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Motives of Female Travellers for Solo Travel

Rrezarta Ejupi

rrezarta.ejupi9@gmail.com

Zorana Medarić

Science and Research Centre Koper, Slovenia

zorana.medaric@zrs-kp.si

The segment of solo female travellers has been growing fast from year to year and is becoming an increasingly important tourism segment. When women travel alone, they want more than just to travel from one place to another. They are often looking for independence, personal growth, new experiences, adventure, connecting with others, and an escape from routine. The aim of this paper is to investigate the main motives for independent travel among Slovenian solo travellers through quantitative and qualitative research. Based on the literature review, the motives were divided according to three different dimensions: psychological, cultural and personal. In our analysis, we found that while all three groups of motives are important, Slovenian female independent travellers attach the greatest importance to the psychological motive, i.e. they see independent travel primarily as a time to fulfil their own needs and desires, gain confidence and independence or withdraw from everyday life.

Keywords: solo female travel, motives, independent travel



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Introduction

Recent literature (Chiang & Jogartnam, 2006; Junek et al., 2006; McNamara & Prideaux, 2010; Pereira & Silva, 2018; Yang, 2020) suggests that solo travel is one of the fastest growing segments in the tourism market. Today, we can observe a decline in package holidays and an increase in solo travel, mainly due to the higher demand for holiday flexibility. The rise in solo travel reflects the changing demographics and lifestyles of modern society, characterised by individualism and high levels of consumerism (Hyde & Lawson, 2003; Laesser et al., 2009). Independent travel by women is not a new phenomenon, as women have been travelling and exploring the world for centuries (Junek et al., 2006). Still, women's participation in tourism and leisure activities has increased significantly over the past 20 years (Jordan & Gibson, 2005). The increase in solo female travellers has

contributed significantly to the growing segment of solo travel (Yang, 2020). According to travel industry statistics, there has been a 131% increase in the number of Google searches online for 'solo travel' between 2016 and 2019 and 84% of all solo travellers are women (<https://www.condorferries.co.uk/solo-travel-statistics>).

Solo travellers are often characterised by their curiosity and desire to learn about cultures other than their own. They are often driven and excited to explore new ways of life and new experiences. Some of them prefer to stay with locals instead of booking a hotel in order to immerse themselves in the culture. Solo travel gives them the opportunity to interact with people from other cultures, religions, countries, etc. Solo travel also allows them to make their own decisions about activities and travel plans without having to compromise. Often, women travelling alone experi-

ence a sense of personal power that they did not know they had before (Osman et al., 2020).

Understanding the motives for tourism travel is crucial for various institutions planning tourism development or for tourism providers. Nowadays, competition in the tourism market is very strong, so it is necessary to follow constant changes and trends (Mahika, 2011). Therefore, the aim of this article is to examine the motives of female solo travellers as an important segment in the travel market, focusing on different dimensions of motivation.

Literature Review

Solo female travel has become an increasingly popular phenomenon (Chiang & Jogaratnam, 2006). Therefore, it is not surprising that since the late 1990s, an increasing number of studies have been conducted on female solo travellers in tourism, showing that female solo travellers are in search of self-affirmation, identity, and other experiences. Research also shows that women travelling alone sometimes face unwanted male attention, violence, and sexual harassment. This growing phenomenon of female solo travel has also been studied to understand travel motivations (Chiang & Jogaratnam, 2006; McNamara & Prideaux, 2010; Wilson & Little, 2005, 2008; Seow & Brown 2018; Osman et al., 2020). This academic work has highlighted the characteristics of female solo travel, motivation, experiences of empowerment and perceptions of risk (Wilson & Harris, 2006; Harris & Wilson, 2007; Wilson & Little, 2008; Jordan & Gibson, 2005; Chiang & Jogaratnam, 2006; Jordan & Aitchison, 2008; McNamara & Prideaux, 2010; Yang et al., 2019; Seow & Brown, 2018; Osman et al., 2020).

A review of the general classifications of travel motives shows that they mostly include cultural, religious, physical, personal and psychological components (World Tourism Organisation, 1994; Pearce & Lee, 2006; Swarbooke & Horner, 2007; United Nations, 2008, Middleton et al., 2009). For example, one of the widely used classifications of travel motives is that of Swarbooke and Horner (2007), which distinguishes between psychological motives (relaxation, health, sunbathing, etc.), emotional motives (romance, nostalgia, adventure, escape, spirituality), per-

sonal motives (visiting relatives and friends, meeting new people), developmental motives (learning), status motives (fashion, exclusivity), and cultural motives (sightseeing, learning about new cultures).

The motives of solo female tourists vary and change over the life course (Gibson et al., 2012). Important motives include seeking physical, emotional and spiritual fulfilment, self-confidence, empowerment, a sense of power (Wilson & Harris, 2006; Harris & Wilson, 2007) and getting out of one's comfort zone (Wilson & Little, 2008). Pereira and Silva (2018), who developed a conceptual framework that relates women's travel preferences to tourism experiences, link independent women's travel experiences to the 'desire to learn, self-development, to challenge oneself, to find a sense of identity and autonomy, to meet new people, and to experience new life and adventure moments' (p. 137). They also emphasise the desire to experience a different cultural context than the one they are used to. Chiang and Jogartnam (2006) found that it is important for solo travellers to experience a new culture, acquire new knowledge, and meet people with similar interests. Phillips (2019) highlights the learning opportunities and transformative aspect of travel through interaction with other cultures.

Based on the literature review (Wilson & Harris, 2006; Chiang & Jogartnam, 2006; Harris & Wilson, 2007; Wilson & Little, 2008; Bond & Falk, 2012; Pereira & Silva, 2018; Phillips, 2019; Seow & Brown, 2018; Osman et al., 2020; Yang, 2020), we focus on three dimensions of motives that are most frequently highlighted, namely psychological, cultural and personal motives:

- psychological motives (desire for adventure and adventures, escape from routine, change of environment, gaining independence and self-confidence),
- cultural motives (sightseeing, attending events, visiting museums and galleries, tasting local food, learning about local culture),
- personal motives (visiting relatives and friends, meeting new people, learning new skills, personal growth, searching for identity).

Although these motives may overlap in practice,

they are presented independently for the purposes of this article.

Psychological Motives

At the core of independent travel is the ideology of independence, autonomy, and freedom. Through the journey the traveller creates an independent and self-sufficient sense of self (Phillips, 2019). For women, travel often represents an opportunity to enter new spaces away from familiar contexts and people. Many women choose to travel independently after life changes such as divorce, widowhood, graduation, and job loss because it allows them time to satisfy their own needs and desires by creating their own schedules and pursuing their own interests. Travelling alone enables a woman to undertake a meaningful journey in which she seeks physical, emotional and spiritual fulfilment (Wilson & Harris, 2006; Harris & Wilson, 2007; Wilson & Little, 2008).

In women's solo travel, it is important to emphasise the aspect of empowerment and the sense of autonomy and independence. Women travel primarily because they have the right to make their own decisions, maintain control over their actions, and meet new people. Their travel experience focuses on self-confidence and independence. Solo travel helps women deal with the problems they encounter on their own. Overcoming fears and meeting challenges and obstacles while travelling leads to greater personal growth, self-confidence and a sense of power (Wilson & Harris, 2006; Harris & Wilson, 2007).

Cultural Motives

Another important aspect of female solo travel is discovering and exploring other cultures and learning about their ways of life. This includes sightseeing and attending events, as well as tasting local gastronomy. Women travel not only to see different places, but also to gain new knowledge and experiences. They also want to learn different ways of thinking about the world. Experiencing culture is often one of the main motives for travelling alone, as it provides the opportunity to have independent experiences (Chiang & Joganam, 2006). This motive is also often linked to issues of identity. The way female travellers see themselves is

an important motive for cultural solo travel as the relationship between the traveller and the host culture is crucial and also related to their self-identity (Bond & Falk, 2012). The independent traveller wants to escape from everyday life with her travels and seeks new cultural frameworks that are different from those she is used to (Crompton in Pereira & Silva, 2018).

Personal Motives

One of the characteristics of female travellers is the desire to meet other people and interact with other travellers and locals. On such trips, it is easier to meet new people and make friends as you are far away from the possible pressures you face in your home environment. This helps women to develop confidence and social skills. For women, independent travel is therefore also a means of personal growth and searching for identity. Apart from enhancing self-confidence and independence, women also improve their social skills on such trips. These acquired skills are transferred to other areas of their daily lives, both at home and at work (Wilson & Harris, 2006; Harris & Wilson, 2007; Phillips, 2019).

Methods

The aim of the study was to obtain data on the motives of independent female travellers. The data was obtained through quantitative and qualitative research – a questionnaire and interviews. The survey was conducted online from May 5 to August 5, 2020 using the 1KA online survey tool. The survey was shared through the social network Facebook; more specifically, the survey was posted to six travel groups. 239 female respondents were included in the sample. For each question, only valid responses were considered for analysis.

The questionnaire for the survey was based on the literature read. It consists of five demographic questions and three sets of statements about the motives of independent travel. Respondents had to express their agreement or disagreement with the statements using a Likert scale (level 1 to 5).

In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight travellers to get a more detailed

picture of travel motives. The respondents were obtained with the help of a questionnaire. Those who were willing to participate in the interview provided their contact details (email address). All interviews were conducted remotely via video connection (Facebook Messenger, Skype and Facetime). Ethical guidelines were followed: participants were informed of the aim of the project and were assured that confidentiality would be maintained. The topics of the interviews included history of solo travels, preparation for the travel, routine on a typical solo travel, main motives for the solo travel, safety issues, and positive and negative aspects of solo travel. The interviews were semi-structured and lasted an average of 35 minutes, while their transcription took twice as long. The interviews were transcribed and analysed according to the rules for analysis and interpretation of qualitative data.

Results

Table 1 shows the age of respondents. The average age of our respondents is 30.1 years. As many as 49% of respondents belong to the age group between 22 and 28 years. 16% of all respondents belong to the age group between 29 and 35 years. Only 12% of respondents are under the age of 22, while 22% of respondents are over the age of 35. The youngest respondent is 18 years old and the oldest is 68 years old.

Table 2 (p. 181) shows the normal duration of a solo trip, how often they travel. Most respondents, 42%, travel alone for two weeks, while 37% of respondents travel between two weeks and one month. Of the respondents, 10% travel between one month and three months and only 1% of the respondents travel for more than half a year. Respondents who travel for less than two weeks were excluded from further analysis. The

majority of respondents take an independent trip once every two years or once a year (78% overall). 15% of all respondents go on an independent trip two to three times a year, while only 6% of respondents travel more than three times a year. The most frequently chosen accommodation, with as many as 47% of all responses, is a hostel. Other frequently chosen accommodations are apartments at 17% and hotels at 16%. The fewest travellers use motels, only 2%.

In our research, three dimensions of motives in particular proved to be important, which are presented in this paper: psychological, cultural and personal. The sentences measuring different dimensions of motives were clustered into three groups forming three indexes that were verified for internal validity with Cronbach's alpha and an average for the index as a whole was calculated as well.

Respondents expressed their agreement or disagreement with the statements by circling a number from 1 to 5 for each statement, representing the level of importance in their decision to take the last independent trip. This means 1 – I disagree completely, 2 – I disagree, 3 – I am neutral, 4 – I agree, 5 – I completely agree.

Table 3 (p. 181) shows the agreement of respondents with claims about psychological motives. 82% of respondents agreed with the statement that solo travel is a time to pursue your own needs and desires. Slightly less, 81%, agreed or fully agreed that a change of environment is important to them when travelling alone, while 79% of respondents agreed or fully agreed that they prefer to travel due to disconnecting or departure from everyday life. 66% of them expressed that they feel more confident and independent when travelling solo.

Table 4 (p. 182) shows the agreement of respondents with claims about cultural motives. Respondents mainly agreed with the statements related to the cultural motives. A total of 83% of respondents agree or completely agree that they like to get to know the culture and way of life of other people during their travels. Slightly fewer, 82%, agree or completely agree that they enjoy seeing the sights at their destination. 81% of all respondents agree or completely agree with the statement about tasting local food, while

Table 1 Age of respondents

| | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|-------|
| Q1 How old are you? | Valid | 239 |
| | Number of units | 283 |
| | Average | 30.10 |
| | Standard deviation | 10.25 |
| | Minimum | 18 |
| | Maximum | 68 |

Table 2 Average Duration of a Solo Trip and How Often They Travel Solo

| Questions | Answers | (1) | (2) | (3) |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| | | | | |
| Q2 Normal duration of your solo trip? | Less than two weeks | 11 | 5 | 5 |
| | Two weeks | 101 | 42 | 47 |
| | More than two weeks to one month | 89 | 37 | 84 |
| | More than one month to three months | 24 | 10 | 95 |
| | More than three months to half a year | 9 | 4 | 98 |
| | More than half a year | 3 | 1 | 100 |
| | More than one year | 1 | 0 | 100 |
| | Total | 238 | 100 | |
| Q3 How often do you travel solo? | Once in two years | 91 | 39 | 39 |
| | Once in a year | 90 | 39 | 78 |
| | 2 to 3 times a year | 35 | 15 | 94 |
| | More than 3 times a year | 15 | 6 | 100 |
| | Total | 231 | 100 | |

Notes Column headings are as follows: (1) frequency, (2) percentage, (3) cumulative percentage.

Table 3 Psychological motives

| Sub-questions | | Answers | | | | | Total | (1) | (2) | (3) |
|--|----------|---------|----|----|-----|----|-------|-----|-----|------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | |
| Q3a I prefer to travel solo because of disconnecting, withdrawal from everyday life. | <i>n</i> | 4 | 10 | 33 | 107 | 69 | 223 | 223 | 4.0 | 0.90 |
| | % | 2 | 4 | 15 | 48 | 31 | 100 | | | |
| Q3b The change of environment is important to me on my solo journey. | <i>n</i> | 3 | 6 | 32 | 108 | 75 | 224 | 224 | 4.1 | 0.84 |
| | % | 1 | 3 | 14 | 48 | 33 | 100 | | | |
| Q3c When I travel alone, I feel more confident and independent. | <i>n</i> | 5 | 16 | 56 | 94 | 50 | 221 | 221 | 3.8 | 0.96 |
| | % | 2 | 7 | 25 | 43 | 23 | 100 | | | |
| Q3d Travelling alone is a time to fulfil my own desires and needs. | <i>n</i> | 3 | 6 | 30 | 92 | 89 | 220 | 220 | 4.2 | 0.86 |
| | % | 1 | 3 | 14 | 42 | 40 | 100 | | | |

Notes Column headings are as follows: (1) number of units, (2) average, (3) standard deviation. Cronbach's alpha = 0.809, index average = 4.0.

69% of respondents agree or completely agree with the statement about attending cultural and entertainment events. Just over half of all respondents (53%) agree/completely agree with the statement about visiting museums and galleries.

Table 5 (p. 182) shows the agreement of respondents with claims about personal motives. The statement about broadening horizons, exploring and learning new things on the road receives the highest level of agreement (86%), with 73% of all respondents agree-

ing or completely agreeing with the statement that they enjoy meeting new people while travelling, while 59% of respondents go on a trip in search of identity and personal growth.

Respondents stressed the importance of disconnecting and retreating from everyday life, as it gives them time for themselves and their thoughts. When asked about the change of environment and disconnecting from everyday life, our respondents expressed very high agreement and importance by saying:

Table 4 Cultural motives

| Sub-questions | | Answers | | | | | | (1) | (2) | (3) |
|---|----------|---------|----|----|-----|----|-------|-----|-----|------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total | | | |
| Q4a I like to visit museums and galleries on my travels. | <i>n</i> | 12 | 27 | 68 | 92 | 26 | 225 | 225 | 3.4 | 1.02 |
| | % | 5 | 12 | 30 | 41 | 12 | 100 | | | |
| Q4b I like to try local food on the trip. | <i>n</i> | 3 | 10 | 31 | 83 | 98 | 225 | 225 | 4.2 | 0.92 |
| | % | 1 | 4 | 14 | 37 | 44 | 100 | | | |
| Q4c I love getting to know the culture and way of life of other people and nations. | <i>n</i> | 3 | 8 | 28 | 89 | 96 | 224 | 224 | 4.2 | 0.89 |
| | % | 1 | 4 | 13 | 40 | 43 | 100 | | | |
| Q4d I like to see the sights at the destination. | <i>n</i> | 3 | 11 | 26 | 109 | 76 | 225 | 225 | 4.1 | 0.87 |
| | % | 1 | 5 | 12 | 48 | 34 | 100 | | | |
| Q4e I like to take part in cultural and entertainment events on my travels. | <i>n</i> | 2 | 16 | 51 | 113 | 43 | 225 | 225 | 3.8 | 0.86 |
| | % | 1 | 7 | 23 | 50 | 19 | 100 | | | |

Notes Column headings are as follows: (1) number of units, (2) average, (3) standard deviation. Cronbach's alpha = 0.809, average = 3.9.

Table 5 Personal motives

| Sub-questions | | Answers | | | | | | (1) | (2) | (3) |
|---|----------|---------|----|----|----|-----|-------|-----|-----|------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total | | | |
| Q5a On the journey, I like to meet new people. | <i>n</i> | 7 | 11 | 43 | 96 | 68 | 225 | 225 | 3.9 | 0.98 |
| | % | 3 | 5 | 19 | 43 | 30 | 100 | | | |
| Q5b On the journey, I want to broaden my horizons, explore and discover new things. | <i>n</i> | 3 | 5 | 24 | 89 | 104 | 225 | 225 | 4.3 | 0.84 |
| | % | 1 | 2 | 11 | 40 | 46 | 100 | | | |
| Q5c I go on a journey in search of my identity and personal growth. | <i>n</i> | 11 | 19 | 64 | 96 | 35 | 225 | 225 | 3.6 | 1.01 |
| | % | 5 | 8 | 28 | 43 | 16 | 100 | | | |

Notes Column headings are as follows: (1) number of units, (2) average, (3) standard deviation. Cronbach's alpha = 0.719, average = 3.9.

It's definitely very important. Like I said before, when you go out of your everyday life somehow and see other people's way of life, you realise what's important to you in life and what's not. Through travel, I learned to appreciate the simplest things. [Nina, 34 years old]

Travels thus provide a form of escapism and an opportunity to relax in a different environment:

Detachment is very important to me. When I'm on a trip, I don't think about all the problems I have at home, or all the things I can do. On the journey, I take time for myself to relax and forget about worries. [Eva, 24 years old]

Interviewees also stressed the importance of the sense of empowerment and self-confidence that comes from solo travel.

The women rely on themselves to organise trips or solve problems, which in turn changes their self-perceptions.

In addition to the self-confidence I gained, I also became more resourceful and independent. I don't have to rely on anyone like myself to do something or solve a problem. Now I am more confident in myself that I can do something. [Travels] give freedom and [are] full of new experiences. They teach me a lot about myself and the world in general. [Alenka, 27 years old]

Independent travel gives me more self-confidence to be able to plan and travel without special parental accompaniment as we did when we were children. They change [sic] my whole thinking about myself, the people around me, the cultures and the world. [Maša, 20 years old]

Competencies, such as independence, that the travellers acquired on their journeys were often transferred into their daily lives. The transformative aspect of travel was often emphasised by respondents. This is evident from quotes such as the following:

You get extra confidence to go anywhere alone. In the past I didn't go to the cinema alone, now I'll go alone, it's not a problem for me because I got used to it abroad. [Nina, 35 years old]

I definitely gain a lot of self-confidence, I see that I can step out of my comfort zone and I am able to get myself out of a stressful or difficult situation. I have become more independent and patient, because there is no one else to help you and make things easier. And that's good because you see that you're resourceful enough and can adapt to different situations. [Tara, 28 years old]

The findings are consistent with Wilson and Little (2005), who believe that travellers in general are looking for experiences that provide them with an escape and freedom from their comfort zone. According to Wilson and Harris (2006) and Wilson and Little (2008), challenges have a positive effect on the traveller, as overcoming these challenges while travelling leads to a strong sense of empowerment and a boost in self-confidence. In particular, independent travel greatly helped our travellers to increase their confidence and resourcefulness. It has also made the travellers more confident in themselves and their abilities. Overcoming fears, challenges and obstacles while travelling leads to more personal development, self-confidence and a sense of strength. These acquired skills are transferred to other areas of daily life, both at home and at work (Wilson & Harris, 2006; Harris & Wilson, 2007), highlighting the transformative power of solo travel (Phillips, 2019).

Our interviewees showed an interest in the culture of the destinations they visited. They emphasised the importance of learning about the local people, their culture, and their specialties. Learning about the local country, culture, history, and people, as well as participating in cultural activities, are important elements of solo travel:

Even before I go on a trip, I learn about the history of the country and their culture. But I think you really get to know a destination only when you actually visit it and get to know the people and meet their way of life. I met locals everywhere, while visiting attractions, while taking public transport, and especially in the evening while visiting some bars. [Sara, 24 years old]

On the trip, I like to experience things that are typical for the destination I am visiting. I like to try the activities they offer and explore their culture. I also spend a lot of time with the locals to get an in-depth picture of the state of this country and not just what the media is portraying. [Nina, 35 years old]

Attending various cultural events also allows them to gain a better insight into the destination:

I love attending events that help me understand the culture of the destination I attend. When I was in Turkey, I attended an event in a city where some kind of competition took place, where men competed in different categories. There was also a lot of dancing and singing at the event. [Maša, 20 years old]

An important part of visiting and getting to know the destination is also getting to know the techno scene of the destination. Sometimes my main motive for visiting is a festival, around which I then organise other activities. [Sara, 24 years old]

According to Chiang and Jogartnam (2006), an important aspect of female solo travel is the exploration of other cultures. An important reason why women

choose to travel independently is the relationship between travel and experience. Their goal is not to travel alone, but to gain skills and new experiences (Wilson & Harris, 2006; Wilson & Little, 2008). Attending events on the trip proved to be an important aspect of understanding different cultures.

Respondents also expressed a strong desire to learn new things. They described how they broadened their horizons in different ways by attending classes, workshops, and events.

I like to look at everything and try everything little by little. Above all, I want to broaden my horizons, to learn something new. Try something new, experience, see as much as possible, try local specialities, meet new people and have time to observe the surroundings. I give a lot more to experiences and memories than to something material. I like to enrich my soul. [Alenka, 27 years old]

I always avoid hotels and tourist attractions and prefer to get to know more remote areas where you see real life and where there are local people. I attend some events, music events are always a way to get to know people and culture. Another thing, of course, is street food. I also like to visit some historical or art museums, so you get to know the place you are in very well. [Tara, 28 years old]

Getting to know people is something fundamental to their travels. They also explained where and how they meet new people.

Yes, that's one of my main motives for independent travel. So far, I have met many of them at the destination where I spent the night, the owners of accommodation or other independent travellers. [Tara, 28 years old]

One of the main motives for my travels is meeting people. They are easiest to meet in a hostel where you meet other independent travellers. If you are somewhere for a long time, you can go to a language course or other workshops and get

to know them there. Couchsurfing is also great for getting to know each other. [Alenka, 27 years old]

This is in line with previous research. Namely, Pereira and Silva (2018) believe that travellers are highly motivated to learn and expand their knowledge through travel experiences. Additionally, as Wilson and Harris (2006) say, one of the characteristics of travellers is also the desire to interact, meet other people and build relationships.

Conclusion

Understanding travel motivations is one of the most important priorities in tourism today. In our study of independent female travellers, motives were classified into three different categories: psychological, cultural and personal. Independent travellers, as an important tourism segment, seek more than just travel, namely the desire for independence, learning, challenges, meeting new people, new experiences, personal growth and the search for identity (Pereira & Silva, 2018).

Based on the analysis, we found that, in line with the previous research, the three selected groups of motives (cultural, personal and psychological) are all relevant for Slovenian female independent travellers. Still, they attach the greatest importance to the psychological motives, that is, they see independent travel primarily as a time to fulfil their own needs and desires and the way to gain confidence and independence. The change of environment and the aspect of disconnecting or getting out of the daily routine are also important for them.

In relation to cultural motives, they like to learn about new cultures and ways of life, try local gastronomy and attend various events during their travels. Personal motives such as broadening their horizons, discovering and learning new things during their travels and meeting new people are also very important.

By providing the experiences of a unique segment of Slovenian women, our study contributes to the current literature on solo travel by women and deserves the attention of suppliers interested in segmenting the market for independent women's travel. Based on

these findings, destination marketing teams can attract independent travellers by promoting psychological, cultural, and personal motives. Promotional campaigns could emphasise the motive to escape routine, the motive to change environments, the motive to have new experiences, the motive to engage in cultural activities, and the motive to acquire new skills.

Interpretation of the data may be limited by several factors. Our sample included only travellers from Slovenia, so our results cannot be generalised to all women travelling alone. In addition, due to selective sampling, the results cannot be generalised to all solo female travellers from Slovenia. Moreover, most of our travellers were travelling for short periods of time and therefore differ from travellers who choose to travel for longer periods of time. For further research, we suggest expanding the sample to include solo travellers who travel for longer periods of time. It would also be useful to include travellers from different countries.

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Understanding Responsibility from the Tourist's Perspective: A Hotel Context

Petra Zabukovec Baruca

University of Primorska, Slovenia
petra.zabukovec@fts.upr.si

Zlatko Jančič

University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
zlatko.jancic@fdv.uni-lj.si

Aleksandra Brezovec

University of Primorska, Slovenia
aleksandra.brezovec@fts.upr.si

Understanding responsible tourist behaviour is critical for tourism operators if they expect both economic and environmental benefits. Despite decades of academic and practical study of responsibility for the natural and social environment, it is still unclear who is responsible for improving the situation in terms of sustainable development. This requires a deeper understanding of the concept of individual responsibility, which has a behavioural, ethical, and response basis, that will be addressed in this paper. In a hotel context, we explore the concept of individual responsibility in the role of tourists' ability to improve the state of the environment through changes in awareness and behaviour. Based on the relevant theories presented, we defined individual responsibility as a construct divided into four dimensions: personal responsibility or norms (ethics and morals), awareness and knowledge, preference, and action-based responsible behaviour. Significant results on tourist responsibility were obtained by factor analysis and a hierarchical clustering method to identify three different types of responsible tourists. We labelled them as actively responsible, pragmatically responsible, and irresponsible tourists. The identified differences among the three types of (ir)responsible tourists allow for a better understanding of their motives and expectations, as well as better design of sustainable practices by tourism providers.

Keywords: individual responsibility, tourist behaviour, hotel, sustainable tourism



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Introduction

As an international organization committed to the development of responsible and sustainable tourism, UNWTO has recently developed a Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, which is intended to promote tolerance and respect and encourage the industry to adopt ethical values. The concept of ethical and re-

sponsible tourism remains largely unexplained. Responsible Tourism was defined as 'making better places for people to live in and better places for people to visit' at the 2002 Cape Town Conference. Responsible Tourism requires that operators, hoteliers, governments, local people and tourists take responsibility and action to make tourism more sustainable (Euro-

pean Commission, 2012). While UNWTO believes that the code serves as a guide for all stakeholders involved in tourism development, it remains rather bland and unclear as to what exactly is meant by an ethical and responsible approach. Goodwin and Pender (2005) explain responsible and ethical tourism as a business and consumer response to some of the major economic, social and environmental issues affecting our world. It is about travelling in a better way and taking responsibility for the impact that our activities have on other people and their social, cultural and natural environment (p. 303). This statement shifts the debate from a general discussion of responsible production to responsible consumption. Today, the understanding of mutual responsibility for sustainable development is also included in the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Goal 12, entitled 'Responsible Consumption and Production,' is one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals established by the United Nations in 2015 (*The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*).

In postmodern marketing theory, the discourse on the new consumer is defined by characteristics that expose the consumer as an increasingly complex individual who, in pursuit of products, also reflects their attitude to the world and wider social problems (Jančič, 1999). In the sociology of tourism, Urry (1995) defines the tourist as a postmodern consumer associated with an aesthetic cosmopolitanism characterized by a general interest in places, people, cultures and openness, as well as the ability to positively evaluate and accept differences, which is the basis for the sense of responsibility in tourism. The trend toward greater responsibility is reflected in increasingly socially and environmentally aware tourists who also generally take responsibility (Mihalič, 1993; Urry, 1995; Shaw & Clarke, 1999; Harrison et al., 2005).

There is growing concern about the negative impacts of tourism and sustainability, with more attention paid to the responsibility of tourists (Del Chiappa et al., 2019). Moreover, most of the negative impacts of tourism result from inappropriate behaviour of tourists who do not behave in an environmentally friendly way. Juvan and Dolnicar (2014) argue that tourists are the most promising target when it comes to improving the environmental sustainability

of tourism. Tourists can help reduce the negative impacts of tourism by making environmentally friendly tourism decisions and behaving in an environmentally responsible manner. However, despite empirical evidence of tourists' good intentions to purchase environmentally friendly and socially responsible products, this pressure is slow to develop (Font, 2007). Tourists often have limited understanding of the social and environmental impacts of tourism, but have some idea of how their behaviour could change things for the better (Miller et al., 2010). It is difficult to understand what motivates a responsible tourist or what the main barriers are for the tourist to choose responsible behaviour (Budeanu, 2007). From the perspective of the tourist's responsibility and moral judgment, the attributes of a particular product or service may be acceptable or unacceptable and as such may be a trigger for the consumer's behaviour, response, and influence (Isaacs, 2011).

Based on these premises, we focus our study on consumer responsibility in tourism. The aim is to propose a measure of a tourist's individual responsibility as a driver of their behaviour in sustainable tourism consumption and practices. In addition to theoretic interest in this topic, the study is also of practical importance to tourism experience providers, as it helps them understand the factors that are critical to the sustainable development and marketing of their products.

We based our study on the hotel industry because it is an important component of the tourism experience and provides a complex tourism product (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2011). New trends in the way travellers use tourism and hospitality services are leading hotels to evolve from mere accommodation providers to meaningful experience creators, resulting in a need for responsible and sustainable customer relationships at all stages of the guest's journey. Hotels included in our study allow us to study responsibility from the tourist's perspective at all stages, from their choice of hotel prior to arrival, to their experience during their stay, to their satisfaction and actions after leaving the hotel in the post-purchase phase.

In this paper, we first introduce the conceptual aspects of responsibility from the tourist's perspective and discuss the determinants of responsible be-

haviour. In the second part, we present an empirical study conducted in the hotel industry, in which we identified the types of responsible consumers in tourism. In the last part, we discuss the obtained results and provide suggestions for sustainable tourism management.

Conceptual Framework

The concept of responsibility can be a component of existing tourism segments, such as nature, cultural, community, volunteer, and educational travel; backpacking and youth tourism; adventure tourism; and high-end tourism (Krantz & Chong, 2009). Responsible tourism, however, is not a type of tourism per se, but a paradigm. It is a way of doing tourism that emphasizes responsibility to the ecology, culture, and communities of the destination. Harrison et al. (2005) point out that responsible consumption is a field that goes beyond an understanding of a narrow ecological environment to include human rights, equality, justice, charity, and solidarity. The concept of responsibility is central to many psychological, social, economic, legal, and political phenomena. The goal of responsibility research, from moral responsibility in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* (1820 in Alznauer, 2008) to studies of responsible prosocial behaviour during the COVID-19 pandemic (Hellmann et al., 2021), is to understand the origins of responsibility, support responsible behaviour, and bridge the gap between individualistic and collective responsibility. Highlighting the attributes of responsibility from a tourist's perspective and identifying factors for responsible tourist behaviour are the main objectives of this section.

Responsibility from the Tourist's Perspective

The behavioural aspect is considered the dominant aspect in responsible tourism studies. There are several authors that address responsibility from the tourist's perspective. Wheller (2012) states that the tourist's awareness before arriving at the destination is fundamental, and based on this understanding, their education takes place. The tourist's responsibility goes beyond conscious and responsible thinking, both in relation to the environment and ethical issues (Mihalic, 2016). For Krippendorf (1987), responsible tourists are

willing to invest adequate time and resources and to educate themselves before travelling in order to be conscious and ethical about their local experiences. Responsible tourism is based on fundamental principles such as respect for others and their environment and acting responsibly in relation to one's own actions and, moreover, in relation to the management and operation of businesses. It is based on appropriate strategies and policies that are underpinned by sustainability, accompanied by appropriate behaviour, and capable of (re)sustainable actions that respond to and are supported by an environmental and ethical tourism awareness (Fennell, 2018; Leslie, 2012). However, these committed, responsible tourism stakeholders, even if well-intentioned, are not a homogeneous group. Other studies looking at consumer perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours related to responsible tourism show discrepancies between attitudes demanding that tourists engage in their activities responsibly and their actual behaviours (Budeanu, 2007; Juvan and Dolnicar, 2014; Weeden, 2014). In Wang et al.'s (2018) study, they mention that in tourism activities, tourists' responsible environmental behaviour is the result of positive human interaction with the environment. Their study uses the theory of planned behaviour and was conducted in a case study on Huangshan Mountain in China. The results show that tourists' intentions toward environmentally friendly behaviours positively influence their attitudes toward environmental protection. Moreover, Dias et al. (2021) respond to this challenge in their study focusing on more sustainable segments and seeking more responsible tourists by developing a measure to assess tourists' responsibility. The results show two dimensions: civic responsibility and philanthropic responsibility, which provide an understanding of how tourists can act responsibly in destinations without compromising the environmental footprint on the planet. Moreover, responsible tourist behaviour is not limited to environmental concerns. Culturally responsible behaviour should also be considered, as tourism can have negative impacts on social aspects. Pennington-Gray et al. (2005) stated that culturally responsible behaviour means being aware of and taking into account the cultural values, traditions, and customs of a foreign society

in order to meet the expectations of the host society.

