to stimulate community spirit in clear distinction from mass tourism (Rungrat et al., 2017). As a result, a large number of tourists in mass tourism areas can be distributed to local and regional areas, where there are still a smaller numbers of tourists. According to the Andaman tourism cluster in five provinces of Thailand, a development plan for the community-based tourism contains communities that are models for other communities in the future, so incomes can be expanded from mass tourism areas to local community areas (Boonmee and Tanasavate, 2019; Demkova et al., 2022).

The Andaman coast in southern peninsular Thailand is considered to be among the leading marine tourism targets globally. There are a lot of tourist attractions, beautiful and unique natural resources, especially marine resources, beaches, and islands. The community-based tourism along the Andaman coast has been expanded since more tourists tend to want to learn and experience a different kind tourism, sensing pure nature, attending environmentally friendly activities, and staying at unique accommodations (The Office of Strategy Management, Southwest Andaman, 2016).

Although this community-based tourism has become more popular, the COVID-19 pandemic has had economic impacts on household incomes and income distribution, as well as social impacts changing lifestyles. Due to the restrictions associated with this infectious disease, more people have become stressed and nervous (Batra, 2021; Kungwansupaphan, 2021). As a result, the community-based tourism in each community have had to adapt themselves to this situation so as to restore some community's features to be distinctive and unique. Regarding such community-based tourism, 'Travel in a New Normal' in

* Corresponding author

the Covid-19 era has made it challenging to develop the processes and outcomes in community-based tourism (Janthadech, 2021; Srimaca and Muneenam, 2021). As a consequence, this article aims to explain the situations and components of community-based tourism during the COVID-19 pandemic in the Andaman coast of southern peninsular Thailand.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Community-based tourism (CBT)

Community-based tourism is one development approach for tourism that has an identity and features which are different from mass tourism (Lee and Jan, 2019; Potjana Suansri and Responsible Ecological Social Tour, 2003). Its objective is for people in a community to have opportunities and a wide range of benefits from tourism, which is appropriately managed by that community (Croes, 2014; Curcija et al., 2019; Demkova et al., 2022; Goodwin and Santilli, 2009; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020). Local people can also get economic benefits from their community's enterprise development which is supported to make the community strong, to reduce poverty, and to exchange cultural and societal perspectives between the tourists and the community. In addition, community-based tourism can evolve to a plan to direct a community's tourism management to be self-reliant with good quality of people's lives and to raise awareness of environment and sustainable development (Giampiccoli, 2020; Lee, 2013; Mayaka et al., 2019; Potjana Suansri and Responsible Ecological Social Tour, 2003; Umam et al., 2022).

Community-based tourism is based on a community development concept that has the local people participate in tourism development plans in terms of resource conservation, economic and social development, and community ownership. The concept of community-based community can be divided into three dimensions (Mayaka et al., 2019). First, involvement is considered the main element to operate this community-based tourism. It is started from part ownership or whole ownership of the development. Second, power and control are a dimension of relationships between local community elements—social and historical contexts—and community-based tourism operators from outside. If a project or activity for community-based tourism is started by some people or an organization from outside, a community can lose its power and control. Third, outcomes and tourism quality need to be set in order to support a community to be self-reliant and have social justice, sustainability, and independence of community operation. However, community-based tourism might not be successful if people in a community do not receive skill development which is necessary for business operation.

Community-based tourism in Thailand

According to the Office of Permanent Secretary, the Ministry of Sports and Tourism (2017), tourism operations throughout the country were surveyed. It was found that there were 264 communities applying the community-based tourism concept. Among these, there were 63 communities (23.86%) in the Southern and Andaman tourism provinces, the world' s leading tourism base. The community-based tourism in these provinces was remarkably expanded since there were more tourists tending to learn and gain different experiences from their trips and having the desire to sense pure nature by attending environmentally friendly activities. Nevertheless, the COVID-19 pandemic still interfered and caused small and medium-sized enterprises to adjust themselves or to close down their businesses permanently (Batra, 2021).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This qualitative research contains multiple case studies to investigate and analyze situations. Due to the limitations imposed by COVID-19, especially the social distancing measures, data were collected through online in-depth interviews and online focus group discussions between January and March, in 2022 (Figure 1). This research was certified for ethics in social and human research, with reference no. EC 001/65 on the 5th of January 2022, by the Public Policy Institute, Prince of Songkla University, Thailand.

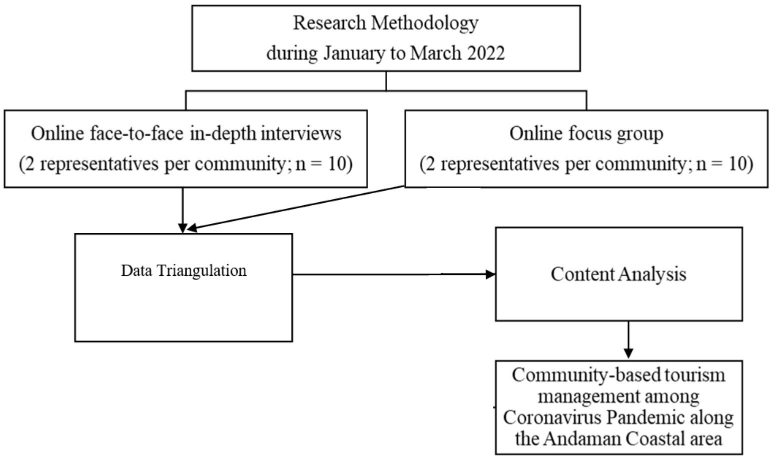

Figure 1. Research Methodology Steps (Source: The authors' elaboration)

Study Area

The scope of study adopted was the following five prototype communities operating community - based tourism in five provinces Phangnga, Phuket, Krabi, Trang, and Satun Provinces - of the Andaman Tourism Cluster, Southern Thailand, with the certification of the Community - Based Tourism Standard by Designated Area for Sustainable Tourism Administration (Public Organization) (Figure 2).

1. CBT A: Baan Sam Chong Nuea Community in Kalai sub-district, Takua Thung district, Phangnga province.
2. CBT B: Baan Hua Kuan Community in Kamala sub-district, Kathu district, Phuket province.
3. CBT C: Baan Na Tean in Mueang district, Krabi province.
4. CBT D: Bo Hin Farmstay Community in Bo Hin sub-district, Sikao district, Trang province.
5. CBT E: Baan Bo Chet Luk in Pak Nam sub-district, La Nga district, Satun province.

Key Informants

The key informants in the research were a group of leaders who are community-based tourism entrepreneurs. These samples were selected by purposive sampling, with the following characteristics. (1) They are owners of businesses, tour agents, or tour planners related to community-based tourism. (2) They are community leaders or policymakers who are essential to operate community-based tourism. (3) They have been entrepreneurs living in the tourist area provided with community-based tourism since the beginning of the program. (4) They were willing to attend the research program. The details of these 10 key informants are summarized in Table 1.

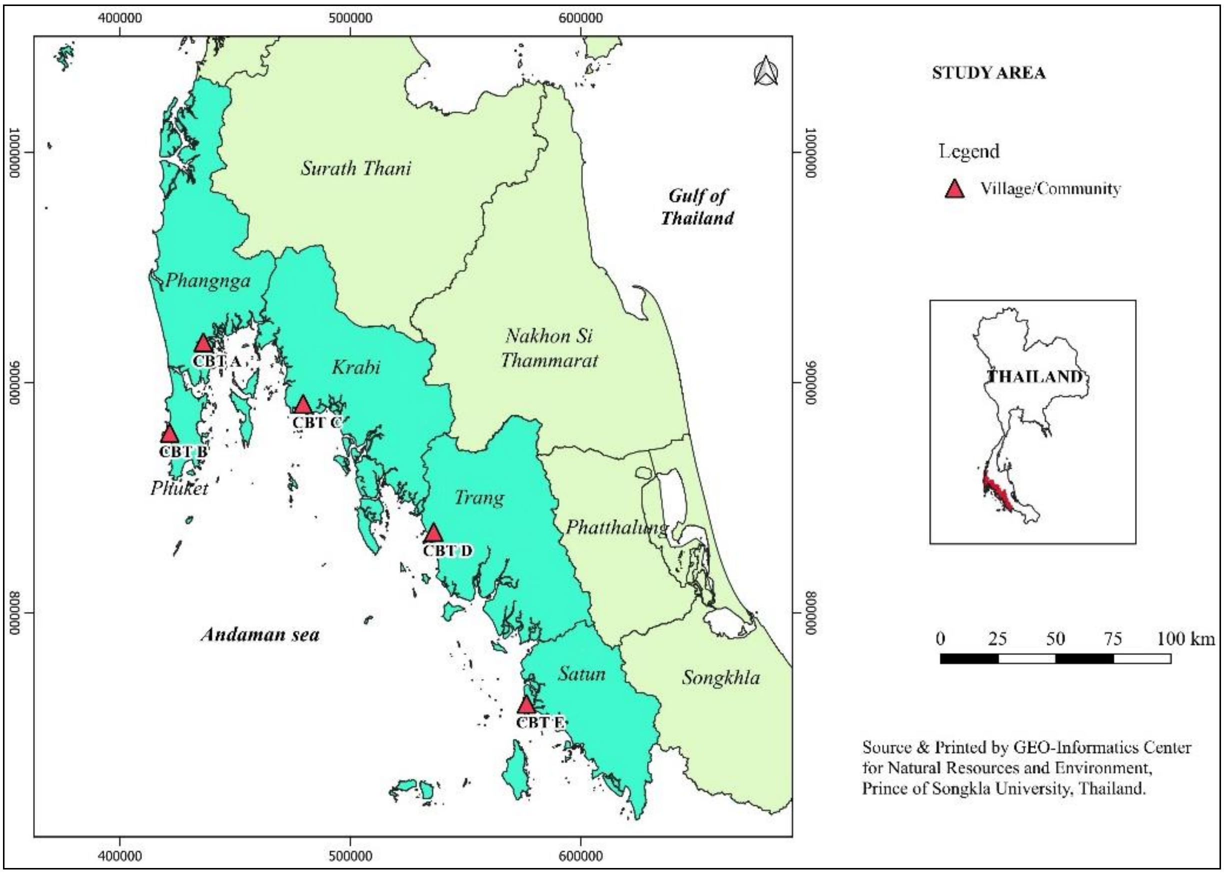

Figure 2. Study Areas (Source: authors)

Research Tools

The instruments used in the research included the researchers, a set of questions for online in-depth interviews, and online focus group discussions via Zoom application (Cohen et al., 2007; Dayan and İlknur, 2022).

The main question was '*how was the community-based tourism management among Coronavirus Pandemic along the Andaman Coastal area, Thailand?*' In addition, the key informants were asked to share opinions about the community-based tourism management during the Coronavirus pandemic along the Andaman coast. All of the data were collected, and voice and video recordings were permitted by these key informants.

Table 1. Respondents' demographic background and CBT line of work (n = 10) (Source: The authors' elaboration)

No	Respondents	Name of CBT	Dominant religion in community	CBT is major activity	Age	Gender	CBT line of work	Year established	Date of interviews
1	A	CBT A: Baan Sam Chong Nuea	Muslim	×	57	F	Owner /policy contributor	2005	17/02/2022
2	B				55	M	Owner	2005	20/02/2022
3	C	CBT B:`Baan Hua Kuan	Muslim	✓	54	F	Owner/ policy contributor	2015	17/02/2022
4	D				44	M	Owner	2015	18/02/2022
5	E	CBT C: Baan Na Tean	Muslim	×	47	M	Owner /policy contributor	2004	17/02/2022
6	F				45	F	Owner	2004	19/02/2022
7	G	CBT D: Bo Hin Farmstay	Buddhism	×	53	M	Owner /policy contributor	2004	17/02/2022
8	H				50	F	Owner	2004	19/02/2022
9	I	CBT E: Baan Bo Chet Luk	Muslim	×	59	M	Owner/ policy contributor	2004	17/02/2022
10	J				50	F	Owner	2004	18/02/2022

Data Collection

The steps of the data collection were as follows.

1. Online face-to-face in-depth interviews with each community leader of five communities or related people in the community-based tourism management were conducted for not over one hour (two representatives per community; n = 10). During each interview, the data were journaled, together with voice and video records.

2. The online focus group discussion with five community-based tourism entrepreneurs or tour agents was conducted once for 2-3 hours (n = 10). During the discussion, the data were written to notes, together with voice and video records.

Triangulation and Data Analysis

Data triangulation was used to inspect one topic of the data collected from more than one informant, and triangulation was applied to verify the data gained from the interviews and the focus group discussions. Then the data were analyzed by content analysis.

Results

The results of this research in five communities along the Andaman coast in Southern Thailand are described next.

Area Context

There were four dominantly Muslim communities in the study: CBT A, B, C, and E. Ninety percent of the people in these communities are Muslim. Only the people in CBT D are dominantly Buddhist. Four communities, CBT A, C, D, and E have been operating their community-based tourism for more than 15 years. They started the project after the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami in 2004; while the community-based tourism was started in CBT B in 2015.

Under the theme of their community-based tourism, cultural and nature-based tourism were provided in five communities. The communities provided activities in line with their original ways of life. For example, in CBT B, people's incomes primarily depended on tourism during the high season of tourism. Some of them were employees in tourism businesses; providers of room rentals; and others had their own businesses. However, tourism was considered a second job for people in CBT A, C, D, and E. Their main jobs were in agricultural farms, including rubber tree and oil palm plantations, and in traditional fishing. In CBT D, their community-based tourism was developed by another CBT role model, as the second job following agricultural jobs. The activities were designed to be natural tourism providing learning experiences regarding fishermen's ways of life along Sikao canal, in Trang province. In addition, some materials in their community such as coconut shells, Batik fabrics, long-tailed boat models, and organic rice were promoted as community products.

Table 2. Community-based tourism operation during the Coronavirus 2019 pandemic (Source: The authors' elaboration)

Topics	CBT A	CBT B	CBT C	CBT D	CBT E
1. Characteristics of Vaccinated Tourists Entering Communities, and Preferred Quality Tourists					
▪ vaccine certificates (at least two doses)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
▪ ATK results in case of vaccinations more than 6 months ago	×	✓	✓	✓	×
▪ ATK provided for tourists	×	×	×	✓	×
▪ local tourists' temperature check, as well as Mho Chana and Thai Chana scanning applications	×	×	✓	×	×
▪ reports from tour guides before 'Sandbox' tourists enter the communities	×	✓	×	×	×
2. Communities' Readiness for Receiving Tourists					
2. 1 Service staff's regular coronavirus 2019 tests					
▪ ATK tests for service staff every 15 days	×	×	×	✓	×
2.2 Area renovation and tourism activities appropriate in a pandemic situation					
▪ events held in nearby communities in such areas as coastal and rice farm areas	×	×	×	✓	×
▪ air ventilation system in the activity areas	✓	×	✓	✓	×
▪ limited number of tourists: 50% of tourists on boats	×	×	✓	✓	✓
▪ having new tourists join activities with tourists staying in the communities	×	✓	×	×	×
▪ receiving specific tourists	×	✓	×	×	×
▪ learning activities	×	×	✓	✓	×
3. Public relations and communication of the communities' good image					
▪ understanding of communication to convey increased prices due to increased cost of materials, tools, and area sizes	×	×	×	✓	×
▪ additional improvement of public relations signs	✓	×	×	×	×
▪ promotion and public relations on TV and online social media	×	×	×	×	✓
4. Community development to enter the Standard of Thailand Safety and Health Administration (SHA)					
▪ adaptation to New Normal way of life	×	×	×	✓	×
▪ continuously following news by community leaders	×	×	×	✓	×
▪ communities certified by the Amazing Thailand Safety & Health Administration (SHA)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
▪ communities trained according to the Amazing Thailand Safety & Health Administration (SHA) by Provincial Tourism and Sports Office or other governmental offices	×	×	×	✓	×
▪ readiness of local administration offices and governmental offices	×	×	×	×	×
▪ readiness of the communities, private businesses, hotels, and entrepreneurs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5. A Surveillance system and monitoring of the community situation					
▪ measurements of COVID-19 pandemic prevention	×	✓	×	×	×

Community-Based Tourism Management during the Coronavirus 2019 Pandemic

The community-based tourism management during the Coronavirus 2019 pandemic was focused on creating confidence and safety for tourists traveling in communities by the following five components: (1) characteristics of vaccinated tourists entering the communities and preferred quality tourists, (2) communities' readiness to receive tourists, (3) public relations and communication of the communities' good image, (4) the community development to enter the standard of Thailand **S**afety and **H**ealth **A**dministration (SHA), and (5) a surveillance system and monitoring of the community situation (Table 2).

(1) Characteristics of vaccinated tourists entering communities and preferred quality tourists

In these five communities, restrictions on receiving tourists in the communities were highlighted. In each community, tourists were asked to present their personal information and vaccine certificates (at least two doses). When tourists had got vaccinated over six months ago, they were asked to show Antigen Test Kit results (ATK) in three communities. However, the Antigen Test Kits were prepared for tourists in one community. These kits were billed in the fees for the stay (Table 2).

There were more additional measures in some communities. For example, tourists from the same province or from within the country were requested to check their body temperature and check into the Mho Chana and Thai Chana Applications, according to the Ministry of Health's procedure. In case of a Sandbox project, some tourists needed to show COVID-19 tests and submit to a quarantine before entering the communities. It could be seen that the tourist quality was emphasized in these communities. Plus, it was found that there were two communities highlighting both the quality and quantity of their tourists, according to the following interview. "In our community, we receive all coming tourists but still under our procedure. In the past, when tourists were together in one group, we welcomed and gave information to them in a meeting room. Now, during the COVID-19 pandemic, after tourists did the first procedure, we provided them at an outdoor area" (Respondent E). In the other two communities, the tourist quality was also in focus. They could take part in the community people's activities, but the number of tourists entering the communities depended on the carrying capacity of the communities, as referred to in the following interview excerpt. "We adjusted to a new tourism form, and we try to receive only quality tourists who can join our people's activities. Therefore, we do not receive a large number of tourists. We think we can determine the number of tourists entering the community in each round. We did receive a lot of tourists, but now we select potential tourists who can pay for their trips here" (Respondent C).

(2) Communities' readiness for receiving tourists

The results showed that there were two management patterns for readiness for receiving tourists (Table 2).

(2.1) Service staff's regular coronavirus 2019 tests.

It was found that there was only one community having its staff do self-checks with Antigen Test Kit every 15 days and record their test profiles. Moreover, the public relations were pursued online via the community's website and the community's Facebook Fan Page.

(2.2) Area renovation and tourism activities appropriate in a pandemic situation

The community areas were renovated, and tourist activities were set according to protective procedures adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic. The communities in the study cooperated with nearby communities having cultural or resources capital to provide activities or events by geographically zoning the tourism area in the coastal area and in a rice farming area. It was found that the areas in three communities were adjusted to ensure good air ventilation as in the following interview excerpt. "The tourist attractions in our community are not quite crowded and open enough for tourists. Our community-based tourism management is focused on ways of life and nature in the community" (Respondent G).

Furthermore, in one community, activities of tourism routes were changed to activities in the community. As regards marine activities, congestion on boats was reduced by setting capacity limit to 50% of what it had been, but more tourists were welcomed to do cultural activities as in the following interview excerpt. "We provided tourists activities in our community so that our people and community can have apparent incomes, and we can consider the number of tourists. That means we changed the way to receive tourists" (Respondent C). However, when the communities were ready, they could receive various tourists. In case of more incoming tourists, outdoor activities could be provided, and these tourists could be distributed to stay at local entrepreneurs' places or nearby community networks.

(3) Public relations and communication of the communities' good image

Public relations and communication of the communities' good image during the COVID-19 pandemic were pursued in order to build confidence in the tourists traveling in the communities. It was found that ATK checks for staff every 15 days were promoted for the tourism communities. However, the tour prices increased since the capital investments in tourism including materials, tools, and space sizes went up. The public relations were thus intended to make the tourists understand and make them willing to pay. "We increased the prices a bit to make the balance of expenses, but we try to explain our tourists about this matter" (Respondent G). Furthermore, the results revealed that public relations signs for good image were improved to build confidence in the tourists. The public relations by external organizations such as TV stations, and online social media was also welcomed to promote tourism in the communities (Table 2).

(4) Community development to enter the standard of Thailand Safety and Health Administration (SHA)

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many tour entrepreneurs such as homestay entrepreneurs and some owners of tour businesses were impacted. In consequence, these entrepreneurs were very keen to adjust themselves to survive during this pandemic by entering the standard of Thailand **S**afety and **H**ealth **A**dministration (SHA) issued by the Ministry of Health to create more confidence in tourists. "The pandemic has been more relieved, and tourists are more confident to travel in the community" (Respondent A). The communities had their own management methods to enter the tourism standard. The results indicate that every community was developed to enter the Amazing Thailand **S**afety & Health Administration (SHA). However, there was only one community trained for SHA by Provincial Tourism and Sports Office. Other communities had not been trained yet, so there would be some trainers from Provincial Tourism and Sports Office, District Offices, District Health Offices, and District Health Center in the areas to give some advice and certify the standard (see Table 2). Besides, the leaders of the communities kept up with the latest news continuously; therefore, the behavior of the communities was adjusted for the new normal. It could be seen that private sector, hotels, and entrepreneurs in the communities adjusted themselves and got ready enough to manage their tourism. Nevertheless, due to the measures of local administration, and government offices, the communities could not accept visitor groups, affecting the community incomes. "Visitor groups from government offices disappear. Only some Thai tourists who can financially support themselves have come to the community. In the past, we received a lot of visitor groups. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the preventative measures, visitor groups from government offices still cannot visit the community" (Respondent E).

(5) A surveillance system and monitoring of the community situation

Each community adopted observing the situation as regards the COVID-19 pandemic, and designated appropriate responsibilities in their tourism management, namely procedures to receive tourists and those for room reservations. Tourists were asked to provide some personal information, travel evidence, vaccine certificates, and COVID-19 test results before entering the communities. Besides, the results showed that, in fact, there was only one community that had planned the management since the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak and forecasted the following impacts because the community realized that they would have to live in this situation for a while (Table 2).

DISCUSSION

Community-based tourism should be restored as soon as the government relaxes the measures of COVID-19 prevention. However, every community needed to understand its target groups of tourists, who might also be domestic tourists (Janthadech, 2021; Noorashid and Chin, 2021). Therefore, local tourists living in Thailand entering communities along the Andaman coast in Southern Thailand should be considered the first priority, as they are the most accessible customers, followed by emphasis on the quality of tourists. This result is relevant to the study by Hambira et al. (2022) suggesting that target groups of domestic tourists for nature and cultural tourism should be included in 'new normal community-based tourism'. In terms of community readiness for receiving tourists, each community needed to adjust to transformative tourism for tourist well-being (Pung at al., 2020; Srimaca and Muneenam, 2021) Therefore, it was necessary to survey and investigate needs for services and products to promote small-scale industry of CBT for community restoration (Noorashid and Chin, 2021). Moreover, design of activities and learning topics should be considered for physical and mental health (Voigt et al., 2011). For 'Travel in a New Normal', a new trend in the COVID-19 era, cleanliness, safety, and building ventilation systems should be prioritized (Environmental Protection Agency, 2022; Potjanajaruwit, 2022). Plus, seating distances, queue reservation for park entrance, people capacity limitations, quality small tourist groups, and some safety symbols—SHA, Clean Food Good Taste, and Healthy Accessibility Safety (HAS)—should be emphasized in public relations and in communicating the communities' good image. Importantly, the communities should be certified with the Amazing Thailand Safety & Health Administration (SHA) (Janthadech, 2021). Nevertheless, there have not been any visitor groups attending activities in the communities due to their lack of confidence and readiness; in spite of support by the government for a project 'Thailand meeting is safer' (Janthadech, 2021). Hence, the communities should provide a surveillance system and monitoring of the community situation in order to build confidence and safety for tourists and their own people. Besides, the government should also support with tax policies or financial projects, and in the use of online platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube for attracting tourism to the communities. This could imitate Brunei Darussalam that promoted their CBT via online tourism conventions and resilience strategies (Mulyani et al., 2022; Noorashid and Chin, 2021)

CONCLUSION

This qualitative research article sought to explain the community-based tourism management during the Coronavirus 2019 pandemic in five communities of five provinces (Phangnga, Phuket, Krabi, Trang, and Satun provinces) along the Andaman coast of Thailand, which creates an understanding of the characteristics of community-based tourism management for application in specific situations. This study, however, was conducted during the coronavirus pandemic in the context of the Andaman coast of Thailand; hence, because of the social distancing measures, data were collected through online in-depth interviews and online focus group discussions between January and March, in 2022.

It can be concluded that community-based tourism of the Andaman tourism cluster in southern Thailand has been operated for more than 15 years. It was started after the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami. All activities of the mostly community-based tourism have been still considered as second jobs after people's main occupations.

Their community-based tourism included existing cultural and nature tourism. Five components of the community-based tourism management during the Coronavirus 2019 pandemic along the Andaman coast were: (1) characteristics of vaccinated tourists entering communities and preferred quality tourists; (2) communities' readiness for receiving tourists—service staff's regular coronavirus 2019 tests and area renovation and tourism activities appropriate in a pandemic situation; (3) public relations and communication of the communities' good image; (4) community development to achieve the standard of Thailand Safety and Health Administration (SHA); and (5) a surveillance and monitoring system of the community situation. The tourism communities in Andaman coastal area were pushed to adapt to the changing situation of the 2019 coronavirus pandemic. These five components were based on transitional situations, which arose from the understanding of the community, such as the internal experiences of the individuals, the condition of the community, and government policies. Besides, the management of community-based tourism in the Andaman coastal area stepped into a "New Normal" of the COVID-19 era, which challenges the communities to develop the processes and outcomes of community-based tourism. All of the above five elements could be developed as preliminary criteria for evaluating community-based tourism management in other similar and interested areas by using participatory action research studies that will establish benchmarks for the growth of CBT communities. The results of management elements may differ by area and other context. Moreover, the informants for this study were only community-based tourism entrepreneurs probed via qualitative methods, and the results, therefore, focused on understanding experiences and phenomena through people who have directly experienced them.

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MOTIVATIONAL DECISIONS, SATISFACTION, AND REVISIT BEHAVIOR OF DOMESTIC TOURISTS: AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

Peter Onyonje OSIAKO
Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Doctoral School of Management and Organizational Sciences, Kaposvár, Hungary, e-mail: peterosiako78@gmail.com

Harshavardhan Reddy KUMMITHA
Budapest Business School, Department of Tourism, Budapest, Hungary, e-mail: Kummitha.harshavardhan@uni-bge.hu

Viktória SZENTE[*]
Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Institute of Agriculture and Food Economics, Kaposvár, Hungary, e-mail: szente.viktoria@uni-mate.hu

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Abstract: This study sought to investigate the effect of push and pull motivation factors on the satisfaction, and revisit behaviour of domestic tourists. A survey was conducted on a sample of 258 domestic tourists visiting Machakos People's Park in Kenya, where quantitative data was collected through a structured questionnaire and analyzed by descriptive and inferential statistics using the SPSS software. The findings revealed that both push and pull motivational factors affected the satisfaction of domestic tourists, and that satisfaction positively affected revisitation. These findings are instrumental for theory, policy and practice among relevant stakeholders in revitalizing the role of domestic tourism. The three variables in the current study are intricately interrelated. Tourism industry players could base on this associations to tailor their operations and marketing strategies towards invigorating domestic tourism.

Key words: domestic tourism, Kenya, Machakos People's Park, motivation, revisitation, satisfaction

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a source of foreign-exchange and a channel through which foreign investment is attracted by many developing counties (Manzoor, 2019). Vanhove (2005) broadly categorizes forms of tourism as domestic tourism, inbound tourism, outbound tourism, internal tourism (domestic tourism plus inbound tourism), and international tourism (inbound tourism plus outbound tourism). Most countries tend to emphasize more on international tourism due to the revenue earned through exports, despite domestic tourism being recognized as an important catalyst for regional economic growth and development (WTTC, 2018). Overreliance on foreign tourism has previously resulted in a decline in tourism performance when adverse situations in international travel call for travel restrictions (Kwoba, 2018). More recently, the global COVID 19 pandemic threat on foreign travel has compounded the challenges associated with international tourism (Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, 2020). This makes domestic tourism promotion a subject worth of greater consideration in the present time (Chan, 2021).

The World Tourism Organization (WTO, 2020) estimated that in 2018, nine billion domestic tourist trips (overnight visitors) were made. Measured in number of tourist trips, domestic tourism is more than six times bigger than foreign tourism (1.4 billion international arrivals in 2018). Africa as a continent is yet to exploit her tourism potential fully, despite her tourism industry playing a key role in the global economy (KIPPRA, 2017). Among the Africa countries striving to improve both domestic and international tourism is Kenya (Manono and Rotich, 2013; Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, 2018), doing this in an effort to dispel the common notion that the country heavily recognizes foreign tourism at the expense of domestic tourism (Osiako and Szente, 2021). The domestic tourism council of Kenya (DTCK) was created in 1984 with the mandate of promoting tourism to a higher notch (Gachenge, 2007). Among its evident achievements is the increased conference and exhibition tourism in the country, incentive travel, and sustained campaign initiatives targeting domestic tourists with slogans such as *Tembea Nyumbani*, *Tembea Kenya*, and *Twende Tujivinjari*.

A review of literature reveals glaring gaps with regard to the dynamics of domestic tourism in developing countries. In Kenya, among other notable deficiencies is the lack of information on the motivations for domestic tourism, domestic tourists' satisfaction, and revisit behaviour to attraction sites. It is alluded by Bajs (2013) that for tourism businesses have to understand the profiles of tourists if they are to identify new opportunities and market segments. This can be done on the basis of perception of a destination, and satisfaction levels amongst the tourists. The current study was therefore carried out in Machakos People's Park in Kenya to address the existing gap. It was meant to enhance the overall understanding of the motivations for domestic tourists visiting recreational parks and establish the association between these motivations and tourist satisfaction and revisitation. The study sought answers the following research questions:

[*] Corresponding author

- What factors motivate domestic tourists to visit recreational parks?
- Are the motivations of domestic tourists related to their satisfaction?
- Does tourist satisfaction influence return visit to domestic tourist destinations?

The findings of the study provide insights into people's motivations to take domestic tours, their satisfaction and revisitation. It provides practical implications for product developers and service providers including destination management organizations (DMOs) and tour companies. The following sections of this paper present materials and methods adopted, results of the study and finally the conclusion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourist Motivation

As a socio-psychological phenomenon, motivation relates to an individual's internal and emotional aspects with regard to the desire to have rest, escape, experience emotional arousal and adventure (Güzel et al., 2020). According to Kotler and Keller (2016) it is the driving force that initiate action in a person in order to meet their needs. Bideci and Albayrak (2016) defined tourism motivation as a set of the needs and attitudes of an individual to take part in tourism activities. Hence, determining the behaviour of the tourist. In relating travel and motivations, Baniya and Paudel (2016) established that people travel because they are pushed into making travel decisions by internal, psychological forces, and pulled by the external forces of the destination's attributes. Explanations about travel motivations have previously been based on several theories, which include: Maslow's (1943) Theory of the Hierarchy of Needs, Travel Career Ladder (TLC) model developed by Pearce (1988), Dann's (1981) Theory of Push and Pull Motivations, and Travel career patterns model (Pearce and Lee, 2005) and Prayag and Hosany (2014). These theories exhibit a gradual shift from motivation theories that are general in nature, to theories that are directly applicable to the behaviours. As pointed out by Yousaf et al. (2018), these theories only have a general application to tourists and cannot apply in the analysis of all tourists nor even all segments of tourist. Kotler and Armstrong (2017) identified motivation as a key determinant when customers are making decisions to purchase goods and services. On the other hand, Katsikari et al. (2020) have stated that push and pull factors of travel motivations are the most commonly recognized analyses of tourism motivation.

Tourist push and pull motivations

The Theory of Push and Pull Motivations (Dann, 1981) introduced the widely applied travel-related push and pull motivations. Since then, push and pull factors have been employed to a great extent in assessing tourists' travel motivations (Michael et al., 2017; Wijaya et al., 2018). Push factor is a socio-psychological construct of tourists and comes from a tourist's home environment that encourages them to travel. They are internal drives that initiate travel among individuals and are linked to factors such as recreation, and a desire to 'get away from it all', need for rest, adventure and escape, and overcoming isolation commonly associated with modern lifestyles (Yousaf et al., 2018). On the other hand, pull motivations are related with cognitive and external factors found in the destination areas and are associated with the infrastructure, facilities, climate, landscape, services offered, and prevailing prices that attract tourists to visit certain tourism destinations. Both of the factors have been found to determine the tourists' decision-making on where and how to travel (Wulandari et al., 2019). A number of research have investigated and established the relationship between these two travel motivations and the overall tourist satisfactions (Luvsandavaajav and Narantuya, 2021).

Tourist Satisfaction

Tourist satisfaction is defined as the level of positive feelings emanating from tourists' experience at a destination (El-Adly, 2019). Based on Sturgeon et al. (2015) satisfaction reflect both an emotional and cognitive phenomenon. It is significant to deeply study the history behind the evaluation without restricting ourselves to its assessment, or else it will limit the capacity to understand the customer's emotional experiences when interacting with the product provider (Stickdorn et al., 2018). Early studies indicate that the motives that initiate service providers are the determinants of the tourists' activities at their destination. Additionally, employee satisfaction in the tourism industry has been found to influence tourist satisfaction (Polychronidou and Chapsa, 2022).

Motivation and satisfaction

More recent research show that there is need to independently analyze the motivation and activities occurring at destinations (Prebensen and Xie, 2017). As asserted by Bayih and Singh (2020), the push and pull travel motivations of domestic tourists have an influence on their overall satisfaction when experiencing their destinations. Wong et al. (2013) argue that satisfaction and motivation are positively interrelated, just as Correia et al., (2013); Lee and Hsu (2013) had earlier on alluded. Vetitnev et al. (2013) revealed that satisfaction level is linked to motivations, among other factors. Further, Kim (2021) established a strong and significant correlation between push and pull motivation, and satisfaction. Therefore, based on the above literature review, this research purposes that:

H1: Domestic tourists' push motivation has a positive effect on tourists' satisfaction.

H2: Domestic tourists' pull motivation has a positive effect on tourists' satisfaction.

Tourist satisfaction and revisitation

A great deal of research has examined satisfaction as a determinant of destination loyalty (Bayih and Singh, 2020). In investing the relationship between these variables, they found that overall satisfaction strongly and positively influenced domestic tourists' revisit to destinations. This implied that the more the satisfaction of domestic tourists, the higher their propensity to revisit the same destination. Nasseef et al. (2017) found a positive association between the impact of motivation for attendance to Aqaba city and destination loyalty. A study by Leninkumar (2017) also established a significant relationship among customer satisfaction level, loyalty, and recommendation. An understanding of tourist motivations, satisfaction, and loyalty is deemed crucial to the successful marketing of tourist destinations as alluded by Grobbelaar et al. (2019). According to Kim (2021) push and pull motivation, and satisfaction collectively predict tourists' revisit intention for destinations. These crucial psychological and behavioral factors of tourists were found to significantly impact their revisit intention. Earlier studies also collaborate these assertions, including Yip et al. (2011) and San Martin et al. (2013). Consequently, this current study hypothesizes as follows the Figure 1.

H3: Domestic tourists' satisfaction has a positive effect on tourists' revisitation

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Area of study

Data for the current study was obtained from Machakos Peoples' Park (MPP) in Machakos county in Kenya. The recreational park is a forty-acre gated site, which is open to the public on Thursday afternoons, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. It comprises of both natural and man-made attractions which local and foreign recreationists visit to enjoy.

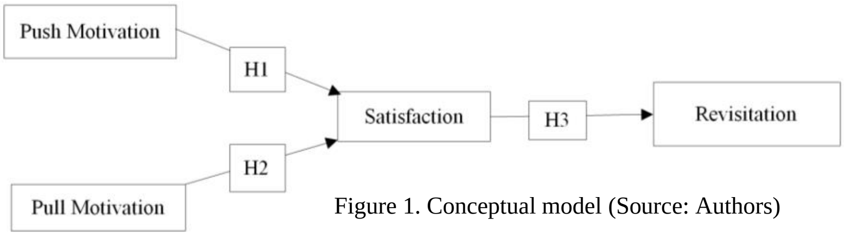

Figure 1. Conceptual model (Source: Authors)

Study variables

This study used cross-sectional questionnaire survey to collect quantitative data. The independent variables comprised push motivation variables, and pull motivation variables, while the dependent variables were satisfaction, and revisitation. The motivation variables for this study are developed basing on previous conceptualizations and studies in the context of leisure tourism, and modified as relates to the recreational park under study (Yiamjanya and Wongleedee, 2015; Xu and Chan, 2016; Naidoo et al., 2015; Kassean and Gassita, 2013). Ultimately, push motivation indicator variables are 10 while pull motivation indicator variables are 12. All the 22 motivation statements were measured with the five-point interval scale such that strongly disagree (1) and strongly agree (5). The one statement for the satisfaction variable for this study was measured on the five-point Likert scale as follows: No satisfaction (1) Satisfaction below average (2) Average satisfaction (3), Satisfying (4), Highly Satisfying (5). Further, the revisitation variable for this study was measured by one statement measured on the five-point ratio scale as follows: once (1) twice (2) thrice (3), four times (4), five times (5), more than five times (6).

Data collection and analysis

Domestic tourists who visited MMP during the period of study (December 2019 and January 2020) were systematically sampled such that every fourth Kenyan adult person (of the age of 18 years and above) entering the park through the main entrance during the opening days (Thursday afternoons, Friday, Saturday and Sunday) was asked to take part in the survey by filling in the questionnaire. Those who acknowledged to reside in Kenyans, and agreed to take part in the study after being introduced to the survey and its main aims were given an opportunity to voluntarily respond to the questions. In total, 392 questionnaires were issued, out of which 311 (79% response rate) were filled. From these, 258 (83%) were found to be complete and usable. The flow chart our research can be find on Figure 2.

Data was analyzed using the IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, version 23.0 (IBM Corp., Armonk, N.Y., USA) software to determine descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Explorative factor analysis was performed to distinguish the pull factors from pull factors. Thereafter, ordinal logistic regression and one-way ANOVA were performed to evaluate the association between motivation and satisfaction, and between satisfaction and revisitation respectively.

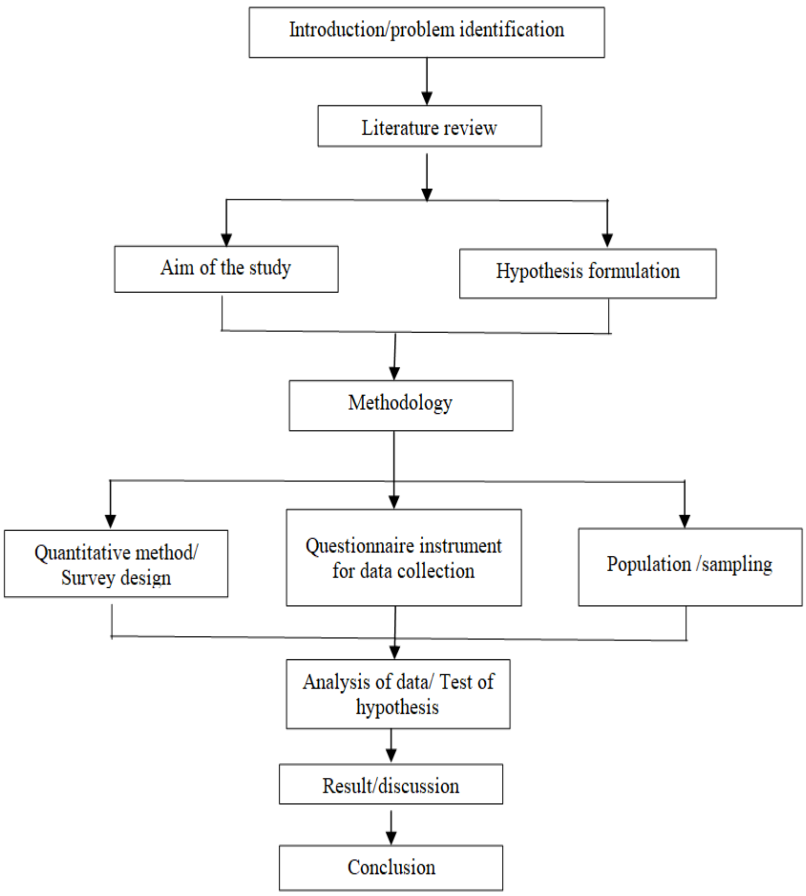

Figure 2. Flow chart of the research methodology steps (Source: Authors)

Table 1. Respondents' socio-demographic characteristics (N=258) (Source: Authors)

Socio-demographic variable		Frequency	Percent
Gender (N=258)	Male	137	53.2
	Female	121	46.8
Age (N=258)	18-25	36	13.9
	26-35	93	36.1
	36-45	87	33.5
	46-55	31	12.0
	56-65	11	4.4
Your income (N=258)	below 50,000	144	55.7
	50001-100000	65	25.3
	100001-150000	42	16.5
	over 150000	7	2.5
Your Marital status (N=258)	Single Without Children	67	26.0
	Single With Child/ren	51	19.6
	Married With Child/ren	70	27.2
	Married Without Children	67	26.0
	Widowed	3	1.3
Highest educationnal level attained (N=258)	Primary	20	7.6
	Secondary	57	22.2
	College	91	35.4
	Bachelor's Degree	73	28.5
	Post Graduate Degree	16	6.3
Residence *(N=258)*	Rural	165	63.9
	Urban	93	36.1

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic characteristics of Respondents

A wide diversity in socio-demographics manifested in the sample representing visitors to MMP (Table 1). Male respondents were 53.2% while female respondents were 46.8%. Most of the respondents (36.1%) were in the age bracket of 26-35 years old. This was closely followed by 33.5% in the age 36-45 years, then 13.9% in the age 18-25 years and 12% in the age 46-55 years. The least percentage (4.4%) were in the age bracket 56-65 years. No respondent was over 65 years of age (Table 1). Majority of them (55.7%) earned income of less than 50,000 Kenya shillings (USD 500) per month; 25.3% earned 50,001-100,000; 16.5% earned 100,001-150,000 and a paltry 2.5% earned over 150,000. Respondents who were married with child/ren represented the highest percentage in marital status (27.2%). Those who were married without children, and single without children were each represented by 26.0% followed by those who were single with children 19.6%, and the least percentage (1.3%) were widowed. As pertains to the highest level of education attained by the respondents, the biggest proportion of the sample (35.4%) were middle-level college graduates, followed by 28.5% bachelor's degree holders. 22.2% were high school graduates, 7.6% had not proceeded beyond primary level of education, and 6.3% were post graduate degree holders. Rural dwellers were more (63.9%) than urban dwellers (36.1%) who visited MMP during the survey period.

Tourist motivation and satisfaction

Table 2 represents a list of the 17 tourist motivation statements in this study and their resulting itemized mean scores. These mean scores indicate the direction for interpretation and inferences. The table contains 9 items related to push motivation and 8 items related to pull motivation. Item number 5 had the highest mean (M = 3.68, SD = 1.164) with the push motivation statements "Motivation is to find an ideal place for my children". On the other hand, item number 15 had the highest mean score (M = 3.99, SD = 0.93) with the pull motivation statement "Motivation is that in this place I enjoy a variety of experiences". A comparison between the average mean for push and pull motivations for domestic tourists visiting MPP reveals that the mean score of pull motivation (M = 3.62, SD = 0.689) is higher than the mean score of push motivation (M = 3.34, SD = 0.765). When asked to rate the overall satisfaction they get in the park, majority (49.2%) said the overall experience was "satisfying".

Table 2. Explorative factor analysis of motivation items (Source: Authors)

No.	Motivation Item Statement	Item Mean	Factor Item loading [a]PushM	Factor Item loading [b]PullM	Mean	Std dev.	Reliability α
1.	I had saved money to spend on such a visit	3.62	.656		3.34	.765	.800
2.	I wanted to find relief for my ill health	3.30	.724				
3.	I need a place to enjoy company of friends	3.29	.645				
4.	I need for an opportunity to learn	3.43	.558				
5.	I find an ideal place for my children	3.68	.559				
6.	To conduct research	2.78	.518				
7.	I was recommended by friends	3.41	.507				
8.	I had an incentive offer from my employer	3.12	.722				
9.	I feel historically attached to this place	3.39	.658				
10.	This place is a famous attraction	3.74		.596	3.62	.689	.761
11.	In this place I enjoy outdoor recreation	3.63		.472			
12.	In this place I enjoy attractive landscape	3.38		.747			
13.	The place suits my need to relax	3.70		.573			
14.	This place is easily accessible	3.58		.688			
15.	I enjoy a variety of experiences	3.99		.491			
16.	In this place I enjoy pleasant ambience	3.36		.718			
17.	This place is affordable	3.57		.561			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization. [a]PushM - Push Moivation. [b]PullM - Pull Motivation

Exploratory factor analysis

In order to determine the primary dimension of the respondents' motivation to visit MMP, an exploratory factor analysis was performed. For item inclusion, loadings of .40 were used and eigenvalues of 3.927 and 2.869 were used for factor extraction criterion. There were 22 items for motivational factors on which a factor analysis with Principal Component Approach and Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization was performed. KMO Bartlett's test was carried to verify the normality and significance of the conducted analyses and it was found to be highly significant (approximate X^2 = 1120.390, df = 136, p < 0.0001). Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (X^2 = 1120.390) and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's (KMO) overall measure of sampling adequacy (.805), indicated that the data were suitable for using factor analysis (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001). This resulted in two categories of motivation factors representing 40% of the total variance. For each factor, Cronbach's coefficients were calculated in order to determine the reliability of the analyzed data and to serve as a measure of internal consistency among the identified items. Items number 6, 14, 16, 21 and 22 failed to adequately load to their respective factors with the set value at least .40 and were therefore dropped. This left the push motivation factor with 9 items and the pull motivation factor with 8 items. Their Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were .800 and .761 respectively which, being above .70 were sufficient for performing factor analysis. In order to determine the level of importance of each factor, mean values were calculated for each factor based on the Likert-scale used in the questionnaire. The mean values calculated for each factor were found to be 3.34 and 3.62 for push factor and pull factor respectively (Table 3).

The correlation between motivation, satisfaction and revisitation

A Spearman's rho correlation was conducted among the four variables: pull factor, pull factor, satisfaction, and revisitation. The analyses revealed that the relationships between all the four elements were moderate, positive, and statistically significant (Table 3), According to Cohen (1992), the effect size is low/weak if the value of r varies around 0.1, medium/moderate if r varies around 0.3, and large/strong if r varies more than 0.5.Between push motivation and pull motivation (r(256) = .228, *p* < .001), between push motivation and satisfaction (r(256) = .314, *p* < .001), between pull motivation and satisfaction (r(256) =.287, *p* < .001), between push motivation and revisitation (r(256) = .321, p < .001), between pull motivation and revisitation (r(256) = .241, *p* < .001), and finally between satisfaction and revisitation (r(256) = .303, *p* < .001).

Table 3. Mean, SD, and Non-Parametric correlation results (Source: Authors) ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

	Mean	SD	Push motivation	Pull motivation	Satisfaction
Push motivation	3.34	0.765	-		
Pull motivation	3.62	0.689	.228**	-	
Satisfaction	3.95	0.885	.314**	.287**	-
Revisitation	2.38	1.506	.321**	.241**	.303**

The implication here is that: there are positive relationships between push motivation, pull motivation, satisfaction, and revisitation. This fact places motivation, in a strong position as a factor determining satisfaction for domestic tourists.

Effect of motivation on satisfaction

The first model sought to isolate the impact of each motivational factor on tourists' satisfaction, whereby ordinal logistic regression analysis was performed. Ordinal logistic regression was chosen because the data for the dependent variable was on ordinal scale. Therefore, this non-parametric regression model was used to estimate the conceptualized relationship of how push motivation and pull motivation factors predicted satisfaction of domestic tourists visiting MMP. The ordinal logistic regression produced a Nagelkerke value of .153 (Table 4). This is a Pseudo R-square value indicating that the percentage of variance in domestic tourists' satisfaction attributable to the model was 15.3%. The significance of model fitting information (*p* = .000), Goodness-of -fit index (*p* = .997; 1.000), as well as the test of parallel lines (or assumption of Proportional Odds) (*p* = .072) were all satisfactory according to Field (2018) and Petrucci (2009). They validate the model. The Model Fitting Information in Table 6 indicates a significant improvement in fit of the Final model over the null model [$X^2(2) = 38.805$, *p* = .001]. The Goodness of fit (Table 5) containing Pearson Chi-square test results [$X^2(742) = 640.854$, *p* = .997] and the Deviance test results [$X^2(742) = 456.140$, *p* = 1.000] indicate that both the results were non-significant. These results equally suggest good model fit. Table 6 has two regression coefficients (parameter estimates) and their respective significance tests for the two independent variables in the model. There are positive parameter estimates of 0.682 and 0.704 for push factor and pull factor respectively both at *p* = .000 significance level. Evidently, both push factor and the pull factor are significant, positive determinants of the level of satisfaction that domestic tourists get when they visit MPP. The pull factor appears to be a comparatively stronger determinant. The interpretation here is that: first, for every one unit increase in push motivation, there is a predicted increase of 0.682 in the log odds of being on a higher level on satisfaction, and secondly, for every one unit increase in pull motivation, there is a predicted increase of 0.704 in the log odds of being on a higher level on satisfaction. Therefore, a domestic tourist exhibiting higher motivation for visiting the park was more likely to report greater satisfaction from the experiences they found.

