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THE EFFECTS ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR OF HOTEL RELATED COMMENTS ON THE TRIPADVISOR WEBSITE: AN ISTANBUL CASE[1]

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ABSTRACT

In parallel with the major developments witnessed in information technologies, social media, supported by its broad area of usage, is gaining significance in every field, with the tourism sector being no exception in this regard. The transfer of changing marketing strategies via digital channels into social media has transformed the way customers interact with the tourism sector, having now the ability to access the comments of other consumers via social media, and adjusting their preferences accordingly. In this study, the impact of the content analysis on the star rating given to hotels is examined with a "Panel Data Analysis" of all the hotels in Istanbul that have received a maximum of 25 reviews on the TripAdvisor website, with a total of 12,000 comments assessed. It was found that the location of the hotel, the access to transport facilities, the food and beverage concept, the quality of staff/service, and the cleanliness of the facilities all affected the star ratings given to hotels; while the architectural structure and the recommendations of other guests had a lesser effect. It was further noted that entertainment-animation programs had little effect on guest preferences.

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INTRODUCTION

In parallel with the technological developments around the world in recent years, the means by which we "access information" have changed dramatically, leading to changes in the way people make their purchasing choices. These changes in the accessibility of information have affected institutions and consumers' alike, and social networking has added a distinct dynamism to communication, raising the importance and increasing the scope of "blogs" and the mutual exchange of information. Such outlets of information can provide ideal opportunities for the marketing, branding, development and positioning of products, for increasing corporate reputation, for the making of market researches and for the evaluation of customer feedback. At the same time, such blogs can aid consumers in identifying their needs, allowing an analysis of their alternatives and guiding the other consumers together with the evaluation stages after the exchange of traditional information (Mazzarol et al., 2007; Nardi et al., 2007; Gretzel & Yoo, 2008; Sweeney et al., 2008; Howe, 2009; Deng et al., 2014).

For customers of the tourism and hospitality sector, acquiring information and making purchasing decisions based on this information can be realized in the easiest and fastest way through the comments and information provided by social networking sites (Liu & Park, 2015). The rapid advances in information technologies have led to significant changes in the global tourism and hospitality sector, and today, consumers can turn to such resources as TripAdvisor – one of the leading blog sites influencing tourism preferences –to quickly access data about hotels. This puts them at the very center of these organizations, and these sources provide significant opportunities not only to consumers, but also hotels, having become a key component of the tourism sector (Buhalis & Law, 2008; Litvin et al., 2008; Lee & Youn, 2009; Stringam & Gerdes Jr, 2010; Neuhofer et al., 2012; Leung et al., 2013; Ladhari & Michaud, 2015).

As trip planners lack a general criterion for the measurement of a tourism experience on which to base their purchase decisions, they need the opinions and comments of users with previous experience of their planned destinations, and therefore often consider pre-travel inspections, since it is impossible to experience every aspect of the destination prior to making a purchasing decision. Accordingly, content created by users plays an important role in the creation of a brand and image, as well as in target awareness and choice (Mazzarol et al., 2007; Gretzel & Yoo, 2008; Sweeney et al., 2008). The increasing number of contributors to social networking sites and blogs has emerged as a means of better understanding consumer behavior, allowing enterprises also to increase their sustainability and strengthen their brand (Hashim & Murphy, 2007; Levy et al., 2013). Digital platforms such as social networking sites and blogs serve as an active platform for the exchange of information between the guest and the hotel and business manager; permit the evaluation of customer comments, reviews and suggestions; provide an opportunity to build trust and recognition; and give businesses the opportunity to correct negative customer experiences, while also facilitating the development of brand perception, providing access to a large customer information network and allowing the consideration of consumer feedback prior to the development of new products or services (Baird & Parasnis, 2011; Sigala, 2012; Rosario et al., 2013).

Within the modern marketing concept, the expected effects on online consumer behaviors occur spontaneously as a result of efforts to gather the necessary information to meet demands and needs in the best possible way, to evaluate this information and to understand all aspects of consumer behavior, based on the comments and reviews made by guests after making a purchase. Online consumer behaviors are considered as conceptual conscious consumers in the concept of contemporary marketing, and are defined as the power of information, researching information, sharing of information results and the power of information technologies by determining the needs of consumers, meeting their needs and specifying positive or negative comments after the purchase. From this perspective, social networking sites and blogs can directly influence how consumers make their purchasing decisions, making use of online environments and the shared opinions and comments of others, thus giving power to consumer behavior patterns by directly affecting consumer behaviors (Constantinides & Stagno, 2011; Yilmaz, 2017).

For Turkey, where the tourism sector is the leading source of income, the number of tourists visiting the country is very important (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2018). As one of the largest and most touristic cities in Europe, and the only city in the world that is located on two different continents (Europe and Asia), Istanbul has significant tourism potential in terms of historical tours, shopping, world cuisine and nightlife, and is one of the leading cities in Turkey's tourism sector. Following a rising trend since the beginning of the 2000s, and hosting 39,488,401 foreign visitors in 2018, Istanbul was still Turkey's most visited city in 2018, with 13,729,747 guests (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2018). The city has been able to increase its value as a tourism destination thanks to the presence of hotels appealing to all tastes. Due to the advantages they bring and the dynamic role they play in Turkey's tourism sector, digital travel platforms like TripAdvisor, and the details they provide of the products, services and accommodation provided by the many different types of hotels, are very seriously by the sector in Istanbul. The city also pays close attention to the comments, reviews and suggestions made on such platforms, and addresses almost all of the positive or negative comments made on these sites by adjusting the provided services accordingly. Advanced blog sites such as TripAdvisor have filled an important gap in the market for consumers when making their choice of destination, with significant reliance and emphasis placed on consumer comments (Park & Kim, 2008; Gretzel & Yoo, 2008).

This study assesses how the opinions and comments made about hotels on TripAdvisor, as one of the leading tourism-related blog sites, affect consumer behaviors, and the criteria determined by the content analysis based on these interpretations. The study also looks into how potential guests have an impact on hotel preferences. For the study, the 25 hotels that have attracted the most comments by consumers on the TripAdvisor site, are identified, with a total of 12,000 comments about these hotels analyzed. The results of this analysis have been used to determine the criteria for specific subheadings. The study further makes a panel data analysis to examine the impact of these criteria on the hotel preferences of consumers for a four-year period. Determining these impacts, it is believed, will make a significant contribution both to the hotel sector and the body of tourism literature.

The contributions of this study to the existing body of literature are threefold. First, this is the first study to investigate the determinants of tourist hotel preferences by making use of an econometric approach. Second, the hotels are evaluated in whole sample, which leads to more consistent findings than previous studies due to the adopted panel data methodology. Third, this study examines tourist preferences based on seven different criteria (architectural structure of the hotels, general cleaning services, food and beverage concept, personnel and service quality, entertainment and animation services, location and transportation facilities, and the ranking of the hotel, as scored by other users), providing clear data on consumer preferences that can be used by hotels to steer policy and strategies to attract more guests.

LITERATURE REVIEW

With the spread of the Internet and developments in communication technologies, new platforms affecting living spaces are emerging. These platforms are growing with the inclusion of people in social groups and virtual communities on the Internet, resulting in a shift in the knowledge economy toward the production of information by consumers. Social networking sites that prioritize these platforms, and that eliminate the boundaries between the producer and consumer, are able to increase their institutional capital day-by-day through the use of cheap technological tools (Howe, 2009; Yamamoto & Şekeroğlu, 2014).

Most blogs serve as places where people put down their thoughts in the way they want, and as a branch of social networking, offer a means of mutual communication where individuals can make comments and receive online responses at any time. The ability to respond to these online comments by consumers and institutions with the desire to do so makes blogs an important element in marketing in terms of the transfer of capital strength to the consumer (Williams & Jacobs, 2004; Seyrek & Yilmaz, 2016).

The history of blogs dates back to 1997, and their creation has been attributed to Internet author John Barger. The term "blog" is derives from the "Weblogs", being defined as "Logs created in a web or Internet environment". Blogs have been defined as "free lecture" environments in view of their structure in which the writer and reader are free to express their opinions. They have been referred to also as "virtual media diaries", with posts displayed in reverse chronological order to ensure that the most recent contents can be seen and read easily. Blogs have further been described as learning-oriented structures in which text, links, images, and audio and video recordings can be uploaded, as well as being an environment where news can be gathered, various Internet links can be provided, and users can write whatever they want, resulting in a constantly updated platform (Prensky, 2001; Bausch et al., 2002; Williams & Jacobs, 2004; Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Murugesan, 2007; Ostrander, 2007; Eley & Tilley, 2009; Seyrek & Yilmaz, 2016).

Blogs that have the capacity to involve people in collaborative activities and information sharing have become an important source of information in every field, and the tourism sector is no exception (Williams & Jacobs, 2004; Werthner & Ricci, 2004). The increase in the online exchange of travel information has allowed tourists to consider many options when searching for a suitable hotel. In this context, since blogs take on the task of collecting information, archiving such as information retrieval and comparison, and shaping the tourism industry, tourism activities are affected more by other sectors (Bausch et al., 2002; Pan et al., 2007).

Playing an important role in shaping the tourism sector and making use of advanced technologies, travel blog sites provide consumers with important data that can steer their purchasing habits, and particularly the comments of previous users highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of hotels, based on their first-hand experiences. Every year, the increasing number of people with tourism mobility and the wealth of available information on the tourism sector have made the use of the most reliable and well-known of the blog sites almost obligatory. TripAdvisor and similar blog sites operating in the tourism sector serve as an important source for the evaluation of consumer preferences in tourism, given their growing coverage. Through the comments and evaluations posted by consumers, TripAdvisor has a great deal of influence over potential guests, and as a result, its standing among the blog sites that are active in the field of tourism. The shared tourism experiences in the form of comments on advanced blog sites such as TripAdvisor allows us to better understand the dynamics in the sector, and offers significant potential to businesses and managers, while also guiding potential guests in their purchasing decisions (Jeong & Jeon, 2008; Zheng et al., 2009; Sparks & Browning, 2010; Stringam et al., 2010; Limberger et al., 2014; Molinillo et al., 2016).

TripAdvisor was established in the United States in 2000, and has grown to become one of the largest and most popular online travel resources in the world (Law, 2006). The site serves as a message board for content created by users focusing on accommodation and travel, and has grown into a platform listing approximately 7.7 million registered tourism enterprises that have been subjected to over 661 million evaluations. Some 456 million people on average visit the site every month, millions of which are carrying out research before confirming their travel plans. Visitors to TripAdvisor can access and analyze consumer reviews of thousands of hotels, attractions and historical sites, cities and restaurants, supported by travel photos, prior to making an online reservation (Law, 2006; Milano et al., 2011; Vásquez, 2011). The TripAdvisor strategy involves the collection, analysis, exchange and use of information among tourism stakeholders, with its main purpose being to create competitiveness and technological infrastructure of supply and demand based on tourism industry, to increase its functionality, to create common benefits and to provide value in innovative ways (Sigala, 2012).

More than 80% of today's travelers make use of such blog sites as TripAdvisor that provide reviews and evaluations of businesses operating in the tourism sector, offering customers potential alternatives, and selection of selections, along with after-service experiences. Statistics show that 77.9% of customers who turn to online travel blog sites in search of information based on their individual preferences are influenced by the reviews of other consumers, and they take these reviews into account when making purchasing decisions (Briggs et al., 2007; Mazzarol et al., 2007; Gretzel & Yoo, 2008; Sweeney et al., 2008; Dickinger, 2011; Molinillo et al., 2016).

This situation has created a sense that positive or negative comments can both have significant implications for the tourism sector in literature, that consumers change their minds and that online consumer behavior has been shaped from the very outset, as has been widely evaluated by many authors in connection with digital channels (Law, 2006; Briggs et al., 2007; Chung & Buhalis, 2008; Jeong & Jeon, 2008; Miguéns et al., 2008; O'Connor, 2008; 2010; Yoo & Gretzel, 2009; Barcala et al., 2009; Law et al., 2009; Sparks & Browning, 2010; Stringam et al., 2010; Lu & Stepchenkova, 2012; Simms, 2012). Given the rapid evolution of technologies, the increasing global competition, the ever-changing consumer demands and trends, and the long-term sustainability and competitiveness fostered by advanced blog sites such as TripAdvisor are progressively dependent on a business's ability to continuously update and enrich its services and functionality. Accordingly, TripAdvisor should make progress such as producing new values, researching advanced potential sources and creating value-added production. In addition, it should internationalize its social media capabilities, its technological use of mobile facilities and the services it provides, while also expanding and enriching production capabilities with the help of travel content. TripAdvisor' leading position among blog sites operating in the tourism sector has been bolstered by its ability to allow its users and potential customers to be influential in terms of the opinions and comments made (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008; Dahlander & Gann, 2010).

The change brought to online consumer behaviors through content-rich social networking sites has led to changes in some of the criteria related to hotel preferences in TripAdvisor. Even the simplest form of criteria, being positive or negative opinions and comments about hotels, can have an impact on consumer behavior (Anderson, 2012; Yang & Chao, 2015; Chen & Law, 2016; Chen & Ng, 2017; Lombardi & Vernero, 2017; Tsao et al., 2018). An analysis of studies investigating this effect reveals that positive or negative opinions and comments influence consumer behaviors. Some potential customers, before making hotel preferences, review the observations made on TripAdvisor, and show that they are oriented towards hotel preferences with positive feedback and higher rating scores, indicating that online consumer behaviors are shaped in this direction (Park & Allen, 2013; Liu & Park, 2015; Luo et al., 2015; Molinillo et al., 2016; Chan et al., 2017; Phillips et al., 2017; Mariani & Borghi, 2018; Ruiz-Mafe et al., 2018). It is seen that, unlike the other study results detected, some potential customers find negative opinions and reviews of hotels to be more realistic, and this shapes their online consumer behaviors in this direction (Godes & Mayzlin, 2004; Casaló et al., 2015; Park & Nicolau, 2015).

Many studies have been carried out to determine which criteria derived from the comments and reviews made on TripAdvisor, which is accepted as the leading blog site in the tourism sector, are important factors in determining purchasing behaviors in terms of their effect on consumer preferences. The opinions and comments about hotels that are effective in consumer preferences play a decisive role in purchasing behaviors (Jeong & Jeon, 2008; Barcala et al., 2009), among which staff-service, location-transport access and price-performance (Barriocanal et al., 2010); architectural structure, food and beverage and price-performance (O'Connor, 2010); architectural structure, staff-service, food and beverage, and price-performance (Stringam et al., 2010); architectural structure, cleanliness, staff-service, food-beverage and location-transport access (Bronner & Hoog, 2011); staff-service (Tejada & Moreno, 2013); architectural structure (Lado-Sestayo et al., 2014; Zhou et al., 2014); location-transport access (Limberger et al., 2014); architectural structure, cleanliness, staff-service, location-transportation and price-performance (Xie et al., 2014); cleanliness and location-transport access (Xie et al., 2016); staff-service and architectural structure (Molinillo et al., 2016) are the most influential.

It is apparent that the entertainment-animation criterion is ignored in the studies conducted in literature in which city hotels are examined and evaluated (Jeong & Jeon, 2008; Barcala et al., 2009; Barriocanal et al., 2010; O'Connor, 2010; Stringam et al., 2010; Bronner & Hoog, 2011; Tejada & Moreno, 2013; Lado-Sestayo et al., 2014; Limberger et al., 2014; Xie et al., 2014; Zhou et al., 2014; Xie et al., 2016; Molinillo et al., 2016), and that the entertainment-animation criteria applies mostly to holiday hotels (Yilmaz & Aytekin, 2018). In literature, the effect of the entertainment-animation criteria on the hotel preferences of potential customers is investigated in order to eliminate the lack of such data on city hotels.

In the light of all these findings, the present study makes an assessment of the comments posted about the hotels on TripAdvisor, and determines the impact of the criteria identified in the comments and the star rating given to the hotels.

EMPIRICAL MODELS, METHODS AND DATA

At this juncture, an empirical model is determined, and the reasons for choosing the hotels in Istanbul, which straddles Asia and Europe and can be considered as Turkey's most important city in terms of its history, metropolitan structure and tourism mobility, are examined. Considering the literature review, the obtained theoretical information and the applied content analysis, the model explains in detail the impact of seven independent variables – which are accepted as important by guests considering the online comments by TripAdvisor users – on the star ratings given to hotels. In addition, the data sets related to the variables included in the model, the forms of these data sets and the panel data method that will be utilized in the empirical analysis are clarified.

The first criterion is hotel architecture, and relates to the hotel architecture and the general situation of the hotel, the size of the rooms, the usefulness of the rooms, the usability and uniqueness of the properties and the hotel fixtures and rooms, the swimming areas (sea, pool, aqua park, beach, etc.), the common areas (restaurants, bars, spa, sauna, Turkish Bath, amphitheater, gym, mini club, etc.), and the accessibility of all points within the hotel. The second criterion relates to cleanliness, and includes such sub-headings as general hotel cleanliness, room cleanliness (bath, toilet, bed linen, etc.), the cleanliness of the environment and the swimming areas (sea, pool, aqua park-beach, etc.), the cleanliness of the common areas (restaurants, bars, spa, sauna, Turkish Bath, amphitheater, mini club etc.), and the cleanliness of the equipment throughout the hotel. The third criterion relates to food and beverage, and includes variety, flavor, freshness, brand quality, quality of service, the accessibility of the food and beverage areas, children's restaurants and menus, and the variety and quality of the hotel bars and the minibars. The fourth criterion relates to staff-service, and comprises such sub-topics as staff interest and professionalism, service speed and quality, problem solving, friendliness and kindness, check-in/check-out, room service and lobby services, welcome and farewell, and bell boy services. The fifth criterion relates to entertainment-animation, and covers the entertainment provided (parties, concerts, DJ performances, live music, etc.), animation (sea, pool, aqua park, beach, etc.), mini clubs (kids' activities and child care), spa, sauna, Turkish Bath, amphitheater, sporting activities (paragliding, balloon, jet ski, games, competitions, etc.), and local tours and excursions. The sixth criterion relates to location and transport access, and covers the proximity of the hotel to other locations (airport, bus station, hospital, shopping centers, amusement centers, etc.); the frequency of transport services around the region; the proximity of the hotel to the region's unique and historical sites; the public transport system in the city; and the proximity of the accommodation units to the swimming areas, common areas and restaurants in the hotel. The recommendation criterion, which is the final criterion within the specified criteria, includes such subheadings as positive or negative recommendations, as well as the satisfaction with price/performance.

Empirical Model

To investigate the impact on the hotel star rating of the criteria prioritized by customers in their analysis of the available hotel options, the following empirical model panel is developed in this study;

$$lnSP_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 lnARC_{it} + \beta_2 lnGC_{it} + \beta_3 lnFB_{it} + \beta_4 lnPS_{it} + \beta_5 lnEA_{it} + \beta_6 lnLOC_{it} + \beta_7 lnREC_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (1)$$

in which the *InSP* refers to the average star rating of the hotel; *lnARC* to the architectural structure of the hotel; *lnGC* to the hotel's general cleaning services; *lnFB* to food and beverage quality within the hotel concept; *lnPS* to the staff and service quality of the hotel; *lnEA* to the entertainment & animation services provided by the hotel; *lnLOC* to the hotel's location; and *lnREC* to the recommendations made by other consumers. Furthermore, *i, t* and ε_{it} refer respectively to the horizontal section (hotel), period of time and disturbance terms.

Data

The hotels located in Istanbul listed on TripAdvisor were examined, and the 25 hotels that received the most reviews and comments on the website are included in the study sample. While generating data sets, the comments and star points given to each hotel were included, along with their monthly average in the model, and "2015m–12018m12" observation interval was evaluated. The number of related comments and hotels specified in the data set are explained in detail in Annex A.

Some 12,000 comments made about the 25 hotels selected for the study were examined and subjected to a content analysis, resulting in seven different criteria with different subheadings being determined in connection with the literature reviews. These criteria include the main headings of hotel architecture, cleanliness, food-beverage, staff-service, entertainment-animation, location and advice.

Statistical Analysis

LLC and IPS unit tests were carried out for the subject of the study, and the stability of the data included in the study was tested. In the following stage, preliminary tests were made of the proposed panel regression analysis model, after which coefficient estimation analyses were carried out to determine the weighting of the determined criteria.

LLC Unit Root Testing

The LLC unit root test revealed that individual unit root tests have only limited power against the alternative hypothesis, and that dramatically permanent deviations from the balance will occur (Levin et al., 2002). Accordingly, the zero hypothesis of this research can be concluded to comprise the unit root for each separate time series, while alternative hypothesis is static for each time series. In the light of these findings, the basic equation of the test was developed as follows;

$$\Delta y_{it} = \delta y_{it-1} + \sum_{L=1}^{P_i} \theta_{iL} \Delta y_{it-L} + \propto_{mi} d_{mt} + \varepsilon_{it} \;, \qquad m = 1,2,3. \tag{2}$$

in which d_{mt} refers to the deterministic variable and $\propto_{mi}$ to the coefficient vector. Since the P_i value in the equation is unidentified, a three-phase procedure is applied for the test-related calculations. In the first stage, an

Augmented Dickey Fuller (ADF) regression is made separately for each series included in the panel, after which, estimations are made of the long-term and short-term standard error rates for each series, while a measurement of the pooled t statistic is made for the final step.

In first phase, the above stated hypothesis is applied for each horizontal section. The lag length (p_i) is allowed to be different among the horizontal sections. The maximum lag length (p_{max}) is chosen for the period T, and the t statistic of θ_{iL} is preferred if a smaller delay length is selected. According to the null hypothesis, it is observed that t statistics have a standard regular distribution.

AfterP_i is calculated, Δy_{it} and y_{it-1} regressions are applied to the appropriate deterministic variable Δy_{it-L} and d_{mt} , and the inclusions e_{it} and v_{it-1} are obtained. These inclusions are normalized through the following calculations: $e_{it} = \frac{e_{it}}{\sigma_{\varepsilon i}}$ and $v_{it-1} = \frac{v_{it-1}}{\sigma_{\varepsilon i}}$. In the second phase, calculations are made of the long- and short-term standard error rates. Referring to the null hypothesis accepting the unit root's existence, the model's long-term variance is measured through the following calculation (Levin et al., 2002):

$$\sigma_{yi}^2 = \frac{1}{T-1}\sum_{t=2}^{T}\Delta y_{it}^2 + 2\sum_{L=1}^{K} w_{KL}\left[\frac{1}{T-1}\sum_{t=2+L}^{T}\Delta y_{it}\Delta y_{it-L}\right] \tag{3}$$

in which *K* refers to the transition lag, and *L* is the regular lag. *K* should be measured in such a way that the consistency of the variance is not disturbed. The $w_{KL} = 1 - (\frac{L}{K+1})$ formula is used to calculate the Bartlett kernel, and the following formula is used to calculate the mean standard error;

$$S_N = \frac{1}{N}\sum_{i=1}^{N} s_i \tag{4}$$

Panel test statistics are calculated in the third phase using the following regression with the number of *NT* observations;

$$e_{it} = \rho v_{i,t-1} + \varepsilon_{it} \tag{5}$$

in which, *t* refers to mean number of observations per horizontal section, and *ρ* refers to the mean lag length of each ADF (Çetin & Ecevit, 2010).