Several theories and models have been developed in the context of consumer behaviour. The theoretical model of personal norms (normative influences on altruism, Schwartz, 1977) explains our behaviour as influenced by the sense of moral obligation to act on one's personally held norms. Research supporting this model has shown associations between personal norms and behaviour rather than causal relations. Studies show that variations in situational conditions also influence the relationship between personal norms and responsible behaviour. The studies of how personal norms are related to responsible behaviour are part of a larger research field of attitude and behaviour relations in general. Together with the normative theories, motivational theories provide a broad framework for the study of behaviour in general and responsible behaviour in particular. According to these theories, behavioural motivation depends on the personal evaluation of the desired outcome. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), originally proposed by Ajzen (1985), is a well-known approach from social psychology that focuses on how to motivate people to perform a particular behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). According to this theory, people behave rationally in their decision-making. TPB has been successfully applied in determining human behaviour in a number of domains, including tourists' environmentally conscious behaviour, and it has been used to predict behaviour in various domains, including tourism behaviour (Han & Kim, 2010). TPB has also been applied to the field of environmental behaviour research, such as e-waste recycling (Wang et al., 2017), energy conservation and emission reduction (Chen, 2016), environmental innovation (Long et al., 2017), and sustainable consumption behaviour (Joshi & Rahman, 2019). Han's (2015) findings suggest that moral commitment has a greater influence on guests' behavioural intentions to stay in environmentally friendly hotels, while Chen and Tung (2014) claimed that TPB variables have higher explanatory power than variables reflecting morality.

All of these theoretical frameworks agree that the evaluation of a behaviour is an important antecedent to the actual behaviour.

Determining Factors for Responsible Tourist Behaviour

In order to approach the concept of a responsible tourist, it is necessary to identify the basic conditions and factors. The factors associated with responsible behaviour are still poorly understood. To gain a deeper insight, this study analyses some individual and situational factors based on tourists' personal responsibility, awareness and knowledge, preferences and environmental behaviour. Several studies have examined the factors that influence environmental behaviour. Various theoretical models have been used in an attempt to explain and predict tourist behaviour. Tourism researchers operationalize responsible behaviour in different ways depending on the study context. Responsible behaviour usually depends on individual factors, external and situational factors, and demographic background factors, which are often used to improve the accessibility of segments for subsequent profiling and targeting strategies (Wedel & Kamakura, 2000).

Monitoring the behaviour of tourists illustrates the manifestations of behaviour, the individual behaviour factors, and the consequences or effects of tourist behaviour. In this context, it is necessary to explore, in an extensive literature review, numerous factors that influence responsible consumer behaviour which can be identified. At this point, we have explained the most important determinants of responsible buying behaviour.

Individual Factors

This category of individual factors includes variables that relate specifically to an individual decision maker. These variables are usually the result of individual life experiences (attitudes, values, personality, etc.) and influence a person's decision-making process. A consumer's value system is essential to understanding responsible consumer behaviour. Many studies have found a positive correlation between consumers' environmental, social, and ethical values and their green product purchasing behaviour (Chen & Chang, 2012; Wang et al., 2014). Consumers' environmental and ethical values, specifically personal values, were found to positively influence ethical commitments and personal norms (Chen & Chang, 2012). Responsible be-

behaviour is a complex form of ethical decision-making behaviour. Researchers studying responsible tourism seek to understand the ethical values and behaviours of both the so-called 'ethical consumer' (Weeden, 2008). The common element of these concepts related to tourist behaviour is responsibility, which is often associated with the term's ethics and morality (Strong, 1997; Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Weeden, 2008). Studies attempt to understand the motivations of responsible tourists, as there are many different labels for people who are aware of the ethical and moral issues in tourism and want to make their holiday decisions responsibly. Fennell (2008) was one of the first to address ethics in tourism. He emphasized the importance of sacrifice when moving towards responsibility and challenged the notion of 'tourism as freedom' by arguing that any chance of freedom is taken away when travellers deny responsibility (Fennell, 2008). For Fennell (2008), a basic understanding of one's self-awareness of being or becoming responsible is essential to the performance of responsible individual actions. Consumers readily justify their travel by claiming that everyone else is behaving the same way, or by using moral license as an excuse (Barr et al., 2010; McKercher et al., 2014; Miller et al., 2010; Font & McCabe, 2017), by accusing others of not acting sustainably or responsibly (Juvan et al., 2016), or by pretending to be unaware of the link between travel and sustainability (McKercher et al., 2014; Miller et al., 2010). Thus, the profound notion that 'a holiday is a holiday' permeates even the minds of those who are strongly committed to and openly address environmental concerns and actions (Barr et al., 2010). At the same time, consumers exhibit a distinct trait of entity thinking, in that they do not take personal responsibility for changing their behaviour towards greater sustainability until other individuals and, interestingly, developing countries change their behaviour accordingly (Miller et al., 2010; McKercher et al., 2014). It can be said that consumers' environmental, social and ethical values, together with their individualistic values, have a positive influence on responsible behaviour.

Other factors that influence and promote responsible consumer behaviour are based on informing, raising awareness, and educating the public about the pos-

itive and beneficial effects of behaviour on the environment and society (Wright, 2004; Dolnicar et al., 2008). Most consumer theories that examine the influence of individual factors on responsible purchasing behaviour assume that environmental knowledge, information, and awareness have an impact on responsible purchasing behaviour by influencing consumers' environmental attitudes (Zhang & Dong, 2020). Amendah and Park (2008) argue that knowledge growth can change consumption behaviour, while Lee and Moscardo (2005) find that environmentally conscious consumers are more likely to have environmentally friendly intentions than other consumers. Moreover, it appears that even in areas where consumers are potentially willing to accept a range of responsibilities, their willingness to respond depends on the availability of relevant information (Williams, 2004; Barnett et al., 2005; Becken, 2007). However, information is not synonymous with consumer response. Too much information can create a sense of information overload that prevents the consumer from responding (Jacoby, 1984; Hahn et al., 1992). Environmental knowledge is an important prerequisite for customer behaviour in relation to a hospitality product and indicates that a guest is able to understand the concepts, issues and problems of the environment and model its activities (Chan et al., 2014).

Situational Factors

According to Ajzen (1991), a situational variable or situational factor refers to people's perception of how easy or difficult it is to perform a behaviour. In contrast, Barr (2007) and Barr et al. (2010) defined situational variable as a given personal situation in terms of behavioural context, individual characteristics, and individual knowledge and experience of the behaviour. Situationism in psychology refers to an approach to personality that assumes that people are more influenced by external situational factors than by internal characteristics (Krahe, 1993).

External situational factors in travel behaviour are preferences that are part of a personal lifestyle and can influence both how and why people travel (Chen et al., 2009). Preferences are associated with the consumer's lifestyle, which also influences the choice of vacation

type, destination, accommodation, mode of transportation, and personal travel experience. Environmental considerations rarely play an important role when choosing a hotel, and tourists usually prioritize price, quality, brands, amenities, and pleasure when choosing accommodation (Manaktola & Jauhari, 2007). In addition, several studies examined the relationship between price and the choice of environmentally friendly hotels and whether guests should pay a premium to stay in such hotels (Han & Kim, 2010; Manaktola & Jauhari, 2007). However, the empirical results are contradictory and the willingness to pay a surcharge may be influenced by consumers' environmental awareness (Kang et al., 2012). In this context of responsibility, preferences can be considered as part of a sustainable lifestyle, as many of the current environmental problems are related to people's unsustainable lifestyles (Gössling, 2018).

Consumer preferences are also related to product attributes and are determined by individual consumer values such as health and safety concerns and hedonistic values of enjoyment and pleasure in using a product (Chen et al., 2012). In many studies, it was found that product attributes positively influenced the responsible purchase of green products (Chen et al., 2012; Young et al., 2010). Moreover, consumers preferred functional attributes of the product that meet their personal needs and desires over ethical attributes (Chen & Lobo, 2012). Another important situational factor is the availability of tourism services and products. Consumers generally do not like to spend a lot of time searching for environmentally friendly products; they prefer products that are easily accessible (Young et al., 2010). Limited availability and inconvenience in obtaining products act as barriers and increase the gap between consumers' positive attitude and their actual behaviour towards sustainable products. Therefore, easily accessible services and products with beneficial functional and ethical attributes and high quality are a strong motive and have a positive influence on consumers' responsible purchasing behaviour.

Action-Based Responsible Behaviour

From the above discussion, it is clear that various individual and situational factors motivate or hinder re-

sponsible behaviour and influence the translation of a positive attitude into actual responsible action.

Goodwin (2011) clearly links responsible tourism to actions that make tourism more sustainable. His understanding of the concept of responsibility is based on three aspects: accountability, actionability and responsiveness. The third aspect, responsiveness, relates directly to tourism behaviour and involves dialogue, developing solutions and taking action to make tourism more sustainable. Leslie (2012) argues that responsible tourism is a behavioural characteristic based on the fundamental principles of respect for others and their environment. He assumes that when faced with the dilemma of a conceptual basis for assessing responsibility, the tourist refers to the ethical and environmental principles of tourism and proposes to behave in an environmentally friendly and ethically responsible manner.

On the other hand, there is evidence that environmental knowledge and environmental activism do not influence holiday behaviour (Juvan & Dolnicar, 2014), which means that it might be useful to look for alternative explanatory models for the influence of environmental awareness on consumer behaviour. When people are aware of the environmental impact of their actions, we talk about so-called intentional environmental behaviour or directly about environmentally relevant behaviour. Most cases of environmentally relevant behaviour can be judged on the basis of environmental knowledge according to their impact on the environment and can be labelled as environmentally friendly or environmentally unfriendly. Consumers often make trade-offs between environmental concerns and product attributes. For example, they evaluate the various environmental, social, and individual consequences of purchasing environmentally friendly products. Consumers who give more importance to environmental and social consequences look for the characteristics of responsible consumption in products, such as local, green, organic. On the other hand, consumers who place more importance on individual consequences look for functional features of a product and their individual considerations overshadow their positive environmental and social attitudes (Follows & Jobber, 2000).

Our study addresses consumer responsibility in relation to hotel service attributes in tourism purchase decisions. We rely on the basic concept of individual responsibility, which is defined as an ethical evaluation that depends on whether relationships with other people, society and nature are permissible or impermissible, acceptable or unacceptable, right or wrong. Every action of an individual has consequences for other people and the environment, and therefore the ability to act brings with it a certain responsibility.

Methodology

The aim of our study was to gain insight into consumer responsibility, to develop a detailed understanding of their concerns about the impact of their holidays and to further academic knowledge about their motivation in the context of responsible behaviour. The research was conducted in the hotel industry as it provides a complex tourism experience (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2011).

A tool has been developed that relates directly to the hotel context. During a hotel stay on vacation, tourists are exposed to a variety of services, activities, movement, and excitement that shape the overall experience. Since travel and tourism should be planned and practiced in a sustainable manner, all stakeholders, including tourists, should take responsibility. The hotel context provides an opportunity to observe tourists' behaviour throughout the purchase process, from hotel and accommodation selection to post-purchase experience evaluation, which is valuable for understanding tourists' responsible behaviour.

The research design is based on theoretical findings to determine individual and situational factors in the four dimensions of ethics, awareness and knowledge, preference, and action-oriented responsible behaviour. A questionnaire was developed to measure the four dimensions. The questionnaire is primarily based on the methodology of the International Hotels Environment Initiative (Consumer Attitudes towards the Role of Hotels in Environmental Sustainability, 2002), which was conducted among IHEI members (Accor hotel chains, Carlson hotels around the world, Fairmont Hotels & Resorts, Hilton International, Marco Polo Hotels, Marriott International,

Radisson Hotels & Resorts on six continents, Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, TUI, and others.) The questionnaire was tailored to evaluate the dimensions in different purchase process phases (Budeanu, 2006).

The quantitative research approach of data collection was carried out in six hotels on the Slovenian coast during the summer season. The survey was carried out with an online questionnaire for data collection. The questionnaire is partly tailor-made for this research and comprises five relevant content sets of indicators measuring the responsible tourist dimensions. The first set of questions relates to the dimension of consumer responsibility and includes the variables awareness and ethical attitude, preferences, environmental behaviour, and moral responsibility; the second set of questions covers the purchasing process: assessment of importance of and satisfaction with the hotel's environmental attributes; the third group of questions relates to the characteristics of the environmental factors of the hotel offer in relation to the social environmental indicators; the fourth set of questions relates to information about the guest's visit, such as the motive for the visit, the category of the hotel and the length of the guest's stay in the hotel; the fifth set of questions covers the basic socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents (Table 1).

Several studies examined and discussed the application of factor analysis to reduce the large set of data and to identify the factors extracted from the analysis (Pett et al., 2003; Shrestha, 2021). This study has followed three major steps for factor analysis: assessment of the suitability of the data, factor extraction, and factor rotation and interpretation.

Sampling and Data Collection

The research sample was based on proportionally stratified, partly earmarked and partly convenience samples. The combination of the purpose and convenience sample is a result of the sampling approach, where we used a known guest structure based on their nationality, which is typical for the selected months of the survey. The sample of respondents was based on domestic and foreign guests who were willing to complete the questionnaire after leaving the hotel. The

Table 1 Questionnaire Content Sets of Indicators

| Set | Dimension | Number of indicators |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Responsible consumer | Awareness | 3 |
| | Behaviour in rel. to the environment | 3 |
| | Ethics | 14 |
| | Preference | 11 |
| Purchasing process | <i>Pre-purchase phase</i> | |
| | Expected well-being | 6 |
| | Hotel selection | 11 |
| | Information | 7 |
| | <i>Stay</i> | |
| | Hotel environmental factors | 14 |
| | Employee relationship | 5 |
| | Consumer behaviour | 11 |
| | <i>Overall phase</i> | |
| Guest response | 7 | |
| Hotel and envir. attrib. | Environmental factors | 5 |
| | Social factors | 5 |
| Guest visit information | Motive | 6 |
| | Hotel category | 3 |
| | Length of stay | 1 |
| Socio-demographic data | Gender, age, nationality, education | 1 |
| | Status | 4 |
| | Economic position | 3 |

limitation of the sampling refers to the technique of electronic survey, which we could only carry out with a population that included those people who had left their contact details and a notification authorization and were willing to participate in the survey, which also influences the characteristics of the sample collected. The sample comprised 886 respondents from Slovenia, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Italy and other countries. Of these, 45.5% filled in the questionnaire completely. This included 35.6% of respondents from Slovenia, 42.8% from Italy, 12.9% from Austria, 5% from Germany and 1.5% from other countries. The largest proportion of respondents (60.1%) stayed in a four-star hotel, 21% in a three-star hotel, 16.3% in a five-star hotel and 2.5% in other accommodation, which includes apartments and hotel annexes.

Reliability and Validity of the Measurement

We used principal component analysis to test the content validity of the measurement instrument. In the first phase, we conducted principal component analysis by including all empirical variables in the measurement instrument (Table 2).

Separate analyses were conducted for each measured set of variables to check the substantive reliability of the measurement instrument. In addition, principal components analysis of the estimate of commonality or common space for each measured dimension was performed using the most common method of factor analysis, i.e. principal axis factoring. In addition, principal axis factoring was used with the extraction method, in which we performed orthogonal rotation, extracting from the analysis those variables that had values less than 0.2 after extraction. Separate factor analyses were performed for each dimension. For each dimension, we performed seven replicates. The results of the factor analysis for each of the four dimensions are shown in Table 2. Regarding the loading of each of the five dimensions, all 54 variables have values higher than 0.59. The Cronbach's alpha used to test the reliability of each of the five dimensions shows the validity of the convergence of the created scale, which also indicates good measurement reliability.

For each dimension, we performed principal components analysis and factor analysis separately to test the dimensions of consumer environmental responsibility: (1) awareness and knowledge; (2) preference (general and environmental); (3) ethics; (4) action-oriented responsible behaviour. We were interested in whether there was evidence of some latent variables in a particular dimension. Based on the principal axis factorization and principal component analysis, we concluded that there were six factors.

Data Analysis

In the factor analysis, we used 54 variables that measure the four dimensions of the construct of responsibility and are recorded in the five sets of the questionnaire, i.e. A, B, C, D and E (Table 1). Significant results on consumer responsibility were obtained by six separate factor analyses and hierarchical grouping. The underlying concept of consumer responsi-

Table 2 Reliability Statistics of Measured Variables by Questionnaire Sets

| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
|-----|-----|--|-----|---|-------|------|
| 1 | A | Awareness and knowledge | 9 | Dichotomous scale | - | 53.6 |
| 2 | B | Environmental factors of hotel choice | 11 | Likert scale from 1 to 5 – <i>importance</i> | 0.908 | 52.8 |
| 3 | C | Preferences of hotel choice | 11 | Scale of priority from 1 to 5 | 0.903 | 51.0 |
| 4 | D | Environmental practices of the hotel | 12 | Likert scale from 1 to 5 – <i>importance and satisfaction</i> | 0.938 | 52.8 |
| 5 | E1 | Behaviour in relation to the environment | 10 | Frequency from 1 to 3 | 0.706 | 45.3 |
| | E2 | Ethics | 10 | Rate from 1 to 3 | 0.590 | 35.3 |

Notes Column headings are as follows: (1) number, (2) label, (3) dimension, (4) number of variables, (5) measurement scale, (6) Cronbach's Alpha, (7) explained variance (method of principal components, in percent).

bility was examined from the perspective of the buying process through which we identified the types of (ir)responsible consumers. The standard statistical program SPSS 21.00 was used for data analysis. The hierarchical cluster method of Ward was used for grouping units. To validate the measurement of the research objectives, we operationalized both the discussed research area of consumer responsibility and the concept based on theoretical starting points, based on the key elements of the definition of a responsible consumer in terms of individual responsibility and moral judgement, as well as awareness and knowledge, preference, and motives for action regarding the natural and socio-cultural environment. We have highlighted four key dimensions of responsibility with measurement variables that measure individual dimensions.

Results

Descriptive Statistic

Descriptive statistical analyses of the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents data obtained show that 51.6% of respondents were women and 48.4% were men; the average age structure was between 50 and 60 years. According to the national structure, most respondents were from Italy (42.8%), followed by Slovenians (35.6%), respondents from Germany, Austria and Switzerland (18.9%) and others (2.7%). Regarding the educational structure, respondents with a level of education predominated (53.7%), followed by respondents with a secondary or vocational school leaving certificate (33.3%) and then by respondents

with a master's degree or higher (10.2%). By status, salaried employees (71.3%) dominate, followed by pensioners (24.4%). The majority, 56.5%, described their economic situation as average, 20.5% as above average and 16.8% as below average.

Regarding information about the stay in the hotel visit, respondents indicated that 60% stayed in a four-star hotel, 21% in a three-star hotel and 16.3% in a five-star hotel. On average, they stayed 5.8 days in a hotel. The reason for the visit was given by the majority (30.1%) of re-spondents as rest, 12.5% wellness and well-being, 9.6% travel and excursions, 9.3% entertainment and fun, and the remaining 4.5% with sports and recreation, or 2.8% with business or education.

Identification of Responsible Groups of Consumers

With factor analysis we obtained six factors, which we used to identify groups of responsible consumers through the method of classifying units into clusters. Based on hierarchical cluster analysis, we used a method of stepwise integration based on a successive grouping of two groups into a new group. When classifying, it is important that the units within the group are as similar as possible, and the groups are as diverse as possible. In our case, we used Ward's method of hierarchical cluster analysis, which is based on successive grouping. The Ward's method tends to groups that have comparable variability. The determined number of groups was then used for further statistical analysis. The defined number of clusters was then used for further statistical analysis. After examining individual solutions, we decided on three main groups because

Table 3 Variance Analysis

| Factors | | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
|---------------------------|----------------|---------|-----|--------|---------|-------|
| 1 Actively aware | Between groups | 15.840 | 2 | 7.920 | 20.327 | 0.000 |
| | Total | 120.261 | 270 | | | |
| 2 Generally aware | Between groups | 3.735 | 2 | 1.867 | 4.417 | 0.013 |
| | Total | 117.024 | 270 | | | |
| 3 Environmental dimension | Between groups | 89.878 | 2 | 44.939 | 70.649 | 0.000 |
| | Total | 260.349 | 270 | | | |
| 4 Choice preference | Between groups | 199.192 | 2 | 99.596 | 363.666 | 0.000 |
| | Total | 272.589 | 270 | | | |
| 5 Ethics | Between groups | 30.546 | 2 | 15.273 | 19.902 | 0.000 |
| | Total | 236.213 | 270 | | | |
| 6 Responsible behaviour | Between groups | 39.874 | 2 | 19.937 | 28.785 | 0.000 |
| | Total | 225.494 | 270 | | | |

Notes Column headings are as follows: (1) Sum of squares, (2) degrees of freedom, (3) average, (4) F, (5) significance.

this resulted in a more transparent and content-related classification.

The descriptive statistics were reviewed after the identification of three groups. Using the analysis of variance (Table 3), we identified the differences between individual groups and factors. The differences between the groups were statistically significant. To better define and describe the groups, we found the differences between the three groups according to individual factors: active awareness, general awareness, environmental practices, preference, ethics, and action-based responsible behaviour (Table 4).

There were 271 units in total. The first cluster represents 39.9% of all units, while the second group represents 44.6% and the third group represents 15.5% of all units.

Description of the Different Types of Consumers

If the assumption is correct that some consumers are more environmentally responsible than others, then it is necessary to describe the group of consumers who demonstrate responsible behaviours in tourism.

Group 1: Irresponsible Consumers

The first group includes more people with a lower average in terms of the environmental responsibility fac-

tor and the responsible behaviour factor, which is why we consider them to be environmentally irresponsible consumers. They show a predominant general awareness and are not prepared to pay higher prices for hotels with environmentally conscious practices or lower comfort levels in order to contribute to environmental protection, i.e. their purchasing decisions are not influenced by environmental concerns. The hotel's environmental practices do not matter to them, and they do not behave responsibly towards the environment, for which they also do not feel morally responsible. This group is dominated by personal preferences when choosing a hotel, with the emphasis on safety, quality of service, reasonable price, previous experience, and ambience.

The results show that this group is represented in 39.9% of all units, so it is important to understand the reason for their indifference to environmentally responsible behaviour. Among the existing findings, the reason is that when the consequences of behaviour are far from its implementation, and too little, too late or too unlikely to affect it immediately and directly, oral rules can act as discriminatory stimuli describing probable outcomes of behaviour or inaction. The second reason is related to the comfort expected by tourists on vacation and often occurs in the form of be-

Table 4 Clustering and Differences in Averages

| Groups | | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
|---------|--------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Group 1 | Average | -0.3168125 | 0.2034306 | -0.6437870 | -0.2159839 | -0.3084760 | -0.4716181 |
| | Percentage | 39.9 | 39.9 | 39.9 | 39.9 | 39.9 | 39.9 |
| | Standard deviation | 0.75168253 | 0.62726112 | 0.96470417 | 0.64743233 | 0.90439244 | 1.01896342 |
| Group 2 | Average | 0.1841461 | -0.0317208 | 0.6066639 | -0.4898942 | 0.4227192 | 0.3365261 |
| | Percentage | 44.6 | 44.6 | 44.6 | 44.6 | 44.6 | 44.6 |
| | Standard deviation | 0.49394911 | 0.67132575 | 0.59065039 | 0.43425496 | 0.85951869 | 0.47033626 |
| Group 3 | Average | 0.1547757 | -0.0485494 | 0.1521262 | 1.9827618 | 0.0457939 | -0.3155177 |
| | Percentage | 15.5 | 15.5 | 15.5 | 15.5 | 15.5 | 15.5 |
| | Standard deviation | 0.59847396 | 0.64596174 | 0.84141176 | 0.37986146 | 0.84818614 | 1.08174509 |
| Total | Average | -0.0200498 | 0.0593845 | 0.0378843 | 0.0024817 | 0.0729039 | -0.0865935 |
| | Percentage | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| | Standard deviation | 0.66739240 | 0.65834726 | 0.98196502 | 1.00478273 | 0.93534177 | 0.91387195 |

Notes Factors: (1) actively aware, (2) generally aware, (3) environmental dimension, (4) choice preference, (5) ethics, (6) responsible behaviour.

haviour in the search for greater pleasures of achievements that bring hedonic rewards and indicate the status of the individual; in addition, the search for pleasures can have a detrimental effect on the environment due to permissive energy consumption.

Group 2: Active Responsible Consumers

The second group consists of those better informed and more aware of the environmental impact of consumer products, with a higher average in the environmental dimension, ethics and responsible behaviour factors. Therefore, those who are actively responsible for the environment are included in the second group because they have a high level of awareness and, when choosing a hotel, the hotel's environmentally conscious practices are important to them, with great emphasis on the relationship with the environment and society. Among the preferences, the priorities are safety, an environmentally friendly hotel and quality of services. They often behave in an environmentally responsible manner and more often express their opinion about the quality of the services and the environmental practices of the hotel, and they feel more morally responsible for their environmental behaviour. This group of consumers was the largest of the three groups and is defined as the most en-

vironmentally responsible in terms of factor values.

The results show that this group is represented in 44.6% of all units, which indicates an increase in responsible behaviour in tourism. This group of consumers is the most desirable, so many researchers are working to gain an in-depth understanding of the key drivers of responsible behaviour in tourism in various fields. Environmentally concerned individuals may be very effective in reducing their environmental impact, as they are well informed about the impact of consumption on the environment (Bord et al., 2000).

Group 3: Pragmatic Responsible Consumers

In the third group, represented in 42% of all units, the choice preference factor has the highest average value, deviates from the average factor values. This group also has a pronounced active awareness which is lower than that of the members of the second group. They also differ in the fact that their decisions are less influenced by environmental concerns than those of the second group. They adapt their behaviour primarily to their well-being and are pragmatic in their environmental behaviour. They express an attitude of importance towards the environmental practices of the hotel, but not as clearly as the second group, where they consider the attitude towards nature to be more

important than the attitude towards society. They do not have a common priority when choosing a hotel. They rarely behave in an environmentally responsible manner and have a moderate moral responsibility for environmental behaviour. This group is numerically smaller so that conclusions can be discussed. The fact is that the welfare of this group of consumers is paramount, and this could also be linked to responsibility towards themselves.

Many researchers note inconsistencies between what consumers say about the importance of ethical consumption and actual purchases. Environmental concerns are not always reflected in pro-environmental consumer behaviour, which is influenced by routine, preferences, lifestyle, economic motives, and so on. In these cases, consumers base their behaviour only on personal preferences and advantages over environmental protection and respond pragmatically. In view of this, ethical concerns seem to have limited influence on reducing environmental impact when lifestyle effects prevail. This is because environmentally responsible consumption is characterised as a highly complex form of consumer behaviour where there is a gap between consumers' positive attitudes towards the environment and actual purchasing behaviour.

The questionnaire also included socio-demographic variables, but these were generally found to be poor indicators of responsible behaviour and also in our study there are no significant differences between the identified groups. Stronger attitudes are observed only among older people or people with higher education. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that responsible decisions and actions depend not only on individual characteristics, but also on the characteristics of the whole family on holiday. Often, the decision-making process can be considered in terms of the entire household rather than individual members (Kubicek et al., 2010).

Discussion and Conclusions

Tourists rarely make environmentally responsible choices of holiday with the specific intention of keeping their environmental impact low (McKercher et al., 2014 Juvan & Dolnicar, 2014), but there are still groups

that behave responsibly. Responsible tourists want to act in accordance with their sense of responsibility for the impact of their holiday, but they also want to enjoy themselves, have fun and relax. They make compromises, some focus on the environmental impact of their holiday and therefore do not fly, others promote the economic benefits of their holiday by staying in locally owned accommodation or using local currency, while still others work hard to comply with local cultural norms. Responsible behaviour in tourism is maintained by high levels of hedonic reinforcement, such as the effects of pleasure, entertainment, well-being, unique experiences etc. In addition to these direct resources of personal drivers, there are also other influential factors that are variable in nature, such as social confirmation, personal safety, simplification of travel planning routines, comfort, and satisfaction, which varies among situations. Tourism providers and managers need to understand the motives that guide environmentally (ir)responsible tourism consumers, and they need guidance on how to increase environmentally conscious tourism behaviour.

The analysis of tourist behaviour indicates the behaviour of current and future tourists. The central contribution of the present study is that it provides empirical evidence that different specific responsible behaviours of tourists depend on various specific individual and situational factors. This study confirms the importance of individual responsibility as a relevant value for environmentally sustainable tourism experiences in diversity within the broader category of nature and socially responsible tourists. Based on consumer characteristics, we identified different types of (ir)responsible consumers who assign a different value to the importance of environmental attributes of hotel services, preferences, and moral responsibility with respect to environmental responsibility. The segmentation results revealed three types of responsible consumers. We named them actively responsible, pragmatically responsible, and irresponsible consumers. Actively responsible and pragmatic responsible consumers are aware of the impact of tourism on the environment in a broader sense (natural and social) and differ in their behavioural and moral dimensions. Actively responsible tourism consumers take

responsibility and feel morally responsible for their actions, while pragmatic consumers adapt their actions to their preferences and circumstances during the holiday, while the unaware and irresponsible tourist remains a challenge for providers. Each of the identified consumer groups provides opportunities for further research.

Researching tourist behaviour is a key factor in planning tourism services, following the argument that analysing behaviour reveals strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities in developing, marketing, and implementing tourism products (Cohen et al., 2014). In addition, each identified type will allow management to better understand and develop, implement, and adapt effective interventions that will have an impact on their environmentally responsible behaviour. These different types of consumers are thus of great importance when hotel management is planning operational improvements, marketing strategies, and other sustainable development initiatives. For example, actively responsible tourists are a valuable segment because their opinions, impressions, and responses are a useful source of information for improving the offering. They are more critical in their responses, so their impressions should be monitored through various internal channels and public platforms to conduct further research that benefits tourism providers. To bring about systemic quality change, tourism providers need to incorporate consumer collaboration and communication into their sustainable development programmes.

The managers of the tourism sector should develop marketing practices for tourism that prioritize the aspect of sustainability, manifested in respect for others, society and nature, by adopting the segmentation strategy based on tourists' responsibility. Tourism marketing managers should therefore launch promotional campaigns that adapt to each segment. Other practical recommendations can be derived from this study for the development of measures to recognize and encourage more environmentally conscious behaviour among tourists. For example, hotel and destination managers could offer collaborative programmes that help co-create greener services and experiences or implement measures that introduce a

sense of responsibility that could be developed as a direct reminder during their travel or stay. Such exposed approaches include providing information that demonstrates sustainable alternatives can have the same qualities as other vacations, while highlighting the benefits of social platforms or traditional forms of communication to educate and raise awareness (Juvan et al., 2016). The measures could be implemented in all purchasing processes, before arrival at the destination, during the hotel stay, and after departure. The efficient initiative would have a positive economic impact, but also bring other benefits in terms of environmental sustainability, social responsibility, and brand recognition. Consequently, it is important to provide tourists with a sense of personal responsibility for the impact of their vacation (Miller et al., 2010).

There are several limitations to this study, particularly in relation to a closed-ended questionnaire that does not provide interpretations of individual understanding of environmentally responsible behaviour in tourism to gain a deeper insight into perceptions and the relationship between the underlying factors of moral values, awareness, preferences, and behaviour. Moreover, the behavioural aspect of values is difficult to measure as it often shows that the individual's perception leads to a bias regarding social desirability. External barriers are stronger than internal knowledge and motivations in hindering tourism environmental behaviours (Tanner et al., 2004). Moreover, most consumers continue to rank other aspects such as price and quality higher than environmental and social attributes in their travel decisions (Miller et al., 2010). Indeed, there is much evidence of a disconnect between the attitudes of responsible consumers and their actual behaviours; this disconnect is often referred to as the relationship-behaviour gap (Juvan & Dolnicar, 2014; Hall et al., 2016).

Finally, the main barrier to responsible tourism consumption advocates seeking positive behaviour change is the 'attitude-behaviour gap,' in which consumers affirm that ethical standards are important to them in their consumption practices, but few consider these standards in their actual purchasing decisions (Bray et al., 2011). Despite the importance of the attitude-behaviour gap to prospects for responsible

or sustainable tourism consumption, it is important to explore how and whether the gap can be bridged. This topic deserves further attention, as do the situational factors that may hinder ethical consumption. This represents a knowledge gap in tourism, but also more generally (Bray et al., 2011).

This article contributes to the growing literature on understanding responsible tourism behaviour. It offers insights into the differences between the various levels of responsibility in tourism. Such an outcome should encourage policy makers and tourism managers to be responsive to active and pragmatic responsible tourists and use their opinions to improve their offerings to create greener and more sustainable activities as well as behavioural changes among tourists (Font & McCabe, 2017). Rather than focusing on environmentally conscious messages in their practices and campaigns, our findings should encourage them to promote and support responsible values and behaviours. Responsible behaviour is a powerful response, both on the part of tourists and tourism management, that leads to more responsible consumption and production in tourism.

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Exploring Travel Behaviour Post-COVID-19: Towards a More Responsible Tourism

Rehab El Gamil

Alexandria University, Egypt
rehab.elgamil@alexu.edu.eg

Worldwide, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the economy and seriously hit the travel and tourism industry. This will certainly impact destination image and travel behaviour in the future. This study aims to explore the changes in travel behaviour post-COVID-19. Specifically, it seeks to examine to what extent these changes could lead to responsible tourism post-COVID-19. Primary data was collected from 400 respondents through an online questionnaire and exploratory factor analysis was conducted. The study findings showed that many changes in travel behaviour will emerge following the COVID-19 pandemic. This will accelerate the shift towards more responsible travel. Moreover, the exploratory factor analysis revealed that responsible travellers post-COVID-19 will be determined by three main factors: travel preferences, health and hygiene considerations, and destination choices. Thus, the study concluded that the responsible traveller post-COVID-19 is the person whose travel behaviour, preferences, and choices will minimize the risk of spreading the pandemic before, during, and after the travel. This study ends with important implications for urgent cooperation between all tourism stakeholders such as DMOS, service providers, and health authorities in tourism destinations.

Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic, travel behaviour, preferences, responsible traveller, exploratory factor analysis



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Introduction

At the beginning of the year 2020, the world witnessed an exceptional moment when WHO declared the new pandemic, namely 'the novel Coronavirus disease 2019' as a global public health emergency (Wu et al., 2020). On February 11, 2020, China accounted for 42,708 coronavirus cases. Accordingly, many countries imposed travel bans to reduce the movement of people, especially from the most affected areas. In this context, Polyzos et al. (2020) stated that the COVID-19 outbreak altered all the growth predictions of the tourism sector as the pandemic hit the global economy aggressively.

UNWTO (2020a) predicted that tourist activities would decline by 20–30% and this would reduce in-

ternational tourism receipts by about 300–450 USD billion. Furthermore, UNWTO (n.d.) declared that the impact of COVID-19 on the tourism sector would be more threatening than the financial crisis of 2008 and the SARS epidemic, and that it will affect negatively tourism growth for the upcoming seven years. Additionally, both short and long-term changes in travel behaviour could emerge (Papagiannakis et al., 2018).

Quite recently, many studies have focused on the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism sector (Sharma & Nicolau, 2020; Sigala, 2020; Uğur & Akbıyık, 2020), recovery strategies for the tourism sector post COVID-19 (Prayag, 2020; Yeh, 2020), and COVID-19 pandemic and travel risk perception (Matiza, 2020; Neuburger & Egger, 2020; Sán-

chez-Cañizares et al., 2020). However, only a few studies have addressed the changes in travel behaviour and preferences post-COVID-19 (Ivanova et al., 2021; Molloy et al., 2021; Sinha & Nair, 2020). In fact, the tourism industry has not experienced a global crisis such as COVID-19 so the findings of the previous studies may be limited and not applicable (Abdullah et al., 2020). Moreover, there is no previous study that clarified how the changes in travel behaviour and tourism demand post-COVID-19 may lead to the emergence of a new concept of responsible tourism.

This study will contribute by highlighting the importance of exploring the new trends and changes in travel behaviour post-COVID-19. Accordingly, the study will focus on how these changes may lead to the emergence of a new concept of responsible tourism which will depend mainly on health and hygiene considerations. Furthermore, this study will contribute to defining the concept of the responsible traveller post-COVID-19. This could help the destinations, marketers, and service providers to a better understanding of the new trends and changes in tourism demand post-COVID-19 and accordingly to design a suitable tourism product.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to fill the gap in knowledge related to the changes in travel behaviour post-COVID-19 and illustrate the most significant travel trends that will dominate the tourism market in the upcoming years. Specifically, this study aims to examine to what extent this travel behaviour will be responsible and how COVID-19 adds another dimension to the concept of responsible tourism in terms of sanitary and hygiene considerations. Consequently, the research questions can be summarized as follows:

1. What are the potential changes/shifts in travel behaviour that could emerge post-COVID-19?
2. To what extent post-COVID-19 travellers will act responsibly?

Literature Review

Post-covid-19 Tourists' Behaviour

The tourism sector has been recognized for a long time as a sector vulnerable to any disasters or risks, especially health and safety crises (Estevão and Costa,

2020). Concerning the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is expected that several changes will occur in tourism demand and travel behaviour.

In fact, tourist behaviour is a result of interaction between internal elements (attitudes, motivations, beliefs) and external elements (economic, social, and cultural settings) (Andrades et al., 2015). The external factors are often responsible for the changes in tourists' decisions and perceptions (Chebli and Said, 2020). However, Sinha and Nair (2020) emphasized that every unexpected outbreak leaves behind a shift, which may be oriented toward the visitor, the destination, or even the behaviour. Accordingly, studying tourists' behaviour is a very important issue to improve tourism businesses and understand tourists' choices and preferences in the future (Quilty et al., 2020).

In the context of unexpected crises, the decisions of travellers and their choices are influenced by their perceptions of the safety and security of the tourism destination (Taylor & Toohey, 2007). After such shocks and challenges, the tourism sector has to recover and understand the travellers' new behaviour (Mair et al., 2016; Chebli & Said, 2020). However, travel behaviour is very difficult to predict, particularly following any crisis (Vo Thanh, 2006). Besides, the change in travel behaviour is a long process and travellers change their preferences gradually (Hagoort, 2020).

As noted by Haque (2020), travel behaviour after any crisis will pass through three main stages: panic, adapt, and new normal. From this perspective, Andreini and Mangiò (2020) highlighted that, according to the theory of travel planning, the changes can emerge in the travel planning process during three stages (pre-trip, during the trip, and post-trip).

Previously, the tourism sector has experienced various crises such as terrorist attacks, natural disasters, health crises, and financial crises. These crises directly affected the tourist demand in many destinations in the short and long term (Polyzos et al., 2020). In this regard, Reichel et al. (2007) mentioned that such crises lead to an obvious shift in the tourist demand and consequently affect travel behaviour and destination choices. Similarly, Novelli et al. (2018) explained that managing the tourism industry during and after pandemic crises is a hard mission, particularly for the gov-

ernments, which should adopt recovery strategies and explore the changes in travel behaviour and preferences.

Since the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of air passengers has dropped by 93% (Gössling et al., 2020). Accordingly, some travellers cancelled their travel plans for the rest of 2020 while others are still searching for low prices and willing to travel (Wachyuni & Kusumaningrum, 2020). Travel became a dream between fears and hopes and will probably be more difficult post-COVID-19 (Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Department for Transport, The Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP, The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP, 2020). In this respect, Han et al. (2020) mentioned that globally, the travel behaviour of international travellers post-COVID-19 remains unclear mainly due to the uncertainty in the tourism market.

Indeed, COVID-19 has posed many challenges for destination marketing organizations (DMOs) since they have to study the market carefully post-pandemic. Recently, COVID-19 has influenced travel behaviour and tourist decisions and it is expected that new patterns of tourists will emerge. Unexpectedly, travellers have found themselves confronted with internal restrictions such as economic and health barriers, and external restrictions such as travel bans and closed borders (Gössling et al., 2020; De Vos, 2020). Hence, travellers have been forced to change their behaviour to adapt to the new normal (De Vos, 2020). Parallel to the previous arguments, some studies (Shamshiripour et al., 2020; Molloy et al., 2021; Sinha & Nair, 2020) noted that the impacts of COVID-19 will cause changes in various aspects such as travel plans, destination choice, and tourist preferences. The next section will address how COVID-19 affects travel behaviour and how this could lead to more responsible tourism.

Destination Choice

Destination choice is a negotiation process conducted between destination characteristics and tourist attributes (Ankomah et al., 1996). Commonly, three elements affect tourists while making their travel decisions and choosing destinations: firstly, their social and psychological attributes; secondly, their perceptions of travel risk; and thirdly, attributes of the desti-

nations including the risk elements which are associated with these destinations (Perpiña et al., 2020).

Furthermore, destination choice is a filtration process that eases the decision-making through grouping alternative destinations (Karl et al., 2015) based on the tourist's desire to visit a destination and the possibility of taking a holiday in this destination (Karl et al., 2020). Risk perception is a key factor that affects the intentions and choices of tourists to travel (Bae & Chang, 2020). Therefore, destinations with high risk will be unattractive and also impossible to visit (Karl et al., 2020). The decisions of travellers and their choices are influenced by their perceptions of the safety and security of the tourism destination (Taylor & Toohey, 2007).

In general, several studies (Bae & Chang, 2020; Kock et al., 2020; Neuburger & Egger, 2020; Wang et al., 2020) mentioned that fears about COVID-19 will impact travel decisions for the next six months. According to H2R Market Research (2020), most of the respondents (more than 50%) stated that they do not have the intention to visit destinations with high cases of COVID-19 infections. Additionally, Wilson and Chen (2020) stated that tourism and travel will witness two phases of changes: short-term trends that will control the market for more than two years, and long-term which will be hard to predict.

In this light, tourist demand will experience a noticeable shift from visiting large and crowded cities and tourism hot spots to small cities, and less populated and remote destinations (Chebli & Said, 2020). Tourist behaviour while choosing a destination will be affected by distance (Yang et al., 2018). Thus, Bratic et al. (2021) highlighted that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, tourists will replace their international vacations with safer domestic ones. It is obvious that domestic tourism will be the first choice for many tourists after the pandemic, at least in the upcoming six months (Li et al., 2020; Wachyuni & Kusumaningrum, 2020). Similarly, during the 2003 SARS outbreak, tourist demand increased for nature-based destinations and countryside accommodation (Han et al., 2020).

It is evidently clear that health and hygiene issues become an important factor while tourists are choos-

ing their destinations in the pandemic era (Wachyuni & Kusumaningrum, 2020) Also, the number of infected cases in the host destinations is considered a key determinant in tourists' choices. This may affect tourists' intentions toward the host destination (Li et al., 2021). Therefore, a consistent health system in the host destination will be an important aspect of tourists' decisions.

From the previous arguments, it can be noted that the tourist post-COVID-19 will be more responsible in terms of destination choice. They will avoid choosing destinations with a high number of infected cases, and choose to travel domestically in remote and small destinations which could reduce the risk of spreading the virus and protect themselves and others.

Tourist Preferences

Due to the continuous risk of infection and the restrictions of COVID-19, which are imposed by many destinations, choices have become very limited. Tourists will certainly change their preferences and attitudes to travel (Jamal & Budke, 2020). So, meeting the demand of this new tourist is the only choice.

As mentioned above, tourists will prefer to choose domestic destinations; in this regard, the study of the Family Travel Association (n.d.) expected an evident increase in road trips between cities as a suitable alternative to travel by plane. This reflects that two emerging trends may dominate travel post-COVID-19. Firstly, the increasing demand for traveling by private cars and vehicles as travellers will feel safer and will avoid public transportation (Sadique et al., 2007; De Vos, 2020; Wilson & Chen, 2020). Secondly, the increasing demand for family leisure travel for short vacations as travellers will choose to travel in small groups (family members, relatives, or close friends) to avoid contact with unknown groups (Wilson & Chen, 2020). Similarly, Sadique et al. (2007) explained that older people in Asian and European destinations have adopted this behaviour during times of SARS and influenza.

Regarding bookings and travel insurance, travellers will look for more flexible bookings. During the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, many travellers were disappointed as they bought non-refundable

tickets (Chebli & Said, 2020). As a result, many travel agencies will change their policies to encourage people to travel, for example, adopting a last-minute cancellation' policy. Actually, numerous insurance companies have started to improve their policies to be more flexible and to offer various options to travellers (Uğur & Akbıyık, 2020).

In terms of accommodation preferences post-COVID-19, Wilson and Chen (2020) expect that guests will be concerned with sanitation and cleanliness practices. Consequently, booking of private accommodations such as apartments, campsites, and cabins will increase while the bookings of hotels and resorts may decrease. The new tourists will also choose luxury hotels where they can trust in the applied sanitization measures. In this context, UNWTO (n.d.) predicted that many travellers will choose to spend their holidays close to their homes. Thus, staycation tourism will be more suitable for short vacations.

With respect to tourist activities, it is expected that travellers will prefer outdoor and recreational activities such as cycling, yoga, and walking tours. The recreational destinations and open areas such as parks may create positive experiences post-COVID-19 (De Vos, 2020; Singh et al., 2020). Travelers will prefer more ecotourism and green tourism and will support responsible travel (Chebli & Said, 2020). On the other hand, travellers will depend more on online purchasing to book all tourism services and products (Martin et al., 2013). As predicted by Shi et al. (2019) and De Vos (2020), the pandemic and its measures will lead to an increase in the online shopping rate and this may affect shopping trips, which will decrease.

From the previous arguments, it is obvious that there is a significant shift and change in tourist preferences post-COVID-19. Most of them are linked to health and safety measures to decrease their risk of exposure to the coronavirus. This reflects that post-COVID-19 travellers will be more responsible for their safety and will adopt responsible behaviour towards travel and destinations.

Responsible Travel in the Post-COVID-19 Era

The rapid changes in the travel and tourism industry following the COVID-19 pandemic raised an ur-

gent call for more responsible travel. Therefore, the concept of responsibility has become a key approach for the recovery of the tourism sector.

Responsible tourism is a form of tourism that aims to reduce the negative impacts of tourism on the community and the environment. Hence, responsible tourism is aligned with sustainability's objectives (Goodwin & Francis, 2003; Cheng & Wu, 2015). In this context, Kim et al. (2017) noted that responsible tourism is a promising market as the consumers are characterized by ethical consumption and responsible behaviour towards destinations. As mentioned in *Lexico* ('Responsibility,' n.d.) the concept of responsibility includes two aspects, individual behaviour and ethical aspects.

It has been widely recognized that tourism based on ethical actions supports the idea of responsible travel (Tribe, 2002; Fennell & Malloy, 2007; Kim et al., 2017). Indeed, responsible travel includes visiting natural sites, social responsibility, protecting the environment, and supporting the local community (Honey & Stewart, 2002).

Previously, the travel sector was dominated by the insistent drive for profits and growth (Jover & Diaz-Parra, 2020). In a simple sense, over-tourism was a remarkable phenomenon that threatened many destinations before the COVID-19 crisis (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020). Within this context, the COVID-19 crisis has pointed out the need for sustainability and responsibility in managing economic activities (UNWTO, 2020b).

One of the most important aspects of responsible travel is to collect information about the host destination and understand the risks carefully (Jamal & Budke, 2020). Due to the pandemic, tourism destinations imposed some ethical values and legal measures for travellers to follow before and during their trips, in order to respect the places they visit. These measures are mostly related to safety and health concerns, for example, passing a coronavirus test, wearing a face-mask, and practising social distancing.

UNWTO (2020b) confirmed that well-planned and managed tourism could responsibly contribute to the improvement of the health and well-being of travellers, the local community, and service. In response to the pandemic risk, UNWTO started to guide the travel

and tourism sector to mitigate the impacts of this crisis by collaborating with the World Health Organization to emphasize that the tourism industry is coping with the new normal in a responsible way. For instance, a hashtag was launched for all travellers – 'Stay home today, #traveltomorrow.' It was one of the most influential calls from UNWTO to increase travellers' awareness, solidarity, and responsibility to slow down the spreading of the virus. Beyond the economic losses of the tourism sector, UNWTO (2020b) highlighted the importance of putting people first. Furthermore, it reported that the destinations and tourists should share the responsibility.

The negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the global economy, especially the travel and tourism sector, led many destinations around the world to reopen their borders to save their economies. Although UNWTO called for more responsibility while reopening the tourism industry, it failed to define clearly the concept of responsible tourism in the context of COVID-19 recovery strategies (Tremblay-Huet & Lapointe, 2021). Undoubtedly, this responsibility should be a long-term approach for all service providers, local communities, and travellers as well, to reduce the spread of the virus and manage the contamination (Jamal & Budke, 2020).

Interestingly, the COVID-19 pandemic crisis is considered an exceptional opportunity to rearrange and readjust the tourism sector towards a new path for a better future. This means that the responsible approach is an essential requirement to reorient tourism to the public benefit (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020). Additionally, Tremblay-Huet and Lapointe (2021) underscored that through the choices of responsible tourists, the impacts can be mitigated. Thus, tourists have a responsibility to follow the measures imposed by WHO and their national authorities to minimize transmission during and after their trip.

Methodology

Sampling Technique

A convenience sampling technique was used to collect the study data. It is a time-saving technique and allows the researcher to reach a huge number of respondents regardless of their geographic location. In

addition, the participants are free to complete the survey questionnaire at any time (An et al., 2019). The data of this study were collected from a total of 400 participants through an online questionnaire. Of the sample, 56% were females, 45.25% aged between 31–40 years old, 49% were single, 52% had a Bachelor degree and 43% of the respondents originated from the Middle East.

Data Collection

A quantitative approach was used in this research to collect data, as it is the most appropriate approach for the research subject. A questionnaire was conducted to realize the study's objectives and to answer the research questions. The questionnaire was shared online through social media (Facebook, WhatsApp) and some pages for travel bloggers and travel groups in order to reach a greater geographical and demographic sample. 420 questionnaires were received online in one month starting from 5th of May till 5th of June 2020. Twenty questionnaires were excluded due to incomplete responses so that 400 valid questionnaires were retained for data analysis.

Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire was written in English and translated to Arabic to increase the sample size and the rate of participation. The measurement items (34 items) were developed based on the existing measurement scales from the literature and previous studies but adapted to the current situation of the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the questionnaire was anonymous and participation was voluntary.

The questionnaire was divided into three main sections to explore the expected changes and shifts in tourist behaviour post-COVID-19. In addition, it aims to investigate whether these changes will lead tourists toward responsible behaviour. The first section describes the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents (e.g. gender, age, nationality, marital status, educational level, and job). The second section consists of six questions that explore the respondents' travel plans and destination choices following the COVID-19 pandemic. The third section includes 34 statements that highlight the tourists' behaviour

and preferences post-COVID-19 and their trend toward responsible travel post-COVID-19.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used to describe the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics and their travel plans and destination choices post-COVID-19. A Likert scale consisting of a five-point scale from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree) was used and the importance of each statement for the travellers was determined by the value of its mean and standard deviation. Furthermore, exploratory factor analysis based on the principal component method was conducted to explore the factors determining responsible travel behaviour post-COVID-19. Accordingly, only the factors with an Eigenvalue greater or equal to one were considered essential (Luo & Deng, 2008).

Results and Discussion

Travel Plans and Destination Choice

Table 1 showed that most of the respondents (73%) used to travel between one to three times per year; 86.25% of them had a travel plan before the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, the results showed that 47.25% of

Table 1 Respondents' Travel Plan

| Variables | | <i>n</i> | % |
|--|--|----------|-------|
| Number of travels abroad per year | 1–3 times | 292 | 73.00 |
| | 3–6 times | 65 | 16.25 |
| | More than 6 times | 43 | 10.75 |
| Having a travel plan this year before COVID-19 crisis | Yes | 345 | 86.25 |
| | No | 55 | 13.75 |
| Concerning the respondent's plan after COVID-19 crisis | I cancelled it | 103 | 25.75 |
| | I postponed it | 108 | 27.00 |
| | I will decide after the travel bans are lifted | 189 | 47.25 |
| Planning to travel after the cancel. of COVID-19 meas. | Yes | 222 | 55.50 |
| | No | 57 | 14.25 |
| | I am not sure | 121 | 30.25 |

Notes *N* = 400.

Table 2 Post COVID-19 Pandemic Destination Choice

| Regions | Safest regions | | Risky regions | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|--------|---------------|--------|
| | <i>n</i> | % | <i>n</i> | % |
| African countries | 102 | 25.50 | 25 | 6.25 |
| European countries | 12 | 3.00 | 89 | 22.25 |
| USA | 8 | 2.00 | 170 | 42.50 |
| Asian countries | 30 | 7.50 | 57 | 14.25 |
| Middle East | 33 | 8.25 | 39 | 9.75 |
| Australia and New Zealand | 130 | 32.50 | 11 | 2.75 |
| Oceania and Pacific Islands | 85 | 21.25 | 9 | 2.25 |
| Total | 400 | 100.00 | 400 | 100.00 |

the respondents will decide about their travel plans after the travel bans are lifted and 55.5% of them have a plan to travel after the cancellation of COVID-19 outbreak measures. This result is supported by Wachyuni and Kusumaningrum (2020) who highlighted that the traveller’s attitude to travel post-COVID-19 is positive and many of them have a plan after the travel bans are lifted. Overall, Assaf and Scuderi (2020) expected that the tourism industry will start again one year later after the COVID-19 pandemic, whereas Ivanova et al. (2021) explored the future behaviour of Bulgarian travellers and found that most of them have the intention to travel inside the region within two months. These results emphasize the importance of studying the market’s needs and tourists’ preferences post-COVID-19.

Concerning destination choice and tourist risk perception post-COVID-19, Table 2 showed that 32.5%, 25.5%, and 21.2% of the respondents considered Australia and New Zealand, African countries, Oceania, and the Pacific Islands, respectively, as the safest destinations to travel post-pandemic.

However, 42.5%, 22.2%, and 14.2% of the respondents considered the USA, European countries, and Asian countries respectively as the riskiest destinations to travel to post-COVID-19. This is clear evidence that the COVID-19 pandemic plays a significant role in various aspects of life and dominates where and how people spend their vacations (Bratić et al., 2021). These results are in accordance with Sönmez and Graefe (1998) who discussed that the tourist could change

his travel plan to avoid risky destinations and look for safer alternatives. Likewise, this certainly fits with Cahyanto et al. (2016), who mentioned that there is an evident relationship between travel behaviour and risk perception. Also, in the same study, he stated that tourists choose their destinations according to the reported cases and infection rate. In this respect, Chew and Jahari (2014) clarified that the risks which are related to health, for example viral infection, could affect destination choice and tourism providers.

Tourist Behaviour and Preferences Post-COVID-19

A list of 34 statements related to the travellers’ behaviour and preferences post-COVID-19 was provided to respondents. They were asked to indicate the importance of each statement, ranging from one to five (strongly disagree to strongly agree). The mean and standard deviations of the statements are shown in Table 3. The five top-ranked features are (with means): I now will not trust staying in rented apartments, Airbnb and hostels (4.19); I will prefer travelling by car, train or bus to travelling by plane (4.18); I will prefer booking with free cancellation (4.16); I will respect the social distancing in all places and while dealing with people (4.14); and I will accept passing a coronavirus test as a requirement to travel to some countries (3.98) (Table 3).

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis was performed on the 34 statements to reveal any underlying patterns of responses. After factor loading, only 18 of 34 statements were retained and considered as essential due to their eigenvalue which was greater or equal to one (Luo & Deng, 2008). With a KMO value of 0.9448, the study sample showed good adequacy and reliability, as Hair et al. (2010) noted that a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value greater than 0.6 indicates sampling adequacy.

The final analysis revealed three-factor solutions with a total variation of 71.78 %. These factor-solutions include tourist preferences, health and hygiene considerations, and destination choice. Table 4 showed the percentage of variance explained by each factor, in which Eigenvalues are greater than or equal to

Table 3 Travellers' Behaviour and Preferences Post-COVID-19

| Statements | Mean | SD |
|---|-------|-------|
| I will prefer to travel solo | 3.105 | 1.220 |
| I will avoid travel with unknown groups of people | 3.453 | 1.341 |
| I will start to travel inside my home country (domestic travel) | 3.338 | 1.222 |
| In the case of feeling ill, I will avoid interaction with my family and friends for a while | 2.758 | 1.207 |
| I will start travelling by visiting my friends, family, and relatives in other cities | 3.168 | 1.240 |
| I tend to choose destinations depending on their natural and rural tourism-based activities rather than urban/mass destinations | 3.470 | 1.182 |
| There are some countries and regions that are very risky and I don't wish to visit them now | 3.785 | 1.299 |
| I will choose to travel to small cities rather than large cities and capitals | 3.195 | 1.202 |
| I will follow the social rules that apply at the places I visit | 2.978 | 1.277 |
| I will prefer environmentally friendly tours | 3.518 | 1.110 |
| I will give more attention to the reviews about the accommodation cleanness | 3.943 | 1.157 |
| I will prefer booking with free cancellation | 4.163 | 1.109 |
| I will seek comfort and hygiene rather than luxury in the accommodation | 3.918 | 1.183 |
| I will seek day trips and overnights as a short vacation | 3.350 | 1.086 |
| I will look for lower airfares and emptier planes | 3.563 | 1.223 |
| I will look for booking a flight ticket with more flexibility | 3.850 | 1.149 |
| I will book online all the attractions, activities and my tickets for internal tours to avoid waiting in queues | 3.700 | 1.137 |
| I will check and read carefully all the items covered by travel insurance to ensure that I will receive reimbursement during any travel ban | 3.908 | 1.096 |
| I will accept passing the coronavirus test as a requirement to travel to some countries | 3.985 | 1.191 |
| I will avoid eating street food during my trip | 3.275 | 1.268 |
| I will reduce dining out and I will prefer to order take away meals | 3.218 | 1.195 |
| I now will not trust staying in rented apartments, Airbnb, and hostels | 4.190 | 1.117 |
| I will give more time to free walking tours | 3.765 | 1.128 |
| I will prefer a different form of tourism, more respectful of the visited communities and nature | 3.743 | 1.060 |
| I will prefer to visit natural sites such as parks and beaches more than closed historical places | 3.670 | 1.185 |
| I believe my way of shopping will fundamentally change | 3.353 | 1.175 |
| I will respect social distancing in all places and while dealing with people | 4.148 | 1.111 |
| I will go out with my mask, gloves, and sanitizer | 3.845 | 1.247 |
| I will use mobile payment options more | 3.753 | 1.170 |
| I will write reviews about the hygiene and sanitation measures related to all the places I visited | 3.493 | 1.146 |

Continued on the next page

one. With a total variance of 71.78%, factor one is explained by 38.68%, so this factor is the most significant determinant of responsible travel behaviour post-COVID-19. This factor (factor 1) is named tourists'

preferences and it includes 11 items and comprises the tourists' preferences, such as: flight booking, travel insurance, type of accommodation, means of transportation, booking attractions, and activities, and fol-

Table 3 Continued from the previous page

| Statements | Mean | SD |
|--|-------|-------|
| I will write reviews about the hygiene and sanitation measures in the visited destination | 3.605 | 1.182 |
| I will send reviews about the management of the COVID-19 crisis in the visited destination | 3.470 | 1.203 |
| I will continuously check my health status | 3.833 | 1.146 |
| I will prefer travelling by car, train or bus to travelling by plane | 4.185 | 1.146 |

Table 4 Factor Analysis of Responsible Traveller Behaviour Post-COVID-19

| Statements | Factor 1 | Factor 2 | Factor 3 | Com. |
|---|----------|----------|----------|--------|
| I will prefer booking with free cancellation | 0.8074 | | | 0.2586 |
| I will look for booking a flight ticket with more flexibility | 0.7329 | | | 0.3169 |
| I now will not trust staying in rented apartments, Airbnb, and hostels | 0.7005 | | | 0.2028 |
| I will check and read carefully all the items covered by travel insurance to ensure that I will receive reimbursement during any travel ban | 0.6946 | | | 0.3070 |
| I will give more attention to the reviews about the accommodation's cleanness | 0.6790 | | | 0.2849 |
| I will prefer travelling by car, train or bus to travelling by plane | 0.6779 | | | 0.2853 |
| I will seek comfort and hygiene rather than luxury in the accommodation | 0.6560 | | | 0.2682 |
| I will respect social distancing in all places and while dealing with people | 0.6255 | | | 0.2013 |
| I will look for lower airfares and emptier planes | 0.6222 | | | 0.3476 |
| I will accept passing the coronavirus test as a requirement to travel to some countries | 0.5742 | | | 0.3852 |
| I will book online all the attractions, activities and my tickets for internal tours to avoid waiting in queues | 0.5562 | | | 0.4106 |
| I will write reviews about the hygiene and sanitation measures related to all the places I visited (including hotels, restaurants, tourism sites) | | 0.8681 | | 0.1298 |
| I will write reviews about the hygiene and sanitation measures in the visited destination. | | 0.8532 | | 0.1653 |
| I will send reviews about the management of the COVID-19 crisis in the visited destination. | | 0.8358 | | 0.2073 |
| I will continuously check my health status. | | 0.5361 | | 0.2692 |
| I will start to travel inside my home country (domestic travel). | | | 0.5543 | 0.5592 |
| There some countries and regions that are very risky and I don't wish to visit them now. | | | 0.5514 | 0.5691 |
| I will choose to travel to small cities rather than large cities and capitals | | | 0.5149 | 0.4009 |
| Eigenvalue | 14.4621 | 1.6881 | 1.4346 | |
| Percentage of variance (total = 71.78) | 38.68 | 23.41 | 9.69 | |
| Cumulative variance percentage | 38.68 | 62.09 | 71.78 | |
| Cronbach's alpha (total = 0.9500) | 0.9363 | 0.9113 | 0.6708 | |

Notes Factor 1: Tourist preferences, Factor 2: Health and hygiene considerations, Factor 3: Destination choice.

lowing COVID-19 measures. These results are in line with those obtained by Wilson and Chen (2020) and Chebli and Said (2020), who predicted that travellers will be aware of the importance of buying travel in-

surance which could cover various options, and also highlighted that travellers will look for more flexible booking means.

Additionally, these results are similar to the study

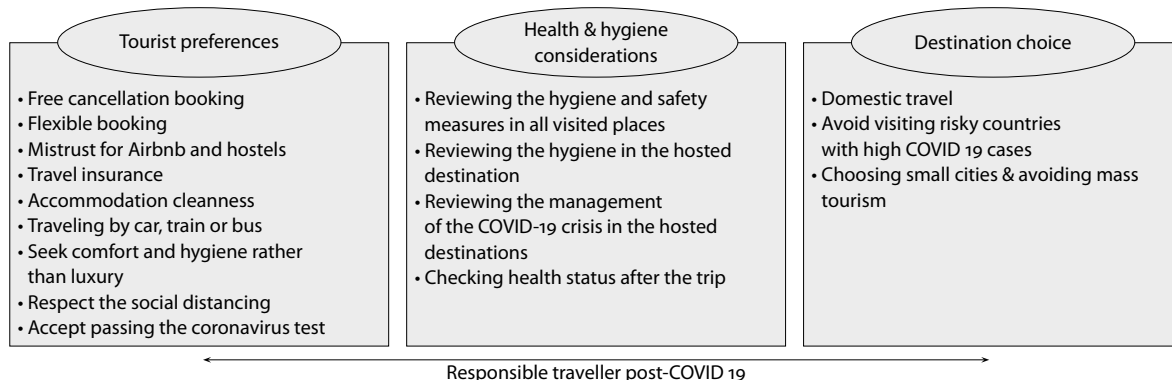


Figure 1 Determinant Factors of the Responsible Traveller Post-COVID-19

of Wachyuni and Kusumaningru (2020), who noted that travellers have become more careful about cleanliness and safety after the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, this is supported by the findings of Chebli and Said (2020), who explained that COVID-19 put hygiene and the cleanliness of accommodation, tourism facilities, services, and tourist attractions as a priority for travellers. Furthermore, these results are aligned with the study of Wen et al. (2005), who explained that during the SARS crisis in China, tourists started to travel domestically, especially in rural areas where social distance can be easily applied. They preferred travelling with family by car instead of by plane.

Factor two is named ‘Health and hygiene considerations,’ and comprises four items. The results reflected that travellers are very interested in the hygiene and sanitation measures in the visited destinations and they stated that they give their feedback about the management of the COVID-19 crisis in these destinations. This reflects that the travellers’ behaviour post-COVID-19 will be more responsible, not only during their trips but even after the trip. This finding comes in line with the study of Chebli and Said (2020) who stated that the health system, the quality of the offered care, and the management of the host destination during the COVID-19 pandemic have turned into significant factors that affect travel decisions.

Finally, factor three is named ‘destination choice’; it includes only three items. The items loaded are related to destination choices. The results showed that post-COVID-19 travellers prefer domestic travel, vis-

iting countries with low COVID-19 cases and small cities, and that they will avoid mass tourism. These aspects were examined by Lahood (2020), who clarified that the COVID-19 pandemic will influence tourists’ preferences and will change their choices. Also, it matches with the previous studies of Pizam and Fleischer (2002) and Rittichainuwat and Chakraborty (2009), who emphasized that tourists avoid choosing the countries and regions with safety risks, for instance, natural disasters, terrorism, or a pandemic outbreak. Similarly, this finding is affirmed by Floyd et al. (2004) and Chebli and Said (2020), who clarified that risk perception is an important aspect in decision making and also influences tourist behaviour. The values of each statement included in these above-mentioned three factors have a factor loading above 0.5.

It can be concluded that the concept of responsible tourism has been redefined following the COVID-19 era. Currently, health and sanitary considerations are the key factors that affect travel behaviour and tourist choices. Accordingly, the responsibility has become a sharing mission between tourists and destinations.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study provided an exploratory overview of the changes in travel behaviour post-COVID-19. It highlighted the expected trends which will dominate the travel and tourism sector for the short and medium-term. The findings revealed that *the responsible travellers post-COVID-19 will be determined by three main*

factors: travel preferences, health and hygiene measures, and destination choices. Moreover, the study concluded that the contamination rate and the number of coronavirus cases might have a negative impact on tourist demand. This means that health/safety considerations and perceived risk are significant factors that affect destination choice following the COVID-19 crisis.

Significantly, the study also presented a new concept of the responsible traveller post-COVID-19 which highlights two aspects: the importance of health and hygiene considerations and the impact of travellers' choices on others and the destinations. Consequently, the study concluded that a responsible traveller is a person whose travel behaviour minimizes the risk of spreading the pandemic before, during, and after travel. This highlights the power of the traveller as a responsible decision-maker in the COVID-19 era. This pandemic has accelerated the transformation of worldwide tourism to a sustainable path which should be the new normal. Developing guidelines for responsible and safe travel post-COVID-19 could significantly help travellers to make responsible choices. To design these guidelines, the stakeholders should use mutual standards based on sustainability and responsibility to cope with any challenges in the future.

Recommendations for Service Providers Such As Hotels, Tour Operators, and Airlines

Depending on the above-mentioned findings, the service providers should make serious responses effectively and quickly. Presently, they face challenges to regaining the confidence of travellers. This requires adopting new policies related to refund/cancellation rules and hygiene measures. In addition, there is an urgent need to redesign the tourism products and offers to match with the new needs and expectations of tourists. In other words, service providers should re-examine their marketing mix carefully with regard to new preferences.

Recommendations for Destinations Marketers and Managers

The destination marketers should adopt, for instance, the strategy implemented by Asian countries, particularly Thailand, Hong Kong, Vietnam, and Singapore

after the SARS pandemic. This strategy is based on promoting these destinations as safe and responsible countries to repair their tourism images and attract visitors again. DMOS have to review their business model and launch innovative marketing and promotional campaigns to attract more tourists. It is important for DMOS to collaborate with public and private sectors to ensure a sufficient level of safety before and during travel.