Table 4. Model Fitting Information (Link function: Logit) (Source: Researchers' analysis)

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.	Pseudo R2 (Nagelkerke)
Intercept Only	555.071				
Final	516.266	38.805	2	.000	.153

Table 5. Goodness-of-Fit (Link function: Logit) (Source: Authors)

	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pearson	640.854	742	.997
Deviance	456.140	742	1.000

Table 6. Parameter Estimates (Link function: Logit) (Source: Authors)

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.
Threshold	[Satisfaction level = 1]					.664
	[Satisfaction level = 2]	1.918	.789	5.907	1	.015
	[Satisfaction level = 3]	3.460	.782	19.587	1	.000
	[Satisfaction level = 4]	5.877	.847	48.152	1	.000
Location	Pull motivation	.682	.179	14.492	1	.000
	Pull motivation	.704	.163	18.641	1	.000

Effect of satisfaction on revisitation

In the second model, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) with Games-Howell Post hoc was carried out in SPSS to establish the influence of satisfaction levels on tourists' revisitation behaviour. To evaluate the null hypothesis that "there is no difference in tourists' revisitation based on their level of satisfaction", a one-way ANOVA was conducted (*N* = 258). Satisfaction was the dependent variable while the number of revisit times was the dependent variable. The independent variable (satisfaction) included five levels: no satisfaction (*M* = 2, *SD* = 1.155, *n* = 4), satisfaction below average (*M* = 1.31, *SD* = 0.751, *n* = 13), average satisfaction (*M* = 1.75, *SD* = 1.184, *n* = 44), satisfying (*M* = 2.40, *SD* = 1.410, *n* = 127), highly satisfying (*M* = 2.94, *SD* = 1.727, *n* = 70). The assumption of normality for the two variables was tested using measures of skewness and kurtosis and found to be tenable (George and Mallery, 2011; Hair et al., 2010). Further, Levene's Test of the assumption of homogeneity of variances was conducted and found to be untenable, *F*(4,253) = 4.901, *p* = .001. Hence, Games-Howell Post hoc test was applied to evaluate pairwise differences among satisfaction levels. The ANOVA was significant *F*(4,253) = 6.624, *p* = .000, leading to the conclusion that there is significant difference in revisitation of domestic tourists based on their levels of satisfaction. The Games-Howell Post hoc test for comparisons conducted on the sample revealed significant pairwise differences between four pairs of mean scores: "below average satisfaction" level and "satisfying" level, "below average satisfaction" level and "highly satisfying" level, "average satisfaction" level and "satisfying" level "average satisfaction" level and "highly satisfying" level, $p < .05$ (Table 10). The remaining mean scores of pairs of levels of satisfaction did not significantly differ from each other at $p < .05$). As Table 7 shows, the one-way ANOVA test results indicate significant differences among the tourists based on their levels of satisfaction with the destination (significant differences were found between four levels of satisfaction). This conclusively implies that increase in satisfaction would result in increased revisitation to tourist sites by domestic tourists. The ANOVA result being statistically significant at $p < .001$ indicates that the probability of attaining to this variance in revisitation is high enough to be predictable.

Hypotheses testing

Owing to the positive correlations between push motivations, pull motivations, satisfaction, and revisitation, and considering the three hypotheses stated earlier, all the four variables in this study have moderate-level positive correlations with each other. The correlation between: push motivation and pull motivation is ($r(256) = .228$, $p < .001$), push motivation and satisfaction is ($r(256) = .314$, $p < .001$), push motivation and revisitation is ($r(256) = .321$, $p < .001$), pull motivation and satisfaction is ($r(256) = .287$, $p < .001$), pull motivation and revisitation is ($r(256) = .241$, $p < .001$), and finally between satisfaction and revisitation is ($r(256) = .303$, $p < .001$). Additionally, ordinal logistic regressions analyses results indicated that both push factors and pull factors had a significant, positive parameter estimates of 0.682 and 0.704 respectively at $p < .001$, with respect to their influence on satisfaction.

Results of the one-way ANOVA test involving satisfaction and revisitation indicated that satisfaction had a significant positive influence on revisitation, $F(4,253) = 6.624$, $p = .000$. Hence, the three hypotheses represented in Table 8 were tested, confirming the validity of the model. Therefore, all the three hypotheses are supported as illustrated in the research model output in Figure 3.

Table 7. Post Hoc Tests: Multiple Comparisons
(Note: The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level) (Source: Authors)

Dependent Variable: The number of times you have revisited this place		
Sign. of Difference found (1-way ANOVA)	Difference found between pairs of the levels of satisfaction	Games-Howell Significance
	No satisfaction → Satisfaction below average	.788
.000	No satisfaction → Average satisfaction	.991
	No satisfaction → Satisfying	.949
	No satisfaction → Highly satisfying	.595
	Satisfaction below average → Average satisfaction	.501
	Satisfaction below average → Satisfying	.002
	Satisfaction below average → Highly satisfying	.000
	Average satisfaction → Satisfying	.029
	Average satisfaction → Highly satisfying	.000
	Satisfying → Highly satisfying	.171

Table 8. Summary of results of hypotheses tests (Source: Authors)

Hypotheses	Predictors/Relationship	Test	P - value	Remarks
H1	Pull motivation positively affects satisfaction	Logistic reg.	.000	Supported
H2	Push motivation positively affects satisfaction	Logistic reg.	.000	Supported
H3	Satisfaction positively affects revisitation	1-way ANOVA	.000	Supported

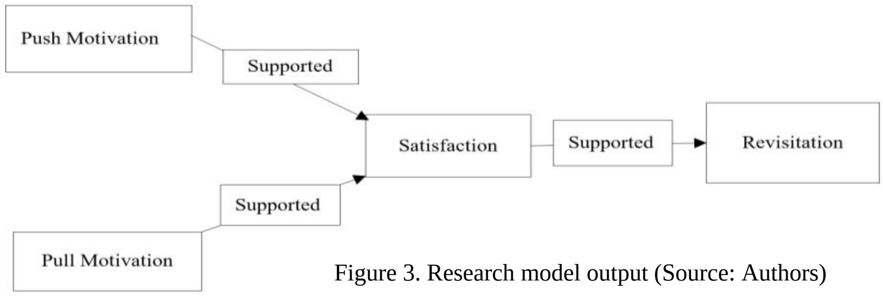

Figure 3. Research model output (Source: Authors)

DISCUSSION

The motivation, satisfaction and return visit correspondence

The findings of this study showed that motivation as a factor broadly has two components: push and pull components. These two factor-categories have dominated tourism literature since the time Dann (1981) postulated the push and pull motivations theory as applicable to travel and tourism studies. A wide range of tourism behaviour studies have been carried out basing on this categorization including Kanagaraj and Bindu (2013), Michael et al. (2017) and Wijaya et al. (2018). The current study findings showed that most domestic tourists were motivated by the need to "find an ideal place for their children". This push-motivation item had the highest mean score. On the contrary, the need to "conduct research" had the lowest means score among push motivators. The implication from this was that, as far as push motivation factors were concerned, most domestic tourists would visit recreational parks if they were guaranteed that the place would be ideal for their children. It turns out to be a strong support for the argument that majority of domestic tourists, particularly in Kenya are family groups, and were strongly motivated by family-based packages as indicated by other studies (TRI, 2021; Manono and Rotich, 2013). Comparing the strengths of the two types of motivations, pull motivations more strongly accounted for domestic visits to recreational sites than the push motivations do. By extension, we can further deduce that visits to recreational sites by domestic tourists are to a greater extent determined by external factors existing in the destination sites than by internal factors in the domestic tourists' home environment. As Mehmetoglu and Normann (2013) averred, this study also supported the fact that both of push and pull factors influence tourists to visit a place. This the starting point of any visitor's travel decision. Understanding tourist motivation is very critical to tourism promoters with respect to market segmentations (Aziz et al., 2018).

A significant, positive correlation was found between motivation factors and satisfaction, and between satisfaction and revisitation. This was also confirmed by the results of logistic regression analysis and ANOVA performed to measure the two associations respectively. Motivation was found to positively and significantly influence satisfaction, with a slight difference between the magnitude of influence of push and pull motivations. The influence of satisfaction on revisitation too, was positive and significant. These findings support the arguments made in the earlier studies. Khuong and Ha (2014) established that push and pull motivations have a positive relationship with the satisfaction of tourists and with visit behavioral intentions. A study by Leninkumar (2017) and Bayih and Singh (2020) established a significant relationship among customer satisfaction level, loyalty, and recommendation. San Martin et al. (2013) also aver that tourist satisfaction is the most important factor for the loyalty of a tourist destination. When the diverse motivations for visiting particular destinations are known, together with the different satisfaction levels of tourists, strategic niche marketing could be designed for the destination's long term economic success through tourism. Satisfaction being strongly associated with motivation, implies that in order to arrive at their satisfaction levels, tourists will evaluate their experiences against their expectations. These expectations in this case are the motivations they develop before embarking on their trips. It must be appreciated that the understanding of tourist motivations, satisfaction, and loyalty is crucial to the successful marketing of tourist destinations as alluded by Grobbelaar (2019). This is because, these factors inform the choosing of a destination, the consuming of what is offered, and the revisitation to the destination (Kozak and Rimmington, 2000). It is further argued by Chen et al. (2011) that revisit intention can enhance tourists' willingness to recommend to others after they make the visitation.

CONCLUSION

In the current study, it was clear that motivation affects satisfaction, and satisfaction affects return visits. Apparently, higher levels of guest satisfaction encouraged guests to revisit the destination. This means greater profits for tourism and hospitality operators. However, if the guests' level of satisfaction were low, there would be a high possibility that the guest would opt for a competitor's product as alluded by Haeruddin et al. (2022). Since motivation occurs before tourist experience, and satisfaction occurs after the tourist experience, it is prudent for tourism promoters, product developers, and service providers to execute their mandate with strategy, considering the dynamics at each stage of the travel cycle. A clear understanding of the motivation types that are specific to particular tourist types or particular destination categories is crucial for successful efforts in winning and satisfying diverse tourist types. In general, it is incumbent on tourism promoters, recreation site managers and other stakeholders to ensure that the relevant tourist motivators are adequately addressed to be able to cultivate a sustainable domestic tourism demand base whose expectations are ultimately met. Thus, securing their loyalty.

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RISK FACTORS TO TOURISM VISIT DECISIONS WITH DESTINATION IMAGE AS A MEDIATION: CASE STUDY OF RAWA PENING LAKE, INDONESIA

PURWANTO*
President University, Faculty of Business, Master of Technology Management Program, West Jawa, Indonesia, e-mail: purwanto@president.ac.id

Wiranto RETNOWATI
President University, Faculty of Business, Business Administration Study Program, West Jawa, Indonesia, e-mail: retnowati@president.ac.id

Hari SURYANTO
President University, Faculty of Humanities, Communication Study Program, West Jawa, Indonesia, e-mail: harisuryanto@president.ac.id

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to determine the risk factors that influence the decision to visit with the image of the destination as a mediating variable. A quantitative method for data processing using SPSS and AMOS - SEM software as instruments. The survey was conducted on 229 respondents who had visited Rawa Pening lake tourism, Central Java, Indonesia. The results obtained confirmed that the perception of cognitive risk and financial risk contributed greatly to the visit decision, either directly or through the mediation of cognitive attraction and effective image. While socio-psychological risk is less impactful even though it is through cognitive attraction and directly, the role of the affective image can bridge visitors to visit. The two mediators helped the community decide to visit this tourist area.

Key words: Risk factors, destination image, visit decision, SPSS, AMOS-SEM

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INTRODUCTION

Important role tourism contributes to a country's source of income, and some countries have established it as a sector on which to build national economic strength (Khalifa and Fawzy, 2017; Mohamud et al., 2017). The improvement in COVID-19 cases is good news for a variety of industries, including tourism. The resumption of tourism activities was followed by a slew of policies aimed at hastening the pace of domestic economic recovery. The foreign exchange value of Indonesia's tourism sector is expected to rise to 1.7 billion US dollars, or approximately Rp 24 billion, in 2022, with the proportion of tourism around 4.3 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Furthermore, the value-added side of the creative economy is expected to reach Rp 1,236 trillion. Meanwhile, the value of creative product exports is expected to reach US$ 21.28 billion in 2022. In terms of economic development, tourism is the only natural or man-made service sector that contributes to a country's overall economic growth (Bushati, 2017).

Tourism is one of the industries most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Statistics Indonesia (2021), domestic and foreign tourists experienced a slowdown in growth which resulted in reduced accumulation. In 2020, there will be 4.02 million foreign tourists visiting Indonesia. In comparison to 2019, the number of foreign tourists fell by 75.03 percent. According to nationality, the top five countries visiting Indonesia in 2020 are Timor-Leste, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, and China. Except for China, most of these countries are neighbors. In early 2022, the number of foreign tourists visiting Indonesia increased. Statistics Indonesia reported 74,380 visits in the first quarter of 2022. Domestic tourists are both the hope and the driving force behind Indonesian tourism during the pandemic. Movement data in 2021 increased by 12% over the previous year. Not only that, but tourism foreign exchange increased by 4% compared to 2020, from US$ 0.32 billion to US$ 0.36 billion.

Efforts to grow and campaign for the output of the tourism industry should refer to policies made by each region that are domestically oriented but collaboration with countries outside or globally is still carried out which will ultimately make a difference in social and economic relations locally (Kyrylov et al., 2022). The lakes that are spread across various islands in the archipelago are an example of Indonesia's wealth and extraordinary natural beauty. There are 840 lakes in total, with a wide range of typologies, the majority of which occur naturally. There are 7,103 square kilometers in total. These lakes can be found in Sumatra, Kalimantan, Java, Bali, Sulawesi, and Papua New Guinea (LIPI, 2020). Lakes can be used for drinking water, industrial raw water sources, water transportation, energy, irrigation, tourism, and protein sources from fishery businesses. There are various models and types of lakes in Indonesia, but judging from their shape, natural lakes dominate in Indonesia (Haryani, 2013). Lakes are bodies of water that range in size from a few tens of hectares to tens of thousands of hectares (Suhardja 1993). Central Java has 982 tourist attractions with 351 details Nature Tourism, 163

* Corresponding author

Cultural Tourism, 301 Artificial Tourism, 73 Interest Tourism Special, and 94 others (Youth, Sports and Tourism Office of Central Java Province, 2021). The development of Central Java tourism in the graph is illustrated in the figure below.

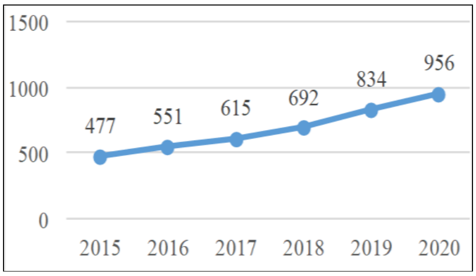


Figure 1. Tourist Attractions,
Special Interests Others (Business)

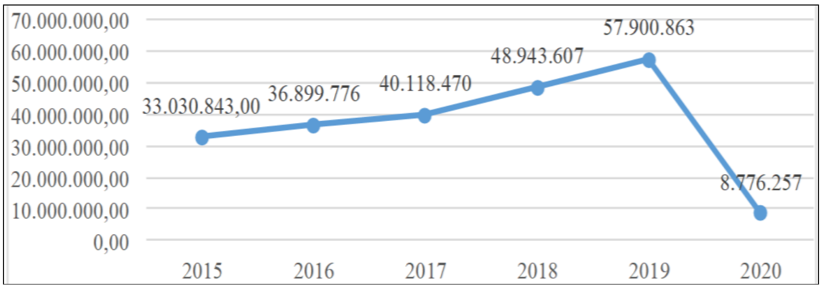


Figure 2. Number of Archipelago Tourists (Persons)
(Source: Youth, Sports and Tourism Office of Central Java Province, 2021)

The number of tourists visiting is calculated based on tourists who visited in 2020 as many as 22,707,375 tourists with details of 78,290 tourists foreign tourists and 22,629,085 domestic tourists. Refers to Youth, Sports and Tourism Office of Central Java Province (2021), 5 (five) large districts/cities visited by many foreign tourists are Magelang Regency (37,681 people), Klaten (22,205), Semarang City (6,628), Magelang City (3,726), Jepara (3,004), while the top 5 (five) The districts/cities that are visited by many domestic tourists are the City of Semarang (3,260,303), Semarang Regency (1,840,813), Regency Magelang (1,412,666), Purbalingga Regency (1,376.265) Regency Banyumas (1,325,727).

When compared with the previous year, the numbers decreased. The development of tourism objects in the Rawa Pening area must take visitor preferences into account so that changes in tourism conditions or quality can benefit both visitors and local governments. Furthermore, it is hoped that by considering environmental costs including policies on the use of natural resources between time and generations future generations can enjoy the beauty and benefits of nature that have been built in the current era. In the future, cost reductions will lead to lower perceived benefits due to the degraded state of natural resources. The perception of risk is not the only factor that influences consumer purchases of tourism products. Previous findings have had a major impact on the relationship between deciding to travel and the image of a tourist area (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Handawan, 2015). All associated risk factors, including cognitive, socio-psychological, and financial perceptions, should be carefully considered. Chew and Jahari (2014) discovered a link between socio-psychological and financial risk and destination image in their study. Meanwhile, physical risk has a direct impact on visit intention without passing through the cognitive and affective image. Due to air pollution, US and Australian tourists have a negative perception of China. This condition affects visitors' haste, and the destination's image suffers as a result. This shows that risk perception and destination image have an impact on visiting intentions (Becken et al., 2016).

The actions of the surrounding community can influence the satisfaction of visitors with the desire to come back (Chin et al., 2022). Risk perception, both cognitive and affective, can affect the basis of belief in the image of a country or destination for the desire to visit. Several previous studies have produced conflicting results when determining whether to visit tourist attractions. Risk perceptions play a significant role in tourist destination image and visit decisions, and they must be addressed. To ensure the tourism industry's survival, each type of risk must be understood. On the basis of different views, the investigation of the effect of risk factors on visit decisions either directly or through cognitive attractiveness and affective image as mediating variables has never been done before and is very important to do.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL

Visit Decision

Visiting decisions in the tourism industry are influenced by various components, but no research has compiled them systematically there are several factors such as satisfaction (Olya and Altinay, 2016) and the perceived risk that have been disclosed that will affect the decision-making process of visits by tourists although in some cases these factors have no impact. The decision will adapt to each journey process taken by the individual (Moore et al., 2012).

Various factors are taken into consideration, including the facilities at the selected destination, namely accommodation, food, accessibility, tour package prices, existing technology, and entertainment (Goeldner and Ritchie, 2012). In their study, Lin et al. (2014) stated whether gender specifically had an effect or not. Some previous studies mentioned gender involvement in decision-making, but some did not.

Cognitive Risk Perception

Risk factors consist of perceived cognitive, socio-psychological, and financial risks as part of it. In tourism, the risk is caused by turmoil, disasters, and threats that may impact and harm the tourism industry (Perpiña et al., 2019). Perceived risk is defined as information related to turmoil, disasters, and threats in a tourist destination that is evaluated by each individual and interpreted to influence the actions of visitors. Customers feel the impact of risk perception due to factors consisting of age, marital status, motivation, and psychological value (Chew and Jahari, 2014) and stimulus factors such as close relationships at the destination including the personal travel experience of tourists (Fuchs and Reichel, 2011). Through a more holistic risk approach, the integration of dual-process conceptualization of perception, the cognitive scale, and affective aspects are covered despite differences (Trumbo et al., 2016). In the perception of risk, both cognitive and affective can change beliefs about the image of a country or destination towards the willingness to visit. Based on these reasons, Some of the hypotheses proposed are as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Cognitive risk perception has a significant influence on visit decisions.

Hypothesis 2: Cognitive risk perception is significantly mediated by cognitive attraction to visit decisions.

Hypothesis 3: Cognitive risk perception is significantly mediated by the affective image on the visit decision.

Socio-Psychological Risk

Comprehensively risks are described in terms of equipment, financial, physical, psychological, satisfaction, social, and time risk. Fuchs and Reichel (2011) conducted a study that inspired world tourists traveling to Israel which was categorized into six factors namely human impact, financial, quality of service, socio-psychological, natural disasters and travel accidents, food conditions, and weather disturbances. The mismatch of destinations can affect the level of tourist satisfaction with the trip, support is shown against the disapproval of social groups with the decision. An effective image can be formed from a high level of tourist satisfaction and the suitability of his choice. The mismatch of the image in the tourism industry after the crisis with the visitor's self-image will bring about changes in the perception of socio-psychological risk which will eventually lead to doubts about visiting or contacting other people. The less positive effect of socio-psychological risk on the cognitive and affective image of the destination will mediate the consumer's behavior (Chairunnisa and Siregar, 2019). To overcome the high socio-psychological risk, a word-of-mouth strategy is needed, making community leaders who get a lot of public attention inform and improve the image of tourism in Rawa Pening Lake (Anzani et al., 2022). The submission of the hypothesis consists of:

Hypothesis 4: Socio-psychological risk has a significant influence on visit decisions.

Hypothesis 5: Socio-psychological risk is significantly mediated by cognitive attraction to visit decisions.

Hypothesis 6: Socio-psychological risk is significantly mediated by the affective image on the visit decision.

Financial risk

Financial risk is interpreted as the possibility that consumers will suffer losses monetary when the product's quality is not worth the price paid. All kinds of financial losses in the form of fraud, low product quality, and disproportionate and unsuitable expectations hurt influencing purchasing decisions. On each trip, there will be perceptions of the risks posed, including physical, psychological, financial, and health risks, resulting in unfavorable perceptions due to natural disasters. Tourist visitors characterize cognitive and affective images that consider financial risk as a decrease in the comfort benefits of their arrival. Participation in the perception of high financial risk among Malaysians who come to Japan (Chew and Jahari, 2014). Tourists form a cognitive and affective image that perceives financial risk will reduce the perceived benefits of visiting. In a study of Americans, it was found that financial risk can affect the decision to visit the 2012 Summer Olympics which took place in London (Schroeder et al., 2013). Based on the previous findings, The suggested hypotheses development are:

Hypothesis 7: Financial risk has a significant influence on visit decisions.

Hypothesis 8: Financial risk is significantly mediated by cognitive attraction to visit decisions.

Hypothesis 9: Financial risk is significantly mediated by the affective image on the visit decision.

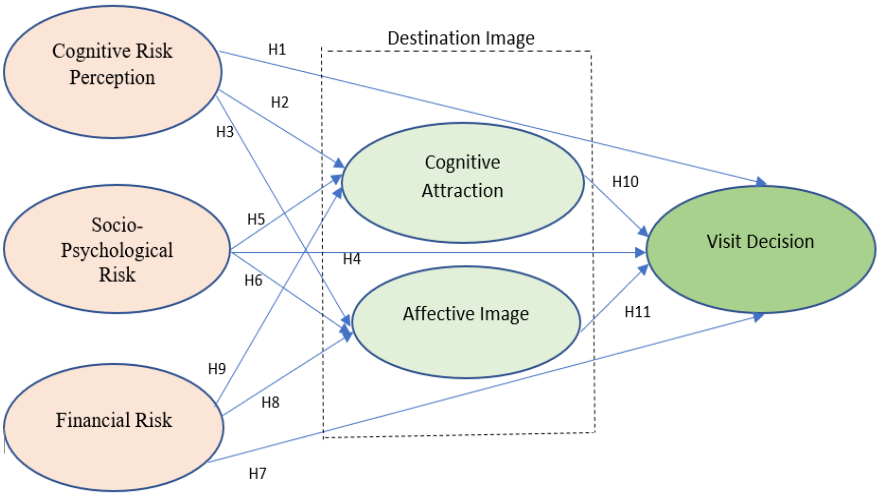


Figure 3. Theoretical Framework (Source: Adopted from Chew and Jahari (2014); Becken et al., (2016); Anzani et al., (2022) with modifications by researchers)

Destination Image

Destination image according to past research results illustrates that cognitive and affective rechecking has a major contribution to pre-arrival travel and post-visit behavior. In addition to uniqueness and recreation, the image of the destination also continuously reviews intentions. Several cognitive and affective elements can provide alternative decisions to come to Hong Kong (Tan and Wu, 2015). The image of a destination is part of a measure of tourism products and estimates how consumers behave (Alvarez and Campo, 2014). Resources or attractions usually offer a set of attributes that can be assessed as a destination image from a cognitive aspect. In this case, the development of hypotheses that can be offered are:

Hypothesis 10: Cognitive image has a high impact on visit decisions.

Hypothesis 11: Affective image has a high impact on visit decisions.

Based on several theories and empirical research, a theoretical framework can be made in Figure 3.

RESEARCH METHOD

The quantitative approach is used to collect, process, and analyze data to discover accurate facts, relationships, and precise and systematic interpretations of the effects of exogenous, intervening, and endogenous variables. In the quantitative method, researchers gain understanding through observational methods, which in this case, is data collection on a predetermined approach to providing statistical results (Apuke, 2022). The population is defined as an object or subject that exists in a study area and meets research criteria (Unaradjan, 2019). The population for this study was drawn from visitors to the tourist lake Rawa Pening. Of the 325 respondents, 229 people met the criteria, namely having visited at least once. The research variables consist of: cognitive risk perception, socio-psychological risk, financial risk, cognitive attraction, affective image, and visit decision. An online survey created with google forms was used to collect data for this study. According to Patten (2016), an online questionnaire can be used to gather information about respondents' opinions. Online surveys are relatively easy to be widespread, causing some of the targets to be the wrong respondent (McKee, 2015). The survey used the Likert Scale with the statement answer from point 1 to point 7 ranging from “Strongly Agree = 7”, “Agree = 6”, “Simply Agree = 5”, “Neutral = 4”, “Simply Disagree = 3”, “Disagree = 2”, “Strongly Disagree = 1”.

Researchers use these to perform descriptive statistics and classical assumption tests. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is one of the multivariate statistical analysis techniques for processing data in other ways because the difference in the number of samples is more than regression or path analysis. The work is a bit complicated due to the complexity of the measurement and structural models (Joseph, 2022). The data collection process begins with making a draft questionnaire, testing validity and reliability, distributing questionnaires, descriptive analysis, and processing data which includes good-fit measurement (CMIN), baseline comparisons, root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA), critical ratio, p-value, and hypothesis testing. In carrying out the research process, the team went directly to the Rawa Pening lake area and discussed with community leaders and visitors to get initial data.

Literature and empirical studies are carried out which are grouped into the grand, middle-range, and applied theories so that a conceptual framework and hypothesis development can be developed. The preparation of the questionnaire according to the dimensions of each variable was to be distributed to respondents who had previously been tested for validity and reliability. The collected data is processed through the help of software, statistically analyzed which is elaborated on the concept, and then conclusions are drawn. The complete flow chart is shown in Figure 4.

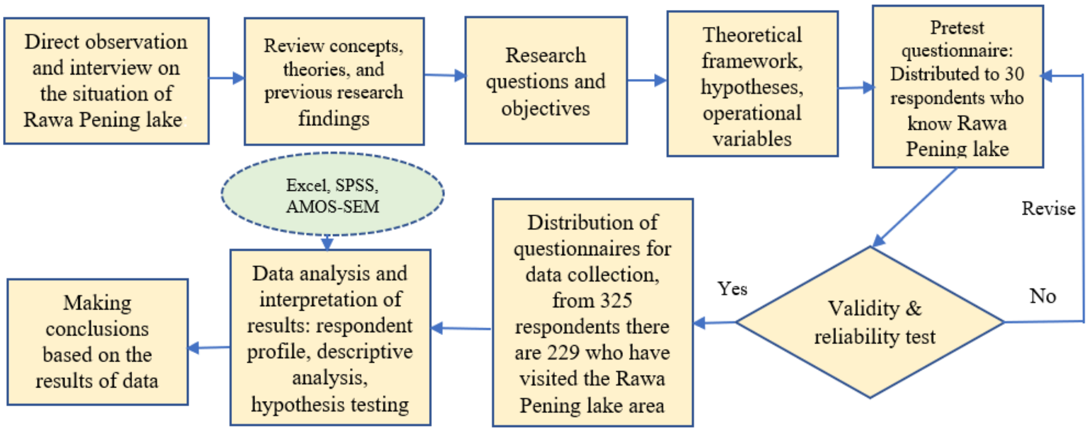


Figure 4. Research Process (Source: Adjusted from several sources by researcher, 2022)

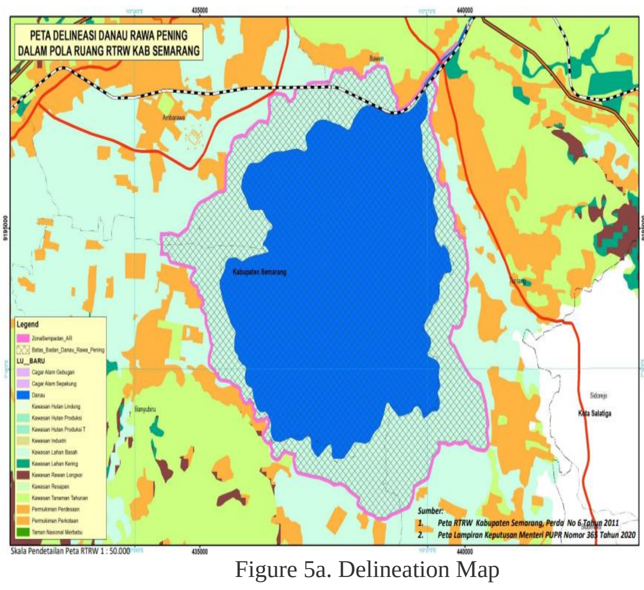


Figure 5a. Delineation Map

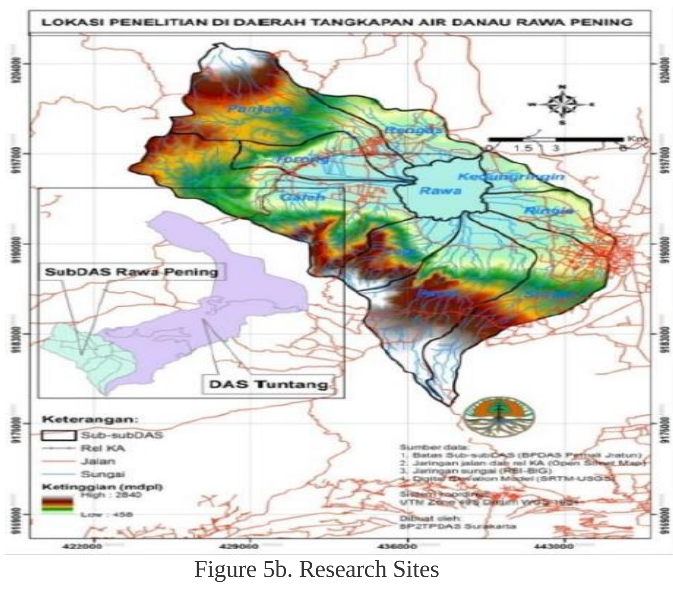


Figure 5b. Research Sites

RESULTS

Rawa Pening Lake Profile

The tourism potential of Rawa Pening Lake in Central Java is very promising and has the potential to become an international standard tourism destination. However, the swamp area's condition has not yet been well managed, particularly the silting and thick water hyacinth plants, which are one of the development impediments. This natural lake of 2,670 hectares has exotic natural scenery, abundant water resource potential, and distinctive arts and culture. Even the lake's tourist attraction, popular with the legend of "Baru Klinting", stretches between the Ambarawa, Tuntang, Bawen, and Banyubiru districts, covering a variety of interesting things with a unique historical background, deserving of development as a world tour. The research delineation and area are shown in Figures 5a and 5b.

The two images show the location in detail of the lake area including its connectivity with other places and its surroundings. The area is in the midst of community life, the majority of which are farmers and still maintain local culture.

The lake ecosystem benefits plant, animal, and human species by serving as a habitat for plants and animals, regulating hydrological functions, preventing natural disasters, maintaining natural systems and processes, producing biological natural resources, producing energy, serving as a means of transportation, recreation and sports, social and cultural benefits, and serving as a means of research and education (BBWS PJ, 2016).

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

1. Validity test

Table 1. Validity Results (Note: n = 30; α = 5%; R table = 0.361; if R compute (test) > R table → Valid)

No	Variable	Statement 1	Statement 2	Statement 3	Statement 4	Decision
1	Cognitive Risk Perception	0.736	0.639	0.721	0.658	Valid
2	Socio-Psychological Risk	0.871	0.794	0.593	0.687	Valid
3	Financial Risk	0.599	0.757	0.677	0.558	Valid
4	Cognitive Attraction	0.724	0.813	0.756	0.783	Valid
5	Affective Image	0.746	0.403	0.590	0.733	Valid
6	Visit Decision	0.749	0.770	0.761	0.829	Valid

Through a pretest questionnaire distributed to 30 respondents, the output of the test calculation (R compute) using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient technique for all statements on the variable exceeds the R table (0.361) so it is declared valid. The details are written in Table 1. Some ideas can be helpful for people who do analysis and interpretation to calculate the magnitude of the correlation coefficient when conducting statistical tests between two variables whether they have a strong or weak relationship (Thakur, 2022).

2. Reliability Test

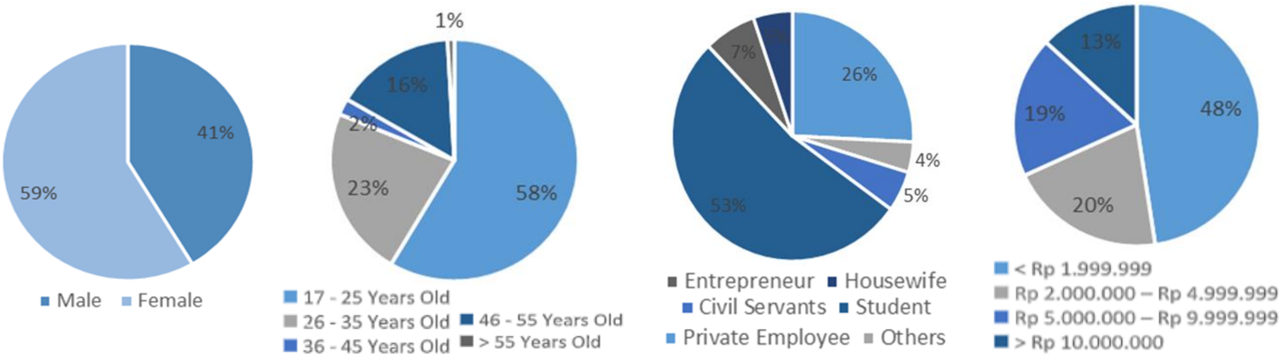
Table 2. Reliability

No	Variable	SPSS Code	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Decision
1	Cognitive Risk Perception	CR	0.733	Reliable
2	Socio-Psychological Risk	SP	0.707	Reliable
3	Financial Risk	FR	0.659	Reliable
4	Cognitive Attraction	CA	0.713	Reliable
5	Affective Image	AI	0.788	Reliable
6	Visit Decision	VD	0.844	Reliable

The reliability results in Table 2 indicate that all outputs according to SPSS software testing have met the requirements, Cronbach's Alpha test result must be more than 0.6 (α > 0.6) to be considered the data be reliable (Stephanie, 2017). The highest value of 0.844on the visit decision variable, while the lowest value of 0.659 occurred in financial risk. Coefficient values close to 1 mean reliability or consistency of measurement and vice versa.

3. Respondent

Visitors who know about tourist attractions in Rawa Pening lake and have filled in the questionnaire as many as 229 respondents are described in the profile Figure 6. Overall, visitors were dominated by 135 females, or 59% while male 94 people, or 41%. While those who come have an average age of 17-25 years or 59%, the most type of occupation from students as much as 53% with monthly income below Rp 2 million or still giving from their parents. According to information, several schools also conduct study tours and field practices for students.



Gender - 229 Responses Age - 229 Responses Occupation - 229 Responses Income - 229 Responses

Figure 6. Respondent Characteristics

4. Descriptive statistics

Table 3 shows a descriptive analysis that states that the lowest mean = 5.08, the highest mean = 6.20, the lowest standard deviation = 0.877, and the highest standard deviation = 1.987. All mean values are still below the standard deviation, which means that all data are declared good in distribution, so there is no need for outliers. This research data will be analyzed using SPSS with the following criteria Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test result should be more or equal to 0.5, and Bartlett's test result should occur in less than or equal to 0.05 (Sig. ≤ 0.05) (Stephanie, 2017). The KMO test evaluates the data's suitability for factor analysis. The test evaluates the model's overall sampling efficiency as well as the sampling efficiency for each variable. The statistic is a representation of how much of the variance among the variables may be a common variance. The KMO value obtained is 0.928 indicating a strong correlation and testing must be carried out. Tests can be carried out to determine the null hypothesis that the correlation matrix to identity is built using Barlett's roundness. Test tools usually use numbers below 0.05 which indicates the significance and the existing correlation matrix shows the rejection of the null hypothesis.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics

Variable and Dimension	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Cognitive Risk Perception				
- Possession of perception	2	7	6.16	0.877
- Information push (story, origins)	1	7	5.62	1.125
- Gaining knowledge	1	7	5.73	1.058
- Remember information	1	7	5.78	0.994
Socio-Psychological Risk				
- Self-image	1	7	5.76	1.291
- Safe friends and family	3	7	5.51	0.998
- Social level	1	7	5.38	1.225
- Psychological comfort	3	7	5.80	1.040
Financial Risk				
- Money not back	1	7	5.08	1.987
- Comparable spending	1	7	5.52	1.008
- Cheap accommodation costs	2	7	5.57	1.103
- Cheap traveling costs	2	7	5.78	1.166
Cognitive Attraction				
- Interesting	1	7	6.13	1.042
- Emotional	1	7	5.65	1.026
- Feeling of belonging	1	7	5.66	1.067
- Part of life	3	7	5.69	0.999
Affective Image				
- Feel calm	3	7	6.20	1.018
- Happy emotion	1	7	5.66	0.965
- Exciting	1	7	5.73	1.031
- Lively atmosphere	1	7	5.71	1.034
Visit Decision				
- Have a wish	1	7	5.94	1.134
- Searching for information	1	7	5.54	1.096
- Making comparisons	1	7	5.60	1.101
- Decision to choose	1	7	5.66	1.085
KMO-MSA: 0.928; Chi-Square: 2365.032; Sig. : 0.000				

5. Structural Equation Model

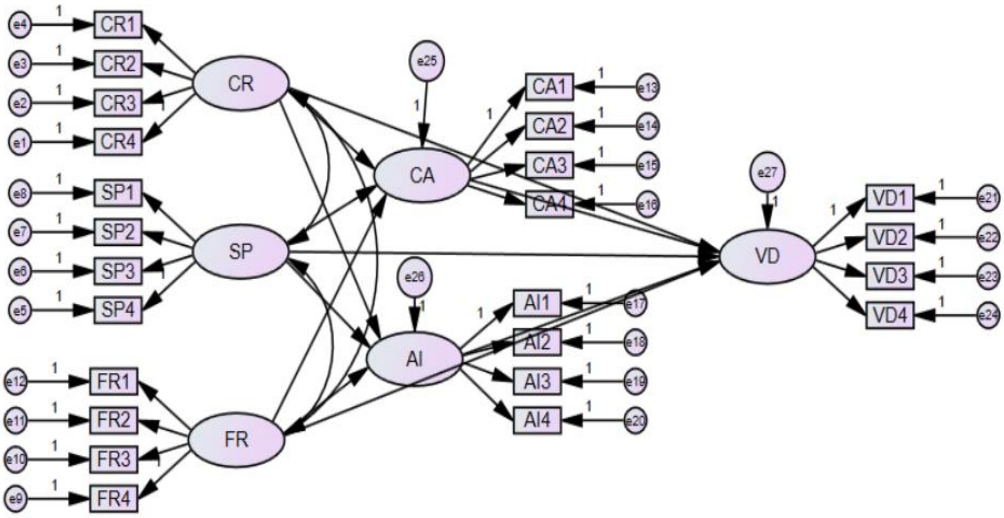


Figure 7. SEM Output

The research creates a Structural Equation Model based on the theoretical framework consisting of 6 variables which are cognitive risk perception, social-psychological risk, financial risk as an independent variable, cognitive attraction, and affective image as mediating variables, and visit decision as the dependent variable. This SEM can be shown in Figure 7.

6. Goodness-of-Fit-Model

The result of the data from this research shows the Good fit model from the value of CMIN is 1.029, less than the required CMIN (CMIN < 5). The IFI is 0.998, TLI is 0.997, CFI is 0.998, greater than the required standard of 0.90 and RMSEA is 0.011. Results should be less than or equal to 0.60 (Hooper et al., 2008).

7. Hypothesis Testing

In Table 4, the critical ratio (CR) result must be more than 1.96, while the P-Value number must be less than or equal to 0.05 for it to be proved to have strong evidence, and the null hypothesis, as a result, more than 0.05 indicates weak evidence and if it is close to 0.05 indicates marginal and can go strong evidence or weak evidence (Limited, 2018). This is a certain difference ratio from the calculation of the mean value of the standard deviation. This value is obtained from the estimated parameter divided by the standard error (SE). The table shows that only socio-psychological risk variables on visit decisions, either directly or through cognitive attraction, reject the initial hypothesis. This situation is shown in SP to VD and SP to VD (through CA) each having P values of 0.299 and 0.0855, CR value = 1.039 and -0.183, both smaller than 1.96. While the other variables meet the specified requirements.

Table 4. Hypothesis Outputs

Direction	Hypothesis	Estimate	S.E	C.R.	P	Decision
CR to VD	Hypothesis 1	1.115	0.124	8.983	***	Accepted
CR to VD (through CA)	Hypothesis 2	0.998	0.149	6.948	0.031	Accepted
CR to VD (through AI)	Hypothesis 3	1.049	0.152	6.897	***	Accepted
SP to VD	Hypothesis 4	0.178	0.171	1.039	0.299	Rejected
SP to VD (through CA)	Hypothesis 5	-0.125	0.683	-0.183	0.855	Rejected
SP to VD (through AI)	Hypothesis 6	1.579	0.230	6.872	0.030	Accepted
FR to VD	Hypothesis 7	0,795	0.103	7.716	***	Accepted
FR to VD (through CA)	Hypothesis 8	0.882	0.107	8.244	***	Accepted
FR to VD (through AI)	Hypothesis 9	1.377	0.510	2.698	0.007	Accepted
CA to VD	Hypothesis 10	0.951	0.144	6.948	***	Accepted
AI to VD	Hypothesis 11	0.845	0.114	7.430	***	Accepted

Note: CR = Cognitive Risk Perception; CA = Cognitive Attraction
SP = Socio-Psychological Risk; AI = Affective Image
FR = Financial Risk; VD = Visit Decision

DISCUSSION

Cognitive risk perception has a significant direct or indirect impact on visit decisions. Lake Rawa Pening's existence as a tourist destination was viewed positively by visitors. Knowledge and information about stories and origins that have become legends in the community will be obtained. The comfortable, beautiful, and pollution-free environment allows visitors to stay for an extended period. The area is in the middle of unspoiled nature, many rice fields and people's houses are still rare and far from the noise of the city. Theoretically, there is relevance between cognitive and affective processes that are integrated as the basis for assessment and decision-making. Simultaneous application of processes in understanding perceptions of tourist areas is also needed. Evidence has shown that an integrated multiple-process approach can broaden insight into the psychological phenomenon of perceived risk. In practice, when an individual is exposed to risk, the tendency is to activate affective and cognitive processes simultaneously.

Referring to the analysis conducted by Becken et al. (2016), tourists' perception of air quality or negative affective risk will reduce the image of the destination and result in uncertainty for its recreation. A cognitive approach can help to create a positive image. Various factors have an impact on destination image, risk perception, and willingness to come. Personal experience with environmental risks has increased people's awareness of how to avoid risks (Shakeela and Becken, 2015). At various scales, a more holistic risk approach that includes both cognitive and affective aspects has been proposed (Trumbo et al., 2016). Risking the perception of whether cognitive or affective can create views on arrival to a country or region, forming an image and desire to visit. Age, marital status, motivation, and psychological values are factors perceived by customers related to risk perception (Chew and Jahari, 2014).

Socio-psychological risk has a strong role in cognitive attractiveness and affective image but does not affect visit decisions, either directly or indirectly via both of them as a mediator. Social risk is defined as the probability that buying a product will negatively affect the opinions of other consumers. In consumer behavior research this dimension has most often been conceptualized as a potential feeling of shame or loss of self-esteem from others as a result of the product purchase or product failure after purchase. Psychological risk is concluded as a consumer's concern about dissatisfaction in using a product, especially a product that has never been used by consumers because the product does not meet their expectations. Products with private labels must improve the quality of their products so that consumers feel the need to use these products. Despite the legends, activities, and rituals of the surrounding community, lake Rawa Pening has not proven to be an appealing destination. Visitors are arriving as a result of the image's impact; the atmosphere is calm, exciting, and crowded. Traveling in this location does not fully describe self-image, social comfort, or social status. Psychologically, the image that is still beautiful and has a legendary meaning makes people want to know about the existence of this area. Anzani et al., (2022) demonstrate that cognitive and affective images can mediate socio-psychological risks, causing visitors to visit East Belitung. There is something less positive for socio-psychological risks in consumers' lives because of the cognitive and affective image mediator variables of the destination (Chairunnisa and Siregar, 2019). The alignment found by Chew and Jahari (2014) related to this problem is the formation of cognitive and affective images due to socio-psychological risks, if needed, revisiting will be better.

Financial risk has a high contribution to the decision to visit, either directly or indirectly via cognitive attraction and affective image mediation. Financial risk is defined as the consumer's financial loss; because of misallocation of investments, discrepancies between prices and products obtained, indiscretion in spending goods, and product possibilities that require repair or replacement. Including consumers who lost money for buying it wrong. When losing money for consideration. Importantly, the financial risk is said to be high. Research investigating the dimensions of financial risk focuses on the perception experienced by consumers that purchasing a product will not provide the desired benefits. So that buyers feel they don't get the satisfaction of just wasting money and having the desire to replace it with other products. In comparison to other areas, the entrance fee to Rawa Pening Lake is relatively low and very affordable for the community. The cost of admission, lodging, and transportation in the surrounding area does not have to be prohibitively expensive. Local governments still provide subsidies for operational and maintenance costs so that the prices offered are very affordable for tourists. Visitors who cancel their trip to the location are also not disappointed. People usually seek peace, learn about their origins and rituals, and integrate into society.

Previous research has found that young female tourists, particularly those aged 18-35, do not change their perception of a destination's positive image due to financial risks (Khan et al., 2017). Amid a crisis, the younger generation takes advantage of the promotion of low-cost tourism (Chew and Jahari, 2014). Schroeder et al. (2013) disseminated their investigation that Americans are rethinking visiting the 2012 Summer Olympics in London because of the financial risks they consider. People will tend to avoid situations that cause financial problems (Anzani et al., 2022).

The destination image, which consists of cognitive and affective attraction, has a great contribution to making visits. There are legends, and rituals that become part of information and knowledge for visitors, making them feel calm, happy, excited, and interested. This is in accordance with the findings of Chew and Jahari (2014); Tan and Wu (2015); Becken et al. (2016) which investigated various cognitive and affective factors in influencing risk perception, destination image, and customer behavior in determining the decision to visit an area. In Lake Rawa Pening, the image of tourist destinations is very important in changing consumer behavior. This is consistent with findings that explain how a destination's image is a measure of tourism products (Pike and Ryan, 2004) and predicts consumer behavior (Alvarez and Campo, 2014). Their research concludes that the political conflict between the two countries hurts the image of the country and increases previously held hostility. This incident also adds to the negative impact of the affective image on the overall image of the country and the desire to visit the location. Rawa Pening Lake, which is supported and maintained by local community leaders, can increase its existence in the future.

CONCLUSION

Cognitive risk perception has a large effect either directly or through the destination image on the visit decision. Knowledge, information on legends, and the beautiful and pollution-free atmosphere can build a cognitive and positive image of the existence of Rawa Pening lake. A holistic approach by combining the two even though with differences in scale has proven to be effective in attracting tourists to visit again. The socio-psychological risk aspect has no impact on the final decision to visit, although it has a very significant effect on the mediator. This is related to the state of the area that has not been fully recognized in self-image, social interaction, and the status of life around it.

Financial risk has a very significant effect on both intervening and visiting decisions. The cost of accommodation which includes entrance tickets, sightseeing in the vicinity, lodging, and culinary is relatively cheaper. The respondent's profile supports this reasoning because the largest visitors are in the student segment with incomes below IDR 2 million. If there are obstacles that result in the cancellation of the visit, it is not economically disadvantaged.

Cognitive attraction and affective image as components of destination image have a very big contribution in influencing the consideration of visitors before making a decision. The calm, happy, exciting, interesting, legendary and various cultural rituals have colored the behavior of customers to see more about the existence of Rawa Pening lake in Central Java, Indonesia. Folklore that continues to stick in the hearts of the people around it makes this area protected and protected from environmental damage so that the existence of the lake as a place of ritual and tourism continues to this day.

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MARINDUK ISLAND IN THE PHILIPPINES FROM THE POSITION OF GEOGRAPHY OF TOURISM

Kalibek AKYLBEKOV
Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University, Institute of Natural Sciences and Geography, Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan, e-mail: yes171@bk.ru

Emin ATASOY
Bursa Uludağ University, Faculty of Education, Department of Social Studies Education, Bursa, Turkey, e-mail: eatasoy@uludag.edu.tr

Elina ISSAGALIYEVA
Atyrau University named after H. Dosmukhamedov, Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, Atyrau, Republic of Kazakhstan, e-mail: tilek-elina@mail.ru

Erbolat MENDYBAYEV
K. Zhubanova Aktobe Regional State University, Department of Ecology, Alia Moldagulova, Aktobe, Kazakhstan, e-mail: beskurek@mail.ru

Zharas BERDENOV*
L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Faculty of Natural Sciences, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, e-mail: berdenov-z@mail.ru

Maria Victoria O. ESPALDON
University of the Philippines Los Banos, School of Environmental Science and Management, Los Banos City, Philippines e-mail: mariavictoriaespaldon@gmail.com

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Abstract: The Marinduque Island, which is a part of the Marinduque province, is a small but densely populated island within the Luzon Islands Group. The island surrounded by the water of the Sibuan Sea, the island has an area of 959 square kilometers and a population of 245 000 people. Flat plains, low coasts, low slope plains, mangrove forests and hilly lands constitute the most important natural elements of the Marinduque Island. There are many bays, beaches, atoll, cliffs, capes, coral and mangrove forests on the coast of the island. In this study, the geographical location of the Marinduque Island and its general geographical features have been explicated, and the main tourism elements of the island have been briefly discussed. We have tried to examine the main physical and human characteristics of the island by identifying its tourism potential. Furthermore, the main accommodation facilities, beaches and hotels located on the east and west coasts of the island have been identified. The main purpose of this study is to introduce the tourism potential and natural beauties of this Philippine island, which is not well-known among the foreign tourists and to offer new holiday options for the inquisitive tourists.

Key words: Philippines, tourism, tourism potential, Marinduque Island, Marinduque Province

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INTRODUCTION

The Philippines, which is the most populated Christian country in the Asian continent, is the country with the most islands in the continent, along with Indonesia and Japan (Figure 1). Each island in the Philippines, whose numbers are as many as 7641, has its own demographic, cultural, economic and tourism characteristics. Even though thousands of foreign tourists visit one of these islands every year, the fact that the number of scientific works published on the tourism potential of these tropical islands is insufficient is the principal reason for putting pen to paper for this article. The Philippine Archipelago, which is a part of the Malay Archipelago, constituting the largest group of islands in the world, is divided into 3 large groups of islands. The islands in the northern parts of the country are in the "Luzon Group Islands", the islands in the central part are in the "Visayas Group Islands", and the islands in the southern parts of the country are in the "Mindanao and Sulu Archipelago" group (Atasoy and Atış, 2020).