IPS Unit Root Testing

Based on the results of this test, calculated with the average of particular unit root test statistics and allowing for heterogeneity of the horizontal sections, the following regression equation can be developed (Baltagi, 2011; Im et al., 2003);

$$\Delta y_{it} = \mu_i + \beta_i y_{i,t-1} + \sum_{k=1}^{p_i} \theta_{i,k} \Delta y_{i,t-k} + \gamma_i t + \varepsilon_{it} \tag{6}$$

The equation has a constant and trendy structure, and so the trend should be deleted from the equation to obtain a constant equation. The rejection of null hypothesis according to the IPS test implies that one or more than one of the series is static.

Im et al. (2003) measured the t statistics of each horizontal section as $t_i = \beta_i / sh(\beta_i)$, and then calculated the mean Z of t_i using the following formula;

$$Z = \left(\frac{\sqrt{N}(t - E(t))}{var(t)} \right) \sim N(0,1) \tag{7}$$

The *t* value can be calculated using the following formula (Çetin & Ecevit, 2010);

$$t = \frac{1}{N} \left(\sum_{i=1}^{N} t_i \right) \tag{8}$$

RESULTS

At this stage of the study, the results of the empirical analysis aimed at determining the data levels of the 25 hotels in Istanbul and the factors affecting the hotel preferences of the customers are investigated. To this end, the stability of the series is first examined via a panel unit root test, and the required preliminary tests for the selection of either the panel constant or the panel random effects models are made. Finally, the coefficients of the effects of each independent variable on hotel preferences are calculated.

Unit Root Test Results

The unit root tests developed by Levin et al. (2002) and Im et al. (2003) are applied to the Istanbul data, and the stability of the series is calculated within the model. The unit root test results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. *Unit Root Test Results for Istanbul*

Variable	LLC	IPS
lnSP	-4.813* (0.000)	-10.989* (0.000)
lnARC	-4.475* (0.000)	-10.074* (0.000)
lnGC	-3.124* (0.000)	-8.550* (0.000)
lnFB	-3.800* (0.000)	-8.199* (0.000)
lnPS	-3.871* (0.000)	-11.469* (0.000)
lnEA	-3.476* (0.000)	-7.638* (0.000)
lnLOC	-6.193* (0.000)	-10.941* (0.000)
lnREC	-4.659* (0.000)	-9.440* (0.000)

*p<0.001.

In the application of unit root tests, the Newey-West estimator is preferred to address the autocorrelation problem, while the optimum delay lengths are determined based on the Schwarz Information Criteria (SIC). An examination of the results presented in Table 1 reveals that the null hypothesis, which claims that the series contains a root unit for all variables, is rejected by both tests, and that the variables are static at all level values. As this finding contradicts the situation necessary for the identification of a co-integration relationship between variables, the coefficient estimation leads to the use of the panel regression method, based on the level values of the series. From this it can be concluded that the comments made on TripAdvisor are not influenced by each other, and that the data can be static.

Preliminary Test Results

When deciding whether to apply fixed or random effects in the panel data analysis, it is necessary to test the pooled regression of the model prior to the estimation of the coefficient, and to carry out preliminary tests. Before proceeding with the application of preliminary tests, it is necessary to determine whether to use fixed effects or pooled regression. An F-test was applied for this purpose, and from the results it was concluded that the null hypothesis determining the pooled regression should be used is rejected, and that the fixed effects model should be preferred. The results of the F-test are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. *F-test Results*

	Statistic	**d.f.**	**Prob.**
Cross-section F	2.132	(24,868)	0.001
Cross-section Chi-square	51.569	24	0.000

After determining that the fixed effects model should be preferred over a pooled regression model, LM tests were applied to choose between the random effects and pooled regression models. The results of the different LM tests, which indicate that the zero hypotheses and pooled models should be preferred over the random effects model, are presented in Table 3. It can be seen from the result that the null hypothesis is rejected for all tests, meaning that the random effects model should be selected over the pooled model.

Table 3. *LM Test Results*

Tests	**Cross-section**	**Time**	**Both**
Breusch-Pagan	4.355	0.075	4.431
	(0.036)	(0.783)	(0.035)
Honda	2.087	-0.274	1.281
	(0.018)	--	(0.100)
King-Wu	2.087	-0.274	1.432
	(0.018)	--	(0.076)
Standardized Honda	3.796	-0.181	-3.846
	(0.000)	--	--
Standardized King-Wu	3.796	-0.181	-3.588
	(0.000)	--	--
Gourierioux et al.	--	--	4.355
			(< 0.05)

Finally, the results of the Hausman test, which is used to choose between the fixed effects and random effects models, indicate that the null hypothesis that implies the necessity to use the random effects model, is rejected, and that the constant effects model is the most accurate model for the analysis. The results of the Hausman Test are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. *Hausman Test Results*

	Chi-Sq. Statistic	Chi-Sq. d.f.	Prob.
Cross-section random	10.699	7	0.152

Coefficient Estimation Results

The results of the coefficient estimation of the panel constant effects for the interpretation of the determined factors and the determination of severity levels are presented in detail in Table 5.

Table 5. *Panel Fixed Effects Coefficient Estimation Results*

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
lnARC	0.158	0.005	29.395	0.000
lnGC	0.167	0.007	22.566	0.000
InFB	0.170	0.005	29.214	0.000
lnPS	0.154	0.003	39.560	0.000
lnEA	0.000	0.001	0.479	0.631
lnLOC	0.163	0.010	15.324	0.000
lnREC	0.171	0.016	10.586	0.000
C	0.024	0.014	1.652	0.098
Cross-section fixed (dummy variables)				
Effects Specification			**S.D.**	**Rho**
Cross-section random			0.001	0.036
Idiosyncratic random			0.007	0.963
Weighted Statistics				
R-squared	0.930	Mean dependent var		0.960
Adjusted R-squared	0.929	S.D. dependent var		0.028
S.E. of regression	0.007	Sum squared resid		0.050
F-statistic	1707.138	Durbin-Watson stat		2.179
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000			
Unweighted Statistics				
R-squared	0.965	Mean dependent var		1.471
Sum squared resid	0.051	Durbin-Watson stat		2.122

According to the data in Table 5, when the results of the fixed effects model for Istanbul are examined, it is seen that the effects of the other observed factors on the star rating averages of hotels are positive and statistically significant.

It can be understood from the findings that hotel architecture increases the guest preference and average star rating by 0.15%; the cleanliness of the hotel by 0.16%; the food and beverage facilities by 0.17%; the staff-service quality by 0.15%; the hotel's location and transport access by 0.16%; and finally, the recommendations made about the hotel by 0.17%. The entertainment-animation criterion was found to have no statistically significant effect on guest preference or the average star rating.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

An evaluation of the findings reveals that all criteria other than entertainment-animation programs have the power to influence the same proportion of potential hotel guests in Istanbul. Among these criteria, it is concluded that those such as recommendations from other customers, the food-beverage concept, cleanliness, location and transportation, architectural structure and the quality of staff-services are close to each other in terms of their influence over potential customers. In addition, it can be understood that the entertainment-animation criterion for Istanbul is not important for potential customers and does not affect choice.

Considering the criteria garnered through a content analysis of the comments posted on the TripAdvisor.com.tr website, the fact that recommendations are the leading factor affecting hotel choice in Istanbul, that most of the hotels in the rankings are four-star boutique-style hotels and resort district in contrast to the five-star hotels in Turkey, and that most of the hotels are located on the European side of the city and very close to each other indicates that these hotels have similar concepts and facilities. This indicates that the criteria determined by potential customers are effective, and that they may be influenced by recommendations or non-recommendations, as included in the aforementioned criteria. It is apparent also that “price-performance” satisfaction, which falls below the recommendation effect in previous literature, is also taken into consideration by potential customers in Istanbul, concurring with the results of previous literature (Jeong & Jeon, 2008; Barcala et al., 2009; Barriocanal et al., 2010; O'Connor, 2010; Limberger et al., 2014). In general, a city hotel’s location and transportation facilities are more important for customers, along with such criteria as proximity to destination, food-beverage and staff-service facilities; and the impact of recommendation and satisfaction with price/performance are much more important considering the capacity to take measures against price differences and the characteristics of the hotels in terms of preference for those who are more prominent than their counterparts.

The fact that the food and beverage criterion comes to the fore among other factors indicates the prevalence of a "bed-breakfast" concept, and that the breakfast services offered to the guests by the hotel is of high importance, despite being free of charge, and is evaluated in terms of quality, taste, variety and presentation. Furthermore, the quality, taste, variety and presentation of the food and beverages offered at other meals are considered as another important factor by the customers. In this area, customers tend to look at the variety of food and beverage options, the bars in the hotel concept and mini bars in the rooms, the freshness of the products used, the quality of the products, the taste, presentation quality and service times, as well as the availability of popular brands. Compared to other hotels in the holiday regions, the concept of food and beverage is more important in this region, even though the concept differences are limited in Istanbul when compared to other regions in Turkey. These results concur with those of the previous studies by Barriocanal et al. (2010), O'Connor (2010) and Stringam et al. (2010).

The importance attributed to cleanliness in the present study stands out among the other criteria, and parallels the results of previous studies in literature (Stringam et al., 2010; Limberger et al., 2014; Xie et al., 2014). It can be said that for the hotels in Istanbul, as is the case in Turkey as a whole, the general cleanliness of the hotel and the rooms; the cleanliness of the facilities and equipment in both the common and private areas; the environmental and landscape cleanliness; the cleanliness of the swimming areas, such as indoor and outdoor pools; and the cleanliness of social areas such as restaurants, bars, spas, Turkish Bath and sauna are important for both customers and potential customers, are naturally an issue of primary importance.

Istanbul holds an important place in the holiday preferences of tourists due to its historical background, its location straddling Europe and Asia, its geographical beauty, its wide variety of shopping opportunities and its unique night entertainment. As a large part of the hotels in this region are close to each other and located mainly on the European side of the city, it is possible to think that the hotel location criteria is one of the main criteria in hotel selection, based on the comments posted on TripAdvisor. This may also be due to the fact that most tourists want to be based close to the historical, geographical, social and shopping areas, and so hotels in locations close to such attractions cause this criterion to come to the fore. In addition, considering the distress of transportation sources of some regions, distance from transportation points of hotels, and transportation problems due to the frequency of transportation, it can be concluded that transportation in Istanbul is important for hotels in terms of their proximity to airports, bus terminals, hospitals, shopping centers, entertainment venues and transportation hubs. It can also be concluded that urban transportation facilities, such as the metro, tram, bus, minibus, Marmaray, taxi stops and sea transportation vehicles can be an important criteria affecting tourist preferences. The importance of a hotel's location and its proximity to transportation hubs brings this criterion to the fore in the comments made, paralleling the findings of studies conducted previously by Jeong & Jeon (2008), Barcala et al. (2009), Stringam et al. (2010), Limberger et al. (2014), Xie et al. (2014) and Lado-Sestayo et al. (2014).

Hotel architecture retains a high position on the list of the criteria affecting the choices of customers and potential customers may indicate that customers believe that the four-star and boutique-style hotels in the region may pay more attention to detail and to be of greater value than five-star hotels. The availability of indoor and outdoor swimming pools, the size and usefulness of the rooms, the newness of the fixtures and fittings, the hotel common areas, Internet access and hotel parking are all important factors for customers, and are of equal importance to the other criteria. In addition, the proximity of the hotel to the city center and the sound-proofing of the hotel rooms can be considered other important factors related to the architecture of the hotels in Istanbul. Concurring with the findings of the studies by Barriocanal et al. (2010), Stringam et al. (2010), O'Connor (2010), Tejada & Moreno (2013), Limberger et al. (2014), Zhou et al. (2014) and Molinillo et al. (2016), it can be concluded from the present study that hotel architecture is also of primary importance in this region.

The importance of the personnel-service factor is based on the desire of customers to be provided with a fully professional service by professional staff, in addition to the attention they expect from hotels offering four or five-star or boutique-style services in Istanbul. Because the location and transportation facilities of the hotels being over certain standards, the manner of presentation of the services, the quality and speed at which they are provided, the cheerfulness and friendliness of the staff, the politeness and respect received, and the way problems are resolved can be considered as being of significant importance in the eyes of the customer. Also deemed to play an important role in this regard are the means of check-in/check-out, room series, the lobby and reception, bell boy availability, send-off, and access to a doctor or other health services. Finally, it is generally possible in hotels to use foreign language effectively for foreign-oriented tourist portfolio and to help tourists in their daily programs, to offer them alternatives, to provide them with the necessary transport and to suggest different places to eat, which increases the significance of this criterion dramatically. The significant importance attributed to the staff and service criteria in the studies of Jeong & Jeon (2008), Barcala et al. (2009), O'Connor (2010), Stringam et al. (2010), Bronner & Hoog (2011), Limberger et al. (2014) and Xie et al. (2016) are similar to the results obtained in the present study.

Considering the criteria determined from the comments posted on TripAdvisor, the entertainment-animation criterion in Istanbul has little impact on customers, as the hotels are planned in four or five stars and boutique styles; the facilities are limited; events such as parties, concerts, DJ performances and live music are not planned; services such as spa, sauna and Turkish Baths are not at the desired level or they are not available at all; tours, excursions and events in the region are not available and hotel architectures are not suitable for amenities such as gyms. And considering all these facts, it can be concluded that these criteria are of no importance in the preference by the customers. As hotel guests spend most of their time visiting historical and geographical sites in the city, shopping and experiencing the nightlife, it can be concluded that hotel managers in Istanbul attribute little importance to the entertainment-animation criteria, as their guests do not spend much time in the hotel. It is thought that the absence of this criterion from previous studies may be due to studies conducted in city hotels and hostel-style accommodation and limited hotel facilities selected such as Jeong & Jeon (2008), Barcala et al. (2009), Barriocanal et al. (2010), O'Connor (2010), Stringam et al. (2010), Bronner & Hoog (2011), Tejada & Moreno (2013), Zhou et al. (2014) Lado-Sestayo et al. (2014), Limberger et al. (2014), Xie et al. (2014, 2016), and Molinillo et al. (2016). In this respect, although the inclusion of entertainment-animation criterion in this study proves to lack significance for the hotels in Istanbul, it can be considered of great importance in the "all inclusive" and "ultra all inclusive" hotels that are predominant in

Turkey's holiday regions (Yilmaz & Aytekin, 2018), and this study can thus be considered to contribute to previous literature.

As can be understood from the results of the present study, it would be beneficial for hotel managers and business owners in the sector to recognize the power of social networking sites which are led by blogs. It is becoming more and more important to review the feedback of previous hotel and facility guests, to realize that even the smallest detail is shared on TripAdvisor by previous customers, and to understand that such blogs direct the buying behaviors of both current and potential customers. The opinions and comments shared by existing customers are of great importance to potential customers in the identification and evaluation of alternatives, and consequently, can serve as a guiding light for businesses in determining the aspects of their enterprises that are missing or that need improvement. Businesses can ensure customer satisfaction by giving priority to these points as a priority, as well as optimizing the weaknesses detected by such criteria through taking correct steps to gain the potential customers.

It can be understood from the present study that hotels with criteria with high coefficients have a good working understanding of, and are considered successful in terms of tourist preferences. It is suggested that they should continue their service understanding with the strategies adopted. In addition, hotels with positive yet low coefficients should work towards paying attention to the criteria with low coefficients, as this may aid in their efforts to attract more tourists.

For Istanbul, based on the comments made on the TripAdvisor website, it is seen that almost all of the criteria identified through the content analysis have the same effect on potential customers when identifying their alternatives on making choices. Among these criteria, recommendations by previous customers, the food-beverage concept, the cleanliness factor, hotel location and transportation, the architectural structure of the hotel and quality of staff-service have equal levels of importance for potential customers, and furthermore, the absence of entertainment-animation programs, or such programs not being at the desired level in hotels, can be considered a shortcoming. Accordingly, hotel managers or facility administrators may consider expanding the scope of the services provided in this regard, although not at a level to match the complex structure of Turkey's holiday regions, and to organize such events as parties, concerts, DJ performances and live music shows, providing or elevating such services as spas, saunas and Turkish Baths to the desired levels, or to provide such services if they are lacking; organizing suitable tours, excursions and trips; and of changing the hotel architectures in such a way that facilities such as gyms can be accommodated. In this way, managers and administrators can increase the level of satisfaction of their guests in the facilities by considering that such elements are important as a guiding factor in identifying and evaluating alternatives to potential customers.

The 25 selected hotels all need to pay attention to the entertainment and animation criteria, which is clearly lacking. The fact that entertainment and animation criterion has in the past been overlooked in most previous researches of city hotels leads to the conclusion that this criterion is the most important factor. Entertainment and animation might not be a determining factor among tourists in their selection of a city hotel, yet organizing such activities in recognition of the cultural and historical features of the city will provide great benefits to the hotels. For example, offering a service giving priority to hotel guests for entry to historical and cultural sites such as Topkapi Sarayi, Dolmabahce Sarayi, Galata Kulesi etc. will have a very positive effect on tourist preferences. Also, planning Bosphorus Tours, guided city tours and providing special vehicles for tourists to take them shopping, dining and for other evening entertainment as part of the entertainment and animation activities provided by the hotel will further aid hotels in attracting tourists.

In this study, a four-year (2015–2018) data set for Istanbul was obtained from TripAdvisor. Considering that the necessity of extending the data set interval could be interpreted as a limitation, the data range was expanded, and the previous years' comments were examined prior to the analysis phase of the study. When the year range is extended based on the data set, the number of comments is insufficient and the contents are incomplete. For these reasons, it was impossible to reach the content of the seven criteria based on four years of data over the limited and inadequate comments.

In addition, assuming that the comments in the extended data set are sufficient in number and full in content, it is foreseen that there may be increases or decreases in the coefficients that determine the importance of the variables, as well as changes in the significance level of the entertainment and animation criteria that lack significance for Istanbul.

It can also be said that the sufficient number of comments and the full coverage of the criteria selected for analysis in this study supported the selection of these 25 Istanbul hotels, aside from their garnering of the highest number of reviews on TripAdvisor. This number can be deemed sufficient, as the luxury level, size, facilities and locational advantages of the first 25 hotels, which were selected based on the number of reviews, enabled the development of the seven criteria as a content.

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Annex A. *The Istanbul Hotels and Comments*

RANK	HOTEL NAME	REGION	NUMBER OF COMMENTS
1	White House Hotel Istanbul	Sultanahmet	4158
2	Hotel Amira Istanbul	Sultanahmet	3716
3	Hotel Sultania	Sirkeci	3267
4	Sirkeci Mansion	Sirkeci	3245
5	Neorion Otel	Sirkeci	3238
6	Hilton Istanbul Bosphorus	Beşiktaş	3045
7	Conrad Istanbul Bosphorus	Beşiktaş	2942
8	Hilton Istanbul Bomonti Hotel & Conference Center	Şişli	2608
9	Levni Hotel & Spa	Sultanahmet	2459
10	Hotel Sapphire	Sirkeci	2281
11	Hotel Erboy	Sirkeci	2279
12	Sura Hagia Sophia Hotel	Sultanahmet	2162
13	Çıragan Palace Kempinski Istanbul	Beşiktaş	2117
14	DoubleTree by Hilton Istanbul - Old Town	Sultanahmet	2104
15	Grand Hyatt Istanbul	Beşiktaş	2066
16	InterContinental Istanbul	Taksim	2039
17	Basileus Otel	Sultanahmet	2001
18	Ottoman Hotel Imperial	Sultanahmet	1878
19	Best Western Plus The President Hotel	Beyazıt	1858
20	Orient Express Hotel	Sirkeci	1833
21	Four Seasons Hotel Istanbul at Sultanahmet	Sultanahmet	1797
22	Best Western Empire Palace	Sirkeci	1786
23	DoubleTree by Hilton Istanbul - Moda	Moda	1767
24	Titanic Business Kartal	Kartal	1740
25	Four Seasons Istanbul at the Bosphorus	Besiktaş	1721

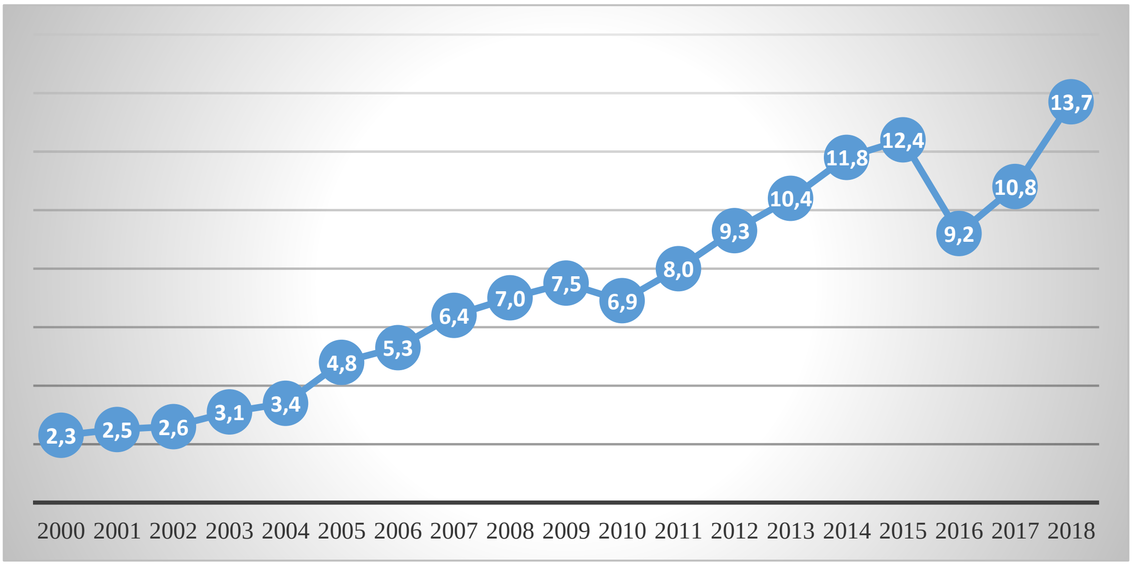
Note: In terms of the number of user comments on TripAdvisor.com.tr, the highest ranking was the "White House Hotel" in the Sultanahmet neighborhood, with a total of 4158 reviews, while the "Four Seasons Istanbul at the Bosphorus Hotel" in the Beşiktaş neighborhood was lowest in terms of the number of reviews.

Annex B. *Distribution of Number of Incoming Tourists to Turkey and Istanbul by Year (2017–2018)*

MONTH	TURKEY		ISTANBUL		Change Rate for 2017 (Monthly)	Change Rate for 2017 (Cumulative)
	2017	**2018**	2017	**2018**		
January	1,055,474	**1,461,570**	559,372	**831,307**	48.6	48.6
February	1,159,833	**1,527,070**	590,175	**848,510**	43.8	46.1
March	1,587,833	**2,139,766**	742,479	**1,073,002**	44.5	45.5
April	2,070,322	**2,655,561**	835,614	**1,144,041**	36.9	42.9
May	2,889,873	**3,678,440**	830,019	**984,028**	18.6	37.2
June	3,486,940	**4,505,594**	827,494	**1,100,389**	33	36.4
July	5,075,961	**5,671,801**	1,319,549	**1,502,397**	13.9	31.2
August	4,658,463	**5,383,332**	1,247,384	**1,561,033**	11.5	27.7
September	4,076,630	**4,792,818**	1,045,896	**1,361,950**	18.1	26.4
October	2,992,947	**3,755,467**	1,122,266	**1,230,079**	9.6	24.3
November	1,652,795	**1,966,277**	831,982	**1,015,032**	22	24.1
December	1,703,789	**1,950,705**	888,365	**1,077,979**	21.3	23.9
TOTAL	32,410,860	**39,488,401**	10,840,595	**13,729,747**	**27**	**35**

Note: According to Turkey Statistical Institute data, in **2018**, the number of tourists visiting Istanbul increased by **24%** on the same period of the previous year.