In addition, it is essential for tourism managers and marketers to increase their communication efforts and use various channels. Finally, DMOS have to encourage stakeholders to spread the marketing messages aimed at responsible tourism post-COVID-19, trying to increase the awareness of tourists and promoting sustainable actions.

The Limitations and Future Research

The main limitations of this research are: firstly, this study has a time limitation as the data were collected at the beginning of the pandemic outbreak, and the effects of the pandemic may bring more changes in the travel and tourism industry. Secondly, the sample is limited as the author collected data through an online questionnaire and mainly from social media channels. Finally, this study has an obvious limitation as it only focused on the future trends and the changes in tourist behaviour.

Future studies could explore the relationship between tourist behaviour and the risk factors related to health. In addition, more studies should address the tourist profile and experience post-COVID-19. This could help the destinations and marketers to target the new tourists based on their new beliefs and perceptions after the COVID-19 crisis.

Lastly, future studies should explore the changes in travel behaviour post-COVID-19 in specific regions and nationalities and different market segments. This will help the service providers to design tourism products which will meet the tourists' expectations based on their socio-demographic characteristics.

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Travellers' Destination Attribute Preferences: A Choice-Based Conjoint (CBC) Analysis

Meltem Altınay Özdemir

Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University, Turkey

meltemozdemir@mu.edu.tr

The study used a choice-based conjoint analysis to investigate Turkish travellers' preferences for destination choice based on five *attributes* (*destination type, distance, length of stay, season, and value for money*). Using purposive sampling, data were obtained from Turkish travellers in Istanbul with an experimental questionnaire between April and May 2019. The questionnaire included sixteen destination profiles produced using an orthogonal experimental design. *Travellers* had one go-to code for all profile cards from highest to lowest preference. The data were analysed with SPSS Conjoint. The findings revealed that destination type was the most important attribute, followed by the length of stay, season, distance, and value for money. T-test and ANOVA results showed that travellers' destination preferences also differed by their socio-demographic characteristics. The study provides an alternative perspective for future research by examining destination choice using an experimental approach. Furthermore, it offers practical implications for travel companies seeking to understand Turkish travellers' destination preferences.

Keywords: destination choice, destination preference, tourist behaviour, travel motivation, experimental design



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Introduction

Destinations, like other tourism businesses, can segment their visitors for more effective marketing (Denizci Guillet et al., 2015; Huertas Garcia et al., 2014). Destinations can implement basic socio-demographic segmentation by segmenting visitors based on several attributes. Tourists seek products that satisfy their demands (Wong & Yeh, 2009), therefore each destination's desirability is determined by how well its marketing elements meet those needs (Hanlan et al., 2006, p. 214). Tourists are also concerned about making bad choices that lead to a negative shopping experience. Destination marketing that is effective allows for a better grasp of the complexities involved in the destination decision process. The act of recognizing and selecting potential solutions to a problem is known

as decision-making (Al-Tarawneh, 2012). Many studies show that tourism suppliers need to understand tourist behaviour and travel motivation in order to meet demand and aid tourists in making decisions (Blasco et al., 2014; Decrop & Kozak, 2014; Yiamjanya & Wongleedee, 2014). Previous research has used conjoint analysis to investigate travel preference segmentation (Chiam et al., 2009; Nuraeni et al., 2015; Pai & Ananthakumar, 2017).

This study investigates the segmentation of Turkish travellers based on five attributes (destination type, distance, length of stay, season, and value for money) through a choice-based conjoint analysis. It segmented Turkish travellers' preferences for destination choice using an experimental method of conjoint analysis. The research can help travel companies figure out the

attributes and levels of destinations travellers prefer. As a result, the study offers a novel way of segmenting travellers. The experimental analysis can show travel companies new ways to reach target travellers.

Decision-Making and Destination Choice

Decisions are complex and multidimensional, while the travel decision-making process is intuitive and spontaneous (Smallman & Moore, 2010). Destination choice is affected by various factors (Buhalis, 2000; Hanlan et al., 2006; Hsu et al., 2009; Li et al., 2017; Oppewal et al., 2015; Pestana et al., 2020; Seyidov & Adomaitienė, 2017). Many studies draw attention to key aspects of the destination choice process and offer theoretical models (Cao et al., 2020; Dey et al., 2020; Hsu et al., 2009; Seddighi & Theocharous, 2002). Some studies have identified the factors and motivations affecting destination choice (Dey et al., 2020; Jang & Cai, 2002; Pawaskar et al., 2020; Qiu et al., 2018; Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005; Wong & Yeh, 2009). Experimentation using choice-based techniques has been employed in several destination studies (Hsu et al., 2009; Li et al., 2017; Oppewal et al., 2015). Sirakaya and Woodside (2005) incorporated major conceptual and empirical studies in their thorough qualitative evaluation of the tourist decision-making literature. They concluded that the Um and Crompton (1990) destination choice set model is theoretically more widespread and methodologically more robust than others in tourist decision research (Hsu et al., 2009). However, various destination choice models have also been proposed in the literature. Hong et al. (2006) stated that tourists compare and evaluate the attractiveness, accessibility, ease of travel, and varied infrastructure of the destination vis-à-vis alternatives, at the specific time, situation, and context of travel. In addition, Yoo et al. (2018) proposed the multinomial logit model (MNL) analysis to conclude that tourist psychographic types can be varied by their demographic pattern, travel type decisions, frequencies, duration of travel, purpose of visit, and destination setting.

Identifying and selecting among possible solutions to a problem is what decision-making entails (Al-Tarawneh, 2012). Choosing also comprises converting a motive into a purchase process, in which the

final purchasing decision is made after a multi-stage process (Hanlan et al., 2006, p. 10). As a result, research shows that motivations should be explored because they have the power to influence tourists' choices (Nikjoo & Ketabi, 2015; Pestana et al., 2020; Prayag & Ryan, 2011; Yiamjanya & Wongleedee, 2014).

Travel Motivation

It is crucial to figure out what influences people's destination choices in order to improve marketing efforts. Age, income, gender, personality, education, cost, distance, nationality, risk, and motivation are some of these determinants (Hsu et al., 2009). Motivation, which is an important research topic in the tourism literature, is a dynamic concept that varies between individuals and destinations. Several motivational theories have been proposed to understand travel motivation, such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Alderfer's existence theory, Herzberg's motivator-hygiene theory, and the push and pull theory (Vujičić et al., 2020). Undoubtedly, the most extensively used is Crompton's (1979) push and pull theory (Chen & Chen, 2015; Hsu et al., 2009; Nikjoo & Ketabi, 2015; Prayag & Ryan, 2011).

According to the push-pull theory, tourists are pushed to travel by internal desires or emotional factors and pulled by external factors like destination attributes (Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Cohen et al., 2014). Crompton (1979) identified seven push motives (escape from a perceived ordinary environment, exploration and evaluation of self, relaxation, prestige, regression, enhancement of kinship relationship, and facilitation of social interaction) and two pull motives (novelty and education). While there are a variety of theories for explaining tourist motivations, the push-pull theory is one of the most extensively addressed in the tourism literature (Güzel et al., 2020; Liro, 2020; Prabawa & Pertiwi, 2020).

There are various typologies of motivation factors for tourism. Hanqin and Lam (1999) identified five push factors (knowledge, prestige, enhancement of human relationships, relaxation, and novelty) and five pull factors (expenditure, accessibility, service attitude and quality, sightseeing variety, and cultural links). Jang and Cai (2002) also suggested six push fac-

tors (novelty experience; escape; knowledge-seeking; fun, and excitement; relaxation; family/friend togetherness) and six pull factors (natural and historic environment; cleanliness and safety; easy to access; economic deal; outdoor activities; sunny and exotic atmosphere). Confirming previous studies, Pearce and Lee (2005) argued for four push factors: novelty seeking, escape/relaxation, relationship enhancement, and self-development. Prayag and Ryan (2011) suggested push factors such as escape, novelty, social interaction, and prestige to describe the kind of experiences tourists are looking for.

Psychological characteristics determine the push factors, while destination attributes determine the pull factors, according to Yiamjanya and Wongleedee (2014). They identified the following push and pull factors: experiencing a foreign country, eating traditional food, learning about a new culture, relaxing in a foreign country, wanting to learn new things, being interested in local culture and traditional markets, escaping from routine daily life and enjoying activities, adventure, and good weather. Hsu et al. (2009) analysed tourist destination choice using the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) while incorporating Crompton's push and pull factors as internal and external forces, respectively. They identified four internal force factors (psychological, physical, social interaction, and seeking/exploration) and two external force factors (tangible and intangible).

Based on a literature review, Danthanarayana et al. (2020) concluded that tourists are influenced by the following push factors: motivation for romance, desire to escape, relaxation, expectations of different cuisines, prestige, income, personal safety, and excitement. They also identified the following pull factors: attractions, location and attributes, facilities and amenities, quality of accommodation, reasonable travel cost, the romance of the destination, advertising of the destination, shopping opportunities, climate, and tourist sites/activities. The push factors are useful for explaining travel intentions, whereas the pull factors help explain destination choice (Goossens, 2000; Hsu et al., 2009). In other words, tourists are pushed by travel needs and pulled by destination attributes (Cohen et al., 2014).

Tourists tend to select destinations based on their aims; therefore, destinations are attractive based on how well they meet those aims. From the past (Awaritefe, 2004; Jang & Cai, 2002) to the present (Awaritefe, 2004), travel motivation and destination choice have been researched extensively (Morris et al., 2021; Pawaskar et al., 2020; Pestana et al., 2020; Yoo et al., 2018). As a result, understanding destination attributes is essential for explaining travellers' destination choice behaviour.

Destination Attributes

Before making a final decision, destination attributes play a significant role in the information-gathering phase (Oppewal et al., 2015). Because destination selection is fluid, alternative approaches should be tested regularly (Deng et al., 2021). Alternative methods, such as the choice-based conjoint model (Hung et al., 2019; Lupu et al., 2020; Nuraeni et al., 2015; Suh & McAvoy, 2005) or AHP (Hsu et al., 2009) can be used to determine destination choice and destination attributes. Researchers can use these analyses to improve the attributes of a destination systematically. Push factors are linked to the origins and desires of travellers. The desire to escape, relax, experience adventure, and improve one's well-being are among them. Pull factors are linked to the attractiveness of a destination, such as diversity, uniqueness, accommodation, recreational facilities, and cultural and historical resources (Dwyer & Kim, 2003; Klenosky, 2002). Every destination has a unique set of attributes (Prayag & Ryan, 2011). As a result, travellers' evaluations of destination attributes and perceived utility values can be associated with destination choice (Suresh et al., 2021).

Pull factors, according to Hsu et al. (2009), are both tangible and intangible external factors. Tangible factors include transportation facilities; friendliness of people; quality and variety of food; accommodation facilities; personal safety; price; culture and historical resources; good shopping; environmental safety, and quality, whereas intangible factors include destination image and benefit expectations. Nuraeni et al. (2015) used four main attributes and 12 levels to examine the decision-making process using conjoint analysis. The attributes were: value for money (3 lev-

els), what the traveller looks for in the recreational site (5 levels), comfort during the holiday (2 levels), and distance from the place of origin (2 levels). Pai and Ananthakumar (2017) also applied conjoint analysis with six attributes and 30 levels to examine tourist preferences for travel packages. The attributes were price (5 levels), length of stay (5 levels), hotel rating (5 levels), season (5 levels), destination type (5 levels), and mode of transport (5 levels).

Health, safety, travel time, and distance all influence destination choice (Bansal & Eiselt, 2004), as does value for money, which refers to 'what travellers get for the money' (Nuraeni et al., 2015, p. 315). Travel expenditure, length of stay, income, exploring new places, and/or things, getting away from the daily routine, stress, and troubles are also important factors for destination choice (Denizci Guillet et al., 2011). Attractions, natural beauty, safety and security, festivals, and events are crucial to attracting visitors to the destination (Dahiya & Batra, 2016).

The tourists' destination choice process is a functional or utilitarian decision-making process influenced by a variety of factors such as psychological, personal, socioeconomic, and travel characteristics (Pandey & Joshi, 2021). Destination attributes and tourist-specific features significantly affect destination choice (Seyidov & Adomaitienė, 2017; Qiu et al., 2018). The main factors are tourism activities (Awaritefe, 2004) and cost (Seddighi & Theocharous, 2002), although travel time and travel distance (Cao et al., 2020) also affect destination choice along with tourism areas and destination amenities (Nicolau & Más, 2006; Tseng et al., 2015). Climate and weather conditions also significantly impact destination choice, although mostly temporarily (Hamilton & Lau, 2006). Therefore, the first research question regarding destination attributes is as follows:

RQ1 Which attributes have more importance in travellers' preference for destination choice?

Some studies have shown that tourists' sociodemographic characteristics significantly influence their destination choice (Limtanakool et al., 2006). Characteristics such as income, education level, cost, distance, risk, and motivation are likely to influence destination

choices (Almeida-Santana & Moreno-Gil, 2018; Hsu et al., 2009; Kozak, 2002). This leads to the following research question:

RQ2 Do travellers' destination attribute preferences differ according to sociodemographic characteristics?

Methodology

Choice-Based Conjoint (CBC) Analysis

The study segmented Turkish travellers based on five attributes: destination type, distance, length of stay, season, the value for money, and sociodemographic variables using CBC analysis. The selection of attributes, design of profiles or choice sets, data collection, analysis methods, and usefulness of the results are all technical aspects of CBC analysis (Rao, 2014, p. 16), which has the following five stages (Rao, 2009):

1. Determine destination attributes and levels;
2. Design profiles;
3. Collect data;
4. Analyse data;
5. Determine part-worth values and attributes.

A higher part-worth utility value indicates a greater preference for that attribute level. Another key advantage is that the method uses preference simulators to answer 'what if' questions. These simulators rely on the findings of conjoint analysis data collected on both hypothetical and real alternatives (Rao, 2014, p. 8). Relative importance is a measure to evaluate the importance of each attribute for choice preferences (Orme, 2010). Therefore, this study applied CBC analysis to understand Turkish travellers' preferences for destination choice.

CBC involves offering respondents multiple hypothetical scenarios that include different combinations of preference attributes (Lee, 2016, p. 71). It is a multivariate approach used to explain consumers' preferences for products or services. Respondents evaluate the value of each product or service by combining different levels of each attribute. CBC analysis uses the following techniques (Rao, 2014, p. 19):

- A measurement technique: measuring purchaser values:

- An analytical technique: predicting the likely reaction of purchasers to new products;
- A segmentation technique: identifying groups of purchasers with similar interests;
- A simulation technique: assessing new products and services in a competitive market;
- An optimization technique: searching for product profiles offering the highest profit.

Each attribute in this study describes a destination characteristic, and the level represents a range of possible values for each attribute. As a result, levels in an attribute set based on a conjoint set characterize the destination combination. According to an *ORTHOPLAN* in conjoint analysis, the combination presents a preference list of destination options, comprising attributes and levels describing destinations. Travellers sequence levels of attributes from highest to lowest according to their preferences (Orme, 2002). For conjoint attributes, the part-worth represents the level's utility. Based on the levels of destination attributes, the part-worth utility values aid in determining which destination is highly preferred.

Attributes and Levels of the Research

CBC analysis is a suitable approach for examining travellers' destination preferences. The first thing to do is to describe the attributes and levels that indicate what travellers consider in their destination choices. The following five attributes (and fourteen levels) were identified for this study: destination type (3), distance (2), season (3), length of stay (4), and value for money (2) based on previous studies, as shown in Table 1 (Nuraeni et al., 2015; Pai & Ananthakumar, 2017). The attributes and levels for what travellers look for in destination (destination type), season, and length of stay were retrieved from Pai and Ananthakumar, while the distance from the place of origin and value for money were drawn from Nuraeni et al. (2015). Table 1 shows the full list of attributes and levels.

Experimental Survey

Destination profiles were created and provided to travellers using the above attributes. Full factorial design profiles contain all combinations of attribute lev-

Table 1 Destination Choice Attributes and Levels

| Sources | Attributes | Levels |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| Pai & Ananthakumar (2017) | What the traveller looks for in a destination | Nature, activity, and adventure Culture and heritage Sea, sand, and sun |
| Nuraeni et al. (2015) | Distance from the place of origin | Domestic trip International trip |
| Pai & Ananthakumar (2017) | Season | Spring or summer Autumn or winter Summer or autumn |
| Pai & Ananthakumar (2017) | Length of stay (days) | 1-4 5-8 9-11 ≥12 |
| Nuraeni et al. (2015) | Value for money | Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation, delicious food, and entertainment Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation and delicious food |

els (Rao, 2014, p. 46). In this study, using all levels would have resulted in 144 (3x2x3x4x2) profiles. However, because the respondents did not have enough time to consider all profiles, the design was restricted to 16 destination options using an orthogonal experimental design (*ORTHOPLAN*) in *SPSS 22*. This method is commonly employed since it is difficult to use all conceivable combinations in a single experiment, and more advantageous findings can be acquired by analysing possible combinations. Because it more accurately mimics various real-life judgments and is compatible with random utility theory, the discrete choice method was applied to build preferences (Louviere et al., 2000).

As a result, the *CBC* questionnaire contained a combination of attributes and levels (16 destination choice cards and 4 simulation cards) based on an orthogonal experimental design (Appendix). Travellers assigned numbers to the profile cards, ranging from 1 (most preferred) to 16 (least preferred). There were

22 questions in the questionnaire, including 16 profile cards, 5 demographic questions (gender, age, marital status, working status, monthly income), and 1 for travel frequency.

Sample

The respondents were chosen through purposeful sampling. Turkish travellers who travel at least once a year met the eligibility criteria. Between April 15 and May 30, 2019, data were collected face-to-face from students and academics at a university in Istanbul, Turkey. Only 105 of the 120 questionnaires distributed were returned. However, 19 questionnaires were considered invalid due to repeated numbers, leaving 86 questionnaires to be examined.

Data Analysis

SPSS Conjoint was used to analyse the data. First, data were input along with the 16 combination cards and descriptive questions. Second, average utilities for the destination cards were calculated and the part-worth utility was determined. The data were drawn from a normal distribution, according to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test ($p > 0.05$), therefore, parametric tests were applied. Third, T-tests and ANOVA were employed to see if travellers had similar preferences for the relative importance of different destination attributes.

Findings

A total of 86 questionnaires that could be used were examined. The sample profile is shown in Table 2. Gender distribution was nearly equal. Most respondents were younger than 25 years old. Almost everyone was working, but they mostly had 1500 TRY and less monthly income. More than half of the respondents stated that they travel once a year.

The Pearson coefficient (0.816) showed that the results were highly significant (Rao, 2014). Similarly, a high Kendall coefficient suggests that observed and predicted preferences are highly correlated. Kendall's Tau value, which evaluates the model's representation strength, was 0.600 ($p = 0.000$), showing that the model was statistically significant. These values show that the model fit is satisfactory (Table 3). The high

Table 2 Sample Profile

| Item | | <i>n</i> | % |
|----------------------|---------------------------|----------|------|
| Gender | Female | 40 | 46.5 |
| | Male | 46 | 53.5 |
| Age (years) | 18–19 | 10 | 11.6 |
| | 20–21 | 27 | 31.4 |
| | 22–24 | 20 | 23.3 |
| | 25–35 | 18 | 20.9 |
| | 36–46 | 7 | 8.1 |
| | 47–57 | 4 | 4.7 |
| Marital status | 57 or more | 10 | 11.6 |
| | Single | 69 | 80.2 |
| Working status | Married | 17 | 19.8 |
| | Working | 42 | 48.8 |
| Monthly Income (TRY) | Not working | 44 | 51.2 |
| | 1500 or less | 35 | 40.7 |
| | 1501–2500 | 12 | 14.0 |
| | 2501–3500 | 12 | 14.0 |
| | 3501–4500 | 17 | 19.8 |
| Travel Frequency | 4501 or more | 10 | 11.6 |
| | Once a year | 50 | 58.1 |
| | Twice a year | 23 | 26.7 |
| | Three times a year | 7 | 8.1 |
| | Four or more times a year | 6 | 7.0 |

Notes $n = 86$.

Table 3 Model Fit

| Item | Value | <i>p</i> |
|---------------------|-------|----------|
| Pearson coefficient | 0.816 | 0.00 |
| Kendall's Tau | 0.600 | 0.00 |

predictive accuracy and internal validity of a conjoint model are shown by its fit and efficiency (Tripathi & Siddiqui, 2010, p. 9).

A CBC analysis offers values of the utility of the relative importance of attributes. Figure 1 shows the measures of the relative importance of attributes based on the range of each part-worth function. Regarding RQ1, the respondents produced the following rank order of average attribute importance percentages: 29.93% for destination type, 26.30% for the length of stay, 26.97%

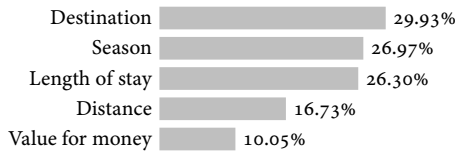


Figure 1 Relative Percentage Importance of Attributes

for the season, 16.73% for distance from the place of origin, and 10.05% for value for money.

Part-worth utility—a measure of relative desirability or worth—provides further insights into travellers' preferences, with a higher utility showing that a factor is more desirable in a traveller's choice (Orme, 2010). Part-worth means utilities of level for conjoint attributes. When multiple attributes come together to describe the total worth of the product, the utility values for the separate parts of the product are part-worth. Part-worth can be used to predict preferences for items in any choice set, while these estimates can be used to predict the customer's first choice and last choice (Rao, 2014, p. 19). In this study, part-worth is utilized to establish the intended destination attributes and levels, as well as their relative importance. The part-worth utilities for destination attributes are shown in Table 4. First, the sea, sand, and sun level contributed more to the total utility (0.5954) than the other levels for the destination type attribute, indicating that this level was preferred over the others in destination choice. Cultural and heritage had a negative utility (−0.6764), indicating that it was less desired than other levels of the same attribute.

Second, the domestic trip level had a higher utility score (0.1642) than the international trip level, indicating that it contributed more to the attribute's total utility. The utility for the international level was negative (−0.1642), indicating that international destinations were the least preferred by travellers. Third, the utility of the spring and summer level (0.2742) and autumn and summer level (0.2364) contributed more to the total utility than autumn or winter for the season attribute. As a result, the autumn or winter utility was negative (−0.5107). Fourth, the utility of staying for 12 days or more contributed more to total utility (0.1512) than the other levels, followed by 9–11 days (0.1134). As a result, stays of 9 or more days were more impor-

Table 4 Estimated Part-Worth Values for Destination Choice

| Attribute | Level | Part-worth value |
|---|--|------------------|
| What traveller looks for in a destination | Culture and heritage | − |
| | Nature, activity, and adventure | 0.6764 |
| | Sea, sand, and sun | 0.5954 |
| Dist. from the place of origin | Domestic trip | 0.1642 |
| | International trip | − |
| Season | Summer or autumn | 0.2364 |
| | Spring or summer | 0.2742 |
| | Autumn or winter | − |
| Length of stay (days) | 1–4 | − |
| | 5–8 | − |
| | 9–11 | 0.1134 |
| | ≥12 | 0.1512 |
| Value for money | Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation, delicious food, and entertainment | 0.0538 |
| | Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation and delicious food | 0.0538 |
| Constant | | 8.622 |

Notes The highest score of each attribute is shown in bold.

tant than the other levels. The utility levels for 1–4 days (−0.0029) and 5–8 days (−0.2616) were also negative, indicating that travellers thought these lengths of stay were less desirable than the others. Therefore, the utility values of the longer stay levels were higher than the shorter stay levels.

Finally, the utility of the 'Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation and delicious food' level contributed more (0.0538) to the total utility of value for the money attribute than the other levels. Comfortable accommodation and delicious food are prioritized by travellers over comfortable accommodation, delicious food, and entertainment. In other words, tourists did not consider the expenditure on entertainment

Table 5 Differences in Attribute and Level Utility Score Averages by Socio-Demographic Variables

| Attribute | Attribute level | Age | | | Income | | | Travel frequency | | |
|---|--|-------|--------|---------|--------|--------|-------|------------------|--------|-------|
| | | F | p | Diff. | F | p | Diff. | F | p | Diff. |
| What travellers look for in a destination | Culture and heritage | 1.377 | 0.24 | – | 2.170 | 0.08* | 1.2<3 | 1.436 | 0.23 | – |
| | Nature, activity, and adven. | 1.545 | 0.18 | – | 2.225 | 0.07* | 3<1.2 | 0.624 | 0.60 | – |
| | Sea, sand, and sun | 0.073 | 0.99 | – | 0.860 | 0.49 | – | 0.217 | 0.88 | – |
| Dist. from the origin place | Domestic trip | 2.844 | 0.02** | 6.7<2.3 | 2.269 | 0.16 | – | 2.682 | 0.05** | 1<3 |
| | International trip | 2.844 | 0.02** | 2.3<6.7 | 2.269 | 0.16 | – | 2.682 | 0.05** | 3<1 |
| Season | Summer or autumn | 1.158 | 0.33 | – | .774 | 0.54 | – | 1.628 | 0.18 | – |
| | Spring or summer | 1.198 | 0.31 | – | 1.879 | 0.12 | – | 1.034 | 0.38 | – |
| | Autumn or winter | 1.305 | 0.27 | – | 1.847 | 0.12 | – | 1.031 | 0.38 | – |
| Length of stay (days) | 1–4 days | 2.305 | 0.05** | 2.3<6 | 1.900 | 0.11 | – | 1.072 | 0.36 | – |
| | 5–8 days | 0.431 | 0.82 | – | 0.987 | 0.42 | – | 1.012 | 0.39 | – |
| | 9–11 days | 2.501 | 0.03** | 6<2.3 | 3.118 | 0.01** | 3<1.2 | 0.103 | 0.95 | – |
| | ≥12 days | 0.347 | 0.88 | – | 1.107 | 0.35 | – | 1.102 | 0.35 | – |
| Value for money | Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation, delicious food, and entertainment | 0.672 | 0.64 | – | 1.968 | 0.11 | – | 0.971 | 0.41 | – |
| | Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation and delicious food | 0.672 | 0.64 | – | 1.968 | 0.11 | – | 0.971 | 0.41 | – |

Notes Age (years): 1 – 18–19, 2 – 20–21, 3 – 22–24, 4 – 25–35, 5 – 36–46, 6 – 47–57, 7 – 57 or more. Income (TRY): 1 – 1,500 and less, 2 – 1,501–2,500, 3 – 2,501–3,500, 4 – 3,501–4,500, 5 – 4,501 or more. Travel frequency: 1 – once a year, 2 – twice a year, 3 – three times a year, 4 – four or more times a year. $n = 86$; * $p < 0.10$; ** $p < 0.05$.

at the destination. Rather, they preferred comfortable accommodation and delicious food to get value for money.

The significance of differences in utility score average of attributes and levels by sociodemographic variables was determined using the ANOVA test. The differences between homogeneous groups were defined using Post Hoc-LSDB (Table 5). The attribute of distance from the place of origin differed by age. That is, those aged 20–24 preferred domestic destinations over those aged 47 and older ($F = 2.844$; $p < 0.05$). Travellers aged 47–57 preferred to stay 1–4 days in a destination ($F = 2.305$; $p < 0.05$), whereas those aged 20–24 preferred to stay 9–11 days ($F = 2.501$; $p < 0.05$).

Tourists with an income of 2,501–3,500 TRY preferred a cultural and heritage destination more than those with an income of 2,500 TRY and less ($F = 2.170$;

$p < 0.10$). Those with an income of 1,501–2,500 TRY preferred nature, activity, and adventure more than tourists with an income of 2,501–3,500 TRY ($F = 2.225$; $p < 0.10$). Finally, those with an income of 2,500 TRY and less preferred to stay for 9–11 days more than those with an income of 2,501–3,500 TRY ($F = 3.118$; $p < 0.05$).

Travellers who travel three times a year preferred a domestic destination, whereas those who travel once a year preferred an international destination ($F = 2.682$; $p < 0.05$). Thus, in response to RQ2, destination choice attributes differed by sociodemographic variables, except for value for money. In particular, the levels of culture and heritage versus nature, activity, and adventure, domestic versus international trips, and 1–4 days versus 9–11 days differed by sociodemographic variables.

Table 6 Utility Score Average and *t*-Test Scores of Attitudes and Levels by Socio-Demographic Variables

| Attribute Level | Gender | | | | | | Marital status | | | | | | Working status | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------|------|----------|---------------|-------|---------------|-----------------|------|-------------|------------------|-------|---------------|------------------|------|-------------|----------------------|-------|---------------|--|
| | Female (n = 40) | | | Male (n = 46) | | | Single (n = 69) | | | Married (n = 17) | | | Working (n = 42) | | | Not working (n = 44) | | | |
| | M | SD | <i>t</i> | M | SD | <i>p</i> | M | SD | <i>t</i> | M | SD | <i>p</i> | M | SD | <i>t</i> | M | SD | <i>p</i> | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| What travellers look for in a destination | -0.24 | 2.32 | -1.05 | 2.17 | 1.67 | 0.09* | -0.87 | 2.05 | 0.13 | 2.54 | -1.66 | 0.09* | -0.34 | 2.66 | -0.98 | 1.79 | 1.31 | 0.19 | |
| Culture and heritage | -0.21 | 2.78 | 0.33 | 2.37 | -1.00 | 0.32 | 0.46 | 2.53 | -1.46 | 2.17 | 2.88 | 0.00** | -0.36 | 2.48 | 0.50 | 2.61 | -1.56 | 0.12 | |
| Nature, activity, and adventure | 0.45 | 2.78 | 0.71 | 2.38 | -0.45 | 0.64 | 0.41 | 2.49 | 1.32 | 2.80 | -1.31 | 0.19 | 0.71 | 2.67 | 0.48 | 2.48 | 0.40 | 0.68 | |
| Sea, sand, and sun | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Distance from place of origin | -0.23 | 1.73 | 0.50 | 1.81 | -1.92 | 0.05** | 0.18 | 1.71 | 0.08 | 2.18 | 0.21 | 0.83 | -0.13 | 2.00 | 0.45 | 1.55 | -1.52 | 0.13 | |
| Domestic trip | 0.23 | 1.73 | -0.50 | 1.81 | 1.92 | 0.05** | -0.18 | 1.71 | -0.08 | 2.18 | -0.21 | 0.83 | 0.13 | 2.00 | -0.45 | 1.55 | 1.52 | 0.13 | |
| International trip | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Season | 0.31 | 1.42 | 0.16 | 1.11 | 0.54 | 0.58 | 0.18 | 1.30 | 0.18 | 1.30 | -0.81 | 0.41 | 0.34 | 1.06 | 0.13 | 1.43 | 0.77 | 0.43 | |
| Summer or autumn | 0.12 | 1.55 | 0.40 | 1.35 | -0.86 | 0.38 | 0.28 | 1.51 | 0.21 | 1.16 | 0.17 | 0.86 | 0.03 | 1.34 | 0.50 | 1.51 | -1.52 | 0.13 | |
| Spring or summer | -0.44 | 1.44 | -0.56 | 1.60 | 0.36 | 0.71 | -0.46 | 1.56 | -0.67 | 1.37 | 0.50 | 0.61 | -0.37 | 1.38 | -0.63 | 1.65 | 0.78 | 0.43 | |
| Autumn or winter | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Length of stay (days) | -0.06 | 2.10 | 0.04 | 2.14 | -0.24 | 0.80 | -0.18 | 2.13 | 0.73 | 1.90 | -1.62 | 0.10* | 0.54 | 1.93 | -0.52 | 2.16 | 2.42 | 0.01** | |
| 1-4 | -0.20 | 1.42 | -0.30 | 1.47 | 0.33 | 0.74 | -0.34 | 1.38 | 0.05 | 1.67 | -1.02 | 0.31 | -0.18 | 1.36 | -0.33 | 1.53 | 0.48 | 0.63 | |
| 5-8 | -0.15 | 2.15 | 0.34 | 1.94 | -1.11 | 0.26 | 0.31 | 2.02 | -0.69 | 1.97 | 1.83 | 0.07* | -0.48 | 1.87 | 0.68 | 2.05 | -2.76 | 0.00** | |
| 9-11 | 0.41 | 2.12 | -0.08 | 1.63 | 1.23 | 0.22 | 0.21 | 1.87 | -0.10 | 1.93 | 0.61 | 0.53 | 0.12 | 1.87 | 0.17 | 1.90 | -0.12 | 0.90 | |
| ≥12 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Value for money | -0.02 | 1.04 | -0.08 | 1.21 | 0.24 | 0.80 | -0.14 | 1.16 | 0.30 | 0.94 | -1.48 | 0.14 | 0.09 | 1.07 | -0.19 | 1.17 | 1.19 | 0.23 | |
| Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation, delicious food, and entertainment | 0.02 | 1.04 | 0.08 | 1.21 | -0.24 | 0.80 | 0.14 | 1.16 | -0.30 | 0.94 | 1.48 | 0.14 | -0.09 | 1.07 | 0.19 | 1.17 | -1.19 | 0.23 | |
| Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation and delicious food | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Notes The highest score of each attribute is shown in bold. *n* = 86; * *p* < 0.10, ** *p* < 0.05.

T-tests revealed differences in attitude and level utility score averages by gender, marital status, and working status (Table 6). Regarding gender, female travellers preferred cultural and heritage destinations more than males ($t = 1.67$; $p < 0.10$). Male travellers tend to prefer domestic destinations ($t = 1.81$; $p < 0.05$) while females prefer international destinations ($t = 1.81$; $p < 0.05$). Regarding marital status, married travellers preferred cultural and heritage destinations ($t = -1.66$; $p < 0.10$), whereas single travellers preferred nature, activity, and adventure destinations ($t = 2.88$; $p < 0.05$). Married travellers preferred to stay for 1–4 days ($t = -1.62$; $p < 0.10$), whereas single travellers preferred 9–11 days ($t = 1.83$; $p < 0.10$). Regarding working status, working travellers preferred to stay for 1–4 days ($t = 2.42$; $p < 0.05$), and non-working travellers preferred to stay for 9–11 days ($t = -2.76$; $p < 0.05$).