In the present study, the tourism resources, geographical features and tourism potential of the Marinduque island, which is located in the "Islands of the Luzon Group", were examined multidimensionally. In this article, the main settlements, beaches, accommodation facilities, faith centers, touristic districts and tourism centers of the island as well as the characteristics of the small touristic islets located close to Marinduque, were all examined. In other words, the tourism potential of both the island of Marinduque and the small islets in its vicinity were exhibited in the study, thus it was aimed to create a tourist guide for the inquisitive tourists who would visit these islands. As a result, the primary

* Corresponding author

purpose of this study focused on the tourism geography was to introduce the geographical features, touristic attractiveness, tourism potential, tourism advantages and disadvantages of Marinduque, one of the most important, but not very well-known islands of the Philippines (Andriesse, 2018). The island of Marinduque, located in the central part of the Philippines and in the Sibuyan Sea, is bordered by Luzon to the north and east, Mindoro to the west, Burias and Masbate to the southeast, and Banton, Simara, Tablas, Romblon and Sibuyan to the south. The Tayabas bay located between the islands of Luzon and Mindoro, to the north of Marinduque and the Mompog strait located to the northeast separates this island from Luzon. Nevertheless, the Tablas strait separates the islands of Marinduque and Mindoro. Catanauan, General Luna, Pitogo and Lucena, located on the island of Luzon, are the port cities closest to the island of Marinduque. The capital of the province is the town of Boac. Santa Cruz, Torrijos, Gasan, Buenavista and Mogpog are the other major settlements of the Island**. The district centers of the island are also the largest settlements of the island.

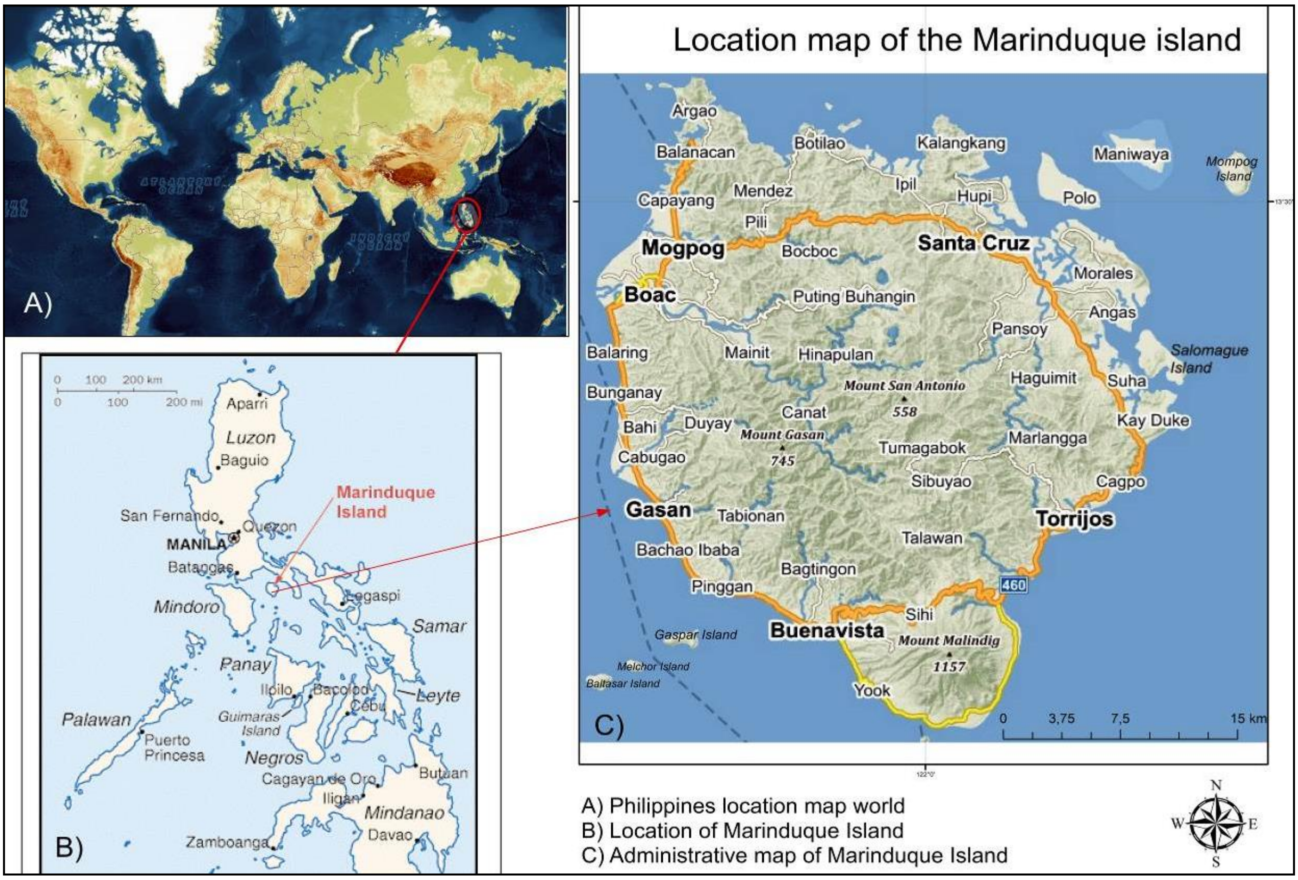

Figure 1. Location Map of the Marinduque Island (Source: Authors, 2022)

Marinduque is neither the most populous, nor the most densely populated, nor one of the most populated one amongst the Philippine provinces. The provincial population, which exceeded 51 000 in 1903, reached 82 000 in 1939, 114 000 in 1960, 173 000 in 1980, 217 000 in 2000 and 239 000 in 2020**. As is clearly illustrated in Table 1, in 2020, the Province of Marinduque had an area of 952.58 km^2 and a total population of 239,207, with an average of 251 people per km2 in the territory of the province. In other words, the Marinduque Province constitutes 7.41% of the total population of the MIMAROPA Region, 0.38% of the total population of the Luzon Island Group and 0.22% of the national population of the Philippines**. The province of Marinduque, which is located within the Luzon Island Group and in the MIMAROPA Administrative Region, is comprised of 14 more islands as well as the island of Marinduque. There are 6 towns and 218 barangays within the borders of Marinduque province (Table 1). The town of Boac, located in the northwest of the island of Marinduque, is both the provincial capital and the most populated town on the island of Marinduque. The towns located in the Marinduque province are: Boac, Santa Cruz, Torrijos, Gasan, Buenavista and Mogpog. In fact, with an area of 959 km2, the island of Marinduque is the 14th largest island in the Philippines**.

Table 1. Major Administrative and Geographical Features of the Marinduque Province**

Name of the Town	Population of the Town (Year 2020)	Surface Area (km^2)	Population Density (Person/km^2)	Number of Barangays Embodied
Boac	57,283	212,70	269	61
Buenavista	26,043	81,25	321	15
Gasan	36,197	100,88	359	25
Mogpog	34,516	108,06	319	37
Santa Cruz	54,692	270,77	202	55
Torrijos	30,476	178,92	170	25
TOTAL	**239,207**	**952,58**	**251**	**218**

Since the shores of the island of Marinduque are not very indented, there are not many of peninsulas and gulfs. Ulan, Sayao and Calancan located on the northern coasts; Torrijos and Marlanga on the east coast; Balanacan, located on the west coast, are the largest bays of the island. Both the characteristics and sizes of the large and small islets around the island of Marinduque, as well as their geographical location, vary greatly (Table 2). The island of Solomagui to the east of the island of Marinduque; the islands of Banot and Hakupan to the north; the island of Elefante to the south; the islands of Gaspar, Melchor and Baltasar (Tres Reyes Archipelago) to the southwest; the islands of San Andres, Atta, Agpisan, Natangco and Hidalgo to the northwest; the islands of Polo (Santa Cruz), Maniwaya and Mongpong to the northeast are all located. Almost all of these small islets surrounding the Marinduque mainland have no settlements or permanent populations. Daily visits are paid to these uninhabited islands generally for the purpose of sea tourism by boats from the island of Marinduque (Estoque et al., 2018). The Marinduque Island, located only 18 km to the south of the island of Luzon, has a humid tropical-monsoon climate. The average annual temperature of the island is 28.04 ^{o}C, and it is clear that it is 0.82 ^{o}C higher than the average temperature of the Philippines. The highest monthly temperature averages were established in May 29.47 oC and June 29.40 ^{o}C, and the lowest monthly temperature averages were established in January 26.41 ^{o}C and February 26.31 ^{o}C. As is clear, there is no great variation in the temperature values throughout the year, and there is only a 3-4 degree difference in monthly average temperature (Fabinyi, 2018).

Table 2. Primary Characteristics of the Provincial Island of Marinduque

Group Islands Located: The Luzon Group Islands	**Total Population (Year 2020):**240 000
The Province: Marinduque	**Arithmetic Population Density:** 252 people/km^2
Surface Area: 959 km^2	**The Largest Town:** Boac
The Highest Point: Malindig (1157 m.)	**The Largest Settlements:** Boac, Santa Cruz, Torrijos, Gasan, Buenavista and Mogpog
The Longest River: Boac	**The Largest Lake:** Capayang
Number of Towns Embodied: 6	**Number of Barangays Embodied:** 218

The average annual precipitation on the island is 2034 millimeters, and the humidity rate throughout the year has been established as 78% on average. The period between January and April receives less precipitation and the average monthly precipitation in this period varies between is 50 to 100 mm. More precipitation falls in the October - December period and the average monthly precipitation in this period varies between 200 to 250 mm. In other words, when the climatic characteristics of the island of Marinduque are examined, it is possible to assert that the most unfavorable period in terms of sea tourism is the period of October - December with plenty of rain. However, since there is precipitation throughout the year on the island, there can be no definite "dry season" and definite "rainy season". Therefore, both humidity and temperature averages on the island are high throughout the year. On the Marinduque island, it rains on average 229 days (63%) out of 365 days within a year.

Even though the Marinduque Island has a small area and a mountainous topography, it contains many rural settlements. A small part of these rural settlements, whose populations and places of establishment have kept changing, are located on the coast, and a large part is located in the interior part of the island (Salvacion and Magcale-Macandog, 2015). The common characteristics of the rural settlements on the Marinduque Island are that they are not scattered but grouped, they generally earn their living by fishing and agricultural activities, and they are comprised of poor families with low quality of life (Salvacion, 2020). In terms of transportation, trade, education and tourism, the villages of Balanacan, Guisian, Poras, San Antonio, Poctoy, Mogpog, Cabuyo, Ipil, Libtangin, Dolores, Taytay, Masiga, Cawit, Lipata, Marlanga, Malibago and Maligaya are the most important and most strategic rural settlements villages of the Marinduque island. More than 70% of the island population is Catholic Christian, more than 15% is made up of various Christian denominations and less than 5% is Muslim communities (Estoque et al., 2018; Fabinyi, 2018).

Marinduque is a mountainous and rugged Island, with less sloping land and flat plains only along the coastline and stream valleys. The major mountains of the island are Malindig (1157 m.), Gasan (745 m.), Tapian (698 m.), San Antonio (558 m.) and Catala (606 m.). In other words, Malindig (1157 m.) is the most famous and highest mountain of the island. The Malindig Mountain, which is the subject of folk tales and legends, is actually an active stratovolcano. The Marinduque Island has short and fast flowing streams. Boac, Libtangin, Bol, Mogpog, Tabionan, Tipo and Cabuyo are the longest rivers on the island. The Boac river is the longest river on the island. There are also shorter rivers such as Matandang Gasan, Pangi, Bangbang, Antipolo and Tigioun within the borders of the island (Figure 2). Water pollution, unregulated irrigation and sudden floods are among the most common problems observed in the rivers on the island. Tailing Pond and Gapayang are the largest lakes on the island, which is poor in terms of lakes. In recent years, mining activities on the lake basins affect the ecological environment very negatively (Lanot et al., 2020). Consequently, mining activities, unconscious agriculture, dumping of harmful wastes into water basins, illegal tree cutting and uncontrolled domestic waste create the biggest ecological problems of the lakes (Dmitriyev et al., 2021; Dmitriyev et al., 2022), seas and streams on the island; on the other hand, they do harm to the image of the island and undermine the tourism activities.

Tourism, agriculture, fishing and mining are the most developed economic activities on the island of Marinduque. Rice, corn and coconut are the most widely grown agricultural products on the island. Boac and Santa Cruz are the island's most important ports (Saguin, 2017). “Marinduque Airport”, located between the cities of Boac and Gasan, is the only major airport of the island. It should also be noted that the geographical center point of the Republic of the Philippines is located in the Argao region, in the northwest of the Marinduque Island. In short, this interesting island is geographically located in the very center of the country (Figure 1, B).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This scientific study, which is part of the research program titled "The Republic of the Philippines from the Perspective of Political, Economic and Human Geography and Turkey-Philippines Interaction", which was accepted by the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey in 2020 within the scope of "2219-Overseas Postdoctoral Research Scholarship Program" and conducted by Emin Atasoy is one of its scientific outputs of this program. In the present study, the demographic, economic, geographical, economic and ecological characteristics of the Marinduque island was examined, and both the tourism advantages and disadvantages as well as the tourism resources of the island were attempted to be identified. The author conducted city surveys and geographical observations on the Marinduque island between 23 - 28 October 2022; as a result, he personally examined majority of the tourism centers on the island. The methodological basis of the study is the methods of a systematic scientific approach (Figure 3), comparative geographical, cartographic and expert assessment (Dunets et al., 2020; Berdenov et al., 2021; Dmitriyev et al., 2021; Suleimenov et al., 2022; Khazai en al., 2018; Ozgeldinova et al., 2017). One of the primary objectives of this study is to proclaim the great tourism power of this small island to the world and promote the island in terms of international tourism.

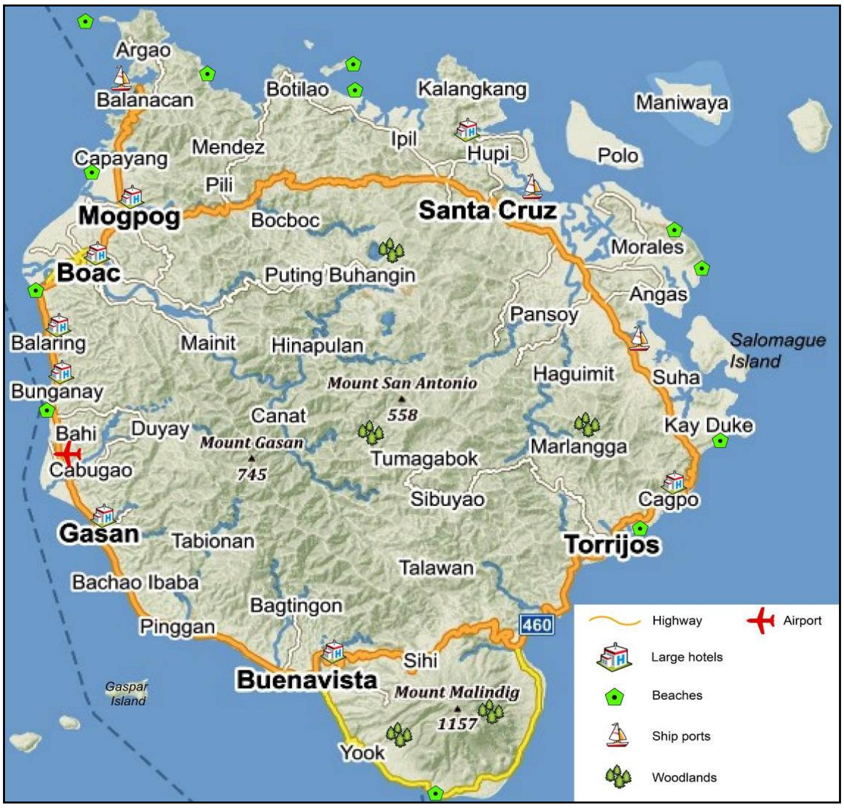

Figure 2. Tourism Map of the Marinduque Island
(Compiled by the Author in the ArcGIS program)

A comprehensive assessment of the tourist and recreational potential of the island based on the study included the following steps. First stage. Identification of parameters for assessing an object in the blocks "natural conditions and resources", "cultural and historical resources", "security of tourist infrastructure", "information security of tourism". Second stage. Collection of information necessary for the assessment. Processing of information from statistical documentation of local tourism management bodies. Study of hotels, sights, leisure and recreation infrastructure, transport support. Third stage. Bringing the obtained indicators of evaluation criteria to a single measurement system. The weighting coefficients are calculated. Further, the calculation of private indicators of the tourist and recreational potential is carried out: natural conditions and resources, cultural and historical resources, provision of tourist infrastructure, information provision of tourism.

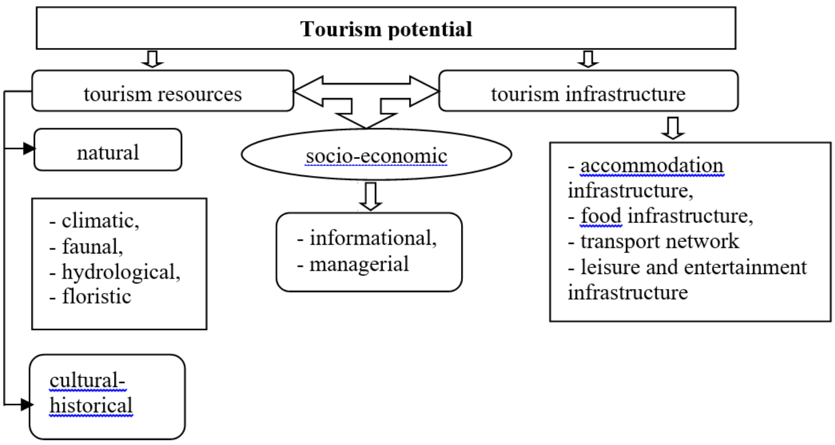

Figure 3. Blog diagram exploring tourism potential (compiled by the author)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Marinduque Island which is tucked between the islands of Luzon and Mindoro, is not one of the Philippines' most visited islands and most popular destinations, nor is it one of the busiest destinations for international tourist flows and foreign travelers. Therefore, those who visit the island are those who prefer quieter holidays, experienced divers engaged in water sports, and enthusiastic travelers who like to discover new geographical locations. For those who love mountains covered with tropical forests, healing springs, exotic and quiet beaches, picturesque caves and majestic waterfalls, historical churches and colorful festivals, this island has many tourist attractions to explore. The Marinduque Island offers good opportunities for diving and water sports enthusiasts, cockfighting spectators, local cuisine enthusiasts, those who collect ecological products in agricultural farms, those who fish in lakes and streams, those who wish to swim in untouched coves or those who love trekking in nature. The Marinduque island is one of the Philippine islands where cultural and artistic activities, recreation and entertainment, sports activities and nature walks, fishing and sea holidays can be performed together. One of the most important features of this tranquil island is that it has many festivals and thousands of tourists take part in these cultural events every year. Since thousands of local and foreign tourists visit the island, especially in March – April (due to the Moriones Festival), the greatest intensity of activities and tourist flow happen during this period. The following summarizes the most important festivals on the island**:

- Moriones Festival (Marinduque Island, April),
- Haring Karabaw Festival (Santa Cruz, January),
- Kalutang Festival (February),
- Gasang-Gasang Festival (Gasan, Easter Sunday),
- Kangga Festival (Mogpog, May),
- Kalesayahan sa Gasan (Gasan, August),
- Bila-Bila Festival (Boac, December).

The most vivacious and most famous tourism activity on the Marinduque island is the famous Moriones Festival, which takes place in various cities in March - April. Thousands of local and foreign tourists take part in this colorful festival, which takes place in the cities of Buenavista, Boac, Gasan and Mogpog every year. Since the date of the Moriones Festival constantly changes depending on the month in which Catholic Holy Week is celebrated, there is actually no exact date of celebration. The Holy Week is usually observed in March or April. In this case, the Moriones Festival is also celebrated during these months. In the Moriones Festival, a cultural tradition from the Spanish rule, there are crowded and noisy celebrations, as well as parades with military clothes, interesting masks and dresses reminiscent of the Roman period. Men and women in costumes and masks replicating the apparel of Roman soldiers roam the town streets from the Holy Monday to Easter Sunday, scaring children or arranging interesting moves or surprises in order to attract attention. Therefore, the Moriones Festival is both a festival with historical and faith motifs, and a cultural tourism activity with deep roots. Another popular cultural tradition of the Marinduque Island is the famous cockfights, which have continued for centuries. Every weekend and usually on Saturdays, this engrossing event is held in specially prepared venues for these fights and is watched with interest by hundreds of spectators. Naturally, as expected, environmentalists and animal rights activists are actively working for the prohibition of long-term cockfights on the Island.

Natural Tourist Attractions of the Marinduque Island

Nature reserves, caves, waterfalls, beaches, small islets, natural parks, interesting hydrographic and geomorphological formations are among the most popular natural tourist attractions of the Marinduque Island. The most interesting and most visited natural tourism attractions in the Marinduque Island and its surroundings are (Figure 2):

- Nature reserves: Marinduque Wildlife Sanctuary, Capayang Man Made Lake Park Alanı, Tres Reyes Marine Sanctuary, Lipata Baywalk Sunset, Carmen Eco-Adventure Park, Haribon Sanctuary;
- Touristic caves: Bathala, Duyay, Tarug, Ka Amon, Tablo, Bagumbungan, Piton, Talamban, Baltasar Sea Cave (Alviola et al., 2015);
- Touristic waterfalls: Paadjao, Ginaras, Tabag, Basud Hidden, Kawa-Kawa, Kabugsakan;
- Touristic beaches: Ipil White Beach, Palad Sandbar, Poctoy White Beach, Dapdap Beach, Silangan Beach, Amoingon Beach, Seaman's Park Resort, Pinkys Taha Beach Resort, Polo Beach - Sta. Cruz Island, Gasgas Beach, Hakupan Beach, Gasan Public Beach, Kanossa Beach Resort, Beach Club Cagpo Resort, Duque Beach, Maligaya Beach, Pielago Beach And Resort, Ulong Beach, Alobo Beach, Bathala Beach, Gasgas Beach, Guisian Beach, Natangco White Beach, Borangi Beach, Vesita Verde Beach, Banot Free Beach, Mongpong White Beach, El Marinduqueños Island Resort - Mompong Island, Second Wind Resort – Mompong Island, Jovita's Paradise Beach;
- Touristic hydrographic and geomorphological formations: Malindig Volcano, Ungab Cliffs, Libtangin River, Mini Rock Formation – Maniwaya Island, Sunong Bato – Maniwaya Island, Mulawin Mountain, Tailing Pond Lake, Gasan Mountain, San Antonio Mountain, Gapayang Lake, Eli's Rock Formation – Mompong Island, Tapian Mountain, Boac River, Mount Catala, Mount Catubugan;
- Touristic small islets: Santa Cruz, Maniwaya, Mompong, Salomague, Elefante, Gaspar, Melchor, Baltasar, Hidalgo, Agpısan, Atta, San Andres, Banot, Ipil, Hakupan, Natangco, Polo, Botlao (Table 3).

Table 3. Top 10 Natural and Human Tourist Attractions of the Marinduque Island (Source: Authors, 2022)

Top 10 Natural tourist attractions of the Marinduque island	**Top 10 Human tourist attractions of the Marinduque island**
Malindig Volcanic Mountain	Boac Cathedral
Paadjao Waterfall	Pulang Lupa War Memorial
Poctoy White Beach	Malbog Sulfur Spring
Palad Sandbar	Bellarocca Island Resort and Spa
Kawa-Kawa Waterfall	Balanacan View Deck
Bathala Cave System	Marinduque National Museum
Maniwaya Island	Marinduque Hot Spring
Bagumbungan Cave	St. Joseph Parish Church of Gasan
Marinduque Wildlife Sanctuary	Freedom Eco Adventure Park
Ipil White Beach	Gasan Butterfly Garden

Divers paying a visit to the south coast of Marinduque island can watch the cute dolphins, exotic rays, colorful tropical ocean creatures and dangerous sharks under the sea. Those who dive on these shores can explore the picturesque underwater cave galleries. Inquisitive divers should definitely pay a visit to the Baltasar cave, which has a 20-meter-deep entrance and a 28-meter-deep exit. Nearby at the Baltasar Sea Cave, they can observe the underwater remains of the "Mactan" ferry that sank nearly 20 years ago. One of Marinduque's popular natural attractions is the Batala caves. This complex cave network, located in the Santa Cruz mountains, consists of long and interesting underground galleries (Alviola et al., 2015). Since the Batala caves are privately owned, they can only be visited with a pre-booked reservation and a small fee. In the Piton cave, which is famous for its interesting reptiles, many snakes that are not dangerous for humans can be observed.

In recent years, the Marinduque island has become one of the most popular diving destinations for experienced divers. Natural coral walls with steep slopes, wrecks of sunken ships, underwater caves of various depths and rich diversity of life invite thousands of inquisitive tourists to visit the diver centers of this island every year. The divers who come to Marinduque compare this charming island with the Great Barrier Reef in Australia (http://philippine.ru/marinduque_diving.html) for its colorful fish diversity, rich marine life and abundance of interesting dive sites. Therefore, water sports, beach holidays and diving are the most common tourism activities on the island. Furthermore, in a study conducted in 2013, the province of Marinduque was voted as the safest and calmest province in the country. In other words, it is possible to assert that Marinduque is one of the least dangerous provinces of the Philippines in terms of robbery, murder, theft, extortion, injury etc. In the following below, the main beaches, touristic districts and small islets in the vicinity of Marinduque island have been examined.

Human Tourist Attractions of the Marinduque Island

Historical faith centers, water parks, botanical gardens, agricultural farms, historical castles, museums, Catholic churches with picturesque architecture and spa centers are among the most popular human tourist attractions of the Marinduque island. The most exotic and most visited human tourist attractions on the Marinduque Island and its surroundings are:

• Churches and faith centers: Boac Cathedral, New and Living Way Baptist Church, Baluarte de Santa Cruz Historic Castle, Roman Catholic Church - Holy Child Jesus Parish, St. Ignatius of Loyola Parish, Cagpo Chapel, Matuyatuya Cathedral Church, Holy Cross Parish Church, St. Isidore Parish Church, Immaculate Conception Cathedral of Boac, Mary Help of Christians Parish, St. Raphael Archangel Parish Church of Cawit, Mary Mediatrix of All Graces Chapel, St. Joseph Parish Church of Gasan, St. Joseph the Worker Parish Church, Iglesıa Fılıpına Independıente.

• Touristic farms, gardens and agro-tourism centers: WHS Butterfly Farm, Ma. Diosa de Jesus Farm, TIMBO Integrated Farm, Curba Farm Resort, Vilma's Garden, Lyra-Ysabelle Butterfly Farm, Celina's Farm & Resort, Tres Reyes View Park – Gasan, Taklobo Sanctuary Center, Gasan Butterfly Garden.

• Recreation centers and touristic park areas: Lupac Water Park, Freedom Eco Adventure Park, Guingona Park, Buenavista Seaview Park, Freedom Park, Carmen Eco-Adventure Park, Capayang Mining Site Park, Lupac Water Park, Earthly Delights Mini Garden, Puyog View Deck Mountain, Sawi Inland Fresh Water Canal, Mt. Baliis - Sea of Clouds, Gasan Nature and Butterfly Park.

• Hot springs and dam lakes: Marinduque Hot Spring, Malbog Sulfur Spring, Makulapnit Dam Basin, Buenavista Hot Springs.

• Architectural works, historical monuments and museums: Marinduque National Museum, Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage Parish – Balanacan, Paye Marker War Memorial, Pulang Lupa War Memorial, Station Balanacan (Geodetic Center of the Philippines), Municipal Government of Boac, Historillo Ancestral House, Bamboo House, Gasan Old House, Hinanggayon Mountain, Mirambil's Ancestral House, Poctoy Underwater Museum.

• Most Popular restaurants: Casa Don Emilio, Café Mamita, 10 Y.O. Cafe, Curba Bar and Grill, Kusina sa Plaza.

• The most prestigious hotels: "Balar Hotel and Spa", "Marina Marinduque Hotel and Resort", "Luxor Resort and Restaurant" and "Bellarocca Island Resort and Spa"

Historical churches and bridges, picturesque architectural works and war memorials, military forts and museums are the most popular cultural tourism centers of the Marinduque Island. There are more than 200 churches and faith centers within the borders of the Marinduque Island. "Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception – Boac", "St. Joseph Parish Church of Gasan", "Mary Help of Christians Parish", "St. Raphael Archangel Parish Church of Cawit", "Boac Cathedral", "St. Joseph the Worker Parish Church" and "Iglesia Philipina Independiente" are the most magnificent churches of the island and the most popular faith centers among the foreign tourists. "Church of the Holy Child in Buenavista", "St. Ignatius of Loyola Parish Church in Torrijos", "Holy Cross Parish in Santa Cruz" and "San Isidro Labrador Church in Mogpog" are the examples of other touristic faith centers on the Marinduque island. Another interesting tourist attraction of the Marinduque island is the Red Mountain, which has an important part in Philippines history. The Red Mountain, which played an important part in the bloody war between the Filipinos and the Americans near Pulang Lupa, has today turned into a national legend, a cultural tourist attraction and a heroic epic in war history. The Battle of Pulang Lupa (Filipino: Labanan sa Pulang Lupa, Spanish: Batalla de Tierra Roja) was a conflict between the forces of Colonel Maximo Abad and Devereux Shields on September 13, 1900, during the Philippine-US War. Filipino Abad's soldiers defeated the American forces and inscribed his name in gold letters on one of the most glorious military victories in Philippine history. In memory of the war won by the Filipinos, a magnificent memorial statue was built on the Red Mountain, and the tourists who pay a visit to this place can watch the magnificent natural view of Marinduque from this memorial square.

The number of four or five-star hotels in the luxury class within the borders of the Marinduque island is exceedingly insufficient. Budget hotels and hostels, as well as lodgings, rental villas and family businesses are the most common accommodation facilities on the island. "Hotel Zenturia", "The Boac Hotel", "Nine Balconies Island Stay", "Tahanan sa Isok", "Hotel Marinduque", "Freedom Eco Adventure Park", "Spencer's Transient Inn", "Cavesera Residencia, Farm and Resort", "Villa d' Arco Resort", "Dewey Hotel & Restaurant", "R Hotel Centro", "Rico's Inn", "Puente Family Dormitory", “Fun Island Regencia's Hotel & Resort”, “D' Classmate's Resort”, “Oromismo Hotel”, “Lihim na Paraiso” and “Sheila's Place” are among the most popular hotels on the island. (https://www.booking.com/; https://www.trivago.com/; https://www.tripadvisor. com/). Briefly, there are more than 120 accommodation facilities with different characteristics within the borders of the island. Most of the modern tourist establishments on the island are located in the town of Boac and its surroundings (Table 4, 5). “Balar Hotel and Spa”, “Marina Marinduque Hotel and Resort”, “Luxor Resort and Restaurant” and “Bellarocca Island Resort and Spa” are among the most prestigious luxury hotels on the island.

Tranquil and clean beaches, affordable accommodation facilities, peaceful and safe holidays, interesting natural beauties and hospitable locals are the most important touristic advantages of the province of Marinduque. The beaches, which are an indispensable element of sea tourism, draw attention with their tranquility and non-crowded natural environments, their suitability for camping, overnight stays with tents and for long-term holidays in the accommodation facilities. The most popular beaches in the Marinduque province are: “Poctoy White Beach”, “Hakupan Beach”, “Palad Sandbar”, “Ipil White Beach”, “Mongpong Island Beach”, “Aroma Beach”, “Natangco White Beach”, “Ulong Beach”, “Maniwaya Island Beach” and “Amoingon Beach”. The following below briefly describes the most popular beaches in the province of Marinduque.

Table 4. Major Accommodation Facilities in the Northern Territories of the Marinduque Island (Source: Authors, 2022)

Guisian Beach Resort	Guisian Cove Resort	R Hotel Centro
Dewey Hotel & Restaurant	Lihim na Paraiso	Erlinda's House
Puente Family Dormitory	Sayao Free Beach	Rico's Inn
D' Classmate's Resort	Oromismo Hotel	Pizarra’s Home
Fun Island Regencia's Hotel & Resort	Sikatuna Resort Hotel	Bahay ni Queencel
Ulong Bay Beach Resort	Family Beach Resort	CSM Lodge
Shirley's Lodging House	Fergus Clouds Resort	Hilltop Hotel
Obando's Aqua Heaven Resort	Sadıwa Clan	Little Canaan
Aurora Beach Resort	Pyramid Beach Resort	The Boac Hotel
Lucky 7 Pension House	Abby's Place Hotel	Hotel Marinduque
Nine Balconies Island Stay	Tahanan sa Isok	Hotel Zenturia
Cely's Kitchenette And Lodging	Balar Hotel and Spa	Ocean View
Adis Resort Hotel and Restaurant	Chateau Du Mer	Villa Fernando
Freedom Eco Adventure Park	Spencer’s Transient Inn	Casa Elisea
Mainit Hot Springs	Binunga Boac	Sheila’s Place
Jllvci Prayer Mountain	Montegrejo's Resthouse	Bahay ni Queencel
Marina Marinduque Hotel and Resort	Casa Al Mare Marinduque	A&B Coral Resort
3E's Love Bay Beach Resort & Hotel	Ferguz Cloud Resort	Casa Blangca
Cavesera Residencia Farm and Resort	Villa Delia Resort	Eastpoint Hotel

Table 5. Major Accommodation Facilities in the Southern Regions of the Marinduque Island (Source: Authors, 2022)

Luxor Resort and Restaurant	Joey's Crib Beach Hostel	DJ Plaza Hotel
Ian's High Mountain Resort	Golden SunSet Resort	Legaspi Lot
Katala Beach Resort & Restaurant	Sunset Beach Resort	FMJ Hotel
Hidden Greenery Resort & Event Place	Beach Famıly Hotel	Villa Ribleza
Marinduque Hot Spring Resort	Southwest Bay Resort	Village Sunrise Inn
Villa Macaria Nature Resort	Dream'Home Resort	Jovita's Paradise
Tres Maria Boarding House	Rosales Guest House	Beach Club Cagpo
Blue Castle Beach Resort	Joepens Coco Beach	Jade Francısco
Praiseland Bible Camp	Curba Farm Resort	Jean Genie’s

Poctoy White Beach: The “Poctoy White Beach”, located in the northeast of Torrijos town, is the most famous and most visited beach on the island. The “Poctoy White Beach” near the town of Poctoy is famous for its karaoke bars, entertainment venues, seafood restaurants and budget hotels. The “Poctoy White Beach”, located in the southeast of the Marinduque island, is situated on the coast of the Sibuyan Sea, just northeast of the town of Torrijos. It is considered by the tourism experts to be the most famous and most popular beach on the Marinduque island. The beach, which is more than a kilometer long, fascinates visitors with its pure white sands, pristine turquoise waters, majestic coconut trees, picturesque coastal rock formations and lush vegetation. In the background of the beach, the beautiful scenery of Mount Malindig, which is one of the touristic symbols of the island, and other mountain masses covered with tropical forests offers a romantic view. The tourists visiting the Torrijos town and “Poctoy White Beach” can enjoy snorkeling, sunbathing in a tranquil environment, diving into deep ocean waters and windsurfing. There are many beachfront accommodations in the area and cottages and rental villas are also available for day visitors, as well as the picnic and camping opportunities in the beach area. The “Poctoy White Beach” is a clean, tranquil and peaceful beach, even though it is a low-cost (about 30 Philippine Peso) public beach. The “Beach Club Cagpo Resort”, “Villa Briones Homestay Lodging”, “Joey's Crib Beach Hostel”, “Jovita's Paradise”, “Rosales Guest House”, “Rendezvous Beach Resort” and “Alia Water Station”, “Poctoy White Beach” are the major accommodation facilities situated in the surrounding area. The beach area, which is far from urbanization and crowded settlements, does not offer luxury 4 or 5-star hotels; therefore, it is possible to say that it is not suitable for tourists with high expectations.

Palad Sandbar: The “Palad Sandbar”, located in the east of Marinduque Island, within the Santa Cruz County borders and just northeast of Maniwaya island, is one of the most popular tourist attractions in both the Marinduque province and the Philippines. Essentially, the “Palad Sandbar” is more of a narrow and long coastal arrow formation stretching from land to sea rather than a classic beach. Since the beach area has shallow waters, it offers an ideal sea holiday for young children and non-swimmers, and is also suitable for SCUBA diving. During low tide, this small coastal arrow can be walked on and from afar it looks like you are walking on the sea. This beach, which is the most popular tourist attraction on the Maniwaya Island, can be accessed by boat from the port of Santa Cruz. Budget accommodations such as “Pielago Beach and Resort”, “Q Hostel Maniwaya”, “Islas Moriones Beach Resort”, “Wawie's Beach Resort”, “Palomaria Beach Sanctuary”, “Villa Atillana”, “Palomaria Beach” “Camp Resort”, “3 Brothers Beach” and “Cozea Beach Lodge”, situated close to “Palad Sandbar”, are all located on the Maniwaya island. The tourists paying a visit to Palad Sandbar should see interesting attractions such as "Sunong Bato Cliffs", "Taklobo Sanctuary Center", "Residencia De Palo Maria", "Mini Rock Formation" and "Villa Atillana", which are around the corner.

Ulong Beach: The famous Ulong beach is situated in the northwest of Marinduque Island, within the borders of Mogpog County, just northwest of Mogpog town. It is a quiet beach surrounded by long sandy beaches and tall coconut trees. The clear and shallow sea coast has allowed families with children to prefer it as a priority sea holiday destination. Since there are no grocery stores, restaurants, markets or restaurants around the beach, tourists visiting the beach must bring their drinks and food with them.** To the south of Ulong beach are the less popular beaches of Maligaya and Balogo, and to the north are the beaches of Balanacan and Argao. All these beaches are situated in the northwest of the Marinduque Island and face the coast of Batangas of the island of Luzon. Scuba diving, fishing, boat trips, picnics and day trips are among the most common recreational activities on these beaches. The "Balanacan View Deck" with a magnificent scenery, the "Our Lady of Balanacan Statue", which is the tourism symbol of Marinduque Island, and the "Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage Parish" Catholic Church, which has a magnificent and historical building, are the most famous tourism attractions of the region. There are very few accommodation facilities in the region. "Hilltop Hotel", "Shirley's Lodging House", "Family Beach Resort" and "Ulong Bay Beach Resort" are the examples of small and affordable accommodation facilities in the region.

Amoingon Beach: The Amoingon Beach, found in the north of "Roberto's Hideaway Beach Resort" public beach and south of "A&B Coral Resort" beach, is one of the most popular tourist attractions on the east coast of the Marinduque Island. Famous as the "Snorkeling Capital of the Marinduque Island", the Amoingon Beach is situated southwest of the town of Boac and within the county boundaries of Boac. Amoingon Beach offers great opportunities for water enthusiasts who love to watch the corals and colorful fish rather than hiking, sunbathing on the beach, picnics or grilling. The sea waters are so intertwined with wildlife that many refer to it as the snorkeling capital of Marinduque. The tourists visiting the Amoingon Beach can visit the Inagpatong ecological park, Tugos mountain, Blue Sea Resort beach, Historillo Ancestral House building, Kabugsakan waterfall, St. The visitors can also visit the Raphael Archangel Parish Church and the historical Paang Bundok place. For tourists paying a visit to the Amoingon Beach, there are many accommodation facilities in the immediate vicinity with different features and suitable for all budgets. "Freedom Eco Adventure Park", "Eastpoint Hotel", "Amsterdam (Kastilyo Inn)", "3E's Love Bay Beach Resort & Hotel", "Aplaya ng Amoingon", "Adis Resort Hotel and Restaurant", "Balar Events PlaceChateau Du Mer" and "A&B Coral Resort" are examples of affordable accommodation facilities in the immediate vicinity. The "Marina Marinduque Hotel and Resort" and "Balar Hotel and Spa" are among the top quality and most expensive accommodation facilities in both the Amoingon region and the entire Marinduque Island.

Major Tourist Towns of the Marinduque Island

There is no urban settlement with a population of more than 70 000 within the borders of the Marinduque Island, which has lands approximately twice as densely populated as the Republic of Turkey. The largest settlements within the island borders are the coastal towns and small cities, and Santa Cruz, Torrijos, Buenavista, Gasan, Mogpog and Boac are the major settlements (Salvacion and Magcale-Macandog, 2015). The Marinduque Island that is lacking crowded and noisy metropolitan cities has given the island more advantage than disadvantage in terms of tourism. There are 6 towns in total on the Marinduque island and the largest one in terms of surface area is Santa Cruz (270.77 km^2) and the smallest one is Buenavista (81.25 km^2) (Table 1). Furthermore, among these 6 towns, while Boac has the highest population (57,283 people), Buenavista is the town with the least population (26,043 people). Boac has the most Barangays (61), whereas Buenavista has the fewest Barangays (15) (Table 1). In the following below, the most popular touristic towns of the island and their main features are explicated (Gier et al., 2017).

The Town of Boac: The town of Boac is the economic heart of the Marinduque Island and is both the most populous town on the island and the town with the highest number of barangays on the island (Table 1). The town of Boac, located in the northwest of the Marinduque Island, is comprised of both 61 barangays and an area of 212.70 km^2. According to the 2020 census, the town of Boac's population is 57 283 peopleand its population density is 269 people per square kilometer. Only 23 settlements within the town borders have a population of more than 1000 people. Among the town settlements, only four of them (Santol, Laylay, Bunganay and Cawit) have a population of more than 2000 tourism attractiveness. There are many cultural and natural tourism attractions within the borders of the town of Boac. Duyay cave, Kabugsakan waterfall, Balogo Beach, Marinduque Wildlife Sanctuary, Freedom Eco Adventure Park, Inagpatong Mountain ecological park, Immaculate Conception Cathedral, Banudyo Cliff Hill, Tugos Mountain ecological park, Mt. Baliis - Sea of Clouds, Kabugsakan cave and Historillo Ancestral House are the most popular tourist attractions of this town. There is a rich variety of accommodation in the district, suitable for all budgets. "Marina Marinduque Hotel and Resort", "Balar Hotel and Spa", "A&B Coral Resort", "Freedom Eco Adventure Park", "Hotel Marinduque", "The Boac Hotel" and "Hotel Zenturia" are among the most popular accommodation facilities in the district. The town of Boac, founded in 1579, is both the administrative center of the island and its largest urban settlement. The town, situated in the meandering valley of the Boac river with the same name, is the island's commercial, transport and tourist center. The most densely populated urban areas are Poblacion and the northwestern and southwestern parts of the town. The eastern parts of the town are generally sparsely populated. The tourists visiting the town of Boac, which is famous for the Moriones Festivals, mostly visit the tourism attractions such as "Boac Cathedral", "Casa Real Museum", "Laylay Harbor", "Boac Town Plaza", "Paye Battlefield", "Freedom Park in Bunganay", "Liwasan ng Kalayaan", and "Kalayan" and "Marinduque Branch of the National Museum of the Philippines". Furthermore, the enthusiastic tourists visiting the town of Boac should definitely see the "Villa Aplaya Beach Resort" hotel, which has a magnificent view by the sea and the Kabugsakan Waterfall with its magnificent.

The Poblacion area, located in the center of Boac, is called the "Boac Central Business District". The newly built two-story Town Market with approximately 100 shops is located in the heart of this commercial district. The "Boac Public Market" situated in the town center, is one of the town's landmarks. Vendors and local artisans sell food products such as fruit, vegetables, fish in four buildings (https://marinduque.gov.ph/municipal/). Shipping terminals near the Public Market transport goods to other settlements on the island. Therefore, the "Boac Public Market" is considered both the commercial center and the "mini supermarket" of the Marinduque Island. “Dr. Damian Reyes Memorial Hospital”, “Pablo N. Marquez Memorial Health and Diagnostic Center” and “Boac Rural Health Polyclinic” are the most important health institutions in the Boac region. The most important educational institutions in the town of Boac are as follows: “Marinduque State University”, “Educational Systems Technological Institute” (ESTI), “Marinduque Institute of Science and Technology”, “Marinduque National High School”, “Ilaya National High School”, “Cawit National Comprehensive High School”, “Saint Mary's College High School”, “MSC Laboratory High School”, “Virgin Mary Private Catholic School” and “Marinduque School of Arts and Trades”. Briefly, Boac is both the commercial, transportation and economic center of the island of Marinduque and the most important tourism, educational and cultural settlement of the island. The only airport of the island is located in the region of Masiga, just south of the town of Boac. Therefore, it is possible to say that domestic and foreign tourists visiting the island enter the Marinduque Island from this airport.

The Town of Santa Cruz: Santa Cruz is the most populous, most popular and tourist attraction of the Marinduque island. The county of Santa Cruz, situated in the northeast of the Marinduque Island, was established in 1609 and is composed of 55 barangays. The total area of the town is 270.77 km^2. The population of the town in 2020 was around 55 000 and the average population density is 202 people per square kilometer. The area of Santa Cruz town makes up 28.4% of the Marinduque Island and 22.8% of the island's population. Therefore, it is one of the largest and most important districts of the island, the National Statistical Coordination Board (http://www.nscb.gov.ph). Banot, Macupan, Polo and Mongpong islands, which are of great importance in terms of tourism, are also situated within the borders of the town. Small poor villages constitute the most common settlements of the town (Salvacion, 2020). The population of only 18 settlements within the boundaries of the town exceeds 1000 people. Among the district settlements in the town of Santa Cruz, Lapu-Lapu Poblacion (3276 people) is the most populated one. Agriculture, commerce, tourism, poultry farming, handicrafts and fishing are the most developed economic branches of the town. Rice, coconut and tropical vegetables are widely grown in the town, which has fertile plains. Interesting karst formations and caves, exotic tropical islands, historical churches and castles, rich geomorphological formations on the seaside, deserted beaches and quiet coves are the most important tourist attractions of the town of Santa Cruz. The historical Santa Cruz Catholic Church, the magnificent Kawa Kawa waterfall, breathtaking Carmen Eco-Adventure Park with its natural beauties, Eli's Rock Formation formed by the erosion of ocean waves, Palad Sandbar in Maniwaya island, the magnificent Holy Cross Parish Church, Sunong Bato cliffs, Paadjao waterfall in Mogpog county Villa Atillana, situated on the island of Maniwaya and attracting attention with its interesting architecture, Piton, Bagumbungan and Bathala caves, which have an eerie appearance, are the most popular tourism centers of the town. The “Ipil White Beach”, “Wawie's Beach Resort” and “Mongpong White Beach” are the most popular beach areas in the town. There are hardly any luxury accommodation facilities within the boundaries of the town, whereas budget hotels, hostels, hostels and family accommodation businesses are common. “Wawie's Beach Resort”, “Marikit-na Beach Resort”, “Dewey Hotel & Restaurant”, “Sikatuna Resort Hotel”, “Fun Island Regencia's Hotel & Resort”, “Cavesera Residencia Farm and Resort”, “Villa d' Arco Resort”, “Ka-Abling's”, “Beachfront Resort”, “Oromismo Hotel”, “R Hotel Centro”, “Rico's Inn”, “Palomaria Beach Camp Resort”, “Villa Atilana”, “Cozea Beach Lodge”, “Lihim na Paraiso” and “Palomaria Beach Camp Resort” are the most popular accommodations in the town of Santa Cruz.

The Town of Torrijos: The town of Torrijos, situated in the southeast of the island of Marinduque, has a total area of 178.92 km^2, a total population of 30 476 and an average arithmetic population density of 170 people/ km^2. The Gulf of Marlanga and a large part of the island of Salamogue are also found within the boundaries of the town. This charming town with a total number of 25 barangays is not one of the largest nor one of the most important towns of the Marinduque Island, neither in terms of population size, nor in terms of economic potential. Of the 25 barangays in the district, only 14 have a population of more than 1000 people and only 4 of them (Buangan, Malibago, Poblacion, Tigwi) have a population of more than 2000 people. Malibago is the largest barangay of the town with a population of 3216. Poor villages, where agricultural activities predominate, are the most common settlements of the district (Salvacion, 2020). The Pulang Lupa War Memorial, Tabag Waterfall, Mount Malindig, Poctoy Underwater Museum, Ka Amon Cave, Poctoy White Beach and Freedom Park are the tourism symbols and constitute international promotion showcase of the town of Torrijos. Apart from these tourist attractions, Sibuyao Farms, Dugue Beach, Bonliw Loom Weaving, Matuyatuya Cathedral Church, Basud Hidden Falls, Torrijos Gospel Church, Exotic Island View Beach, The Flintstone House, Tabag Cliff and River, Duque Beach, Celina's Farm & Resort, Bangwayin Farm, Ma. Diosa de Jesus Farm, Exotic Island View Beach and Basud Hidden Falls are among the other popular tourist destinations of the county. The total number of all hotel and accommodation types within the boundaries of Torrijos town is not more than 20. Among the few accommodation centers, hostels, small family businesses, budget hotels and rental villas are the major ones. The main accommodation centers of Torrijos town are: “Beach Club Cagpo”, “Ian's High Mountain Resort”, “Villa Macaria Nature Resort”, “Villa Ribleza”, “Jovita's Paradise”, “Tres Maria Boarding House”, “Village Sunrise Inn”, “Rosales Guest House”, “Joey's Crib Beach Hostel”, “Villa Briones Homestay Lodging” and “Montegrejo's Resthouse”. There are many free public beaches within the boundaries of the town. “Poctoy White Beach”, “Exotic Island View Beach”, “Beach Club Cagpo”, “Duque Beach” and “Makawayan Beach” are the most popular beach areas in the town.

Popular Tourist Islands Near Marinduque

The Philippine Archipelago covers 7,641 islands, of which about 2000 are inhabited and populated, while more than 5600 are uninhabited and unpopulated. Furthermore, more than 5000 islets within the borders of the town do not even have a name. There are many small islets in the immediate vicinity of the Marinduque Island, which are significant for sea tourism. Some of these islets, which generally do not have permanent settlements and permanent population, are very popular and are visited by thousands of local and foreign tourists every year. Located off the coast of Marinduque, Natangco, Elefante, Mongpong, Maniwaya, Hakupan, Tres Reyes and Salomagui are the most visited islets in the Marinduque province. The main features of these touristic small islands are briefly explained below (Ocampo et al., 2018).