Annex C. *Graphical Distribution of the Number of Tourists (Million) Visiting Istanbul by Years (2000–2018)*



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TOURIST SATISFACTION: RELATIONSHIP ANALYSIS AMONG ITS ANTECEDENTS AND REVISIT INTENTION

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the factors affecting tourists' satisfaction and their revisit intention by randomly selecting 280 tourists from Pokhara, Nepal. Result of structural equation modeling confirmed the positive relationship between exogenous variables; hospitality service, the behavior of the people, and the cost of stay with tourist overall satisfaction. It further confirmed the significant positive association between tourist overall satisfaction and their intention to return. All the relations are statistically significant at the 5% level of significance. This study provides salient reference for future researcher, destination managers and policy makers of tourism industry of Nepal.

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INTRODUCTION

Positive association between tourist satisfaction and their intention to return (Dayour & Adango, 2015) corroborates that satisfied tourist will either revisit the destination or share positive words about the destination. Some other studies agreed that when tourists' expectations are met, their

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likelihood of return to the same destination is higher (Chen & Tsai, 2007). When consumers plan to travel, usually they recall the past memories to select the destination (Zhang et al., 2017, p. 326), therefore there are less likely chances that, unsatisfied traveler repeats the visit to same destination. Additionally, some other researchers in tourism and hospitality field also had similar thoughts in the past. They argued that, satisfaction of the tourists motivates them to return the same destination or recommend it to other people (Alegre & Garau, 2010; Kozak, 2001b; Meleddu et al., 2015; Meng & Han, 2018; Zhang et al., 2017). Past scholars' findings corroborate the fact that satisfaction of the tourist is one salient factor to motivate them to return or spread the positive words. This study aims to re-confirm this fact by selecting the sample of tourists who visited Pokhara, Nepal. It further purposed to explore the salient factors which are associated to tourist satisfaction.

Numerous scholar research papers have been found on topic of tourist satisfaction and its' consequences, but rarely have satisfaction and revisit intention of the tourists who visited Pokhara, Nepal been empirically investigated before. Therefore, aim of the study is to examine the overall satisfaction of the tourists, its determinant factors and consequences by selecting the sample of the tourists who visited Pokhara, Nepal at the time of survey. Similar studies have been conducted in some other parts of the world, but these studies do not truly represent the Nepalese tourist satisfaction and its impact on their revisit intention. Motivation and expectation of visitors are varying according to the location where they plan to visit. Pokhara, Nepal is one of the unique destinations for the tourists. Tourists who visit Pokhara expect something different from the tourists who visit other destinations in the world. Hospitality service, behavior of the local people and cost of the accommodation in Pokhara are different from other tourist sites of the world. Therefore, this study proposed to investigate the relationship between hospitality service, the behavior of the local people and cost of stay with tourist overall satisfaction, and it further aims to explore the relationship between tourist overall satisfaction and their revisit intentions. The empirical findings of this study provide the valuable reference background to destination managers, local government and policy makers to formulate development planning and marketing strategies to increase the arrival rate of tourists in Pokhara, Nepal.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourist Satisfaction and Revisit Intention

Researchers in the past agreed that satisfaction is causing the tourist return to the same destination and sharing of positive word about the destination (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Dayour & Adongo, 2015; Kim et al., 2015). Dayour and Adango (2015) abstracted that motivation of the tourists is significant influencing factor of their intention to revisit, where overall satisfaction of the tourists plays the role of mediation. It also explored the fact that, satisfied tourist either revisits the related destination or shares positive word of mouth about the destination to other people. On the other hand, some other studies argued that overall satisfaction is not a primary cause of revisit intentions of the tourist. Um et al. (2006) abstracted that revisit intention has been regarded as an extension of satisfaction rather than an initiator of revisit decision-making process. This study revealed that perceived attractiveness, rather than overall satisfaction, is the most important indicator for future revisit intentions. Bigné et al. (2001) underlined that tourism image is antecedent of satisfaction, perceived quality, an intention to return and willingness to recommend to others, but there is no direct relationship between tourist satisfaction and their intention to return.

Even though, some scholars disagreed that satisfaction of the tourists is the strongest influential factor in their revisit intention (Bigné et al., 2001; Um et al., 2006), large mass of the researchers confirmed that overall satisfaction of the tourist is the primary influential factor for their revisit intention or recommendation to others (Alegre & Garau, 2010; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Kozak, 2001b; Meleddu et al., 2015; Meng & Han, 2018; Zhang et al., 2017). Therefore, we proposed the following hypothesis for this study;

Hypothesis 1: *The revisit intention of the tourists is positively related to their overall satisfaction.*

Tourism researchers also viewed satisfaction and revisit intention through the lens of motivation theory. Some researches attempted to search for the answer to the question of why people travel and what are the factors that motivate them to travel. They agreed that there are two motivation forces, push and pull, that urge people to set travel decision. “Travelers are pushed into making a decision to travel by internal, psychological forces and pulled by the external forces of the destination attributes” (as cited in Yoon & Uysal, 2005, p. 45). Pull motivations are those, tourists are influenced by the destination attractiveness, such as natural beauty, cultural attraction, recreation facilities etc. These destination attributes may encourage and reinforce inherent push motivation (Yoon & Uysal, 2005, p. 45). This understanding supports the fact that if tourists are satisfied with the destination attributes like hospitality service, natural attraction, behavior of the people etc., it pulls them again towards the same destination. On the other hand, the internal forces are the ones that push them to revisit the related touristic place.

Antecedents of Tourist Satisfaction

Some researchers in the past confirmed that hospitality service quality is an antecedent variable of tourist satisfaction (Kim et al., 2013; Rimmington & Yüksel, 1998; Ryu & Han, 2010). Others viewed hospitality service quality as a part of general service quality (Chi & Qu, 2008; Crompton, 1979; Kozak, 2001a; Meleddu et al., 2015; Pizam et al., 1978; Sam, 2009; Um et al., 2006; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). In addition, researchers also investigated the relationship between food quality and customer satisfaction and found a significant positive association between them (Chi & Qu, 2008; Kim et al., 2013; Sulek & Hensley, 2004). Kim et al. (2013) found that perceived food healthiness increases the level of satisfaction, which, as a consequence; leads to customer's repeated visit in the future. Since food quality or food service is the part of hospitality service, it corroborates that hospitality service is salient influencing variable of tourist overall satisfaction too. Rimmington and Yüksel (1998) examined the relationship between tourist satisfaction and hospitality service quality, including some other variables and confirmed the positive relationship between hospitality service and tourist satisfaction. Nield et al. (2000) abstracted that food service is a salient factor which is responsible for tourists' satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Similarly, some researchers also stated that tourist loyalty comes from good service quality such as price quality, cleanliness, destination image, hospitality, accessibility, and tourist expectations which are all capped under tourist service quality (Ryu & Han, 2010). These past studies provide enough background to set the following hypothesis;

Hypothesis 2: *Tourist overall satisfaction and hospitality service are positively related.*

Researcher of hospitality and tourism has also seen "cost of stay" as one of the salient determinant factors of tourist satisfaction. Price is one of the important influencing indicators of tourists' return intention (Kozak, 2001a). Travelers who feel that they paid a reasonable price for their expected service, are more likely to be satisfied than those who feel that they paid higher price (Hutchinson et al., 2009). Stevens (1992) highlighted that, price is less important than qualitative factors such as beautiful scenery, accommodation quality, and cultural programs, but it is more salient when tourists select the variety of other product related to the trip.

Some scholars of the marketing paradigm highlighted that price is one of the important factors of customer satisfaction (Ryu & Han, 2010) and it is also the salient influencing factor of customer switching behavior (Keaveney, 1995). According to De Ruyter et al. (1997), customers may not necessarily buy the service of the highest quality level, but they may be satisfied with low perceived quality. In summary, these studies have seen the price as one of the salient influencing factors of customer satisfaction. Tourists are also a kind of customers for the tourist destination. Therefore, these studies corroborate the fact that, the price is one of the antecedent factors of tourist satisfaction. Following hypothesis is proposed for this study after reviewing the past studies;

Hypothesis 3: *Tourist overall satisfaction is positively related to the cost of the stay*.

Local people of the tourist destination area are viewed as brand ambassadors for tourism industry (Papadimitriou et al., 2018). Therefore, behavior of the local people is a salient influencing factor for the tourist satisfaction and their intention to revisit. Sheldon and Abenoja (2001) researched on residents' attitude in a mature destination and agreed that residents' attitude towards tourist is important for the sustainability of the tourism. In addition, host community support for tourism development is important, but it is affected by the level of concern, eccentric values, utilization of resource base, perceived costs, and benefits of tourism development (Gursoy et al., 2002). Furthermore, Braun et al. (2013) investigated the importance of local residents in place branding and concluded that local residences are a significant target group of place branding. To sum up, these studies support that the behavior of the local people is important for tourist satisfaction. Even though most of the researcher focused on the attitude of the local people and destination branding, rarely the researchers focused on the relationship between the behavior of the local people and tourist overall satisfaction and their revisit intention. Therefore, this study proposed to examine the relationship between the behavior of the local people and tourist overall satisfaction. Following hypothesis is proposed for this study;

Hypothesis 4: *There is a positive relationship between the behavior of the local people and tourist overall satisfaction.*

Based on the proposed hypotheses, proposed conceptual model for this study is presented in the Figure 1.

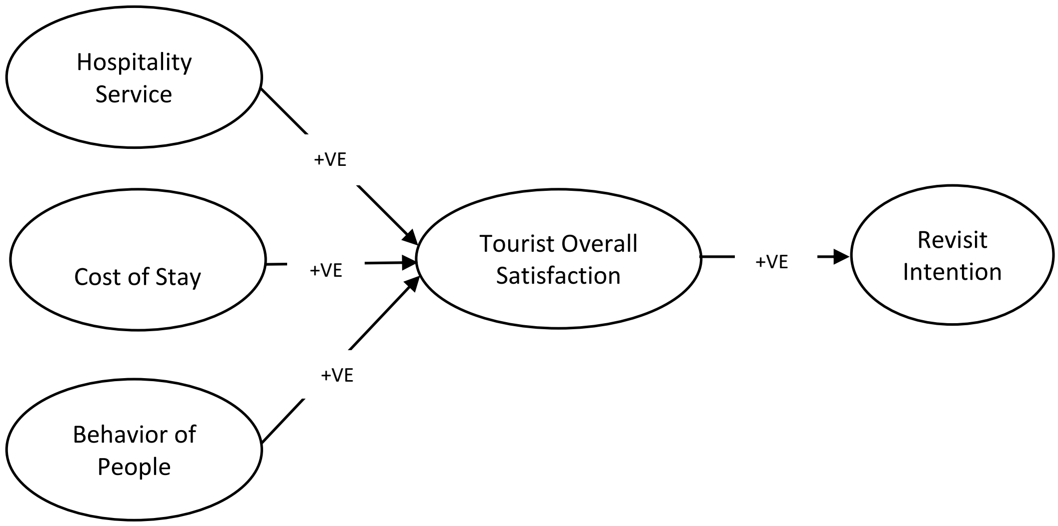

Figure 1. *Conceptual Model*

METHODOLOGY

Study Instrument

The self-administered questionnaire was used for this study. There are three parts of the questionnaire. In the first part participant tourists required to indicate their level of satisfaction about infrastructure condition, hospitality service, environmental condition and cost of stay, ranges from 1-5 (1= "very dissatisfied", 5= "very satisfied") and in part II participant tourists required to indicate their level of agreement about overall satisfaction and revisit intention (1= "strongly disagree", 5= "strongly agree"). The third part includes the participants' profile; gender, age, the frequency of visit, expenditure, tourist home country, length of stay. Pilot testing was conducted in order to assess the effectiveness of the questionnaires and to correct the erroneous items. Questionnaire was also translated into Chinese language for Chinese tourists, since pilot testing showed that Chinese tourists have difficulties in understanding English. Internal consistency of the items was examined by Cronbach's alpha(a). Alpha value of more than 0.7 was considered as a reliable variable. Composite reliability was also measured to support the alpha coefficient. Composite reliability coefficient of more than 0.6 was considered as reliable. Validity was examined by using the method of average variance extracted (AVE). AVE more than 0.5 was considered as valid. But, we accept AVE 0.4 or higher if the composite reliability is 0.6 or higher because if AVE is less than 0.5 but composite reliability is above 0.6, convergent validity of the construct is still valid (Fornell & Larcker, 2018). To test the goodness of fit the measurement model, structural equation modelling was adopted. Only fourteen items were significantly loaded under five constructs. All the factors are valid and reliable (see table 2). Therefore, this study is based on 14 valid and reliable items.

Study Setting and Sampling

Nepal is a beautiful Himalayan country. World largest peak Mount Everest, including world tenth largest peak the Mount Annapurna and other six mountains belong to Nepal. Pokhara, one of the beautiful tourist destinations of Nepal, is surrounded by beautiful lakes and a magnificent view of the Himalayan range of Mount Annapurna. It is located at the central part of the Nepal and connected via road transportation from all the border cities of Nepal. In addition, it is located at 20-minutes flight distance from capital city Kathmandu. Pokhara is the most popular tourist destination of Nepal, since in average it covers 35% (approximately) of the total tourist population who visited Nepal in last ten years (Nepal tourism statistics, 2017).

Random sampling was adopted to select the participants for this study. 400 questionnaires were distributed to the tourists who visited Pokhara from August 2016 to April 2017 but only 280 respondents returned the questionnaire. Among them approximately 50% of respondents are male and 50% are female. 43% of the participants are Chinese, 38% are Indian and 19% are others. About 78% of the tourists are first-time visitors. The average length of stay of the tourist is 10 days after removing the outlier. The average length of stay of Chinese was 15.61 days, Indian was 4 days, and other was 8 days. Average per day expenditure of the tourist was US$40 after removing outlier. Average per day expenditure of Chinese tourist was US $41.4, Indian was US$ 26, and others was US$83. Self-reported average satisfaction score, and intention to revisit score of Indian, Chinese, and others was more than 4.

Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, median, skewness, and kurtosis of the items as well as factors were extracted. Prior to run the structural equation modelling, principal component factor analysis was performed to eliminate the poorly loaded indicator items. Communalities of the indicator items and items below 0.6 were eliminated. Varimax rotation was adopted and factor loading of 0.40 was used as the benchmark of included items in a factor. SEM was adopted to know the association between proposed exogenous and endogenous variables. All data analysis was performed by using IBMSPSS 20, LISREL 8.54 and Excel 2016. Before performing the final analysis, descriptive statistics were explored. Skewness and kurtosis were examined to know the distribution nature of the extracted items.

RESULTS

Table 1 displays that mean of all the items is more than 3 and median of most of the items is 4 or more. It indicates that, tourists are satisfied and willing to revisit to the Pokhara again. Mean of items related to hospitality service lies between 3.62 to 3.84 and the median is 4, which shows that tourists are satisfied with the hospitality service. Skewness and kurtosis of all the items related to hospitality service lie between the range of +/-3. Mean of items related to the behavior of the people range from 4.21 to 4.36 and median ranges from 4 to 5, showing that tourists are highly satisfied with the behavior of the people. Skewness and kurtosis of all the items related to the behavior of the people lie between the range of +/-3.

Mean of price satisfaction ranging from 3.47 to 3.59 and median ranging from 3 to 4, show tourists are moderately satisfied with the price structure. Skewness and kurtosis of all the items related to the cost of stay lie between the range of +/-3. Mean of overall satisfaction ranges from 4.11 to 4.99 and median ranges from 4 to 5, it shows that there is high overall tourist satisfaction at Pokhara. Skewness and kurtosis of all the items related to overall satisfaction lie between the range of +/-3 except one item. Kurtosis of the item SAT4 is 3.17, it is not too far from the 3, therefore it is also reasonable to accept this item as normal. Mean of tourist revisit intention ranges from 3.6 to 4.19 and the median is 4, it indicates that tourists are willing to revisit Pokhara again. Skewness and kurtosis of all the items of revisit intention lie between +/-3. All the indicator items are normal and no indication of normality violation.

Table 1. *Descriptive statistics*

Items	Mean	SD	Median	Skewness	Kurtosis
Appealing accommodation facilities (HS1)	3.84	0.9	4	-0.69	0.49
Variety of food and beverage (HS2)	3.71	0.95	4	-0.43	-0.27
Hygiene of food and beverage (HS3)	3.62	1.01	4	-0.31	-0.59
Willingness to help customers (BL1)	4.21	0.90	4	-1.12	-1.11
Warm and welcoming local people (BL2)	4.36	0.88	5	-1.53	2.28
Price of food and beverage (CC2)	3.47	1.03	4	-0.30	-0.49
Price of local transportation (CC3)	3.5	1.02	3	-0.33	-0.21
Price of products (CC4)	3.59	0.97	4	-0.68	0.33
It was a wise decision to visit Pokhara (SAT2)	4.11	0.86	4	-1.07	1.65
I had enjoyable time at Pokhara (SAT3)	4.37	0.78	4	-1.22	1.88
I am attracted by beautiful scenery of the Pokhara (SAT4)	4.99	0.82	5	-1.7	3.17
I am willing to return to Pokhara in the future (RV1)	4.19	0.86	4	-1.12	1.42
Pokhara will be my priority for future travel (RV2)	3.6	1.07	4	-0.38	-0.52
I strongly recommend to my friends and relatives to travel to Pokhara (RV3)	4.12	0.95	4	-1.06	0.99

Prior to run the measurement model principal component factor analysis was performed to eliminate the poorly loaded indicator items. Table 2 shows that 14 items are loaded under 5 factors. Factor loading of all the items ranges from 0.64 to 0.86, and t-values of each factor loadings are greater than 2. Thus, all the factors are significant at 5%. Average variance extracted (AVE) of all the factors fall above 0.4 and composite reliability of all the items fall above 0.6. Cronbach's alpha of all the factors ranges from 0.76 to 0.85 and overall Cronbach's alpha is 0.887. It shows that all the items are reliable and valid. Fit indices of the measurement model also support that loading of the following 14 items in five latent variables; hospitality service (HS), behavior of the people (BL), cost of the stay (CC), overall satisfaction (SAT), and revisit intention (RV) are statistically significant, since t-values of all the path is more than 2 and fit indices are within the acceptable limit. Fit indices show that normalized chi square is 1.65 (<3), RMSEA is 0.048 (<0.08), GFI is 0.95 (>0.9), RMR is 0.042 (<0.05), NFI is 0.97

(>0.9) and CFI is 0.99 (>0.9). It confirmed that the measurement model is valid and reliable.

Table 2. *Measurement model results*

Constructs	Items	λ	Error Variance	Cronbach's α	AVE	CR	t values
HS	HS1	0.64	0.41				12.84
	HS2	0.80	0.26	0.836	0.59	0.76	16.04
	HS3	0.85	0.3				15.99
BL	BL1	0.74	0.27				12.38
	BL2	0.67	0.34	0.76	0.50	0.62	12.34
CC	CC2	0.86	0.33				15.84
	CC3	0.82	0.36	0.85	0.67	0.80	15.36
	CC4	0.78	0.34				15.09
SAT	SAT2	0.65	0.31				14.19
	SAT3	0.65	0.2	0.81	0.41	0.63	15.8
	SAT4	0.60	0.32				13.43
RV	RV1	0.72	0.22				16.65
	RV2	0.74	0.59	0.833	0.57	0.74	12.6
	RV3	0.81	0.24				16.92

Table 3 and equations 1, 2 and 3 shows the direction and magnitude of association between proposed exogenous and endogenous variables;

$$SAT = 0.38{*}HS + 0.43{*}BL + 0.24{*}CC,\ \text{Error var.} = 1.00,\ R^2 = 0.42 \qquad (1)$$

(3.76) (3.78) (2.58)

$$RV = 1.28{*}SAT,\ \text{Error var.} = 1.00,\ R^2 = 0.74 \qquad (2)$$

(7.55)

$$RV = 0.49{*}HS + 0.55{*}BL + 0.30{*}CC,\ \text{Error var.} = 2.64,\ R^2 = 0.31 \qquad (3)$$

(3.52) (3.60) (2.48)

Table 3. *Results of path analysis*

Exogenous variable	Path	Endogenous variable	Unstandardized Estimate	Standardized Estimate	t values
Hospitality Service	→	Tourist Overall Satisfaction	0.38	0.29	3.76*
Behavior of the People	→	Tourist Overall Satisfaction	0.43	0.33	3.78*
Cost of Stay	→	Tourist Overall Satisfaction	0.24	0.18	2.58*
Tourist Overall Satisfaction	→	Revisit Intention	1.28	0.86	7.55*
Model Fit Statistics					
Chi-Square		120.93			
Chi-Square/df		1.72			
RMSEA		0.051			
GFI		0.94			
RMR		0.038			
NFI		0.97			
CFI		0.99			

* Significant at 5% level of significance

It shows that there is a significant positive relationship between hospitality service and tourist overall satisfaction since unstandardized beta coefficient is 0.34 and the standardized beta coefficient is 0.29 (t=3.76). It supports hypothesis 2. Likewise, there is a positive relationship between the behavior of the people and tourist overall satisfaction since unstandardized beta coefficient is 0.43 and the standardized beta coefficient is 0.33 (t=3.78). It supports hypothesis 4. Also, there is a significant positive relationship between the cost of stay and tourist overall satisfaction, where unstandardized beta coefficient is 0.24 and standardized beta coefficient is 0.18 (t=2.58). It supports hypothesis 3. The overall coefficient of determination of the equation (1) is 0.42, it shows hospitality service (HS), the behavior of the people (BL) and cost of stay (CS) accounts for 42% variation on the overall satisfaction of the tourist.

Equation 2 and table 3 shows, there is a significant positive relationship between overall tourist satisfaction and tourist revisit intention, since unstandardized beta coefficient is 1.28 and the standardized beta coefficient is 0.86 (t=7.55). The coefficient of determination of equation 2 is 0.74, it shows overall satisfaction of the tourist accounts for 74% variation on the tourist revisit intention. An equation (3) is the reduced structural equation, displayed direct relationship between revisit intention

(RV) and other three variables of hospitality service (HS), behavior of the people (BL), and cost of stay (CC). Equation (3) shows that revisit intention (RV) has a significant positive relationship with hospitality service (HS), behavior of the people (BL), and cost of stay (CC).

All the proposed hypotheses are supported by the findings. The path analysis (table 3) confirms the proposed model. The model is a good fit since all the fit indices are within the cut-off value. $\chi2/df$ is 1.72 (<3), RMSEA is 0.051 (<0.08), GFI is 0.94 (>0.9), RMR is 0.038 (<0.05), NFI is 0.97 (>0.9) and CFI is 0.99 (>0.9).

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

Earlier studies have made a significant contribution to exploring the relationship of tourist satisfaction and their revisit intention, but tourists who visited Pokhara Nepal, were rarely the participants of these studies. Therefore, studies conducted in different part of the world might not reflect the satisfaction and revisit intention of those who visited Nepal. This study adds bricks to generalize the tourist satisfaction and revisit intention model by selecting tourists who visited Pokhara Nepal during the study period. Also, findings of this research could offer precious reference to destination managers and tourist planners in order to understand the importance of tourist satisfaction for motivation to revisit Pokhara.