As a result, in response to RQ2, these findings show that travellers' destination preferences differ by attributes and levels based on sociodemographic factors. More specifically, destination type preferences vary by gender and marital status; distance preferences vary by gender, and length of stay varies by marital and working status.

Discussion and Conclusion

Destination choice is a popular study issue. The study focuses on destination attributes to understand travellers' destination preferences. Travellers are prone to prioritizing essential destination attributes while planning a trip. Destination choice behaviour is affected by several internal and external factors, but mostly by basic attributes such as destination type, distance, season, length of stay, and value for money. Although the decision-making process in tourism has been extensively studied, few studies have attempted to use conjoint analysis to identify the priority of attributes and levels of destination choice. As a result, using a CBC analysis, this study attempted to fill this gap by revealing how travellers make destination choices. The purpose of this study was to figure out which attributes travellers prioritize the most when choosing where to travel. Quantitative data were collected by a conjoint method offering multiple hypothetical scenarios and examined based on a multivariate approach. Con-

joint analysis was utilized to understand more about tourists' preferences for destination choice. Overall, Turkish travellers mostly prefer domestic destinations of sea, sand, and sun for 9–11 days in spring or summer, while focusing on comfortable accommodation and delicious food. By investigating destination choice from a different perspective, this study contributes to the literature by examining the priority attributes of destination choice. Using CBC analysis, this empirical study identified the importance of the attributes and levels in travellers' destination choices. As a result, by offering an experimental perspective, the work aids future research. It also offers a variety of practical implications for how tourism destinations might strengthen their product offerings.

Theoretical Contributions

Theoretically, this study can help clarify unexplored aspects for further research into the attributes and levels of destination choice. Destination choice research will continue to increase in popularity in the future, thus researchers should focus on using choice-based tests to better understand tourists' preferences. Card-7 was shown to be the most popular destination profile among travellers. The part-worth utility of its attributes proves that Turkish travellers prefer domestic sea, sand, and sun destinations in spring and summer for nine or more days while focusing on comfortable accommodation and delicious food. As seen in the study by Pai and Ananthakumar (2017), spring is the most favourite season for travelling. However, length of stay varied, as longer stays were preferred over medium or shorter holidays. Turkish travellers have different preferences for length of stay than Indians, and they have different preferences for distance from their origin than Indonesians. As a result, the attributes and levels of destination choice differ depending on the tourists' nationality (e.g. Nuraeni et al., 2015; Pai & Ananthakumar, 2017). This is an interesting finding for future research.

Indirect methodology-based studies have utilized conjoint analysis to investigate tourists' preferences for accommodation and tour packages (Chiam et al., 2009; Denizci Guillet et al., 2011, 2015; Huertas Garcia et al., 2014; Pai & Ananthakumar, 2017; Tripathi

& Siddiqui, 2010), and to investigate the travel preferences of youths (Nuraeni et al., 2015; Vukic et al., 2015). However, comprehensive research on the factors that influence destination choice for people of different backgrounds is still needed. This research implemented an experimental approach to determine which destination attributes and levels travellers prefer most when choosing a destination, and then examined these attributes and levels in light of travellers' sociodemographic characteristics.

This study highlights three main contributions of the conjoint approach. First, it has not been much used previously to explore destination choice, although this has shown that it is well suited to this research field. Thus, this approach can be very useful for evaluating and understanding destination preferences. Second, the factors that travellers pay attention to in their destination choice were presented based on choice profiles. Third, travellers' preferences were segmented based on sociodemographic characteristics.

Practical Implications

The results have significant managerial implications for travel companies. According to the findings, focusing on destination attributes can accurately predict Turkish travellers' preferences. The study, like the study by Qiu et al. (2018), reveals that people with different aims prefer to choose different destinations. The findings also show that Goossens' (2000) push factors, or destination attributes, have an impact on destination choice. Furthermore, the research uncovers useful information about destination attribute preferences.

Travellers aged 20–24 prefer domestic destinations, while those aged 47 and over prefer international destinations, according to the findings. Those with low incomes prefer nature, activity, and adventure destinations more than those with high incomes. Another interesting finding is that those who travel three times a year travel more domestically than people who only travel once a year. International destinations are prioritized by Turkish travellers who travel at least once a year. Younger travellers (20–24 years old) want to stay for 9 days or more, whereas elder visitors (47–57 years old) want to stay for 1–4 days. Females prefer international cultural and heritage destinations, while males

prefer the opposite. Single travellers prefer to stay 9–11 days in nature, activity, and adventure destinations, whereas married travellers prefer to stay 1–4 days in cultural and heritage destinations. Travellers who are working prefer a shorter stay than those who are not. Thus, these findings support arguments that sociodemographic characteristics affect destination choice.

Given these findings, travel companies could create diverse tour packages based on sociodemographic factors to increase product quality and sales, as destination choice decisions play a significant role in tour planning and marketing. Travel companies should, for example, offer tour packages with lengthier domestic stays for young Turkish travellers (20–24 years old) and shorter international stays for older Turkish travellers (47–57 years old). They should suggest international cultural and heritage destinations for females, but domestic non-cultural and heritage destinations for males. Short-stay tour packages to cultural and heritage destinations should be geared toward married travellers, while longer-stay nature, activity, and adventure destinations should be geared toward singles. Finally, travel companies should provide both short-stay and long-stay tours for working and non-working travellers.

Limitations and Future Research

The study contains four major shortcomings. First, 86 questionnaires were analysed for research. The small sample size is a limitation; Pai and Ananthakumar (2017) analysed 150 questionnaires, while Lee (2016) only received 117. Although the sample size is small in conjoint analysis, it has a representative feature. Researchers can use conjoint analysis for even the smallest samples if they access enough respondents to adequately represent the population (Orme, 2010, p. 62). Second, because the importance of attributes differs by country, the results are particular to Turkish travellers. As a result, future research should investigate the relationship between sociodemographic factors and destination choices in various countries. Following Deng et al. (2021), tourists' preferences can be researched by age, profession, education, gender, and living environment to develop a clearer understanding of destination choice. Third, this study was limited to de-

termining Turkish travellers' destination preferences based on five attributes. Multivariate techniques could be used in future studies to investigate more attributes and levels that potentially influence destination choice decisions. Fourth, because understanding destination choice is crucial, tourism scholars are attempting to identify the key factors that influence these decisions or preferences. As a result, future research could focus on essential aspects of the issue.

Appendix 1 Destination Attributes Profiles/Cards

1. Domestic trip to a place that is nature-based, activity, and adventure for 9–11 days in spring or summer. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation and delicious food.
2. International trip to a place that is nature-based, activity and adventure for 9–11 days in autumn or winter. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation, delicious food, and entertainment.
3. Domestic trip to a place that is cultural and heritage for 9–11 days in summer or autumn. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation and delicious food.
4. Domestic trip to a place that is nature-based, activity, and adventure for 5–8 days in summer or autumn. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation and delicious food.
5. Domestic trip to a place that is cultural and heritage for 9–11 days in spring or summer. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation, delicious food, and entertainment.
6. International trip to a place that is cultural and heritage for 5–8 days in summer or autumn. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation and delicious food.
7. Domestic trip to a place that is sea, sand, and sun for more than 12 days in summer or autumn. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation, delicious food, and entertainment.
8. International trip to a place that is sea, sand, and sun for 1–4 days in spring or summer. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation and delicious food.
9. Domestic trip to a place that is cultural and heritage for 1–4 days in autumn or winter. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation and delicious food.
10. International trip to a place that is sea, sand, and sun for 9–11 days in summer or autumn. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation and delicious food.
11. Domestic trip to a place that is cultural and heritage for 1–4 days in summer or autumn. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation and delicious food.
12. Domestic trip to a place that is sea, sand, and sun for 5–8 days in autumn or winter. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation, delicious food, and entertainment.
13. International trip to a place that is cultural and heritage for more than 12 days in summer or autumn. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation, delicious food, and entertainment.
14. International trip to a place that is nature-based, activity and adventure for 1–4 days in summer or autumn. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation, delicious food, and entertainment.
15. International trip to a place that is cultural and heritage for more than 12 days in autumn or winter. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation and delicious food.
16. International trip to a place that is cultural and heritage for 5–8 days in spring or summer. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation, delicious food, and entertainment.

Appendix 2 Simulation Cards

1. Domestic trip to a place that is sea, sand, and sun for 9–11 days in summer or autumn. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation and delicious food.
2. Domestic trip to a place that is nature-based, activity and adventure for 1–4 days in autumn or winter. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation, delicious food, and entertainment.
3. Domestic trip to a place that is nature-based, activity, and adventure for 9–11 days in summer or autumn. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation and delicious food.
4. Domestic trip to a place that is cultural and heritage for 9–11 days in summer or autumn. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation, delicious food, and entertainment.

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Descriptive Analysis of the Recent Advances of Film-Induced Tourism: Identification of Strengths, Gaps and Opportunities

Sara Nunes

Higher Colleges of Technology, UAE
sara.nunes.pt@gmail.com

Samiha Chemli

University of Deusto, Spain
s.chemli@icloud.com

Alejandro del Moral Agúndez

University of Extremadura, Spain
delmoral@unex.es

Kang Jin Seo

Woosong University, Republic of Korea
jormundgand@naver.com

Julia Fragoso da Fonseca

Polytechnic Institute of Leiria, Portugal
julia.fonseca@ipleiria.pt

Film-induced tourism is a recent topic in academic research, only studied since the '90s, and especially in the US and UK, followed by Australia, Asia, and Europe, becoming a worldwide theme with its expansion to Asia. In the beginning, the main studies were focused on justifying the importance of studying the topic and concentrating on the power of film and TV productions in motivating tourism demand, followed by a theoretical and methodological improvement focused on impacts, development, and marketing initiatives. At the moment, studies are focused on a cross-disciplinary approach and commodification of location and culture. Nowadays, numerous studies focus on this subject, and this paper intends to analyse the latest advances in the field over the last eight years. Our study explores their strengths, potential, gaps, and opportunities. In terms of results, we can affirm the strengths related to the studies centred on the impacts of film-induced tourism on destinations, film-induced tourism as a motivator for the intention to visit through exhibited images, and tourism marketing activities and initiatives based on film and TV productions. In terms of gaps and opportunities, these are related to tourist experiences and authenticity, celebrities, sustainable planning, cross-disciplinary studies, residents' perspectives, consumers' answers to brand placement, the role of governments in terms of strategies and policies, the importance of social networks in the field, and the need for more studies to be developed worldwide, not only based on western examples.

Keywords: film-induced tourism, tourism, film and media, television, tourist destinations



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Introduction and Background

Tourism to places shown in film productions has been prevalent since the advent of cinema (Beeton, 2011;

Kim & Reijnders, 2018) and became even more critical when producers decided to start contemplating several locations in the city besides the studios, which

began to arouse interest among audiences in visiting the portrayed places. Some examples of early film productions are *Roma, città aperta* (1945), *Sciuscià* (1946), *L'amore* (1948), *Villa Borghese* (1953), *Roman Holidays* (1953) and many others. After that, many film productions also started to bet on specific destinations for their recordings, staying less in studios. The relationship between tourism and cinema stopped being casual as the two sectors began working together, leading to the film-induced tourism phenomenon.

Many recent works have called attention to this phenomenon, mainly focused on four main categories: the influence of productions on the decision to travel, the actions carried out by destinations, the economic impacts of film tourism, and the marketing and commercialization of tourist activities (Béric et al., 2013). From the authors' perspective, it seems a limited approach that ignores other components actively correlated with film-induced tourism. Our study attempts to move a step further and identify more categories that influence the film-induced tourism dynamic.

This paper's main objective is to analyse the strengths of the recent advances in the field from the last eight years that should be recognized, valued, and applied by tourist destinations and to explore the gaps and opportunities that will suggest new lines of investigation for future research in the field. This research is vital as it can provide significant insights for tourism destinations managers, stakeholders, and film commissions and contribute to local communities' wellbeing.

Methodology

As stated before, the majority of studies have focused mainly on the economic impacts and benefits from this type of tourism in the tourist destinations portrayed, on the influence that film and TV productions have on the image of a tourist destination, on the motivations and preferences of visitors, and on the branding strategies carried out by tourist destinations (Riley & Van Doren, 1992; Riley et al., 1998; Tooke & Baker, 1996; Hudson & Ritchie, 2006a, 2006b; Iwashita, 2006; Kim & Richardson, 2003; O'Connor et al., 2008; Kim & Assaker, 2014).

The purpose of this research is to analyse the latest

advances undertaken within the film-induced tourism field since 2013, noting strengths, gaps, and opportunities for future research. To address the problem, an in-depth analysis was conducted based on descriptive research and secondary data from the studies within this topic through an extensive review of scientific journals available on Web of Science (WOS), Scopus, SSCI and books. The reason for including books relates to the fact that some of the most significant work in the field is presented in books that have a far more multidisciplinary and complex approach.

To gather the information, the authors followed the qualitative approach and developed content analysis, hermeneutics, focusing on 128 published articles in the field of film-induced tourism. In terms of sampling technique, the authors used the criterion method, which allowed for analysing specific articles and books published since 2013. Since undertaking a comprehensive and meaningful study of the field is virtually impossible due to its multidisciplinary nature and the high number of studies, the authors decided to establish an exclusion criterion. Therefore, the authors prioritized higher-quality studies, studies that analysed a new approach to the area, and studies that consider diverse types of productions and see film-induced tourism as a broader concept, and excluded articles that offer a limited approach to the field and where the new advances and progress in the field were not considered.

After analysing the studies, the authors decided to use the qualitative method quotation banks (see Figure 1), where relevant quotations were organized into categories or themes. Based on the results, the authors propose that film tourism can be categorized into five broad types presented below, where it can be seen that film studies have evolved from impacts, motivation, and marketing activities developed by tourist destinations to an analysis of tourism experiences, involvement, nostalgia, and authenticity (Nunes et al., 2020).

The authors also decided to adopt a different methodology compared with previous studies with a similar approach. The goal was not to describe the evolution of studies in the field, which was already done by several authors (Connell, 2012; Beeton, 2016), and also not to replicate, support, and reinforce the most

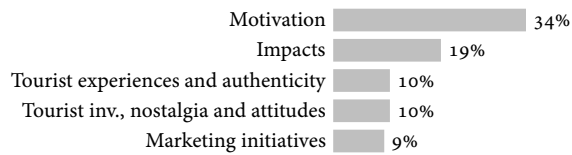


Figure 1 Quote Bank about the Film-Induced Tourism Studies (2013–2021)

critical studies, giving credit to specific authors, which has also been the approach of the majority of the studies in the field. Instead, the authors decided to aggregate the studies that brought a new perspective and advances in the field between 2013–2021 and analyse film-induced tourism knowledge achieved and recognized in the field up to this point. This methodology will also allow for comparison of the number of studies per category.

In addition, the authors were confronted with some overlap given the connections of perception, image, and intention of visit; however, these studies were organized by the main explored topic within the spectra of film-induced tourism and organized by data. Furthermore, the aforementioned similar studies in the field took place years ago; therefore, this study fills a significant gap that can bring about a further discussion of the field of film-induced tourism.

Category 1. Economic direct and indirect impacts of film-induced tourism on destinations (O'Connor & Kim, 2013; Balli et al., 2013; Martin-Jones, 2014; Quintal & Phau, 2014; Corton & Ebrahimpour, 2014; Kim et al., 2015; Yoon et al., 2015; Bharti, 2015; Beeton & Cavicchi, 2015; Di Blasi & Arangio, 2015; Di Cesare & La Salandra, 2015; Pratt, 2015; Costa, 2016; Kim & Nam, 2016; Mandic et al., 2017; Tkalec et al., 2017; Li et al., 2017; Bąkiewicz et al., 2017; Park, 2018; Taylor, 2018; Schmidt et al., 2019; Du et al., 2019; Depken et al., 2020; Lundberg & Lindstrom, 2020).

Based on the studies presented, we can affirm that there are several benefits of film-induced tourism in tourist destinations, usually analysed in the form of direct and indirect impacts. The direct impacts are related to the expenses from the audiovisual production teams, the generation of employment and taxes, and the indirect impacts derived from the high number

of tourists attracted to the destination in the short, medium, and long term due to the film and TV productions. In terms of direct impacts and depending on the type of production (films, commercials, TV programmes, documentaries, photo shoots), the production team can have more than 100 professionals. The duration of the stay can be as long as three months, adding two months for preparation. In terms of cost for three months of shooting per production on average, the expense would be around USD 21 million.

In terms of indirect impacts, it is proved by the presented studies that the exposure of film or TV production location leads to an increase in tourism demand not only after the production release but also in the following years. It also leads to a rise in tourism revenue. The increment of tourism demand and tourism revenue varies from 25% to 150% on average, and in some cases, the increment is up to 200% to 300%. For instance, New Zealand saw their tourism demand rise threefold with the release of the trilogy *The Lord of Rings* (2001, 2002, and 2003) and Miami saw an increment of 150% in tourism demand with the production *Miami Vice* (2006); Thailand, with the production *Lost in Thailand* (2012), also saw an increment rise of 93% in its tourism demand.

Also, new parts of cities started to be included in the tourist areas and promoted the increase of the tourism supply on the tourist destination; this is the case with *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008), where tour operators and travel agents started organizing commercialized tours to the slums. Hotels also gained recognition and started being overbooked for a few years after the production's release, for instance, The Crown Hotel from the production *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (1994). In addition, some tourist attractions had increased visitors, such as Wallace Monument, Scotland, from the production *Braveheart* (1995), the National Parks of Sydney through the production of *Mission Impossible* (2000), Rosslyn Chapel in Scotland with the production *The Da Vinci Code* (2006), Highclere Castle in the United Kingdom through the production *Downton Abbey* (2010), and the Devils Tower in Croatia through *Game of Thrones* (2011).

These impacts had been noticed since the analysis of earlier films and TV productions, such as *Dallas*

(1978), *Crocodile Dundee* (1986), *Dances with Wolves* (1990), and *Forrest Gump* (1994); however, after the year 2000 and especially after the film production *The Beach* (2000), the impacts on tourism demand and tourism revenue stopped presenting itself as a slight influence and became a worldwide phenomenon with incredible increases of tourism demand and revenue. In addition, those indirect impacts came to be increasingly higher due to the development of new media technologies, such as cable television, video, and internet, among others, which allow repeated visualizations.

Category 2. Film-induced tourism as a motivator for intention of visit through exhibited images and media (Carvalho, 2013; Chen, 2013; Mwaura et al., 2013; Basanez & Ingram, 2013; Spears et al., 2013; Mathisen & Perbensen, 2013; Josiam et al., 2014; Josiam et al., 2015; Baloglu et al., 2014; Tessitore et al., 2014; Ritichainuwat & Rattanaphinanchai, 2015; Ali, 2015; Liu, 2015; Poonia & Chauhan, 2015; Quintal & Phau, 2015; Loureiro & de Araujo, 2015; Lopez et al., 2015; Pennacchia, 2015; Puleo, 2015; Oviedo-Garcia et al., 2016; Lee & Bai, 2016a; Fu et al., 2016; Hetland et al., 2016; Chiu et al., 2016; Stylos et al., 2017; Kumar & Dung, 2017; Itoo & Nagar, 2017; Yang et al., 2017; Ismail et al., 2017; Meneguel et al., 2017; Nunes, 2018; Terzidou et al., 2018; Wen et al., 2018; Dubois & Gibbs, 2018; Tham & Kim, 2018; Lian & Yu, 2019; Du et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2020; Pookaiyaudom & Tan, 2020; Blanchet & Fabry, 2020; Chen et al., 2021; Vila et al., 2021; Singh et al., 2021).

Based on the studies presented, we can confirm that in general, studies carried out show that the images of a tourist destination, when it is transmitted through a film or TV production, can be a powerful and effective strategy increasing the destination's brand notoriety and image.

Film productions and literature expose tourist destinations and can influence the travel preferences and motivations of individuals to have the desire to live the same experiences presented by the production, as they develop feelings, emotions, and attitudes when visualizing the production. The more involved the spectator is, the more their interrelationship with the destina-

tion will develop, and their idea and motivation will be to try to live the same emotions as the protagonists of the production. For instance, over 80% of Britons plan their holidays after seeing tourist destinations in film productions. Also, it is estimated that three million of the thirty million foreign tourists that the UK receives each year are attracted by the places and landscapes that they have seen in films. It is estimated that one-tenth of British tourism can be attributed to the impact of films shot at the destination; the ratio between the two sectors is estimated to represent £2.1 billion of visitor spending per year.

Category 3. Film-induced tourism marketing activities and initiatives (Silva et al., 2013; Lara, 2013; Béric et al., 2013; Hao & Ryan, 2013; Rodriguez Campo et al., 2014; Ozdemir & Adan, 2014; Urso, 2015; Shao et al., 2016; Candrea et al., 2016; Pan et al., 2017; Sharma, 2017; Nunes et al., 2020).

Based on the studies presented, we can affirm that nowadays, when the market is very competitive and where all countries try to promote their tourism products using the most diverse marketing techniques, film and TV productions can be constituted as an important marketing tool for the promotion of tourist destinations, because it is a way to minimize costs, as the cost of promoting a tourist destination is extremely high. Also, results are more effective than the traditional promotion strategies since the images are not biased, as they are not intended for commercialization and advertising; viewers are more likely to respond emotionally to the perceived information which influence the decision to visit. In addition, they are much more comprehensive than advertising, thus reaching more potential consumers.

Moreover, film-induced tourism has a great capacity to make tourist destinations known, transforming locations without great tourist expression into authentic tourist attractions, as a brand based on film and TV production creates visibility. It can increase brand loyalty concerning consumer choices. Film and TV productions keep viewers interested in a tourist destination in an innovative and accurate way. Film and TV productions reach a very public audience and exert great power on the viewer's imagination.

Also, a campaign rarely remains in the viewer's memory, contrary to what happens with film and TV productions that have a long-lasting effect due to the emotional connection they arouse, since TV and cinema productions can be rewatched through numerous existing communication channels, such as cinema, DVD, and TV.

In addition, tourist destinations organize tours supported by maps, interactive brochures, and websites based on film productions, such as *The Devil Wears Prada* (2006), *Mamma Mia!* (2008), *Australia* (2008), *The Bridges of Madison County* (1995), *Harry Potter* (2001, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2007), and *Ratatouille* (2007), which have attracted numerous visitors.

Last but not least, tourist destinations can also invest in alternative initiatives. One of these initiatives is film commissions, which are public, non-profit organizations, usually public bodies. These entities work to attract audiovisual productions, promote regional competitive advantages, and organize support and negotiation services with the government. Another alternative is to invest in film festivals, which are of great importance, as they not only attract many people who want to be present but also cause a promotional and economic impact in the region due to the presence and dissemination of the media. There is a continuous growth in film festivals, such as in Venice, Cannes, Hong Kong, Berlin, Vienna, Los Angeles, New York, London, Edinburgh, Goa, and Manila.

Category 4. Film-induced tourism analysis of tourist experiences and authenticity (Kim & Assaker, 2014; Bryce et al., 2015; D'Alessandro et al., 2015; Yen & Croy, 2016; O'Connor & Kim, 2016; Kirillova et al., 2017; Ritichainuwat et al., 2018; James et al., 2018; St-James et al., 2018; Nechita et al., 2020; Lovell & Thurgill, 2021).

Based on the studies presented, we can affirm that some displacement occurs in the film-induced tourism context since the locations portrayed in the film and TV productions sometimes do not correspond to reality. There are many examples of displacement: for instance, the movie *Sex and the City 2* (2010) was shot in Morocco, not in Abu Dhabi as mentioned in the production; the majority of the scenes in *Braveheart*

(1995), a fictionalized retelling of how Scotland fought for its independence during the Middle Ages when England threatened to take it over completely, were actually shot in Ireland due to tax breaks the country offered; and *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), one of Spielberg's most critically acclaimed movies, was actually shot in Ireland, instead of Normandy, among other examples.

This displacement will lead to a negative and inauthentic experience and affect tourism demand and satisfaction. Film-tourists have high expectations of the images portrayed and expect hyper-real experiences based on motivational drivers such as nostalgia and scenery. We can affirm that film tourists attribute a higher value to their judgments of authenticity, and their experience is built through action. Film tourists are like pilgrims who focus on having an authentic experience, even with physical exercise and discomfort. The focus is to be a part of a temporary community (fellowship) where the engagement with the experience providers is primordial, and a displacement could lead to a less meaningful experience. Therefore, producers and tourist destinations must consider the negative impacts that displacement could bring and bet on authentic portrayed scenarios.

Category 5. Film-induced tourism and tourist involvement, nostalgia, celebrities, and pilgrimage (Busby, Huang, et al. 2013; Busby, Ergul, et al., 2013; Wong & Lai, 2013; Yen and Teng, 2015; Yen & Croy, 2016; Beeton, 2016; Kim & Kim, 2017; Chen, 2018; Kim & Kim, 2018a, 2018b; Kim, Kim, & King, 2019; Kim, Kim, & Han, 2019; Li & Liu, 2020).

Based on the studies presented, we can affirm that celebrities are seen as human brands, and it has been proved that they influence consumer behaviour through celebrity involvement. Celebrity involvement is a state of motivation towards an activity through emotional attachment, which is translated into celebrity endorsements or worship. The relationship with celebrities and actors of a film or TV production will create a high level of interest, empathy, and admiration and lead to strong associations, increasing the motivation to visit the location portrayed. The more emotional involvement the audience develops, the greater the like-

likelihood of their visiting film tourism locations and developing place attachment.

Several destination marketing organizations have used film celebrities to promote destinations (e.g. Bae Yong-Joon in South Korea and Jackie Chan in Hong Kong) since they are an effective marketing promotional tool due to the high levels of celebrity attachment transferred into place attachment. Celebrities play an important role in the process of selecting a tourist destination, and they are seen as an important pull factor with attributes such as trustworthiness and attractiveness. Therefore, celebrity attachment is positively related to place attachment, affecting the behavioural intentions of tourists. Tourist destinations can also develop place attachment by emphasizing affective and cognitive destination experiences.

Besides the presented five categories, the authors also recognized some other areas due to the evolution of the studies on film-tourism research spectra, which have started to become an interdisciplinary approach that involves other areas, such as the broader field of sociology, anthropology, and psychology, media, and audience studies, cultural studies, cultural geography, cultural heritage, marketing and environmental studies (Beeton, 2010; Reijnders, 2011; Connell, 2012). However, these new categories lack sufficient evidence and studies to be established as categories. Also, these studies need a broader context analysis and methodology. These recent studies can be sorted into twelve new areas, such as:

- *Effects of film-induced tourism on the local community* (Yoon et al., 2015; Garcia et al., 2015; McKercher et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2016; Beeton, 2016; Mendes et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2018; Saltık & Dönmez, 2020a; Kim & Park, 2021);
- *Loyalty to a tourism destination through film-induced tourism and its factors* (Chiu & Zen, 2016);
- *Sustainable planning in the tourism destination through film productions* (Lundberg & Lindstrom, 2020);
- *Role of cultural proximity between the film production and the audience and its impacts on tourist motivations and demand* (Chang, 2016);

- *Negative impacts for the communities hosting film site locations* (Bąkiewicz et al., 2017; Itoo & Nagar, 2019);
- *Consumers' answer to brand placement in movies* (Nagar, 2016);
- *A cross-disciplinary academic approach* which includes new areas related to film-induced tourism studies and exploring cause-effect relationships among factors (Basanez & Ingram, 2013; Fu et al., 2016; Saltık & Dönmez, 2020b);
- *Connection between film-induced tourism and voluntourism* (Shao & Gretzel, 2018);
- *Off-Location* such as film-themed events and theme parks related to a TV series or movie (Beeton, 2016);
- *Government cultural strategies* associated with the film-induced tourism phenomenon (Kim & Nam, 2016);
- *Tourist experiences have been transformed in the field* due to the impacts and changes of roles and functions where those experiences were performed (Park, 2018);
- *Understanding and approaching the relationship between media and tourism* (Månsson et al., 2020).

After analysing the significant studies undertaken within film-induced tourism over the last ten years, strengths and gaps will be presented and discussed.

Discussion of the Main Results

Strengths are related to the studies identified as category 1, category 2, and category 3. The following paragraphs present the main strengths based on the referenced authors.

A variety of studies allow us to affirm that film-induced tourism brings critical positive economic impacts for the tourist destination in terms of the direct effects and indirect effects; the latter results are extended in the years following the film or TV production launch.

In addition, we can affirm that film-induced tourism also has a vital role in the tourist destinations' promotion since it can constitute an important marketing tool that can make the difference in maximizing

costs and images portrayed on film and TV productions, and also increasing the possibility of the tourist destination being selected for a further visit. Due to this recognition, tourist destinations invest funds to capture productions and even facilities for producers, as well as developing many activities based on the film and TV productions.

In conclusion, we can say that this type of tourism brings numerous advantages to tourist destinations, such as regenerating neglected areas, revitalizing rural communities, increasing employment, increasing the number of visitors, increasing and improving infrastructure, boosting economic growth, increasing revenue, trade growth, awakening the call to visit, providing tourist visibility, making images of a place remain in the memory of spectators, improvement in cultural interest, decrease in seasonality, and contributing to the creation of new products and services in the tourist destination. It is recognized as an innovative marketing tool, able to catch a large audience that would never be reached through so-called promotion and to create local companies with unique characteristics related to production that cannot be replicated by other tourist destinations.

Gaps and Opportunities

After analysing the primary studies carried out on this theme, significant contributions were found. However, some gaps would be pertinent to study since they would allow for knowing more about the theme and allow anticipation and preparation of the tourist destinations. The gaps are related to the studies identified as category 4 and category 5. Also, category 1 and category 2 present some gaps in particular features that deserve our attention and further analysis, even though those categories were included in the strengths of this study. The main opportunities are related to new approaches and methodologies as well as new areas interconnected with film-induced tourism.

The *first gap* focuses on tourist experiences and authenticity, even though many authors have carried out several studies as presented previously. However, there is a need for more studies since there is still a lack of understanding of the importance of authenticity. The previous studies proved its importance in

terms of tourists' perspectives; it means film-induced tourists recognize the issues with commodification. However, the same does not happen concerning the industry; there is still a lack of understanding and recognition, ignoring film locations when displacement occurs. Currently, most productions focus on creating unrealistic expectations from visitors based on the transmitted images on the film or TV productions since the location portrayed in production is different from reality. This situation is more common than we usually think; producers are influenced to pick a destination that offers the best advantages related to incentives, location, services, infrastructures, and costs. Therefore, producers have been pressured to select the most competitive tourist destination regarding film-induced tourism, such as the United States, Canada, New Zealand, the UK, and Australia.

This process leads to problems related to authenticity, so it is vital to make an accurate transcription of reality, even though the films are notoriously works of fiction. The focus should be on developing film locations instead of story settings and prioritizing activities related to existential authenticity that film-induced tourists can experience to match hyper-real expectations and give them a sense of belonging based on cognitive, emotional, and behavioural involvement. Therefore, it is necessary to develop more studies on how to implement new strategies for the tourist destination to analyse how tourism bodies, authorities, and film commissions can work together and create an adequate analysis of displacement and the potential negative consequences for the tourist destination, including the concept of commodification.

In addition, tourists' experiences in the places visited and how they perceive, interact, and relate to the tourist destination should also be evaluated. In other words, we can say that there are no studies that measure the degree of satisfaction of tourists after an experience of film tourism, and this would be very important. It is also pertinent to analyse what kind of activities tourists are looking for in the destination and the ones which satisfied/dissatisfied them the most. Among the possible actions, the analysis should focus on a tour regarding the production locations, visits to film studios, theme parks depicting produc-

tions, events, film festivals and premieres, and visits to celebrity houses, among others. In addition, it would be very important to analyse how the tourist's experiences changed over time due to the impacts of film-induced tourism and changes in the functions of the portrayed places.

The *second gap* focuses on tourist involvement, nostalgia, and celebrities; even though many authors have carried out several studies, as presented previously, there is a need for more studies to understand to what extent the associations with celebrities could also bring negative connotations besides the already proven benefits. Celebrities can also be a risk since it is impossible to predict their career and behaviour in terms of morals and ethics. More studies should be developed to understand the cause-effect relationship between celebrities and different tourist destinations and impacts on the tourism demand when celebrities are involved in incidents, to analyse if this negative awareness would affect the tourism demand and satisfaction.

The *third gap* is related to the impacts since all the studies are mainly focused on the positive economic impacts of film and TV productions; however, not all the impacts are positive, and sociocultural and environmental impacts should also be part of the analysis. Traffic issues, over-tourism, sustainability, and the role of the local communities as the host of film site locations should also be analysed. The role of film-induced tourism in the sustainable planning and development of a tourist destination also deserves special attention. In addition, the majority of the studies focused on the analysis of the impact of a specific production and in a specific tourist destination which can bring a minimal approach and incredible results since specific results are not appropriate for making general conclusions.

The *fourth gap* is related to the motivations; even though many authors have carried out several studies, as presented previously, the process that pushes viewers to visit the site portrayed in the film or TV production is still unclear since not everyone who watches it decides to visit. It is essential to understand the role of the perceived value, emotional involvement, familiarity, empathy, identification, attitude, and connection with the production and determine how they can af-

fect the decision process. Only seeing place attributes alone may not explain the process: it needs to combine behavioural components, such as cultural, psychological, emotional, and physical elements of landscape and place consumption. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors that are more likely to be connected with film-induced tourism.