Hakupan Island: Hakupan, situated on the northern coast of the Marinduque Island, to the northwest of the island of Banot, is a small islet without settlements and permanent inhabitants. Inquisitive tourists visiting Bagumbungan cave, Ipil White Beach and Banot Island usually also stop by the Hakupan Island. This small islet, located in Santa Cruz County and within the borders of Botilao Barangay, has an area of 4.5 hectares. Even though the highest point of this low and uninhabited island is only 31 meters, it fascinates its visitors with its clear turquoise sea waters, white deserted beaches and palm trees. The island's shores offer an ideal setting for snorkeling and scuba diving among the coral reefs. This small islet, which does not have economic activities, transportation routes and settlements, is open to daily boat visits and sea tourism activities all year round. The Hakupan Island, situated just 160 kilometers southeast of the capital city of Manila, is easily accessible by charter boat from the Botilao village. For those who choose to have romantic holidays, peaceful beaches and day trips, Hakupan is the right choice.

Maniwaya Island: Maniwaya, situated to the northeast of the island of Marinduque, within the county boundaries of Santa Cruz, is one of the province's most popular small islets. Located between Polo and Mompong islands, Maniwaya is one of the most visited sea tourism centers of this region. Among the islands in the immediate vicinity of the Marinduque Island, only the Maniwaya Island is permanently inhabited. Desolate beaches, hidden coves and white sandy beaches fascinate the tourists to the Maniwaya Island. This small island has around 10 beach areas on its low shores, all of which are free of charge to use. “Wawie's Beach”, “Palomaria Beach”, “Playa Amara”, “Munting Buhangin”, “Sunong Bato”, “La Crispel Beach Resort”, “Lorna's Place” and “Pielago Beach and Resort” are the most popular beaches of the Maniwaya Island. The tourists paying a visit to the Maniwaya Island are recommended to see the tourist attractions such as “Maniwaya Poultry Farm”, “Palad Sandbar Shore Arrow”, “Sunong Bato Cliffs”, “Morion Statues”, “Maniwaya Church”, “Taklobo Sanctuary Center” and “Ungab Rock Formation”. Especially the “Palad Sandbar Coastal Arrow” and “Ungab Cliffs” are among the most visited natural touristic places by the Inquisitive travelers. There are more than 20 accommodation facilities within the borders of the Maniwaya Island, which is famous for its productive coconut farms, budget vacation opportunities and clean beaches. “Residencia De Palo Maria” and “Villa Atilana” are among the most popular accommodation facilities with their picturesque architecture, landscaping and location. Other accommodation centers operating within the island borders are: “Pielago Beach and Resort”, “Islas Moriones Beach Resort”, “Wawie's Beach Resort”, “Q Hostel Maniwaya”, “Don Ruffael Beach Resort”, “Donayln Beach Resort”, “Residencia De Palo Maria”, “3 Brothers Beach”, “Cozea Beach Lodge”, “Playa Amara” and “Palomaria Beach Camp Resort”.

Tres Reyes Archipelago: The islands of Melchor, Baltasar and Gaspar, situated in the southwest of the Marinduque Island, form the Tres Reyes Archipelago. This archipelago, which is located within the borders of the Marinduque province and carries the name of "three kings", offers ideal natural environments for daily boat tours, diving sports, sunbathing and picnics. With the exception of Gaspar, there are no families living permanently within the borders of the archipelago and there are no permanent settlements and accommodation facilities (Sotto and Labay, 2012). Gaspar is the largest, most popular and most beautiful island in this archipelago. The Gaspar Island, found just in the west of the town of Buenavista within the borders of Gasan province, is famous for its incredibly clear turquoise waters and fine snow-white beaches. This small island, located in the Sibuyan Sea and with a great reputation among underwater archaeologists, can only be accessed by boats chartered from the town of Buenavista. This deserted island is a tropical paradise for those who long for a quiet and romantic holiday away from the crowds of tourists and the noise of bars and restaurants. Gaspar island has a short coral beach with clear blue-green waters ideal for picnics and snorkeling. The Melchor and Baltasar Islands, on the other hand, have steep coasts, high cliffs and underwater caves that are frequented by the deep-sea divers. The coasts of the archipelago are popular destinations for marine biologists and divers due to their rich flora and fauna. The Melchor Island is found between the Gaspar and Baltasar Islands and forms the smallest islet in the Tres Reyes Archipelago. The coastal area of the island is a bit high and rocky, so it is not very easy for the boats to dock, especially on rainy and windy days. Even good swimmers should not venture too far from the shore and swim into the sea because of the strong unpredictable sea currents that occur along the shores of Melchor. Beautiful cliffs, turquoise sea waters and rich species diversity magnetize the local and foreign tourists to this small island. Coconut crabs are very common on the shores of Melchor. The island of Baltasar has fewer visitors than the other islands, since it is the outermost part of the Tres Reyes Archipelago and the furthest from the Marinduque Island. With many diving spots and underwater caves, this islet offers great opportunities for those who wish to explore the sea creatures or those who are bitten by the underwater photography bug. There are no permanent settlements and accommodation facilities on the Baltasar Island, as is the case on the Melchor Island. Therefore, both islands are only available for daily excursions.

Natangco Island: "Natangco White Beach", one of the most beautiful beaches in the Marinduque province, is found in on the island of Natangco, within the borders of Mogpog town, at the northwest end of the Marinduque Island. With an area of eight hectares, this uninhabited island does not have a permanent resident population, nor does it have any accommodation center, market or restaurant. The Natangco Island, situated within the borders of Barangay Silangan, is located in the Gulf of Tayabas between the islands of Luzon and Marinduque. This small islet, found in a marine nature reserve, is famous for its steep and high coral reefs. One of the most popular places for diving on the Marinduque Island is the island of Natangco, at a depth of 40 meters and home to a Japanese torpedo ship from the Second World War. The steep sloped reef formations 30-40 meters deep on the west coast of Natangco Island offer excellent experiences for snorkelers or professional scuba divers. The Natangco Island is a privately owned area, but this island can only be reached by obtaining a special permit. The visitors who come to the island for a daily visit, diving sports or picnic are required to bring water, food and other supplies to meet their daily needs. For sea lovers and scuba divers, the corals of the island of Natangco offer great opportunities and views.

Elefant Island: Elefant, situated on the southern coast of Marinduque island, within the Sibuyan Sea and Buenawista province borders, is the most extraordinary island of the Marinduque province. This small islet is an ideal option for snorkeling, quality accommodation and scuba diving. Many tourism experts compare the Elefant Island to the famous Greek island of Santorini. The main reasons for this similarity are the immaculate white buildings perched on the hills, international wealthy tourists, white-colored hotel facilities on the slopes, and the rugged terrains on both islands. The Elefant Island (Elephant Island), near Marinduque, is a very popular tourist destination among the divers, with its white corals, which are very rare in the world, and vertical walls that go as far as 80 meters deep. The "Bellarocca Island Resort and Spa" hotel, which is the most luxurious accommodation facility of the region, constitutes a large part of the island with its 20-hectare area. Therefore, tropical forests and hotel facilities cover almost the entire island. The Elefant Island, mostly serving the elite tourists, is known as the most privileged, prestigious and wealthiest island in the province of Marinduque. The Elefant Island is called "the island of magnificence with five stars" because it houses the five-star "Bellarocca Island Resort and Spa" hotel on its territory. The private helipad and luxury marina on the island of Elefant serve the wealthy tourists who wish to reach this privileged holiday destination throughout the year. As a result, the Elefant, one of the most famous islands of the Philippines, has become famous beyond the borders of the country for its fine white beaches, coral reefs, luxury accommodation and tropical forests.

Salomagui Island: The Salomagui Island, located on the east coast of the island of Marinduque, within the borders of Sibuyan Sea and Torrijos town, is an uninhabited, low-lying island with no permanent population. It is devoid of hilly terrain and mountains as the island's highest point reaches 74 meters. On the east coast of the Salomagui Island, there is a wonderful area of white beaches with 500 meters of fine sand filled with crushed coral. The low shores of the island offer a quiet ecological environment for day trips by boat, sunbathing, picnics and sea holidays, especially scuba diving. The island, which does not hold any accommodation, shopping centers and settlements, is ideal for those who love quiet and peaceful sea environments. The tourists visiting the Salomagui Island can also visit the nearby tourist attractions such as "Poctoy White Beach", "Freedom Park", "St. Ignatius of Loyola Parich Church", "Angas Beach Lake", "Ma. Diosa de Jesus Farm", Duque Beach" and "Battle of Pulang Lupa Monument".

CONCLUSION

The Philippines, which is the most populated Christian-populated country in the Asian continent, is one of the countries with the most islands in the continent, along with Indonesia and Japan (Efe and Atasoy, 2021). There are a total of 7641 islands within the borders of the Republic of the Philippines, and each of them has its own demographic, cultural, economic, geographical and tourism characteristics. In this study, the tourism resources, geographical features and tourism potential of Marinduque, one of the lesser-known islands of the country, came up for discussion. For the foreign tourists visiting the Republic of the Philippines, Marinduque is not a must-see island, nor is it one of the country's most beautiful and popular tourist destinations. The Marinduque island is undoubtedly as big as the Mindanao Island, as crowded as the Luzon Island, as famous as the Borocay Island, as interesting as the Bohol Island and not as popular as the Palawan Island, but it has some unique natural beauties and some unique tourism attractions. Even though Marinduque is not among the top five islands in the list of preferences chosen by the foreign tourists for the Philippines, the fact that there are many holiday options, the number of economical hotels and touristic facilities, the wide variety of recreational activities and tourism types, has led to a significant increase in the number of tourists coming to this island in recent years. The paramount tourism advantages that positively impact the development of tourism activities on the Marinduque island can be summarized as follows:

Geographical Richness and Tourism Diversity: One of the biggest tourism advantages of the Marinduque Island is that despite its small surface area, it has a very rich tourism diversity, quality accommodation facilities suitable for every budget and a rich variety of recreational activities at the same time. There are also mountaineers who come to this tropical island in order to climb volcanic peaks; there are botanists and ecologists who want to discover endemic plant species; there are patients who want to improve their health in the healing hot springs; there are divers who love to dive in deep ocean waters; there are also divers who come to attend one of the many cultural festivals on the island; and there are adventure lovers and also enthusiastic tourists who want to visit the interesting museums and historical artifacts. Even though the Marinduque Island does not have large dimensions, the geographical and historical-cultural diversity seen on the island has also led to the diversification of tourism activities on the island. Therefore, both rural tourism and faith tourism, health tourism and sea tourism, cultural tourism and thermal tourism, ecotourism and adventure tourism, cave tourism and botanical tourism can be observed side by side in the same geographical places on the Marinduque Island. Consequently, the geographical, cultural and ecological diversity of the island has led to the diversification of tourism types.

Convenient Geographical Location and Easy Access Connections: The strategic geographical location and easy sea transport connections with the neighboring islands are one of the biggest tourism advantages of the Marinduque Island. The fact that the Marinduque Island is located in the center of the Philippine archipelago facilitates the economics, transportation and tourism connections with other islands. The Marinduque Island is located in the very center of its neighboring islands such as Luzon, Mindoro, Burias, Sibuyan, Banton, Masbate and Tablas and provides easy sea transportation between these islands thanks to the ferries. Furthermore, the fact that a regional airport serves within the borders of the Marinduque Island offers a great advantage for the tourists who prefer air transportation. Moreover, the fact that a regional airport serves within the borders of the Marinduque Island offers a great advantage for the tourists who prefer air transportation. The Marinduque Airport, located between the towns of Boac and Gasan, is the only airport of the island. Clearly, the island of Marinduque does not have many ports and sea cruise piers. Boac and Santa Cruz are the island's most important ports. It is only 18 km away from Luzon and only 150 km from the capital Manila, is the largest island of the Republic of the Philippines in terms of both population and surface area provides a distinct tourism advantage to the Marinduque Island. It should also be noted here that the geographical center point of the Republic of the Philippines is situated in the Argao region, in the northwest of the island of Marinduque.

The Prevalence of High Security and Ecological Protectionism: The Marinduque Island is one of the safest and most environmentally friendly islands in the Philippines. Numerous nature protection areas within the borders of the island play a major role in transferring the ecological richness of the island to future generations, while offering valuable opportunities for the development of ecotourism activities. The most important caves, waterfalls, valleys, volcanoes, forests, atolls, wetlands, reefs and lakes within the borders of the island are under protection by the state. Furthermore, the absence of terrorism and conflict events, the absence of security problems such as extortion, murder and theft have made Marinduque one of the safest islands in the Philippines. Marinduque is a very safe, peaceful and quiet island that has no terrorism problems and has largely solved its infrastructure problems. Moreover, since it does not have a very large surface area, it is a compact, easily navigable island, without serious traffic jam problems and easily accessible from everywhere. Consequently, being one of the Philippine islands with the lowest crime rate gives Marinduque a distinct tourism advantage.

Tourism Novelty of Small Islets in the Close Vicinity of the Marinduque Island: In the immediate vicinity of the Marinduque Island, there are more than 15 small-area islets that are generally uninhabited but with high tourism potential. Since daily boat excursions are organized to these clean, peaceful and interesting islands, they are of great importance in terms of sea tourism. The tourists who prefer deserted beaches, hidden coves, romantic holidays and white beaches usually pay a visit to the island of Maniwaya. For sea lovers and scuba divers, the corals of the island of Natangco offer stunning views. The Elefant Island that stands out with its luxury accommodation and tropical forests, generally serves the foreign tourists in the upper income group. The Tres Reyes Archipelago, with its many diving spots, majestic cliffs and underwater caves, offers great opportunities for those who wish to explore the sea creatures or have an interest in underwater photography. For those who prefer romantic holidays, peaceful beaches and day trips, Hakupan or Mompong make a good choice of island. In summary, the small islets located in the immediate vicinity of the island of Marinduque not only create a colorful, peaceful and different holiday alternative, but also strengthen the national and global tourism image of Marinduque.

Availability of Numerous Accommodation Facilities Suitable for Every Budget

As far as the population, area and touristic potential of Marinduque are concerned, it is possible assert that the island has a sufficient number of accommodation facilities, restaurants, tourism offices, diving centers, restaurants and other touristic facilities. More importantly, most of these touristic facilities offer cheap services and economical prices. Therefore, the tourists who do not prefer popular but expensive islands such as Samal, Busuanga and Borocay visit Marinduque, which offers more economical holiday opportunities. There are more than 120 hotels, hostels, hostels and accommodation facilities on the Marinduque island, but only 15-20 of them are amongst comfortable and high quality accommodation facilities. Therefore, one of the biggest tourism problems of the island is the insufficient number of 4 and 5-star luxury hotels. It is clear that the hotels and touristic facilities throughout the island are concentrated in the Boac, Santa Cruz and Torrijos regions. The hotels providing sports and diving training, family villas and romantic honeymoon hotels, spa centers and spa hotels, cheap hostels and budget beach hotels constitute the highest number of accommodation facilities on the island. Another tourism advantage of the island is that almost all beaches on the coast are free of charge and open to the public for 365 days. The Marinduque island has numerous spa centers, artificial swimming pools and healing springs. Therefore, a sufficient number of SPA centers, spa hotels, sports and health tourism centers operate within the borders of the island. In conclusion, the Marinduque island, which has developed in the economic shadow of Luzon and Mindoro islands, is a candidate to become one of the most developed and popular tourism centers of the Philippines in the years to come.

Multitude of Interesting and Original Tourism Attractions: Marinduque, with its unique natural resources and interesting tourism attractions, has already proven itself to be a distinctive tourist island and a unique geographical location. It is possible to assert that distinction and originality are the greatest tourism trump cards of the Marinduque island. Rich historical-cultural heritage, economical accommodation opportunities and multi-choice holiday preferences are the other tourism advantages of the island. Even though Marinduque is one of the youngest, most peaceful, most environmentally friendly and calmest islands of the Philippines, it is one of the tourism centers that American and European tourists do not know much about and do not choose for vacation. Waterfalls and caves, stream and lake basins, hot springs and beaches, museums and faith centers, botanical parks and nature reserves within the borders of the island are waiting to be discovered by visitors from all over the world. Numerous water sports centers, agrotourism centers, botanical gardens and diving training centers operate within the borders of the island. The rich historical-cultural heritage, many interesting architectural monuments, as well as historical forts, statues, war memorials and Catholic churches from the US and Spanish era are the other tourism advantages of the Marinduque island. Furthermore, the fact that Marinduque has calm, clean and peaceful coasts away from big metropolitan cities and industrial facilities is another tourism advantage of the island. Nevertheless, in the long view, the magic concept called "time" will establish whether these geographical riches and tourism resources on the island will be sufficient for Marinduque to become one of the ecotourism centers of the Far East Asia.Even though the Marinduque Island has many positive features in terms of geographical, ecological and economic characteristics, it also has some negative features that restrain and undermine the tourism development. The major tourism disadvantages that negatively affect the development of tourism activities on the Marinduque Island can be summarized as follows:

• The rapid concretization of the sea shores, as well as unplanned construction and squatting has been turning into an increasingly common problem on the island.

• The insensible lumbering of natural tropical forests and the rapid reduction of forest lands, the opening of agricultural lands to settlement, the drying of swamps and other wetlands, the exposure of river and lake basins to anthropogenic activities, strong erosion and soil loss, the decrease in the number of plant and animal species day by day, illegal hunting, forestry and fishing, pollution of sea waters and fresh water resources are the major ecological problems on the island.

• The spread of regional environmental problems and the increase in soil, water and air pollution in some regions are the other burning problems of the island. It is possible to assert that the mining activities causing serious environmental problems are the most common and most critical environmental problem on the Marinduque Island (Gigantone et al., 2015; Lanot et al., 2020; Carr et al., 2003).

• The inadequacy of modern sewerage and road transportation network, the absence of fast internet and telephone connections on the whole island, the lack of clean drinking water and uninterrupted electricity connections in all regions are among the other burning problems on the island of Marinduque.

• There are almost no modern cinemas and theaters, modern hospitals, equipped pharmacies and large shopping centers within the borders of Marinduque, as well as the inadequacy of banks and currency exchange centers are other important negativities that adversely affect the tourism activities on the island.

• Undoubtedly, the fact that these problems listed above could not be resolved in the forthcoming period will adversely affect the tourism activities on the island of Marinduque in the long run.

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THE ROLE OF BREAKFAST IN HOTEL SELECTION, SATISFACTION AND INTENTION TO RETURN: A TWO-FOLD APPROACH LOOKING AT GUESTS AND MANAGERS' PERSPECTIVES

Fernanda LEITE-PEREIRA[*]
University of Aveiro, Department de Economics, Management, Industrial
Engineering and Tourism, Aveiro, Portugal, e-mail: fernandaleitepereira@gmail.com

Filipa BRANDÃO
University of Aveiro, Department de Economics, Management, Industrial
Engineering and Tourism, Aveiro, Portugal, e-mail: filipa.brandao@ua.pt

Rui COSTA
University of Aveiro, Department de Economics, Management, Industrial
Engineering and Tourism, Aveiro, Portugal, e-mail: rui.costa@ua.pt

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Abstract: To determine the importance guests give to breakfast when choosing and returning hotels and hotel managers' perception on this topic. Relevance of consumer behavior and satisfaction for marketing in hospitality. Two different online questionnaires sent to hotel guests (n=626) and to European managers (n=112). Namely for European guests, breakfast is among the 3 main attributes when choosing a hotel. Online information about breakfast influences breakfast's ranking and the prospect of returning. Most managers recognize breakfast as important for guests' choosing process. Breakfast is valued by hotel guests when they travel and managers should convey more descriptions of breakfast online. This is the first assessment both of travelers and managers regarding the value of breakfast for choosing and returning to hotels.

Key words: Food marketing, breakfast, hotel selection, guests, behavioural intention

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism has grown significantly on a yearly basis and the hotel industry, remarkably, has not only kept up with this growth but has also surpassed itself in this sector (Spoerr, 2020). Choosing accommodation is not an unthinking act. The choice of a hotel involves intrinsic issues such as individual preferences, cultural issues, motivations, travel companions and available services, among other attributes considered important for a guest. The choice of a hotel is the first phase of a sequence of events, including accommodation, satisfaction and/or exceeding expectations, which, followed by behavioural intention, can generate customer loyalty. The hotel's food service can be one of the decisive attributes for a guest not only to choose a hotel, but also to be satisfied with their stay and to remain loyal to it. In fact, gastronomy is considered a tourist product and increasingly related to the selection of tourist destinations (Gheorghe et al., 2014; Jiménez-Beltrán, et al., 2016). In the hotel industry, food and restaurants are also very relevant attributes for and are thus important when evaluating hotels. Specifically, breakfast has a significant nutritional relevance, but more than that, for a guest, it may have an additional importance because it is the first meal of the day and is often included in the daily rate. Moreover, this meal can become a gastronomic experience, and depending on the context of the trip, and the cultural elements involved, it can represent a complete meal considering the uncertainty of daily activities that will follow throughout the day (Trancoso et al., 2010). However, few studies consider hotel breakfast as an important attribute for guests (Leite-Pereira et al., 2019) and, as far as we are aware, no study was conducted to determine breakfast as a significant determinant influencing the selection of hotels, guests' satisfaction and intention to return. As such, this hampers the potential that breakfast may assume in hotels' strategic options, positioning and communication actions. Bearing this in mind, we aimed to determine if breakfast is a relevant attribute when guests select hotels and decide on their return, to understand the way guests search for information about this meal, and to clarify factors guests consider as the most relevant as it may influence their loyalty, enable marketing actions and lead to success.In addition to the theoretical contribution, practical implications can be foreseen. To Moreover, this study also presents significant information about the hotels managers' perspectives on this topic. This manuscript includes an introduction; a literature review that provides our hypotheses and a summary of food, gastronomy and experiences, breakfast when choosing a hotel and the importance of satisfaction to return and hospitality, management and breakfast; methods describing data collection procedures and analysis; and finally, discussion and conclusions.

[*] Corresponding author

LITERATURE REVIEW

The importance of food and breakfast when selecting a hotel

For the success of the enterprise and for its placement regarding the competition, it is fundamental to understand what a guest prioritizes among the various services and hotel attributes when choosing a hotel (Cobanoglu *et al*., 2003); some amenities can be important factors in influencing this choice (Neal, 1999). The attributes that directly influence the process of choosing a hotel are called determining indicators and can become the factor of customer loyalty and differentiation of the hotel in relation to the competition, as well as a negative comment may negatively influence options for a hotel (Alpert, 1971, Aradhana and Mohan, 2022). The choice of a hotel involves several factors. Guests choose hotels that meet their needs depending on their motivation, company on the trip (alone, group of friends, children, among others) and services offered by the accommodation, among other features, including the food service (Lopes and Da Silva, 2011). Even though not very often studied, food services in hotels can be a crucial factor when considering guests' choice. According to Santich (2004), one of the meanings of hospitality is the act of welcoming guests, ensuring comfort, and meeting their needs not only for accommodation, but also for food and drink. This concept is also shared by Brotherton (1999) who says that hospitality comes from the exchange between people to improve their well-being with the provision of accommodation, food, and drink.

Food is essential for a guest, not only because of the intrinsic value of eating, but because it includes important questions for those who have been away from home for a while and are subject to new gastronomic experiences. The importance of the food service is also very important for the hotel itself, as by this means it can create a reference in this sector, impress guests, differentiate itself from the competition and stand out in the market. Therefore, as previously summarized, food and beverages can be a valued attribute for clients in hotels, but rarely breakfast has been studied determining guests' options when choosing their accommodation. Breakfast is a meal that is part of the hotel's food service and that can be decisive in choosing one accommodation unit over another according to Mun and Seo (2020), in addition to which a good breakfast can positively affect other services provided by the hotels (Tophotelnews, 2021).

Also, in 2015, a publication on Hospitalitynet.org showed that breakfast was in second place in the attributes considered the most important by guests. This meal can also change according to different personal characteristics as Kucukusta (2017) showed that the older tourists attribute greater importance to breakfast, and that this preference also varies in relation to gender, because according to the author men give more importance at breakfast than women. Therefore, developing research on how breakfast can be fundamental to guests, or to specific group of guests, during their selection process and returning intentions, will influence marketing options and potential gains over competition. Therefore, the following research hypotheses were proposed for the present study:

H1: Breakfast is important when selecting a hotel

How the online information about the hotel's breakfast influences the selection process

As stated above, choosing a hotel involves several aspects. This process is another intrinsic issue that undergoes constant modification on the part of customers who update their information sources, either through direct access to hotel websites, often complemented by access to online guest comments, or via the hotel itself. The evolution of the choice process comes from the modification of demand and the expectation of the product (Otto and Ritchie, 1996).

The internet has become essential for consumers, adding information to them (Yilmaz, 2020), whether for buying or selling products and services, and hospitality is no different. More and more hotel sales are made on online platforms, where the characteristics of the accommodations, photos and online reviews from users are presented. This has become a complete source of information that facilitates decision-making and the process of choosing a hotel; that is, the process of choice and also post-purchase is made with analysis of various sources of information available online that help the guest make their decisions (Chan et al., 2017; Hlee and Koo, 2018). According to Milan (2007), online opinions and comments are much more credible when it comes to choosing a hotel than its own characteristics, which is in line with Chittiprolu et al. (2021), who say that customers check reviews online before booking a hotel. The topic of breakfast in the hotel industry does not seem to be considered very often by researchers (Trancoso et al., 2010; Leite-Pereira et al., 2019). Nevertheless, it is one of the most frequent attributes in online comments made by guests on hotel sales platforms. According to Leite-Pereira et al. (2020) more than half of online comments (56%) about four- and five-star hotels are about breakfast, and the reasons are diverse, such as: being the first meal of the day, because it is often included in the daily rate, or due to being a moment of gastronomic experience, presenting local foods, among other characteristics. In the same study, we showed that when images or texts related to breakfast are published, either on hotel websites or online sales platforms, comments about that meal are more frequent (Leite-Pereira et al., 2020). Helvig (2022) in their study also about online comments by guests in hotels' platforms from found that one of the four topics most cited, both positively and negatively, was breakfast. However, in this study guests were only from hotels located at airports. In another study, addressing online comments as well, Wang et al. (2022) demonstrated that online reviews from customers of three-star hotels report more about the breakfast meal than customers of other hotels ranking, despite not checking other guest characteristics. Therefore, the choice of a hotel can be combined with the choice of accommodation with a good breakfast if it identifies that meal with comments or photos. If breakfast is important for the customer looking for accommodation, this information will make a difference at the time of booking. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed for the study:

H2: Information on breakfast on online platforms influences the selection of a hotel

Customer satisfaction with hotel meals and their behavioural intention

Customer satisfaction has been a very important part of administrative marketing as satisfying customers can bring benefits such as loyalty and increased revenues (Liu and Jang, 2009). Satisfaction refers to the difference between expectation and perception after consumption, meaning that when the performance reaches the expectation it generates satisfaction (Oliver, 1980). For Poon and Low (2005), consumer satisfaction or dissatisfaction is the result of the interaction between expectations in the pre-purchase phase and the evaluation in post-purchase. When the experience results in positive feelings, tourists are satisfied and this makes them recommend the service and make positive comments about the destination (Chen and Chen, 2010; Bam and Kunwar (2020). Buying behaviour and customer decisions depend on a satisfactory assessment of their affective experiences about a product or service (Han and Hyun, 2017).

In catering services, the customer's perception of quality must be positive so that satisfaction and the intention of positive behaviour is achieved (Ha and Jang, 2010). Still on the theme of catering, Han and Ryu (2007) found that improving the level of customer satisfaction is essential to increasing intentions of return and recommendation and to Choe et al. (2018) and to Yoon and Chung (2018) the satisfaction had significantly positive effect on behavioral intention.

Customer loyalty has become an essential factor for the success of hotel ventures. According to Oliver (1999), loyalty is the repeated purchase of the same product or service, ignoring external influences and also is the intention of reacquiring a product or service based on one's positive experiences combined with future needs (Lee and Cunningham (2001).

Some authors agree that the food and beverage services in the hotel are responsible for the satisfaction and loyalty of guests (Parasuraman et al., 1988), and for good reviews of the establishment (AbuKhalifeh and Som, 2012), even though specific studies on breakfast are rare. More specifically, in restaurant services, quality is also extremely important. The quality of the food does in fact seem to be decisive for a gastronomic experience, in addition to being the essential product in choosing a restaurant and customer loyalty, followed by the quality of the service (Mattila, 2001). On the other hand, customer dissatisfaction is also related to the lack of quality of food, recognized by Yang and Mattila (2012) as the "failure in the central service", which calls into question the customer's relationship with the service in a definitive way.

For Han and Hyun (2017), in the restaurant area, the quality of a product, in addition to the physical part (food and facilities), encompasses intangible experiences. Tangible factors refer to physical aspects, such as the environment (or facilities) and the quality of food, while intangibles include quality of service, that is, service, characteristics of employees and prices, among others (Ryu and Lee, 2017). The catering service of a hotel offers several meals (breakfasts, lunches, sometimes snacks and dinners) and, as such, it can easily promote local food and gastronomy.

The inclusion of local products in hotels' food services in all meals, not only at breakfast, increases the local producers' efficiency and therefore local economy. This, together with activities and promotions, help in the promotion of a tourist destination and in the sustainability of its accommodation network (Brunori and Rossi, 2000; Alonso and Liu, 2012).

Food, besides being essential for guests, can be a differentiating feature of the accommodation, adding to a good customer experience and bringing comfort to one's stay. Particularly, breakfast, as the first meal, may well provoke this in a guest. If guests are pleased with breakfast, e.g., food's variety and quality, this will be decisive to their satisfaction and subsequently, their intention to return. Knowing the customers and providing targeted products that not only please but surprise them brings satisfaction, exceeds expectations, and as a consequence generates a positive experience (Oh et al., 2007; Pine and Gilmore, 1999). Breakfast as part of hotel catering can be another attribute which can generate satisfaction and influencing the return and loyalty of customers. As such, taking this into account, the following hypothesis was thus considered feasible:

H3: Hotel guests' satisfaction with breakfast influences behavioural intention

Hospitality, management, and breakfast

Among the actions of hotel managers, being aware of constant changes in market trends and acting proactively so that their accommodation always meets the needs of customers is essential to adequately position the hotel in the market and to achieve advantages over competitors. Managers' attention to these factors can also bring focus to investments as they keep up with market demands (Nebel and Ghei, 2007). Attracting customers is an essential factor for the hotel business and has reinvented itself with the increasingly essential use of digital platforms. With the use of social networks, new ways of attracting customers have emerged, and using these digital media to obtain new customers and retain them is an increasingly used form of marketing strategy, with low costs and very positive results (Gomes and Mondo, 2016). Another advantage of social networks is the dissemination of the brand and services, rapid communication and wide reach.

Access to or knowledge of online comments from hotel sales platforms is a way to determine the guest demand and customer (dis)satisfaction factors as it is known that positive comments greatly influence the hotel's rating and acquisition of new guests. Meeting or exceeding guests' expectations and satisfying them is a very important factor for hotel businesses. According to Bettman et al. (2008), knowing the choices and promoting satisfaction is fundamental for the success of a hotel. Therefore, knowing what guests look for and what is of value at breakfast, a meal which is so important for these clients, is fundamental for the hotel. The authors Lee et al. (2018) in a study on breakfast food preferences suggests that hotel managers should add guests' favorite foods to attract them. According to Kuhn et al. (2018), breakfast is one of the services provided by hotels that stands out the most, exerting great influence on the choice of hotel, in addition to being a service that can impress and surprise the customer at breakfast, both with the level of product quality as well as service. It is also a unique moment for the hotelier to attract guests (Kuhn et al., 2018; Trancoso, 2008). In summary, by better understanding consumers we may improve strategies to attract them, satisfy their expectations and enhance loyalty. To achieve this, managers have at their disposal several tools namely social media and internet, where guests may describe their experiences and comments. By focusing on breakfast as a relevant attribute, marketing processes may well lead to gains over other competitors.

METHODOLOGY

Data collection

Two online questionnaires (one directed at hotel guests, and another applied to hotel managers) were developed specifically for this study. LimeSurvey software was used for that purpose.

The survey applied to guests was developed according to references in the field of tourism and hospitality (Illum et al., 2010; McCarthy et al., 2010), a method which has also been used in studies in the area of gastronomy (Lee et al., 2015).

This questionnaire includes 30 questions designed to answer the hypotheses and it includes 4 groups of questions:

- The first part is related to information about the last stay in a hotel where breakfast was served (motivation and companions during travel, reasons to select and to return to the hotel, location and ranking of the hotel, and length of stay and travel);
- The second part consists of specific questions about breakfast and on whether breakfast is considered important both in life and when choosing hotels and on breakfast quality;
- The third part was developed to understand the importance of services related to gastronomy, namely breakfast;
- The last part concerned personal information, with questions related to age, sex and nationality, among others.

In table 1 we can verify the relationship between the research hypotheses and the questions used in the questionnaire.

Table 1. Relation between research hypothesis and the survey questions

Hypothesis	Questions
H1: Breakfast is important when selecting a hotel	Why did you choose that hotel? Please select the 3 top reasons. If the breakfast was important or very important to choose this hotel, please indicate how did you know about it? How would you rank the importance you gave the breakfast when choosing the last hotel you stayed in?
H2: Information on breakfast in online platforms influences the selection of a hotel	If the breakfast was important or very important to choose this hotel, please indicate how did you know about it.
H3: Hotel guests' satisfaction with breakfast influences behavioural intention	In your opinion, please rank from 1 to 5 (1=very bad to 5=very good) the breakfast at this hotel? Would you return to that hotel because of breakfast?

Most of the answers to the questions were made using five-point Likert scales or with scales that varied between "not important at all" and "extremely important" (Nemoto and Beglar, 2014). Multiple choice questions were also included when applicable. Most responses were mandatory, except for open questions, of which there were only three, and in the form of suggestions. This questionnaire was developed both in Portuguese and in English and validated after an initial test with 15 responses, having undergone minor modifications, namely in terms of translation. A second questionnaire was sent by email to hotel managers including a link to the built survey. This includes personal information, hotel information and specific questions about breakfast. At the end of the questionnaire, an open question was asked about promotion strategies or investments in breakfast.

Participants

For the first survey and as stated above, the LimeSurvey program was used to prepare the questionnaire and the link to it was sent using participants' social networks (WhatsApp, Facebook) and email between 05/29/2020 and 08/14/2020. The defined population was unknown and a non-probabilistic sample (by convenience); a total of 626 fully completed questionnaires was collected and analysed. The second survey was sent to all managers on the list of European four- and five-star hotels (n = 112) used in a previous publication (Leite-Pereira et al., 2020) between 09/01/2020 and 16/06/2020. The email available on the hotels' websites was used. Nine questionnaires were retrieved (7%) and analysed.

List of variables and statistical analysis

The questionnaire data were exported and computed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) programme. Proportions were used to describe dichotomic ordinal and nominal variables. Chi-square testing was used for comparing distributions and stepwise logistic regression was used to estimate interaction between factors and the importance given to the hotel.

Hypotheses

For hypothesis **H1:** Breakfast is important when selecting a hotel, the statistical analysis was planned to determine the proportion of guests a) considering breakfast in the top three attributes when choosing a hotel, b) the importance (high or extreme importance) given to breakfast in hotels and c) specifically at the last hotel where that guest stayed. **H2:** Information on breakfast on online platforms influences the selection of a hotel, was assessed by determining the proportion of sources which provided information about breakfast and how this leads breakfast to be considered among the top three attributes when choosing a hotel. By determining the proportions of guests returning to the same hotel according to their perspective regarding breakfast, **H3:** Hotel guests' satisfaction with breakfast influences behavioural intention, was evaluated.

RESULTS

Guests' perspectives

In Table 2, the main characteristics of guests participating in our study are summarized. A total of 626 questionnaires were analysed. Forty-four percent were participants with ages between 35 and 54 years old and 431 were completed by women (69%). Most participants were married (48%). Sixty-two percent were living in Europe or were Europeans (57%). Among non-Europeans, an important proportion was from South America (42%). Thirty-three percent had an annual income between €1001 and €3500. As concerns the travel itself, 77% of guests answered that the reason for staying in the last hotel they visited was leisure or vacations and 57% were couples (32% without and 25% with children). 57% of trips were made to four- or five-star hotels.

Table 2. Characteristics of sample and the relative distribution according to the importance gives to breakfast (n=626) (*chi-square)

		Breakfast									
		Top 3	*p**	**Importance in hotels** (high or extremely important)	*p**	**Importance in the last hotel** (high or extremely important)	*p**	**Breakfast in last hotel** (good or very good)	*p**	**Reason to return**	*p**
		157 (25)		**438 (70)**		**298 (48)**		469 (75)		**401 (64)**	
Age (years) n (%)			0.622		**0.043**		0.027		0.032		0.417
18-34	227 (36)	62 (27)		153 (67)		99 (44)		158 (70)		144 (63)	
35-54	272 (44)	65 (24)		204 (72)		146 (54)		218 (80)		181 (66)	
>55	127 (20)	30 (24)		81 (64)		54 (42)		94 (74)		76 (60)	
Gender n (%)			0.169		**<0.001**		**<0.001**		**0.013**		**0.002**
Male	195 (31)	511 (73)		295 (23)		395 (46)		290 (42)		333 (32)	
Female	431 (69)	115(27)		331 (77)		231 (54)		336 (58)		293 (68)	
Marital status n(%)			0.618		0.182		0.029		0.929		0.315
Single	221 (35)	58 (26)		149 (67)		91 (41)		162 (73)		143 (65)	
Married	294 (48)	69 (23)		216 (74)		157 (53)		221 (75)		189 (64)	
Consensual union	59 (9)	19 (32)		42 (71)		28 (48)		45 (76)		36 (61)	
Divorced	41 (6,5)	9 (22)		23 (56)		15 (37)		32 (78)		29 (71)	
Other	11 (2)	2 (18)		8 (73)		7 (64)		9 (82)		4 (36)	
Region of residence n(%)			0.074		0.771		0.482		0.850		0.100
European	385 (61,5)	106 (28)		271 (70)		179 (46)		287 (75)		237 (62)	
Non-European	241 (38,5)	51 (22)		167 (69)		119 (49)		182 (76)		164 (68)	
Monthly individual income (€) n(%)			0.948		0.224		0.969		0.043		0.066
<600	64 (10)	17 (27)		45 (70)		30 (47)		48 (75)		39 (61)	
600-750	40 (6)	9 (23)		28 (70)		18 (45)		26 (65)		31 (78)	
751-1000	98 (16)	27 (26)		64 (65)		43 (44)		63 (64)		63 (64)	
1001-3500	207 (33)	53 (26)		155 (75)		101 (49)		160 (77)		123 (59)	
>3500	84 (13)	18 (21)		51 (61)		41 (49)		64 (76)		49 (58)	
Do not know	133 (21)	33 (25)		95 (71)		65 (49)		108 (81)		96 (72)	

Table 3: Characteristics of guest's last stay and the relative distribution according to the importance given to breakfast (*chi-square)

		Breakfast									
		Top 3	*p**	**Importance in hotels** (high or extremely important)	*p**	**Importance in the last hotel** (high or extremely important)	*p**	**Breakfast in last hotel** (good or very good)	*p**	**Reason to return**	*p**
		157 (25)		**438 (70)**		**298 (48)**		469 (75)		**401 (64)**	
Motivation n (%)			**0.032**		0.195		0.278		0.422		0.792
Vacations or pleasure	482 (77)	135 (28)		351 (73)		243 (50)		364 (76)		312 (65)	
Working/business	64 (10)	6 (9)		39 (61)		24 (38)		48 (75)		43 (67)	
Congresses or exhibitions	25 (4)	4 (16)		17 (68)		10 (40)		14 (56)		13 (52)	
Study	13 (2)	2 (15)		6 (46)		4 (31)		9 (69)		7 (54)	
Health	2 (0)	0		1 (50)		1 (50)		2 (100)		1 (50)	
Visiting family or friends	34 (5)	8 (24)		20 (59)		12 (35)		27 (79)		22 (65)	
Religion	2 (0)	0		1 (50)		1(50)		1 (50)		1(50)	
Gastronomy	1 (0)	0		1 (100)		1(100)		1 (100)		1(100)	
Other	3 (0,5)	2 (68)		2 (68)		2 (68)		3 (100)		1 (33)	
Companions n (%)			**0.042**		**0.026**		**0.002**		**0.009**		0.398
Couple with no children	199 (32)	62 (31)		138 (69)		92 (46)		138 (69)		120 (60)	
Couple with children	159 (25)	38 (24)		123 (77)		96 (60)		128 (81)		105 (66)	
Single	75 (12)	10 (13)		43 (57)		27 (36)		49 (65)		46 (61)	
Group	122 (19,5)	28 (23)		88 (72)		56 (46)		101 (19)		86 (70)	
Other	71 (11)	19 (27)		46 (68)		27 (38)		18 (75)		44 (62)	
Location of hotel n (%)			**0.021**		0.710		0.902		0.344		0.15
European	386 (62)	109 (28)		268 (69)		183 (47)		284 (74)		233 (60)	
Non-European	240 (38)	48 (20)		170 (71)		115 (48)		185 (77)		168 (70)	
Ranking n (%)			0.254		**<0.001**		**0.001**		**<0.001**		**0.070**
1-3*	235 (43)	59 (25)		141 (60)		86 (36)		144		138 (58)	
4*	277 (44)	72 (26)		216 (78)		149 (54)		232 (84)		185 (67)	
5*	83 (13)	17 (20)		64 (77)		48 (58)		76 (92)		57 (69)	
Other	31 (5)	9 (29)		17 (55)		11 (36)		17 (55)		21 (68)	
Number of nights	5.29; 3 (1-151)										
			0.269		0.834		0.272		0.017		0.017
<= 3		86 (27)		222 (70)		145 (45)		226 (71)		190 (60)	
>3		71 (23)		216 (70)		153 (50)		243 (79)		211 (69)	

Validation of hypotheses

H1: Breakfast is important when selecting a hotel

In Figure 1, the attributes most sought after by guests when choosing a hotel were: location (81%), price (60%) and facilities (49%). Twenty-five percent of participants considered breakfast in the top three attributes when choosing a hotel (Figure 1 and Table 3). Also, 70% of respondents find breakfast very or extremely important when staying in a hotel and 48% considered it very or extremely important in the last hotel (Table 3), which allows us to confirm H1. Twenty-eight percent of guests on vacation or pleasure trips considered breakfast in the top three attributes when choosing a hotel, as did 24% among those visiting family or friends, whereas between 9% for those travelling for business and 16% for congresses prioritize breakfast (p = 0.032). In multivariate analysis, women seem to give higher importance to the breakfast at the last hotel than men (Odds Ratio (OR) 2.094 (1.452-3.021) and those tourists travelling as a family (OR 2.394 (1.343-4.270). There is a trend that a greater number of days a guest stays in a hotel, the greater the possibility of returning to the hotel. Guests of four- (44%) and five-star (13%) hotels find breakfast very or extremely important when choosing a hotel and rated the breakfast as good or very good in the last hotel where they stayed. Couples with children seem to be independently related, considering the breakfast in the last hotel as good or very good (OR 2.439 (1.257-4.733).

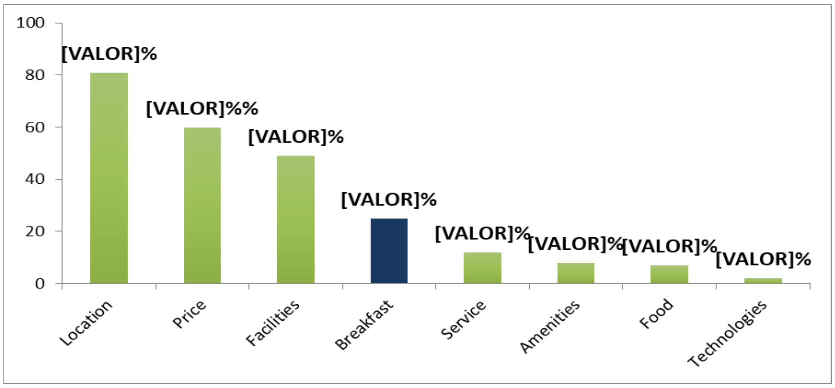

Figure1. Attributes that were considered more relevant by guests when choosing a hotel (percentage of respondents)

Table 4. Source of information among guests that considered breakfast importantor very important when choosing an hotel and among those that considered breakfast a reason to return to that hotel (*chi-square)

		Reason to return 401 (64)	*p**
Source of information regarding the breakfast n (%)			<0.001
Pictures, hotel website	136 (22)	93 (68)	
Pictures, booking platforms	140 (22)	80 (57)	
Online reviews	144 (23)	102 (71)	
Ranks of breakgast, booking platforms	42 (7)	35 (83)	
Previous experience	70 (11)	55 (73)	
Other	94 (15)	40 (43)	

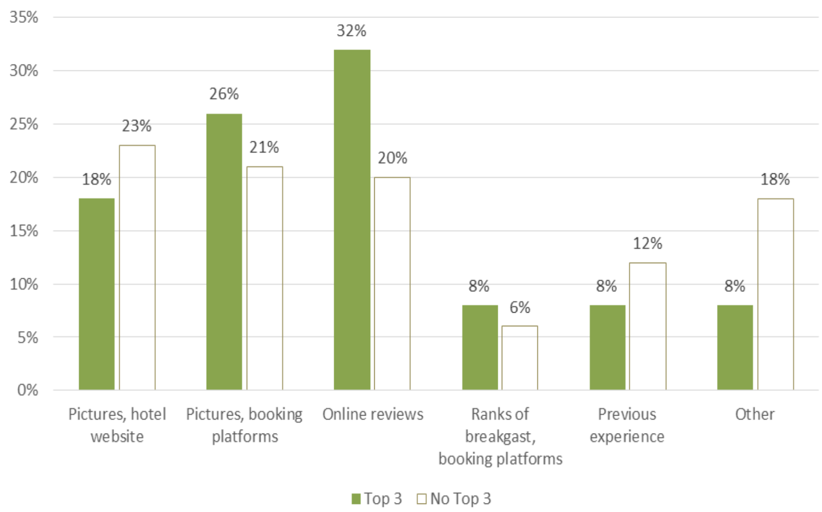

Figure2. The source of information about breakfast when guests considering breakfast in top 3 (percentage of respondents)

H2: Information on breakfast on online platforms influences the selection of a hotel

Most tourists booked on online booking platforms (40.8%), among which Booking.com stood out with 36.4% of bookings made. The sources of information to access the breakfast features were obtained mostly from online reviews (23%) and from photos on the online booking platforms (45%) (Table 4).Guests that access information about breakfast through online review or ranks of breakfast on booking platforms seem to consider returning to the hotel because of breakfast (p < 0.001). Also, travellers considering breakfast in top 3 seem to seek information in booking platform pictures and online reviews more often – Figure 2. This confirms H2.

H3: Hotel guests' satisfaction with breakfast influences behavioural intention

Sixty-four percent of guests stated that they would return to that hotel because of its breakfast, with 44% and 31% considering the breakfast in their last hotel good and very good respectively. Among these, 76% (n = 358) would return to that hotel because of breakfast (confirming H3, that is, satisfaction with breakfast hotels leads them to return to this service). In multivariate analysis, being a woman seems to be the sole fact influencing return (OR 1.710 (1.208-2.421)).

Managers' perspectives

Among managers, 67% think breakfast is important, very important or extremely important for guests when they make a hotel reservation (see Table 5). 84% of managers belong to five-star hotels and are mostly men between the ages of 35 and 44. All hotel managers agreed that online comments are the most important way to inform guests about the hotel's breakfast. When asked about what guests value in that meal, managers who considered breakfast important to guests (67%) think that service and quality are the most valued attributes, whereas for managers who responded that breakfast was not an important meal for guests, 100% belong to four-star hotels and think that variety is the most important factor for guests at that meal.

Table 5. Characteristics about hotels' managers and their responses about clients and breakfast (# <25, 25-34, 35-44, 45-64 years old; **)

	Global	importance of breakfast for your costumers before they make a reservation **in any hotel** ?	
	N=9	Low importance (n=3)	**Important/very important /extremely important (n=6)**
Age # (median, years)	**35-44**	35-44	35-44
Gender (male/female)	**4/4**	**0/3**	**4/1**
Academic background (bachelor/master)	**5/4**	2/1	3/3
Experience ** (median, years)	**2-5**	2-5	**5-11**
Hotels (4*/5*)	**4/5**	3/0	**1/5**
Booking (platform, hotel site, phone)	**53/25/18**	53/15/18	52/31/17
Important of online comments (important / very important / extremely important)	2/2/**5**	1/1/1	1/1/**4**
Features of your hotel's breakfast			
Variety	4	2	2
Quality	4	1	3
Service	4	1	3
Free	1	1	0
Other	2	0	2

DISCUSSION

The hotel industry is constantly updating according to the demand of guests that search for service innovations meeting and satisfying their needs. These services have been undergoing modifications and improving in hotel activity (Aradhana and Mohan, 2022). Food services are one of the most important parts of the tourism industry, it really is not easy to think about hospitality and not include food and breakfast (Carvão, 2010; Zampollo, 2013). In addition, the food and beverage departments generate relevant revenue in hospitality businesses, in addition to positively affecting customer loyalty and satisfaction with the hotel (Ozan, 2018). Breakfast is not often studied in the field of tourism and hospitality, but it can be a differential service to attract customers and retain them. Results have demonstrated that 25% of respondents would rank breakfast among the top 3 most important attributes when choosing a hotel. Some recent studies, even though not specifically addressing breakfast, mention this meal an attribute referred by guests, demonstrating a trend about this topic and justifying why it is relevant to further increase our understanding on factors determining guests' motivations and perspectives (Padma and Ahn, 2020; Peres and Paladini, 2022).

This research also concludes that among the surveyed guests, 70% believe that breakfast in hotels is very or extremely important, and 48% consider very or extremely important to consider this meal when choosing a hotel. Of the respondents, 64% would return to the hotel because of breakfast, which shows that guests value this meal.

The results have also allowed to confirm that the importance of this meal in hotels is three times higher for women than for men, which demonstrates that there are gendered differences in the perspective towards food.

In what gender is concerned, the study reveals that among women, the importance that breakfast had in the last hotel they stayed in is twice as high as among men and even more if the trip includes children. The greater concern of women with food, specifically with breakfast, can be seen in Siro et al. (2008), who mention women as being more interested in food issues and nutrition. Campbell (2013) also cited the importance that women give to the quality of children's food.