Past studies consistently treat hospitality as a part of service quality (Chi & Qu, 2008; Crompton, 1979; Meleddu et al., 2015; Pizam et al., 1978; Um et al., 2006; Yoon & Uysal, 2005), but this study treated it as a separate antecedent factor of tourist overall satisfaction, as suggested by Rimmington & Yüksel (1998). The study confirmed the positive association between hospitality and tourist satisfaction, in addition we found that most of the tourists are satisfied with the hospitality service. Our study strengthens the position of hospitality service as a salient antecedent variable of tourist satisfaction and their intention to return. Chinese and Indian foods along with Nepali cultural foods are available in Pokhara. Tourists could be satisfied with the variety of food and appealing accommodation facilities they received at Pokhara. They could enjoy their own preferred food with Nepali cultural food. Tourists are also satisfied with the hygiene of the food too. Because of appealing hospitality service offered by hotels in Pokhara, revisit of the tourists would be anticipated.

Tourism studies in the past rarely treated behavior of the local people as an antecedent variable of tourists' overall satisfaction. However, Papadimitriou et al. (2018) critically evaluated behavior of the local residents as an influencing factor of word of mouth and destination branding. In the current study it was found that the behavior of the local people is a salient influencing factor of tourists' overall satisfaction and confirmed a significant positive association between them. Average score of this construct also shows that tourists are highly satisfied with the behavior of the people of Pokhara. Majority of the tourist destinations in Pokhara offers a welcome and cultural program for tourists. They could be kind and cooperative with tourists, which can make them feel good and satisfied with locals' behavior. If tourists are satisfied with behavior of the local people, it will definitely motivate them to revisit Pokhara. For the tourism development, local people should be kind and cooperative with tourist but be cautious if tourists are involving in some restricted activities, violating the government laws, harming the local community and environment etc. This study also adds value to the tourism literature by exploring the importance of the locals' behavior for tourist satisfaction and their revisit intention.

Cost of stay is another salient exogenous predictor variable of the tourist overall satisfaction. Researchers in the past also viewed cost as an important exogenous variable for tourist overall satisfaction. Kozak (2001a) concluded that level of price along with some other facilities such as hospitality service, customer care, entertainment etc. are important for revisit intention of tourists at the same destination. Hutchinson et al. (2009) highlighted that tourists who feel that they paid a reasonable price for their expected service, are more likely to be satisfied. Finding of the current study is similar to the one of Hutchinson et al. Finding of the current study also shows that tourists are moderately satisfied with the cost of stay at Pokhara and it is the weakest exogenous variable among all three of them. Less satisfaction of tourist in cost of stay at Pokhara could be because of two different price categories for air travel in Pokhara, and variation on the other accommodation prices for tourists (International tourist required to pay higher price than domestic tourists). Stevens (1992) viewed price as the less important factor than other qualitative factors such as beautiful scenery, quality of accommodation, and different cultures. But, he believes that price is important only when travelers select the other products related to travel. Authors of the current study have different stand point: if tourists are not satisfied with the price and if they feel they are paying more than their expected price level, they would feel they are cheated, which, consequently, will affect their satisfaction and intention to return. If tourists are unhappy with the price level, they would share the negative word of mouth, as a result, it will downsize the future tourist population. Therefore, cost of the stay is an important antecedent variable for the tourists' overall satisfaction and their revisit intention. Even though qualitative factors should have influence on the tourist overall satisfaction, as Stevens' (1992) thought, price is not less important factor either.

Result of positive association between tourists' overall satisfaction and their revisit intention corroborate the findings of the past studies where it was abstracted that satisfied tourists either return the same destination in the future or recommend it to other people (Alegre & Garau, 2010; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Kozak, 2001b; Meleddu et al., 2015; Meng & Han, 2018; Zhang et al., 2017). Even though, high nobility seekers have less chances for visiting the same destination again (Bigné et al., 2001; Um et al., 2006), positive voice about the destination by pre-visitors motivate new nobility seekers to visit.

Current study confirmed that hospitality service, the behavior of the people and cost of stay through tourist overall satisfaction have significant influence on revisit intention of tourists. If tourists are not happy with hospitality service, cost of stay and behavior of the local people, there would be fewer chances of their revisit to the same destination, even though they are attracted by its beauty. Although current revisit trend of tourists shows that majority of them are first time visitors, self-reported score of the tourists shows that they are willing to revisit Pokhara. Survey results also show that tourists are less satisfied with the tariff rates of hotels, road transportation, and communication facilities (average self-reported score was less than 3.25). In case of climate and beautiful scenery of the Pokhara, tourists are highly satisfied (average self-reported score of climate and beauty was higher than 4). It is reasonable to claim that in the past visitors were moderately satisfied in Pokhara therefore, when they returned to their homes, they forgot about Pokhara and forget to share about it to their friends and relatives. Consequently, growth rate of the tourist in the recent years wasn't satisfactory. Tourist arrival rate would be increased by offering appealing hospitality service in minimum cost with pleasant behavior of the local people, improving the road transportation, and communication facilities, but destinations should be ready to accommodate the anticipated increased volume of tourists. Growth of the infrastructure development is salient to provide comfortable accommodation to the expected increased volume of the tourists for the sustainable tourism development. However, uncontrolled construction in the tourism site would hide the natural beauty and harm the environment, therefore, government as well as local community should be watchful about it.

Undoubtedly, higher tourist arrival rates would attract foreign investments which are important for the least developed countries like Nepal. Higher growth of the tourist arrivals has positive consequences for example; more jobs will be created by the expanded local and international tourism business in the tourist sites, large volume of local product will be sold in higher value and government revenue collection will increase. Along with focusing on the strategy to increase the tourist movements in the future, tourism managers of Pokhara should also focus on attracting more third country and Chinese tourists, since their per day expenditure and average length of stay is higher than Indians. For the sustainability of the tourism, government should; create the environment for the foreign investors, promote the expansion of local tourism business houses, and local community-based tourism businesses such as home stay. Role of the government should also be to educate the local communities about negative consequences of the tourism movements such as the destruction of environmental systems, and loss of cultural heritage. Government should also provide some decision-making role to local community in preserving the local cultural heritage and ecological system.

In conclusion, overall empirical results support all the proposed hypothesis. It corroborates that exogenous variables; hospitality service, the behavior of the people, and cost of stay have significant positive influence on tourist revisit intention through overall satisfaction. It is reasonable to conclude that satisfied tourists either return the same destination in the future or suggest it to other people. To increase the tourist arrival rates in the future, destination managers should offer appealing hospitality service in minimum cost with pleasant behavior without exploiting the ecological system and cultural heritage of the tourist sites.

This study would sketch the pathway for future researcher who wish to dig into the tourist satisfaction, its' influential factors and its' consequences, especially, for Nepalese tourism industry. It can work as a good reference for future academicians, researchers and graduate students. Finding of the study will also contribute to the tourism business managers, planners and government of Nepal to make a policy for the future tourism business.

Even though this study has significant contribution to the tourism literature in several ways and has several managerial implications, there are some limitations. First, the study area of the current study is Pokhara, city of Nepal. Therefore, call for future research to focus on other tourist destinations of Nepal is necessary. Although, the current instrument was tested for validity and reliability, some extensive research would be needed to strengthen the current measurement model. Only two items were loaded under the behavior of the people factor, therefore, in the future research more items can be included and tested for their validity and reliability. In addition, some other exogenous variables could be added to this model and have its' validity and reliability tested.

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EVALUATION OF HOTEL PERFORMANCE ATTRIBUTES THROUGH CONSUMER GENERATED REVIEWS: THE CASE OF BRATISLAVA[1]

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ABSTRACT

Slovakia is positioned in a highly competitive market of Central European countries with geographical and cultural similarities. Despite having a good potential, the tourism development in the country has not reached the level of the neighboring countries. In information sensitive sector such as tourism, the development is highly dependent on following and implementing new trends including latest technology. The usage of social media and Travel 2.0 platforms has become crucial in decision-making about the place to go or stay and online reviews have turned into a valuable source of information about the supplier's performance and service quality. This study analyses hotel performance through hotel performance attributes using consumer generated reviews posted on the number one hotel rating social platform TripAdvisor. Hotel reviews based on real travel experience is a valuable source of information about the hotel's performance evaluated by tourists directly. Several interesting findings resulted from the research and further implications were advised.

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INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that performance measurement of a business has gained on importance in the eyes of business owners and managers in the last decades, with ever growing globalization and fierce market competition. Many authors have emphasized the intense competition in the hotel industry which makes decision-making based on sufficient performance information a necessity (Atkinson & Brander Brown, 2001; Sainaghi, 2010; Zigan & Zeglat, 2010; Chen et al., 2011; Kantarci et al., 2017). Performance measurement can be defined as "process of collecting, computing and presenting quantified constructs for the managerial purposes of following-up, monitoring and improving organizational performance" (Kollberg et al., 2005, p. 98). Over the last several decades, academics have developed numerous approaches to performance measurement including individual financial or non-financial measures and more holistic approaches. Atkinson and Brander Brown (2001) emphasize that a company's performance should be evaluated in relation to customer satisfaction, where perceived service quality is the driver of hotel's performance (Wilkins et al., 2007). Starting with SERVQUAL scale of Parasuraman et al. (1988, 1991) the perspective of evaluating service quality shifted from company's to consumer's perspective, which is accurate especially in the age of Web 2.0 technology. Hotel visitors share their experiences and opinions extensively through Travel 2.0 platforms in form of consumer generated reviews. These platforms can be considered valuable sources of information about hotels' performance mediated by consumers' satisfaction. Adding consumer's perspective into hotel performance theory is undoubtedly advantageous as several studies have proven relation of online hotel reviews and hotel's occupancy level, average daily rate and revenue per available room (Touminen, 2011); and relation between hotel rating system and hotel performance changes measured through volume of sales, average daily room rate and occupancy (Narangajavana & Hu, 2008).

The research of hotel performance adopting consumer generated review analysis is very scarce and rather outdated. Except a few studies mentioned above (Narangajavana & Hu, 2008; Touminen, 2011), the work of Xie et al. (2016b) concentrated on managerial responses in relation to eWOM and hotel performance. Kantarci et al. (2017) analyzed consumer generated reviews of hotels, shortly CGR, in Kyrgyzstan using Log-Linear model in order to determine the influence of trip characteristics such as travel year, travel season and travel type on hotel evaluation dimensions. Jeong and Mindy Jeon (2008) conducted an analysis of New York City hotels' reviews using 8 hotel performance attributes from TripAdvisor, guest satisfaction and return intention evaluations in relation to hotel characteristics such as ownership, class, number of rooms, average room rate and popularity index. To our best knowledge, a more holistic research of what are the hotel attributes evaluations in TripAdvisor reviews influenced by and dependent on has not been conducted yet. Similar to Jeong and Mindy Jeon (2008) who directly accepted the 8 dimensions of TripAdvisor reviews as hotel performance attributes, the authors have decided to accept the hotel attributes in consumer generated reviews (CGRs) of hotels on TripAdvisor as hotel performance attributes. Using the wide range of standardized data provided by hotel reviews on TripAdvisor the study aims to investigate:

- whether there is any relation between hotel performance evaluations and demographic characteristics of reviewers (age, nationality, gender), trip characteristics (travel type, season and year) and hotel characteristics (hotel ownership and class) and

- which dimensions influence the overall evaluation of a hotel as a hotel’s overall performance attribute.

Along with traditional performance measures, assessing hotels’ performance from consumers’ point of view may provide a more complete picture of a hotel’s performance. As using the publicly available data on TripAdvisor is less cost and time consuming than traditional ways of opinion surveys and enables a continual monitoring of a hotel’s performance, the study provides an example of extracting valuable information for hotel managers and sector decision makers that can be useful in market segmentation and targeting, formulating marketing strategies or product development and innovation and thus may lead to improving the hotel’s performance.

The study is organized into four sections. Firstly, the literature review on the topic of measuring performance through hotel attributes and their online evaluation on social platforms is presented. A short introduction of Slovakia and an overview of the development of tourism in the country follows. In the second part, the applied methodology is described. The third section explains the key findings of the study followed with the final section concluding and discussing the obtained results, their practical implications and limitations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Measuring hotel performance via hotel attributes

In literature, three approaches to performance evaluation can be identified. Hotel performance was predominantly measured via traditional measures including financial and non-financial measures as well as more holistic evaluation scales. With the rise of social platforms, the hotel performance was evaluated via consumer generated reviews either in relation to the traditional performance measures or using it as direct representations of hotel performance attributes. The traditional ways of measuring hotel performance were based on financial statements encompassing a number of disadvantages when used as a sole method of performance evaluation (Atkinson & Browner Brown, 2001; Zigan & Zeglat, 2010); and several non-financial measures such as sales and market share growth (Harrington & Akehurst, 1996), customer satisfaction and level of complaints (Banker et al., 2005), average daily rate and revenue per available room, occupancy of a hotel (Touminen, 2011). The more holistic balanced performance measurement systems that are related to company's strategy and customer satisfaction (Atkinson & Brander Brown, 2001) include the performance measurement system in the service industry (PMSSI) by Fitzgerald et al. (1991) and the balanced scorecard (BSC) by Kaplan & Norton (1992) which have been used extensively in the hospitality research (Evans, 2005; Phillips & Louvieris, 2005; Bergin-Seers & Jago, 2007; Chen et al., 2011).

Based on the research of Atkinson & Brander Brown (2001), 94% of UK hotels evaluated quality of service as a part of performance measurement although the methods are unknown. Service quality constructs were proven to be drivers of a hotel's performance by the research of Wilkins et al. (2007). Narangajavana & Hu (2008) found a significant relationship between service quality improvement and changes in hotel performance. The SERVQUAL scale designed and refined by Parasuraman et al. (1988, 1991) as a multi-item scale measuring perceived service quality evaluated by consumers themselves was widely applied in the hotel industry (Devi Juwaheer, 2004; Ramsaran-Fowdar, 2007; Stefano et al., 2015) as was the SERVPERF by Cronin and Tayor (1992, 1994), although to a lesser extend (Yilmaz, 2009; Al Khattab & Aldehayyat, 2011). Regardless of the scale, adding the customer's perspective on service quality helped acquiring a more realistic picture of hotel performance.

Following the rapid development of Web 2.0 technologies a new approach to perceived service quality and hotel performance evaluation can be identified. Consumer generated content created by consumers themselves represent a turning point in the hotel performance measurement through customer satisfaction and perceived service quality evaluation. Unlike the previously mentioned methods, CGRs of hotels on the Internet offer several significant advantages:

- published by consumers themselves based on real experience, they are considered largely reliable by travelers (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008; Chua & Banerjee, 2013);
- produce information available not only for hotel management but easily accessible to travelers worldwide and thus influence their decision-making directly (Kantarci et al., 2017);
- may include textual as well as visual information;
- may have structured or unstructured form. Unlike other approaches, CGR are independent from any pre-defined set of dimensions, which decreases the risk of omitting any important factor influencing the service quality and hotel performance;
- are available for any period of the year and ensure continuity;
- are more time and cost effective compared to approaches utilizing traditional consumer surveys;
- generate data for evaluation of a single hotel, hotel chain or the whole hotel sector in a destination.

Despite the numerous advantages of consumer generated content, CGRs represent very recent research field among academicians. CGRs of hotels on the largest travel-related platform TripAdvisor was studied in connection to various areas such as consumer decision-making (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009); credibility perceptions of CGC (Ayeh et al., 2013); customer satisfaction (Molinillo et al., 2016); eWOM, review content analysis and valence (Melián-González et al., 2013); destination image (Miguéns et al., 2008); use and impact of CGR during travel planning process (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008); content creators' reputation (Lee et al., 2011); comparisons of independent and chain hotels (Banerjee & Chua, 2016); offline hotel popularity (Xie et al., 2016a).

Limited number of authors has related CGR with hotel performance from different points of view. Xie et al. (2016b) paid attention to managerial response in relation to eWOM and hotel performance. Kantarci et al. (2017) analyzed CGR of hotels in Kyrgyzstan using Log-Linear model in order to determine the influence of travel year, travel season and travel type on hotel evaluation dimensions. Singh et al. (2016) studied online reviews in relation to improving hotel performance and online image. They found out that while quality of online consumer ratings influenced significantly the overall market rankings of hotels on travel websites, the quantity of reviews did not have any influence. Touminen (2011) studied hotel reviews on TripAdvisor and their influence on hotel performance measured through occupancy level, average daily rate and revenue per available room. His extensive research among 77 hotels in 6 different cities proved a significant positive relation between the above-mentioned hotel performance measures and number of reviews written and review average, while both of them can also significantly improve the occupancy of a hotel. Moreover, the study revealed a high correlation between recommendation percentage and occupancy of a hotel and a considerable correlation to revenue per available room. No relationship was found between TripAdvisor popularity rating and the hotel performance (Touminen, 2011). Similarly, Narangajavana & Hu (2008) analyzed the relationship between hotel rating system, service quality improvement and hotel performance changes. The hotel performance changes were evaluated through volume of sales, average daily room rate, occupancy before and after the certification by the Thailand Hotel Standards. The research also found out that improvement in service quality led to positive changes in hotel performance.

In order to quantify the impact of consumer generated reviews on hotel performance, Ye et al. (2009) constructed a log-linear regression model and analyzed data from the Chinese biggest travel-related website. According to their results, 10% increase in online review rates leads to 4.4% increase in hotel room sales. Similarly, Öğüt & Onur Taş (2012) found 1% increase in online ratings resulting in up to 2.6% increase in room sales depending on the destination while Ye et al. (2011) concentrated on online sales and found that a 10% increase of review ratings cause the online bookings to rise by more than 5%. Based on the Expedia internal statistics, a one-point improvement in online review rate results in 9% increase in average daily rate (Lynch, 2012). However, the authors of the current study believe that online reviews shall not be researched only in relation to traditional financial and non-financial performance measures as in the studies above. Consumer generated reviews may be accepted as digital representations of hotel performance attributes reflecting consumer satisfaction and perceived quality of a hotel as in the study of Jeong and Mindy Jeon (2008). The authors conducted an analysis of New York City hotels' reviews using 8 hotel performance attributes adopted from TripAdvisor, guest satisfaction and return intention evaluations in relation to hotel ownership, class, number of rooms, average room rate and popularity index using descriptive statistics, t-test, ANOVA and the Bonferroni's multiple group comparison method. The research is based on the theory that online communication sites are a primary source of information about a company's performance and they can help hospitality companies to improve their performance in the future. It is important to mention that the research included reviews from the year 2006 when the structure of reviews on TripAdvisor differed from its present form.

Online evaluation of hotel performance attributes

Consumer generated content including CGRs published in social media and Travel 2.0 platforms are especially influential in tourism because of the experience-based nature and intangibility of touristic products (Touminen, 2011). To reduce the risk, travelers tend to search recommendations of other travelers in form of CGRs during their travel planning process, which can be very influential on their purchase decision (Yoo et al., 2007; Gretzel & Yoo, 2008; Hays et al., 2013; Munar & Jacobsen, 2014).

According to Kantarci et al. (2017) travelers can reach online opinions of visitors easier, cheaper and faster than using any other traditional way. Travel related topics are among the most popular topics on social media (Öz, 2015) and some authors consider it the major driving force that has impact on traveler's perception of a hotel (Sigala et al., 2012). Consumer generated media, especially CGR, are widely used by travelers when planning a trip as proved by several studies (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008; Yoo et al., 2009). They are generally considered to offer more accurate, enjoyable and reliable information to travelers. The reviews are preferably searched for on virtual community websites such as TripAdvisor, which uses the same Web 2.0 technology as social media websites. Most of the travelers use CGRs in the middle stage of their travel planning to cut down choices. Almost 78% of travelers use it for deciding on the place to stay while 25% of infrequent and 33% of frequent travelers did change their hotel decisions in the past based on other travelers' reviews (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008).

Although the SERVQUAL model of Parasuraman et al. (1988,1991) can be considered a milestone in search for service attributes that determine consumer satisfaction, the model itself is hardly applicable in online service quality evaluations because of its length (22 items regarding each expectations and perception) and being time consuming and confusing for some consumers. In order to bridge the gap in quality perceptions between service providers and hotel visitors, Nasution & Mavondo (2008) pointed out that it is vital to add consumers' perspective into hotel service quality evaluation for a more accurate picture of hotel's performance. Consumer generated reviews on online platforms provide real-time continual data on consumers' satisfaction and service quality, which is impossible to obtain through questionnaires or surveys (Zhang & Verma, 2017).

Using these online data, a group of researchers continues researching and justifying hotel attributes that play important role in customers' satisfaction. The work of Jang et al. (2018) identified top 30 hotel attributes in CGRs determining the hotel ratings on TripAdvisor that were grouped into core service & room quality, supplementary service and attributes outside the hotel categories. The authors analyzed the importance of each attribute and change of its importance over time. In conclusion, staff was found to be the most important hotel attribute influencing the hotel rating. On the contrary, Zhang and Verma (2017) proved service and rooms to be the most important attributes for high-end hotels. A research among luxury hotels in Malaysia (Padma & Ahn, 2020) distinguished among hotel-related attributes, room-related attributes, staff-related and travel-related attributes of luxury hotel service quality while identifying quality of rooms and interaction with employees as the drivers of consumers' satisfaction. The research on identifying hotel attributes from CGRs and analysis of their importance from the consumers' point of view is quite extensive but the text mining techniques applied only explain the frequency of individual words (attributes) not their valence and miss any quantifiable evaluations, which makes it impossible to measure the actual performance of a hotel at the end. Such an approach also produces an overload of information and high number of attributes that are hard to monitor on a regular basis in practice.

On the other hand, using the standardized data included in CGRs on platforms such as TripAdvisor enables to calculate quantified outcomes and analyze any relations among variables that may influence the hotel performance attributes evaluations by consumers. Although textual part of CGRs articulates the details of a consumer's actual hotel experience, it is the numerical ratings that communicate hotels' performance in relation to various attributes (King et al., 2014). In the study, the standardized attributes of CGRs of hotels on TripAdvisor were accepted as hotel performance attributes and analyzed in relation to the overall evaluation of hotel's performance as well as to demographic, hotel and trip characteristics.

Tourism in Slovakia

Slovakia is a landlocked country in the Central Europe with a population of nearly 5.5 million. The country declared sovereignty on January 1993 (slovakia.travel, 2018). Although the country has a rich potential for tourism development, the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index 2017 ranks Slovakia as 59 from 136 countries (World Economic Forum, 2018). Its natural resources are favorable for development of agro-tourism, rural tourism, health tourism, winter and special interest tourism. There are 9 national and 14 regional parks under protection covering almost 22% of Slovakia, 1200 mineral and thermal springs, 10,000 km of cycling tracks and 14,000 km of trekking routes and tens of ski centers, around 6000 caves 18 of which are accessible to public and unique in Europe and the world. 7 UNESCO heritage sights, together with 18 cities with well preserved and protected city centers and hundreds of castles and mansion houses, are the base for cultural and city tourism in Slovakia (SACR, 2013).

Figure 1. *Map of Slovakia (Central Intelligence Agency, 2019).*

The Slovak travel and tourism (T&T) sector produced 2.2 billion EUR in 2017, which accounts for 2.6% of its total GDP. While 50.7% of it was generated by foreign visitors, remaining 49.3% was generated by domestic tourists. The total contribution of travel and tourism to GDP is estimated to be double the size of the direct contribution and in case of Slovakia it was 5.4 billion EUR (6.3% of GDP) in 2017. Based on the total contribution of T&T to GDP, the World Travel & Tourism Council ranks Slovakia as 77th out of 185 countries in 2017 but it expects Slovakia to fall to 126th place within the following 10 years. The sector provided over 155,500 jobs in total (6.1% of total employment) and visitor exports accounted for 2.4 billion EUR in 2017, which forms 3% of total exports of the country (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2018). The above stated indicators are forecasted to rise very insignificantly (0.1% - 0.9%) until 2028 so it is obvious that Slovak tourism performance does not meet its potential.