After analysing the presented gaps, we can conclude that studies of the field would require a broader context focus on large-scale studies. Some studies are also focused on a specific film and TV production where results cannot be accepted generally.

Concerning new opportunities for further research on the field, the *first opportunity* concerns the analysis of film and TV productions which expose undesirable images of the tourist destination. The studies should focus on the hypothesis that revealing negative aspects of the tourist destination will lead to a negative image which can lead to a lack of interest in a future visit to the tourist destination. Or the opposite, since the engagement with special interest tourism, such as dark tourism and slum tourism, among others, is a strong trend in terms of consumer behaviour.

The *second opportunity* consists of the analysis of cultural perspectives on film-induced tourism motivation and experiences. It is imperative to analyse whether different cultures among film and TV productions and viewers make it less likely to identify and motivate consumers' decisions to travel to a tourist destination portrayed on the film or TV production. Also, the role of culture on the film-tourist experiences and correspondent satisfaction or dissatisfaction should be analysed.

The *third opportunity* consists of analysing the role of the media in this whole process; the goal is to investigate if popular culture can influence destination image. Even though there are some studies, they are not enough to draw general conclusions. When media expose the production with a positive or negative perspective, the consequences on the tourism image and demand could differ.

The *fourth opportunity* consists of the analysis of film-induced tourism in a cause-effect relationships perspective among factors correlated directly with

the field, such as the relationship between authenticity and loyalty, or celebrity and tourists' satisfaction, among others. Film-induced tourism is a complex topic, requiring in-depth explanatory research seeking to explain relationships between phenomena, besides the already achieved cross-disciplinary academic approach with complementary areas such as popular and media culture, cultural geography, film studies, and theory approaches; cultural perspectives, media, and tourism; social psychology, and new media platforms.

The *fifth opportunity* consists of studying different approaches to keep the longevity of the tourism initiatives related to film-induced tourism contributing to sustainable planning and development of a tourist destination. It is imperative to maintain the longevity of film tourism initiatives and extend the benefits for the tourist destination in a long-term perspective, besides the importance of sustainable development and its sustainable development goals. All tourist destinations are focusing on a long-term aim to preserve environmental, natural, and social-economic equity, and film-induced tourism could be an essential tool for this achievement.

The *sixth opportunity* consists of studying if different genres might impact tourist visitation; it means to what extent different genres of film or TV production have the ability to influence tourism motivation and demand positively or negatively. It would be crucial to analyse if, for instance, horror movies and productions focused on controversial themes would also lead to tourist motivation and demand. It is vital to take into consideration different studies due to the subjectivity of the film and TV productions.

The *seventh opportunity* consists of studying residents' perspectives and attitudes towards film-induced tourism. With so many examples in the industry primarily related with over- and mass tourism in result of culture clashes based on cultural differences, economic inequality between locals and tourists, and failure to respect local customs and moral values, it is imperative to develop further research to analyse the satisfaction of residents in the planning, development, and establishment of film-induced tourism initiatives. In addition, it would be important to analyse how the

extent to which local residents' perceptions and attitudes towards film-induced tourism have changed, transformed, or adjusted over time.

The *eighth opportunity* consists of analysing consumers' answers to brand placement in movies. Due to the increment of competition, companies can see an opportunity in film and TV productions since those are alternative opportunities for advertisement. Besides, film and TV productions reach a larger audience and have a longer life span than short commercials.

The *ninth opportunity* consists of analysing in a further and more in-depth perspective the role of governments in terms of strategies and tourism policies in film-induced tourism, analysing their effects on the host communities and the creative industries.

The *tenth opportunity* consists of developing more studies on the field, based not only western examples, predominantly from the UK, Ireland, Australia, and the USA, but also including Asian studies. The authors Kim and Reijnders (2018) made an excellent contribution to the field with their book *Film Tourism in Asia*, however, more studies of this kind are needed to strengthen knowledge and achieve results.

Last but not least, the *eleventh opportunity* consists of developing studies on the importance of social networks in film-induced tourism in terms of motivation and image.

Further empirical studies in this area should then cover those gaps and opportunities that would help understand this typology of tourism in its fullness and reinforce the studies and the knowledge already achieved in the current literature review about the topic. Even though there are many studies in the field, it remains an emerging area that would benefit from this cross-disciplinarity.

Conclusion

After all the presented analysis, we can conclude that film-induced tourism, despite being a theme that has only begun to be recognized for its importance since the '90s, has generated many studies with the aim of understanding it as a whole. The first studies reported analysis on the US and UK, followed later by Australia, Asia, and Europe. Those studies were based on the positive economic impacts of a film or TV produc-

tion, film-induced tourism's role on tourist motivations, and the importance of film-induced tourism in marketing activities and initiatives from tourist destinations portrayed on film or TV productions. Those studies were about specific productions and specific tourist destinations, which are questionable for being applied to other destinations and film and TV productions.

In the last 20 years, more studies have been added within the spectra of film-induced tourism research which also started focusing on tourist experiences and authenticity and on the role of celebrities in tourist involvement, which has given a more extensive understanding and approach to the theme; however, those topics remain an emerging area for further empirical studies.

We can conclude there is insufficient evidence to date in specific areas viewed as potential gaps in film-induced tourism literature, besides the fact that previous studies did not explore a correlation between concepts that would allow a broader perspective and comprehension. The gaps are therefore related to tourist experiences and authenticity, tourism involvement, nostalgia and celebrities, negative impacts of film-induced tourism on destinations, and film-induced tourism as a motivator for the intention of visit through exhibited images; where place attributes alone might not be able to explain this process, it is also necessary to add the behavioural components. Not all viewers feel motivated to travel after watching a film or TV production.

The main opportunities related to new studies focusing on the connection of film-induced tourism with sustainable planning and development are as follows: to analyse if different genres of film and TV productions and different cultures among film and TV productions and viewers have different effects in terms of motivation and satisfaction; to analyse if film and TV productions that expose negative images about a tourist destination would imply a negative image leading to a lack of tourism motivation to visit the tourist destination; to focus on the cross-disciplinarity between factors and even exploring cause-effect relationships among them, and on residents' perspectives and attitudes towards film-induced tourism, the role of the

media on tourist motivation and consumers' answer to brand placement in movies.

In all, the presented authors can conclude that film-induced tourism is a profitable and growing sector worldwide that provides economic importance for the tourist destinations where the productions are made due to the increase in international travel and the growth in the entertainment industry. Therefore, it is imperative to invest in further research filling the gaps pinpointed by this study in terms of gaps and opportunities to keep taking advantage of the present benefits.

The best examples are destinations like New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia, among others, who have adopted film-induced tourism as a way of promoting their tourist destinations, taking advantage of the opportunities generated, and becoming part of the panorama of the leading world tourist destinations. This example can be applied to other tourist destinations if further research takes place contributing to empowering managers, film commissions, stakeholders and local communities.

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A 7P Comparison between Restaurant Managers' and Customers' Post-COVID-19 Quality Expectations

Marko Kukanja

University of Primorska, Slovenia

marko.kukanja@fts.upr.si

This study examines restaurant management and customer quality expectations (expected performances) in the post-COVID-19 pandemic period. The purpose of this study is to investigate which marketing-quality (7P) dimensions best explain the construct of restaurant quality expectations after the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and to determine whether differences exist between restaurant managers' and customers' quality expectations. An online survey was delivered via emails (managers) and social media (customers) in the Republic of Slovenia. A total of 422 valid online questionnaires were obtained from customers, and 89 completed questionnaires were gathered from managers. The 42-item questionnaire was based on the principles of the marketing mix. Results of exploratory factor analysis indicate that six marketing dimensions best explain restaurant quality expectations in the post-COVID-19 pandemic period (in order of importance): Physical evidence, Product, Promotion, Processes, Placement, and Price. Results also reveal a significant gap in quality expectations since price is the only dimension where no differences were found between restaurant managers' and customers' quality expectations. This research contributes to the literature by explaining the importance of the different 7P quality indicators for assuring restaurant quality in the post-COVID-19 pandemic period. By applying a 7P research methodology, we have also facilitated a benchmarking process for the international restaurant industry.

Keywords: COVID-19, managers, customers, restaurant, quality, marketing



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Introduction

In service industries, the quality of services offered constitutes one of the most critical elements for a competitive advantage of service firms in the global marketplace and significantly influences service firms' operational profitability (Kukanja & Planinc, 2018). Timely and accurate measurement of customers' expectations is crucial for improving service quality, creating a competitive advantage, and the effective allocation of production resources (Samanci et al., 2021). Similarly, in the restaurant industry, where there is intense competition among restaurant providers, restau-

rant firms should focus on analysing customers' expectations to improve the quality of their offerings and maintain customer satisfaction. Although service quality is measured from the customers' mainly subjective perspective, restaurant managers are expected to understand their customers' needs and expectations in order to provide high-quality offerings (Parasuraman et al., 1985) and maintain competitive and profitable business operations (Wang et al., 2021). Therefore, a holistic conceptualisation of restaurant service quality should consider both the customers' (external) and managers' (the inner) quality perspectives.

Studies on restaurant service quality that evaluate customers' quality expectations and perceptions are frequently reported in the literature. Nevertheless, significantly fewer studies have analysed both customers' and managers' quality perceptions (Dedeoğlu & Demirel, 2015; Kukanja, 2017), and only a few studies have focused solely on the managerial perspective (Kukanja et al., 2020). However, with the outbreak of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-COV-2), which causes the new COVID-19 disease, the global restaurant industry has suffered its heaviest blow ever in modern human history (Brizek et al., 2021), causing a 'new reality.' Accordingly, many researchers have focused on investigating the various aspects of restaurant customers' buying behaviour changes during the COVID-19 pandemic. The main topics referred to the analysis of risk perceptions (Yost & Cheng, 2021), social distancing (Wang et al., 2021), the safety of food packaging (Byrd et al., 2021), and many others (relevant state-of-the-art research findings are presented in Table 1). To the best of our knowledge, no study has analysed restaurant managers' quality expectations during the pandemic. In this context, neither has any study identified potential differences between restaurant managers' and customers' quality expectations in the post-COVID-19 pandemic period.

In the spring of 2021, the governments of the European (EU) member states have cautiously started to loosen the rigorous anti-COVID-19 measures. Due to the widespread vaccination of the population, the implementation of the EU digital COVID-19 travel certificate, and the gradual reopening of restaurant facilities, this study aims to reveal how to improve restaurant service quality in the ongoing post-COVID-19 pandemic period. It does this by simultaneously comparing the quality expectations of both restaurant managers and customers.

In this study, we implemented a marketing-based research concept. Using the theoretical principles of Kotler's marketing mix, we also aim to identify the most critical marketing quality dimensions in the post-COVID-19 pandemic period.

By understanding the importance of the different marketing-quality dimensions and the potential dif-

ferences between managers' and customers' quality expectations (expected performance), the long-term negative impacts of the pandemic on restaurant firms can also be minimised if proper recovery strategies are applied in time. Therefore, identifying potential differences between managers' and customers' quality expectations might also help strengthen restaurants' resilience strategies in the post-COVID-19 pandemic period (Yost & Cheng, 2021). Based on research results, restaurant firms should rethink and optimise their marketing-mix strategies and improve the quality of their offerings. Additionally, we believe that this study will also remain significant for future research since, according to Zhong et al. (2021), this is most probably not the last pandemic humanity will face in the forthcoming years.

This paper is based on a mixed methodological approach. After the literature review, primary data were collected using an online questionnaire. The design of the questionnaires was based on the study of Kukanja et al. (2017). An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed to investigate the expected quality structure, and the Wilcoxon Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to analyse the differences in quality expectations between managers and customers.

The remainder of the paper is organised as follows: the following sections discuss a literature review, the methodology and the presentation of research results. The paper concludes by presenting practical implications for the restaurant industry and indicating future research directions.

Literature Review

Restaurant Quality

Based on its customer-oriented concept of subjectivity, service quality is most often defined as the ability of a service to fulfil or surpass the gap (the difference) between customers' quality expectations and perceptions (Parasuraman et al., 1985). In the restaurant sector, service quality is critical because it results in the difference between customers' expectations and perceptions of quality. Customers have a high-quality experience when the perceptions exceed the expectations. Consequently, customer expectations and satisfaction and the concept of quality management have been im-

portant topics in the hospitality literature. Customers' choices to dine at restaurants and the research in this area were usually rooted in understanding the critical quality dimensions that motivate customer buying behaviour (Yost & Cheng, 2021).

Accordingly, there were several theoretical attempts to capture and empirically validate the critical components of service quality. One of the most widely used concepts is the Gap model of service quality by Parasuraman et al. (1985). This generic model presents the theoretical basis for the implementation of service quality management in service industries. Moreover, it provides a scale for the empirical measurement of service quality based on a 29-item SERVQUAL instrument composed of five RATER (Reliability, Assurance, Tangibles, Empathy, and Responsiveness) quality dimensions.

Many scholars modified the generic instrument to meet the specifics of the different service sectors. For example, Stevens et al. (1995) modified the SERVQUAL instrument to meet the specifics of the restaurant industry and introduced the DINESERV scale, Raajpoot (2002) introduced TANGSERV, a scale measuring tangible quality elements, and Chen et al. (2015) developed GR SERV – a tool for measuring consumer perceptions of service quality in green restaurants. In addition, there were also alternative attempts to validate service quality empirically. For example, Bufquin et al. (2017) introduced the dinEX instrument, which focuses on social dimensions of connectedness and homophily, while Kukanja et al. (2017) introduced a marketing-oriented service quality model that captures the characteristics of restaurant service quality based on marketing-mix quality indicators.

The generic SERVQUAL model applies a two-step (the gap) approach for measuring service quality. In contrast, all other models (e.g. SERVPERF, TANGSERV, DINESERV.per) are one-dimensional and focus solely on the service performance evaluation after the service encounter. Although they do not provide a numerical evaluation of differences between guests' quality expectations and perceptions, they have proved to be reliable service quality indicators since guests evaluate service quality based on their quality expectations (Kukanja et al., 2017).

Restaurant Customers' Quality Expectations (pre-COVID-19 Research)

The pre-COVID-19 research projects focused on measuring the perceived service quality, which, from our research perspective, disables the empirical analysis and a direct comparison of customers' quality expectations. Nevertheless, previous research results stressed the importance of different quality dimensions that define a satisfactory dining experience. Several studies (Gupta et al., 2007; Vanniarajan & Gurunathan, 2009) reported that food (*Product*) is the crucial quality dimension affecting guests' quality perceptions. In contrast, a large volume of studies (Mosavi & Ghaedi, 2012; Voon, 2012) described the role of *People* as the most critical restaurant quality dimension. The importance of the tangible (visible) quality attributes (*Physical evidence*) was also highlighted by many researchers (Cheng et al., 2012; Ryu & Han, 2011). In their study, Kukanja et al. (2017) found that restaurant customers primarily evaluate restaurant service quality based on three marketing dimensions (in order of importance): *People*, *Placement*, and *Product and Physical evidence*.

In this view, it is essential to note that research results might change according to the different methodologies (e.g. RATER, 7P) applied to the different studies. Moreover, customers with different cultural backgrounds have different quality expectations, which might also influence their quality perceptions from restaurant providers (Cha et al., 2019).

Restaurant Managers' Perceptions of Customers' Expectations of Quality (Pre-COVID-19 Research)

Managers' realistic perceptions of guests' quality expectations present the first step in the five-step model of service quality by Parasuraman et al. (1985). Moreover, restaurant managers must identify customers' quality expectations, as purchasing decisions are mainly driven by customer expectations of restaurant providers (Kim et al., 2021). Despite its importance for delivering restaurant service quality, managers' perceptions of customers' quality expectations have rarely been analysed in pre-COVID studies. According to Kukanja (2017), academics have simply not considered managers' perceptions of customers' quality expectations as a prerequisite for providing high-quality

services. Briggs et al. (2007) reported that hotel managers frequently misunderstand what level of service guests expect.

In their study, Dedeoğlu and Demirer (2015) analysed perceptions of service quality among the different groups of stakeholders (guests, managers, and staff). Their findings showed a discrepancy in perceptions of quality as employees and managers perceived service performance to be at a high level. In contrast, guests perceived it to be at a low level. Similarly, Kukanja (2017) analysed differences between restaurant customers and managers and found statistically significant differences in quality perceptions between both groups of respondents. Research results also revealed that the most critical marketing quality dimension for both groups of respondents was by far *People*. Other marketing quality dimensions were significantly less, or even not crucial, for ensuring restaurant quality.

In their research, Kukanja and Planinc (2018) assessed the influence of restaurant managers' quality perceptions on restaurant firms' profitability. According to managers' perspectives, research results revealed that only two quality dimensions are essential for ensuring overall restaurant quality – empathy and assurance, and tangibles. Regarding determining restaurant firms' financial success, the results show that the quality dimensions mentioned above have no impact on restaurants' operational profitability.

Restaurant Customers' Buying Behaviour during COVID-19 (2020–2021 Research Findings)

As stated above, to the best of our knowledge, no studies have analysed customers' and managers' quality expectations in the post-COVID-19 pandemic period. Nevertheless, several authors examined the influence of the pandemic on restaurant customers' buying behaviour during COVID-19 (we found no studies for restaurant managers).

During the pandemic, restaurant customers changed their buying behaviour. According to Eftimov et al. (2020), customers started to prepare food at home, reduced their shopping frequency, searched for alternative food supplies, and stockpiled food. Yost and Cheng (2021) state that COVID-19 has left an inefaceable mark on customers' buying behaviour by creat-

ing a 'new normal' among customers' spending ability, movement patterns, and eating habits. In contrast, according to Pantano et al. (2021), the pandemic should not necessarily have a long-term impact on restaurant customers' buying behaviour. Our literature review found relatively few studies that analysed customers' buying behaviour during the pandemic from the various (partial) perspectives. Accordingly, Table 1 presents the relevant research findings.

As can be seen from the studies presented above, there is no consensus about changes in customer behaviour during the pandemic from the quality management perspective. Various methodological approaches have been adopted in different online studies. Moreover, no study applied a 'traditional' (e.g. Servqual), holistic, or a marketing-based approach to analysing potential changes in customer quality expectations during the pandemic. Most studies stressed the importance of risk perceptions, imposed safety measures, and motivations to dine out. Suppose changes in customer buying behaviour will have a long-term (a post-pandemic) effect on their quality expectations and demand. In that case, restaurant managers will have to readjust their perceptions of guests' expectations and adapt restaurant quality and marketing-mix strategies to provide satisfactory quality offerings (Madeira et al., 2020).

Specifically, from the futuristic and marketing-mix perspectives, this study has two objectives. First, to investigate which marketing-quality dimensions will best explain quality expectations in the post-COVID-19 pandemic period. Secondly, to explore if statistically significant differences exist between restaurant managers' and customers' quality expectations. Based on the above-presented research findings, we pose our research questions (RQs) as follows:

- RQ1 *Which marketing-quality dimensions best explain restaurant quality in the post-COVID-19 pandemic period according to restaurant managers' and customers' quality expectations?*
- RQ2 *Are there are statistically significant differences between restaurant managers' and customers' quality expectations concerning the post-COVID-19 pandemic period?*

Table 1 Restaurant Quality Studies during COVID-19 (2020–2021)

| Authors | Main theme | Location, sample size, and data collection | Major findings |
|---------------------------|--|--|---|
| Brewer and Sebby (2021) | Effect of online restaurant menus on consumers' purchase intentions | USA; $n = 420$ (online) | Menu's visual appeal and informativeness play a decisive role in consumer purchase intentions. |
| Byrd et al. (2021) | Risk perceptions about food and its packaging | USA; $n = 958$ (online) | Consumers are less concerned about contracting COVID-19 from food <i>in general</i> than restaurant food and its packaging. |
| Dedeoğlu and Boğan (2021) | Motivations to visit upscale restaurants | Turkey; $n = 681$ (online) | Socialisation and affect regulation have a significant positive effect on visit intention to upscale restaurants. |
| Dsouza and Sharma (2021) | Analysis of food delivery portals | Maharashtra (India); $n = 201$ (online) | Food quality plays a vital role in customer satisfaction, indirectly influencing their loyalty towards the restaurant provider. Implemented safety measures help to retain the customer base. |
| Foroudi et al. (2021) | Risk perceptions and adaptive belief | UK; $n = 521$ (online) | Guests' self-protective behaviour and adoptive belief positively influence their trust in restaurant providers. |
| Hakim et al. (2021) | Perceived risk and intentions to visit restaurants | Brazil; $n = 546$ (online) | Perceived safety and brand image are the primary factors affecting consumers' intention to (re)visit a restaurant. |
| Kim et al. (2021) | Clean safety food message framing | Korea; $n = 1$ (restaurant sales data and 366 responses from diners) | Clean safety food message framing affects customers' purchasing behaviour. |
| Luo and Xu (2021) | Online restaurant reviews | USA; $n = 112.412$ (restaurant online reviews) | The four most frequently mentioned restaurant features are service, food, place, and experience. |
| Min et al. (2021) | Perceived vulnerability, consumer co-creation behaviour, and repatronage intention | USA; $n = 345$ (Qualtrics web-based survey) | Perceived vulnerability to COVID-19 leverages customers' repatronage intention, which is affected by service fairness, trust, and co-creation behaviour in the restaurant industry. |

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Research Method

Research Process and Instrument Design

A qualitative research study was conducted in the first section to discover relevant past studies focusing on customers' and managers' quality expectations. From February to June 2021, studies on the aforementioned topic were obtained from significant scholarly tourism and hospitality research databases.

In the next section of the study, quality expectations were examined using a modified version of a

marketing-based questionnaire for measuring restaurant quality (Kukanja et al., 2017). There are 35 marketing-quality indicators in the original questionnaire. Seven indicators were added to the original version of the questionnaire (one to each marketing dimension) to address the specifics of the present crisis. The following items were included: availability of sanitisers (Zhang et al., 2021); employment of local staff (Wang et al., 2021); use of local ingredients (Pressman et al., 2020); possibility of using information technologies

Table 1 Continued from the previous page

| Authors | Main theme | Location, sample size, and data collection | Major findings |
|-----------------------|--|--|--|
| Pantano et al. (2021) | Consumer behaviour | UK, Spain, and Italy; $n = 15.000$ (analysis of tweets) | Consumer behaviour is driven by the need of escaping from home by having a good meal (UK), drink alcohol (Spain), and travel (Italy). |
| Sung and King (2021) | Preventive behaviour and media exposure | Taiwan; $n = 366$ participants (online) | Guests' risk perceptions and fear are positively influenced by social media coverage. |
| Tuzovic et al. (2021) | Wellbeing perceptions | Germany; $n = 15$ interviews (online) | Collective wellbeing comprises three domains: governmental procedures, restaurants' offerings, and guests' perceptions. |
| Wang et al. (2021) | Crowdedness and in-restaurant safety measures | USA and Australia; $n = 593$ USA and 591 Australia (online experiment) | USA customers are more sensitive to crowdedness, whereas Australians are more sensitive to other safety protocols. |
| Wei et al. (2021) | Dine out intentions | USA; $n = 296$ (online) | Dining involvement positively affects customers' decision to dine out, and country of origin moderates the relationship between the perceived importance of preventive measures and brand trust. |
| Yang et al. (2020) | Effects of the pandemic on stay-at-home orders | USA; $n = 1.882$ counties (panel data) | An increase of 1% in COVID-19 cases led to a 0.0556% decrease in daily restaurant demand. |
| Yost and Cheng (2021) | Risk perceptions and motivation to dine out | Literature review (conceptual study) | Restaurants that accumulated more customer trust by fostering transparency are most likely to recover from the crisis quickly. |
| Zhong et al. (2021) | Dining out behaviour | Korea and China; $n = 508$ participants (social media in China and offline in Korea) | Subjective norms, perceived physical and psychological risks, enjoyment, and precautionary restaurant measures are vital factors affecting guests' dining out behaviour. |

(IT) (Brewer & Sebbly, 2021); information about safety protocols (Tuzovic et al., 2021); food delivery or take away (Yang et al., 2020); and the possibility of using alternative means of payment (Grobys, 2021). As a result, the participants' expected performance scores for 42 restaurant marketing-quality indicators were determined (see Table 3).

As the virus presents an ongoing threat, the expected quality performance has been preferred instead of the perceived (actual) one. This study's methodological (expected performance) concept is based on a recent study by Samanci et al. (2021), who analysed managers' and passengers' post-COVID-19 quality expectations in the airline sector.

The second section of the survey included questions about respondents' demographic characteristics (age, education, gender, and income) and their buying behaviour (frequency of restaurant visits and average spending per person – ASP). A pilot study with 47 participants (forty customers and seven managers) confirmed that the instructions and research instrument were understandable and that the survey time was adequate.

The anti-COVID-19 measures implemented by the government of Slovenia were focused on assisting restaurant providers (e.g. deferral of payment of taxes, favourable national loans, covering employees' wages) and did not directly impact restaurant customers'

buying behaviour. Namely, tourist vouchers issued to Slovenian residents in 2020 could only be spent on accommodation. Accordingly, no variables related to the influence of governmental support on restaurant customers' buying behaviour were included in the questionnaire.

Data Gathering and Research Method

An online survey was delivered via emails (managers) and social media and web links (customers) to avoid physical contact, as previously done by many researchers (see Table 1). The focus of the research was on sit-down restaurants which offer table service. Take-away and self-service facilities were excluded from research since, from the 7P perspective, these facilities provide a limited marketing-quality experience. Due to the nature of their business, the importance of some quality indicators might be limited (e.g. professionalism and recommendations from service staff). In the official business register (<https://www.ajpes.si/fipo>), there were 8,410 businesses registered as restaurants (NACE code 156).

After a pre-screening process, we excluded from the sample all facilities that might not operate as sit-down restaurants. Moreover, not all restaurant firms had publicly available emails. Therefore, to gather data from restaurant managers, invitations to voluntarily participate in the study were emailed to 500 randomly chosen restaurant firms with published email addresses in the business register.

Using a snowball sampling method via social media and web links, we collected data from restaurant customers. The target population were domestic customers who dined at sit-down restaurant facilities just before the lockdown in March 2020, as Samanci et al. (2021) had previously done.

In the participation-invitation letter, the research goal and instructions for both groups of respondents were thoroughly presented to minimise any potential bias in the data gathering process. As stated above, we performed a pilot study to assure maximum comprehensibility of all research items. Respondents were asked to indicate their restaurant marketing-quality expectations (expected performance) in the post-COVID-19 pandemic period on a five-point ordinal-

type Likert scale ranging from 1 (not important at all) to 5 (very important). The survey captured data from March to mid-May 2021, when on-site dining with indoor seating was prohibited. We collected 89 completed questionnaires from restaurant managers (response rate was 17.4%) and 422 completed questionnaires from customers. Participation in the survey was voluntary, anonymous, and no monetary incentives were given.

Information about respondents' characteristics was presented using descriptive statistical analysis. EFA was performed to extrapolate quality factors, and a Mann Whitney-U test was applied to investigate differences between customers' and managers' quality expectations. All data were analysed using SPSS (version 26) software.

Research Results

Descriptive Statistics

Findings show that the sample was predominantly (52%) composed of female managers, respondents were on average forty-four years of age, the largest proportion of managers had completed secondary education (40%), and that almost half of the managers (47%) also own the restaurant they manage. According to managers, most guests (32%) will spend between €11–20, followed by those (24.5%) spending between €6–10, and only 11.5% will spend more than €50 when visiting a restaurant in the post-COVID-19 pandemic period. Most managers (52.5%) also believe that customers will visit restaurants with the same frequency as before the pandemic and that their quality expectations will not significantly change due to the pandemic (48%).

In terms of customers, results indicate that respondents were, on average, thirty years of age, the sample was predominantly composed of females (64.2%), and that the largest group of respondents had completed secondary education (45%). Results indicating customers' buying behaviour in the post-COVID-19 pandemic period show that the largest group of respondents (36%) is planning an ASP of €11–20, 26.1% of them indicated an ASP of €6–10, and 2.4% of them were planning to spend over €50 when visiting a restaurant in the post-COVID-19 pandemic period. The

Table 2 Characteristics of Respondents

| Variables | Managers | Customers |
|---|---|--|
| Years of age (average) | 43.7 | 30.2 |
| Gender (predominant) | Female (52%) | Female (64.2%) |
| Education (majority) | Secondary education | Secondary education |
| Expectations about customers' buying behaviour in the post-COVID-19 pandemic period | ASP: <€5 (11.5%), €6–10 (24.4%), €11–20 (32.1%), €21–50 (20.5%), >€50 (11.5%). <i>Dining out frequency</i> : significantly less than before the pandemic (5%), less than before the pandemic (30%), the same as before the pandemic (52.5%), more than before the pandemic (8.8%), significantly more than before the pandemic (3.8%). | ASP: <€5 (20.9%), €6–10 (26.1%), €11–20 (36%), €21–50 (14.4%), >€50 (2.6%). <i>Dining out frequency</i> : few times per year (22.3%), few times per month (36.5%), few times per week (18.7%), daily (6.2%), not planning to dine out in the first months after the pandemic (16.3%). |

Table 3 Quality Expectations: Descriptive Statistics

| 7P | Indicators | Managers | | Customers | |
|--------------------------|---|----------|------|-----------|------|
| | | M | SD | M | SD |
| P I – Product | 1 Selection of dishes | 4.16 | 0.94 | 4.09 | 0.91 |
| | 2 Size of portions | 3.75 | 0.88 | 3.80 | 0.88 |
| | 3 Food taste | 4.62 | 0.86 | 4.51 | 0.85 |
| | 4 Food appearance | 4.35 | 0.85 | 3.77 | 0.86 |
| | 5 Food safety perception | 4.45 | 0.93 | 4.42 | 0.86 |
| | 6 Use of local ingredients | 3.93 | 1.01 | 3.65 | 1.03 |
| | Average | 4.21 | 0.77 | 4.04 | 0.59 |
| P II – Physical evidence | 1 Restaurant cleanliness | 4.79 | 0.84 | 4.60 | 0.81 |
| | 2 Presentable service staff | 4.70 | 0.87 | 4.29 | 0.85 |
| | 3 Sense of comfort | 4.64 | 0.81 | 4.27 | 0.82 |
| | 4 Sense of security | 4.67 | 0.91 | 4.20 | 0.90 |
| | 5 Restaurant design according to food offerings | 4.56 | 0.86 | 4.03 | 0.89 |
| | 6 Availability of sanitisers | 4.48 | 1.27 | 4.09 | 1.06 |
| | Average | 4.64 | 0.62 | 4.25 | 0.68 |

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largest group of respondents is planning to dine out a few times per month (36.5%), followed by those who plan to visit a restaurant a few times per week (18.7%), while 16.3% of respondents indicated that they do not plan to dine out in the first months after the pandemic. Interestingly, 89% of respondents reported that the COVID-19 pandemic has not significantly influenced their restaurant quality expectations.

Characteristics of respondents (demographic pro-

file and perceptions of customers' buying behaviour in the post-COVID-19 pandemic period) are summarized in Table 2.

The results presented in Table 3 indicate that all marketing-quality indicators were evaluated relatively highly for both groups of respondents. The average mean values (M) are 4.05 for managers and 3.83 for customers. The highest-rated dimension for both groups was *Physical evidence* (M = 4.64 and M = 4.25, re-

Table 3 Continued from the previous page

| 7P | Indicators | Managers | | Customers | |
|------------------|---|----------|------|-----------|------|
| | | M | SD | M | SD |
| P III – People | 1 Sufficient number of service staff | 4.24 | 0.74 | 4.02 | 0.79 |
| | 2 Imp. of the presence of the rest. manager for quality offerings | 4.00 | 1.01 | 3.15 | 1.07 |
| | 3 Distracting presence of other customers | 4.08 | 1.02 | 3.53 | 1.05 |
| | 4 Hospitable service staff | 4.71 | 0.81 | 4.40 | 0.78 |
| | 5 Professionally competent service staff | 4.45 | 0.85 | 3.93 | 0.89 |
| | 6 Employment of local staff | 3.65 | 1.09 | 3.32 | 1.15 |
| | Average | 4.19 | 0.61 | 3.72 | 0.64 |
| P IV – Processes | 1 Appropriate answers from service staff | 4.44 | 0.73 | 4.13 | 0.74 |
| | 2 Helpfulness of service staff | 4.46 | 0.76 | 4.09 | 0.77 |
| | 3 Responsiveness of service staff | 4.49 | 0.74 | 4.34 | 0.71 |
| | 4 Restaurant opening hours | 3.88 | 0.82 | 3.95 | 0.85 |
| | 5 Service waiting time | 4.25 | 0.79 | 4.19 | 0.78 |
| | 6 Possibility of using IT | 3.58 | 1.07 | 3.29 | 1.16 |
| | Average | 4.18 | 0.69 | 4.00 | 0.57 |
| P V – Promotion | 1 Visible marketing signs | 3.80 | 0.97 | 3.35 | 1.02 |
| | 2 Compliments and signs of special attention | 3.96 | 0.88 | 3.40 | 0.91 |
| | 3 Recommendations from service staff | 4.24 | 0.86 | 3.64 | 0.85 |
| | 4 Special offers and sales campaigns | 2.88 | 0.97 | 3.43 | 1.02 |
| | 5 Advertising activities in media | 3.23 | 1.02 | 3.00 | 1.16 |
| | 6 Information on safety protocols | 3.90 | 1.03 | 3.53 | 1.07 |
| | Average | 3.68 | 0.64 | 3.39 | 0.70 |
| P VI – Placement | 1 Accessible entrance | 4.13 | 0.75 | 3.98 | 0.76 |
| | 2 Accessible parking area | 4.12 | 0.88 | 4.08 | 0.87 |
| | 3 Neat surroundings | 4.15 | 0.83 | 3.62 | 0.83 |
| | 4 The restaurant is worth the distance travelled | 4.24 | 0.85 | 3.81 | 0.88 |
| | 5 The restaurant enhances indirect distribution | 2.30 | 1.08 | 2.75 | 1.13 |
| | 6 Possibility of food delivery and takeaway | 3.23 | 1.06 | 3.81 | 1.08 |
| | Average | 3.69 | 0.59 | 3.67 | 0.61 |

Continued on the next page

spectively), with restaurant cleanliness as its highest-rated quality indicator. The lowest rated expectations for managers were related to the dimension *Price* ($M = 3.65$), with alternative payment as its lowest-rated indicator. For customers, the lowest-rated indicator was *Promotion* ($M = 3.39$), with advertising activities in media as its lowest-rated quality indicator. The mean

difference (MD) between managers and customers is $MD = 0.22$, indicating that managers have higher quality expectations than customers. The dispersion of the data is presented by the values of standard deviations (SD). Relatively high values of SD show that the data is widely spread around the mean values.