What makes tourists intend to return and retain the hotel is satisfaction or surpassing it. Tourists' satisfaction with the hotel accommodations where they stay is very important, as it represents a positive experience and their well-being (Furtado et al., 2022). Well-proportioned positive experiences, in addition to the intention to return, cause positive publicity on the part of the client (Tung and Ritchie, 2011). Therefore, a breakfast that satisfies and impresses a customer, in addition to creating a positive experience, can be an attribute that causes loyalty and can generate positive online comments.

The attributes that hotel guests most value in breakfast is the quality of the food (80%). This was referred to as the most important attribute of that meal. Mattila (2001) also cited this attribute as one of the most important criteria even when choosing restaurants, a fact also verified by Ryu and Han (2010), who cited the importance of food quality in the satisfaction of customers. It was also found that guests who place breakfast among the most important attributes of a hotel seek information about that meal through the photos on the hotel sales platforms and also in the online reviews of former guests, which confirms the importance of these comments for hotels. This was confirmed by da Silva Freitas (2017), who reports that 60% of users consulted online comments before making a purchase decision. Moreover, the content of online comments is also responsible for the sustainability of a hotel, as they describe content that managers are often unable to modify, creating the hotel's reputation (Peres and Paladini, 2022). However, when asked, 67% of managers replied that breakfast was an important meal for guests, which perhaps shows the lack of knowledge on the part of these professionals about the tendency and priorities of guests. According to Petrocchi (2003), among the areas of hotel management, services related to food are those that require greater attention and effective administration to serve customers.

This is in agreement with Pilis et al. (2022) that reports that guests are increasingly demanding and influencing gastronomy itself and consequently the management of tourism businesses. In a previous systematic review (Leite-Pereira et al., 2019), only two studies published in recent years referred to breakfast as a relevant attribute to guests. After that, Kuhn et al. (2018) also cite breakfast as a key characteristic when choosing a hotel. Also, recently, the importance of breakfast was reported by Leite-Pereira et al. (2020) due to the considerable presence of online reviews on this dimension. In this study of online comments on a hotel sales platform, breakfast was cited by 56% of guests. With this study we confirm breakfast as an important factor and a tendency in hospitality.

CONCLUSION

The food services of the lodging facilities are a way of understanding the relationship that is established between the company and its consumer – the tourist. After all, the quality, variety and promptness of these services are a parameter to understand the ways in which the tourist is served, the structure that the means of accommodation offer, and the relationship that is established between these two centres.

Knowing what attributes guests seek and value at breakfast, a meal so important to the customer, therefore seems essential for the hotel as it favours the choice of accommodation. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study assessing both guests and managers; for hotel managers, knowing the profile of customers, their preferences, what they value, what they seek and what they prioritize in a hotel, can be determining factors in satisfaction, which is essential for clients' loyalty. This has clear impacts in its competitiveness and success.

In conclusion, hotel guests value breakfast significantly when they travel, particularly women and tourists travelling with children. Managers should give more attention to breakfast in their hotel's description on online platforms as this seems to significantly influence the source of information about breakfast by guests and the choice of and return to hotels.

Guests' loyalty is one of the most important factors in hotels' sustainability, as it generates greater competitiveness, leading to the success and market sharing of a specific hotel. The economic sustainability of a hotel is also responsible for the increase in local economy as it contributes to a higher dynamic in local and traditional commerce, jobs creation, increase in family income and also in tax contribution (Mitchell et al., 2015; So et al., 2016)

This research's results can provide the basis for the development of more assertive marketing initiatives in hosting offering customer loyalty, by creating a better knowledge of the clients' profile, motivations and preferences. The subject of this research relates primarily to health and well-being issues and with the relevance of lived experiences in travel and tourism. The consumer profile has changed significantly in this sense with the covid-19 pandemic, making tourists more concerned with their health and well-being (Bajpai et al., 2022) Therefore, it is believed that the present study may bring even more relevant results for hotel companies and tourism organizations.

Practical Implications

To completely understand guests is an asset for a hotel, as it enables the establishment to satisfy and retain them. From this study, we know the attributes that guests prioritize when choosing a hotel and that breakfast is present among them. In addition, to know how guests seek information about this meal, and how it influences the return and/or loyalty to the establishment may be relevant to managers. Moreover, managers can adapt to their guests, prioritizing the attributes that they value most to please them and stand out from the competition. The questionnaires to the managers give the same information if they are correctly focusing on the priorities of the guests and the possibility of adjusting to these needs. Ultimately, the satisfaction of guests with a very important part of their stay, for those who value breakfast, will certainly bring positive impacts also for recommendation (both traditional and electronic word-of-mouth), upgrading the establishments competitive position in the market. In summary, this study increases the knowledge about guests' profiling and brings significant insights on the changes in marketing strategies that will potentially determine clients' satisfaction and loyalty.

Theoretical Implications

This is the first study about breakfast assessing both guests and managers, in addition to being specifically focused on that meal as an attribute that influences guests' choice of hotels and their return.

Moreover, we sent the survey to worldwide guests (different from previous studies, that were focused on Asian tourists (Leite-Pereira et al., 2019) and European managers from all European capitals in four- and five-star hotels.

Limitations and Future Research

This study presented a perspective of hotel managers on the importance of breakfast for guests. However, these data should be considered with caution, due to the limited number of responses received in this survey. This is in fact the main limitation of our manuscript. We have provided a solid assessment of guests' perspective on breakfast when booking a hotel for the first time, but also when they return. The choice of an online survey can be criticized, as it may include memory bias. However, in order not to expose guests directly to the researcher (that is, versus direct questionnaires or phone calls), during an important meal, we think we were able to circumvent the bias. Studies on the characteristics of breakfast or guests' preference for that meal should be performed, bringing even more information to hotel managers in its preparation and service. Also, studies with a greater number of managers would further increase the degree of information they have about this meal. Considering that this study was mainly developed before the covid-19 pandemic, it is suggested that it can be replicated alongside the post-covid tourists, to analyze the evolution of the importance of breakfast before and after the pandemic, as well as the main changes in operations related to breakfast management in this context.

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FACTORS AFFECTING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN KHMER FESTIVAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN MEKONG DELTA, VIETNAM

Nguyen Chi HAI*
An Giang University, Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City, Department and Faculty Long Xuyen, An Giang Province, Vietnam, e-mail: nchai@agu.edu.vn

Nguyen Thi Kim NGAN
An Giang University, Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City, Department and Faculty Long Xuyen, An Giang Province, Vietnam, e-mail: ntkngan@agu.edu.vn

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Abstract: Abstract: The Mekong Delta has rich and diverse tourism resources, it is also a long-standing residence of the Khmer community with a specific culture. Exploiting community-based tourism from festivals will contribute to preserving ethnic and cultural identities, eradicating poverty, and improving people's living standards in the region. The objective of this study was to examine the factors affecting the community's participation in the development of Khmer festival tourism in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam. The research methods used include descriptive statistics, exploratory factor analysis, and regression analysis. The data was collected from the results of a survey of 1258 travelers to the Mekong Delta. SPSS 20, and AMOS 24 software are used to analyze and evaluate the scale and test hypotheses. The research results show that the factors affecting the community's participation in the development of Khmer festival tourism in the Mekong Delta include (1) Economic benefits; (2) Cultural and community; (3) Resources of tourism; (4) Policies for the development of community tourism; (5) Community environment; (6) Tourism products and services. Some contents were discussed, proposed solutions with governance implications to attract community participation in the development of Khmer festival tourism in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam.

Key words: influence factors, community participation, tourism festival, Khmer, Mekong Delta

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INTRODUCTION

Community-based tourism has been interesting in many countries around the world. Community-based tourism is a type of community-based tourism, it is managed and implemented by the local community, towards the goal of environmental, cultural, and social sustainability. Community-based tourism is a type of tourism where visitors from outside come to the local community to learn about customs, lifestyles, and beliefs enjoy local cuisine, and participate in festivals (Almeida-Garcia, 2015). Local communities control the impacts, they gain benefits through participating in this form of tourism, thereby enhancing self-governance, enhancing livelihoods, and promoting the traditional values of locals.

Community-based tourism is a type of tourism where visitors from outside come and stay overnight in the living space of the local community. Community-based tourism gives visitors the opportunity to explore the wild natural environment or learn about traditional cultural values, respecting indigenous cultural thinking. Local communities have the opportunity to enjoy economic benefits from participating in discovery activities based on natural and socio-cultural values in the area where the local community lives (Choi, 2013). The characteristics of community-based tourism activities are community-based. Local people are the main actors in tourism activities, members of the local community are involved in planning; implementing, and managing tourism activities in their own communities. Moreover, the economic benefits are shared equally, not only for the travel agencies but also for the members of the community.

Community participation in sustainable tourism development is the reasonable division of benefits between the parties involved in tourism activities, including the local community that will provide tourism services, and organizes tourism activities. The local government is the representative of the state agency that directly manages local activities, ensuring security, order, and safety for the community and visitors (Lo and Janta, 2020). Tourism businesses work with local communities and host governments in providing tourism-related services (Dang, 2021). In addition, the participating parties must be responsible for contributing to and upgrading the infrastructure to serve tourism and people's activities. In fact, the conservation of nature and the local culture has a close relationship with the development of infrastructure for community-based activities according to the principle of harmony. The Mekong Delta includes 13 provinces and cities including Long An, Tien Giang, Ben Tre, Vinh Long, Tra Vinh, Hau Giang, Soc Trang, Dong Thap, An Giang, Kien Giang, Bac Lieu, Ca Mau, and Can Tho City. The Mekong Delta is currently preserving many traditional cultural values of the Khmer ethnic group with distinct identities, which is the characteristic of the river delta. The Khmer people have had many cultural heritages that are valuable in education, and potential for tourism activities (Nguyen et al., 2019). Cultural values include

* Corresponding author

performing arts, customs, practices, religions, beliefs, cuisine, festivals, and craft villages. These cultural values are the factors that create the attraction and uniqueness to attract festival tourism of the Khmer people in the Mekong Delta.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Community participation in tourism development

Community-based tourism is a type of tourism organized, built, managed, and mastered by the local communities themselves to bring economic benefits. The community must protect the environment when carrying out tourism exploitation activities; introduce visitors to the local characteristics. Community-based tourism is based on the needs and experiences of tourists to learn about the lives of people from different cultures (Frleta and Badurina, 2019).

Community-based tourism development is necessary with the participation of local communities. Community members participate in the planning and implementation of tourism activities, it represents the ownership of tourism resources by the community, they take ownership in providing services to ensure the sustainability of the activity travel. Visitors can experience the diversity and customs of the local culture, and more importantly, to experience the community (Etsuko, 2008).

Communities are people who share with visitors about local culture so that visitors can access, learn and share their traditional culture. The community shares folk knowledge and experiences in life such as cuisine, music, folklore, customs, traditional craft villages, lifestyles, beliefs, and religions (Long and Kayat, 2011). Most tourism activities can bring benefits to the local community. However, it cannot be denied that it brings negative impacts to the community and the natural environment. In any form of tourism, the natural environment, and local culture are subject to external influences.

Indigenous communities should be fully aware of the importance of culture and environment to their lives and the tourism they are providing. We should respect and protection of natural resources, and local cultural identity is fundamental to resource regeneration for tourism. The richer the tourism resources, the more attractive it is to tourists (Huong and Lee, 2017). For community-based tourism to develop in a long-term and sustainable way, the conservation of resources is considered necessary.

2. Festival tourism

A Festival is a type of folklore activity including belief, religion, architecture, and landscape, which have the characteristics that make it attractive to visitors. Festivals are community activities capable of meeting the needs of the spiritual life of the community and the whole of society. Festivals are usually held at historical and cultural relics, scenic spots, relics, and cultural institutions, it is held at specific times and spaces. The connection between the natural landscape and tangible and intangible cultural heritage has created a long-term and sustainable tourism attraction (Giao et al., 2021). Therefore, the festival attracts tourists and vice versa, tourism activities will promote the community to preserve and develop the festival.

The Mekong Delta has rich potential for cultural tourism and festival tourism where visitors can experience and discover the cultural identity of the Khmer community. The uniqueness of Khmer culture is that festivals include traditional festivals and religious festivals such as The Chol Chnam Thmay (New Year celebration), The Sene Dolta (grandparent worship), and The Ok Om Bok (moon worshiping ceremony). The festivals attract many domestic and foreign tourists to attend and experience. Exploiting festival tourism brings many benefits to local people, it increases income from participating in tourism activities including serving accommodation needs, enjoying culinary dishes, selling handicrafts, performing folk art, and experiencing community cultural activities (Nguyen and Nguyen, 2022). Festival tourism will contribute to stabilizing economic life, developing livelihoods, and reducing poverty for Khmer people in the Mekong Delta.

Communities participating in tourism activities can perceive it as an opportunity to promote the culture of the nation, and at the same time, it is a stable source of income. Indigenous communities rely on available tourism resources, and community participation in festival tourism will create a unique feature for the tourism industry in Vietnam (Dong et al., 2020). Festival tourism will give the community the opportunity to enrich its culture. Indigenous communities should recognize the important role of tourism in local economic and social development. They should actively organize propaganda and promotion activities on tourism; build a local tourism brand; focus on training tourism human resources, improving the quality of tourism services and products (Tung, 2020). In the study “Understanding the historical and geographical contexts of food festival tourism development: The case of the Tatebayashi Noodle Grand Prix in Japan”, by Sangkyun (2015). The study examined the extent to which an area's culinary heritage and its themed food festivals have been organized for successful community development in the Japanese context, from a tourism development perspective festival. The results show that the region's cuisine and cuisine are special and unique as an intangible cultural heritage that has become an invaluable resource for the development of festival tourism in the region. The festival itself serves as a platform from which local communities have retained their cultural identity. It also provides an opportunity for them to honor and support the traditions and practices associated with their culinary cultural heritage that is in danger of being lost (Sangkyun, 2015).

According to Andrea and Dimitris (2019) in the study “Factors influencing visitor travel to festivals: Challenges in encouraging sustainable travel”. The study looked at visitors' choice of festivals and encouraged sustainable tourism. The results show that the external and internal factors affecting tourists' choice of travel mode are closely related. External factors reflect environmental factors related to the location and type of overnight stay, festival venue, travel time, and quality of public transport services. Internal factors include autonomy in taking different routes and times, travel costs, and physical health and mobility issues. The authors argue that to further encourage sustainable tourism, festival organizers and policymakers should not focus solely on travel time and costs but must consider a range of festival-specific elements and their geographical location (Andrea and Dimitris, 2019). In the study “Factors affecting the development of cultural tourism in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam” by Nguyen (2022). Cultural tourism is a form of tourism based on national cultural identity, with the participation of the community in order to preserve and promote traditional cultural values. Cultural tourism is a trend in many countries around the world. Research results show that there are six factors affecting the development of cultural tourism in the Mekong Delta including the Tourism Development Policy; Infrastructure for tourism; Tourism human resources; Resources of tourism; Geographical location; Tourism products and services. Research indicates that policymakers should make adjustments in developing tourism markets and products; Training human resources and improving service quality; Investment in infrastructure development, material and technical; Planning for cultural tourism development and conservation of natural resources and environment (Nguyen, 2022). According to Xu (2022) in the study “Impact of cultural proximity on destination image and tourists' perceptions: The case of the Portuguese cultural festival Lusofonia in Macao”. The author argues that festivals introduce cultural heritage, popularize tourist destinations, and generate economic benefits. In addition, studies have shown that participating in the festivals of a destination whose culture is close to them helps tourists resonate with the destination better. The results provided insight into the role of cultural events in enhancing destination image and identified equivalent attributes of destination culture positively oriented festival perception and image perceived destination image. Research indicates that tourism managers should align destination branding with tourists' expectations and experiences (Xu, 2022). Thus, festival tourism has been studied by many scientists through the examples that it has brought many positives. Festival tourism should be of interest to further studies.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH STRUCTURE

1. Theoretical framework

Community-based tourism is a form of sustainable tourism that promotes pro-poor strategies in a community setting. Community-based tourism initiatives aim to involve local people in the operation and management of small tourism projects as a means of poverty alleviation and alternative income generation for the community copper. Community-based tourism initiatives also encourage respect for local traditions and cultures as well as for natural heritage.

There are many studies on community participation in festival tourism development. According to Bernadette (2006) Problematising Festival Tourism: Arts Festivals and Sustainable Development in Ireland. According to the authors, tourism emerged as a force driving the development and expansion of the festival. It is believed to be related to increasing revenue and developing local infrastructure. The author suggests that there is a relationship between the festival and the local population. Festivals with tourism need to be carefully managed for the benefit of the community, and social stability, and to encourage sustainable approaches to tourism development (Bernadette, 2006).

In the study “The support of attendees for tourism development: Evidence from religious festivals, Taiwan” by Tsung et al., (2015). The authors' study examines the relationship between emotional experience, festival identity, and tourism development support among attendees at two popular traditional religious festivals in Taiwan. The authors argue that authentic experience directly affects the festival identity of the attendees and indirectly affects the attendees' support for the tourism development of the festival (Tsung et al., 2015). In the study by Lela et al., (2020) on “Issues with Applying the Concept of Community-Based Tourism in the Caucasus”, the authors discovered the factors affecting the implementation of Community-Based Tourism in Armenia and Georgia. The authors propose the development of comprehensive Community-based tourism activities in the South Caucasus including Creating development communities using tourism activities; Preparing guidelines for the development and implementation of Community-Based Tourism projects; Focusing on developing diverse products as a key driver for local people to cooperate and gain mutual benefits (Lela et al., 2020).

According to Lo et al., (2020) in the study “Resident's Perspective on Developing Community-Based Tourism - A Qualitative Study of Muen Ngoen Kong Community, Chiang Mai, Thailand”. The authors have studied the benefits and challenges of community-based tourism in the Muen Ngoen Kong community. The results show that Community-Based Tourism efforts in the community affect the livelihoods of local residents including the Abundance of tourism resources; Community-based tourism has contributed benefits to the survival of the community (Lo et al., 2020).

According to Asa et al., (2022) in the study “The Impact of Tourism Development on the Local Communities in Namibia” The authors analyzed and explained the impact of tourism development on local communities in Namibia. It gives foreign exchange Income to the residents which is important for the development of the local community. They claim that self-efficacy positively affects the participation of local communities in tourism development, which has a positive impact on their quality of life in terms of economy and society (Asa et al., 2022). In addition, the local community should be more supportive and instead have a positive attitude towards tourism development as it is more profitable for the tourism sector. The authors suggest that the government should also ensure that locals are well informed about the importance of tourism, its impact on economic development, and sustainable tourism strategies in Namibia.

Raymond et al., (2017) “Tourism in Hoi An, Vietnam: impacts, perceived benefits, community attachment and support for tourism development”. The content of the study determined the perception of residents in Hoi An, Vietnam about the impacts and benefits derived from tourism, and the relationship between community attachment and support for tourism. The authors point out that people perceive the impact of tourism to be positive in terms of economy, culture, and society (Raymond et al., 2017). They realize that more attention should be paid to the negative socio-cultural and environmental impacts to improve tourism quality in a sustainable way. According to Le and Duong, (2019) in the study “Factors affecting the participation of the community in the development of tourism combined with orchards in An Giang province”. The authors analyzed the factors affecting the community's participation in the development of tourism and orchard models. The results show that there are 4 factors affecting the community's participation in the tourism model combined with orchards, including economic benefits, social capital, natural factors, and local resources (Le and Duong, 2019).

In the study by Phuong et al., (2020) on “Factors affecting community-based tourism development and environmental protection: A practical study in Vietnam”. The authors state that community-based tourism is one of the types of tourism in the direction of development with three critical goals: bringing sustainable economic benefits, protecting the natural environment, and preserving indigenous cultural values. The authors analyze the factors affecting the development of community eco-tourism associated with environmental protection (Phuong et al., 2020). According to Huong et al., (2020) the research "Factors affecting decisions to participate in community tourism of the local people in Lam Binh, Tuyen Quang". The authors have pointed out that the factors affecting the decision to participate in community tourism of local people include (1) Personal factors; (2) Attraction and image of a tourist destination; (3) Support and investment from the State, local authorities, organizations, and enterprises; (4) The influence of those around (Huong et al., 2020). Thus, studies on community participation in tourism, and the development of festival tourism are rich and diverse. Previous studies have mentioned the theory and practical experience of sustainable tourism development, bringing economic benefits to local communities, protecting the environment, and preserving indigenous cultures. These studies are an important basis to apply to the research model of community participation in the development of Khmer festival tourism in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam.

2. Hypotheses

On the basis of research theories, we propose a model of factors affecting community participation in the development of Khmer festival tourism in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam. The following hypotheses have been proposed.

Hypothesis (H1): *Factors affecting community participation in the development of Khmer festival tourism in the Mekong Delta include (1) Economic benefits; (2) Cultural and community; (3) Resources of tourism; (4) Policies for the development of community tourism; (5) Community environment; (6) Tourism products and services.*

H1.1: Benefit of economic affect community participation in the development of Khmer festival tourism in the Mekong Delta.

H1.2: Cultural and social factors affect community participation in the development of Khmer festival tourism in the Mekong Delta.

H1.3: Tourism resources affect the participation of the community in the development of Khmer festival tourism in the Mekong Delta.

H1.4: Policies for the development of community tourism affect community participation in Khmer festival tourism development in the Mekong Delta.

H1.5: Community environment affects community participation in Khmer festival tourism development in Mekong Delta.

H1.6: Tourism products and services affect community participation in Khmer festival tourism development in the Mekong Delta.

3. Research structure

Based on reference to available studies, and combined with an actual survey on community participation in Khmer festival tourism development in Mekong Delta, Vietnam. The study initially hypothesized that there are 5 factors affecting the community's participation in festival tourism development including (1) Economic benefits; (2) Cultural and community; (3) Resources of tourism; (4) Policies for the development of community tourism; (5) Community environment; (6) Tourism products and services.

Table 1. Observable variables in the research structure of community participation in the development of Khmer festival tourism in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam

Factors in the model	Encode	Observed variables
Benefit of economic	BOE	(1) Tourism has improved job opportunities in my community; (2) Tourism has attracted more investment to the community; (3) Tourism enhances tourist spending; (4) Our standard of living has increased significantly because of tourism; (5) Tourism brings economic benefits to local people; (6) Tourism brings economic benefits to local businesses.
Cultural and community	CAC	(1) Locals have a wider range of opportunities and facilities; (2) Encourage the local community to participate in various cultural activities; (3) Promote understanding and exchange of cultures; (4) Bring many valuable experiences; (5) Positive impact on the cultural identity of the community; (6) Tourism helps preserve cultural heritage.
Resources of tourism	ROT	(1) Abundant natural landscape; (2) Many major festivals during the year; (3) Many cultural relics have historical value; (4) Many traditional craft villages; (5) Diversity in culinary culture.
Policies for the development of community tourism	PDT	(1) Policy on community tourism development; (2) Policy on the regional linkage for community tourism; (3) Policy calling for investment in community tourism; (4) The economic-social, security-political situation is stable.
Community environment	CEN	(1) Awareness of environmental protection of the local community; (2) The level of risk of causing environmental pollution; (3) Tourism causes crowding and noise in the community; (4) Overcrowding of destinations and resorts during festivals; (5) Degree of infectious disease.
Tourism products and service	TPS	(1) Local specialties, arts and crafts; (2) Festival tourism; (3) Ecotourism and resort tourism; (4) Conference - seminar tourism; (5) Culture and history tourism.
Community participation in festival tourism development	CFT	(1) Developing community-based tourism should pay attention to social benefits; (2) Community-based tourism development should focus on economic benefits; (3) Developing community-based tourism should pay attention to preserving cultural values; (4) Developing community-based tourism must have specific tourism products; (5) Developing community-based tourism requires appropriate policies of the Government.

RESEARCH METHODS

To find and evaluate the factors affecting community participation in the development of Khmer festival tourism in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam. We have based on the theoretical framework combined with the literature study to build the research structure in Figure 1. The methods used include descriptive statistical analysis, exploratory factor analysis, and analysis regression to test the research model.

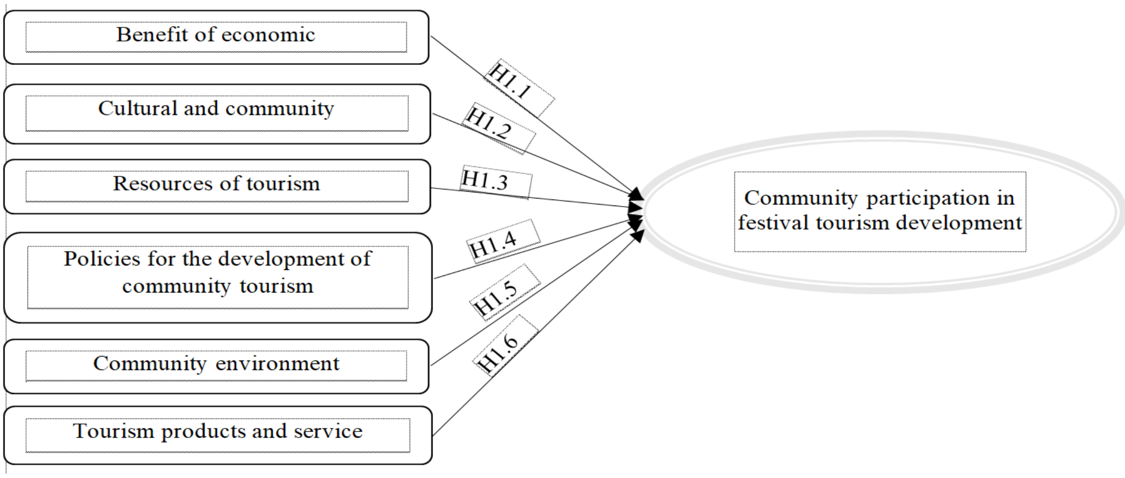

Figure 1. Overview of research structure

1. Take a research sample

On the basis of preliminary discussion results, the research team built a questionnaire on the factors affecting the community's participation in the development of Khmer festival tourism in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam. The survey includes 43 Likert items. The demographic questionnaire sought information on the survey area, gender, occupation, age, education level, monthly income, number of visits to the Mekong Delta by tourists, and 7 scales of the research structure. Likert scale is used with a range of values from 1 to 5 to measure the perceived level of survey subjects (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree, (5) strongly agree. Data collection took place between January and August 2022. The method used was for visitors to respond directly to the questionnaire. The study was carried out in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam. According to data from the General Statistics Office of Vietnam, up to 2019 the Mekong Delta region has 1.2 million Khmer people, they live in large numbers in Hau Giang provinces; Soc Trang; Bac Lieu; Can Tho; Tra Vinh; An Giang; Ca Mau; Kien Giang (General Statistics Office, 2019). It is shown in Figure 2. Questionnaires were distributed to 1300 visitors. There were 1258 valid answer sheets collected, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of the survey sample

Characteristics and survey area	Number of visitors	Percentage
1. Survey area	1258	100%
Hau Giang	113	9.0
Soc Trang	177	14.1
Bac Lieu	96	7.6
Can Tho	226	18.0
Tra Vinh	148	11.8
An Giang	213	16.9
Ca Mau	119	9.5
Kien Giang	166	13.2
2. The gender	1258	100%
Male	640	50.9
Female	618	49.1
3. Occupation	1258	100%
State employees	116	9.2
Company leadership	172	13.7
Researchers	84	6.7
Business staff	238	18.9
Technical staff	141	11.2
Teacher	208	16.5
Freelance labor	124	9.9
Other	175	13.9
4. Age (years)	1258	100%
< 30	331	26.3
30 - 40	313	24.9
40 - 50	376	29.9
> 50	238	18.9
5. Education	1258	100%
Master or PhD	224	17.8
College or Bachelor	348	27.7
Professional diploma holders	410	32.6
Other	276	21.9
6. Monthly Income (million VND)	1258	100%
< 10	291	23.1
10 - 20	413	32.8
20 - 30	322	25.6
> 30	232	18.4
7. Times of visits to Mekong Delta (times)	1258	100%
1	314	25.0
2- 4	375	29.8
5- 6	343	27.3
> 6	226	18.0

2. Data Analysis

The answers from the survey were coded and analyzed using SPSS software version 20, and AMOS version 24. Evaluation of factors affecting community participation in Khmer festival tourism development in Vietnam In the Mekong Delta, Vietnam. Steps to conduct the analysis include Evaluation of the reliability of the scale by Cronbach's Alpha. The alpha coefficient was developed by Cronbach (1951) to measure the internal consistency of variables within the same group.

Accordingly, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient can be used to evaluate the reliability of the scale and remove inappropriate variables from the research model;

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to evaluate the convergent and discriminant value of each variable in the factor groups;

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to check the representativeness of observed variables; evaluated through criteria including unidirectionality; reliability; convergence; and distinctiveness;

Test hypothesis by the linear structural model (SEM), measure factors affecting community participation in Khmer festival tourism development in Mekong Delta; and measure the influence of factors affecting community participation in the development of Khmer festival tourism in the Mekong Delta.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The results of testing the reliability of the scales

Cronbach's Alpha coefficient tests how closely the scales are correlated. According to researchers on the scale, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient > 0.6 can be used, the best scale ranges from 0.8 to 1. In addition, the variables that have variable correlation coefficients < 0.3 will be excluded from the research model (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). The results of data processing in Table 3 have shown that all 7 scales achieve high reliability. Cronbach's Alpha > 0.8 and Total variable correlation coefficient > 0.3 (Cronbach, 1951). It represents the appropriateness of the scale.

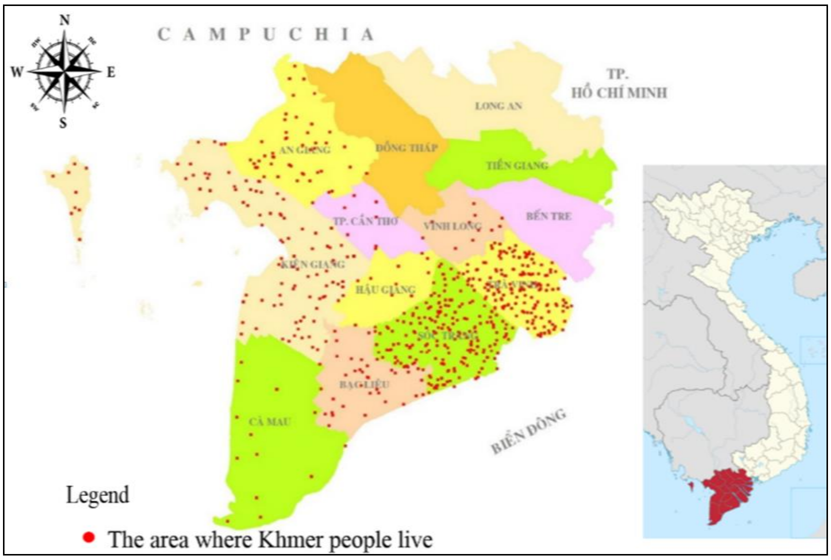

Figure 2. Survey area in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam

Table 3. Results of testing Cronbach's Alpha scales

Scales of measurement	Encode	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpha	Co rrected Item-Total Correlation range
Benefit of economic	BOE	6	.914	.684 - .854
Cultural and community	CAC	6	.887	.645 - .829
Resources of tourism	ROT	5	.858	.603 - .803
Policies for the development of community tourism	PDT	4	.929	.786 - .871
Community environment	CEN	5	.901	.693 - .824
Tourism products and service	TPS	5	.943	.759 - .907
Community participation in festival tourism development	CFT	5	.950	.797 - .887

2. Exploratory factor analysis EFA for the scales

The KMO and Bartlett's test results in the KMO and Bartlett's test tables show that the KMO value = 0.873, proving that this discovery factor is suitable for the scale. Bartlett's test, value Sig.= 0.000 (< 0.05), proves that the variables are correlated with each other in factors. Parameter Eigenvalues ≥ 1 are kept in the analytical model. The analysis results showed that Eigenvalue = 1,381 (≥ 1) and 7 factors were extracted with the best meaning of summarizing information. The sum of squares of the cumulative factor loading coefficient (Cumulative) is 74,213% (≥ 50%), showing that the EFA model is appropriate (Hair et al., 2010). Therefore, all 7 factors are kept in the research model, shown in Table 4.

The results of the rotation matrix in Table 4 show that 36 observed variables are classified into 7 factors, all observed variables have Factor Loading coefficients greater than 0.5 and there are no bad variables (Hair et al., 2010). Therefore, all 7 factors are kept in the research model.

Table 4. Rotated component matrix

	Component						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
BOE5	.871						
BOE6	.838						
BOE3	.795						
BOE4	.787						
BOE1	.752						
BOE2	.735						
TPS4		.946					
TPS5		.926					
TPS3		.918					
TPS2		.853					
TPS1		.801					
CAC6			.890				
CAC5			.822				
CAC4			.817				
CAC2			.739				
CAC1			.718				
CAC3			.708				
CEN5				.883			
CEN4				.866			
CEN1				.818			
CEN2				.790			
CEN3				.774			
CFT4					.815		
CFT2					.808		
CFT5					.780		
CFT1					.775		
CFT3					.682		
PDT3						.906	
PDT4						.898	
PDT2						.867	
PDT1						.830	
ROT5							.835
ROT3							.778
ROT2							.761
ROT1							.736
ROT4							.686

3. Confirmatory factor analysis CFA in the model

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is a statistical technique of linear structural modeling (SEM). The method of confirmatory factor analysis was used to test the scales and model fit. The results of confirmatory factor analysis are evaluated through the following criteria including unidirectionality; Reliability; Convergence; and distinction.

To test the unidirectionality of the model, the results of affirmative factor analysis for 7 scales of concepts with the indexes in Figure 3 are to test the unidirectionality of the model, and the results of confirmatory factor analysis for 7 scales of concepts with indicators in Figure 2 are Chi-square = 4.657; CFI = .949; GFI = .900; RMSEA = .054; TLI = .940; PCLOSE = .001, the coefficients just shown are acceptable (Doll et al., 1994). The results of the confirmatory factor analysis have shown the unidirectionality of the scales in the research model.

Test for convergence validity, discriminant validity, and reliability. In Table 5, we have shown that all composite reliability values (CR) > (0.7) mean that the reliability of the scales is guaranteed; all extracted mean-variance values (AVE) > (0.5) mean convergence is guaranteed; and all maximum individual variance (MSV) < Extracted Mean-Variance (AVE), discriminability is also guaranteed (Baumgartner and Homburg, 1996). The results of testing the scales also show that Square Root of AVE (SQRT AVE) > inter-construct correlations, shown in Table 6. Thus, the results of the validity and reliability test are shown in Table 5, and Table 6 which represent the combined reliability; convergent validity and discriminant validity are guaranteed at all scales.

4. Structural model testing (SEM)

The results of data processing are continued to analyze the factors affecting the development of cultural tourism in the Khmer community in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam. The processing results are presented in Figure 3, and Table 7. The model has Chi-square = 4.657; CFI = .949; GFI = .900; RMSEA = .054; TLI = .940; PCLOSE = .001.

Table 5. Result of convergent validity, distinction validity

Factor construct	No. of items	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)
Benefit of economic (BOE)	6	0.915	0.645	0.275	0.933
Tourism products and service (TPS)	5	0.940	0.760	0.099	0.973
Cultural and community (CAC)	6	0.889	0.575	0.141	0.919
Community environment (CEN)	5	0.902	0.650	0.152	0.910
Community participation in festival tourism development (CFT)	5	0.950	0.793	0.275	0.955
Policies for the development of community tourism (PDT)	4	0.930	0.769	0.158	0.936
Resources of tourism (ROT)	5	0.860	0.555	0.266	0.892

Table 6. The square root of AVE with inter-construct correlations

	BOE	TPS	CAC	CEN	CFT	PDT	ROT
BOE	**0.803**						
TPS	-0.014	**0.872**					
CAC	0.255***	0.015	**0.758**				
CEN	0.259***	0.103***	0.185***	**0.806**			
CFT	0.525***	0.315***	0.375***	0.390***	**0.890**		
PDT	0.318***	-0.022	0.135***	0.196***	0.397***	**0.877**	
ROT	0.408***	0.139***	0.261***	0.258***	0.515***	0.253***	**0.745**
Significance of Correlations: † p < 0.100; * p < 0.050; ** p < 0.010; *** p < 0.001							

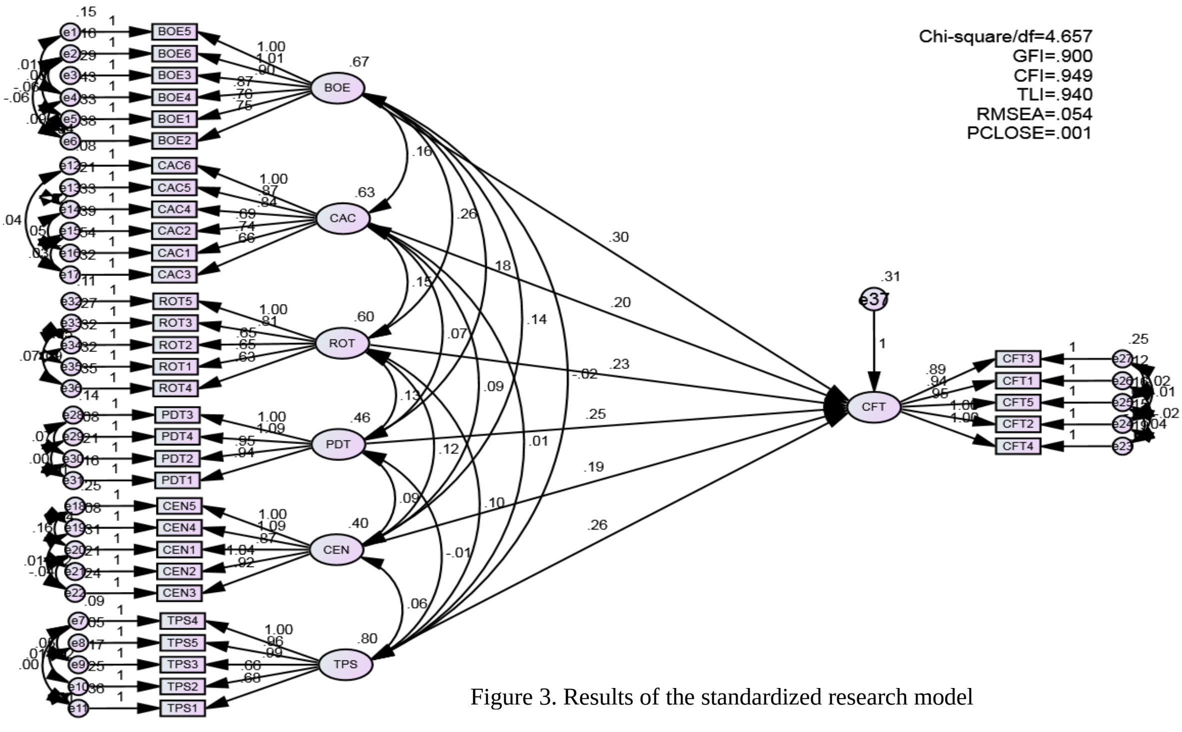

Figure 3. Results of the standardized research model

The results of testing the linear structure of the model are shown in Figures 3, and Table 7, the data show the Sig values of the scales BOE = 0.000 (<0.05), CAC = 0.000 (<0.05), ROT = 0.000 (< 0.05), PDT = 0.000 (< 0.05), CEN = 0.000 (< 0.05), TPS = 0.000 (< 0.05) (Hu and Bentler, 1999). Through the Sig values, it has been shown that there is an impact relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable.

The results of testing the relationship between concepts in the model are shown in Table 7. It shows that the larger the coefficient of normalized regression, the stronger the corresponding independent variable. It shows a stronger impact on the dependent variable, which is the development of cultural tourism in the Khmer community in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam (CUTODE). Factors affecting cultural tourism development of Khmer community in Mekong Delta, Vietnam include BOE = 0.290, TPS = 0.279, ROT = 0.217, PDT = 0.204, CAC = 0.188, CEN = 0.146.

Table 7. Results of testing the impact of independent variables on the dependent variable

The impact of independent variables on the dependent variable	Estimates	Sig	Standardized estimates
BOE ----> CFT	0.296	.000	0.290
CAC ----> CFT	0.197	.000	0.188
ROT ----> CFT	0.234	.000	0.217
PDT ----> CFT	0.251	.000	0.204
CEN ----> CFT	0.192	.000	0.146
TPS -----> CFT	0.260	.000	0.279

The results of the linearity structural test of the research model have R2 (Adjusted R square) of CUTODE = 0.558, which means that the model regression is appropriate. Describe and explain that the independent variables affect 55.8% of the variation of the dependent variable on the development of cultural tourism in the Khmer community in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam (CFT) in the model. Testing the linear structure of the research model shows that the scales are reliable and valid for model evaluation. The findings of the study show that there are 6 factors affecting the development of cultural tourism in the Khmer community in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam including Economic benefits; Tourism products and services; Resources of tourism; Policies for the development of community tourism; Cultural and community; Community environment.

Based on the resulting study, we would like to discuss some ideas for the development of cultural tourism in the Khmer community in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam. We should invest in building more complete infrastructure and technical facilities for tourism. Local governments should call for investment to build and upgrade infrastructure to meet the needs of people and customers (Lo, 2020). Support and advise people to develop craft village tourism to increase income and improve the economy. In the current context, the development of community-based tourism has an important meaning, toward the goal of sustainable socio-economic development. We should develop in association with preserving and promoting the values of natural resources and protecting the environment, raising household incomes (Huynh and Piracha, 2019). Based on the advantages and disadvantages of households when participating in tourism activities, a number of proposals are made to promote and utilize the strengths of the locality (Vu et al., 2020).

Promoting traditional occupations of the Khmer ethnic group, giving up information and communication activities to raise people's awareness of the role, significance, and importance of developing traditional occupations in the Khmer community. We should build a brand for tourism products with specific characteristics of the Khmer people which will help them increase their income and actively participate in the development of community tourism (Stylidis et al., 2014).

We should preserve and promote the cultural traditions of the Khmer. Preferential policies should be developed for traditional craft villages such as the production of handicrafts, consumer goods, folk art, and architecture for the Khmer community (Trang and Tu, 2021). We should create diversity for Khmer tourism products associated with their cultural identity. In addition, we can create tourism products from traditional festivals such as Chol Chnam Thmay (New Year festival), Sen Dolta (filial piety ceremony for grandparents-parents), and Ok Om Bok (moon worshiping ceremony), the cultural-artistic, and religious activity in the community of the Khmer.

Local authorities should implement investment projects to build and upgrade transport infrastructure, road systems connecting routes - tourist attractions. Besides, encouraging and creating conditions for households to develop unique tourism models, form and expand homestay services, and develop accommodation tourism should be taken into account (Truong, 2012). We should create favorable conditions for tourists to visit and experience tourism activities; supporting market search, introducing tourism products, and promoting community tourism programs associated with Khmer cultural identity through fairs, tourism exhibitions, on the media. We should strictly control the problem of environmental pollution, food hygiene, and safety to create a safe environment for tourists. People should raise tourism awareness to provide the best service to visitors. The Khmer in the Mekong Delta should preserve and promote the community's traditional cultural identity, contributing to its uniqueness to attract tourists.

CONCLUSION

The hypothetical research model is tested on the scales showing the appropriateness of the factors. The research results have verified the model of the factors affecting the development of cultural tourism in the Khmer community in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam. Which, there are six factors showing the level of influence from strong to weak, including (1) Economic benefits; (2) Tourism products and services; (3) Resources of tourism; (4) Policies for the development of community tourism; (5) Cultural and community; (6) Community environment.

Thus, the results obtained in the study satisfied the set objectives. Some of the contents discussed were proposed to help policymakers understand the relationship between independent factors and the development of cultural tourism in the Khmer community in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam. Policymakers should make adjustments in investment in infrastructure development, and material and technical services for tourism; improve the lives of people in the tourist area, associate economic development with social and protect the environment, and develop tourism markets and products. In addition, the findings in the study also help researchers conduct follow-up studies, they should collect more samples over a larger area for a comprehensive assessment.

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DICHOTOMY IN THE DISTRIBUTION OF MARITIME ACTIVITY BETWEEN MARINE SUB-REGIONS OF EUROPE

Andrey MIKHAYLOV*

Southern Federal University, Higher School of Business, Rostov-on-Don, Russia; Institute of Geography of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Center of Geopolitical Studies, Moscow, Russia, e-mail: mikhailov.andrey@yahoo.com

Anna MIKHAYLOVA

Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University, Institute of Geopolitical and Regional Studies, Kaliningrad, Russia, e-mail: tikhonova.1989@mail.ru

Dmitry HVALEY

Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University, High School of Hospitality, Kaliningrad, Russia, e-mail: hvaley_gusev@mail.ru

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Abstract: Coastal settlements tend to have higher population density and economic clustering compared to inland territories. The tendency of an increasing socio-economic disbalance in favor of coastal spaces – the coastalization, has attracted the attention of the global academic community. Numerous assumptions are made on the cause of the coastalization phenomenon with the maritime activity and tourism being the primary ones. The aim of this study is to evaluate the role of the coast and tourist seaport infrastructure in the distribution of the population and tourist accommodations in cities across different sea basins of Europe. The research design implies verification of the two hypotheses: the area around the tourist seaport will have H1. The highest population density and H2. The highest density of collective accommodation facilities (CAFs) in the coastal zone of the municipality, decreasing with distance. The methodology has a two-stage structure. Firstly, the quantitative evaluation is done to allocate the tourist seaports of 28 European countries using MarineTraffic database and measure the density of population and CAFs by territorial zones using statistics. Secondly, the qualitative assessment is done presenting highlights of case studies by four sea basins (Baltic Sea, Black and Azov Sea, Northeast Atlantic Ocean, Celtic Sea, and Mediterranean Sea) and six sub-basins. 43 seaports of Europe specialize on tourism (over 90% of inbound ships). Most tourist seaports belong to the Mediterranean basin (58.1%), followed by the basin of the Northeast Atlantic Ocean (25.6%), the Azov-Black (11.6%) and Baltic (4.7%) sea basins. Cities with the tourist seaports are represented by a variety population sizes: from under 50 thousand people to over a million. Despite the differences across sea basins, the general pattern suggests a decline of population density and CAFs with the distance from the tourist seaport. Tourist seaports act as the nuclei of coastalization in Europe. The spatial proximity to the seaport has a positive influence on the density of population – the highest in the territorial zone of 2-5 km distance from the seaport, and an even higher effect on the concentration of CAFs – the highest numbers up to 1 km of the tourist seaport. We should note that population structure and tourism activity of some smaller cities are skewed towards larger adjacent cities, with the agglomeration effect outbreaking the role of the seaport.

Key words: sea basin, coastal area, coastalization, seaport, tourism, collective accommodation facilities, maritime activity

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INTRODUCTION

Humans have historically settled in the vicinity of large water bodies. Sea and ocean coasts, in particular, have traditionally played a significant role in human civilization, being recognized as development poles for mankind (Cantasano and Pellicone, 2014). For centuries the coastal areas around the globe have been subjected to intensified development resulting in a heavy human footprint in the modern days (Mee, 2012). As mentioned by Hinrichsen (1996, p. 40) over a quarter of a century ago, the nocturnal satellite imagery of our planet at night reveals an "uninterrupted river of light flowing along the coastlines of our continents" proving the coastal zones of the world to be over-crowded, overdeveloped, and overexploited. Human activities taking place along the coasts have reached an unprecedented scale and are rapidly expanding (Stojanovic and Farmer, 2013). Numerous observations of unbalanced demographic dynamics between inland and coastal regions and the accumulation of people settlements and economic activity near the coasts have been conceptualized in the definition of coastalization or thalasso-attractiveness.

Coastalization is broadly defined as the gradual increase in density of population, concentration of economic activities, and the development of infrastructure in coastal spaces (e.g.: Bell et al., 2013; Mikhaylov et al., 2018). Burke et al. (2001) have found that about 40% of the world's population lives in coastal areas. An even higher estimation is given by Shi et al. (2001) – 50% of the world population. Country level studies indicate a similar pattern on a national scale. The human geography in China is notably uneven, suggesting that 94% of Chinese reside in the eastern provinces of the country with the highest density in coastal agglomerations of Shanghai and Tianjin (Hinrichsen, 1998, Shi-Qing and Rui, 2012). In the

* Corresponding author

United States over half of population lives along the coast and the coastal states are among the fastest growing (Beach, 2002, Beatley et al., 2002). In Indonesia 60% of population live in coastal areas (Siry, 2007). In Thailand about 70% of the total population reside within a few kilometers of the coast (Tookwinas, 1999). Over 85% of Australians live in coastal settlements (Wescott, 2009). Similar patterns are found in other countries as well: Portugal (Barreto, 2002), Lebanon (Makhzoumi et al., 2012), Brazil (Wever et al., 2012), India (Sreeja et al., 2016), Croatia (Bowen et al., 2006), Greece (Sayas, 2006).

Many of the world's major cities and national capitals are in the immediate vicinity of the coast – Tokyo, Shanghai, San Paulo, Lagos, Los Angeles, London, Mumbai to name just a few. In fact, over 80% of the world's largest cities are located along the coast (Baird, 2009), and nearly 40% of all cities with a population between 1 and 10 million people (Tibbetts, 2002). Over the years the density of the population living in coastal areas has been increasing. The estimations vary depending on the research scope and the delimitation of the coastal zone in particular (Mikhaylov and Plotnikova, 2021) but the general trend has been verified – the urbanization and the sprawl of coastal cities and agglomerations (Barragan and de Andres, 2015).

Naturally the effect of coastalization is most pronounced in the southern hemisphere (Mikhaylov et al., 2020). The north-south divide plays a significant role in the unfolding of the coastalization. The southern coasts have the favorable climate for living and the diverse types of marine and maritime activities. Mediterranean Sea region in the southern Europe is a vivid example of these territorial disparities, which have become especially acute in the last century and growing in the recent decades (Salvati and Zitti, 2007). Scholars suggest that tourism explains a considerable part of coastal urbanization (Salvati and Forino, 2014). Tourism contributes to migration and concentration of population and economic activities along the coasts (Leontidou and Marmaras, 2001). International tourism has intensified the urban sprawl and the urbanization of periurban coastal zones in the Mediterranean (Antipolis, 2001; Sayas, 2006) and other marine basins of the world (Bulleri and Chapman, 2010). Salvati (2014) has found that tourism has also been one of the major causes of the gradual increase in urbanization rates on the shores of the southern European coastal cities since the 1950s. Apparently, more than half of its coastline is heavily urbanized, covered in concrete and build-up (Scoullos, 2003).