The possible reasons behind the low tourism performance and rather unfavorable development of the sector, compared to its potential, may lay in incomplete transition in general and in tourism, low prioritization and support of the sector from the state, slow adoption of new trends including new technology in tourism or missing continuity of tourism strategy, planning and controlling. Since the formation of the Slovak Republic in 1993, tourism has been organizationally transferred from ministry to ministry, currently belonging under the Ministry of Transport and Construction of the Slovak Republic (aices.sk, 2019; culture.gov.sk, 2019).

The outline for tourism development strategy, goals and implementation is described in the Manifesto for 2016 - 2020, the Tourism Development Strategy until 2020 and the Marketing strategy until 2020. In the Manifesto for 2016 - 2020 the Slovak government emphasizes the goals of increasing competitiveness, decreasing unemployment through creating jobs in tourism, promoting coordination between the transport and tourism sector, creating and promoting the image of Slovakia as an attractive and safe destination, attract more tourists and prolong their stay, especially support spa tourism and encourage governance through local Destination Management Organizations (DMOs).

Increasing competitiveness and better use of potential is also the core of the Tourism Development Strategy until 2020, which identifies 2 key areas of focus, i.e. quality of tourism product and attractive presentation and promotion of Slovakia (Ministry of Transport and Construction, 2013). In attempt to increase the quality of tourism offer the Ministry developed the Slovak system of quality of tourism services, which is a certification system aimed at enhancing quality and increasing competitiveness of Slovak tourism product. It enables suppliers of tourism services to gain an internationally comparable quality mark. Furthermore, the marketing strategy until 2020 and especially the updated marketing strategy for 2019 - 2020 recognizes the importance of smart technology in tourism marketing, necessity of providing personalized information to consumer and ever-growing orientation to sharing economy. In accordance with the trends, the National Tourist System has been developed as an interface for smart presentation of Slovakia integrated to the official tourism portal slovakia.travel which helps tourists to plan their trip; several region or activity based mobile applications and regional travel cards have been developed (European Commission, 2017; slovakia.travel, 2019).

Bratislava as the capital of Slovakia is the largest city of the country with a population of nearly 450,000. It is located in the South-West of Slovakia near the Austrian and Hungarian borders. The city is easily accessible by road and rail from the neighboring countries but its accessibility by air is limited. Close proximity of Vienna (approx. 1 hour by car) and direct highway connections to Budapest (approx. 2 hours by car) and Prague (approx. 3 hours by car) position Slovakia into an important East-West and North-South junction, which supplies high number of visitors to the city. On the other hand, however, the profile of the inbound tourists is rather unfavorable formed predominantly by one-day or short-term visitors passing through the city and moving on to their final destination. It is so with the Central Europe tour leading through Budapest, Bratislava, Vienna and Prague which mostly include a visit to the Bratislava City with one overnight stay at most.

Table 1. *Selected indicators of tourism and hotel sector development in Slovakia (2017)*

Tourism development indicators	**Slovakia (SVK)**	**Bratislava region (BA)**	**BA / SVK (%)**
Number of accommodation establishments	3,495	234	6.7
Number of rooms	62,658	9,425	15.0
Number of beds	160,881	21,046	13.1
Occupancy rate (%)	31	41	-
Number of inbound tourists	2,162,384	930,643	43.0
Average length of stay of inbound tourists	2.5	1.8	-
Average expenditure of inbound tourist for accommodation (EUR per night)	26.6	35	-

Source: Adapted from: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (2018b, c).

According to the data from the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (2018a), Slovakia attracted slightly fewer than 2.2 million inbound tourists in 2017. 43% of inbound tourists visited the Bratislava region dominated by the city of Bratislava. Majority of them came from the neighboring countries (Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary and Austria), from Germany, Israel and UK. With an exception of the year 2014, number of tourists has had an increasing tendency in the recent decade reaching 6.7% growth of foreign visitors in 2017 compared to the previous year (Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 2018b).

Despite the increasing number of tourist arrivals, the length of stay and average expenditure per holiday decreases. The average length of overnight stays of foreigners visiting Slovakia dropped from 3.6 in 2000 to 2,5 in 2017 (Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 2018a). The Bratislava region is far below the average of Slovakia reaching only 1.8 nights spent by foreigners (Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 2018b). The very short length of stay is caused by the fact that 67% of visitors of Slovakia are transit or 1-day visitors while only 12.3% of visits last more than 3 days (Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 2016a). This indicates that, for the vast majority of tourists, Slovakia is just a transit country or a part of a trip not the final destination of their holidays.

The average expenditures of tourists during their trips to Slovakia is very low, i.e. approx. 270 EUR per trip of an inbound tourist in 2016 (Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 2016a, b). Accommodation represents a significant part of tourists' expenditures. Receipts from accommodation in Slovak inbound tourism accounted for approx. 186,388,000 EUR in 2017. Bratislava as one of the eight Slovak regions attracts over 40% of foreign tourists visiting the country and generates over 40% of accommodation receipts (Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 2018b, c). From this point of view, it can be hold for the most important touristic region of Slovakia. That is partly the reason Bratislava was chosen as the case study.

Consumer generated reviews can provide valuable information about the hotel sector performance in the Bratislava region as the inevitable part of the tourism product of the region. Bratislava can be considered the entrance gate to Slovakia due to very low international accessibility of other regions. The study introduces Bratislava and Slovakia to the academic circles more closely as the destinations are barely covered by tourism research and academic literature. Its results benefit the hotel managers and decision makers in Bratislava in revealing areas for improving hotels' performance that may lead to attracting inbound tourists staying a longer period of time and improving the online image of Bratislava hotel sector as formed by the online travelers' community. Detailed information about the hotel sector and inbound tourism of Slovakia and Bratislava is presented in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 2. *Accommodation establishments by type of accommodation (2017)*

Type of accommodation	**Slovakia (SVK)**	**Bratislava region (BA)**	**BA / SVK (%)**
Hotels (1* - 5*)	651	101	15.5
Guesthouses	816	36	4.4
Hostels	315	14	4.4
Cottages, Bungalows	52	-	-
Private rental properties	723	14	1.9
Other	884	60	6.8
Total	3495	234	6.7

Source: Adapted from Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (2018b, c).

Table 3. *Inbound tourists in Slovakia and the Bratislava region by type of accommodation (2017)*

Type of accommodation	**Number of inbound tourists (SVK*)**	**% of inbound tourists (SVK)**	**Number of inbound tourists (BA**)**	**% of inbound tourists (BA)**
5* & 4* hotels	1,025,374	47.4	631,164	67.8
3* hotels	463,403	21.4	131,547	14.1
2* hotels	80,559	3.7	21,401	2.3
1* hotels	45,811	2.1	23,018	2.5
Hotels in Total	1,615,147	74.6	807,130	86.7
Guesthouses	184,026	8.5	10,111	1.1
Hostels	69,373	3.2	23,903	2.6
Cottages, Bungalows	39,483	1.8	-	-
Private rental properties	32,877	1.5	1,513	0.2
Other	168,602	7.8	60,065	6.5

Source: Adapted from Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (2018b, c).
*SVK – Slovakia; **BA – Bratislava Region

METHODOLOGY

The consumer generated reviews on TripAdvisor related to the evaluations of the hotels' performance in Bratislava were gathered between December 2017 and May 2018. Two types of data can be reached from Tripadvisor.com. While the first one consists of evaluations of hotel attributes and hotel's overall performance that are rated from 1 to 5 corresponding to evaluations from terrible to excellent respectively, the second type are freely expressed opinions written in the form of text by travelers. In addition, some other type of information such as demographic can be extracted too. In our study, the former type of data has been utilized including the hotel attributes of value, location, sleep quality, rooms, cleanliness and service and the hotels' overall performance attribute called the overall evaluation. As in the study of Jeong and Mindy Jeon (2008), the attributes' evaluations are directly accepted as hotels' performance indicators and subjected to the analysis.

Slovakia has considerable tourism potential but has received limited attention in the literature. It was selected as the case study because any similar data collection and analysis had never been undertaken in the area before. When the data collection began, there were 434 hotels in 67 various locations across Slovakia registered on Tripadvisor.com with over 33.000 user reviews. 90% of online reviews of hotels in Slovakia registered on TripAdvisor belonged to Bratislava hotels. In addition, Bratislava as the region including the capital of the country is at the same time the most visited region attracting 27% of tourists in total and 43% of foreign tourists visiting Slovakia (Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 2018c). The research sample was thus narrowed to 93 hotels located in Bratislava which still accounted for almost 29.700 reviews in December 2017. In order to minimize the missing data in the sample, the generic characteristics of the collected reviews were set as follows:

• Travel date between 2014 and 2018

• Overall rating and all specific ratings for the hotels were submitted, i.e. value, location, sleep quality, rooms, cleanliness, service were rated without an omission.

• At most one demographic data about the submitter of a review was missing, i.e. at most one out of age, nationality or gender.

The suitable reviews were then coded into an SPSS 24.0 version composing of a sample of 1404 reviews from 93 hotels in Bratislava, Slovakia. In order to clearly distinguish the overall evaluation as the hotel's overall performance attribute and the sub-categories of a hotel's performance including hotel attributes of value, location, sleep quality, rooms, cleanliness and service, the overall evaluation is called hotel performance attribute while the specific sub-categories' ratings are called hotel attributes in our study. In order to extract insights from the collected data, independent sample t-test, ANOVA and Factor analysis are employed. T-test and ANOVA are employed since some attributes are categorized, namely, age groups, hotel groups, years, gender and so on. Hence, t-test and ANOVA are suitably employed to determine whether any differences exist among groups based on each hotel attribute and the overall evaluation. In addition, Factor analysis is run in order to determine whether the overall evaluation as a hotel performance indicator is linked to any hotel attribute or not. As reported in the literature, some hotel attributes are not related to the overall evaluation.

RESULTS

While females accounted for 35 percent of reviewers, 65 percent were males. This does not represent the visitors' gender profile of Bratislava hotels. The prevailing percentage of males stems from the fact that 63% of submitters in the sample were couples and business travelers. Assuming that business travelers consist predominantly from males and in case of a couple travelling males are in charge of doing travel arrangements, i.e. review submission invitation is sent to their email addresses, males formed a higher proportion of the dataset. The way the attribute evaluation is influenced by an uneven share of genders leaves an open question for a future research.

The proportion of the age interval of either 18-24 or 65+ was less than ten percent, which accounted for 1.3 and 7.4 percent respectively. The leading age group of the submitters was 35-49 with 41 percent, followed by the age intervals of 25-34 and 50-64 with 25 percent each.

When travel type is concerned, most of the reviewers travelled as couples (35%) or as business travelers (28%). Remaining travel types were family, friends and solo, which summed up the remaining 37%. The recorded data mostly came from the travel years 2014, 2015 and 2016 providing 91 percent of the dataset.

When travel season is considered, most of the submitters travelled in the spring (39%) and summer time (28%) followed by the fall and winter seasons (13 and 22 percent respectively). The leading hotel group which reviews mostly fitted the selected criteria was 4-star hotels accounting for 71% of the data. The remaining 28% comprises 3-star (16%), 5-star (12%) and 2-star hotels (1%). While data consists of predominantly chain hotels (75%), 25% come from independent hotels. The representation of hotel classes and the dominance of hotel chains in the dataset is not meant to reflect the situation of the hotel sector in Bratislava but rather the usage of social platforms by hotels and their visitors. Significantly higher share of 4- and 5-star hotels and hotel chains in the dataset is believed to be a result of more effective usage of social platforms by bigger international hotels in combination with their visitors' profile of tourists that are more frequent contributors to TripAdvisor.

Table 4. *The significant attributes based on gender*

Female		**Male**	
Attributes	**Average**	**Attributes**	**Average**
Sleep Quality	4.44	Sleep Quality	4.34
Cleanliness	4.51	Cleanliness	4.42
Service	4.41	Service	4.31

In order to be more explicit, just significant results with summarizing tables including explanations are provided. In addition, short remarks describing what was conducted and found are provided. When all hotel attributes are concerned, there is a significant difference between males and females at the level of 0.05. As seen in Table 4, females rate sleep quality, cleanliness and service higher than males on average.

When hotel attributes are examined with respect to age groups, sleep quality and location were found statistically significant at 0.05. The sub-groups for each attribute showing significant differences are summarized in Table 5. While travelers whose age is >65 rate higher than the other age groups when location is concerned, the travelers aged between 18 and 24 rate sleep quality higher than the other age groups. The average scores for each variable corresponding to each age group are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. *The results of post-hoc test of Duncan for the hotel attributes of location and sleep quality*

Attributes	**Location**					**Sleep Quality**				
Group	I				II	I	II			
Age	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	>65	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	>65
Average	4.00	4.28	4.28	4.28	4.60	4.67	4.13	4.45	4.36	4.37

Taking into consideration the travel types, travel years and travel seasons, no statistically significant differences were found at 0.05 significance level. However, statistically significant differences based on hotel classification were revealed among hotel attributes with the exception of Location at the significance level of 0.05. The results of ANOVA test using Duncan Post-Hoc are summarized in Table 6 and Table 7.

Table 6. *The results of hotel attributes of Value and Location based on hotel classification using Duncan Post Hoc test*

Attributes	**Value**			**Location**			
Group	I	II	III	I			
Hotel Class	2*-3*	4*	5*	2*-3*-4*- 5*			
Average	3.73	4.04	4.75	4.39	4.40	4.44	4.66

Table 7. *The results of other hotel attributes based on hotel classification using Duncan Post Hoc test*

Attributes	**Sleep Quality**				**Room**				**Cleanliness**				**Service**			
Group	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV
Hotel Class	2*	3*	4*	5*	2*	3*	4*	5*	2*	3*	4*	5*	2*	3*	4*	5*
Average	3.00	3.98	4.41	4.79	3.20	3.84	4.36	4.82	3.67	4.14	4.46	4.85	3.33	4.00	4.37	4.75

As seen in Table 6, Location attribute shows no significant differences among the individual hotel classes when it comes to hotel's performance evaluation regarding its location. It seems that location of a hotel is evaluated independently with no regard to whether a visitor stayed in a 2-, 3-, 4- or a 5-star hotel. Well located hotels may receive a high rating on the performance attribute of Location even though they are only 2-star and vice versa. There are however significant differences in relation to Value. Based on the results, the travelers' evaluations concerning the value they get for the price they pay do not differ very much between 2 and 3-star hotels. When it comes to 4 and 5-star hotels, the hotels' performance evaluations regarding the Value increase significantly along with the hotel class.

The performance evaluations of hotels regarding sleep quality, room, cleanliness and service summarized in Table 7 seem to differ significantly along with the hotel classifications. When hotel class rises from 2 to 5-star, the corresponding average scores for each attribute definitely increases. The results seem to indicate a problem in implementing the hotel classification standards in practice or in consumers' awareness of differences among hotel classes set by a classification system. Although the hotel classification system determines minimum requirements for each hotel class that may have impact on equipment of rooms, service at hotels and sleep quality, there is no logical reasoning why Cleanliness should differ depending on the hotel class. It is rather a basic necessity for each hotel regardless the hotel class.

In case of the overall evaluation as hotels' overall performance attribute, the same statistical analyses were conducted. No variables other than hotel classification were found statistically significant for the overall evaluation at the significance level of 0.05. Based on the results presented in Table 8 it is obvious that the overall hotel performance evaluation reflects the hotel class, i.e. the higher the hotel class is, the higher the average performance evaluation score would be. Although the average evaluation scores for the overall performance of hotels are over the average (starting from 3.13 out of 5), luxury hotels seem to perform much higher in comparison to 2 and 3-star hotels.

Table 8. *Overall evaluation results based on Duncan Post-Hoc test*

Group	**I**	**II**	**III**	**IV**
Hotel Class	2*	3*	4*	5*
Average	3.13	3.97	4.35	4.75

Factor-analysis was run in order to determine which hotel attributes are statistically related to each other. With 76.5% variance explanation value, two rotated groups of factors including different sets of attributes are presented in Table 9. The table was simplified by writing down the significant attributes only with its corresponding factor loadings. While Factor 1 includes five hotel attributes, namely value, sleep quality, room, cleanliness and service plus the overall evaluation, Factor 2 just contains one hotel performance attribute of Location.

Table 9. *Factor analysis results*

Factor 1	**Overall**	**Value**	**Sleep Quality**	**Room**	**Cleanliness**	**Service**
Factor Loadings	0.92	0.82	0.82	0.87	0.84	0.81
Factor 2	**Location**					
Factor Loadings	0.91					

The hotels' overall performance evaluation is a function of five performance attributes composing of weighted attributes in the form of linear functional form. It is assumed that if linearity exists between overall evaluation and other performance attributes, factor analysis can be used to represent that functionality. After running factor analysis, the variance explanation portion was 76.5%, which is highly acceptable and represents linearity. However, the unexplained part, which is almost 23%, is non-linear. Therefore, overall evaluation is a function of value, sleep quality, cleanliness, room and service. On the other hand, location is another independent dimension that cannot be associated with overall evaluation and other performance attributes. The non-linearity part with 23% variation still needs to be studied. Therefore, the Overall evaluation as a hotel performance measure composes of two main constituents, linear and nonlinear respectively. In further research studies, these could be modelled based on the proposed six hotel attributes.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

Consumer generated media gain momentum in the assessment of hotels and their performance. Their in-depth analysis might provide useful insights to hotel service quality as the driver of hotels' performance. In this study, the travelers' evaluations of Bratislava hotels on the tripadvisor.com website were examined. Six hotel attributes and an overall evaluation attribute were accepted to be the online representations of hotels' performance. Statistical analysis such as t-test, ANOVA and factor analysis were used in order to analyze which attributes determine the overall hotel's performance evaluation and any possible relations to demographic, trip and hotel characteristics. To our best belief such a complex analysis of what the hotel performance attributes are influenced by using the standardized data on TripAdvisor is yet missing. Only partial information is provided by a few studies concentrating on one group of variables. The study is meant to provide an example for extracting insights from big data that might turn into implementable recommendations aimed at improving performance of hotels in Bratislava, Slovakia.

The analysis of any relations between hotels' performance attributes evaluation and demographic characteristics of reviewers revealed significant differences in performance attributes assessment among different genders and age groups. Based on the results, women seem to rate sleep quality, cleanliness and service slightly higher than men while their average given score is rather high (over 4.41 out of 5). The representation of females in the sample was however considerably lower than of males. Although it is generally assumed that business travelers are predominantly male and that men usually do the travel arrangements on behalf of his partner or family, which makes them to receive the TripAdvisor review submission invitation, it raises the question about the influence of uneven share of gender upon the online ratings and about the representativeness of evaluations submitted on behalf of a couple or a whole family. When age is concerned, some age groups showed significant differences when evaluating the hotels' performance in relation to sleep quality and location.

While 65+ group submits higher average score for location than other groups, 18-24 age group have higher average score for sleep quality than other age groups do. These findings leave space for a further research about the reasons behind the differences among various demographic groups.

The trip characteristics taken into consideration when researching the relation with hotels' performance attribute evaluation were travel year, travel season and travel type. The analysis revealed no significant differences in performance evaluation in relation to those variables. This contradicts the results of the study of Kantarci et al. (2017) analyzing TripAdvisor reviews of hotels in Kyrgyzstan between 2012 and 2016 in relation to travel type, season and year. Applying the Log-Linear model, the work found a significant relation between the combination of travel type and travel season with hotel attributes. According to the authors, sleep quality, location, room and cleanliness attributes are the most important factors for solo travelers in winter, while service and value are the most influential in online ratings of business, solo and couple travelers.

Hotel class, as the only significant hotel characteristic, was found the most influential with regard to hotels' overall and specific performance attributes evaluation with impact on the overall, as well as specific ratings, with the exception of location. The average performance score for the Location attribute is very high reaching over 4.39 out of 5, which indicates that Bratislava hotels registered on TripAdvisor regardless of hotel class are all in a convenient central location, thus all the hotels scoring very high on average. The insignificant differences of average performance scores among hotel classes mean that hotels' performance in regard to its location is evaluated independently from hotel class. This supports the findings of Jeong and Mindy Jeon (2008) that imply that "convenience of location of hotels from the guest's interest points is a key element in hotel choice regardless of hotel class" (Jeong & Mindy Jeon, 2008, p. 135).

The Value performance was another attribute that was significantly influenced by the hotel class. Regarding the hotels' performance in relation to the value compared to the price of the services, the online evaluations do not differ significantly between 2 and 3-star hotels with average performance score of 3.73, which is slightly over average. Even though the hotel class increases from 2 to 3-star, the extra service of a higher class is balanced by a higher price and, as a result, the value perceived by the consumer does not change significantly. When it comes to value evaluation in 4 and 5-star hotels, luxury hotels have higher average performance ratings compared to lower classes but there is a big difference between the average scores of 4-star hotels (4.04) and 5-star hotels (4.75). The results contradict the findings of Jeong and Mindy Jeon (2008) whose research found value to be an attribute independent from the hotel class. Giving an example of a 4-star hotel, the authors stated that a hotel is considered valued only if it matches the accommodation standards of its star ratings and its high room rate.

On the other hand, the results of the current study indicate that the higher hotel class is, it may be perceived as a plus value. Even though the prices of 5-star hotels rise, the perceived value the consumers receive in return is considerably higher than the price increase and the performance attribute of Value is rated with a higher score. This leaves a question mark that needs to be further investigated, e.g. whether the big perception gap between the value offered by 4 and 5-star hotels is caused by a broad difference in services of the hotel classes, by the price policy of Bratislava hotels or simply by a psychological effect of "staying in a 5-star hotel". Almost 68% of inbound tourists visiting Bratislava chose to stay in luxury 4 and 5-star hotels, which implies that the majority of tourists who visit the region prefer to get a higher value for a higher price, instead of advantageous prices encompassing lower value and service quality. It would, therefore, be appropriate for hotels in Bratislava to maintain or improve the offered value to succeed on the market, especially in the fierce competition of neighboring countries, instead of concentrating on price reductions as a means of gaining a competitive advantage.

In relation to the performance attributes of sleep quality, room, cleanliness and service, significant differences among the individual hotel classes were observed as well. The sleep quality, room and service of hotels are influenced by the hotel classification standards that set requirements for each hotel class. It is natural that the quality of service, room comfort and equipment and even sleep quality will differ based on the hotel class. Given that the consumers are aware of the standard differences among the hotel classes, there is no reason for the attributes to be evaluated according to the hotel class. In this study, however, the hotels' performance evaluations of those three attributes were dependent on the hotel class, i.e. as the hotel class rose from 2 to 5-star, the performance attributes were evaluated significantly higher on average. The 2 and 3-star Bratislava hotels shall pay more attention to improving their performance, especially in relation to room and service attributes, as these were found to be the most important hotel attributes determining the online ratings by consumers (Rhee & Yang, 2015; Zhang & Verma, 2017; Jang et al., 2018).