Results presented in Table 3 provided preliminary

Table 3 Continued from the previous page

| 7P | Indicators | Managers | | Customers | |
|---------------|--|----------|------|-----------|------|
| | | M | SD | M | SD |
| P VII – Price | 1 Understandability of prices | 4.16 | 0.77 | 4.17 | 0.77 |
| | 2 Accurate bill | 4.37 | 0.92 | 4.15 | 0.94 |
| | 3 Value for money | 4.48 | 0.71 | 4.33 | 0.72 |
| | 4 Price competitiveness | 3.73 | 0.87 | 3.79 | 0.90 |
| | 5 Possibility of surcharges for extra security of services | 2.85 | 1.16 | 2.89 | 1.26 |
| | 6 Use of alternative means of payments (e.g. Bitcoins) | 2.23 | 1.11 | 2.37 | 1.23 |
| | Average | 3.65 | 0.62 | 3.62 | 0.59 |

information regarding the differences in quality expectations between both groups of respondents. To get a deeper understanding of the factor structure of quality expectations and to identify marketing-quality dimensions that best explain managers' and customers' quality expectations in the post-COVID-19 pandemic period, in the next step, EFA was performed.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

The decision to use EFA was based on the fact that the generic instrument has not been extensively used before and that additional research items were introduced. Moreover, we tested the instrument in a specific (crisis) situation. Since the same research instrument was used to collect data from both samples, we decided to perform one EFA.

The implied research factor model seeks the fewest factors that can account for the common variance of a set of indicators and attempts to understand the shared variance through a small set of latent variables that link our indicators into a common factor. Based on this presumption, we decided to use the Principal Axis Factoring Method (PAF). Another decision for using PAF is that we could not confirm a normal dataset distribution (the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used) for any of the selected indicators.

Based on the values of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of Sampling Adequacy – KMO (0.889) and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($\chi^2 = 6092.494$; $DF = 450$; $p < 0.001$), we estimated that all initial indicators were suitable for performing EFA. After the evalua-

tion of the adequacy of communalities (≥ 0.50) (Hair et al., 2010), eleven indicators with too-low communalities (I.6 use of local ingredients; III.3 distracting presence of other customers, III.6 employment of local staff; IV.6 possibility of using IT; V.4 special offers and sales campaigns, V.5 advertising activities in media, V.6 information on safety protocols; VI.5 the restaurant enhances indirect distribution, VI.6 possibility of food delivery and take away; VII.5 possibility of surcharges for extra security of services, VII.6 use of alternative means of payment) were excluded from the analysis.

Accordingly, we proceeded with 31 indicators with sufficient communalities. The values of the Bartlett's Test ($\chi^2 = 6082.476$; $DF = 465$; $p < 0.001$) and KMO (0.935) indicated satisfactory values of the dataset for inclusion in the final model. Based on a rotated factor matrix solution (Maximum Likelihood extraction method and Varimax with Kaiser Normalization rotation method were applied), we have selected the final model with six factors and 22 indicators that explain 52.58% of the total variance (see Table 4). Only factors containing three or more indicators with satisfactory factor loadings (≥ 0.50) were retained in the final model. Internal consistency was verified by calculating Cronbach's Alpha (α), which indicated a respectable level ($\alpha \geq 0.75$) of internal consistency (Hair et al., 2010) for all extracted factor groups.

Based on the percentage of their explained variances, the most significant importance in explaining quality expectations in the post-COVID-19 pandemic

Table 4 EFA: Rotated Factor Solution

| Indicators | P II | P I | P V | P IV | P VI | P VII |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| I.1 Selection of dishes | | 0.552 | | | | |
| I.2 Size of portions | | 0.504 | | | | |
| I.3 Food taste | | 0.714 | | | | |
| II.1 Restaurant cleanliness | 0.629 | | | | | |
| II.2 Presentable service staff | 0.662 | | | | | |
| II.3 Sense of comfort | 0.661 | | | | | |
| II.4 Sense of security | 0.674 | | | | | |
| II.5 Restaurant design according to food offerings | 0.623 | | | | | |
| II.6 Availability of sanitisers | 0.516 | | | | | |
| III.2 Importance of the presence of the manager | | | 0.544 | | | |
| IV.1 Appropriate answers from service staff | | | | 0.610 | | |
| IV.2 Helpfulness of service staff | | | | 0.621 | | |
| IV.3 Responsiveness of service staff | | | | 0.606 | | |
| IV.5 Service waiting time | | | | 0.537 | | |
| V.2 Compliments and signs of special attention | | | 0.629 | | | |
| V.3 Recommendations from service staff | | | 0.682 | | | |
| VI.1 Accessible entrance | | | | | 0.641 | |
| VI.2 Accessible parking area | | | | | 0.593 | |
| VI.3 Neat surroundings | | | | | 0.501 | |
| VII.1 Understandability of prices | | | | | | 0.574 |
| VII.2 Accurate bill | | | | | | 0.546 |
| VII.3 Value for money | | | | | | 0.697 |
| Variance (%) | 13.43 | 10.69 | 9.49 | 8.87 | 5.89 | 4.21 |

period have the following marketing-quality dimensions (in order of importance) – *Physical Evidence*, *Product*, *Promotion* (and importance of the presence of the manager), *Processes*, *Placement*, and *Price*. In terms of the dimension *Promotion*, one indicator (III.2 importance of the presence of the restaurant manager) was added to the two indicators belonging to the dimension *Promotion*. Accordingly, we have decided to keep the initial name of the marketing dimension.

After extrapolating quality factors that best present the marketing construct of quality expectations in the post-COVID-19 pandemic period, we analysed potential differences between the two independent samples (groups of respondents).

Mann-Whitney U Test

We performed a Mann-Whitney U test to investigate the differences between the two independent samples (different groups of respondents). The main reason for choosing the U test lies in the asymmetric distribution of the data. To perform the U test, we formulated the null ($H_0: Me_1 = Me_2$) and the alternative hypothesis ($H_1: Me_1 \neq Me_2$) for each pair of identified variables (quality indicators). Research results revealed statistically significant differences ($p \leq 0.050$) exist between guests' and managers' expectations at six quality dimensions (see Table 5). H_0 was rejected in favour of H_1 for nineteen indicators (I.1 selection of dishes, I.2 size of portions, I.3 food taste, II.1 restaurant cleanli-

Table 5 U Test: Marketing-Quality Dimensions

| Item | P II | P I | P V | P IV | P VI | P VII |
|---------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Mann-Whitney U test | 24.657.500 | 21.986.500 | 19.229.500 | 21.671.500 | 16.434.500 | 19.187.500 |
| Wilcoxon W value | 28.662.500 | 25.389.500 | 22.799.500 | 25.676.500 | 19.837.500 | 22.588.500 |
| Significance | < 0.001 | < 0.001 | 0.001 | < 0.001 | 0.147 | < 0.001 |

ness, II.2 presentable service staff, II.3 sense of comfort, II.4 sense of security, II.5 restaurant design following food offerings, II.6 availability of sanitizers, III.2 importance of the presence of restaurant manager, IV.1 appropriate answers from service staff, IV.2 helpfulness of service staff, IV.3 responsiveness of service staff, IV.5 service waiting time, V.2 compliments and signs of special attention, V.3 recommendations from service staff, VI.1 accessible entrance, VI.2 accessible parking area, and VI.3 neat surroundings) belonging to five quality dimensions (*Physical Evidence, Promotion, Processes, Product, and Placement*). At the same time, Ho was confirmed only for three indicators (VII.1 understandability of prices, VII.2 accurate bill, and VII.3 value for money), belonging to the marketing-quality dimension *Price*. Results indicate that no statistical differences between both groups of respondents exist only for the marketing-quality dimension *Price*. Results of the U test provided the answer to our RQ2.

Discussion

In reviewing the literature, we found no evidence of comparing restaurant managers' and customers' quality expectations in the post-COVID-19 pandemic period. Accordingly, the purpose of this work was to (1) identify the most relevant marketing-quality dimensions for assuring restaurant quality in the post-COVID-19 pandemic period (RQ1) and (2) investigate differences between managers' and customers' expectations for restaurant quality offerings in the post-COVID-19 pandemic period (RQ2).

In terms of differences between managers and customers, the mean comparisons indicated that managers have higher quality expectations than customers (MD = 0.22). Interestingly, the highest-rated dimension for both groups was *Physical evidence*, with 'res-

taurant cleanliness' as the highest-rated indicator for both groups of respondents, indicating the importance of cleanliness and safety perceptions in the post-COVID-19 pandemic period. The lowest rated quality indicators were 'use of alternative means of payment' for managers and 'advertising activities in the media' for restaurant customers. Both indicators also prove not crucial for explaining the overall quality structure as they were excluded from the EFA eliminations process.

The EFA structure of quality expectations revealed that the most critical marketing-quality dimensions for defining managers' and customers' quality expectations in the post-COVID-19 pandemic period consist of 22 indicators and six marketing-quality dimensions, thus answering RQ1. The two most important quality dimensions are *Physical evidence* and *Product*. Results indicate the importance of the tangible elements for assuring restaurant quality in the post-COVID-19 pandemic period. Tangibles were identified as essential elements of restaurant quality in many pre-pandemic studies (e.g. Mosavi & Ghaedi, 2012; Namkung & Jang, 2007; Shapoval et al., 2018). Interestingly, the marketing-quality dimension *People* did not prove to be a common latent variable for the overall explanation of the quality construct in the post-COVID-19 pandemic period. However, it was relatively highly evaluated by both groups of respondents (see Table 3).

This finding is also unexpected since the dimension *People* proved to be essential for determining restaurant quality in all previous marketing-based quality studies (Kukanja et al., 2017) and many other RATER (Servqual)-based studies (Mosavi & Ghaedi 2012; Voon, 2012). This finding must be interpreted with caution since the quality of restaurant staff is directly associated with the quality assurance of other

intangible and many tangible (e.g. neat surroundings) elements of restaurant quality offerings.

Of seven items included in the generic research model, only one indicator, 'availability of sanitisers,' proved significant for assuring restaurant quality in the post-COVID-19 pandemic period. This finding additionally reconfirms the importance of safety for explaining the post-pandemic quality construct. The other included indicators proved not to be important. Therefore, we might conclude that the crisis has not influenced customers' and managers' expectations related to the employment of local staff, use of local ingredients, possibility of using IT, information about safety protocols, food delivery or take away, and the possibility of using alternative means of payment. This is an interesting finding, as, during the pandemic, managers and customers heavily relied on IT, local customers and suppliers, and the possibility of food delivery and take away (Brewer & Sebby, 2021; Pressman et al., 2020; Yang et al., 2020). Overall, we might conclude that managers and customers will still prefer the 'traditional' restaurant quality indicators, such as cleanliness, food taste, helpfulness and recommendations from service staff, compliments and signs of special attention, and good value for money (see Table 4).

Based on research results, we found that statistically significant differences exist between managers' and customers' quality expectations (RQ2). Differences were found at five quality dimensions (out of six), indicating a significant gap in quality expectations between managers and customers. According to the Gap model (Parasuraman et al., 1985), differences between customer expectations and management's understanding (knowledge) of those expectations present the first gap in providing offerings of satisfactory quality. This gap is also referred to as a listening or information gap rather than a knowledge gap in a digitalised big-data world where customers have free access to social network platforms (Zhang, 2019).

The only quality dimension where no differences were found was in the dimension Price, indicating that managers and customers have the same quality expectations concerning the understandability of prices, bill

accuracy, and value for money. These results are somewhat unexpected and challenging to explain, primarily due to the lack of comparable (marketing-based) research findings. For example, Kukanja (2017) reported differences between all seven marketing-quality dimensions. We might assume that the results of our study might be somehow related to the price elasticity of the restaurant industry during and after the pandemic. As an economic measure of sensitivity, price elasticity results in significant demand changes due to minor changes in price or income levels. Foroudi et al. (2021) reported that household income significantly impacted customer buying behaviour during the pandemic.

Similarly, Kim et al. (2021) found that customers seem to be more demanding during the crisis and consume food items that signal the best value for money. Based on research results (see Table 5), it seems that managers are aware of customers' price sensitivity and will do their best to meet their customers' price-related quality expectations in the post-COVID-19 pandemic period. As managers are aware of customers' price-related expectations, we might assume that restaurants will not raise their selling prices to compensate for the income lost during the lockdown. These findings are also supported by the same post-pandemic values of customer ASP since most managers and customers reported expecting an ASP between €11–20.

Altogether, from the marketing-mix perspective, the central issue of this study's results are the identified differences (quality gaps) between most of the identified marketing-quality dimensions (see Table 4), which also explain the majority of variance of the post-COVID-19 pandemic quality construct.

Conclusion

This research contributes to the marketing and restaurant management literature by explaining the significance of different marketing-quality indicators and analysing differences between managers' and customers' quality expectations in the post-COVID-19 pandemic period. By applying a marketing-based research concept, we have also facilitated an international benchmarking research process.

However, to provide recommendations for future research, several limitations of this study must be addressed. This study included only domestic customers. Consequently, following studies should apply an international perspective and include the various customer segments. Future research should also use a combination of research approaches. A qualitative research approach, in particular, could provide a more in-depth analysis of quality expectations. This research was conducted during a relatively short period. As this is an ongoing pandemic, future research should take a longitudinal approach to understand the impact of the pandemic on the restaurant industry. Moreover, data gathering that was traditionally performed in person (face to face) was collected online, which may have also influenced the quality of the research. From this point of view, we have obtained a relatively low number of valid questionnaires from managers, which disabled a more rigorous statistical analysis of the data. Accordingly, future studies focused on the validation of the marketing-quality scale using a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) are welcomed. Respondents were also asked to indicate their future quality expectations, which may change if the pandemic persists over a long time. Therefore, quality expectations should be monitored regularly. Another recommendation for future research refers to the creation of a nomological network. The purpose of the nomological net is to show how the identified post-COVID-19 pandemic quality construct is theoretically and empirically related to other concepts in tourism and hospitality marketing (customer satisfaction and return patronage, brand equity etc.).

In terms of applicability, our findings offer directions for revising restaurant quality management strategies and re-modifications of marketing business models. Restaurants should promote their offerings following customers' expectations to provide satisfying and enjoyable customer experiences. Managers should communicate what type of co-creation behaviour (e.g. wearing masks, maintaining physical distance) is required from customers to provide and maintain a safe restaurant atmosphere, as customers and managers have the highest expectations regarding *Physical evidence*. Managers should also correctly

train their personnel (*People*) on how to provide high-quality restaurant offerings.

Finally, we recommend that managers constantly monitor customers' quality expectations and perceptions and adequately adjust their business models. The digitalisation of the business environment has created a plethora of new opportunities and challenges. The online social network platforms present a relatively easy way to collect preliminary information about customer quality expectations. From this point of view, academia and restaurant associations should also assist the industry in analysing customers' quality expectations and adjusting restaurant firms' business models proactively.

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Understanding Dissatisfied Customers' Expectations of Spa Service Quality

Aswin Sangpikul

Dhurakij Pundit University, Thailand

aswin.sal@dpu.ac.th

Most studies examining customers' expectations of spa service quality are conducted through quantitative approaches, which have certain limitations for deeper understanding of what customers actually expect and perceive from the delivered services, particularly the unpleasant experiences. This research, therefore, has an objective to analyze customers' expectations and perceptions of spa service quality from online reviews in regard to spas in Bangkok by focusing on dissatisfied customers. Using an integrated method, the literature has been synthesized to form a framework with eight service dimensions to examine customers' expectations of spa service quality. Content analysis and descriptive statistics are employed to analyse the data. According to the findings, customers make complaints when the quality of service is lower than their expectations. Spas in Bangkok seem to have problems with service delivery in all service dimensions, particularly reliability, empathy and courtesy dimensions. In addition, the study has integrated eight service dimensions into three important constructs: service process, physical elements, and service outcomes. Overall, this study has advanced and contributed to the existing literature by employing eight service dimensions to more deeply understand dissatisfied customers' expectations of spa service quality, and also conceptualizes them into three meaningful constructs. Importantly, the people element and technology-based services can help to generate service innovation for the spa industry.

Keywords: spa, service quality, online complaints, negative reviews, Bangkok, TripAdvisor



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Introduction

Typically, customers compare perceptions with expectations when evaluating a company's service (Parasuraman et al., 1985). Understanding customers' expectations and perceptions is an important issue for a service provider because it is prerequisite for providing superior services (Parasuraman et al., 1991). In addition, examining this topic will help a service provider to understand its service performance from customer perspectives (Lo et al., 2015; Sangpikul, 2019). The spa industry is one of the leisure sectors and service-oriented businesses which mainly relies on the deliv-

ery of high service quality to provide customers with personalized services (Lo et al., 2015; Sangpikul, 2022). Spa customers generally judge the quality of delivered services through their expectations and perceptions. If the delivered service is higher than expectations, customers are likely to feel satisfied; in contrast, if the delivered service is below their expectations, this may result in service dissatisfaction (Parasuraman et al., 1988). To further understand customers' expectations and perceptions in the spa industry, there are three important issues established as the background of the research problems.

First, there are several studies examining customers' expectations and perceptions in the spa industry in various settings such as hotel/resort spas (Albayrak et al., 2017; Gonzalez & Fraiz Brea, 2005; Lo et al., 2015; Tsai et al., 2012), health spas (Alen et al., 2006; Loke et al., 2018; Snoj & Mumei, 2002; Bakirtzoglou et al., 2018), and day spas (Chieochankitkan & Sukpatch, 2014; Sangpikul, 2019; Sulaiman et al., 2020). However, the review of literature indicates that most studies are conducted through quantitative approaches based on numeric findings. Quantitative studies generally reveal the relationships of the variables being examined with numeric interpretation (e.g. Snoj & Mumei, 2002; Chieochankitkan & Sukpatch, 2014; Sulaiman et al., 2020). Despite their advantages, the quantitative approaches still have some limitations in further understanding another side of service quality raised by dissatisfied customers regarding their unpleasant experiences or unmet services (Memarzadeh & Chang, 2015; Sangpikul, 2021). Customers who face unpleasant experiences are crucial for spa service providers because they are telling something about the delivered services which do not meet their expectations, causing customer dissatisfaction, service complaints, and negative word-of-mouth (Memarzadeh & Chang, 2015; Sangpikul, 2022). However, there are a few studies for further understanding another perspective of spa service quality from dissatisfied customers in the spa industry.

Second, given the availability of online information, understanding customers' expectations of spa service quality should not be limited to quantitative studies. Research indicates that online information has been widely regarded as another useful approach to better understand different phenomena which cannot be obtained by quantitative approaches (Memarzadeh & Chang, 2015; Sangpikul, 2021). In this regard, understanding dissatisfied customers' expectations of spa service quality through online reviews is worthy of further investigation because it may help to obtain important information from customers, leading to better service improvement and innovation. Unfortunately, there are limited attempts to implement the contextual approach to understand dissatisfied customers in the spa industry.

Third, past studies find that many negative reviews are sometimes unclear or even unfair for a service firm because of emotive or subjective characteristics of the review content (Memarzadeh & Chang, 2015; Sangpikul, 2021). The literature also indicates that a number of customers make their service evaluations based on personal emotions or feelings rather than the facts of the services (Lo et al., 2015; Sangpikul, 2022). In the spa setting, the non-factual judgments may make it difficult for service providers to identify the actual causes of customers' dissatisfaction and for subsequent service improvement. Therefore, examining the factual and non-factual opinions can assist spa managers to appropriately identify the causes of service problems and to enhance service improvements (Sangpikul, 2021). However, most studies tend to ignore or fail to further analyse customers' online complaints based on factual and non-factual judgments.

Given the above issues, this study is important because there is limited research to implement a contextual method to examine the actual expectations and perceptions of spa service quality of dissatisfied customers in the spa industry. Also, there is still inadequate literature to understand the characteristics of customers' online complaints based on factual and non-factual judgments in order to distinguish them for appropriate service improvement. To fulfil the research gaps, this study has the following objectives: (1) to analyze customer expectations and perceptions of spa service quality from negative reviews, (2) to classify negative reviews into factual and non-factual judgments, and (3) to identify the meaningful constructs for spa service quality. The findings of the study are expected to assist spa managers to better understand customers' expectations and perceptions in the spa industry (particularly the dissatisfied customers), and also help them to better correct the service mistakes for future service improvement. In addition, this study will advance the literature by analysing the negative reviews based on the synthesis of service quality literature in the spa industry. This qualitative approach is expected to supplement the quantitative studies to yield a better understanding of dissatisfied customers' expectations of spa service quality, and will also theoretically contribute to the spa literature.

Table 1 Past Studies Examining Spa Service Quality in Different Contexts

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Studies employing SERVQUAL | Alen et al. (2006); Bakirtzoglou et al. (2018); Lo et al. (2015); Loke et al. (2018); Snoj and Mumel (2002); Sangpikul (2019, 2022); Sulaiman et al. (2020); Vryoni et al. (2017) | Reliability, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, tangibles (SERVQUAL) |
| Studies employing modified models | Albayrak et al. (2017) Choi et al. (2015) Clemes et al. (2020) Lagrosen and Lagrosen (2016) Tsai et al. (2012) | Tangibility, competence & courtesy, credibility & safety Spa facility, spa programme, staff, uniqueness Interpersonal quality, environ. quality, admin. quality, technical quality Skills and knowledge, tangibles, process, outcome Environment, service experience, aug. service quality, value, reliability |

Literature Review

Spa Business and Service Quality

Spa originally referred to health through water, and nowadays it generally refers to water-based services that offer health-related services such as body massages, facial/skin treatments, and additional services such as saunas and exercise courses (Hashemi et al., 2015; Lo et al., 2015; Sangpikul, 2022). Today, there are 7 major types of spas, namely, the resort and hotel spas, club spas, day spas, mineral spring spas, medical spas, cruise ship spas, and destination spas (International Spa Association, 2012 as cited in Sangpikul, 2022).

In general, spa establishments provide customers with a wide range of personal services in a calm, beautiful and relaxing atmosphere (Day Spa Association, 2008). Spa experiences, through a wide range of services (e.g. body massages, skin treatments, or other health-related services) not only provide customers with physical improvements, but also promote psychological well-being like rest and relaxation or stress-relief activities (Sundbo & Darmer, 2008). Spas are related to wellness tourism because they may be a part of tourists' leisure activities which help to promote their physical and mental well-being (Dimon, 2013). For example, tourists may spend their free time on spa services in order to enhance their well-being, such as body massages, skin treatments, and physical fitness. Customers usually judge the quality of spa services through the assessment of how well the delivered services meet or correspond to their expectations. In order to deliver the expected services, spa service providers need to rely on service quality (Lo et al., 2015; Sangpikul, 2019).

Service quality generally refers to an evaluation of how well a delivered service meets customer expectations (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Understanding service quality can assist spa managers in delivering superior services to meet customer expectations, contributing to customer satisfaction, word-of-mouth communication, and loyalty (Memarzadeh & Chang, 2015; Lo et al., 2015). One of the well-known instruments to access service quality is SERVQUAL, identified by Parasuraman et al. (1988). It is a global instrument aimed to access consumer expectations and perceptions of service performance based on 5 dimensions: (1) reliability, (2) empathy, (3) assurance, (4) responsiveness, and (5) tangibles. During the past decade, there have been several studies examining spa service quality based on various models which will be reviewed in the next section.

Studies about Spa Service Quality

In order to better understand customer expectations on spa service quality, Table 1 summarizes past studies from various settings. According to the literature review, related studies can be classified into two groups which are: (1) studies employing SERVQUAL and (2) studies employing modified models.

For the studies employing SERVQUAL, Alen et al. (2006), for example, examined customers' gaps between expectations and perceptions of Spanish spa establishments. They found that there were no significant differences between customer expectations and perceptions of the service quality delivered by spa establishments. Out of 22 attributes, there were 6 attributes rated higher than customer expectations:

Table 2 The Synthesis of Service Dimensions from Past Studies

| Studies | Reliability | Response | Empathy | Assurance | Tangibles | Courtesy | Com. | Outcome |
|---|-------------|----------|---------|-----------|-----------|----------|------|---------|
| Bakirtzoglou et al. (2018); Lo et al. (2015); Loke et al. (2018); Snoj and Mumel (2002); Sangpikul (2019, 2021); Sulaiman et al. (2020); Vryoni et al. (2017) | • | • | • | • | • | - | - | - |
| Albayrak et al. (2017) | • | - | - | • | • | • | - | - |
| Choi et al. (2015) | • | • | - | - | • | • | - | - |
| Clemes et al. (2020) | • | • | - | - | • | • | • | - |
| Lagrosen and Lagrosen (2016) | • | - | - | - | • | - | - | • |
| Tsai et al. (2012) | • | • | • | • | • | - | • | - |

natural surroundings, reputation, decoration, well located establishment, quiet place, and friendly employees. Likewise, Chieochankitkan and Sukpatch (2014) examined spa service quality in Thailand, and found that the level of actual service performance was higher than customers expected. All gaps between customer expectations and perceptions of spa service quality in all dimensions (reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles) were found to be positive, implying customer satisfaction. Bakirtzoglou et al. (2018) used the SERVQUAL framework to examine which service dimensions were important to customer satisfaction from hotel spa managers' perspectives in Greece. Through factor analysis, the study identified the three most important dimensions: responsiveness, reliability, and tangibles.

In regard to the studies employing modified/extended models, Tsai et al. (2012), for example, identified the five service dimensions related to male consumers' perceived performance of Hong Kong Hotel spas, namely: environment, service experience, augmented service quality, value, and reliability. The environment dimension was found to be the important factor that significantly influenced respondents' satisfactions with hotel spa services. A study by Lagrosen and Lagrosen (2016) examined customer perceptions of quality in hotel spas by identifying four specific dimensions: smoothness, pleasure, physical effects, and mental effects. The study indicated that smoothness and pleasure were the process dimensions by concern-

ing customer experience during the consumption of the service while physical and mental effects were the outcome dimension by concerning customer experience after the service.

Although there are several studies examining customer expectations and/or perceptions of spa service quality in various settings, they are conducted through quantitative approaches with certain limitations. The quantitative studies generally rely on the relationships between the variables being examined and the numeric findings. They still lack opportunities to further understand customers from different perspectives, particularly the dissatisfied customers. What makes customers feel dissatisfied with the services may not be similar to the findings identified by the quantitative studies. Importantly, dissatisfied customers have freedom to share the information about their unmet services, helping spa managers to obtain wider feedback in regard to their service weaknesses (Barlow & Moller, 2008; Sangpikul, 2022). As such, examining the feedback from dissatisfied customers may provide important implications for the spa industry. Unfortunately, there is a scarcity of literature to further investigate this important issue in the spa industry.

Framework to Understand Customers' Expectations of Spa Service Quality

As there are two groups of studies examining customers' expectations and/or perceptions of spa ser-

vice quality, it is better to combine or synthesize them to obtain a thorough understanding about spa service quality in the setting of dissatisfied customers because they may share a wide range of service quality issues from their actual experiences. Table 2 presents the synthesis of related literature from various settings to obtain relevant service dimensions for the current study. The service dimensions being employed in each study are separately analysed, and finally they are combined to be the framework for this study. Through the analysis of literature, only 8 suitable dimensions are identified to examine customers' expectations of spa service quality, namely, reliability, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, tangibles, courtesy, communication, and outcome.

Methodology

This study aims to examine the negative reviews regarding spa service providers in Bangkok. Most reviews are posted online from foreign customers (mainly international tourists) who had spa service experiences in Bangkok. After the spa services, they might wish to write something about their unpleasant experiences through travel review websites, and this is worthy of further investigation to better understand service problems. There are 4 steps for the research methodology adapted from past studies (Memarzadeh & Chang, 2015; Sangpikul, 2019): (1) identifying spa service providers, (2) selecting a travel review website, (3) setting the criteria for data collection, and (4) conducting data analysis.

Firstly, spa service providers were identified. Bangkok was selected as an area of investigation because it is the most important tourist city in Thailand. A source of information about spa service providers is available through the Ministry of Public Health which is in charge of promoting wellness businesses in Thailand. According to the Ministry of Public Health (2020), there were 102 registered day spas in Bangkok.

Secondly, TripAdvisor was selected as a source for data analysis because it is an important and useful travel website providing a number of reviews regarding hospitality and tourism products (Au et al., 2014; Memarzadeh & Chang, 2015). Related studies employed TripAdvisor as their source of secondary

data to examine service quality in service industries including spa business (Memarzadeh & Chang, 2015; Sangpikul, 2019; Sparks & Browning, 2010).

Thirdly, the criteria to select the reviews were adapted from previous work (e.g. Au et al., 2014; Memarzadeh & Chang, 2015; Sangpikul, 2019; Zheng et al., 2009) as follows:

1. Names of spas were found through TripAdvisor.com.
2. Spas with 3 or more reviews were included in the data analysis.
3. Online reviews in the English language were selected, and they were collected from 'poor to terrible' scales.
4. The reviews were carefully examined by focusing on spa service quality; non-relevant contents were excluded from the analysis.
5. Data were covered for a one-year period.

At the time of data collection in August 2021, there were 102 registered day spas in Bangkok. However, only 94 spas met the study's criteria, and there were 312 negative reviews with 845 scripts relevant to spa service quality.

Finally, content analysis was used to analyse the data as it is appropriate for a systematic coding and categorizing method used for analysing textual information to determine patterns of words, phrases and the structures of communication (Mayring, 2000; Stemler, 2001). In particular, this method can help the researcher to analyse specific observations and to identify meaningful themes in relation to spa service quality (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Sangpikul, 2022).

Data were analysed based on the related literature. For example, data coding was undertaken by hand to categorize the online reviews by focusing on words, phrases, and sentences (Memarzadeh & Chang, 2015). Data were carefully examined to ensure validity and consistency in measurement (Lombard et al., 2002). Data were analysed and coded by the researcher through a pilot test with approximately 30 reviews. TripAdvisor was used as the source of data. During the coding process, codes were set for the patterns or themes of the messages (Sparks & Browning, 2010), and later they were categorized into appropri-

Table 3 The Analysis of Customers' Expectations and Perceptions from Negative Reviews

| Dimensions | Examples of negative reviews | Expectations | Perceptions |
|------------------------------|--|--|--|
| 1. Reliability 304 (36%) | 'The massage skill is really very disappointed, very lousy skill which unexpected' 'So disappointed on the masseuse skill, compared to outside massage' 'The works pedicure was meant to be a deluxe pedicure which includes: cleanse, trim, deep moisturize, color, exfoliate & massage reflexology points. What we got was bits of some and no reflexology massage' 'Our treatment ended 20 minutes earlier. Didn't feel like a relaxing massage cause it was rushed throughout' 'My masseuse spent most of the 1 hour 45 minutes (when it should've been 2 hours, I checked the clock in the room)' | Skilful/experienced therapists Provisions of standard services Delivery of promised services | Receiving the services from unskilled or unprofessional therapists Receiving services below the standard Receiving unpromised services |
| 2. Empathy 169 (20%) | 'Of the three areas I asked the therapist to focus on, she did one and forgot the other two' 'I ordered a Royal Thai massage very strong but it was more a very soft given by a sweet, very inexperienced masseuse' 'Before the massage, you will be given a form to fill to state the areas to be focused, unfortunately the massage staff does not really understand and they do not focus where it should be' | Understanding of customer needs/requests Offering personalized services | Ignorance of customer requests Ignorance of delivering personalized services |
| 3. Courtesy 135 (16%) | 'At the desk, there is no traditional Thai welcome or smile, it feels more like a business transaction' 'Everyone was very inconsiderate and acted like they did not even want the business' 'Receptionist is not friendly, no smile' | Friendly/courteous staff Welcoming reception | Meeting unfriendly or uncourteous employees |
| 4. Responsiveness 77 (9%) | 'Our booking was 8.00 p.m. We reach the spa at 7.45 p.m. and brought to a room around 8.00pm. The masseurs only come in at 8.30pm' 'It was confusing for me since the spa itself seems very upscale and would have trained their staff in providing proper customer service in which one is trying to help the customer make the best decision. We didn't book anything and left in search of somewhere else' | Provision of prompt services Willingness to help customers | Delayed services Unhelpful employees |

Continued on the next page

ate themes and dimensions. For example, a statement such as 'So disappointed on the masseuse skill, compared to outside massage' was classified into the reliability dimension, whereas a statement like 'Of the three areas I asked the therapist to focus on, she did one and forgot the other two' was categorized into the empathy dimension. The coding scheme and review categories were carefully re-checked and refined by the researcher to ensure the categorization process (Au et al., 2014; Sangpikul, 2022). Descriptive statistics were employed to describe the data in terms of frequencies and percentage.

Findings and Discussions

General Information of Spa Reviews

Based on 312 negative reviews about spas in Bangkok, 36% were posted by Asian tourists, 32% by European, 14% by tourists from other regions (e.g. North America and Australia), and 18% did not provide any information.