Typically, studies on the distribution of coastalization effects consider the size (or density) of the population at different distances from the coast. The assumption about the role of tourism or related maritime activities remains indirect. In this article we link the two components together – tourist seaports and tourist accommodation facilities, assessing the role of the coast and tourist port infrastructure of the city in the distribution of the city's population. The study attempts to verify two hypotheses. H1: the area around the tourist seaport will have the highest population density in the coastal zone of the municipality, which will decrease with increasing distance from the port. H2: the area around the tourist seaport will have the highest density of collective accommodation facilities (CAF) in the coastal zone of the municipality, which will decrease as the distance of the municipality from the port increases.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

1. Geography of the study

The research area covers four sea basins of Europe and six sub-basins:

1. Baltic Sea;
2. Black and Azov Sea.
3. Northeast Atlantic Ocean: 3.1 North Sea, including the Skagerrak and the English Channel;
   3.2. Celtic Sea;
   3.3. Bay of Biscay and the coast of the Iberian Peninsula;
4. Mediterranean Sea: 4.1. Western Mediterranean;
   4.2. Adriatic Sea, Ionian Sea and Central Mediterranean Sea;
   4.3. Aegean, Levantine and Sea of Marmara.

When selecting the marine basins, we relied on the Marine Strategy Framework Directive EU adopted on June 17, 2008. The basin-by-basin analysis made it possible to identify territorial contrasts between different coastal zones depending on their geographical position and economic status. We have collected a database of various statistical and geoinformation data for 28 European countries (including the EU and neighboring countries) highlighting the aspects of coastalization of tourist activity and its localization relative to seaports.

2. Data collection and processing

The study has three dimensions of quantitative data that has been collected and analyzed.

2.1. Data on the location and specialization of sea and river-sea ports

The "MarineTraffic" online portal on the movement of ships and their current location in harbors and ports has been used as a single source of information. The data collection period is February 2020 – the latest period before COVID-19 pandemic global lockdown. When processing data on 330 European sea and river-sea ports, the task was to map their spatial location and differentiate them based on industry specialization, labeling a category of tourist seaports.

This category involves the ports which main functions performed is the transportation of tourists between coastal settlements, attractions at sea and the like. The data of the Marine Traffic web portal made it possible to obtain information on 12 categories of shipping, of which 5 were classified as tourist specializations, namely: High Speed Craft, Pleasure craft, Passenger vessels, Sailing vessels, Wing in Grnd. Other categories of shipping were excluded from the study, such as Fishing, Tanker, Cargo vessels, etc., which have an industrial or other purpose not directly related to tourism. In total, 163 ports were identified for European countries (49.4% of the initial sample) with a share of tourism category of maritime navigation over 50% relative to the total number of vessels represented in the port (Table 1).

Table 1. Distribution of seaports by European countries and specialization, 2020
(Source: based on http://marinetraffic.com, February 2020)

Country	Sea and river-sea ports		including with a share of more than 50% of shipping categories classified as tourism		
			distribution by country		of the total number of ports
	Number	Share	Number	Share	Share
UK	44	13.3	15	9.2	34.1
Italy	41	12.4	22	13.5	53.7
Turkey	37	11.2	17	10.4	45.9
Spain	33	10.0	16	9.8	48.5
France	22	6.7	14	8.6	63.6
Netherlands	22	6.7	13	8.0	59.1
Russia	21	6.4	10	6.1	47.6
Greece	13	3.9	8	4.9	61.5
Norway	12	3.6	9	5.5	75.0
Germany	11	3.3	6	3.7	54.5
Denmark	10	3.0	7	4.3	70.0
Ireland	8	2.4	3	1.8	37.5
Portugal	8	2.4	5	3.1	62.5
Sweden	8	2.4	6	3.7	75.0
Ukraine	7	2.1	3	1.8	42.9
Finland	6	1.8	1	0.6	16.7
Belgium	4	1.2	1	0.6	25.0
Poland	4	1.2	1	0.6	25.0
Albania	3	0.9	1	0.6	33.3
Croatia	3	0.9	2	1.2	66.7
Cyprus	2	0.6	-	0.0	-
Latvia	3	0.9	-	-	-
Bulgaria	2	0.6	-	-	-
Estonia	2	0.6	1	0.6	50.0
Georgia	1	0.3	1	0.6	100.0
Lithuania	1	0.3	-		-
Monaco	1	0.3	1	0.6	100.0
Romania	1	0.3	-	-	-
Total	**330**	**100**	**163**	**100**	**49.4**

Almost 67% of the 330 ports of the initial sample are located in 7 countries: UK, Italy, Turkey, Spain, France, Netherlands, and Russia. Also, these countries are leading in the distribution of 163 ports with the prevalence of tourism specialization, although leaving the UK out of the top ranking (Figure 1). On a national scale, Italy, France, Netherlands, Greece, Norway, Germany, Denmark, Portugal, Sweden, Croatia, Estonia, Georgia, and Monaco have the largest share of ports associated with maritime tourism (above 50%). Latvia, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Romania, and Cyprus were excluded from the subsequent analysis, since the share of ships classified in the tourism category was below the 50% threshold. In terms of sea basins, the leader by the number of tourist seaports is the Mediterranean basin (68 ports), followed by the North-Eastern part of the Atlantic Ocean (60 ports), and the smallest share is in the Baltic (22 ports) and the Azov-Black Sea (13 ports) basins.

Further analysis is focusing on a deeper assessment of spatial patterns in the manifestation of local effects of coastalization on the example of sea tourism. The final sample of the study was reduced from 163 to 43 ports. It includes seaports with a share of tourist shipping categories of at least 90%. Thus, the final sample was 13% of the sea and river-sea ports of the European countries that were originally identified, and 26.4% of the tourist seaports of the European countries, in which the share of shipping categories of the tourism group is more than 50%. Figure 1 shows the territorial and basin distribution of the seaports included in the main part of the study. Most tourist seaports belong to the Mediterranean basin – 58.1%, incl. 10 tourist ports in the Western Mediterranean Sea and the Aegean, Levantine Seas, and another 5 ports in the Adriatic and Ionian Seas. In second place with 25.6% of ports is the basin of the Northeast Atlantic Ocean. The Azov-Black (11.6%) and Baltic (4.7%) sea basins are also represented. We shall note that the Danish port of Roskilde was assigned to the Baltic Sea basin.

2.2. Data on the settlement of the population in coastal regions

The second type of data characterized the population settlement system in 30 coastal regions of European countries (NUTS-2 level), each represented by a tourist seaport. We estimated the density of the population by territorial zones relative to the distance from the tourist seaport: under 1 km; 1 to 2 km; 2 to 5 km; 5 to 10 km; 10 to 15 km; 15 to 20 km.

The analysis is held at the NUTS-3 level territories included in the selected NUTS-2 level regions. Data sources were Eurostat, national statistical offices of countries, the CityPopulation database. Data are for 2020 or the closets available year. It should be noted that cities with the allocated tourist seaports of the sample are represented by a variety population sizes: a) 2 cities with over 1 million people; b) 3 cities from 500 to 1,000 thousand people; c) 2 cities from 250 to 500 thousand people; d) 13 cities from 100 to 250 thousand people; e) 17 cities from 50 to 100 thousand people; and f) 4 small cities of up to 50 thousand people. This heterogeneity has made it possible to trace the effect of the attraction of the population to the sea in a differentiated way, studying the cities of different sizes, and hence the forces of attraction.

The QGis 3.14 software was used to build concentric areas from the centers of the corresponding ports. Population density per 1 km^2 was calculated for each territorial zone. Since the most detailed data on the population are presented at the LAU level, it was used to calculate population density, which was then converted to km zones using the Area Weighted Average tool.

2.3. Data on collective accommodation facilities (CAFs) for tourists in coastal regions

The third group of data reflects the number and geolocation of CAFs for tourists in the selected coastal regions. As in the case of settlement structure indicators, the concentration of CAFs for tourists per 1,000 people was estimated, as well as their distribution by territorial zones in relation to the tourist seaport location: under 1 km; 1 to 2 km; 2 to 5 km; 5 to 10 km; 10 to 15 km; 15 to 20 km. Data on the number of accommodation facilities were taken from public sources Booking.com (or Ostrovok.ru for Russian territories) and represent the absolute number of hotels in each concentric zone. Geoinformation processing of the data was performed using QGis 3.14 software package. Data collection period was June 2022. Infrastructure density of CAFs for each territorial zone was calculated as the ratio of the number of facilities in the territorial zone to the area of the territory excluding waterbody.

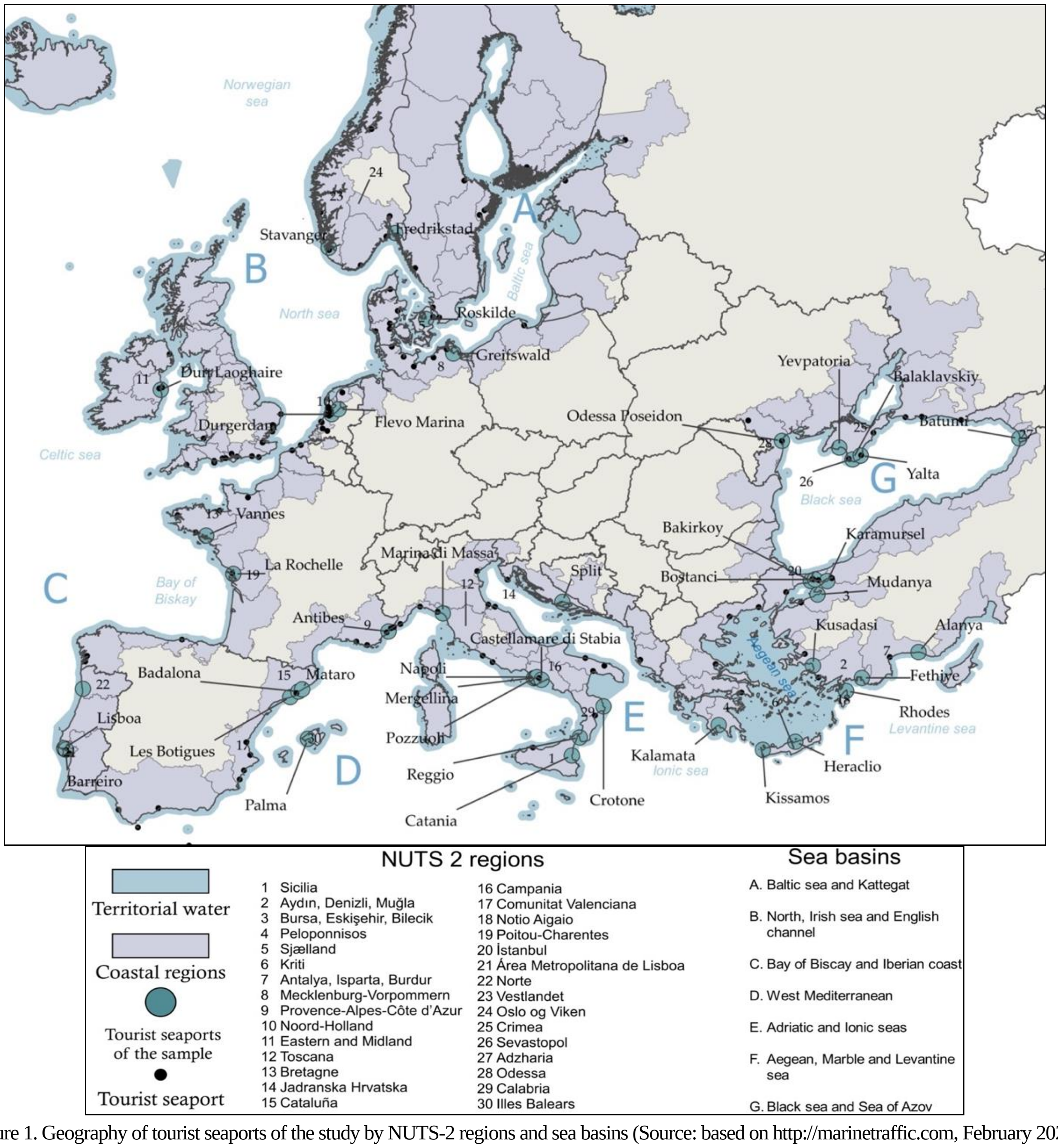
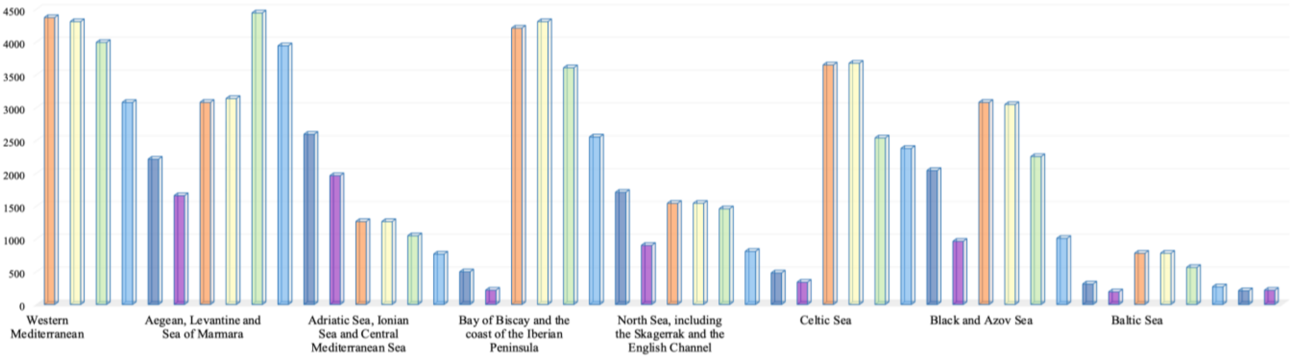


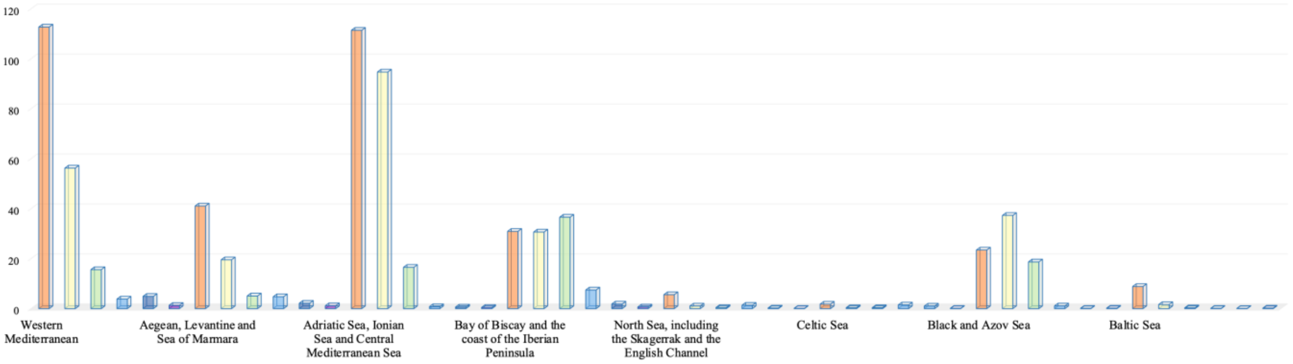
Figure 1. Geography of tourist seaports of the study by NUTS-2 regions and sea basins (Source: based on http://marinetraffic.com, February 2020)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

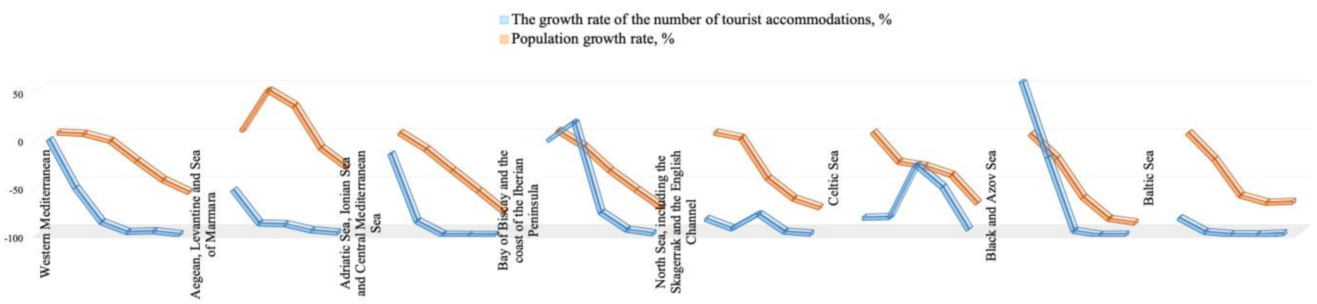
We evaluated the population settlement and distribution of tourist accommodation by marine basins and calculated the average values of these indicators by territorial zones (Figure 2). In spite of significant differences in the average values of population density by sea basins, they have a general pattern in the distribution of population in the territorial zone from 5 to 20 km with a tendency to decrease. At the same time, the attraction of the population to the tourist seaport in the zone up to 5 km has different manifestation, which is reflected both in the absolute values (Figure 2A) and in the chain growth rates (Figure 2B). The concentration of CAFs relative to the tourist seaports is also uneven – Figure 2B. The developed tourist regions with high density of tourist accommodations are located in the Western Mediterranean and Adriatic Sea, Ionian Sea and Central Mediterranean Sea basins, which is natural due to high recreational potential compared, for example, to the Baltic Sea region. The density of CAFs around tourist seaports in other basins under our consideration is significantly lower (over 3 times behind in the area up to 5 km from the port). Also noteworthy is the different curve of change in the rate of CAFs by the territorial zones from 0 to 20 km in the North Sea and Celtic Sea basins (Figure 2B). In contrast to the other basins, there is a slight increase in the density of CAFs in the zone of 5-10 km from the seaport. Table 2 presents pair correlation coefficients between the distance from the tourist seaport and the indicators of population density and CAFs by marine basins.



A) Average population density per territorial zone



B) Average density of tourist accommodations per territorial zone



C) Dynamics in population and tourist accommodations per territorial zone from 0 to 20 km from the tourist seaport

Figure 2. Manifestation of the costalization effect in European marine basins (Note: territorial zones: orange – less than 1 km; yellow – 1 to 2 km; green – 2 to 5 km; light blue – 5 to 10 km; dark blue – 10 to 15 km; purple – 15 to 20 km)

Table 2. Coastalization effects with the distance to the tourist seaport (Source: developed by the authors)

Marine basins	Paired correlation coefficients between distance from the port and the density of ...	
	collective accommodation facilities	population
Western Mediterranean Sea	-0.290	-0.365
Aegean, Levantine and Marmara Seas	-0.408	-0.081
Adriatic Sea, Ionian Sea, and Central Mediterranean	-0.369	-0.587
Biscay Bay and the Coast of the Iberian Peninsula	-0.432	-0.626
North Sea, incl. the Skagerrak and English Channel	-0.281	-0.394
Celtic Sea	-0.342	-0.959
Black and Azov Seas	-0.415	-0.425
Baltic Sea	-0.394	-0.653

We see a significant difference between the sea basins in the strength of attraction to the port infrastructure. Thus, in terms of population, the most striking pattern of decreasing density with the distance from the tourist seaport is characteristic of the Celtic Sea basin. Next come the Baltic Sea and the Bay of Biscay, the coast of the Iberian Peninsula. The least influence of the sea on the settlement system is noted for the studied tourist ports of the Aegean, Levantine and Marmara Seas. For CAFs, the relationship with proximity to the seaport is less strong than for population. However, for some basins it is still more prominent than for others. Given the significant differences between the sea basins in the considered indicators (including the contrast between north and south), a more accurate delimitation of coastal zones on the functional basis (in our case – the tourist function) required a qualitative analysis using the case study methodology.

1. Case study of the tourist seaports by sea basins

1.1. Mediterranean basin

Twenty-five tourist ports are located in the Mediterranean Sea basin, representing over half of the sample. This is the highest result among other European marine basins under consideration, which is expected due to the southern location of this basin, having favorable climate for the development of marine tourism. The ports are distributed across 7 countries: Italy has 8, Turkey – 7, Spain – 4, Greece – 4, and one France and Croatia. According to the distribution of tourist seaports by sub-basins, two are in the lead – the Western Mediterranean Sea (ports of Italy, Spain and France) and the Aegean, Levantine and Marmara Seas (ports of Turkey, Greece). The least represented is the sub-basin of the Adriatic, Ionian Sea and the central part of the Mediterranean Sea, in which the tourist seaports of Italy, Greece, and Croatia are located.

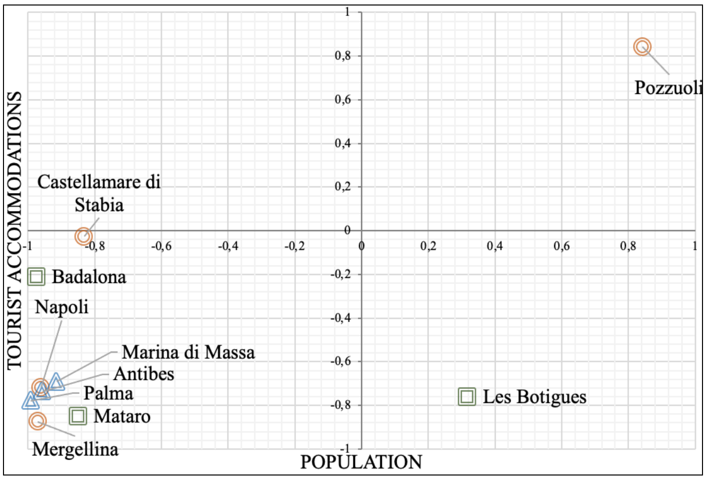


Figure 3. Dependence of population density and tourist accommodations on the distance to the tourist seaport in the Western Mediterranean Sea basin Source: developed by the authors

1.2. Western Mediterranean Sea basin

This sea basin covers three parts of the European coast (Italian, Spanish, and French) and differs from the others in the highest rates of population density and CAFs in the area up to 1 km from the tourist port. Further, with increasing distance, these indicators decrease (the population density decreases slower than the tourist accommodations – Figure 3).

Half of the tourist ports of the sample are located on the Italian coast. In the region of Campania 4 tourist ports are studied, two in the metropolis Napoli – Naples and Mergellina, and two in the province of Napoli – Castellammare Di Stabia (Sorento peninsula) and Pozzuoli (Pozzuoli Bay). The proximity of these ports (50 km is the distance between the most distant cities Pozzuoli and Castellammare Di Stabia by road) outlines them as an important center of maritime tourism with a cumulative impact on the surrounding municipalities. Clustering of large and medium-sized tourist seaports in the Napoli area is due to the high tourist attraction of this stretch of coast and its connection with the neighboring tourist islands and seaside cities by intensive navigation throughout the year. The port of Castellammare Di Sta has yachts shipyards and in Pozzuoli fishing boats are moored, which contributes to the development of maritime tourism in these areas through the related maritime activities. Unlike the large and medium-sized ports, the small resort port Marina Di Massa in the Toscana region does not have a permanent mooring.

Spain is represented by 4 medium-sized ports of the Western Mediterranean. The ports of Badalona and Mataro are located in the Cataluña region and the port of Les Botigues in its neighboring region Comunitat Valenciana. They are all on the same coastline as Barcelona (the capital of Cataluña), stretching a length of 58.5 km, which also allows them to be considered, as in the case of the maritime tourist ports of Naples, as a cluster of maritime tourism. Another Spanish port of the sample is Palma De Mallorca, located in Palma in Palma Bay on the island of Mallorca. It is the largest of the other 4 ports of the Balearic Islands. Its main specialization is cruise shipping, but the port also offers infrastructure for sports navigation, commercial fishing, and cargo transportation. Tourist infrastructure and attractions are presented in walking distance from the port, there is an airport. This makes the port of Palma De Mallorca an important point of maritime tourism in the Mediterranean. The French port of Antibes-Vauban, like the Spanish ports, is medium-sized and located in the western part of the Mediterranean Sea on the Ligurian coast between Monaco and Saint-Tropez. Being a port with history, it has the necessary infrastructure to receive different types of vessels: small fishing boats, pleasure boats, sailing yachts, yachts and superyachts. The port with its 1500 berths is positioned as "the largest marina in Europe". Around the port developed tourism infrastructure. And the port itself acts as a pilot site for testing technologies developed in the European technology park Sophia Antipolis. Figure 3 shows the distribution of the ports by pair correlation coefficients between indicators of population density and tourist accommodations relative to territorial zones by distance from the seaport.

For the tourist ports – Antibes, Palma and Marina Di Massa, not included in the clusters, regardless of their size, there is a decrease in population density and CAFs when moving away from the port. This is also true for the small port of Marina Di Massa. This indicates a clear manifestation of the costalization effect. In the case of tourist ports located close to each other, a deviation from this pattern is taking place. For example, for the port of Les Botigues, the positive correlation with population density is explained by the proximity of other large population centers, as well as for Badalona, which gravitates towards Barcelona. In this respect, Mataro, more distant from Barcelona, acts more as an independent center of 'gravity to the sea'. The same conclusion can be made about the second cluster around Napoli, where the port cities Castellammare Di Stabia and Pozzuoli, the most distant from it, show different trends. The less touristy Pozzuoli is not a strong point of attraction to the sea, neither for the population nor for the CAFs. Castellammare Di Sta, near Pompeii, does not have a strong influence on the concentration of tourist accommodations.

1.3. Aegean, Levantine and Marmara Seas

The study area of the second sub-basin of the Mediterranean covered the waters of three seas (Aegean, Levantine and Marmara) featuring 10 tourist seaports of the sample. This basin showed atypical dynamics of the average population density in the zone of 2 to 5 km – Figure 2A. Four of the Turkish tourist ports studied are compactly located on the coast of the Sea of Marmara. The large-sized port of Bakırköy and the medium-sized port of Bostanci are located in Turkey's largest metropolis, İstanbul, the first in the Bakırköy administrative district, which performs commercial and trade functions, and the second in the Kadıköy administrative district, the cultural and educational center of the Asian part of the city. In addition to the usual commuter ferries, there is a special type of transport between the two ports: sea buses, which are a faster and more spacious type of ferry with compartments for cargo and cars.

In the eastern part of the Sea of Marmara on the southern shore of the Bay of Izmit is a medium-sized tourist port Karamursel (Kocaeli region). Karamursel itself is located 70 km from Bostanci and is connected to it by road. Next to Kocaeli the harbor of Bursa is located in the southern part of the Sea of Marmara, on the coast of the Gulf of Gemlik. It receives passenger ships of all kinds. Mudanya is often seen as a tourist satellite city of the larger town of Bursa, located 30 kilometers away. Since the cities offer complementary tourist products (beach and recreation) and there are good transport links between them. The difference in the location and functional affiliation of these four ports is reflected in the calculated correlation coefficients – Figure 4. The center of attraction of the population and tourist accommodation is Bostanci (especially within 1 km from it), while Bakırköy does not show the tendency of gravitation towards the sea (the main increase in population density is noted in the area of 10 km from the port). The port of Mudanya concentrates tourist accommodations, but the proximity of the larger Bursa gives a shift in terms of population. Karamursel port does not fully act as an independent center of attraction to the sea, and the presence of several larger settlements in the 20 km zone is reflected in the increase in population density with the distance from the port.

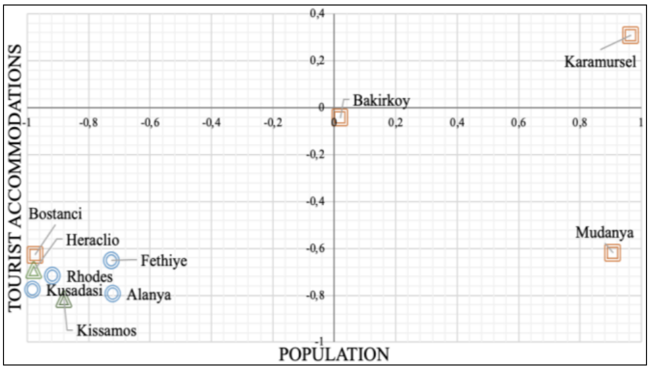


Figure 4. Dependence of population density and tourist accommodations on the distance to the tourist seaport in the Aegean, Levantine and Marmara Seas (Source: developed by the authors)

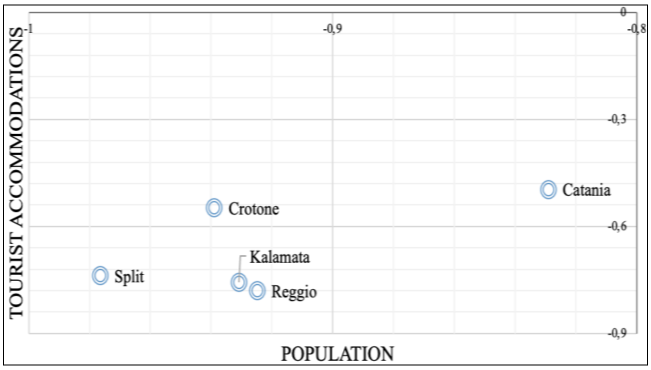


Figure 5. Dependence of population density and tourist accommodations on the distance to the tourist seaport in the Adriatic, Ionian and central Mediterranean Source: developed by the authors

In the south of Turkey, in the neighboring coastal regions of Antalya and Muğla, there are another three tourist seaports included in the study. One of them is the medium-sized port of Alanya on the coast of Antalya Bay in the Eastern Mediterranean. Alanya resort area covers 12 kilometers of Mediterranean coast with attractions and tourist infrastructure. The port itself has a high tourist value and serves tourist ships. International cruise ships and fast ferries call at it. There are also truly tourist attractions, such as passenger ships stylized as pirate ships and ancient galleons. The role of Alanya as a center of attraction to the sea is reflected in the calculated correlation coefficients, showing the shift to the sea of both population and CAFs. The highest density of tourist accommodations is found within 2 km of the port and followed by a decrease, while the population density is distributed more evenly with a decrease after 15 km zone.

Two other Turkish ports, the large-sized Fethiye and the medium-sized Kusadasi, are part of the Muğla region, which overlooks the Aegean Sea. The distance between the ports is about 300 km. Port Kusadasi is located in the resort town of the same name at a sufficient distance (81.6 km) from one of the largest Turkish cities – Izmir, which avoids the strong influence of the neighboring city in respect of population distribution. The port is in the center of the city and is equipped to receive large cruise ships and small vessels with an infrastructure for ferry crossing and tourist services. The main tourist destination that attracts cruise ships to Kusadasi is the museum of the ancient city of Ephesus, located 20 km away. This port reflects a gradual decrease in the density of population and CAFs at a distance from it (with the highest concentration in areas up to 1 km and 1 to 2 km), indicating the port to be a pole of coastalization.

Another port Fethiye is located on the coast of the Gulf of Fethiye, which is favorable for yachting almost all year round. This has led to the creation of several marinas with adequate tourism infrastructure and yacht services. There are regular transport links between Fethiye in Turkey and Rhodes in Greece, whose port is also included in our study, with fast boats and ferries. The latter is located in the northeast of the island Rhodes. The port, the city and the entire island have a pronounced tourist specialization, attracting cruise ships as well as numerous boaters, including from the Turkish side. Both ports (Fethiye and Rhodes) can be classified as centers of attraction to the sea – Figure 4. With that, whereas Rhodes has a sharp decrease in population density with each territorial zone from the port, for Fethiye this occurs more evenly. Two more tourist ports of our sample are located on the island of Crete and face the southern Aegean Sea. They are the medium-sized Greek ports Heraclio (north of the island) and Kissamos (northwest of the island). The distance from each other by almost 175 km makes them to act as independent coastalization poles, which is reflected in the calculated correlation coefficients – Figure 5. For the city of Heraclio, the port has city-forming importance, being in the center of the city and operating year-round. There are many historical and architectural maritime monuments, including the old port harbor with the Venetian fortress on the west side of the seaport. Another port is Kissamos, which is centrally located to the coastal area of the bay of Kissamos and is close to the small resort town of Kastelli Kissamos. There is an old fishing port and a modern, modernized port with a ferry terminal. The beach line runs for 7 miles from Kissamos, allowing the area to be the main tourist attraction, including CAFs. In general, the delineation of the coastal tourist zone around Heraclio and Kissamos by the highest density of tourist accommodations can be made in a line of 5 km from each port.

1.4. Adriatic, Ionian and central Mediterranean

The third Mediterranean sub-basin covered the Adriatic Sea, the Ionian Sea, including the Gulf of Messina, and the Tyrrhenian Sea. Here the sample included 5 ports, all of which in one way or another serve as centers of attraction to the sea – Figure 5. A large seaport of Croatia – Split, located in the central part of the Adriatic Sea, in a bay protected by islands, is an important center of maritime tourism and the leader in our sample by density of CAFs in the immediate (within 2 km) proximity. The port is within walking distance of historical sights and beaches. It is the largest Adriatic port for passenger transportation (and the leader in Croatia). The port has 10 berths for receiving cruise ships. There is a yacht marina with accompanying infrastructure. The ferry port is in the southern part of the city. Regular ferries go to Ancona (Italy), as well as to neighboring islands and the enclave Dubrovnik.

The other four tourist ports of the sample, included in this marine sub-basin, are of medium size. Greek Kalamata is located on the coast of the Gulf of Messina in the Ionian Sea in the southwest of the Peloponnese Peninsula. Kalamata is the administrative center of the district of Messinia and is of high economic and tourist importance to the Peloponnese. Kalamata is 240 km far from Athens. The city has a historical center and beaches for recreation. The port operates in summer and then there are ferry services to the Greek ports of Kissamos and Kythira. There is also a marina. The area up to 2 km from the port is the main concentration of population and CAFs, after which tends to reduce their density.

The seaport of Catania in the eastern part of the island of Sicily on the west coast of the Ionian Sea plays an important role in the development of the city and the entire province. It has numerous types of port activities: commercial, cruise, shipbuilding, fishing, yachting, recreational and sports. The port is built into the transport system of Sicily. A significant tourist destination is the volcano Etna and the historical sites of Catania. For Catania the trend of a gradual decrease in the density of CAFs and population with the distance from the port is not reflected. As far as tourist accommodation is concerned, the peak is between 1 and 2 km, as for the population, the territorial distribution is more even, with a slight increase in density between 5 and 10 km from the port and a subsequent sharp decrease after 15 km. The seaports of Reggio and Crotone belong to the Italian region Calabria. The port of Reggio belongs to the province of Reggio Calabria on the neighboring coast from the Sicilian city of Messina, which also has a port.

There are regular ferry services between Reggio and Messina through the Straits of Messina, and a maritime connection with the aforementioned port of Catania. The average annual load of the port of Reggio is 10 million passengers. According to Figure 6, Reggio can be classified as a center of attraction to the sea, concentrating most of the population around it in an area of 10 km, and tourist accommodation in an area of up to 2 km. The port of Crotone belongs to the province of Crotone and is in the city of the same name with a long history. The seaport has two parts – the old (east-southeast of the city) and the modern (north of the city). The old port is small and serves mainly pleasure boats and fishing boats. The area of the new port is much larger. It has 5 embankments and offshore platforms for hydrocarbon production. Distribution of population from the new port in the area up to 10 km is quite even, but tourist accommodation is mostly concentrated in the area from 1 to 2 km with a shift to the historical part of the city and the old port.

2. Basin of the Northeast Atlantic Ocean

The length of the coasts of the Northeast Atlantic basin is about 20,585 km. The research sample has 11 seaports of tourism referred to the Northeast Atlantic Ocean basin, of which 6 are in the Bay of Biscay, 4 in the North Sea, and 1 in the Celtic Sea. The study presents the tourist seaports of 5 countries – Portugal (4), France (2), Norway (2), Ireland (1), Netherlands (2).

2.1. Bay of Biscay and coast of the Iberian Peninsula

Portugal's ports are in the southwestern part of the Iberian Peninsula on the coast of the North Atlantic Ocean. One of the largest tourist seaports is Lisboa. It is located on the coast of the Tagus River, which flows into the Mar da Palha Bay. The port is located at the crossroads of the Mediterranean, Baltic, Transatlantic and Atlantic routes, making it an important node for maritime and oceanic connections. Lisboa is Europe's leading cruise port and one of the best international cruise ports, which has been recognized with awards and prizes over the years. The port operates three cruise terminals. The Marina de Lisboa, located on the north bank of the Tagus River, has four recreational docks with a total of 900 berths, offering various services for boats and yachts. The port of Lisboa is an important part of the Area Metropolitana de Lisboa, giving economic impetus to 11 neighboring municipalities. The medium-sized ports of Almada and Barreiro (located on the Setúbal Peninsula) are part of the agglomeration influence of the metropolitan area of Lisboa and are managed by a common port authority. Sailing Vessel, Passenger Ship, Pleasure Craft are leading in the structure of vessels received in the port of Lisboa. A similar structure of accepted vessels is characteristic of the port of Almada. The Port of Barreiro, in addition to passenger traffic, also develops cargo traffic. There is a terminal with services for the reception, storage and shipment of bulk liquid products. The impact of Lisboa on the ports of Almada and Barreiro is reflected in the calculated correlation indices – Figure 6. While Lisboa is a major center of attraction to the sea with decreasing population density and CAFs as you move away from it, the other two ports do not show such striking trends. Almada has the highest concentration of CAFs shirting from 2 to 10 km from the port, and Barreiro from 5 to 10 km.

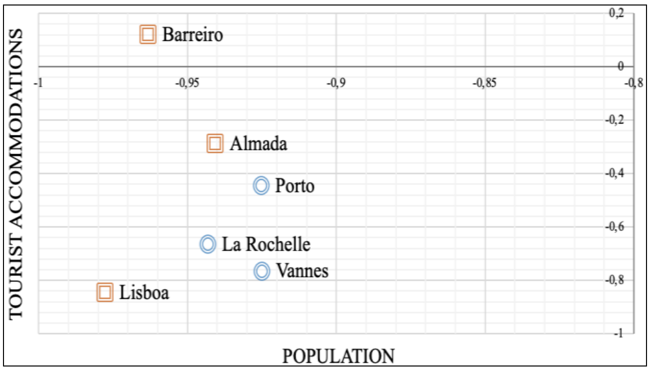


Figure 5. Dependence of population density and tourist accommodations on the distance to the tourist seaport in the Bay of Biscay and coast of the Iberian Peninsula Source: developed by the authors

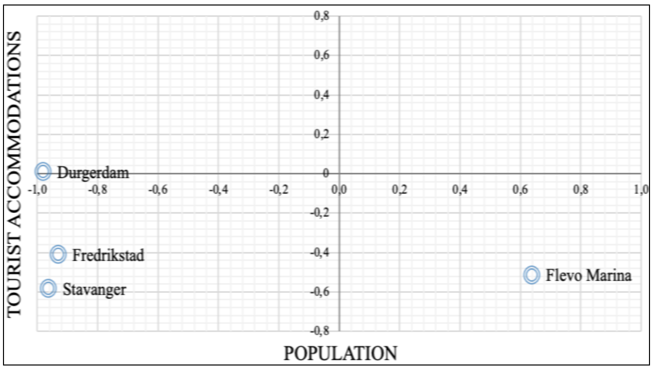


Figure 7. Dependence of population density and tourist accommodations on the distance to the tourist seaport in the North Sea, including the Skagerrak and the English Channel Source: developed by the authors

Another medium-sized seaport in Portugal, Porto, is 300 km away from the port of Lisboa. Porto is one of the largest cities in Portugal after Lisboa, located in the north of the country at the mouth of the river Duero. The Área Metropolitana do Porto, part of the Norte region, was formed around the city. In 1996, Porto was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, which increased its tourist attractiveness. Five kilometers from the city center on the opposite south bank of the river Duero is the recreational port of Douro Marina. It has a marina with 300 berths and services for transient sailors and tourists, as well as various events. It is also home to the Douro Marina Sailing Academy. The territorial displacement of the port of Porto in relation to the historic center of the city has led to the fact that the highest rates of population density CAFs are found in the area from 2 to 5 km. The French port of La-Rochelle is in the city of the same name, the administrative center of the department of Charente-Maritime, contributed to the development of tourism and recreation in the region. Centuries ago, the port gave impetus to the development of La-Rochelle, which went from a fishing village to the seaside resort of Nouvelle-Aquitaine. This is reflected in the high concentration of population and CAFs no further than 2 km from the port, with a subsequent sharp decline. There are many marine-related attractions such as boat trips, ferries and sea buses; cruises to the neighboring islands of Aix, Ré, Oléron, Fort Boyard, etc.; water sports and fishing facilities; historical sites; fish auction and gastronomy; various specialty training, the Maritime Museum and Oceanarium; a significant number of themed events, etc. The port of La-Rochelle itself has three harbors, including the old port. The role of the Port of La-Rochelle as a center of attraction to the sea is confirmed by the calculated correlation values – Figure 6.

The port town of Vannes in the Morbihan department is 252 km from La-Rochelle in northwestern France. The latter is part of the Bretagne region, which occupies the peninsula, washed by the waters of the English Channel and the Bay of Biscay. The port is in a channel on the north coast of the Gulf of Morbihan, overlooking the Bay of Quiberon. The port has pontoons for oversized boats in the floating pool, as well as a marine station for high-tonnage vessels. Located in the center of the city, Vannes Port is attractive for the development of yacht tourism and boat trips. The port area is among the city’s main attractions, along with the historic quarter and the fortress town. There are unique attractions such as a piano barge. The ferry terminal is a 10-minute drive from the city center. There is a ferry service to the neighboring islands of Morbihan Bay. The location of the port in the city center and its active involvement in the tourist ecosystem has contributed to the concentration of population and CAFs no further than 2 km away, and the port itself also serves as a center of attraction to the sea – Figure 6.

2.2. North Sea, including the Skagerrak and the English Channel

The North Sea is characterized by intensive shipping. Our study sample included 4 ports, including 1 large port (Norwegian Stavanger) and 3 medium-sized ports (Dutch Durgerdam and Flevo Marina, Norwegian Fredrikstad) with different coastalization patterns – Figure 7. The port of Durgerdam village is located in the municipality of Amsterdam (in its northern part, the sub-municipality of Amsterdam-Noord, 7 km from the city center). Amsterdam-Noord is separated from the rest of the city of Amsterdam by the reservoir IJ, and in the east comes out to the lakes Markermeer and IJmeer, which previously formed a bay of the North Sea before being dammed with IJsselmeer. The port of Durgerdam faces the shores of Buiten-IJ and is connected to the North Sea by a canal. There is a yacht harbor and 3 sailing clubs. It is also home to the Durgerdam Water Sports Association and hosts sports competitions that attract tourists. The incorporation of Durgerdam into Amsterdam has provided a concentration of population near the port, but the high density of CAFs is shifted to an area 5-10 km away. Flevo Marina is another port we consider in the Noord-Holland region, 66 km from Durgerdam and is located on the shore of IJsselmeer, 7 km from the resort town of Lelystad, the capital of Flevoland. The port has a marina with several berths and services for the maintenance, repair and winter storage of yachts. There is also a water sports center. The main part of the boats in the port are Sailing Vessel and Pleasure Craft, as well as in Durgerdam. Separate tourist attractions are water chalets Flevo Marina, as well as beaches and golf courses in Lelystad. The highest density of CAFs is in the area no further than 1 km from the port, with no dramatic changes in population density.

In the northeast of the North Sea, we consider two other seaports, the Norwegian Stavanger and Fredrikstad, which also serve as centers of attraction to the sea. Stavanger is a major port in the Vestlandet region in the southwest of the country. Stavanger is the administrative center of Rogaland and one of the largest cities in Norway. Stavanger harbor is one of several harbors that make up the Stavanger region, along with Risavika (serving the oil and gas cluster) and Mekjarvik (serving heavy industry). The port of Stavanger itself has year-round cruise, commercial activities and provides a local ferry service. The tourist importance of the port is great. In addition to cruises, there are attractions within walking distance of the harbor (e.g., the Norwegian Petroleum Museum, small tourist sites such as the old fireboat Nøkk, etc.), and various festivals, city festivals with water activities (incl. kayaking, sailing, paddling, recreational boating) are also held. Within 1 km of Stavanger there is the highest density of CAFs, which decreases sharply with distance from the port, confirming its coastalization effect. The second Norwegian port we consider is in the city of Fredrikstad of the municipality of the same name, which is part of the Viken county in eastern Norway (part of the NUTS-2 region Oslo og Viken). The medium-sized port of Fredrikstad is part of the port authority Borg Havn IKS, which combines port harbors in the municipalities of Fredrikstad, Sarpsborg and Hvaler. The distance between their administrative centers is less than 50 km by road. This allowed to locate the port infrastructure in a compact way and to separate the specialization of harbors, forming a universal multipurpose port complex. Fredrikstad itself is a deep-water multipurpose port. The port has four berths, and it is planned to build a fifth one in the old city. From the position of marine tourism, the port of Fredrikstad is regarded as a cruise gateway to Oslo. The main types of accepted tourist ships are Pleasure Craft, Sailing Vessel, and Passenger. Fredrikstad has a ferry pier Gamlebyen, as well as guest harbors for motor homes and boats. In the center of the city there is the promenade Tollboden (length 112 m), available for passenger traffic (including cruise ships). Like Stavanger, Fredrikstad harbor serves as a center of attraction to the sea, but to a lesser extent.

2.3. Celtic Sea

To the sub-basin of the Celtic Sea, we referred the medium Irish tourist port Dun Laoghaire, located on the shore of the shallow Dublin Bay on the west coast of the Irish Sea. The latter is connected by the Strait of St. George to the Celtic Sea. The coastal town of Dun Laoghaire is less than 13 kilometers away from the capital and the country's largest port, Dublin, and is a seaside resort in Ireland. The port harbor Dun Laoghaire has more than 200 years of history. Modern Dun Laoghaire is developing as a seaport and an important tourist destination.

Its artificial harbor consists of two piers, East and West, which are an important tourist attraction. The sailing community is an important driving force for the development of Dun Laoghaire, ensuring the attraction of visitors by organizing major international sailing events. The port of Dun Laoghaire implements a regular ferry service to the port of Holyhead in Wales. However, the use of the harbor as a ferry terminal is gradually declining. Whereas cruise shipping is in operation. From March to October, there are cruises on Dublin Bay. There are also yacht tours to Dublin.

The pairwise correlation coefficient between the distance from the port and population density is -0.959, and between the distance from the port and the density of CAFs is much lower – -0.342. At the same time, despite the fact that the attraction of population to the seaport in Dun Laoghaire is stronger than that of CAFs, their peak concentration in the area up to 1 km from the port is also confirmed (Figure 8).

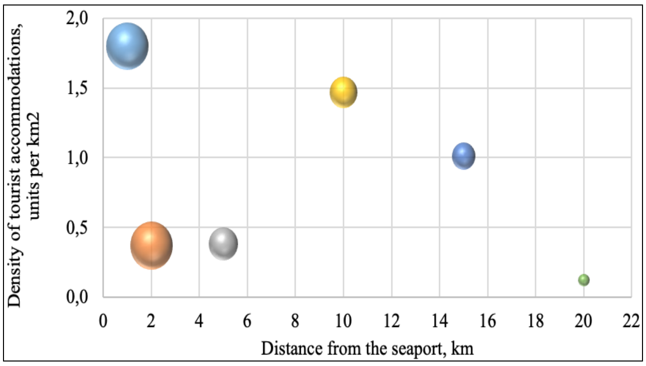


Figure 8. Dependence of population density and tourist accommodations on the distance to the tourist seaport in the Celtic Sea (Source: developed by the authors)

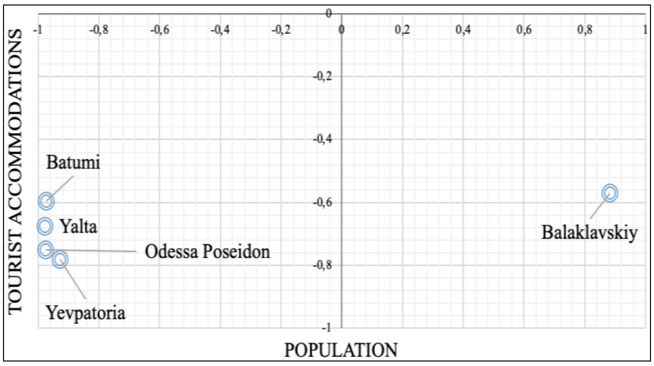


Figure 9. Dependence of population density and tourist accommodations on the distance to the tourist seaport in the Azov-Black Sea Basin (Source: developed by the authors)

3. Azov-Black Sea Basin

The sub-basin of the Azov and Black Seas is represented in this study by 5 ports of tourist orientation. Four of them (except Balaklavskyi port) can be attributed to the centers of attraction to the sea, which is reflected in Figure 9. At the same time, the highest density of CAFs in relation to these ports is noted in the territorial zone up to 2 km, and the population – up to 5 km. The large multi-purpose port of Odessa located in the Northern Black Sea coast in the southwestern part of the Gulf of Odessa. The port is a cargo-passenger port with 54 berths. Passenger complex of the port has the capacity to take up to 4 million tourists a year. There are sea and river cruises from the port of Odessa, but they are not regular. There are cruises on the Black Sea, in the Caucasian direction (Georgian port Batumi), and several cruises to the Mediterranean and North Sea are available. The already mentioned port of Georgia is Batumi, another large-scale Black Sea port. It is located in the southeastern part of the Black Sea in Batumi Bay and has 11 berths.

The passenger terminal with the sea terminal is in the center of the city. The city of Batumi itself is the resort center of Georgia and its Republic of Adjara. Stretching along the Black Sea coast for 20 km, the city has a significant number of attractions for tourists (including beaches and developed infrastructure for seaside recreation, water park, seaside park, historical sites, etc.). Another three year-round ice-free seaports (Yalta, Yevpatoriya, Balaklavskyi) are located on the southern and southwestern coast of the Crimean Peninsula. The peninsula is a resort and recreational area, with actively developing infrastructure for tourism. There is a significant amount of historical and cultural attractions, there are health resorts, as well as natural treasures and more than 400 beaches.

Leading positions are taken by sanatorium treatment and recreation, beach vacations, cultural and educational and active tourism. Yalta and other ports of Crimea host cruise ships sailing on the Black Sea. While Yalta and Evpatoria classify as the centers of gravity to the sea on the two considered indicators, the port of Balaklavskyi, influenced by the large coastal city of Sevastopol, located no further 20 km, cannot be considered as such in terms of the concentration of people. However, the trend of decreasing density of CAFs with distance from the port is true.

4. Baltic Sea basin

The Baltic Sea is characterized by a high density of ferry traffic, especially between Denmark, Sweden, and Germany. In this basin we consider two tourist ports – small Roskilde in Denmark and medium-sized Greifswald in Germany. Both ports are centers of population attraction: the pairwise correlation coefficients between port distance and population density are -0.962 for Greifswald and -0.842 for Roskilde.