Although the hotel classification system determines minimum requirements for each hotel class that may have impact on rooms' equipment, hotel's service and sleep quality, there is no logical reasoning why Cleanliness should differ depending on the star rating. Every hotel is bound to provide accommodation services in clean and hygienic conditions whether it is 2 or 5-star. The perceived performance of Bratislava hotels regarding their cleanliness decreases significantly with each lower hotel class, with 2-star hotels' performance average evaluation of 3.67. The issue requires immediate attention of managers of 2 and 3-star hotels that seem to fail fulfilling the basic requirements of cleanliness in their establishments. The findings agree with results of the study of Jeong and Mindy Jeon (2008) who discovered a similar problem among New York hotels in 2006.

Although the hotels in Bratislava perform quite well in general, still space for improvements has been discovered. The overall evaluation of the hotels' performance changed parallel with the hotels' star classification as well. The higher the hotel class, the higher the hotel's average performance evaluation score. The findings confirm the results of Jeong and Mindy Jeon (2008), whose research found that luxury hotels perform better than lower rated hotels; as well as the results of Zhang and Verma (2017) who found that hotels with the most consistent service also had the highest ratings online. The dependence of hotels' ratings of their overall performance on the hotel class implies that the hotel classification system in Slovakia is either not well implemented into practice or not communicated sufficiently to the consumers. The official hotel classification system sets minimal requirements for each hotel class that needs to be fulfilled. In theory, if hotels meet the necessary requirements and hotel visitors are familiar with the standards and differences in the level of service among individual classes, the performance of the hotels should be evaluated regardless of the hotel class. In other words, even a 2-star hotel can show excellent performance if it meets its class requirements, room rate and consumers' expectations formed accordingly. The results of Bratislava hotels' performance analysis however oppose the theory. The reasons cannot be derived from the current study and would need a closer investigation.

After running both ANOVA and the factor analysis, location was not found to be a significant hotel attribute whatsoever. It appeared to be an independent factor which does not have any impact on the hotels' overall performance evaluation within the extent of the analysis. Hence, the overall evaluation is a linear function of the hotel performance attributes of value, sleep quality, room, cleanliness and service. In order to increase the overall evaluations through online consumer generated reviews, the hotels must increase their performance regarding the five hotel attributes. The factor analyses further showed that the correlation among the hotels' overall evaluation and other hotel performance attributes is very high with factor loadings between 0.81 and 0.92. It contradicts the findings of Racherla et al. (2013) whose findings indicated that the overall evaluation ratings may not be suitable indicators of perceived service quality and customer satisfaction due to very low correlation among the overall rating and specific ratings. The current study on the other hand revealed high representativeness of numeric ratings of the overall hotels' performance evaluations in CGRs.

Implications and limitations of the study

The study contributes to the hotels' performance literature by elaborating on the consumers' perspective of the matter through their expressions on the Internet and broadly used social platforms representing real-time big data. Using the mentioned statistical methods, the research provided an example of extracting valuable information from huge amount of data on social platforms. These can be easily applied by hotels' management for monitoring and improving hotels' performance. Benefitting from the CGRs as representations of consumers' perspective on the hotels' performance, the factors it is influenced by and dependent on is of utter importance as the online ratings of hotels through CGR have been proved to be directly linked to hotels' financial performance through influencing their average daily rate (Lynch, 2012), room sales (Ye et al., 2009, Öğüt & Onur Taş, 2012), price premium (Yacouel & Fleischer, 2012) and online bookings (Ye et al., 2011). The information regularly extracted from TripAdvisor data provide an insight about a hotels' performance regarding their service, rooms, location, cleanliness, value and sleep quality and about the differences in perceived performance of hotels in those areas among various demographic groups, travel seasons, types of holidaymakers, hotel classes etc. Applying that information in fields such as product innovation, service quality improvement or market segmentation and targeting can consequently lead to improving the hotels' overall performance. As stated by Jang et al. (2018) better understanding of consumers leads to improvements of customer satisfaction and hotel performance.

In the context of Slovakia, the study generates a picture about the performance of Bratislava hotels in general and in relation to the individual hotel performance attributes. It also provides more detailed information about the differences in evaluation of those attributes by various demographic groups and hotel classes. Several problematic areas that need the attention of hotel managers and sector decision makers were uncovered. Especially, improving the hotels' performance when it comes to service, room and cleanliness attributes that are highly influential can help hotels and the hotel sector in Bratislava to improve their overall performance as evaluated by the online community that forms the online image of a destination (Singh et al., 2016) and influences the travelers' choices (Hays et al., 2013; Munar & Jacobsen, 2014). As neither Bratislava nor Slovakia has ever been a subject of a similar research before, the study provides unique insight on tourism development in general and hotel sector in particular in the region, which can be further elaborated in comparison to its competitors.

As it was already mentioned in the result section of the study, the analysis was conducted upon a sample with a highly uneven distribution of genders and hotel chains. It would therefore require an additional attention to find out how big influence on the acquired results such a disproportionality has. One of the main limitations of the study includes the fact, that the performance evaluation was investigated only among the review submitter community while the representativeness of such a sample from all hotel service consumers remains questionable. In this study, the specific hotel performance attributes' influence on the overall performance evaluation was investigated but it did not answer the question of the relative importance of the attributes. Furthermore, the performance attributes used in the study were pre-defined by TripAdvisor and thus may not fully cover the main aspects of hotels performance from the consumers' perspective. As the needs of consumers, as well as the importance ascribed to the attributes may change over time, it could be suitable to combine the research with a frequency analysis of CGRs using text mining techniques to verify the accuracy of the pre-defined attributes on TripAdvisor.

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BRINGING HERITAGE SITES TO LIFE FOR VISITORS: TOWARDS A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to explore the ways in which heritage sites can be brought to life for visitors through immersive experience, and attempts to build a conceptual framework. It is based on a multidisciplinary project carried out by scholars of different backgrounds, which means that it relied more on knowledge and expertise sharing, rather than statistical data, even though a further research on consumer behaviour is planned. In heritage sites, the tangible aspects enable first-hand experience with the phenomena, providing a strong sense of reality. On the other hand, intangible aspects, which can be felt and evoked through the medium of heritage, are equally important. The sense of place is generated by those feelings and the meaning as a product of interpretation obtained by first hand experiences as well as any kind of medium. Getting sense of place is based on physical features making the place special or unique, stories and memories abiding connection to the place, as well as the spirituality or spectral aspects also called as hauntings. The essence of heritage interpretation lies in bringing the meaning to the surface as a result of cultural interfaces and engagements with our environment. The conceptual framework is threefold tackling with phenomenological, narrative and semantic levels of exploration, storytelling and meaning making. This article helps to elucidate

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the nascent field of immersive heritage exploring the experience (physical vs. virtual), the narratives (content vs. context) and the meaning (interpretation vs. action). In doing so, it suggests the ways in which immersive heritage can build up meaningful relationships in understanding and valuing heritage sites while enriching our experience through the absent presence between the physical and imaginary worlds.

INTRODUCTION

Human communication, starting with a very simple oral dialogic character lately evolving to literal monologic texts to communicate to larger populations and following generations, is recently in one of its most revolutionary stages. Since the beginning of literacy around 6-7 thousand years ago, the main aim was to push and even crush the boundaries of space-time by communication. Recent developments of immersive technologies in last 30 years, make it more and more possible everyday. In the field of heritage, digitization and the ever-increasing use of immersive technologies introduced new conceptualizations. This paper defines the "immersive heritage" by connoting applications of immersive technologies at heritage sites directed towards enriching visitor experience.

Though everyday life has always been a practice of dialogic communication based on oral conversations; one can easily observe a metronome-like change between the popularity of dialogic and monologic communication through the history of mankind. This was the case from the beginning. Even though primal human beings were communicating through their simple oral languages, after a while, they needed to create cave paintings in order to share knowledge between different tribes. Writing, was and still is the most popular method of sharing knowledge and storytelling. Printing technology, books, magazines and newspapers, followed by the invention of radios and televisions, marked the golden age of monologic communication methods. Even though the invention of telephone was a sign of re-emerging dialogic communication, especially radios and TVs surpassed any other method of communication for a long time. Popularity of those monologic methods might be a result of the hunger of common people to connect with specialists, scholars, artists and all kinds of previously unreachable people. This is followed by the raise of cell-phones and internet.

At the end of 20th century, a new and very advanced era of modern dialogic communication has begun. Cell-phones, at first, emerged from fictional Star-Trek universe and jumped directly into people's pockets. The ability to reach anyone, anywhere and anytime, made people addicted to talking and writing (texting) again. People began to spend more and more time to communicate with each other from long distances, rather than reading or watching third parties. This independence of communication from space, however, reduced the spatial existence of self. One can easily observe people actually being in the same location, communicating with distant individuals instead with each other. Gergen (2002, p. 227) describes this situation as "... at times our presence may go completely unacknowledged. We are present but simultaneously rendered absent; we have been erased by an absent presence." Internet, however made communication even more complicated.

Web is a place where everyone can create or consume any kind of data. One can dialogically communicate with someone else or can act like an authority that can produce monologic data sources. The latter created an environment of "dirty knowledge". In the first decade of internet use, people confused this open source knowledge sharing platform with edited and confirmed sources like books or "early" TV. They trusted the data available on the Internet and liked the idea to contribute in content creation; feeling like supposedly "unreachable" specialists, scholars, artists etc. of earlier times. People started sharing their so-called knowledge or creations with mass consumers, regardless of whether they are actually capable of this or not

Since Internet has become an untrustworthy environment, not only in the manner of professional knowledge or art sharing but also in the manner of personal life, it, again, created the hunger for real specialists and trusted content. The previous monologic communication methods evolved and adapted to newly emerged technologies such as e-books, audio guides, video tours and, at last, immersive storytelling and informative content created through multi-disciplinary projects carried out by specialists.

The question of the impact of new technologies on heritage, or heritigization, and heritage sites remains in the focus of the whole discussion about accessible, visitor-friendly and memorable immersive experience. Liritzis et al. (2015) examine increasing trend for digitization vs. traditional perceptions of the material culture. The line of reasoning is aimed at demonstrating visitors' behaviour whether they are active or passive agents who take part both in the production and consumption of the content. When viewed from the pragmatic side, virtual representation (virtual reality) contributes to knowledge and, in fact, makes it more accessible to anybody, anytime, anywhere. Yet, Liritzis et al. (2015, p. 315) posit that "in situ visit" is (relatively) advantageous in terms of "the idea of locality, the inner emotional kicking (co-movement) and unique stimuli, which are subjected to the five senses from the perception of ancient environment and objects," whereas "the dramatic deterioration of the environment and the broader landscape" observed in the real space "introduces misleading information of images where the visitor hardly ejects to hire those truly details of space-time". Immersive experiences, on the other hand, blur the line between the real and the virtual in the form of submersion applied to representation, while narratives become an instrument to capture the "feeling of presence in the represented reality" (Dominguez, 2017). According to Gerrig (1993, p. 2-3), the audience (visitor) becomes active in the process through two conditions, imagination and performing, as "a narrative serves to transport an experiencer away from the here and now […] by the virtue of performing that narrative". Narratives play a crucial role in "contextualizing a particular content, thereby transforming it from facts or concepts to be memorized into useful tools" to address meanings (Barab et al., 2007, p. 61).

By tackling with the phenomenological, narrative and semantic levels of conceptual research, this article aims to explore the ways in which heritage sites can be brought to life for visitors through immersive experience. A short literature review of absent presence is given in the beginning, where absence and presence are defined as intertwined concepts drawing on the spatio-temporal qualities of heritage sites in connection to trace and memory. Then, the tripartite conceptual framework is presented and applied to the heritage context. The immersive experience is discussed by taking phenomenological approach and addressing sense of place, followed by description of the imaginary role of stories, myths and metaphors and, finally, construction of meaning is expressed through the process of heritage interpretation. The implication of the proposed framework is explained through the lessons learnt from major visitor sites based on Pittock's (2019) findings. Since immersive heritage is quite a recent topic, with a great potential for heritage sites, in the near future, hopefully, there will be more data collected for the use of immersive technologies and also for investigating how the visitors respond to such developments. The purpose of this study is to propose such framework and it will be further explained in the continuation.

THE MATTER OF ABSENT PRESENCE AND THE QUESTION OF DIGITAL RECONSTRUCTION

This part presents the theoretical background by closely scrutinizing the poststructuralist theory "concerning the relationship between human beings, the world, and the practice of making and reproducing meanings" (Belsey, 2002). Drawing on Derridean notion of the concepts of memory and trace, language and signification is recognized as the foundation for a post-structural theory (Hurst, 2017). Traces of the past overwritten on the layers of meaning present new constructions. Memory and imagination play an important role for filling the traces with life (Meier et al., 2013). The notion of time can be understood as a continuous dialogue between past and present. At the intersection lies the absent presence, a concept most closely associated with Derrida (1994) in the poststructuralist theory.

Derrida coins the term "Hauntology" as a pun on the word "ontology" through the figure of a ghost – "specter" – rather "as a metaphor challenging dualisms being neither one thing, nor the other", neither present, nor absent (Davis, 2005, p. 373). Time and space merge in the hauntings of a bygone era or lost traces in the physical space. In Derrida's (1973, p. 65) point of view, the presence of the perceived present is "continuously compounded with a non-presence and non-perception". When put in the other way around, representational absence can be recognized as a form of presence. As a matter of speaking, the attempt should be looking beyond the duality of absence and presence as these two concepts are intertwined – "when we talk about presence we have a trace of absence in it" (Derrida, 1997). According to Derrida, "trace is the mark of the absence of a presence, an always already absent present" (Spivak, 1997, p. xvii). Thus, trace appears as the central concept in "*Of Grammatology*" (Derrida, 1997) in relation to Heideggerian approach towards "metaphysics of presence", and at the same time linked to what Levinas defined as "marked by the relation to other" and as "retaining the other *as other* in the same, as does retention" (Dastur, 2006, p. 49).

If we extend this framework by adding the notion of perception of time, we might talk about "the joint operation of perception and imagination" (Gregoric, 2007) by referring to *"mneme"* and *"anamnesis"* in Aristotle's *"De memoria et reminiscentia"* [On Memory and Reminescence, 350BCE]. Ricoeur (cited in Askin, 2009) makes a distinction here by qualifying *mneme* as cognitive – "memory as a kind of knowledge", and the *anamnesis* as pragmatic – "memory as praxis". When trace and memory are brought together around the temporal dimension in this framework, the cognitive aspect of *mneme* turns up to be read through representation concerning the relationship between absence and presence (Askin, 2009). While Aristotle argues about the memory, Plato's approach is rather inclined towards the trace through the relationship between representation (*eikon*) and imprint (*tupos*). Accordingly, in Platon's account trace is treated as "the representation of something absent", where memory becomes part of the "larger issue of imagination" (Hannoum, 2005, p. 124). Turning back to Aristotle, memory is appraised conjointly with time and imagination through "the sensation that produces affection and thus there is the presence of affection and the absence of the thing that produced the affection" (Hannoum, 2005, p. 124). In other words, even if the thing is absent, we have a memory of it through the affection. Askin (2009) emphasizes the temporal dimension for "distinguishing memory and imagination" characterized by absence based on the fact that "even though the traces are present, whatever caused them is not – not present meaning both not here and not now". The understanding of absence for Deleuze (1990, p. 256) is based on mediation - "to distinguish essence from appearance, intelligible from the sensible, idea from image, original from copy, and model from simulacrum".

In this framework, Virtual Reality (VR) creates the "presence", simultaneous with "the experience of "being" or "acting", when physically situated in another place" (Schwind et al., 2019). Fisher (2012, p.19) takes a critical perspective saying that it is both time and space that collapse in the age of tele-technologies, and the cyberspace as "events that are spatially distant become available to audience instantaneously". Consequently, new technologies disrupt conventional definitions of time and space, "no place like here and no time like now" (Atkin, 2006), based on the independence and availability leading to retention and repetition. Gallix (2011) gives the example of smartphones "encouraging us never to fully commit here and now, fostering a ghostly presence-absence", or YouTube as a "box of retrospective". Nevertheless, hauntings happen constantly "when a place is stained by time, or when a particular place becomes the site for an encounter with broken time" (Fisher, 2012, p. 19).

Desire to set one free from the boundaries of space-time existence through communication, is actually a matter of absent presence. "One is physically present, but is absorbed by a technologically mediated world of elsewhere" (Gergen, 2002, p. 227) and sometimes a world of a different time. Though this is more obvious, impressive and even dramatic with technological communication methods, writing and even oral story-telling sometimes create the same affect, mostly depending on consumers' imagination and the talent of the story-teller.

The dream of traveling back in time, and what one would expect from this kind of experience, is one of the most misunderstood concepts of history and archaeology. Especially considering the ancient era, this kind of misunderstanding is led by our "distorted lens" (Young, 2017, p. 37), which is a result of renaissance and neo-classical predecessors of our civilization. To escape from this distorted lens and produce knowledge and content independently, is one of the most difficult struggles of a specialist. Though producing information is relatively easier, creating realistically accurate immersive content for non-specialist consumers is much more difficult. This shouldn't be confused with the risk of inaccuracy of the content. As for the virtual environments that are created by multidisciplinary teams of specialized scholars, digital artists and software developers, there is no risk of inaccuracy. The content created by this kind of professional and academically capable people, would have no downs in the manner of academic data providing and/or education for that purpose. Also the ICOMOS Charter (2008) provides a clear guideline in this regard (ICOMOS Charter: 2.4). Though scholars are sharply divided into two groups concerning the truth value of narratives, where "…many hold that narratives have potential to bear truth", while others argue that "narratives do not reflect but construct reality" (Gergen, 1994, p. 188), history related disciplines are and have to be on the first side.

A modern observer runs the risk of bringing a distorted conception, or lens, to the experience of viewing ancient Greek and Roman public architecture, and this effect will only be magnified by an immersive experience. Modern observer, especially in Europe and New World, carries the enduring legacy of the revival movement of Classical architecture, which first gathered pace in Italy, and has now diffused throughout the world. In the Renaissance, the architecture of the Greeks and Romans was held up as a flawless ideal: the perfect manifestation of what a building should be (Wright, 1999, p. 1-9). A few prominent structures, such as the Parthenon in Athens, Pantheon in Rome and the Hagia Sofia in Istanbul, had remained largely intact and provided powerful inspiration to Renaissance architects. At the same time a large number of ruined monumental buildings were carefully studied and recorded, and their styles and ornamentation incorporated into public, private and religious buildings: these were innovative re-workings of old designs. These influential Renaissance buildings soon came to symbolise modern conceptions of power. This occurred again during the Neo-classical movement of the 18th and 19th centuries, when a great deal of public architecture took on the forms of Renaissance, Greek and Roman models (Cret, 1941, p. 8-9). This trend was not only popular in Europe, but also in the cities of the emerging powers of the New World (Young, 2017, p. 38).

When surrounded by these standing derivations of Greco-Roman buildings, the 21st century observer will, consciously or unconsciously, attach meanings derived from one's own personal experiences, be they political, religious, educational or other. This effect might be called the "distorted lens". It seems that by digitally reconstructing ancient architecture, it is attempted to understand the effect that this architecture may had had on an ancient observer. If that is the case, it is to be questioned if the modern associations of Greco-Roman architecture might result in false conclusions. It might be wrongly assumed that an ancient observer made the same associations as the modern one does. Wright (1999, p. 5) points out changing subjective reactions of 18th to 21st century observers to ancient ruins: "... images, symbols and their meaning are culturally conditioned. They change, and sometimes in changing times they change quickly."

TOWARDS A TRIPARTITE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework of the current study is threefold (see Fig. 1), tackling with phenomenological, narrative and semantic levels of exploration, storytelling and meaning making respectively. Each level is interrelated and complementary, drawing the whole framework in a cyclical way rather than following a linear process. Immersive heritage practice features key characteristics such as being "story-led, audience and participation centred, multimodal, multisensory and attuned to its environment" (Kidd, 2018). The interest for immersive experience in heritage context was carried forward by narrative turn, affective turn and ludic turn. The arguments raised by ludic turn is discussed through the phenomenological dimension through play and game with the aim of increasing level of engagement and getting sense of place. Storytelling is discussed within the context of narrative turn in relation to the content of the stories as the medium transmitting the voices and representations. How people feel, think, imagine and interpret is discussed in relation to meaning making as a matter of affective turn reflected on behaviour, within the complex pattern of personal, social and symbolic relationships.

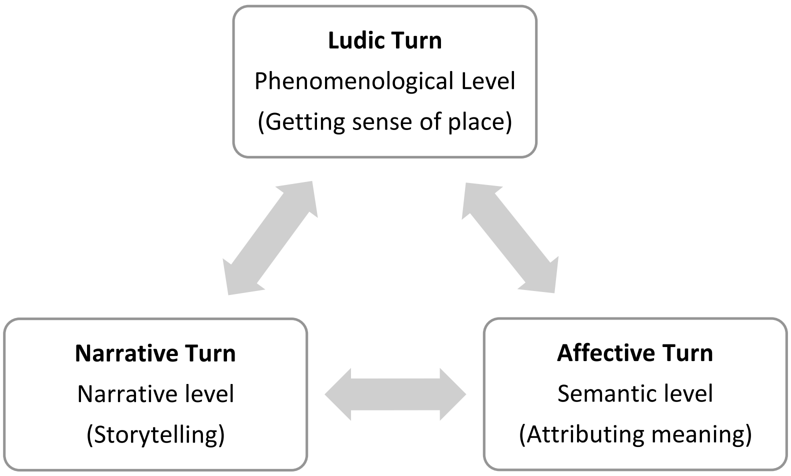

Figure 1. *Conceptual Framework*

Getting Sense of Place

Although, like most of the digital and computerized technologies, immersive tech was first developed for gaming purposes, there is a rising interest in using this tech for informative monologic communication. Virtual travelling in time and space is one of the most tempting opportunities that immersive tech provides. Using Virtual Reality (VR) to visit ancient sites as they were thousands of years ago, and doing this from one's own comfortable sitting room, is more than possible today. Or visiting a thousands of years old site and using Augmented Reality (AR) to watch it raise and resurrect in front of you, is equally possible and tempting. But, as Rahaman points out: "…the present trend of digital heritage is predominantly descriptive, technology-driven and imposing; rather than user-centric." (Rahaman, 2018, p. 215), so there are some points to be set, before one would eagerly put one of those high-tech glasses on.

The use of immersive technologies in heritage sites has its own ups and downs. Using this newly emerged tech for specialized consumers is highly profitable and useful as it lacks the accurate sense of a real "time travel" for unspecialized consumers, for now. But still VR and AR have the potential to overcome this struggle more than any recent method. The best results can be achieved by using VR and/or AR on-site. Avoiding the sense of unreality by actually being at the original location, sums up with the advantage of avoiding the misleading sense of being in the wrong space-time relation.

Phenomenologists like Husserl (1913) and Merleau-Ponty (1945) address the critical role of physical space in human consciousness and meaning making by touching upon corporeality and bodily orientation. For Csordas (1993), embodiment is the starting point for analysing human cultural activity. Based on Merleau-Ponty's (1945) concept of "phenomenology of perception" and Bourdieu's (1977, 1984) notion of the body as "the locus of social practice", Csordas (1993) defines somatic mode of attention as "culturally elaborated ways of attending to and with one's body in surroundings that includes the embodied presence of others" (pp. 138-139). In the context of phenomenological archaeology, the encounter between the human and the artefact takes the form of somatic engagement and suggests the process of knowledge production – "knowledge of a past culture emerges from bodily engagement with the world in such a way that the material form, for instance, rocks and figurines, along with the intangible aspects of cultural heritage are enmeshed with human corporeality" (Flynn, 2008, p. 449). Dourish (2001, p. 126) argues that our engagement with the world and interaction with the artefacts and places make it meaningful based on three elements – (1) participative, (2) task accomplishing, and (3) practical action. In a world of physical and social reality, embodied interaction is at the intersection of "tangible interfaces" and "social computing", where embodiment stems from the user's sense of place and enjoyment (Dourish, 2001). This is closely linked to Ciolfi's (2015, p. 420) notion of human-centred computing in a setting where visitors become "active agents of interaction", embodied and situated; and where "body and senses, the physical environment, and the social world" construct a unified whole.