Analysing Customers' Expectations and Perceptions from Negative Reviews

Table 3 analyses customers' expectations and perceptions of spa service quality from negative reviews.

Table 3 Continued from the previous page

| Dimensions | Examples of negative reviews | Expectations | Perceptions |
|--------------------------------|---|--|---|
| 5. Service outcomes 60 (7%) | 'Other scrubs were too rough, left scars on my legs even after a week. So the scrub didn't make my skin smooth at all' 'Most of the staffs did not know what they are doing. I don't feel any better after their massage' 'I just feel painful during the massage' | Favourable physical/mental outcomes | Unfavourable physical or mental outcomes |
| 6. Tangibles 51 (6%) | 'My husband and I had to join 5 other females and males in the same room with no form of partitions between us. So you can imagine how tensed one will be. What a disturbing experience' 'It was also peculiar that our masseuses would talk/laugh to each other during the massage so it wasn't as quiet/relaxing as I would have liked it to be' 'I had a severe problem with the air-con, it was so loud that no relaxing atmosphere was possible. The masseuse stopped three times and tried to fix it but without success' 'The room temperature was unacceptable, it was too warm' | Service privacy Good maintenance of facilities Pleasant/relaxing atmosphere Customer security | Lack of customer privacy Noise disturbance Poor maint. of facilities Less pleasant atmosphere Cust. belongings security |
| 7. Assurance 32 (4%) | 'The water in the foot bath was very dirty' 'Not sure if it is sanitized properly. No hand gel for customers. Masseuse has no proper masks. They wear cloth mask that doesn't protect customers' 'I had face and head massages. When her fingers touched my face I realized they were smelling of onions and garlic' 'The aroma smell is artificial and cheap quality' | Cleanliness of venue/facilities Hygiene of staff and equipment Quality of products | Uncleanliness of facilities Less hygienic practices Low quality product |
| 8. Communication 17 (2%) | 'I had a very bad experience massage experience here. The herbal compress was very hot which hurts me. I've told her I don't like it and stop it. But she said she don't understand and keep doing' 'I understand the language barrier, but instead of telling me what she wants me to do, she would pull my leg or body not so gently when she needs to position it' 'The service was poor because the therapist was unable to speak English, so a bit communication breakdown' | Communicating with customers during service delivery Basic English communication | Poor communication with customers Poor English communication |

Notes N = 845.

Based on the findings, it is suggested that customers had various expectations of spa service quality. Among 8 dimensions, reliability, empathy, and responsiveness received more reviews than any other dimensions. This suggests that customers had high expectations of these attributes (e.g. skilful therapists, understanding customer needs, and provision of prompt services). But when the performance of these attributes was below their expectations, this resulted in service dissatisfaction and negative reviews. The findings are similar to past studies indicating that customers generally expect all service components from service

providers, including pre-services, during services, and post-services (Chieochankitkan & Sukpatch, 2014; Sangpikul, 2019). In particular, they had high expectations of certain dimensions like reliability and empathy because they expected to receive professional and personalized services from spa service providers (Lo et al., 2015; Sangpikul, 2019). This finding may help to extend spa service literature as most past studies generally give the results of customers' expectations based on 5 dimensions of SERVQUAL. However, this study has disclosed that customers may have a wide range of service expectations including 8 different service

dimensions. This finding may provide an implication for spa managers to better understand various aspects of customers' expectations of spa service quality. With the advantages of contextual analysis, the findings help to better understand what customers actually expect and perceive through their written messages when compared to the quantitative studies. In addition to the 5 original dimensions, spa managers now may need to understand additional service dimensions, namely, employee courtesy, communication, and service outcomes. These findings suggest that customers expect and perceive all dimensions during spa service delivery.

In addition, this study has given another important finding regarding service outcomes. The service outcomes here refer to what customers feel after the completion of spa services (e.g. skin beauty, muscle relief or relaxation). Based on the findings, customers reviewed the service outcomes (either physical or mental) which did not meet their expectations. This suggests that, in addition to customer-employee interaction, customers had expectations of the end results of spa services. The finding helps to identify an existence of service outcomes as expected by spa customers. The finding regarding spa service outcomes has rarely been discussed and examined in past studies (e.g. Gonzalez & Fraiz Brea, 2005; Loke et al., 2018). This may be a drawback of the quantitative studies which fail to obtain another side of service information from dissatisfied customers when compared to a contextual analysis. The current study has identified another new finding regarding spa service outcomes through a contextual method, thereby extending the spa service literature. This provides evidence and implications for spa managers to fully understand that customers expect to experience service outcomes from spa services either physically and/or mentally. It is a responsibility of the spa manager to train their employees to provide customers with personalized services and expected service outcomes.

Classifying Negative Reviews into Factual and Non-Factual Judgments

Table 4 classifies the negative reviews into factual and non-factual judgments based on a service qual-

ity framework. The study has found that all negative reviews regarding spa service quality can be classified into two categories: factual and non-factual judgments. According to the findings, approximately 58% of the negative reviews ($n = 488$) fall into non-factual judgments (emotional judgments) while 42% are in the objective category or factual judgments ($n = 357$). A factual judgment is, for example, 'Of the three areas I asked the therapist to focus on, she did one and forgot the other two,' whereas, a non-factual judgment is a statement like 'The massage skill is really very disappointed, very lousy skill which unexpected [sic]'. The findings are consistent with the literature, indicating that most service evaluations generally rely on customers' subjective opinions (emotions) rather than their objective judgments (Memarzadeh & Chang, 2015; Sangpikul, 2022).

This finding may help to extend the online complaint literature as most past studies fail to examine this special characteristic of e-complaints (electronic complaints), and little is known about factual and non-factual judgments in regard to spa service quality. In particular, the quantitative studies cannot reveal such findings due to the limitations of numeric interpretation. Based on the current finding, it helps to extend the service literature in that online complaints may be classified into factual and non-factual judgments. This also gives an implication for spa managers. For example, the factual judgments are likely to help spa managers to identify the causes of customer dissatisfaction more easily than the non-factual judgments due to the facts of the services (not customers' emotions). Now spa managers can distinguish between the factual and non-factual judgments when exploring customers' negative reviews, which also helps them to prioritize service corrections accordingly.

Identifying the Service Construct for Spa Service Quality

As there are 8 different service dimensions being identified from Tables 3 and 4, it is better to combine them to thoroughly understand the service constructs for future implementations or conceptualization regarding spa service quality. Based on Table 5, some dimensions are similar to each other as they are related to ser-

Table 4 Classifying Negative Reviews into Factual and Non-Factual Judgments

| Dimensions | Examples of factual judgments (<i>n</i> = 357) | Examples of non-factual judgments (<i>n</i> = 488) |
|------------------------------------|--|--|
| 1. Reliability <i>n</i> = 304 | 130 (43%) 'My masseuse spent most of the 1 hour 45 minutes (when it should've been 2 hours, I checked the clock in the room)' | 174 (67%) 'The massage skill is really very disappointed, very lousy skill which unexpected' |
| 2. Empathy <i>n</i> = 169 | 77 (45%) 'Of the three areas I asked the therapist to focus on, she did one and forgot the other two' | 92 (55%) 'I ordered a Royal Thai massage very strong but it was more a very soft given by a sweet, very inexperienced masseuse' |
| 3. Courtesy <i>n</i> = 135 | 44 (22%) 'At the desk, there is no traditional Thai welcome or smile, it feels more like a business transaction' | 91 (68%) 'Everyone was very inconsiderate and acted like they did not even want the business' |
| 4. Responsiveness <i>n</i> = 77 | 45 (59%) 'Our booking was 8.00 p.m. We reach the spa at 7.45 p.m. and brought to a room around 8.00pm. The masseurs only come in at 8.30pm' | 32 (41%) 'It was confusing for me since the spa itself seems very upscale and would have trained their staff in providing proper customer service in which one is trying to help the customer make the best decision' |
| 5. Outcomes <i>n</i> = 60 | 22 (36%) 'Other scrubs were too rough, left scars on my legs even after a week. So the scrub didn't make my skin smooth at all' | 38 (64%) 'Most of the staffs did not know what they are doing. I don't feel any better after their massage' |
| 6. Tangibles <i>n</i> = 51 | 24 (48%) 'There were no lockers, personal belongings were in same room, be careful' | 27 (52%) 'The room temperature was unacceptable, it was too warm' |
| 7. Assurance <i>n</i> = 32 | 9 (28%) 'Room was dirty, I killed 2 cockroaches. Towels are grey and overused' | 23 (72%) 'The aroma smell is artificial and cheap quality' |
| 8. Communication <i>n</i> = 17 | 6 (32%) 'I had a very bad experience massage experience here. The herbal compress was very hot which hurts me. I've told her I don't like it and stop it. But she said she don't understand and keep doing' | 11 (68%) 'She's unable to speak English, so a bit communication breakdown' |

Notes *N* = 845.

vice process or employee-customer interaction (i.e. reliability, responsiveness, empathy) while the others are not directly related to the service process, for example, tangibles, physical assurance, and service outcomes. According to Table 5, the first construct relating to the service process includes reliability, responsiveness, empathy, courtesy, and communication. The reason to group these dimensions together is because they mainly involve employee-customer interaction. The literature supports this argument as most SERVQUAL

dimensions focus on the process of the services because they occur during service interaction between employees and customers (Alen et al., 2006; Ekinci, 2002). The findings from Table 5 can also explain this argument because customers mentioned these dimensions when they interacted with spa employees. In this regard, they are appropriately grouped together under the construct of service process.

In contrast, tangibles identified in the current findings mainly involve the physical elements (e.g. atmo-

Table 5 The Analysis and Identification of Service Construct/Framework of Spa Service Quality

| Examples of reviews | Expectations | Service dim. | Construct |
|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 'I feel the therapist is less experienced in the massage. She used her hands very hard on my legs, very painful' | Skilful/experienced therapists | Reliability | Service process |
| 'My masseuse spent most of the 1 hour 45 minutes (when it should've been 2 hours, I checked the clock in the room)' | Delivery of promised services | | |
| 'Our booking was 8.00 p.m. We reach the spa at 7.45 p.m. and brought to a room around 8.00pm. The masseurs only come in at 8.30pm' | Provision of prompt services | Responsiveness | Service process |
| 'I felt that spa manager looked unwilling to help me with my change of booking' | Helpful staff | | |
| 'Of the three areas I asked the therapist to focus on, she did one and forgot the other two' | Understanding customer needs | Empathy | Service process |
| 'I ordered a Royal Thai massage very strong but it was more a very soft given by a sweet, very inexperienced masseuse' | Delivery of personalised services | | |
| 'At the desk, there is no traditional Thai welcome or smile, it feels more like a business transaction' | Friendly/courteous staff | Courtesy | Service process |
| 'Staff are not friendly at all, no one told us where to go after payment. When you ask them, they were not helpful or friendly especially the front desk' | | | |
| 'I understand the language barrier, but instead of telling me what she wants me to do, she would pull my leg or body not so gently when she needs to position it' | Communicating with customers | Communication | Service process |
| 'The service was poor because the therapist was unable to speak English, so a bit communication breakdown' | | | |
| 'The room temperature was unacceptable, it was too warm' | Pleasant/relaxing atmosphere | Tangibles | Physical elements |
| 'There were no lockers, personal belongings were in same room, be careful' | Security of bel. | | |
| 'The water in the foot bath was very dirty' | Cleanliness of venue and facilities | Physical assurance | Physical elements |
| 'Room was dirty, I killed 2 cockroaches. Towels are grey and overused' | | | |
| 'Other scrubs were too rough, left scars on my legs even after a week. So the scrub didn't make my skin smooth at all' | Physical/mental outcomes | Service outcomes | Service outcomes |
| 'The place was very loud so I couldn't exactly relax' | | | |

sphere, availability of facilities) rather than the service process. They are better grouped separately as 'tangibles' or 'physical' elements. Past studies in hotel studies also separate tangibles as an individual dimension, not being combined in the service process (Alexandris et al., 2006; Wu & Ko, 2013). In relation to assurance, this dimension is a little complicated because its meaning is broad and has not been well defined. 'Assurance' has been criticized in the literature as it seems to be unclearly perceived by many customers (Olorunniwo et al., 2003). Likewise, in a spa setting, assurance could be interpreted differently by

customers and spa practitioners. Consequently, the current study defines assurance in terms of *physical assurance* which refers to the basic services helping to create customers' trust and confidence when using core products. Physical assurance items are, for example, venue cleanliness, equipment hygiene, and customer privacy and security. Physical assurance as identified in this study is supported by past studies (Lo et al., 2015; Sangpikul, 2019) as they measured spa assurance in terms of venue cleanliness and customer privacy and security.

For service outcomes, this attribute is mainly con-

cerned with what customers feel after the completion of spa services either physically and/or mentally. People go to spas for specific or personal purposes; they certainly expect to receive the spa service outcomes that they wish. The current findings support this argument well because customers wrote negative reviews when their expectations of service outcomes were unmet. This may significantly affect the business as many customers indicated that they would neither recommend nor re-patronize the services. There is still limited literature to investigate this important attribute, and to examine it in relation to spa service quality (Lagrosen & Lagrosen, 2016). Therefore, service outcomes are an important result obtained by the present study, and should be regarded as a major construct for spa service quality due to the empirical evidence.

Overall, this study has identified the new findings (new knowledge) regarding the construct or framework of spa service quality through the contextual method. The construct of spa service quality consists of 3 primary components which are: service process, physical elements, and service outcomes. This finding extends the existing literature. Past studies generally examine spa service quality based on the established frameworks by containing 3–6 service dimensions (based on Table 2). There is a lack of research to identify and conceptualize the overall construct or framework of spa service quality. This finding not only contributes to the service literature but also gives important implications for spa managers and employees. The new findings suggest that when customers judge the quality of spa services, they are likely to evaluate these 3 components through their expectations and perceptions. The findings may help spa managers and employees more deeply understand what customers expect and perceive during spa services, and may help them to do their best to respond to customers' needs and expectations.

Implications

Theoretical Implications

Firstly, the current study helps to better understand customers' expectations and perceptions of spa service quality through dissatisfied customers, and goes beyond the SERVQUAL model. Most studies employ

SERVQUAL to assess spa service quality in various settings; however, SERVQUAL has been criticized for its weakness in being fully applicable to a specific service industry, including the spa industry. In particular, several scholars (e.g. Akbaba, 2006; Ekinci, 2002) criticize that SERVQUAL focuses on the process of service delivery, not the service outcomes. This may be because SERVQUAL's conceptualization was originally developed from finance and banking businesses, not the leisure sector. The service industries being examined by Parasuraman et al. (1988) did not concentrate on the service outcomes due to the different nature of service characteristics. However, spa services are distinct from other service industries as people go to spas for specific purposes, and certainly expect to receive physical and/or mental outcomes. Given the findings of service outcomes, the present study, therefore, overcomes the weaknesses of SERVQUAL and goes beyond it by providing empirical evidence regarding customers' expectations of spa service outcomes. Following the existing literature (Table 1), there is still a scarcity of research to fully understand service outcomes in the spa industry. With the advantages of contextual analysis, the current study has identified the existence of service outcome, and its construct, helping to extend the service literature in the spa industry.

Secondly, the current study has conceptualized spa service quality by proposing 3 important constructs: service process, physical elements and service outcomes. Among the 3 constructs, it is shown that most SERVQUAL dimensions are combined into the service process construct while physical assurance and tangibles are combined in the physical construct, followed by the service outcome construct. This conceptualization suggests that SERVQUAL is not adequately or fully applicable for assessing and understanding customers' expectations of spa service quality, particularly the service outcomes.

Thirdly, the 8 dimensions being examined in the current study can make further contributions to the quantitative studies. It is suggested that all dimensions can be implemented in the quantitative studies to better understand the relationships between service quality perceptions and customer satisfactions and loyalty. Many studies often employ 5 dimensions of

SERVQUAL (reliability, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, and tangibles) to examine the impacts of service quality on customer satisfaction and behaviour intentions (e.g. Lo et al., 2015; Vryoni et al., 2017). There is still limited knowledge regarding understanding how other service dimensions identified from the current study (i.e. courtesy, communication and service outcomes) impact those dependent variables.

Fourthly, the construct of service outcomes can help to advance the existing literature, particularly the quantitative studies. This is because service outcomes are a special variable as it may be added to or modified to be an independent or even dependent variable. Past studies indicate the impacts of service outcomes on customer satisfaction and loyalty in other service industries such as banks and hospitals (Choi & Kim, 2013; Hsieh & Hiang, 2004). Unfortunately, this important variable, like the service outcomes, is still under-researched in the spa sector. This may provide an important clue for future spa studies.

Finally, the current study supports Parasuraman et al.'s (1985) conceptualization in that customers judge a firm's service through their expectations and perceptions based on an expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm. This is true in a wellness tourism sector such as the spa industry, based on the current findings. Past studies often criticize the gaps model of SERVQUAL (performance-expectation gaps) by arguing that there is little evidence that customers assess service quality based on performance-expectation gaps (Akbaba, 2006; Olorunniwo et al., 2003). However, the present study has shared the contextual findings that most spa customers had expectations when using spa services in various dimensions. When the delivered services did not meet customers' expectations, they were likely to be dissatisfied and wrote negative reviews. This suggests that spa customers make service evaluations based on their expectations and perceptions as postulated by Parasuraman et al. (1985). The evidence from this study confirms the expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm in the wellness tourism.

Managerial Implications

Firstly, service process: there are 5 dimensions involving the service process (i.e. courtesy, responsiveness,

reliability, empathy, communication). These dimensions may help spa managers and employees to better understand what elements customers expect for the service process (people performance), and to train their employees appropriately. For example, the courtesy element: when customers arrive at the spa venue, they expect to meet courteous and friendly employees, including receptionists and therapists. Spa employees should be well trained to provide customers with a warm welcome and friendly atmosphere during the whole process. In regard to responsiveness, many customers talked about the delay of services in their reviews; this suggests that customers are really concerned about the provision of prompt services when they arrive, and also expect to receive such services, beginning from receptionists to spa therapists. For reliability, customers not only expect professional services from skilful therapists, but also expect the promised services to start and finish on time (e.g. 1-hour service, not 50-minute service). Research shows that reliability (skills of therapists) is one of the most important factors contributing to customer satisfaction (Lo et al., 2015; Sangpikul, 2021). Spa managers should focus on this element by recruiting skilled and experienced therapists to provide customers with professional services (Chieochankitkan & Sukpatch, 2014; Lo et al., 2015). A regular or intensive training programme for less skilled or new therapists is also suggested to enhance their skills (Sangpikul, 2019). As for empathy, spa therapists should keep in mind that different customers have different personal needs due to their health-related problems or personal preferences. They should be trained to deliver the personalized services that meet customer expectations. Regarding communication, spa employees are expected to communicate with locals and foreign customers regarding various issues, for example, explaining spa programmes, answering customers' questions, and communicating with customers during the services or even listening to customers' personal requests. They should be well trained to have good communication with customers. For communication in English, employees with poor English communication may affect service performance and customers' expectations of service delivery, causing customer dissatisfaction. It

is important for spa managers to recruit spa employees with proper qualifications and a good knowledge of English in order to communicate with foreign customers and deliver the services as customers expect (Sangpikul, 2019).

Secondly, physical elements: there are sub-categories under this issue, for example, atmosphere, equipment/facilities, and physical assurance. In addition to the service process, customers also expect physical elements from spa establishments, particularly the maintenance of equipment/facilities and physical assurance (e.g. cleanliness, customer privacy). As most physical elements are not directly relevant to service process, they are generally the responsibility of the management team or even spa owners (buying high-tech equipment). It is suggested that spa managers and supervisors should regularly attend to all tangible related issues to ensure that these attributes complement well the consumption of core products.

Thirdly, service outcomes: customers go to spas for specific purposes, and certainly expect to receive either physical and/or mental outcomes, for example, skin beauty, muscle relief, stress relief, and relaxation. Based on the findings, there are several causes of customer dissatisfaction that can be related to spa service outcomes, for instance, inexperienced therapists, ignorance of customer requests/needs, or employee etiquette (noise disturbance). Spa managers should realize these causes and attempt to obtain customer feedback about their perceptions of spa service outcomes to improve the services to meet customer expectations. Various approaches can be implemented to obtain such information, for example, surveys, opinion boxes, interviews or online reviews. Customers receiving the favourable service outcomes they expect are likely to re-patronize the business.

Fourthly, examining the factual and non-factual judgments from online reviews can help spa managers to better understand the nature of service feedback given by dissatisfied customers regarding their unpleasant experiences or unmet service. Spa managers can now distinguish the characteristics of emotional judgments from factual feedback, and can prioritize actions for service recovery, particularly the ones given by the fact-based evidence (Sangpikul, 2021).

Finally, to stay competitive and be a leading spa establishment in the market, in-depth understanding of certain service dimensions and technology may help to generate service innovation in the spa industry. For example, physical elements such as high-tech equipment may provide service innovation by giving better/superior services. Further, training a professional therapist (reliability dimension) by using high-tech equipment or facilities (physical elements) helps to generate service innovation in the spa industry (a combination of human and technology services), thereby giving competitive advantages. In addition, the high-tech equipment (physical elements) may help to enhance customers' physical outcomes such as skin beauty treatments.

Limitations

This study explored only registered day spas in Bangkok, which included all types of day spas such as hotel spas, luxurious spas, and ordinary spas. Customers' expectations and perceptions of spa service quality may be different based on spa categories, and may affect customer reviews. Future research may investigate similar spa establishments as well as increase the number of samples and locations of investigation to provide more accurate information and to cross-validate what this study has found. In addition, the secondary data collected from online sources should be conducted with caution because some information may not be fully accurate or credible because anyone can write the reviews or post incorrect or fake information (Sparks & Browning, 2010; Zheng et al., 2009). It is suggested to consider guidelines from past studies, and collect many reviews from different/various sources (e.g. service providers, websites, destinations) to help to enhance the credibility of the studies (Sangpikul, 2021; Sparks & Browning, 2010).

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Motivi popotnic za samostojna potovanja

Rrezarta Ejupi in Zorana Medarić

Segment samostojnih popotnic z leti narašča in postaja vse pomembnejši segment turizma. Ko ženske potujejo same, želijo več kot le potovati iz enega kraja v drugega. Pogosto iščejo samostojnost, osebnostno rast, nove izkušnje, pustolovščine, povezovanje z drugimi in pobeg od rutine. Namen prispevka je s kvantitativnim in kvalitativnim raziskovanjem raziskati glavne motive za samostojno potovanje med slovenskimi samostojnimi popotnicami. Na podlagi pregleda literature smo motive razdelili po treh različnih dimenzijah: na psihološke, kulturne in osebne. Ugotavljamo, da so vse tri skupine motivov pomembne, vendar slovenske samostojne popotnice pripisujejo največji pomen psihološkemu motivu, torej samostojno potovanje vidijo predvsem kot čas za izpolnitev lastnih potreb in želja, pridobivanje samozavesti in samostojnosti oziroma umik iz vsakdanjega življenja.

Ključne besede: samostojne popotnice, motivi, samostojno popotništvo
Academica Turistica, 15(2), 177–185

Razumevanje odgovornosti z vidika turista: hotelski kontekst

Petra Zabukovec Baruca, Zlatko Jančič in Aleksandra Brezovec

Razumevanje odgovornega vedenja turistov je ključnega pomena za turistične ponudnike, tako z vidika pričakovanih gospodarskih kot okoljskih koristi. Kljub desetletjem akademskega in praktičnega preučevanja odgovornosti v odnosu do naravnega in družbenega okolja še vedno ni jasno, kdo je odgovoren za izboljšanje razmer v smislu trajnostnega razvoja. To zahteva globlje razumevanje koncepta odgovornosti posameznika, ki ima vedenjsko, etično in odzivno podlago, kar obravnavamo v tem prispevku. V hotelskem kontekstu raziskujemo koncept individualne odgovornosti v vlogi sposobnosti turista, ki z ozaveščanjem in s spremembo ravnanja lahko vpliva na izboljšanje stanja okolja. Na podlagi predstavljenih relevantnih teorij smo individualno odgovornost opredelili kot konstrukt, razdeljen na štiri razsežnosti: osebno odgovornost z vidika etike in morale, ozaveščanje in znanje, preference in odgovorno vedenje. Pomembne rezultate o odgovornosti turistov smo pridobili s faktor-sko analizo in z metodo hierarhičnega združevanja v skupine ter identificirali tri različne tipe turistov. Označili smo jih kot aktivno odgovorne, pragmatično odgovorne in neodgovorne turiste. Ugotovljene razlike med identificiranimi tipi turistov omogočajo boljše razumevanje njihovih motivov in pričakovanj ter boljše zasnovane trajnostne prakse s strani turističnih ponudnikov.

Ključne besede: individualna odgovornost, vedneje turistov, trajnostni turizem
Academica Turistica, 15(2), 187–202

Raziskovanje potovalnega vedenja po pandemiji covid-19: na poti k odgovornejšemu turizmu

Rehab El Gamil

Pandemija covid-19 je prizadela gospodarstvo po vsem svetu, še posebej pa potovalni in turistični sektor. Zagotovo pa bo vplivala tudi na podobe destinacij in potovalno vedenje v prihodnosti. Namen pričujoče študije je raziskati morebitne spremembe v potovalnem vedenju turistov po pandemiji covid-19. Želeli smo ugotoviti, v kolikšni meri bi te spremembe lahko privedle do odgovornega turizma po obdobju pandemije. Primarni podatki so bili zbrani na vzorcu 400 anketirancev s spletnim vprašalnikom in opravljena je bila eksploratorna faktorska analiza. Rezultati so pokazali, da bo po pandemiji covid-19 prišlo do več sprememb v potovalnem vedenju ljudi, ki naj bi pospešile prehod na odgovornejša potovanja. T. i. odgovorne potnike po pandemiji covid-19 bodo določali trije glavni dejavniki: potovalne preference, skrb za zdravje in higieno ter izbira destinacij. Ugotovili smo, da je odgovorni potnik po covidu-19 oseba, katere potovalno vedenje, preference in izbire bi zmanjšali tveganje za širjenje pandemije pred, med in po potovanju. Izsledki študije nakazujejo nujnost sodelovanja med vsemi deležniki v turizmu, kot so DMO, ponudniki storitev in zdravstveni organi v turističnih destinacijah.

Ključne besede: pandemija covid-19, potovalno vedenje, preference, odgovorni potnik, eksploratorna faktorska analiza

Academica Turistica, 15(2), 203–216

Preference turistov glede izbire destinacije: združena analiza na podlagi izbire (CBC)

Meltem Altınay Özdemir

Študija je z uporabo na izbiri zasnovane analize sestavljenih učinkov raziskala preference turških turistov glede izbire destinacije. V model je bilo vključenih pet atributov (tip destinacije, razdalja, dolžina bivanja, sezona in vrednost za denar). Podatki so bili pridobljeni z eksperimentalnim vprašalnikom na namenskem vzorcu turških turistov v Istanbulu med aprilom in majem 2019. Vprašalnik je vključeval šestnajst profilov destinacij, izdelanih z ortogonalnim eksperimentalnim dizajnom. Potniki so vrednotili kartice/profile od najbolj do najmanj primerne. Podatke smo analizirali s programom SPSS Conjoint. Ugotovili smo, da je tip destinacije najpomembnejši atribut, ki mu sledijo dolžina bivanja, sezona, razdalja in vrednost za denar. Rezultati *t*-testa in statistične metode ANOVA so pokazali, da se preference potnikov razlikujejo tudi glede na njihove socialno-demografske značilnosti. Študija ponuja alternativni pristop k raziskovanju dejavnikov izbora destinacije z eksperimentalnim pristopom. Poleg tega ponuja praktične predloge za potovalne agencije, ki želijo razumeti preference turških potnikov.

Ključne besede: izbira destinacije, preference, turistično vedenje, potovalna motivacija, eksperimentalni dizajn

Academica Turistica, 15(2), 217–231

**Opisna analiza nedavnega napredka filmskega turizma:
identifikacija prednosti, vrzeli in priložnosti**

Sara Nunes, Alejandro del Moral Agúndez, Julia Fragoso da Fonseca,
Samiha Chemli in Kang Jin Seo

Filmski turizem je v akademskih raziskavah novejša tema, ki se preučuje šele od 90. let, zlasti v ZDA in Združenem kraljestvu, sledile pa so jima Avstralija, Azija in Evropa. S svojo širitvijo v Azijo je to postala svetovna tema. Na začetku so bile glavne raziskave usmerjene v utemeljitev pomena preučevanja tematike in osredotočanje na moč filmske in TV-produkcije pri motiviranju turističnega povpraševanja, sledila pa je teoretična in metodološka izboljšava, usmerjena v vplive, razvoj in tržne pobude. Trenutno študije temeljijo na meddisciplinarnem pristopu in komodificiranju lokacije ter kulture. Dandanes se na to temo osredotočajo številne študije, pričujoči prispevek pa je namenjen analizi novih dosežkov na tem področju v zadnjih osmih letih. Naša raziskava proučuje njihove prednosti, potencial, vrzeli in priložnosti. Kot rezultat lahko potrdimo prednosti, povezane z raziskavami, ki se osredotočajo na vplive filmskega turizma na destinacije, filmski turizem kot motivator za namero obiska prek predstavljenih podob ter turistične marketinške aktivnosti in pobude, ki temeljijo na filmski in TV-produkciji. Vrzeli in priložnosti so povezane s turističnimi izkušnjami in z avtentičnostjo, s slavnimi osebnostmi, trajnostnim načrtovanjem, z meddisciplinarnimi študijami, s perspektivami prebivalcev, z odgovori potrošnikov na umestitev blagovne znamke, vlogo vlad v smislu strategij in politik, s pomenom socialnih omrežij v praksi, zato je treba razviti več tovrstnih študij po vsem svetu, ne le na podlagi zahodnih primerov.

Ključne besede: filmski turizem, turizem, film in mediji, televizija, turistične destinacije

Academica Turistica, 15(2), 233–247

**Primerjava 7p med pričakovanji kakovosti menedžerjev restavracij
in strank po pandemiji covid-19**

Marko Kukanja

Raziskava preučuje razlike v pričakovanjih menedžerjev in gostov glede kakovosti ponudbe v prehrabnih gostinskih obratih (PGO) v obdobju po pandemiji covid-19. Namen raziskave je preučiti, katere trženjske dimenzije kakovosti (7P) najboljše pojasnjujejo pričakovanja glede kakovosti ponudbe po krizi, ter ugotoviti, ali obstajajo razlike med pričakovanji menedžerjev in gostov. S pomočjo spletnega vprašalnika smo pridobili 422 veljavnih vprašalnikov s strani gostov ter 89 veljavnih vprašalnikov s strani menedžerjev PGO. Vprašalnik je vključeval 42 spremenljivk, ki jih vsebinsko lahko razdelimo v sedem trženjskih dimenzij kakovosti. Rezultati eksplorativne faktorske analize kažejo, da šest trženjskih dimenzij kakovosti najboljše pojasnjuje pričakovanja gostov in menedžerjev glede kakovosti PGO v obdobju po pandemiji covid-19 (glede na pomembnost): to so fizični dokazi, proizvod, promocija, procesi, lokacija in cena. Rezultati prav tako razkrivajo precejšnjo vrzel v pričakovanjih menedžerjev in gostov glede kakovosti ponudbe, saj je cena edina dimenzija, pri kateri ni bilo ugotovljenih razlik v pričakovanjih. Pričujoča raziskava

z razlago pomena različnih trženjskih dimenzij kakovosti v obdobju po pandemiji covid-19 pomembno prispeva k literaturi s področja menedžmenta kakovosti. Z uporabo raziskovalne metodologije, temelječe na konceptu trženjskega spleta, smo prav tako olajšali izvedbo nadaljnjih primerjalnih analiz med različnimi ponudniki in gospodarskimi dejavnostmi.

Ključne besede: covid-19, menedžerji, gostim prehrabni gostinski obrati, kakovost, trženje

Academica Turistica, 15(2), 249–264

Razumevanje pričakovanj nezadovoljnih strank glede kakovosti zdraviliških storitev

Aswin Sangpikul

Večina študij, ki preučujejo pričakovanja strank glede kakovosti zdraviliških storitev, uporablja kvantitativne pristope, ki imajo določene omejitve, da bi bolje razumeli, kaj stranke dejansko pričakujejo in kako zaznajo opravljene storitve, zlasti neprijetne izkušnje. Cilj te raziskave je torej analizirati pričakovanja in zaznave strank o kakovosti zdraviliških storitev na podlagi spletnih ocen zdravilišč v Bangkoku z osredotočanjem na nezadovoljne stranke. Z uporabo integrirane metode je bila literatura združena tako, da ustvarja okvir z osmimi dimenzijami storitev za preučitev pričakovanj strank glede kakovosti zdraviliških storitev. Za analizo podatkov uporabljamo analizo vsebine in deskriptivno statistiko. Glede na ugotovitve se stranke pritožujejo, ko je kakovost storitev nižja od njihovih pričakovanj. Zdi se, da imajo zdravilišča v Bangkoku težave z zagotavljanjem storitev v vseh njihovih razsežnostih, zlasti v dimenzijah zanesljivosti, empatije in vljudnosti. Poleg tega je študija integrirala osem dimenzij storitev v tri pomembne sestave: storitveni proces, fizične elemente in rezultate storitev. Na splošno pričujoča raziskava prispeva k obstoječi literaturi z uporabo osmih dimenzij storitev za temeljito razumevanje pričakovanj nezadovoljnih strank o kakovosti zdraviliških storitev in jih tudi konceptualizirala v tri smiselne sestave. Človeški element in storitve, ki temeljijo na tehnologiji, pomagajo ustvarjati inovativne storitve za zdraviliško industrijo.

Ključne besede: zdravilišče, kakovost storitev, spletne pritožbe, negativne ocene, Bangkok, TripAdvisor

Academica Turistica, 15(2), 265–279

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