Roskilde port is located on the shore of Roskilde-Fjord (its lower part), overlooking the Kattegat Strait. Due to its biodiversity, Roskilde-Fjord has an international conservation status. The town of Roskilde is the administrative center of the municipality of Roskilde, part of the Sjælland region. Roskilde is connected to the Danish capital of Copenhagen (located less than 40 km away) by road and rail. Roskilde harbor has an old and a newer part with a total of 370 berths. Roskilde is a center for cultural and musical events, including those held in the marina and the adjacent museum harbor. The main attractions in and around Roskilde, making their tourism potential and attracting tourists are the Viking Ship Museum and Skjoldungelandet National Park, the Cathedral, the Museum of Stones. The highest density of tourist accommodations is noted in the zone of 1 to 2 km, but its size is not comparable with the ports in the south of Europe.

The second port is the German Greifswald, located in the region NUTS 2 Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. The city of Greifswald is a Hanseatic city. It is located in the southern part of the bay of Greifswald at the mouth of the river Ryck. Part of the city, directly overlooking the Baltic Sea is called Wieck after the name of the fishing village. Stadthafen Greifswald Wieck has free piers for boats and yachts on the north and south banks of the river Ryck. For larger vessels, space is available at the pier on the north and south sides of the river. There is also a pier reserved on the north side of the river for passenger vessels and river cruise ships that sail on the Ryck River. This port accommodates a small fishing fleet. There is a small beach near Wieck, equipped for families. Between Wieck and the central historic part of Greifswald (Marktplatz Greifswald) about 7 km by road, you can also get here on the river Ryck on a yacht or a boat. The bay Greifswald is a recognized sailing and surfing. There are also many tourist attractions related to the sea, such as a wooden drawbridge in the Dutch style, the port museum with a collection of old fishing boats and cargo sailing ships (located in the old city port), the traditional fishing festival Gaffelrigg. Greifswald with the islands of Rügen and Usedom, as well as the seaside town of Stralsund represents an important recreational marine center on the German Baltic coast. The tourist functions of the port are reflected in the high density of tourist accommodations directly near the port (the territorial area up to 1 km), which allows to consider the latter as a center of attraction to the sea.

CONCLUSION

Numerous regional and national level studies, as well as global observations, point to a worldwide shift toward the sea. For example, Small and Nicholls (2003) testify to the accelerated development of the coastal lowlands. Barragan and de Andres (2015) write of the rapid growth of cities in the coastal zone. Data on population dynamics, as well as the location of economic activity, suggest the so-called coastalization phenomenon, that is, the attraction of people and human activity to seashores. Projections claim a population imbalance would soon reach 75% in the littoral zone versus 25% in the rest of the land area (El-Sabh et al., 1998). At the same time, these statements are generalized. There is a lack of understanding about the causal relationships. In particular, what is the role of proximity to the coast and seaport in modern life and whether the agglomeration effect is fundamental. In this article, we focused on the study of the impact of tourist seaports on the location of collective accommodation facilities (CAFs) for tourists and the concentration of the city's population. Having studied 330 sea and river-sea ports of 28 countries in Europe, we identified 43 ports of tourist specialization. The territory of the city was divided into sectors depending on the distance from the port: 1 to 2 km; 2 to 5 km; 5 to 10 km; 10 to 15 km; 15 to 20 km. The results of the study indicate that tourist seaports – the ports in which more than 90% of shipping is directly related to tourism and passenger traffic, have a significant impact on the distribution of population and tourist accommodations. The greatest number of the population of cities with tourist seaports lives in the 2-5 km zone from the port, and CAFs are located even closer – the highest concentration is within 1 km of the port.

Acknowledgement

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DARK TOURISM IN COLOMBIA: MOTIVATION OF TRAVELLERS AND COMMUNITY PRACTICES

Jorge Alexander MORA FORERO
Touristic and Hotelier Business Administration Program, UNIMINUTO Virtual and Distance Learning, Bogotá, Colombia, e-mail: Jorge.moraf@uniminuto.edu

Luis Mauricio BOHORQUEZ PATIÑO
Touristic and Hotelier Business Administration Program, UNIMINUTO Virtual and Distance Learning, Bogotá, Colombia, e-mail: lbohorque30@uniminuto.edu.co

Ana LEÓN-GÓMEZ*
University of Malaga, Department of Economics and Business Administration, Málaga, España, e-mail: ana.leon@uma.es,

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Abstract: Based on the infamous case of the natural disaster of the Armero volcano eruption, this study aims to analyze the perception of the local community towards the development of dark tourism. In particular, the main central question to be addressed in this article is to examine the motivation of tourists and the perception of local residents towards the tourism activity related to this event. To this end, a qualitative methodology was adopted through observation and interview. Our results show that the main motivation of tourists visiting the Armero region is the curiosity to see other people's deaths. However, his feelings change after visiting this region, as curiosity turns to sadness at seeing the suffering of so many people. On the other hand, some locals are not pleased that their history and heritage revolve around tragedy and the dead. This study highlights the lack of awareness of this type of tourism. It is therefore necessary that governments and competent authorities implement measures to encourage the development of this type of tourism. In this way, the cultural impact of black tourism in Colombia can be improved.

Key words: tourism, dark tourism, disaster, Colombia, Armero

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INTRODUCTION

Dark tourism plays an important role in the development of tourism in Colombia, where the sector's activity has been heavily marked by drugs, crime, and terrorism. For this reason, it is particularly important to promote positive aspects of Colombian tourism to improve the resilience of tourists. Dark tourism is considered an activity that is performed in places related to death, such as genocides, wars, catastrophes, natural disasters, man-made disasters, or the death of a representative character, among others (Cohen, 2018; Van Broeck and López López, 2018). Since the 1990s, there has been a growing interest in studying the supply and demand of this type of tourism (Lennon, 2017). As a result, several studies have analyzed cases related to dark tourism in Australia (Kim and Butler, 2015), New Zealand (Jordan and Prayag, 2021), France (Dehoorne and Jolliffe, 2013), and Canada (Bird, 2013), among others.

However, no study analyses the impacts of this type of tourism in Colombia. Our study is based on the natural disaster caused by the eruption of the Nevado del Ruiz volcano in the town of Armero (Colombia) in 1985. This tragedy left a dark history and cultural heritage of the population of Armero, which awakened the interest of tourists to travel to this place. Although this tragedy has been previously analyzed by several researchers (Neira, 2006; Ospina Enciso, 2013; Suárez Guava, 2009), empirical studies published so far do not provide clarity on the perspectives of visitors and residents of the Armero region. The municipality of Armero Guayabal is located north of the department of Tolima, the header is 95 kilometres from Ibagué, this being the capital of the department. The limits of Armero Guayabal are established according to Decree 670 of May 29, 1950 and are approved according to Decree 2441 of 1950.

This municipality has a total area of 440.12 square kilometres, among which 4.44% is composed of urban area, and 95.56% is rural territory. The urban area is composed of 27 neighbourhoods and the rural area is divided into 18 villages, 4 population centres, and 3 townships. Its average temperature is 26 degrees Celsius, and the distance from Bogotá is 169 kilometres. The main objective of this research is to explore the tourism experiences in dark tourism in Armero, and the ethical issues in the profit-making and participation of the inhabitants of this region caused by the development of this type of tourism. Therefore, this study aims to provide a conceptual theoretical framework based on the relationship between the local community of Armero and dark tourism, through analysing the perceptions of visitors and local residents on the impact of dark tourism. Three general research questions guide this study: How did residents cognitively evaluate their experiences at dark tourism sites in their community, what emotions did residents experience during their visits to dark

* Corresponding author

tourism sites in their community, and what coping strategies did residents implement after their visits to dark tourism sites in their community? What coping strategies did residents implement after their visits to dark tourism sites in their community? To answer these questions, a qualitative research method based on the development of semi-structured interviews was carried out. After this introductory section, Section 2 gives the development of the theoretical framework. Section 3 presents the methodological aspects. Section 4 shows the results, while Section 5 presents the main conclusions.

Theoretical framework

The field of dark tourism has been studied for more than 20 years (Sun and Lv, 2021). Recent empirical evidence in tourism suggests that there is a growing interest in the study of tourism destinations whose cultural heritage is related to the dark events of the past (Magee and Gilmore, 2015). Thus, in recent years, dark tourism has been written about, causing it to gain recognition within tourism research, therefore, it has the potential to feed their curiosity, exposing places and stories about death (Isaac, 2021). Dark tourism is related to places with a gloomy character as institutions of punishment like decommissioned prisons, or sites associated with massacre or crime scenes, such as Dachau, a former concentration camp in Germany (Seraphin and Korstanje, 2021). These destinations do not involve the death of ordinary people from natural causes (Pratt et al., 2019), but are often associated with a dark history related to cruelty, evil or disaster, resulting in a growing demand from visitors wishing to experience this cultural heritage (Sharpley and Wright, 2018).

This type of tourism is widely known as black tourism (Lv et al., 2022). It is defined as a recreational activity that consists of travelling to places related to death, such as genocides, wars, catastrophes, natural disasters, man-made disasters, or the death of a representative figure, among others (Cohen, 2018; Rodríguez Amórtegui and Mora Forero, 2021). Despite the great relevance of tourism today, it is not an emerging issue as the interest in studying this type of tourism started in the 1990s (Sharpley and Wright, 2018). This is because death and suffering have been linked to tourism since ancient Rome, where audiences attended gladiatorial combats and public executions, which made places more attractive (Sharpley and Wright, 2018; Van Broeck and López López, 2018). There are numerous areas in the globe where there have been deaths, atrocities, and disasters (Jordan and Prayag, 2022). Dark tourism takes place in places where a certain degree of danger can be perceived, such as those that have experienced natural disasters such as tsunamis, earthquakes, or volcanic eruptions (Tang, 2018). Other authors have highlighted cemeteries or certain cities where celebrities have died of sudden deaths as preferred settings for dark tourism (Kunwar and Karki, 2019). In this context, we can highlight sites such as Chornobyl, where the worst radioactive accident in history occurred, leaving numerous deaths in its wake, and which even today still harbours a certain degree of radioactivity in its atmosphere (Stone, 2018).

Similarly, we can highlight the Jewish Holocaust in Germany as a place marked by the extermination, genocide, and atrocities of a large number of Jews, which generates shocking emotions for visitors (Sharpley and Wright, 2018). Although death is intrinsic to human beings, contemplating the death of others generates a morbid curiosity that has become a form of tourism (Cohen, 2018). These catastrophes can alter a publication's tourist industry to the point that the black history around its cultural assets becomes its principal draw (Lv et al., 2022; Shondell Miller, 2008). Thus, dark tourism represents a very important source of income if it can be exploited. For this reason, places that have a bad reputation due to war, misfortune or calamity seek to improve their image by transforming this violent past into a tourist attraction (Lisle, 2000).

Certain regions produce tangible items that allude to these catastrophes, which tourists bought as souvenirs (Jureniene and Radzevicius, 2022; Seaton, 1996). In addition, these regions also produce scripts about their own history, in order to attract more interest from tourists (Bunten, 2008). While dark tourism can make a significant contribution to the economy, it can also be an important (Burns and Figurova, 2007), it can also generate controversy and damage the reputation of the place (Wight, 2006). For this reason, there are governments that prefer to keep secret or keep very discreet any event related to death in their country (Heidelberg, 2015). In addition, another disadvantage of this type of tourism is in the area of social interaction, as it can generate moral conflicts between communities and visitors (Chen and Xu, 2021; Wang et al., 2021).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This article is based on a descriptive analysis with a mixed approach. Figure 1 shows the steps executed in the elaboration of this research. The choice of this type of qualitative methodology was due to the fact that it allows the interviewee and the interviewer to be free to discuss relevant issues in order to obtain the required information (Salmons, 2014). Finally, the classification of the information obtained from the interviews was carried out using an inductive method (Zamora et al., 2018).

The information was collected during the first semester of the year 2021, through a questionnaire with closed questions that facilitate the management, tabulation, data analysis, the response of

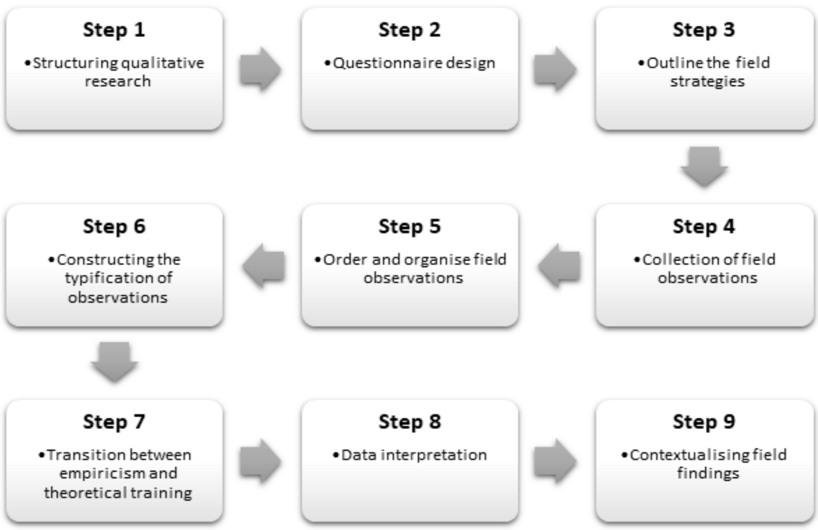

Figure 1. Methodology steps (Source:Own elaboration based on De Souza Minayo, 2012)

the respondents and make these responses reliable (Dibra and Oelfke, 2013). It was structured in two phases: the initial phase corresponds to an introductory section consisting of 6 items, which allow us to know the perception of community-based tourism. Subsequently, the next phase is developed with a total of 10 attitudinal statements on the perception of the tourist towards the development of this type of tourism.

It was taken as a sample 2 local tour operators, and 20 tourists, who were interviewed through semi-structured dialogues. Due to the sample taken, the generalized perception of the entire population could have some variations, but with the instruments designed we tried to obtain the data in the most objective way possible.

RESULTS

This section presents the results of fieldwork in Armero Tolima, after interviewing tourists visiting the municipality. These data show the perception that tourists have of the involvement of community-based tourism in this region characterised by the development of black tourism.

The following are the interview responses of the tourists after completing their trip to the ruins of Armero. These surveys provide qualitative data on tourism demand in the municipality, visitors' motivation and experience.

Table 1. Community Interviewers

Participation of the community in the tourist activity.	Tour operators try to provide the greatest possible participation to the community, through different tasks such as tourist guidance and the acquisition of products and services necessary in the tourist activity reflected in food, drink, clothing etc.
Contributions of tourism to the local community.	With each of the tourist visits, the community benefits as sales in their businesses increase, and opportunities for them to market products and services to tourists increase.
Tourism initiatives in the community.	The community strives to preserve the memory of Armero both before and after the tragedy, there are initiatives to support the Armerita community, support for the preservation of the holy field, and education so that the descendants are the ones who continue with the history.
Profile of the tourist visiting Armero.	Currently there are many kinds of tourists. Some come to the municipality for educational and research purposes, others are people who want to know the history of the place, there are also people who are interested in paranormal phenomena and are sensitive and curious, and the municipality receives visits from relatives or employees of the Armero existing before the tragedy.
Perception of the community in front of its current heritage and history.	Some members of the community do not welcome the fact that their history, and their heritage revolve around the tragedy that occurred and the thousands of victims it claimed, but the vast majority of people who lived this tragedy in their own flesh, enjoy telling their story and being heard; they recognize that for every tourist who listens to them and knows the history of the municipality, the information will multiply and this will contribute to preserve their memory.
Motivation of tourists.	As in the case of the typology of the tourist, there are diverse motivations among which can be found, culture, religion, education, research, memory, family encounters, history, paranormal phenomena, and even some families that still do not find forgiveness.

DISCUSSION

Although authors such as Stone (2018) affirm that one of the main attitudes of tourists, when they visit places that have been the scene of death, is to see that death as something distant in order to feel a certain degree of superiority, the results obtained show that what prevails is the desire to know the history, and to visit all those places where important things happened. Likewise, visitors affirm that knowing the facts makes them develop a certain degree of solidarity with the victims, and with the territory, as well as wanting to contribute so that no more catastrophes like this one happen (Lv et al., 2022).

Another motivation for tourists to visit this place is to have a paranormal experience; a close encounter with death, as Cohen(2018) explains in his conceptualization of Thanatourism, with which he intends to explain and expand the subject a little more. However, nowadays the concepts Thanatorism and Dark Tourism are used as interchangeable qualifiers, to refer to the practice of tourism in places related to death events due to the lack of knowledge that those who talk about the subject have (Chen and Xu, 2021; Wang et al., 2021).

Being Armero a place that suffered a great catastrophe for which tourists come to visit it, it fulfills the particularities exposed by Lennon (2017), about the dark places where dark tourism is practiced. Likewise, this tragedy changed the original conditions of the territory and brought with it a dark heritage, which is exposed and studied by Stone (2018), and highlighted by Ashworth and Isaac (2015), while Magee and Gilmore (2015) see it as a resource that must be managed, in a responsible manner that allows attracting more and more tourists, creating new tourism products and services, and obtaining income to preserve this heritage and improve the conditions of the territory.

Table 2. Interviews with tourists

Origin of tourists.	Most of the tourists interviewed were from Bogotá, and the others from neighboring municipalities in Cundinamarca. This, because it is very easy to reach the municipality of Armero from these places, because the roads are in excellent condition, and the public transport service is also quite affordable. In addition to this, many of those arriving from the capital are university students, who seek to collect information for academic and research purposes.
Range of ages in which tourists are.	Among the visitors, people were found who barely reached the age of majority, until a more adult age. However, even though there was no person over the age of 36 between the interviews, locals say visitors of all ages are usually seen. Even some families go with their minor children, so that they learn the history of Armero from a young age and visit a place different from traditional tourism. Therefore, it would be pertinent to affirm that people from their majority are attracted to visit this type of place and be part of the dark tourism.

Civil status of visitors	Most of the interviewees are single, and only a small portion are married. This is because for those who are single, it is easier to travel to this place, and they have fewer commitments that prevent them from leaving their usual city or municipality. By the theories studied, although tourism always aims to guarantee the safety of tourists, this type of activity that according to Cohen means having a close or symbolic encounter related to death, could generate some fear in married people and with a conformed family. This is because there are different myths about souls in pain, and walking spirits that could radiate negative energy, which would affect sensitive people.
Motivation in the face of the pain and suffering of the victims.	A little more than half of the interviewees say they feel motivated to know the pain and suffering that was experienced in the tragedy of Armero, in the year of 1985. This is one of the motivations that Cohen exposes in his studies, where morbidity and the rugged predominate within the thought and feeling of people. On the other hand, it also fits into what Stone described, that the human being tends to see the suffering of others as something far from his own reality, and makes him feel superior for not having suffered the same misfortunes. Similarly, although with some fear, he feels that his death will be very different. The other percentage of the interviewees develop feelings of sadness and much more respect for, imagining how difficult it could have been for the victims and their families, to go through this misfortune. Far from wanting to know the smallest detail of pain and suffering, it is obvious to them the emotional consequences that this brought, and they prefer to opt for silence and prayer to ask for the eternal rest of all those who perished and for the tranquility of their families.
Interest of visitors to know places that are related to acts of death.	All the interviewees say they are curious to know places where natural disasters, catastrophes or events related to death have occurred. Lennon and Foley were the first to study the relationship between death and tourism, calling it dark tourism, and emphasizing those places that have been scenes of misfortunes such as those mentioned above. At this point, the answers obtained ratify Magee and Gilmore's assertion about the growing desire of people today to visit places related to death. At this point you can see several motivations, among which are the places exposed by Lennon and Foley, knowing stories of tragedy and generating remembrance as seaton claims, and having symbolic contact with death as proposed by Cohen. As in one of the previous points, there is evidence of a progressive interest of people to want to visit this type of places as magee and Gilmore affirm. Another of the very common motivations these days is the one expressed by Podoshen, about consuming products and services that generate interest and admiration in society, either for their high value, for their exclusivity or because not everyone dares to take them. This is what happens with dark tourism, since currently social networks allow sharing content in real time, to show others the activities and consumption that is being carried out. Getting involved in dark tourism activities is something very striking, and admiration for others, so making a selfie or a live broadcast have many likes and comments, can also be a motivation to be a consumer of this type of tourism, considering that many of the tourists as evidenced in one of the first points, they are Millennials and Centenials.
Places related to the tragedy most visited by tourists	The most visited places are the memorial to the victims of Armero, the Immense Stone, and the Tomb of Omaira Sánchez. This is because these attractions are located within the territory called the holy field, and it is a touristic route. The park the founders is also located there, but tourists do not identify it very well, since it is not very distinguishable from the holy field. On the other hand, the central park of Armero Guayabal is a little further away from the ruins, and not all tourists visit it. All these tourist attractions are what Magee and Gilmore call the dark heritage of the territory, and the community that faced calamity; in Armero, all that remained was dark heritage since its entire history revolves around the tragedy, and the deaths that occurred there.
Motivation regarding religion and pilgrimage.	None of the tourists interviewed showed interests in visiting the municipality for religious purposes, or to make pilgrimage; this was regardless of their religious beliefs, since even though some were Catholics, or Christians, they did not base their visit on issues related to religion. This motivation could depend a lot on the place you are visiting. In the case of Armero, only one event links religion to the tragedy which is the visit of Pope John Paul II. The interviewees express great interest in visiting the statue of the pope and kneeling right in the place where the Pope did, touching the statue while raising a prayer to heaven, but not so much as a pilgrimage, but as an honor of being able to step on the same ground as his holiness. This situation could vary greatly if in the place there was talk of a possible appearance of a saint, or of a miracle that occurred; The safest thing is that if in one of the places scenarios of misfortunes related to death, any of these phenomena occurred, people would feel motivated to make pilgrimage and moved by their faith, to visit them for religious purposes.
Feelings developed by knowing the facts of death.	Some of the interviewees expressed a motivation to contemplate the death, and to know the details of the tragedy, but most did not believe so. That is, most people feel a demotivation for their daily lives, when contemplating acts of death and knowing the details why they generate sadness. This statement differs from what Stone proposed where he affirms that the human being comes to feel a certain degree of superiority and relief, when contemplating the pain and suffering of others, seeing it as something distant from themselves. Not only do this group of people not feel motivated to see what others suffered and they didn't, but they seem to have developed a certain degree of solidarity with the victims, and they don't want something like this to be repeated anywhere else.
Motivation in the face of the history of the place.	All the interviewees said that their main motivation for visiting Armero, was to know the details of the tragedy that occurred in this place. They are very curious to know the history of the place and resolve doubts about the event. Cohen within his research works attributes this motivation to that of knowing the history of the place, without focusing so much on death, but rather on the way in which the events happened, the why, the how, and the when.
Interest in preserving memory and territory.	Most of the interviewees express their special interest in visiting Armero, in order to commemorate the tragedy through memory, while contributing to the recovery and regeneration of this place through the consumption of the goods and services available in the territory. Seaton speaks of the memory of these places as something to be preserved, and Cohen of memory as the traveler's motivation. This is evidenced in the answers obtained at this point. Likewise, the contribution to the recovery and regeneration of the place has been studied by Ashworth and Isaac from a perspective of urban development that can reach the territory, through good income management.

CONCLUSION

Dark tourism is an issue of great relevance today. Despite its recent scope, it is a topic that has been little addressed in Colombia. In this country, the natural disaster that occurred on 13 November 1985 in Armero allowed the development of this type of tourism. For this reason, the main central question to be addressed in this article is to examine the motivation of tourists and the perception of local residents towards the tourism activity related to this event. Our results show that tourists who visit Armero, feel great attraction for places related to death, where tragedies, catastrophes, and disasters have occurred. However, his main motivation is in the fact of knowing the story, due to how shocking and macabre it can be. On the other hand, they feel that after knowing the facts, visiting the place, and learning some details they did not know, they take a series of mixed feelings as a travel experience. On the one hand, there is a feeling of sadness for so many deaths, and stories that the place houses, mainly the suffering of Omaira Sánchez, while touring the municipality converted into an immense cemetery called Campo Santo. On the other hand, there remains a feeling of helplessness, and resentment against the government, knowing that the tragedy could have been avoided.

For some the experience begins as a journey of fun, and ends in silence and melancholy, while others already know previously or arrive with a clearer idea of what they are going to find. At a general level, visitors seek to satisfy their curiosity to be in a place where so many people died, to know in detail what happened, and to experience energies that come from an unknown plane, but they also show great interest in contributing to the local community, and interacting with it, in search of stories that come directly from a survivor, family member or inhabitant who has experienced the tragedy in their own flesh. The local community actively participates in tourism and obtains economic benefits every time tourists arrive in the municipality; Locals perceive an increase in the sale of their products and the commercialization of their already established services, at the same time that other members of the community see new market opportunities. Some locals do not see with good eyes that their history and heritage, revolve around the tragedy and the dead, but most have accepted it well and are passionate about telling the history of their municipality, with the aim of having greater scope while preserving their identity, and the memory of the place.

Finally, this study is not without limitations that can be taken as future lines of research. The sample size is small. The limitation in the number of interviews does not capture the variety of experiences, full range of ratings and emotions of tourists and resident of the region. Therefore, future studies could increase the number of interviews. In addition, the increase in sample size will lead to greater complexity and multidisciplinary in the qualitative approach, so that different techniques and methodologies would need to be applied. Finally, future studies could analyse these perceptions from a quantitative point of view, for example by applying structural or differential equations.

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MANAGEMENT OF INDIGENOUS RESOURCES FOR PROMOTION OF INDIGENOUS TOURISM: A STUDY OF SELECTED TRIBAL DISTRICTS OF MADHYA PRADESH

P. RAJA
Central University of Tamilnadu, Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Thiruvarur, India, e-mail: rajaperumal@cutn.ac.in

Ankathi RAGHU[*]
Central University of Tamilnadu, Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Thiruvarur, India, e-mail: hodthm@cutn.ac.in

R. KANNAN
Madurai Kamaraj University, Centre for Tourism and Hospitality Management, Madurai, India, e-mail: saru.kannan@gmail.com

V. SIVAKAMI
Central University of Tamilnadu, Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Thiruvarur, India, e-mail: sivakamivelmurugan@gmail.com

Dinesh Kumar PARASTE
Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Department of Tourism Management, Amarkantak, India, e-mail: rajnarain80@gmail.com

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Abstract: This research article aims to explore indigenous tourism and people, which is a hidden tourist treasure that can be showcased to the outer world for future research gaps. This study is an attempt to reflect the problems, concepts, scope, Government tourism policies, objectives, hypothesis research design, and limitations in the first chapter, followed by an extensive review of the literature to understand the impacts of indigenous tourism on indigenous community, perspectives of the indigenous community of promotion of indigenous tourism, management of indigenous resources, and tourist demands. Data was collected from the tourist respondents who are the direct beneficiaries of indigenous tourism at Balaghat, Mandla, and Dindori districts. In this backdrop, the study aims to portray the trend of results for making Indigenous tourism a viable business option by branding and positioning the study area in the international tourist map. Two questionnaires, one for tourists and another for the indigenous community, were made. The analysis of tourist data is in three parts. The first part is related to the demographic profile of tourists. The second part includes travel-related information, and the third part includes tourist activity. The analysis of community data is in three parts. The first part is related to the demographic profile of the community. The second part includes the impact of indigenous tourism on the community, and the third part includes perspectives of indigenous communities on indigenous tourism promotion. The findings reflect the socio-demographic profile of the members of the community. The tourist questionnaire yielded valuable insights with respect to travel information, preferences and behaviour, as well as activities undertaken by the tourists. The underlying factors influencing the impact of tourism on the community were found to be 1) Creation of Human Resources, 2) Social Incapacity, 3) Conservation Focus, 4) Community Awareness and Participation, 5) Promotion of Local Products, and 6) Infrastructure Improvement. Suggestions have been put forward in connection to developing a better understanding of the target customer, and the tourist market in general; recreation and accommodation options; further research, promotion programs, branding; and greater focus in the making of tourism policy.

Key words: Indigenous People, Indigenous Tourism and People, Aboriginals, Indigenous Tourism

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INTRODUCTION

Background: Indigenous People

Indigenous tourism requires an understanding of indigeneity and how tourism is shaped by it (Mika and Scheyvens, 2021). The population of indigenous people in the world is around 370 million. They cover about 5% of the world's total population and live in 70 countries covering more than 20% earth's surface. They speak nearly 4000 different languages and have different types of 5000 groups of people. Anthropologists and sociologists were amongst the earliest academics to explore a range of theoretical dimensions of Indigenous cultures such as identity, empowerment and authenticity (Carr et al., 2016). United Nations defined the indigenous people during the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) as a group of people who have been occupied a particular area before the creation of new boundaries, and they also have a distinct culture, social and institutional identity in their dominant groups of society (Ryan and Aicken, 2005). Indigenous tourism is a global phenomenon, encompassing a range of complex, multi-layered issues. The foci of Indigenous tourism research are multifaceted, reflecting a plethora of stakeholders with differing perspectives and values about the direction, development and sustainability of the sector (Whitford and Ruhanen, 2016). The distinction between Indigenous, ethnic and cultural tourism is

[*] Corresponding author

rather blurred, but there are some key issues that are distinctive about Indigenous tourism (Xerardo, 2016). Tourism is a livelihood activity that can access remote or rural indigenous communities and be a gateway for interring into a real economy (Dyer et al., 2003; Altman and Finlayson, 2003; Schmiechen, 2006). Tourism not only provides an opportunity to create real wealth in monetary terms but, more importantly, it provides a way to realize cultural, social, country needs, and spiritual aspirations (Trau and Bushell, 2008). In other words, tourism can provide indigenous people an opportunity to gain income from activities on their land area and use it as a tool to revitalize culture and community (Whitford et al., 2001; Hall, 2007). It is also a way to introduce or expose India's cultural diversity to travelers (Mishra et al., 2011).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Indigenous Tourism

Tourism is seen as a major source of potential economic growth and independence for indigenous peoples (Cappucci, 2016). According to Pereiro (2016), indigenous tourism constitutes both a successful start and a challenging future for the communities involved, since the self-management of Indigenous cultural identities can be problematic and, for this reason, a careful and critical examination of the content and development of this process is urgently required. Tourism can be a tool to overcome different types of problems for indigenous people. Tourism activity allows indigenous people to achieve their livelihood (Ashley et al., 2000; Ashley et al., 2001a, b). The understanding of indigenous tourism has changed from ‘tourist-based economy’ to ‘Indigenous-based tourism’ based on the practice of Indigenous control in tourism (Zhou and Edelheim, 2022). Tourism is one industry in which indigeneity and entrepreneurship can, arguably, mesh to realise the development aspirations of Indigenous peoples (Scheyvens et al., 2021). The tourism industry can enhance global assistance for cultural and natural heritage conservation, indigenous community well-being, poverty alleviation, and promote cultural awareness and preservation (Trau and Bushell, 2008; Shiji, 2016). Tourism provides low-level jobs and low-paid employment to the indigenous people due to a lack of commercial business experiences and formal education (Altman and Finlayson, 2003). Involvement in Indigenous tourism has also contributed to better post-disaster recovery and resilience in Indigenous communities (Bayrak, 2022). Due to over-modernization, increased vulnerability and commercialization associated with tourist activities can have deleterious effects if there is no proper coordination and precaution (Bushell and Figgis, 2007; Hall, 2000; Fuller et al., 2005). As tourists become more interested in close contact with Indigenous cultures, images of Indigenous peoples are increasingly used to attract tourists to heritage sites, museums, galleries and festivals (Cassel and Maureira, 2017). It should be remembered that these spaces cannot be managed without the effective participation of their inhabitants and under the responsibility of certain local operators. To ensure a better integration of the populations in various projects, the tourist development in the region must in no case be the business of the only exogenous investors or officials of administrative services (Kherrour et al., 2018).

Ethnic culture is the special attraction of indigenous tourism, and exotic culture plays different roles in tourists' experiences, reflecting distinctive meanings and values (Wu et al., 2020). Destination activities include visiting native homes, attending dances and ceremonies, and even observing or participating in religious rituals (Taylor, 2017). Globally, indigenous tourism is a beneficial activity for the indigenous community having a positive impact as it is causing economic uplift of society. Indigenous tourism is not necessarily just an entrepreneurial activity intended for Indigenous economic wellbeing: it is often a multifaceted enterprise for the self-determined and sustainable development of Indigenous peoples, reflected in their intentions and efforts to preserve their culture and way of life and to share this with others on their terms (Scheyvens et al., 2021).Indigenous tourism also helps the indigenous community overcome oppression and colonization (Zeppel, 1998) and enhances understanding between non-indigenous and indigenous peoples, contributing to the union's progress (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2003; Hinch and Butler, 1996). Moreover, choosing other types of political action for preservation and retention of aboriginal identity (Zeppel, 1998), but tourism can irritate due to invasion of privacy and change in community behavior (Dyer et al., 2003), which can hit a massive loss of sense of place on individuals (Hall, 1998). Since tourism is seen as a source of income and economic profit, the more the host community gets involved in tourism, the more vulnerable they become to exploitation (Cassel and Maureira, 2017). Visitors with a serious approach towards indigenous tourism will more likely express economic support for indigenous culture by spending on culture-related products and services. Likewise, serious travellers will reveal their respect and support for indigenous culture by seeking authentic experiences and donating to cultural conservation (Wu et al., 2017). Indigenous hosts leverage tourism – and the recognition it brings – to motivate the next generation about the relevance, importance, and feasibility of maintaining their culture (Curtin and Bird, 2022). When it connects with scholars' discussionon various tourist phenomena where indigenous culture is the core of attraction in different types of tourism activity is called Aboriginal tourism (Lin and Chang, 2013). The performance of aboriginal culture, attractions, culture, celebrations, and historical heritage in front of tourists in an artistic manner is Aboriginal tourism (Ryan and Huyton, 2002). Among the aspects that determine the development and sustainability of tourism are the institutional and community aspects (Aswita et al., 2018). Indigenous people own and operate tourism is called cultural tourism (Zeppel, 2002). Researchers have defined the concept of Indigenous tourism in several ways. The researcher wants to take a basic definition for his research, which was given by Hinch and Butler (1996) is 'tourism activity in which indigenous people control or serve their culture as the main source of attraction.'Identified impacts of Indigenous tourism included issues pertaining to acculturation and commodification of culture (Carr et al., 2016). Indigenous communities are often presented as a tourism attraction and this is provoking commodification and dilution of their cultures (Cappucci, 2016). Two interrelated concepts that open up the theoretical discourse of the host–guest encounter in tourism, particularly within heritage and Indigenous tourism, are performance and authenticity (Cassel and Maureira, 2017). As authenticity is key to successful Indigenous tourism development, the need for cultural preservation is necessary in order to ensure an authentic experience (Graci et al., 2021). Indigenous peoples are increasingly active in advocating for their rights and wellbeing and advising at national and international policy or governance levels, for example, through WINTA (World Indigenous Tourism Alliance) (Scheyvens et al., 2021). Four different elements of indigenous resources are heritage, handicrafts, history, and habitat. These resources are subject to change from time to time and tourist experience (Johansen and Mehmetoglu, 2011). Five main dimensions of indigenous culture-based tourism in which tourists focus on gazing, authenticity, lifestyle, informal learning, and personal interaction (McIntosh and Ryan, 2007). Indigenous people provide accommodation food and beverage services to tourists, not for attraction but to serve theirneeds to them (Chang et al., 2013). Although there are several tourism products and residents, indigenous peoples are also products of indigenous tourism (Chang et al., 2013; Johansen and Mehmetoglu, 2011).

The elements of tribal tourism development are aboriginal culture, catering services, a high degree of attraction, standard business model, external communication channel, accommodation, control over visitors, friendly attitude, and property unification with other tourism resources (Chang et al., 2013). Often, cultural heritage products developed for tourism promise to provide many socio-economic opportunities for the communities involved, however, tourism can also present a challenge as the self-management of Indigenous cultural product and cultural identity can be problematic (Ruhanen and Whitford, 2019). Understanding the target market and designing marketing strategies for effective communication to the need for the betterment of indigenous tourism is essential for the survival of indigenous tourism (McIntosh and Ryan, 2007). The concept of tourist satisfaction is well documented both in the service management literature as well as the marketing literature (Biswas et al., 2020). There are several ways to divide tourists.

Accordingly, they are foreign tribe products and activity group, foreign tribe tourism-related group, uninterested in foreign tribe tourism group, and foreign tribe tourism-related group (Moscardo and Pearce, 1999). The challenge now is to gain a more comprehensive understanding of Indigenous tourism from the perspective of Indigenous stakeholders, approaching its complexity in an iterative, adaptive and flexible style, and with affected stakeholders involved in the research process, knowledge creation and its outcomes (Whitford and Ruhanen, 2016). The creation of a community-based tourism should be a key for the indigenous tourism development (Cappucci, 2016).

In Taiwan, a study conducted shows three main parts of the aboriginal tourism market: *interested, expert, and apathetic*. Interested tourists support aboriginal tourism very strongly, celebrate activities such as viewing aboriginal architects' dance and songs. Their feelings are positive and satisfy curiosity by viewing aboriginal culture and related things. Expert tourists are very interested to see and understanding aboriginal culture and life. They experience it through direct interaction with Aboriginals. Apathetic tourists are not so much serious about the aboriginal culture. They only travel to indigenous places to escape from their daily routine life, and they do not need to have any interest in anything except travel (Tsung-Chiung et al., 2012). It is necessary to observe the impacts of ecotourism in the indigenous communities and their local environment (Anup et al., 2021). Social entrepreneurship focuses on benefiting the communities whom they serve in addition to the employees and other stakeholders that they associate with (Kummitha, 2020).

The financial future of the local population will depend heavily on the presence of a tourism offer as diverse as possible and with a high attractiveness factor. A fundamental measure in achieving this is putting tourism in the front and centre as an activity that could economically revitalise the area and generate extra incomes for the local population (Vijulie et al., 2018)

Identified Research Gap in the Proposed Work

Management of indigenous resources and promotion has always been a question mark for academicians. Though much research has been done by many researchers, some gap is always there for a new researcher to fill. No research work has been done yet related to this topic in this area. Important constructs Indigenous culture, Health Practices, traditional way of Agriculture, and natural resources are critical for research. There is no study related to the availability of indigenous resources for tourism.

Statement of the Problem

Dindori, Mandla, and Balaghat are tribal-dominated districtsthathave a great history of indigenous peoples where they ruled successfully. Old forts in Mandla and Lanjhi of Balaghat show the impressiveness of Gond, but over time they got weaker due to Brahmin, Hindu, Muslim, and British invaders. After independence, they were forced to adopt the Hindu religion. The Hindu majority considered them Sudra (lowest in the Hindu Varna system) and tried to put religious laws on them. Some tribes believed they are Hindu and followed the Hindu religion, and this affected them huge culturally. Government policies of grabbing natural resources and displacement of tribes are the primary reasons behind the poverty of tribes. Now, most tribes are poor agriculturists; they could not save their interests from outsiders, but the only thing they can save is the culture in some places. Indigenous people from several areas of the world sell their culture as a tourism product to earn money, improve their lifestyle, and solve other financial problems. Indigenous tourism is believed to be a tool for poverty elevation and conservation of tribal culture, rural and natural environment. This research will Explore the potential of indigenous tourism through management so that the problems of the tribes can be solved.

Need for the Study

Tribes in these districts depend upon agriculture which cannot help tribes come out of the financial crisis. The majority of tribal families are living in villages with limited resources. They live in Madhouse, their surroundings are primarily green, and their travel is limited to the nearby areas of the village. Agriculture provides them food and a limited amount of money but cannot solve all problems. Financial problems press tribes to go to cities to earn money, and they go far away from their home and culture. Culture is always essential for everyone as it shapes human minds and society, but it can be used as a tourism product. Tribes have a unique and exceptionally ancient culture that tourists love to know and experience, but tribes do not know how to manage tourism activity and promotion. The need for this study arises to identify the available indigenous tourism resources, their management of indigenous resources through tourist activity, and the promotion of indigenous tourism on the prospects of the indigenous community.

Significance of the Study

Madhya Pradesh is famous for Tiger tourism, but indigenous tourism can also be necessary, as the study area is tribal-dominated districts full of cultural verities. Designing an indigenous tourism model for the management and promotion of indigenous tourism in the region is highly required.

Theoretical Significance: This study focuses on the management of indigenous resources, the impact of indigenous tourism on indigenous communities, and the Perspectives of indigenous communities on indigenous tourism promotion. Tourist activity provides a way to manage indigenous resources for tourism. The primary objective of the study is to find out the available indigenous tourism resources, the relationship between essential variables management, indigenous tourism, and promotion to ensure its contribution to the tribal community, management of indigenous tourism resources according to tourist activity, and indigenous tourism promotion from the perspectives of the indigenous community. Management of indigenous resources is essential to deliver the required things to the tourist so that tourism activity runs smoothly and tourism promotion is necessary to maximize tourists flow. Tourist activity will help understand the need for management, and community perspective will help understand promotional activity requirements. The application of management and promotion to indigenous tourism will help to understand the requirement of indigenous tourism in this study area.

Practical Significance: The study looks forward to being instrumental in understanding tourists come for indigenous tourism, management, and promotion of indigenous tourism resources to develop tourism in tribal-dominated districts of Madhya Pradesh in long-term perspective through proper utilization of the resources. The present study shall be of great significance due to the following: It will foster collaborative management of Indigenous resources for tourism and establish a business culture to ensure natural resource and culture conservation; It will help to understand how can enhance earning money from cultural activity through tourism; It will help to empower and protect the interest of the local tribal community.

Scope of the study

The study is related to the indigenous people, management of indigenous resources, and the promotion of indigenous tourism in tribal areas of Dindori, Mandla, Balaghat districts and is limited to the same area.

The universe of the study. The study includes indigenous communities of Mandla, Dindori, Balaghat, and tourists from different regions. Population. Tourists visited indigenous tourism sites and indigenous communities of the indigenous tourism destinations of study area Dindori, Mandla, and Balaghat districts of Madhya Pradesh state.

Place of Study. The responses were collected through questionnaires from tourists at indigenous tourism sites and the indigenous community at indigenous tourism destinations in Mandla, Dindori, and Balaghat districts.

Data Sources. Tourists and the indigenous communities were interviewed for primary data collection at indigenous tourism destinations and secondary data collected from articles, journals, government websites, district handbook, census of Madhya Pradesh, and district at a glance. Limitations of the study. Primary data from the community were collected from Gond and Baigatribes, and tourists were interviewed at indigenous tourism sites. Responses from indigenous people were collected from the place where indigenous tourism exists. Data collected from the Balaghat, Mandla, and Dindori districts of Madhya Pradesh. Data collection time was September 2019 to February 2020.

Objectives of the study

To assess the existing indigenous tourism resources.

To analyze the impacts of indigenous tourism on the tribal community.

To assess tourist activities to identify and evaluate activity-based management of Indigenous Resources.

To explore the factors for the promotion of Indigenous Tourism from the perspective of indigenous communities.

To know the Government's role regarding indigenous tourism.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

RQ1 What is Indigenous Tourism? What are the different indigenous tourism resources available to cater to tourists?

RQ2 What are the impacts of indigenous tourism on the tribal community?

RQ3 Do tourist activities in the tribal area need management of Indigenous Resources?

RQ4 What are the underlying dimensions of indigenous tourism promotion from the perspective of indigenous communities?

RQ5 What are the current government practices or policies to manage and promote indigenous tourism resources in the study area? Table 1 details the research questions in tabular format, along with the methods used to answer the same.

Hypotheses

H_0: Socio-Demographic attributes and Preferred recreational activities are not significantly associated with activity-based management of indigenous resources.

Research Problem. A comprehensive literature review was carried out to establish the theoretical roots of management of indigenous resources, indigenous tourism, and promotion of indigenous tourism and for conceptual clarity of the research problem. Sustaining or preserving the diversity of indigenous culture is the main issue of concern for the study area. The indigenous community of the region must have a more stable source of income as agriculture is unable to fulfill their need.

Research Approach and Tools. Two sets of questionnaires were designed. One set for the indigenous community and one for tourists, which consist of open-ended questions and close-ended questions having nominal, ordinal, and interval scales. The questionnaire for villagers consists of potential tourism resources, critical inventory at the potential tourism site, tourism-related activities and problems, Indigenous tourism products, and any activity performed in the village. The questionnaire for the community consists of Demographic Profile, Impact of Indigenous tourism on the community, Perspective of indigenous communities on indigenous tourism promotion, and the questionnaire for Touristsconsistsof Demographic Profile, Travel Related Information, and Tourist Activity. On-the-spot analysis by using open-ended questions was carried out to collect information from the indigenous community. A structured interview was used to collect data from the indigenous communities and tourists who came for indigenous tourism. Secondary data were collected from government reports, websites, books, journals, popular magazines, newspapers, office files of the department of tourism, and NGOs working for the indigenous people.

Table 1. Research Questions and methods applied to answer (Source: Self-Prepared)

S.N.	Research Questions	Methods
RQ1	What are different indigenous tourism resources available to cater to tourists?	Qualitative
RQ2	Does indigenous tourism in the tribal region contribute to the tribal community?	Quantitative
RQ3	Do tourist activities in the tribal area need management of Indigenous Resources?	Quantitative
RQ4	What are the underlying dimensions of indigenous tourism promotion from the perspective of indigenous communities?	Quantitative
RQ5	What are the current practices or policies to manage and promote the indigenous resource in the study area?	Qualitative

Research Process

The research process consists of literature reviews, finding research gaps, identifying problems, finalizing objectives, identifying variables and constructs, developing theory, questionnaire, design, sample design, data collection, and analysis.

Scale Development: Due to the diverse understandings and perceptions of the community, the collection of data was very difficult, regarding the impacts of indigenous tourism, the perspective of the community on indigenous tourism promotion. A five-point Likert scale was developed for analysis. Thus, a 5-Point Likert Scale ranging from (1) Strongly Disagree to (5) Strongly Agree has been used to understand tourists and the community's opinions. A three-point scale ranging from (1) Always to (3) Never was also used to know tourist activities at the destination.

Questionnaire Design: The questionnaire for the community consists of:

Part A - The first part of the questionnaire consists of the socio-demographic profile of the community to collect respondents' opinions on gender, marital status, age, educational qualification, occupation, and monthly income with close-ended type questions.

Part B - Second part of the questionnaire deals with the impact of indigenous tourism on the community. The questionnaire was prepared on a five-point Likert scale that includes the variable of impacts of indigenous tourism. Questions are scale type.

Part C - Third part of the questionnaire deals with the perspective of indigenous communities on indigenous tourism promotion. The questionnaire was prepared on a five-point Likert scale that includes the variable of indigenous communities' perspectives on indigenous tourism promotion through scale type.

The questionnaire for tourists:

Part A - The first part of the questionnaire consists of the socio-demographic profile of the tourist to collect respondents' opinions on the place of living, gender, marital status, age, educational qualification, occupation, and monthly income with close-ended type questions.

Part B - Second part of the questionnaire consists of travel-related information including Travelling, frequency of visit, sources of information, duration of stay, accommodation, transportation, preferred recreational activities, destination inconvenience in regards to, and the different activities performed.

Part C - Third part of the questionnaire deals with tourist activities including the variables of tourist activity with a three-point scale consist the options Always, Sometimes, and Never.

Sample Size. Based on the literature review, 500 questionnaires were administered to respondents, 400 community, and 428 tourist responses were found complete and used for the analysis. It was found that 100 community and 72 tourist responses were incomplete during closer scrutiny, so these responses were not used for the analysis. The response rate during the survey of indigenous people was 80 %, and tourists were 85.6%. In indigenous tourist destinations of Dindori, Mandla, and Balaghat district, 50 Samples were collected proportionally from all indigenous tourist sites, namely Chada, Devnala, Kukarramath, Patangarh from the Dindori district, and Ramnagar, Babiha Sahatradhara, from Mandla district. Lanjhi, Hatta, Dondiya Tola from Balaghat districts. The survey period ran from September 2019 to February 2020.

Sampling Technique. The convenience sampling method was used to collect data from the indigenous community. It gives the researcher broader scope to use knowledge and choice to select respondents and get the best suitable sample that meets the purpose of the study (Loomis and Maxwell, 2003). Purposive sampling was used to collect data from tourists due to the scarcity of time, the geographical proximity of the study area, and the willingness of tourists to participate in the study. It is used to collect unbiased responses and obtain valuable answers within the research time limit (Etikan et al., 2016).

Sampling Design. The sample frame consists of the whole population that the researcher desires to study. Purposive-cum-convenience sampling was selected and used. The sample unit for the study includes indigenous people and indigenous tourist respondents. Data Collection: Qualitative and quantitative data were used for the study, and villagers were asked questions in the village. The tourists who came for indigenous tourism were interviewed at the indigenous tourism sites, and the community was interviewed at their homes at the tourism site. Sources of Data: Interviews, observations, and pictorials are used to collect data from the community and tourists. Primary data have been collected with the help of questionnaires from the villagers, tourists, and the community. The survey period was from September 2019 to February 2020. Secondary data have been collected from journals, official publications, official websites, other related websites, books, articles, tourism department reports, reports and surveys, online databases, and NGOs reports.

Data Analysis Techniques. Frequency table, graphical presentation, cross-tabulation, factor analysis, KMO test, and Chi-square test were used for analysis. Factor analysis is a helpful technique for data reduction, which makes data more explainable. Exploratory Factor Analysis covers complex patterns by examining the dataset and testing prediction (Child, 2006). Some EFA methods are PCA, Principal Axis Factoring (PAF), and Maximum Likelihood (ML). Principal Component Analysis (PCA) is used for Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) as PCA is considered the most popular EFA method (Howard, 2016). Factor analysis is used for data reduction to explain the same set of variables in a few extracted factors where high correlated variables are combined and formed a new factor to explain. Varimax rotation is used in PCA. It maximizes the dispersion of loadings within factors or combines smaller numbers of variables onto variables having higher values to see results in an interpretable group of clusters. Factor-Variable Correlations or Factor loadings are the value that shows the correlation between the variables and identified factor. The value of factor loading should be greater than 0.4 (Stevens, 2002). Eigenvalues are the squared values of the factor loadings of a particular set of variables or specific factors. The total percentage of variance is equal to the Eigenvalues. The eigenvalue should be greater than 1 (Kaiser, 1960). Internal consistency is essential to have between extracted factors. Cronbach's Alpha is helpful to know international consistency. The value of Cronbach's Alpha is acceptable if it is higher than .6. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity are the two most popular data inspection techniques for Exploratory Factor Analysis (Kaiser, 1970; Bartlett, 1950; Dziuban and Shirkey, 1974). KMO should be more than .6, and Bartlett's test of sphericity P-Value should be Zero as it shows values are significant and complete all requirements for EFA (Howard, 2016). Variances are used in factor analysis to produce commonalities between variables.