Accordingly, Rahaman and Tan (2009, p. 670) posit that built environment is a social product – "a mimesis of society's intentions and etiquette". Co-presence and shared experience are the conditions setting forth the participatory modes of interaction as a part of social dimension. In this manner, dialogic interaction also impacts on the way of attributing meaning affected by the co-presence.

Storytelling

The history of storytelling can be traced back to Plato's Republic and Aristotle's Poetics (Dubbelman, 2011) as discussed in the literature review of this paper by referring to the concepts of memory and representation. Todorov (1969, p. 10) coined the term "narratology" with the aim of presenting a logical and structural description of the way of storytelling. This follows the tradition of structuralism represented by Barthes, Greimas and Bakhtin with the aim of dissecting the narrative phenomenon into its parts and attempts to determine functions and relationships (Jahn, 2005). This paper draws closer to Barthes as it attempts to deal with "the semiotic presentation of a series of events semantically related in a temporal and causal way" where narrative is defined as a referential text with a temporal flow (Jaén & Landa, 1996). In the context of place-based narratives, the term "to narrate" has a binding character for facts and fiction or past and present through myths, fantasies, images and communicating the meaning (Silver, 2005 cited in Fahmi, 2008, p. 41).

There are ancient narratives that are well-known from myths and historical records. Myths contain archetypal symbols, often themed as the figure of hero or the concept of heroization, creative acts and sacred origins (McAdams, 1993). In a wider cultural context, they are not only about chronicles of events, but also meanings shared and continually reconstructed in a subjective way. On the other hand, the genius loci, is what gives the place its unique character that can be felt on the phenomenological level. The narratives in the heritage context are site-specific, accented on the unique qualities of a particular heritage site, which cannot be transferred onto another place (Farman, 2014). The myths tone up the emotions and remembrance by providing information weaved into narratives.

Bal (2009) conceptualizes narrative through a tripartite framework based on "text", "story" and "fabula". Fabula is related to the level of experiencing where performing occurs at a certain time and place. It is the story that draws semantic relationships and does it through the text, which could be in the forms of words, imagery or sound. The narration stimulates and/or shapes the interaction and thus connects to phenomenological level. This is also linked to praxis in Aristotle's terminology on the level of action and interaction through reconstructing the syntax of human behaviour which operates within narrative (Barthes & Duisit, 1975, p. 252).

Regarding this several opportunities and different approaches, the future of storytelling in heritage sites is offering endless and unpredictable experiences for visitors. As long as it is planned and executed carefully, immersive tech is going to be able to make heritage sites as exciting as they are informative.

Attributing Meaning

Historic places, sites and/or monuments are naturally part of the terminology incorporated with tangible aspects of heritage. Beyond the material heritage, "multiple processes of meaning making" occur in the way "visitors engage or disengage with these things, places and events" (Smith, 2012). Heritage interpretation is about linking tangible and intangible aspects as they coexist together facilitating imaginations based on "recollections and selections of (collective) memories" (Lehnes, 2016, p. 46).

Meaning is not discovered, as it is not dormant in the site waiting to be found by the subject. Meaning is constructed in different ways and it varies even with regard to the same phenomenon (Crotty, 1998). Experience, participation and stewardship offer paths to deeper meaning, which is central to heritage interpretation. In this framework, active involvement and participation is relevant in order to build meanings through individual experiences and interaction.

Fahmi (2008, p. 34) stresses the role of multimedia technologies for production and distribution of signs, where "representation, performance and exchange operate simultaneously". This draws close to Barthes' (1976) semiotic approach tackling the ways in which meaning is produced and represented in a system of signs. Rojek (1993, p. 136) designates tourist attractions (including heritage sites) as semiotic or textual meaning structures, where the "meaning is replaced by spectacle and sensation dominates value".

Bryman (1995, p. 176) links post modernism to tourist gaze and consumption attitude (Urry, 1990, p. 135) in the form of "post-tourism" brought by the "proliferation of images and signs presented as spectacles". In the context of post-tourism, tourist gaze is identified with "the systematic ways in which tourists are seeing, experiencing and consuming signs, symbols and places" (Lee, 2001). Yet, the performative turn posits active participation based on the "encounters with cultural signifiers" opening the floor to the cognitive understandings and emotional response rather than the exploitative nature of tourist imagery (Fahmi, 2008, p. 36).

Edensor (2012, p. 462) puts the emphasis on the absences "distributed in various materialities across space", and the narration is used to spur meaning. Memory is not a matter of retrieving but reshaping the meaning. Crang (2001, p. 201) argues about the "virtual multiplicity of possible futures and pasts" embedded in the ruins. The physical traces are not only signifiers of loss. Immersive experiences bring meaning to the surface by distorting and fragmenting both time and space. Hermeneutically, such experiences testify what is lost while reversing the order of movement from presence to absence as a matter of disappearance. Thus, virtual reality revokes absences rather than merely signifying past presences. Gordon (1997, p. 8) defines this feeling of reality, which spurs on momentary revelations, as a "transformative recognition". Our engagement with the absent presence offers alternative meanings to embellished heritage sites and conventional ways of restoring the past.

IMPLICATION OF THE PROPOSED FRAMEWORK

With the help of technology and digital worlds, there is a growing trend towards designing immersive experiences in the field of heritage. The conceptualization of heritage interpretation is often attributed to Tilden (1957) in search for the meaning. Although Tilden's model is still actively used and successfully implemented in heritage sites, it was not developed for virtual heritage. Rahaman's approach offers an up-to-date model for interpreting immersive experience at heritage sites based on four aspects – first to *satisfy* the consumer's expectation, secondly *provoking* them for further conservation/protection of the heritage, third to promote *learning* of the past history and culture, and, finally, to present the past from *multiple perspectives* (2018, p. 211). Although there is no commonly agreed conceptual approach, Rahaman (2018) sets a very well-constructed and detailed framework supported by some experimental and statistical data.

Pittock (2019) explains some lessons learnt from the five major Scottish visitor sites (Bannockburn, the Burns Museum, Culloden, the Riverside and the National Library of Scotland). Accordingly, the implication of the proposed framework in this research is presented in line with the emerging areas addressed by Pittock (2019), shedding light on the tripartite conceptual framework to connect with visitors and bring heritage sites to life through immersive experience.

Touching objects and sensing (Ludic)

There is a need for handling objects, preferably physical object in the environment or virtual objects, which is "better than nothing" according to Pittock (2019). Various digital tools or media such as haptic devices are commonly used for embodied interaction and for accentuated humanmachine interface. Similar to Gibson's (1986, cited in Rahaman, 2018) idea of tools "as the extension of our hands", Rahaman (2018) sees involvement and embodied action as the form of mediation, and digital heritage demands such interaction.

Feeling realistic sensations while moving and interacting in a virtual environment is crucial for the possibility of immersive experience (Brogni et al., 1999). In order to achieve this, visual input alone is not enough. Therefore, haptic interfaces are designed for rendering of the sensation of a physical interaction with the virtual environments. To give an example, PERCRO at Scuola Superiore S. Anna (Pisa, Italy) has developed force feedback systems to allow a natural mobility to human hand and arm by introducing the advantage of wearability and portability (Brogni et al., 1999). The study of PERCRO indicates some important facts about the use of such applications in heritage sites and visitor engagement:

> *An application on large scale can be a city guide on a wearable computer, that offer tourist as well as historical information to the user. The system could have an interface to consult the database, and he could be able to touch some virtual subjects with a haptic device: for example, for a sculpture positioned on the top of a church, it could be possible to have a reproduction in front of the user, looking that from any sides, feeling the surfaces or its weight*. (Brogni et al., 1999, p.211)

The conceptual framework of this paper presumes that haptics is about touching and sensing, which reflects on the nature of the interaction and perception performed by ludic turn and state-of-the-art in serious game technology. *Roma Nova* is an example of immersive serious game built upon *Rome Reborn*, "a series of products for personal computers and VR headsets that make it possible to visit the now-vanished ancient city - think of it as the place where virtual tourism meets virtual time travel" (Rome Reborn, n.d.). Another example is *Muru in Wonderland*, which is aimed at creating a VR experience for children through a game of hide and seek for finding and grabbing or poking Muru (a virtual character). The setting for this game is composed of 360-degree real-world footage of places in Gwangju with real-time interaction through 3D video tour (Jang et al., 2016). The user interaction is enriched through storytelling as well as physical (haptic) contact (Machidon et al., 2018, p. 257).

Combining virtual and physical experiences with a strong storyline (Narrative)

Contrary to the popular belief that more visual experiences would need less narrative, information is important for the users regardless of the mode of delivery (Pittock, 2019). Nevertheless, “narrow or limited narrative restricts the effectiveness of digital immersives” (Pittock, 2018, p. 224). Stories play a crucial role in this framework for organising and contextualising experiences and information (Interpret Europe, 2017). In conjunction with the temporality of memory and trace, the spatial organization of the material world is a medium for experiencing. If you are visiting the site and looking at the ruins, you are trying to find out “what was not there by capturing images of what was” (Goulding et al., 2018, p. 28). This can be either through images and illustrations or reconstructions. Representation, memory, and storytelling mediate the experience and the meaning. Bucher (2017) argues that storytelling for VR is “less about *telling* the viewer a story and more about letting the viewer *discover* the story”, which recognizes the role of the viewer in meaning-making as an interactant and creative agent.

Young (2017) comments on the virtual reconstruction and its impact on shaping the experience:

> *Another smudge on the lens of the modern observer is that he or she is faced with an incomplete picture of the ancient cityscape. A plan of a city, a computer reconstruction, a visit to an ancient site – or a virtual reality experience – may succeed in communicating the broader impression of the monumental core of a city. Yet, however carefully researched the reconstruction may be, it falls short of providing a modern observer with the complete and authentic experience of walking through an ancient city. Then the modern observer must accept the incomplete nature of their impression of ancient monumental architecture. The details like the activity on the streets, the type of people who frequented them and the business they pursued, as well as the overall collective effect of the city-scape, with its hierarchy of buildings, temples crowning the skyline, colonnaded thoroughfares with balconies and dingy narrow side streets leading to crowded insulae, as well as the smells and the noises are alas far from the reach.* (p. 40)

MacDonald (1986) gives an example for colonnaded thoroughfares;

> *[...] the photogenic files of columns one sees at many sites [...] are misleading with respect both to the original appearance of these elaborate thoroughfares and to their function as urban elements. Their walkway roofs are gone, and*

> *often their bordering buildings too, losses that the preservation of portions of entablatures cannot make good... The effects produced by these shaded corridors... have vanished forever. Even when the façades of the buildings have been preserved, the light is always wrong.* (p. 43)

Immersive experiences become more meaningful through storytelling, which works for filling the voids and bringing past to life. According to Rose and Wylie (2006, p. 475) the spatio-temporal specific tensions between presence and absence shape our engagements with the environment and understanding of the material. Goulding et al. (2018, p. 25) argue about the notion of absence in themed heritage that is "concealing or rendering invisible, alternative, subaltern or excluded narratives to those of the master discourse". Meier et al. (2013, p. 424) view the absence as a relational phenomenon between the materiality and the immateriality, the social and the natural; so that "the relations give absence matter".

Emotional resonance and human connection are as important as knowledge. *EMOTIVE* project draws on the power of "emotive storytelling" with the aim of engaging visitors, triggering their emotions, connecting them to other users, and enhancing their understanding, imagination and experience (Perry et al., 2017). In order to achieve this aim, "a plot-based approach that resonates with people" is adopted through combining hybrid story spaces (online and on-site) and allowing multiple-users not only "interacting with the story" and also "collaborating to advance it" (Roussou et al., 2017, p. 408),

The site of the Ancient Agora in Athens is told by the "*1001 stories of Ancient Agora*" representing universal concepts such as life, death, love and struggle to provoke sympathy or empathy. According to Roussou et al. (2017), the responses of the users vary depending on their preferences and cognitive load caused when interacting with the application:

> *"The whole idea of walking around as someone's telling you not about what you are seeing, but a story, is very powerful."* (p. 417)

> *"It's a narrative where you're free to look around and you have these punctuated moments where it mentions a building and you're, like, oh I'm here in the story!"* (p. 417)

> *"I'd like to learn more about society in Antiquity, to feel the aura of being here in the times of Kimon, Perikles, Plato or Socrates. In fact, I would've liked Kimon to give me the tour."* (p. 417)

As it can be understood from the feedback of the users, narratives play an important role in visitor engagement. Yet, a powerful story becomes even more effective when supported by sensations. Another positive implication is that narratives are accessible before, during or after the visit. Nevertheless, perhaps the most important implication of the use of narratives in immersive heritage experience is the user-generated content. As Byrne (2019) argues "some stories speak to us more than others, which comes across in part from our likes, follows, views and shares" which is emphasized as the effect of the social media. This is not only about creating the content but also sharing it with others. Therefore, the engagement of heritage can be recognized as an interplay between narrative and meaning, thus between "the collective examination of the past and the visualization of an alternative future" (Vit-Suzan, 2016, p. 175).

Preferences on reconstruction vs digital simulation (Semantic)

The "hard architectures" of the present landscapes merge with the liquid "soft architectures" of digital media (Beckman, 1998). Sheller and Urry (2000) argue that "places do not disappear, but their logic and their meaning become absorbed in the network", which suggests co-presence and drawing flexible paths through space and time. Fahmi (2008, p. 33) addresses this phenomenon as the "heterotopias of mobile communications" functioning as signs rather than places. This form of "replicated co-presence" (Terkenli, 2002) through mobile technologies and virtual reorganization of space draws complex bodily, emotional and cognitive interrelationships between the subject and environment.

When Gillings (2000, p. 59) warned of the "relentless questing for the elusive grail of photorealism and ever more faithful simulation", he was commenting on a phenomenon that emerged along with the potential of photorealistic VR environments. And a passage written by Christopher Ratté (2001), describing how a visitor would have seen Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity, can be examined as an example:

> *The first sight to greet a visitor to Aphrodisias in late antiquity would have been the great cathedral, visible for miles from every direction … As he drew closer, the visitor would see the city wall, and the now-venerable cemeteries lining the major roads out of town. Entering any of the principal gates, he would have found himself looking down a broad, straight street toward one of the several monuments that marked the centre of town. As he walked down this street, he would catch occasional glimpses down cross-streets into*

> *residential neighbourhoods whose outward appearance had probably not changed significantly for centuries. If he had an antiquarian interest, he would linger by the remnants of pagan sanctuaries and other early buildings, now occupied by workshops or incorporated into private houses and so on and so on.* (p. 138)

This passage is surely imaginative as it is also slightly troubling with this walk-through description of the city, and its tendency towards certain vagueness with the use of the term "visitor". Using terms such as "visitor" or "observer" is a common technique when discussing the effect of public buildings on ancient observers and the modern self is very reluctant to state the identity of these "visitors" or guess what they were thinking. Yet it must be accepted that identity is anything but non-specific and that as a reader, when confronted with such empty terms like "visitor" or "observer", the strongest urge is to place one's self, the "modern" observer onto that ancient streetscape and imagine how one would interpret its architecture (Young, 2017, p. 26-30).

If one could take an ancient observer and show them the digital reconstructions of ancient cities, it is reasonable to say that they would have a completely different experience. The first thing that might strike them is the haunting emptiness of modern restorations, and then the gross errors in the reconstructions. An ancient observer would also derive a more complex reading from the cityscape, one that is simply beyond us.

However, it is also true to say that the modern observer has come to expect digital reconstructions of ancient cityscapes to be empty, white and eerie. If one is represented with a more authentic picture, in other words, if one sees objects within the scene that they think should not be there, that may feel like something is not quite right. The suspension of disbelief is broken.

Apart from all these complications mostly in the manner of sense and perception, digital reconstructions of ancient cities and monumental architecture especially in immersive technological environments, has its own advantages in technical and professional use (Barcelo, 2009; Hopkins, 2016, p. xiiv-xiv; Wheatley & Gillings, 2000, p. 2-5). One of the most important fields of interest for an architectural historian is to better understand the interrelationship of individual buildings within a city. Using immersive technologies to examine ancient cities is the best way to study this interrelationship from a previously unthinkable number of angles and positions, moving easily from position to position and at a human scale. Also, using photometry instead of 3D modelling would allow scholars to examine architectural remains of distant locations more easily and accurately, without actually travel around the world. And most importantly, the on-site ruins can be conserved rather than being permanently altered by onsite reconstructions, which cannot always be perfectly practiced.

As one of the most serious and accurate VR applications on heritage sites recently, Lithodomos VR and some content of the project can be evaluated as real-life examples (www.lithodomosvr.com/apps/). The free mobile application of the project, LVR Engage, has multiple different content such as Olympia, Athens (Greece), Ostia, Rome (Italy) and more. Even though there is no statistical data to make a comparison, two main approaches can be seen, each one having its own pros and cons. First is to erase people, their activities and relations, shortly "life" from the scene and present mere environmental atmosphere, with buildings, terrain, streets and all other lifeless elements that create the canvas for the real picture (as in examples of Greece and Rome). This would force the consumer to focus on the man-made features placed on a specific terrain, without any interruption of the man itself. This approach would face the visitor with the picture of a naked reality, but with absence of a story, may be encouraging one to imagine their own. As usual, the second approach is quite the opposite of the first: creating immersive content with the most possible accuracy, including people, the social atmosphere they interact, daily routines of a city and its different sections, and all the relations between all these factors; or even creating scenes of mythical and/or historical well known stories to surround the visitor (as in Ostia example). This second approach would definitely create a much more immersive experience and would be much more impressive. But it would create a lot of distraction from the artistic, structural and conceptional features of the environment, pulling the consumer in to a flood of interactions. Also this second approach would take away the freedom of imagination, forcing the visitor to live the experience that has already been set. Yet, it is hard to tell about visitor preferences because they are subjective and tied to expectations shaped by cognitive processes and cultural codes.

CONCLUSION

Heritage sites bear traces of the past and modes of representation which bring them to life through immersive experience. Flynn (2008, p. 447) points out interpretative digital heritage as an emerging area in terms of both theory and practice, which draws on "multi-vocal and culturally embedded interpretations of the past". The motive is bringing past to life through "the way people make sense of the world as social practice" (Flynn, 2008, p. 447). This introduces the necessity for drawing a complex framework based on visualisation, sensing, participating and cultural learning rather than merely taking linear narratives and representations into account.

Rahaman's (2018) approach suggests phenomenological models of perception and highlights the role of embodied experience for knowledge production rather than behaviourist models of learning determined by physical processes and knowledge transfer. Sense of place is intrinsic part of this model for the visitor in order to become part of the context and enjoy the immersive experience. The presence is affected by the co-presence capitalising on the social values and narratives, thus creating collective memory. In this way, reconstructions and simulations are perceived as social products, collective memory devices and manifestations of collective cognitive background (Rahaman, 2018), which helps to attribute meaning to a heritage site.

In sum, this article helps to elucidate the nascent field of immersive heritage experience by tackling with the sense of place (physical vs. virtual), the narratives (content vs. context) and the meaning (interpretation vs. action). The tripartite conceptual framework presented by this article suggests that immersive heritage experience lies "at the nexus of story, body and senses" (Kidd, 2018). In doing so, it presents the ways in which immersive heritage can build up meaningful relationships in understanding and valuing heritage sites while enriching our experience through the absent presence between the physical and imaginary worlds. This, in fact, provides a sensorial experience with heritage through the presence in the virtual environment and stimulates real life experience through shaping perceptions and attributing meaning for what is left behind and why it matters.

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CAPTURING MUSEUM EXPERIENCE WITH EMOTIONAL TRANSFER THEORY

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ABSTRACT

In contemporary museology, visitor relations have become increasingly important. This has led museums to adopt a visitor-oriented approach. Although many aspects of visitor experiences are investigated in the literature, it is observed that emotional experiences are not explained in a comprehensive way. This study aims to discover the emotions that the artefacts in museums located in Eskisehir, Turkey arouse at the visitors. Initially, the museum websites were scanned and information about museums was obtained. Then, nine museums, which included artefacts in their collection that can transfer emotions with a specific theme, were chosen. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with 127 participants who visited the chosen museums. The interviews evaluated the participants' emotional status based on L. N. Tolstoy's Theory of Emotional Transference. The themes of anti-mimicry, romanticism, expressionism, transference intensity and the emotions' nature are derived from this theory. The overall finding is that museums can provide emotional transference apart from anti-mimicry and religious feelings. In addition, the results are important in terms of demonstrating the effect of the museum themes and the emotional statements of the artefacts on visitors.

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INTRODUCTION

Societies have had valuable artistic artefacts reflecting their cultures throughout history. As a venue, the idea of the museum began in the late Middle Ages. The objectives of museums have changed over time to reflect shifts in society. Initially, while museums were used for research and education, they became places representing nationalism as a result of the reforms in societies (Erbay, 2011). As a result of postmodern and contemporary influences, modern museums must produce exhibits as well as manage social responsibilities (Demir, 2013). While these changes occur in museums over time, the culture of a society exists with artefacts that represent traditions. What happened after the Industrial Revolution also affected museums (Madran, 1999). There has been a change in the role of the visitor, in terms of museology, as a result of the widespread use of leisure and holiday concepts and the value of people as consumers. With the understanding of contemporary museology, museums are now becoming organizations that take into consideration the wishes and expectations of visitors (Demir, 2013). The efforts to increase visits have strengthened marketing and business activities in museums (Sandell & Janes, 2007). Considering the effects of museums on visitors and interest in increasing visitors' number, it is evident rise in research studies aimed at investigating visitor experiences (Duncan & Wallach, 1980).

The traditional collection, conservation, research and display functions of contemporary museums have been expanded. The changes have led museums to communicate with visitors rather than develop collections, not only with large masses but also with specific target groups and individual visitors (Demir, 2013). In the 1990s, the view that museums were not only collections, but also important actors, gained prevalence (Onur, 2012, p. 32). When the scientific studies on visitors are examined, there is a large number of work related to the quality of service in this field (Yücelt, 2000; Nowacki, 2005; Mylonakis & Kendristakis, 2006; Mey & Mohamed 2009; Doğan & Karakuş, 2014; Yilmaz, 2011; Umur, 2015), visitor satisfaction (Brida et al., 2013; Trihn & Ryan, 2013; Oral & Çelik Yetim, 2014), and museum experience (Dierking & Falk, 1992; Falk, 2009; Chan & Yeoh, 2010; Dirsehan, 2011). With the proliferation of museum types, it is seen that museums that are subject to cultural tourism are affected by other alternative types of tourism. The museums, which include dark tourism, diaspora tourism, sad tourism and similar, have started to reflect the characteristic features of these tourism types to its visitors. In visitor research, traces of this development can be seen (Allan & Altal, 2016; Geiling & Ong, 2016; Çetinsöz, 2017; Kaygusuz, 2017).