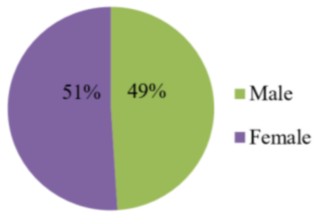


Figure 1. Indigenous community gender

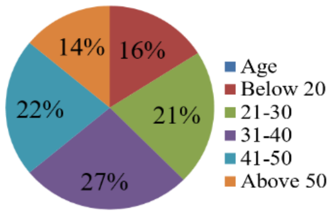


Figure 2. Indigenous community - age profile

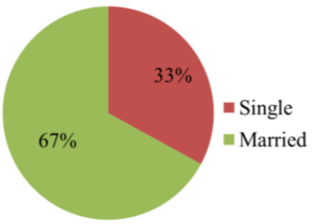


Figure 3. Indigenous community - marital status

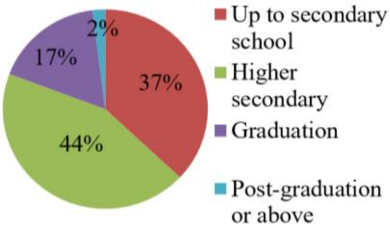


Figure 4. Indigenous community – education

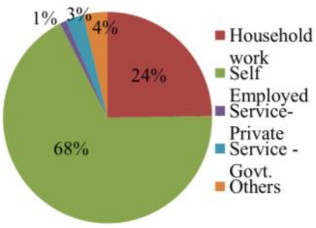


Figure 5. Indigenous community - occupation

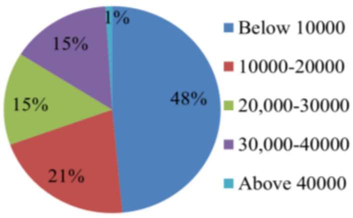


Figure 6. Indigenous community monthly income (in INR)

(Source: Primary data - Questionnaire for indigenous community)

Table 2. Socio-Demographic Profile of the Community (Source: Primary data - Questionnaire for Indigenous Community)

Categories of Respondents	Respondents (400)	Percentage
Gender		
Male	196	49.0%
Female	204	51.0%
Total	400	100%
Age		
Below 20	64	16.0%
21-30	86	21.5%
31-40	106	26.5%
41-50	88	22.0%
Above 50	56	14.0%
Total	400	100%
Marital Status		
Single	131	32.8%
Married	267	66.8%
Total	400	100%
Educational Qualifications		
Up to secondary school	148	37.0%
Higher secondary	175	43.8%
Graduation	69	17.3%
Post-graduation or above	8	2.0%
Total	400	100%
Occupation		
Household work	99	24.8%
Self Employed	271	67.8%
Service-Private	4	1.0%
Service -Govt	11	2.8%
Others	15	3.8%
Total	400	100%
Monthly Income (in INR)		
Below 10000	194	48.5%
10000-20000	84	21.0%
20,000-30000	58	14.5%
30,000-40000	60	15.0%
Above 40000	4	1.0%
Total	400	100%

Communality is the variance in extracted items accounted for by a common variance or common factors (Child, 2006) and presents variables in initial and extraction values. A variable has communality of one if it shares random variance and a variable that does not share its variance with another variable has zero commonality. The initial communality is 1 of PCA with all items retained. After extraction, the communality is less than 1 as the item retained does not explain all the variances of the data. PCA is associated with establishing the items' linear components, and its variability contributes to that component. In the data set, it is crucial to see the consistency of the construct when measured for the factor analysis, so the reliability of the coefficient provides a scale for measurement. The value of Cronbach's Alpha should be more than .6 (Cronbach, 1951). If the value is lower than .6, it strongly indicates an unreliable scale. Table 2 is the tabulated data obtained from the Questionnaire for the Indigenous Community, in order to construct the Socio-Demographic profiles of the respondents. Figure 1 is a graphical representation of the gender of the respondents who answered the Questionnaire for the Indigenous Community. A marginally larger number of women have taken part as respondents in the study. Figure 2 is a graphical representation of the Age Profile of the respondents from the Indigenous Community. While the 31-40 age group is the single largest group of respondents, the 21-30 and the 41-50 age groups are also well represented in the study. Figure 3 is a graphical representation of the marital status of the respondents from the Indigenous Community. The data reveals that bout two-thirds of the respondents are married. Figure 4 is a graphical representation of the Educational qualification of the community respondents. It is seen that a majority of 44% of the respondents have been educated up to the higher secondary level, while 37% of the respondents have been educated upto secondary school level. Only 2% of the respondents were found to have completed education at the post-graduation level or higher. Figure 5 shows the occupation data of the Indigenous community. It was found that 68% of the respondents are self-employed, while almost one-fourth of the respondents do house-work for a living. Figure 6 is a graphical representation of the monthly income (in INR) of the respondents from the community. It was found that almost half (48%) of the respondents earned less than 10,000 INR per month, while only 1% earned over 40,000 INR per month. Roughly equal portions (15% each) of the respondents earned 20,000-30,000 INR and 30,000-40,000 INR per month respectively.

KMO and Bartlett's Test: The outcomes of Table 3 show that the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy KMO = .637 indicates that the data is adequate for factor analysis as it is more than 0.6. The Bartlett's Test of Sphericity χ^2 (136) = 1471.119 and P-Value is .000. These values show that the correlations between the items are adequately significant for principal component analysis (PCA). The data shows that it is appropriate to analyze the impact of indigenous tourism on the community. Communality: Table 4 shows a wide range of communality ranging between .516 to .721. It shows that items have communality with other items, so dimensions of indigenous tourism impacts are interrelated and associated with each other commonly. Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Reliability of Coefficient: Table 5 shows the value of Cronbach's Alpha is ranging from .617 to .703, so it is reliable for further analysis. Principal Component Analysis: In this study, the researcher has removed factor loadings less than .617. Table 6 shows that factor loadings of each item are more than .616, the Eigenvalue of each factor is more than 1, all factors explain total variance 63.262, and Cronbach's Alpha value of each factor is higher than .617.

Table 3. KMO and Bartlett's Test (Source: Analysis of primary data from host community questionnaire)

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.637
Bartlett Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1471.119
	df	136
	Sig.	.000

Table 4. Communalities (Source: Analysis of primary data from host community questionnaire)

Items	Extraction
Supports the sustainable development of the area	.717
Supports the preservation of indigenous culture	.710
Creates employment to the local community	.624
Creates awareness towards the preservation of tradition and cultural heritage	.516
Educates local people towards conservation	.616
Empowers women in the community	.595
Encourages community participation in planning and decision-making activities	.526
Increase in tourist demand on village-based local products	.652
Improve intermediaries to market local products	.721
Creates job for unskilled human resources	.677
Increase in government support and incentives to promote local products	.625

Table 5. Reliability Statistics

Factor	Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items
1	.695	3
2	.628	3
3	.703	3
4	.617	3
5	.624	3
6	.622	2

The extracted factors are as follows 1) Creation of Human Resources 2) Social Incapacity 3) Conservation Focus 4) Community Awareness and Participation 5) Promotion of Local Products 6) Infrastructure Improvement.

Factor-1: Creation of Human Resource: Three items represent this creation of the human resource factor. Items of this factor are, creates a job for unskilled human resources (.788), increase in service and recreational facilities (.786), and creates employment for the local community (.694) with 3.107 Eigenvalue, the factor shows 18.27 percent from total variance with 69.5 percent reliability coefficient. Out of the three items under the Creation of Human Resource factor, the first item, 'Creates job for unskilled human resources' with the highest factor loading .788 shows indigenous tourism impacts primarily on jobs for unskilled human.

Factor-2: Social Incapacity: The second factor includes increase in noise and pollution (.773), a change in density of population (.753), and a rise in overcrowding and congestion (.674). With a 1.991 Eigenvalue, the factor shows 11.7 percent from total variance with a 62.8 percent reliability coefficient. Out of three items under the Social Incapacity factor, the first item, 'Increase in noise and pollution' with higher factor loading .773, shows that indigenous tourism harms the environment through increased noise and pollution.

Factor-3: Conservation Focus: The third factor includes support the preservation of indigenous culture (.831), supports the sustainable development of the area (.762), Educates local people towards conservation (.683). With a 1.866 Eigenvalue, factors show 10.97 percent from total variance with a 70.3 percent reliability coefficient. Out of three items under the Conservation Focus factor, the first item, supports the preservation of indigenous culture' with higher factor loading .831 shows that indigenous tourism supports the preservation of indigenous culture.

Factor-4: Community Awareness and Participation: Fourth factor includes empowerment women in the community (.749), encourage community participation in planning and decision-making activities (.655), and creates awareness towards preservation of tradition and culture (.617). With 1.456 Eigenvalue, factor shows 8.56 percent from total variance with 61.7 percent reliability coefficient. Out of three items under the Community Awareness and Participation factor, the first item,' Empower woman in the community with higher factor loading .749 shows indigenous tourism empowers women in the community.

Factor-5: Promotion of Local Products: The fifth factor includes an increase in government support and incentives to promote local products (.743), an increase in tourist demand on village-based local products (.677), and improve intermediaries to market local products (.643). With 1.269 Eigenvalue, factor shows 7.46 percent from total variance with 62.4 percent reliability coefficient. Out of three items under the Promotion of Local Products factor, the first item, 'Increase in government support and incentives to promote local products with factor loading .743 shows due to indigenous tourism government increased its support and incentives to promote local products.

Factor-6: Infrastructure Improvement: The sixth factor includes the supply of drinking water has improved (.715) and improvement in sewage and sewage disposal (.715). With 1.065 Eigen Value, the factor shows 6.26 percent from total variance with a 62.2 percent reliability coefficient. Out of two items under the Infrastructure Improvement factor, both items show indigenous tourism impacts positively in infrastructure.

Table 6. Principal Component Analysis and Rotated Component Matrix a (Source: Analysis of primary data from host community questionnaire)

Name of the Factor	Items	Loadings	Eigen Values	Variance	Cumu lative %	Cronbach's Alpha
Creation of Human Resource	Creates job for unskilled human resources	.788	3.107	18.275	18.275	.695
	Increase in services and recreational facilities	.786				
	Creates employment for the local community	.694				
Social Incapacity	Increase in noise and pollution	.773	1.991	11.713	29.988	.628
	Change in the density of population	.753				
	A rise in overcrowding and Congestion	.674				
Conservation Focus	Supports the preservation of indigenous culture	.831	1.866	10.974	40.962	.703
	Supports the sustainable development of the area	.762				
	Educates local people towards conservation	.683				
Community Awareness and Participa tion	Empowers women in the community	.749	1.456	8.565	49.527	.617
	Encourages community participation in planning and decision-making activities	.655				
	Creates awareness towards the preservation of tradition and cultural heritage	.617				
Promotion of Local Products	Increase in government support and incentives to promote local products	.743	1.269	7.467	56.994	.624
	Increase in tourist demand on village-based local products	.677				
	Improve intermediaries to market local products	.643				
Infrast ructure Improve ment	The supply of drinking water has improved	.715	1.065	6.267	63.262	.622
	Improvement in sewage and sewage disposal	.715				
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations						

Factor Analysis of Perspectives of Indigenous Communities on Indigenous Tourism Promotion

KMO and Bartlett's Test: The outcomes of Table 7 show that the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy KMO = .713 indicates that the data is adequate for factor analysis as it is more than .6. The Bartlett's Test of Sphericity χ^2 (120) = 1745.377 and P-Value is .000. These values show that the correlations between the items are adequately significant for principal component analysis (PCA). The data shows that it is appropriate to analyze the perspective of indigenous tourism communities of indigenous tourism promotion. Communality:

Table 7. KMO and Bartlett's Test Source: Analysis of Primary Data

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.713
Bartlett Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1745.377
	Df	120
	Sig.	.000

Table 8. Communalities (Source: Analysis of Primary Data; Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis)

Items	Extraction
Tourist are gathered by a single travel agent	.763
Tourism demand resources are supplied by a single organization	.677
Active participation by local artists or craftsmen groups in the area for the promotion	.522
Cooperation is developed with state or regional level organization for tourism promotion	.529
The specific attraction is promoted by the government	.583
Local handicrafts are promoted by the government at the state/national stage	.642
National/ Local Events are organized in the study area	.756
Tour guide has the knowledge and interprets important sites	.752
Local people are involved in the tour guide business	.782
Tourism materials have enough information about local produce and place	.507
Local handicrafts are promoted by the community	.715
Handicrafts or souvenir are made up of local produce	.768
There is a group to check the quality of local produce handicrafts or souvenir	.587
Cultural Programs are organized regularly for tourist	.805
Government is active in the conservation of cultural/ heritage sites	.690
Talents of the specific tribal group are promoted by the government	.661

Table 8 shows a wide range of communality ranging between .507 to .805. It shows that items have communality with other items, so dimensions of perspectives of indigenous tourism communities of indigenous tourism promotion are interrelated and associated with each other commonly. Reliability of Coefficient: the value of Cronbach's Alpha is ranging from .610 to .861, so it is reliable for further analysis. Principal Component Analysis: In this study, the researchers have removed factor loadings less than .486. Table 10 shows that factor loadings of each item are more than .485, the Eigenvalue of each factor is more than 1, all factors explain total variance 66.495, and Cronbach's Alpha value of each factor is higher than .609. The extracted factors are as follows 1) Local involvement and employment, 2) Promotion of local artists, 3) Local produce information, 4) Event Organization, 5) Government Promotion and, 6) Local Participation in Promotion.

Table 9. Reliability Statistics
(Source: Analysis of Primary Data)

Factor	Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items
1	.861	4
2	.629	3
3	.656	3
4	.621	2
5	.610	2
6	.654	2

Table 10. Principal Component Analysis and Rotated Component Matrix b (Source: Analysis of Primary Data)

Name of the Factor	Items	Loadings	Eigen Values	Variance	Cumulative %	Cronbach's Alpha
Local Involvement and Employment	Local people are involved in the tour guide business	.841	3.891	24.321	24.321	.861
	Tourist are gathered by a single travel agent	.838				
	Tour guide has the knowledge and interprets important sites	.818				
	Tourism demand resources are supplied by a single organization	.778				
Promotion of Local Artists	Local handicrafts are promoted by the community	.816	1.853	11.580	35.900	.629
	Local handicrafts are promoted by the government at the state/national stage	.665				
	Talents of a specific tribal group are promoted by the government	.529				
Local Produce Information	Handicrafts or souvenir are made up of local produce	.837	1.337	8.357	44.257	.656
	There is a group to check the quality of local produce handicrafts or souvenir	.640				
	Tourism materials have enough information about	.486				

Table 10 shows the extracted factors are as follows 1) Local involvement and employment, 2) Promotion of local artists, 3) Local produce information, 4) Event Organization, 5) Government Promotion and, 6) Local Participation in Promotion.

Factor-1: Local Involvement and Employment: The first factor consists of four items; local people are involved in the tour guide business (.841), tourist are gathered by a single travel agent (.838), Tour guide has the knowledge and interpret important sites (.818), and tourism demand resources are supplied by a single organization (.778). With a 3.891 Eigenvalue, the factor shows 24.32 percent from total variance with an 86.1 percent reliability coefficient. Out of four items under the 'Local involvement and employment' factor, the result shows that travel agents and tour operators are involved in the indigenous tourism business.

Factor-2: Promotion of Local Artists: The second factor involves three items; local handicrafts are promoted by the community (.816), local handicrafts are promoted by the government at the state/national level (.665), and talents of a specific tribal group is promoted by government (.529). With a 1.85 Eigenvalue, the factor shows 11.5 percent from total variance with a 62.9 percent reliability coefficient. Out of three items under the 'Promotion of Local Artists' factor, the result shows that indigenous tourism is causing the promotion of local artists.

Factor-3: Local Produce Information: The third factor involves three items; handicrafts or souvenir are made up of local produce (.837), there is a group to check the quality of local produce handicrafts or souvenir (.640) and tourism materials have enough information about local produce and place (.486). With 1.337 Eigenvalue, factor shows 8.35 percentages from total variance with 65.6 percent reliability coefficient. Out of three items, two items shows the handicrafts or souvenir are in demand, and other item shows information regarding tourism product is enough.

Factor-4: Event Organization: The fourth factor involves two items; cultural programs are organized regularly for tourists (.867), and National/ local events are organized in the study area (.688). With 1.265 Eigenvalue, factor shows 7.90 percent from total variance with 62.1 percent reliability coefficient. Both items show the commencement of the cultural programs and national/local events in indigenous tourism.

Factor-5: Government Promotion: The fifth factor involves two items; government is active in the conservation of cultural/heritage sites (.811), and the specific attraction is promoted by the government (.704). With 1.220 Eigenvalue, factor shows 7.62 percent from total variance with 61 percent reliability coefficient. Both items show the involvement of the government in the conservation of cultural/heritage sites and the promotion of unique attractions.

Factor-6: Local Participation in Promotion: The sixth factor involves two items; active participation by a local artist or craftsmen group in the area for promotion (.799) and cooperation is developed with state or regional level organization for tourism promotion (.674). With a 1.073 Eigenvalue, the factor shows 6.70 percent from total variance with a 65.4 percent reliability coefficient. Both items show the involvement of the local artist in indigenous tourism and organization of regional and state level are working together for the promotion of indigenous tourism.

Table 11 is the consolidated Socio-demographic data of the Tourists obtained from the Tourists’ Questionnaire. Figure 7 is illustrates the gender of the respondents. It was found that the female portion of the respondents was slightly greater that the male portion (51% and 49% respectively). Figure 8 represents the age profile of the Tourists. It can be seen that the majority of the respondents (37%) belonged to the 21-30 age-group. Tourists above the age of 50 were found to be the minority, making up only 8% of the respondents.

Table 11. Socio-Demographic Profile of Tourist Respondents
(Source: Primary data obtained from questionnaire for tourists)

Categories of respondents	Respondents (428)	Percentage
Gender		
Male	210	49.1%
Female	218	50.9%
Total	428	100%
Age		
Below 20	76	17.8%
21-30	160	37.4%
31-40	86	20.1%
41-50	71	16.6%
Above 50	35	8.2%
Total	428	100%
Marital Status		
Single	121	28.3%
Married	286	66.8%
Divorced	21	4.9%
Total	428	100%
Educational Qualifications		
Up to secondary school	88	20.6%
Higher secondary	194	45.3%
Graduation	121	28.3%
Post-graduation or above	25	5.8%
Total	428	100%
Occupation		
Household work	118	27.6%
Self Employed	229	53.5%
Service-Private	30	7.0%
Service -Govt.	22	5.1%
Others	29	6.8%
Total	428	100%
Monthly Income (in INR)		
Below 10000	131	30.6%
10000-30000	125	29.2%
30,000-50000	46	10.7%
Above 50000	126	29.4%
Total	428	100%

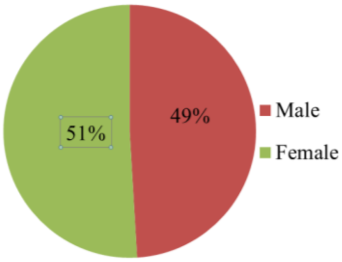


Figure 7. Tourists – gender

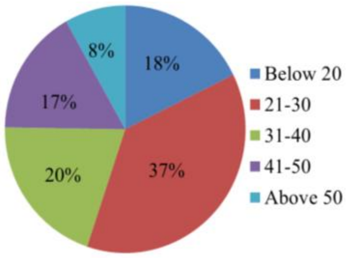


Figure 8. Tourists age

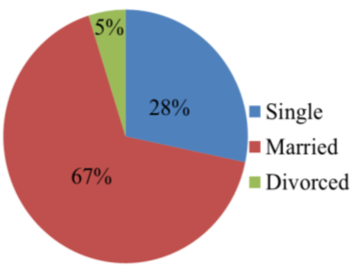


Figure 9. Tourists marital status

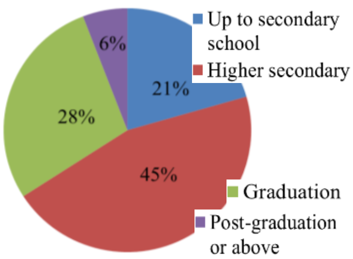


Figure 10. Tourists education

(Source: Primary data obtained from questionnaire for tourists)

Table 12. Travel Related Information of Tourist Respondents

Information of respondents	Respondents (428)	Percentage
Traveling		
Alone	131	30.6%
Couple	125	29.2%
With Friends	46	10.7%
With Family	126	29.4%
Total	428	100%
Frequency of Visit		
First Visit	272	63.6%
Second Visit	71	16.6%
Third visit	19	4.4%
More than Thrice	66	15.4%
Total	428	100%
Source of Information		
Word of Mouth	310	72.4%
Print Media	59	13.8%
Electronic Media	8	1.9%
Social Media	51	11.9%
Total	428	100%
Duration of Stay		
1 day	233	54.4%
2 days	62	14.5%
3 days	63	14.7%
More than 3 days	70	16.4%
Total	428	100%
Accommodation		
Hotel	107	25.0%
Panchayat Bhavan	105	24.5%
Villagers Home	90	21.0%
Other	126	29.4%
Total	428	100%
Transportation		
Bike	111	25.9%
Four-wheeler	178	41.6%
Public transport	83	19.4%
Other	56	13.1%
Total	428	100%
Preferred Recreational Activities		
Visiting Landscape	134	31.3%
Visiting Temples	83	19.4%
Photography	67	15.7%
Cultural activities	83	19.4%
Shopping	45	10.5%
Other	16	3.7%
Total	428	100%
Destination Inconveniences in regard to		
Poor connectivity	97	22.7%
Transport facilities	105	24.5%
Photography hindrances	24	5.6%
Restaurants and eateries	119	27.8%
Information centers	42	9.8%
Accommodation facilities	20	4.7%
Shopping markets	3	.7%
Healthcare services	18	4.2%
Total	428	100%
What are the different Activities Performed		
Tribal Group Marriage	16	3.7%
Dance and Music	21	4.9%
Photography	30	7.0%
Religious activity	287	67.1%
Purchasing of tribal items	74	17.3%
Total	428	100%

Figure 9 is a graphical representation the marital status of the tourists. It is seen that about two-thirds (67%) of the respondents were married, while 28% were found to be unmarried. A small portion (5%) of the respondents were found to be divorced. Figure 1 shows that 45% majority of the tourists were found to have completed higher secondary education, while 28% were graduates, and 21% had been educated up to secondary school. Figure 11 is a graphical representation of the employment data of the tourists. It was found that over half (53%) of the respondents were self-employed, while 28% were occupied with household-work. Figure 12 is a graphical representation of the monthly income (in INR) of the tourists. It is seen that 31% of the respondents earn less than 10,000 INR per month, while a slightly smaller number (29%) belong to the 10,000-50,000 bracket. It was also found that a similar number of respondents (29%) earned over INR 50,000 per month.

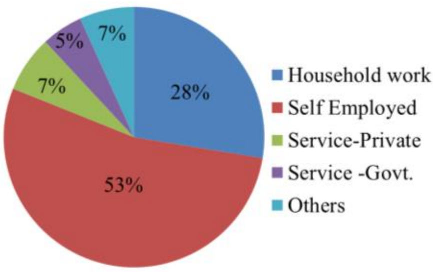


Figure 11. Tourists – Occupation

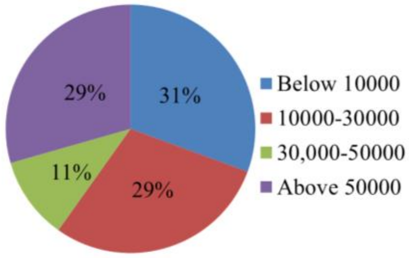


Figure 12. Tourists - Monthly Income (In INR)

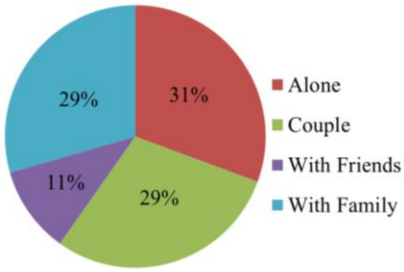


Figure 13. Tourists travel preferences

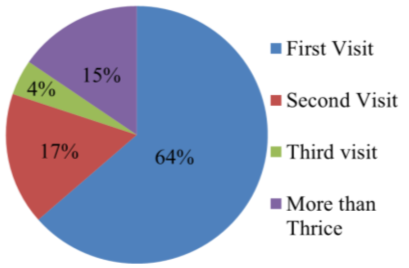


Figure 14. Tourists' Frequency of Visiting

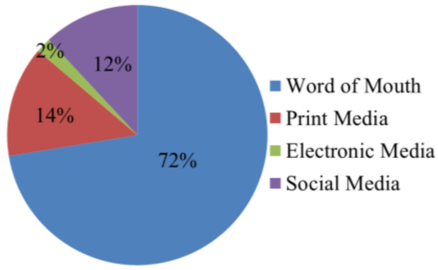


Figure 15. Tourists' Source of Information

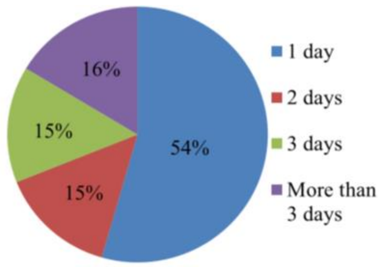


Figure 16. Duration of stay

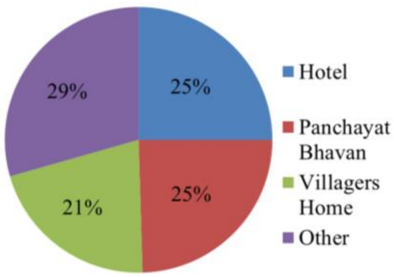


Figure 17. Accommodation

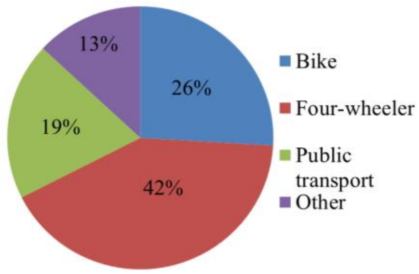


Figure 18. Transportation used

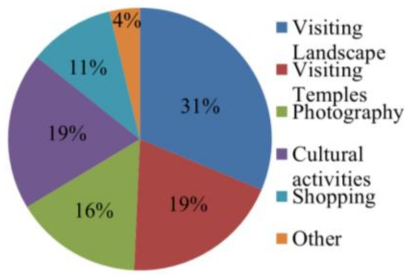


Figure 19. Preferred recreational activities

(Source: Primary data obtained from questionnaire for tourists)

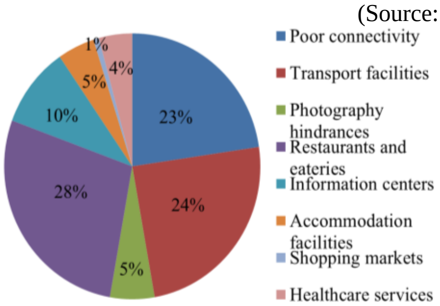


Figure 20. Destination inconveniences

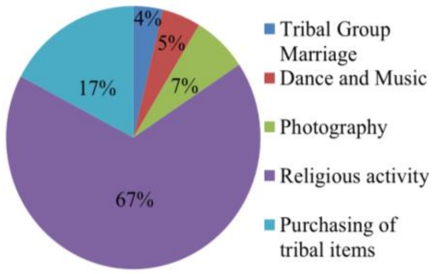


Figure 21. Activities undertaken

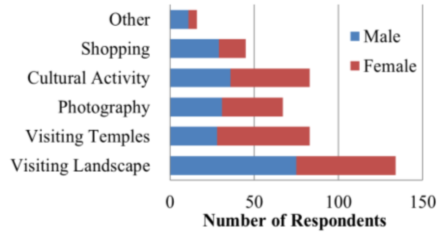


Figure 22. Distribution of Gender by Preferred Recreational Activities

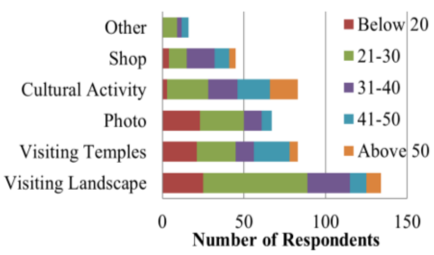


Figure 23. Distribution of age by preferred recreational activities

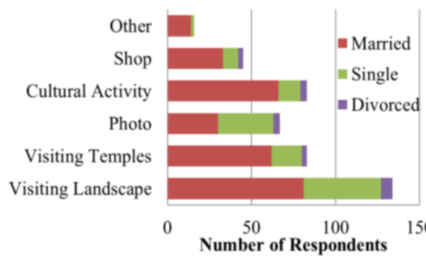


Figure 24. Distribution of marital status by preferred recreational activities

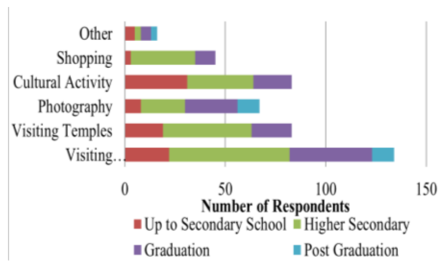


Figure 25. Distribution of educational qualifications by preferred recreational activities

(Source: Analysis of Primary Data obtained from Tourists Questionnaire)

Table 12 is a consolidation of the tabulated data pertaining to the Travel-related information of Tourists, obtained from the Questionnaire for the same. Figure 13 graphically represents the travel preferences of the tourists. It can be seen that 31% of the respondents travelled alone, while 29% travelled as a couple, and 29% travelled with family. Only 11% of the respondents were found to be travelling with friends. Figure 14 is a graphical representation of the tourists' frequency of visiting the area. It was found that the great majority (64%) of them were first-time visitors. 17% of the respondents were on their second visits, while 15% had visited the destination more than three times. Figure 15 is a graphical representation of the tourists' source of information. It can be seen that 72% of the tourists acted on word-of-mouth information, while only 2% had used information from electronic media. Figure 16 represents the duration of stay of the tourists. Well over half of the respondents (54%) were visiting for only one day. Equal portions of 15% each were made up by visitors staying for 2 and 3 day periods. 16% of the respondents were found to be staying for a duration over 3 days. Figure 17 is a graphical representation of the accommodation used by the tourists. One-fourth of the respondents stayed in hotels, while another quarter had used Panchayat Bhavan. The majority of the respondents (29%) had used other modes of accommodation, while the remaining respondents had stayed in villagers homes. It can be seen in Figure 18 that the majority of the respondents (42%) used four-wheelers as the mode of transportation. 26% had travelled in motorcycles, while 19% had used public transport. A small portion of tourists (13%) had used other modes of transport. Figure 19 visualizes the preferred recreational activities of the tourists. It shows that the largest group of 31% of the respondents prefer visiting landscapes, while Visiting temples and cultural activities are preferred by 19% of the respondents each. 16% indulge in photography, while 11% selected shopping as their preferred activity. Figure 20 is a graphical representation of the inconveniences faced at the destination by the tourists. Lack of restaurants and eateries, Transport facilities, and poor connectivity were the most commonly cited inconveniences, with 28%, 24%, and 23% of respondents respectively. Figure 21 is a graphical representation of the activities undertaken by the tourists. It can be seen that 67% of them partake in religious activity, while purchasing tribal items is the second most undertaken activity with 17% selecting it as their main activity.

Analysis of Cross Tabulation and Chi-Square: In non-parametric data set, the Chi-Square test used for inference and cross-tabulation analyzes the association between two variables row or column-wise to know the relationship between variables with the help of the P-Value of the Chi-square test that reveal the level of significance. P-Value, less than .05, shows an association, is significant, and based on it, hypotheses are accepted or rejected. Association between Preferred Recreational Activities and Key Attributes of Socio-Demographic Attributes: H_0: Socio-Demographic attributes and preferred recreational activities are not significantly associated with activity-based management of indigenous resources.

Distribution of Gender by Preferred Recreational Activities

The results of Table 13 show preferred recreational activities across different gender. The same has been graphically represented in Figure 22. In 428 respondents 210 (49.1%) respondents were male and 218 (50.9%) were female. Out of 210 (49.1%), male respondents 75 (35.7%) came to visit landscape, 28 (13.3%) came to visit temples, 31(14.8%) came to take photographs, 36(17.1%) came for cultural activities, 29(13.8%) came for shopping, and 11(5.2%) came for other activities. Out of 218(50.9%) female respondents, 59 (27.1%) came to visit landscape, 55(25.2%) came to visit temples, 36(16.5%) came to take photographs, 47(21.6%) came for cultural activities, 16(7.3%) came for shopping, and 5(2.3%) came for other activities. H_0: Gender and Preferred recreational activities are not significantly associated with the activity-based management of indigenous resources.

Table 13. Distribution of Gender by Preferred Recreational Activities (Source: Analysis of Primary Data obtained from Tourists Questionnaire)

Determinants	Gender		Total	Chi-Square Test
Preferred Recreational Activity	Male	Female		
Visiting Landscape	75	59	134	Pearson Chi-Square = 18.387 df = 5 Asymp. Sig. (2- sided) = (.002)
Visiting Temples	28	55	83	
Photography	31	36	67	
Cultural Activity	36	47	83	
Shopping	29	16	45	
Other	11	5	16	
Total	210	218	428	Ho: Rejected

The findings infer that 31% of respondents came to visit the landscape, and more than 3% of respondents came for other activities. The value of Pearson Chi-square is 18.387 with 5 degrees of freedom, and the significant value of the test is .002, showing a significant association between variables Gender and Preferred Recreational Activities. Table 13 explains the relationship between Gender and Preferred Recreational Activities, and the results show that gender plays an essential role in choosing a recreational activity. Thus, the null hypothesis "Gender and Preferred recreational activities are not significantly associated for activity-based management of indigenous resources." is rejected with the P-Value .002.

Distribution of Age by Preferred Recreational Activities

The results of Table 14 show preferred recreational activities across different age groups. As seen in Figure 23, out of 428 respondents, 76 (17.8%) respondents are below the age group of 20, 160 (37.4%) are within 21-30, 86 (20.1%) are in between 31-40, 71 (16.6%) in between 41-50, and, 35 (8.2%) were above the age of 50. Out of 428 respondents, 134 (31.3%) respondents came to visit landscape, 83 (19.4%) came to visit the temple, 67(15.7%) came for photographs, 83 (19.4%) came for cultural activity, 45 (10.5%) came for shopping, and 16(3.7%) came for other activities. **H_0:** Age and Preferred recreational activities are not significantly associated with activity-based management of indigenous resources.

Result infers that 64 (40.0%) respondents came to visit the landscape, 24 (15.0%) respondents came to visit the temple, 27 (16.9%) respondents came for photographs, 25 (15.6%) respondents came for cultural activities, 11 (6.9%) respondents came for shopping, and 9 (5.6%) respondents came for other activity under the age group between 21-30. The value of Pearson Chi-square is 87.941 with 20 degrees of freedom, and the significant value of the test is .000, showing a significant association between variables Age and Preferred Recreational Activities. Table 14 explains the relationship between Age and Preferred Recreational Activities, and results show that age plays an essential role in choosing a recreational activity. Thus, the null hypothesis "Age and Preferred recreational activities are not significantly associated for activity-based management of indigenous resources." is rejected with the P-Value .000.

Distribution of Marital Status by Preferred Recreational Activities

The results of Table 15 show preferred recreational activities across the marital status. As visualized in Figure 24, out of 428 respondents, 286(66.8%) respondents were married, 121(28.3%) respondents were single, and 21(4.9%) were divorced. Out of 428 respondents, 134(31.3%) respondents came to visit landscape, 83(19.4%) came to visit the temple, 67(15.7%) came for photographs, 83(19.4%) came for cultural activity, 45(10.5%) came for shopping, and 16(3.7%) came for other activities. **Ho:** Marital Status and Preferred recreational activities are not significantly associated with activity-based management of indigenous resources. Findings infer that 81(28.3%) married respondents came to visit landscape, 66(23.1%) married respondents came for cultural activities, 46(38.0%) single respondents came to visit landscape, 33(27.3%) single respondents came for photography. The value of Pearson Chi-square is 31.915 with 10 degrees of freedom, and the significant value of the test is .000, showing a significant association between Marital Status and Preferred Recreational Activities. Table 15 explains the relationship between Marital Status and Preferred Recreational Activities, and results show that Marital Status plays an essential role in choosing a recreational activity. Thus, the null hypothesis "Marital Status and Preferred recreational activities are not significantly associated for activity-based management of indigenous resources." is rejected with the P-Value .000.

Table 14. Distribution of Age by Preferred Recreational Activities (Source. Analysis of primary data obtained from tourists questionnaire)

Determinants	Preferred Recreational Activity						Total	Chi-Square Test
Age	Visiting Landscape	Visiting Temples	Photography	Cultural Activity	Shopping	Other		
Below 20	25	21	23	3	4	0	76	Pearson Chi-Square = 87.941df = 20 Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) =(.000)
21-30	64	24	27	25	11	9	160	
31-40	26	11	11	18	17	3	86	
41-50	10	22	6	20	9	4	71	
Above 50	9	5	0	17	4	0	35	
Total	134	83	67	83	45	16	428	Ho. Rejected

Table 15. Distribution of Marital Status by Preferred Recreational Activities (Source: Analysis of primary data obtained from tourists questionnaire)

Determi nants	Preferred Recreational Activity						Total	Chi-Square Test
Marital Status	Visiting Landscape	Visiting Temples	Photo graphy	Cultural Activity	Shopping	Other		
Married	81	62	30	66	33	14	286	Pearson Chi-Square= 31.915 df = 10 Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) =(.000)
Single	46	18	33	13	9	2	121	
Divorced	7	3	4	4	3	0	21	
Total	134	83	67	83	45	16	428	Ho. Rejected

Table 16. Distribution of Educational Qualifications by Preferred Recreational Activities
(Source: analysis of primary data obtained from tourists questionnaire)

Determi nants	Preferred Recreational Activity						Total	Chi-Square Test
Educational Qualifi cations	Visiting Landscape	VisitingTemples	Photo graphy	Cultural Activity	Shopping	Other		
Up to Secondary School	22	19	8	31	3	5	88	Pearson Chi-Square= 69.198 df = 15Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)=(.000)
Higher Secondary	60	44	22	33	32	3	194	
Graduation	41	20	26	19	10	5	121	
Post Graduation	11	0	11	0	0	3	25	
Total	134	83	67	83	45	16	428	Ho: Rejected

Distribution of Educational Qualifications by Preferred Recreational Activities

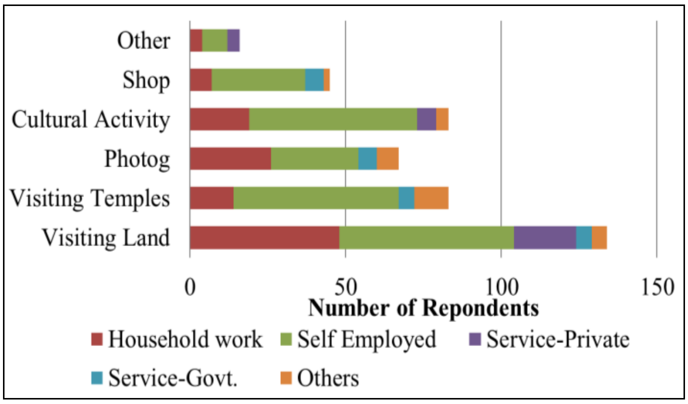
The results of Table 16 show preferred recreational activities across educational qualifications. In 428 respondents, 88(20.6%) respondents were secondary school passed, 194(45.3%) respondents were higher secondary passed, 121(28.3%) respondents were graduated, and 25(5.8%) respondents were post-graduated. Out of 428 respondents, 134(31.3%) respondents came to visit landscape, 83(19.4%) came to visit the temple, 67(15.7%) came for photographs, 83(19.4%) came for cultural activity, 45(10.5%) came for shopping, and 16(3.7%) came for other activities, as seen in Figure 25.

Ho: Educational Qualification and Preferred recreational activities are not significantly associated with activity-based management of indigenous resources. Results infer that 60(30.9%) higher secondary passed respondents came to visit landscape, 44(22.7%) higher secondary passed respondents came to visit temples, 26 graduated respondents came for photography, 33(17.0%), and 32(16.5%) higher secondary passed respondents came for cultural activity and shopping respectively. The value of Pearson Chi-square is 69.198 with 15 degrees of freedom. The significant value of the test is .000, showing a significant association between variables Educational Qualifications and Preferred Recreational Activities. Table 16 explains the relationship between the Educational Qualifications and Preferred Recreational Activities, and results show that Educational Qualifications play an essential role in choosing a recreational activity. Thus, the null hypothesis "Educational Qualifications and Preferred recreational activities are not significantly associated for activity-based management of indigenous resources." is rejected with the P-Value .000.

Distribution of Occupation by Preferred Recreational Activities

The results of Table 17 show preferred recreational activities across occupations. As shown in Figure 26, out of 428 respondents, 118 (27.6%) respondents were household workers, 229(53.5%) respondents were self-employed, 30(7.0%) respondents were private servants, 22(5.1%) were government servants, and 29(6.8%) respondents were related to other occupation than above mentioned. Out of 428 respondents, 134(31.3%) respondents came to visit landscape, 83(19.4%)

came to visit the temple, 67(15.7%) came for photographs, 83(19.4%) came for cultural activity, 45(10.5%) came for shopping, and 16(3.7%) came for other activities. **Ho:** Occupation and Preferred recreational activities are not significantly associated with activity-based management of indigenous resources. Findings infer that 56(24.5%) self-employedrespondents came to visit the landscape, 54(23.6%) self-employed respondents came for cultural activities, 48(40.7%) household worker respondents, and 20(66.7%) private employees came for visiting the landscape. The value of Pearson Chi-square is 80.028 with 20 degrees of freedom, and the significant value of the test is .000, showing a significant association between variables Occupation and Preferred Recreational Activities. Table 17 explains the relationship between the Occupation and Preferred Recreational Activities, and results show that occupation plays an essential role in choosing a recreational activity. Thus, the null hypothesis "Occupation and Preferred recreational activities are not significantly associated for activity-based management of indigenous resources." is rejected with the P-Value .000.



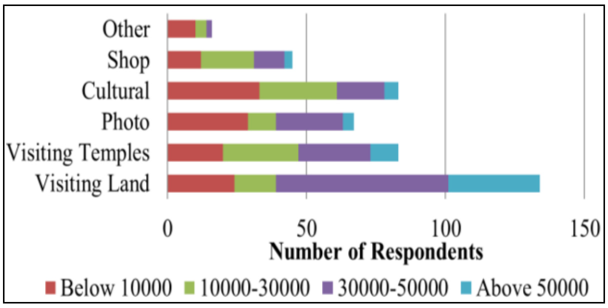


Figure 27. Distribution of monthly income by preferred recreational activity

Figure 26. Distribution of occupation by preferred recreational activities (Source: analysis of primary data obtained from tourists questionnaire)

Distribution of Monthly Income by Preferred Recreational Activity

The results of Table 18 show preferred recreational activities across monthly income, and the same has been illustrated in Figure 27. In 428 respondents, 128(29.9%) respondents income were below Rs 10000, 103(24.1%) respondents were among the income group of INR 10000-30000, 142(33.2%) respondents were among the income group of INR 30000-50000, and 55(12.9%) respondents were above the income group of INR 50000. Out of 428 respondents, 134(31.3%) respondents came to visit landscape, 83(19.4%) came to visit the temple, 67(15.7%) came for photographs, 83(19.4%) came for cultural activity, 45(10.5%) came for shopping, and 16(3.7%) came for other activities.

Ho: Monthly Income and Preferred recreational activities are not significantly associated with activity-based management of indigenous resources. Results infer that 62(43.7%) respondents among the income group of INR30000-50000 came to visit landscape, 27(26.2%) and 19(18.4%) respondents among the income group of INR 10000-30000 came to visit temples and for shopping respectively, 29(22.7%) and 33(25.8) respondents below the income group of INR 10000 came for photography and cultural activity respectively. The value of Pearson Chi-square is 80.999 with 15 degrees of freedom. The significant value of the test is .000, showing a significant association between variables Monthly Income and Preferred Recreational Activities. Table 18 explains the relationship between the Monthly Income and Preferred Recreational Activities, and results show that Monthly Income plays an essential role in choosing a recreational activity. Thus, the null hypothesis "Monthly Income and Preferred recreational activities are not significantly associated for activity-based management of indigenous resources." is rejected with the P-Value .000.

Table 17. Distribution of Occupation by Preferred Recreational Activities (Source: analysis of primary data obtained from tourists questionnaire)

Determi nants	Preferred Recreational Activities							Chi-Square Test
Occupation	Visiting Land scape	Visiting Temples	Photog raphy	Cultural Activity	Shop ping	Other	Total	
Household work	48	14	26	19	7	4	118	Pearson Chi-Square = 80.028 df = 20 Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) =(.000)
Self Employed	56	53	28	54	30	8	229	
Service-Private	20	0	0	6	0	4	30	
Service-Govt.	5	5	6	0	6	0	22	
Others	5	11	7	4	2	0	29	
Total	134	83	67	83	45	16	428	Ho: Rejected

Table 18. Distribution of Monthly Income by Preferred Recreational Activity (Source: analysis of primary data obtained from tourists questionnaire)

Determi nants	Preferred Recreational Activities							Chi-Square Test
Monthly Income (INR)	Visiting Land scape	Visiting Temples	Photo graphy	Cultural Activities	Shop ping	Other	Total	
Below 10000	24	20	29	33	12	10	128	Pearson Chi- Square= 80.999df = 15Asymp. Sig.(2-sided) =(.000)
10000-30000	15	27	10	28	19	4	103	
30000-50000	62	26	24	17	11	2	142	
Above 50000	33	10	4	5	3	0	55	
Total	134	83	67	83	45	16	428	Ho: Rejected

FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

Findings from the Secondary Data

1. It is clear from the collected secondary data that the tribal-dominated districts Mandla, Balaghat, and Dindori have huge indigenous tourism prospects. They key tourism pull factors of the three districts are indigenous history, culture, and natural environment.

2. The district of Balaghat covers an area of 9,229 km^2, Mandla covers and area of 5,800 km^2, and Dindori covers 7,470 km^2.

3. Scheduled Tribes account for 22.5% of the population of Balaghat district, 57.9% of the population of Mandla, and 64.7 % of the population of Dindori district.

4. Baihar is the Community Development block in Balaghat district with the highest population of Scheduled Tribes, with 71,554 individuals making up 67.33% of the CD block population.Bicchiya is the Community Development block in Mandla district with the highest population of Scheduled Tribes, with 83,320 individuals making up 55.87% of the CD block population.Shahpura is the Community Development block in Dindori district with the highest population of Scheduled Tribes, with 80,560 individuals making up 65.28% of the CD block population.

5. The literacy rate of the Scheduled Tribes of District Balaghat is 66.7%, Mandla is 60.1%, and Dindori is 60.2 %.

6. The work participation rate of the Scheduled Tribe in District Balaghat is 54.2 percent, Mandla 56.0 percent, and Dindori 56.8 percent.

7. Gonds and Baigas are the most populous tribes in all three districts.

8. The economy of all districts is agriculture-based, but the Balaghat district derives massive income from its manganese and copper deposits.

9. The total roadnetwork in District Balaghat is 1664 km, in Mandla 1170 km, and Dindori 2299 km.

10. Balaghat and Mandla districts have eight community health centers, and Dindori has seven community health centers.

11. Balaghat district have four homestays and five hotels and restaurants, Mandla has 11 accommodation units, and Dindori has five hotels.

12. Balaghat district has an agro and sub-tropical region with 75-85 percent humidity, Mandla district has relatively low temperatures than other nearby cities, and winter is dry here. Dindori district has a moderate climate, the highest temperature is 430^{o}C, and the lowest is 10.410^{o}C.

Findings and Suggestions from the Socio-Demographic Profiles of the Community: Table 19 is a tabular representation of the findings and suggestions from the socio-demographic profiles obtained from the indigenous community. Table 20 is a tabular representation of the findings and suggestions from the socio-demographic profiles of the tourists.

Table 19. Findings and Suggestions from the Socio-Demographic Profiles of the Community

Attributes	Finding	Suggestions
Gender	Male participation in indigenous tourism is one percent higher than females.	The tribal community of the study area does not have high participation in tourism activity. It is crucial to make tourism very attractive in terms of subsidies and earnings. Participation of the tribal community in Indigenous Tourism can increase through an aggressive promotion campaign is required, and different government schemes are required to boost tourism by providing subsidies to new business startups.
Age	The participation in indigenous tourism inthe age group 31-40 (26.5%) is higher than in other age groups.	
Marital Status	Married participants in indigenous tourism are higher than singles.	
Education Qualification	The majority of participants in indigenous tourism are higher secondary passed.	
Occupation	Participants are involved with a financial activity where the majority of respondents are self-employed.	
Monthly Income	The monthly income of the majority of the respondents is lower than INR 10000.	

Table 20. Findings and Suggestions from the Socio-Demographic Profiles of Tourist

Attributes	Finding	Suggestions
Gender	The number of male tourists is 1.8% higher than female tourist shows male tourist is more motivated by indigenous tourism than a female tourist.	Batter shopping options are required to attract female tourists.
Age	Data shows younger tourists are more interested in indigenous tourism.	Indigenous religious spots and shopping centers can attract senior citizens and staged programs and indigenous-themed parks for the aged group less than 20.
Marital Status	Married tourists are more motivated to visit indigenous tourism sites than singles.	Cultural activities and shopping units need to adjust according to the single tourist.
Education Qualification	Higher secondary passed tourists are more motivated to go for indigenous landscapes and Temples.	Higher educated tourists can be motivated by enhancing temples, shopping areas, and targeted cultural activity.
Occupation	Self-employed tourists are more motivated to travel for indigenous tourism.	Government servants need to be targeted more as they are less interested in indigenous tourism.
Monthly Income	Higher and lower-income group tourists are less motivated to travel for indigenous tourism.	Higher-income group tourists can be attracted more by making shopping and religious sites interested and attractive.

CONCLUSION

It was found that married indigenous people of the 31-40 age group were the largest group, with men slightly higher in number than women. The majority of the respondents were characterized by a higher-secondary education, self-employment, and earnings under INR 10,000 per month. With respect to the tourists visiting the areas, it was again found that there were more men than women, the majority of tourists were young, married, and had passed higher secondary education, in addition to being self-employed. It was also found that tourists from both high and low-income groups were motivated to engage in indigenous tourism.

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