Studies about visitor experiences mainly focus on the quality of service, visitor motivation and expectations. However, considering that most museums are composed of artefacts with artistic value, it can be said that current visitor experience studies should be handled from the perspective of art history and art philosophy. In museology, it is necessary to question what the visitor's feelings about artefacts and museums are. Emotions can affect the experiences of visitors, but reveal the nature of the artefacts in museums as well. In addition, considering that the most of museum collections are composed of valuable artefacts, it can be said that the emotions of these artefacts conveyed to visitors are also important. Finally, it is also emphasized that museum managers and curators should provide clues to the artefacts, leading to the development of new exhibition designs.

As a result, the phenomenon of "emotion" has been the subject of research in many different disciplines. In tourism literature, the concept of emotion is often the subject of research in the context of the customer (Filep & Deery, 2010; Gountas et al., 2011; Mura & Khoo-Lattimore, 2012) and staff (Hochschild, 1983; Ağca & Ertan, 2008; Carnicelli-Filho, 2013; Türker, 2016). However, researches on the emotions arising from the artefacts in museum remain insufficient. Based on the reasons mentioned, current study aims to discover the emotions that the artefacts in museums arouse among the visitors. In this context, the emotional transfer theory (ETT) is determined to be an important basis and the research is constructed within the framework of this theory.

For the purpose of this study, the importance and necessity of the concept of emotion in the artefacts is outlined first. After that, a detailed description of the emotional transference theory developed by L. N. Tolstoy (2004) is provided. In this study, ETT was chosen to provide the basis for the interview questions to explain the feelings of museum visitors. The findings of the study reveal the visitors' emotions created by the exhibitions. In addition, the suggestions presented in the conclusion section provide guidance on how to improve the emotional transfer to visitors of the museums.

EMOTIONAL TRANSFERENCE THEORY AND ITS ANTECEDENTS

The emotional transference theory was developed by Russian philosopher and writer L. N. Tolstoy in the 19th century. Tolstoy discussed his thoughts about the theory in his book, *What Is Art?* (Tolstoy, 2004). The art approaches and ideas that existed during Tolstoy's life affected the development of his theory. These include mimesis, romanticism, expressionism theories and these assume the basic dimensions for his theory.

Mimesis refers to imitation and is based on the notion that art is a copy. Viewing art as a reflection has occurred for centuries and continues in our time (Moran, 1999, p. 17). According to Tolstoy (2004, p. 121), emulation is not a measure of the excellence of art because the main characteristic of art is the passing of the artist's feelings to others. By the 1790s, the romanticism movement formed and remained important until the 1850s. In England, romanticism began in the artefacts of poets such as William Blake, Lord Byron, Percy Shelley, Robert Burns, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Keats. It continued in the artefacts of musicians such as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Joseph Haydn, Ludwig van Beethoven, Johann Wolfgang Goethe and Friedrich Schiller in Germany (Barrett, 2008, p. 59). On the other hand, philosophers such as Johan Fichte, Friedrich Schelling, Arthur Schopenhauer, Friedrich Nietzsche rejected the experimental (realistic) philosophy and produced new ideas on artistic creation and artist sentiment (Barrett, 2008, p. 59). In the following century, art philosophers such as Benedetto Croce and R. G. Collingwood explained the definition of art as the act of creating (Moran, 1999). They argued that the expression of emotions must be realized for creation to occur (Graham, 2005, p. 119). On the other hand, according to Tolstoy, art is the environment of relations that unites people around the same emotions; art is an activity based on the perception of one's feelings by seeing or feeling the feelings of someone (Tolstoy, 2004, p. 51).

The most important difference between ETT and romanticism and expressionism are that, according to ETT, artwork creates a connection between the artist and the audience through emotions. Therefore, Tolstoy believed that forming emotions in the inner world of the artist or the expression to the emotions is not enough. Tolstoy holds the audiences at the centre of the theory (Weitz, 1956). From the perspective of ETT, if there is a transfer of emotion, the effects of the art are "intensity of transference", "prevalence" and "nature of emotions".

Intensity of transference

For ETT, the most decisive feature that distinguishes real art from imitations is its ability to transfer emotion. If the audience feels the emotions and the mood of the artist and this connection occurs for other people, then an art action is counted (Tolstoy, 2004, p. 168). The stronger the emotional infectiousness, the more successful it is as an artwork. Transference is the most important requirement for art. Without this, the work is not an artwork, no matter how realistic it is (Moran, 1999, p. 121). The occurrence of the transference depends on three criteria: "individuality", "clarity" and "sincerity" (Ross, 1994, p. 180).

If an artist conveys his own feelings to his work, it means these feelings are original (Benitez, 2012). The more personal the feeling is, the more strongly it affects the audience (Tolstoy, 2004, p. 169). Benitez (2012) states that the clearness criterion is probably the closest link between Tolstoy's three criteria about the severity of transference. If a feeling is conveyed clearly, it can spread to large audiences. The clearer the transference of emotion, the more effective it is because the audience connected to the artist is satisfied with the emotions they feel (Tolstoy, 2004, p. 169). Tolstoy emphasizes that sincerity is the most important among the three criteria and the most influential. The artwork should primarily affect its creator, implying that the mood of the artist is immediately transmitted to those that feel a connection with the artwork (Moran, 1999, p. 121).

Prevalence

In Tolstoy's theory, prevalence is reflected in the thoughts of “art for art” and “society for art” that creates great controversy during its existence. Tolstoy is one of those who thought art should exist for society and that art must reflect social reality because it is a part of social life (Tezcan, 2011, p. 45). No artist, according to those who defend the concept of art for society, creates work for him/herself. On the contrary, he/she expects his/her work to be seen, read and listened to by others (Soykan, 2009, p. 13). The value patterns that exist in society always begin in social interaction. Therefore, it is not possible to clarify the issue without applying society to the nature of art and the artist (Ulusoy, 2005, p. 13). Tolstoy advocates that society has an important role as an audience in the nascency of emotional transference. The amount that the artwork appeals to the masses and the more it is understood, defines whether the piece qualifies as a true work of art or not (Tolstoy, 2004, p.83).

Nature of emotions

In order to determine what is considered valuable among the artefacts, the nature of the emotion is also considered. The feelings that art conveys are separated into two categories: "universal feelings" that everyone can share and "religious feelings" arising from religious consciousness (Moran, 1999, p. 124; Trivedi, 2004, p. 43).

There are universal emotions that every society can feel (Ortony & Turner, 1990, p. 316). Plutchik (1980) described the universal emotions that motivate people's adaptive behaviour in his "Emotion Wheel" model: *joy, trust, fear, surprise, sadness, disgust, anger,* and *anticipation.* He states that the eight basic emotions consist of opposite poles: four positive emotions and four negative emotions. These can form complex emotions when combined. With joy and anticipation come optimism, trust and fear come together to create submission, surprise and sadness causes disapproval, anger and disgust creates contempt, joy and trust come together to create love, anticipation and anger derive aggressiveness, fear and surprise induce awe, and lastly, sadness and disgust lead to remorse (Plutchik, 1980; 2001).

Tolstoy argues that the feelings conveyed can also contain the feelings arising from religious consciousness. Some art critics consider this to be reactionary (Matthews, 1979; Leddy, 1987; Wertz, 1998), while others advocate his view (Casey, 1971; Daniels, 1974; Jahn, 1975; Long, 1998). Tolstoy states that every society has a religious consciousness of its time and that this sense is the most sublime one for a specific society. This type of emotion is reflected in the artefacts that are valuable for society (Tolstoy, 2004, p. 56).

RESEARCH METHOD

When the factors such as overcrowding of museum visits during the day, lack of an emotion scale prepared by quantitative approach to emotional transfer theory, and the thought that the emotional experience issue in this study is more prone to qualitative research approach are considered, it is understandable the researcher’s choice to adopt qualitative approach in the current study. The interview technique was used to assess the emotional experiences of museum visitors. According to Patton (1987), the aim of the interview is to enter an individual's inner world and understand his perspective. For this purpose, a semi-structured interview form was created with contributions from the literature review.

The nine interview questions were submitted to nine experts who are academicians in Tourism (four people), Art History (three people) and Fine Arts (two people). The process of obtaining expert opinions was carried out in two stages. Initially, the experts evaluated questions in terms of expression, content and punctuation. With the feedback obtained, the interview questions were revised for a second time and put into the final form. As a result of the evaluations of art history and fine arts experts, the seventh question, “What do you want to say about the views that art is for art and/or art is for society?” was removed from the interview form. After the interview form was finalized, a “question-answer key” was created to guide the research process. The question-answer key was used in the content analysis of the interview texts. The finalized interview questions are as follows:

1. What do you think about the artefacts in the museum in general?
2. How did the artefacts in the museum make you feel in terms of emotion?
3. Do the artefacts in the museum adequately describe the emotions you feel? Can you explain it briefly?
4. Did the artefacts give you special feelings on your museum visit? Can you tell us about your feelings?
5. Were the feelings you felt during your museum visit clear and apparent?
6. To what extent do the artefacts you see during your museum visit show the sincerity and feelings of the artist?
7. Did the artefacts arouse some basic feelings in you? For example, feeling of astonishment, or sadness or cheerfulness against some artefacts?
8. Did the artefacts arouse religious feelings in you during your museum visit?

Study Setting

In the first stage, 19 museums in the centre of Eskisehir, Turkey were considered in the scope of the study. To determine which museums would comprise the final study site, a document/website analysis was conducted. For this purpose, web pages of museums with current information were examined. Web page review is a method that is widely used today thanks to the development of internet technologies. An observation form was created for the systematic review of web pages. The observation form was created with the help of an expert, and it includes information about the genre of the museum. After a document analysis, some museums that did not have artistic elements in their exhibitions were excluded.

Museums that were classified as art museums and themed museums (Demiral Gökalp, 2015, p. 76) were determined to meet the aim of the ETT (Weitz, 1956; Wertz, 1998; Tolstoy, 2004, p. 51). Therefore, the "Woodworks

Museum", the "Contemporary Glass Arts Museum", the "Contemporary Arts Museum", the "Education Cartoons Museum", the "Eti Archaeology Museum", the "Liberation Museum", the "Meerschaum Museum", the "Eskisehir City Memory Museum" and the "Yilmaz Buyukersen Wax Sculptures Museum" were selected for the study site.

Data collection process

Prior to collecting data, official permission was obtained from the "Eskisehir Odunpazari Municipality" and "Eskisehir Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism" to which the museums are affiliated. In-person interviews were conducted in the five-month period between December 2017 and April 2018. In the interviews, written notes were taken as well as audio recordings. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with 127 participants who visited the chosen museums. The participants were selected by convenience sampling, owing to uncertainty of number of visitors. The interviews lasted from 5 to 30 minutes. When the interviews reached enough saturation, the raw data were transcribed and prepared for the analysis process. The content analysis technique was used in the data analysis. The main objective of content analysis is to determine the concepts and relationships that can explain the collected data (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). While interview texts were subjected to content analysis, the question-answer key previously prepared by the researcher was used. Meanwhile, a computer package program (Nvivo 10) was used to perform content analysis.

FINDINGS AND EVALUATION

In the study, the findings were obtained by evaluating the main themes of ETT (Basic Dimensions, Intensity of Transference and Nature of Emotions). The explanations also contain quotations from the participant's views. Participant names are coded for the purposes of confidentiality.

Findings on the “Basic Dimensions” theme

Mimesis, romanticism and expressionism approaches have been effective in the development of Tolstoy's theory of art. From this point of view, "anti-mimesis", "romanticism" and "expressionism" were the basic dimensions and evaluated as the main themes (Table 1).

Table 1. *Reference Distribution of Basic Dimensions*

Museum Codes[2]	**1**		**2**		**3**		**4**		**5**		**6**		**7**		**8**		**9**	
Basic Dimensions	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**
Anti-mimesis	20	13	10	8	12	8	16	11	12	8	18	12	15	10	19	13	28	19
Romanticism	20	15	10	7	11	7	14	10	12	9	18	13	14	10	17	13	19	14
Expressionism	19	14	9	7	12	9	14	10	12	9	16	12	16	12	15	11	24	18
The participants	**n**		**n**		**n**		**n**		**n**		**n**		**n**		**n**		**n**	
	19		**9**		**11**		**14**		**11**		**15**		**14**		**15**		**19**	

Museum Codes:
1: Woodworks Museum
2: Anadolu University Contemporary Arts Museum
3: Anadolu University Education Cartoons Museum
4: Contemporary Glass Arts Museum
5: Eskisehir City Memory Museum
6: Eskisehir Liberation Museum
7: Eti Archaeology Museum
8: Meerschaum Museum
9: Yilmaz Buyukersen Wax Sculptures Museum

The sub-themes related to the theme of anti-mimesis are "*Positive or negative evaluation of artistic, aesthetic, historical and archaeological values"* and "*Real/copy artefacts awareness*". The frequency distribution indicates that museums have left positive impressions on visitors. Therefore, the exhibits have artistic, aesthetic, historical and archaeological value. In particular, the intensive expression transfer emerging in the wax museum (10 references in 28) can be interpreted as the art and aesthetic aspects of wax statues. However, it must be considered that these statements may be made as a result of the fact that the statues do not resemble the original. In other museums, the participants made evaluations by reviewing the artefacts and the creativity, labour qualities and form of structures rather than concentrating on whether it was real or replicated. Some statements about the theme from the participants are:

> *"When I look at their work, I think it is a museum that reflects people who had something to do with this country, without being good or bad. It certainly does nor express any particular opinion but a general view."* (Wax Museum-P3)

> *"I like that octopus. Creating something like this from the root of the tree is not what everyone can do."* (Woodworks Museum-P15)

[2]The same museum codes are used in each table.

> *"I think that cartoons describe situations that need to be told in daily life but cannot be expressed. For this reason, this museum is successful in explaining both our society and the problems around the world."* (Cartoons Museum-P1)

> *"There is no work in the museum. It was like the introduction of Eskisehir. I couldn't see a museum or any work. There were a few pieces in the last parts, a few pieces made of wood and glass, but I think the pieces were placed in there for the sake of the work."* (City Memory Museum-P4)

In the theme of romanticism, the emotional status of visitors is explained with the sub-themes of "*Reflecting the artist's feelings and emotions on the audience*" and "*Non-sensations of the audience*". When the frequency distributions shown in Table 1 were examined, the main theme of romanticism was referenced the most in the Woodworks Museum (20 references). The subsequent ranking is the Wax Museum (19 references), the Liberation Museum (18 references) and the Meerschaum Museum (17 references). Most visitors (75%) stated that they were influenced by the artefact in the museums, that the artist conveyed their feelings to the artefacts and that these feelings affected them. In the museums that contain abstract artefacts of art in its collection, the participants experienced more emotional transfer than in other museums. It can be assumed that the reason for the high artistic value of these artefacts and the attractiveness to their audiences is that they reflect the creativity and imagination of the artist. The participants in the Contemporary Glass Arts and the Contemporary Arts Museum had emotionally different experiences. It was observed that they were more touched by the artefacts in which they knew the story, or the artist, or when they could interpret some meaning on their own. On the other hand, in the City Memory Museum some participants (25%) were unable to get an impression from the exhibitions and had different perspectives in accepting them as artefacts. For example, participants perceived the work as virtual and digital. In the Meerschaum Museum, the participants did not find the artefacts as original due to the lack of exhibitions, presentations and guided explanations. However, in general discourse, the audience felt that the work reflected the artist's feeling and emotion. Some participant views to support the findings are:

> *"In some of the artefacts in the museum, I can say that I have some feelings in terms of the artist's imagination, talent, and labour. When I examined the artefacts, I was able to see the labour and the feeling that the artist wanted to convey in many artefacts."* (Glass Arts Museum-P13)

> *"Frankly, when I saw those artefacts, I suddenly made a journey to history and saw how these items were used, and this excited me."* (Archaeology Museum-P9)

> *"In general, the feeling created by the artists reflects itself in all of the artefacts they make. Besides, they are all capable of expressing themselves without any explanation.* (Woodworks Museum -P11)

> *"It was not a feeling that I was impressed. There was more of an interest."* (Meerschaum Museum-P12)

> *"There was not much emotional stuff because they were publicity videos."* (City Memory Museum-P4)

When evaluating participant statements for the expressionism theme, "*Reflects the emotion that it wants to give*", "*No emotion is reflected*" and "*Instructional*" sub-themes were created. From the frequency distributions in Table 1, it was observed that the main theme of expressionism is mostly referenced in the Wax Museum (24 references). The second museum is the Woodworks Museum (19 references). The general opinion of the participants for the theme of expressionism is that they perceive the emotional expression performed by the artists in the artefacts they examine with a rate of 67%. The general characteristics of museums providing expressionism are that they include original artefacts made by qualified artists and that the visual and audio presentations of the artefacts are well done. The participants were able to feel more emotional expressions in the museums that carry these characteristics. The artefacts in the Cartoon Museum and the Contemporary Arts Museum were able to provide emotional arousal thanks to the subjects which were used by the artist. However, participants who did not spend much time in the museum or who were not interested in the artefacts stated that these did not contain a narrative but only visual appeal. Such a transfer is clearly indicated in the museum of Meerschaum. Some of the participants who visited the museum argue that the artefacts did not exhibit any emotion. Perhaps this can be explained not by the lack of artistic value, but by the fact that the artefacts are limited to standard-looking or very few different motifs. Another noteworthy finding is that some participants (7%) stated that the artefacts were instructive even if they did not find emotional expression in them. In particular, the Archaeology Museum and the Liberation Museum, which contain historical and archaeological artefacts in their collections, have been historically instructive and informative for the visitors. With a general explanation, the expression of the emotions of the exhibitions is reflected in the emotions of the participants:

> *"It depends on what you went to the museum for. So, you may not feel any emotion if you have just gone for a walk. But if you try to understand the underlying*

meaning of cartoons, then you can feel the emotion. That's what happened to me." (Cartoon Museum-P1)

"When we look at it, the artefacts in this collection are the artefacts that are reflecting characteristic of that artist. Then yes, the names here are the artefacts that will give the character of those artists and their ideas." (Contemporary Arts Museum-P2)

"The visuals, voices, and animations that were presented there addressed our perception as much as possible. " (Liberation Museum-P2)

"For example, they could have left their inspiration as a small note. They just wrote who did it, but they could write what they told (about this artefact)." (Woodworks Museum-P3)

"If I give an example about the museum, there was no official explanation of the history, how it was founded and how it was processed. We couldn't get a lot of information about them. Yes, I'm visiting, but only visually. It's just visually nice, yes, but it's actually not a very efficient visit." (Meerschaum Museum-P1)

"It has helped us to learn about all periods from past to present. We learned the lifestyle. The artefacts were informative." (Archaeology Museum-P12)

Findings on the "Intensity of Transference" theme

While the transfer of emotions is important for an art activity, the determinant of whether it is considered a good artwork is the intensity of transference. According to Tolstoy, the intensity of transference depends on three criteria: "*individuality*", "*clarity*" and "*sincerity*". The findings of the main themes and sub-themes are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. *Reference Distribution of Intensity of Transference*

Museum Codes	**1**		**2**		**3**		**4**		**5**		**6**		**7**		**8**		**9**	
Intensity of Transference	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**
Individuality	16	12	9	7	11	9	14	11	12	9	15	12	14	11	16	12	21	16
Clarity	23	16	14	10	15	10	13	9	11	8	14	10	14	10	19	13	20	14
Sincerity	22	15	12	8	13	9	16	11	13	9	16	11	14	10	19	13	21	14
	n		**n**		**n**		**n**		**n**		**n**		**n**		**n**		**n**	
The participants	**19**		**9**		**11**		**14**		**11**		**15**		**14**		**15**		**19**	

The theme of individuality is explained in the study by two different sub-themes: *"feeling individual emotions"* and *"creating ordinary feelings"*. According to the frequency distributions in Table 2, The Wax Museum (21 references), the Woodworks Museum (16 references) and the Meerschaum Museum (16 references) have the most comments about having individual artefacts. The museum with the least statements is the Contemporary Arts Museum (9 references). The participants agreed with the theme of feeling individual emotions with a rate of 59%. From this point of view, it can be said that the exhibitions in the museums are perceived as moderately unique for visitors. In museums with visual artefacts in its collection, the artefacts are perceived to be the original. The participants find the tangible artefacts that they can objectively see. Exhibitions in the Wax Museum or the Liberation Museum are examples of this case. Negative perceptions of abstract video artefacts in the City Memory Museum also support this situation because some of the participants did not evaluate the video artefacts as original piece of art. The museum, which has the least original artefacts, is the Meerschaum Museum. Some participants' views on the theme of originality are:

> *"There is a room in the museum describing the war of liberation. When we entered the room, we sat in the sandbags. The feeling of sitting in the trenches gave me a bit of emotion."* (Liberation Museum-P3)

> *" The people who are worth to remember like Kemal Sunal, Barış Manço, Aşık Veysel made me feel special."* (Wax Museum P-11)

> *I mean, it doesn't appeal to me. It doesn't make sense to me."* (Meerschaum Museum-P5)

> *"No. I haven't had any special feelings."* (City Memory Museum-P8)

The clarity criteria are explained by the sub-themes of "*being complicated*", "*being intelligible*" and "*feeling the emotion clearly*", as it is evaluated in relation to the clarity of the transmitted emotions. When the frequency values are examined, it was observed that the most interpreted museums are the Woodworks Museum (23 references), the Wax Museum (20 references) and the Meerschaum Museum (19 references). The emotions conveyed by the artefacts are closely related to the emotional bond that the audience has established with the work. If the participants can understand the artefacts, they can feel the emotions reflected by the work. When sub-themes are evaluated, participants found that the artefacts are understood and convey the feeling clearly. In other words, the participants evaluated a work as open if it was understandable. The Liberation Museum, the Archaeology Museum, and the Wax Museum are examples of these experiences. Participants stated that emotions are complex in the Woodworks Museum, the Contemporary Arts Museum, and the Meerschaum Museum because of the inclusion of abstract artefacts in their collections. Eventually, the artefacts convey clear and understandable feelings to 66% of the participants. In this context, it can be said that the artefacts in the museums are clear and intelligible enough to be understood by a wide audience. Some of the participants' views on the sub-themes are:

> *"A little bit, some work is complex, of course, there must be some intellectual knowledge to capture the same feeling of thought. I personally have difficulty understanding the surrealist artefacts."* (Woodworks Museum-P14)

> *"Inadequate, there is a relief sculpture, but I don't know what it belongs to. The interest does not pass to me."* (Meerschaum Museum-P6)

> *"Critical works on social issues were especially clear and understandable."* (Cartoon Museum-P10)

> *"Yes, I had feelings of patriotism throughout the museum trip. In every section I have seen, these feelings have continued to increase. It was clear and understandable."* (Liberation Museum-P7)

According to the participant statements, the sincerity criteria was explained by the sub-themes of "artefacts reflect sincerity", "the work is not sincere" and "finding something of yourself". Regarding the reference distributions in Table 2, the artefacts with the most comments were found in the Woodworks Museum (22 references), the Wax Museum Sculptures (21 references) and the Meerschaum Museum (19 references). The participant comments indicate that the artefacts reflect the sincerity of the artist to a great extent (63%). The artefacts exhibited in the Liberation Museum (94%), the Wax Museum (76%) and the Contemporary Arts Museum (75%) were found to be the sincerest. It can be said that the artefacts whose story is known or appealing to all segments of society are sincerer. The Liberation Museum and the Wax Museum contain such artefacts. However, since the Contemporary Glass Arts Museum, the Woodworks Museum and the Contemporary Arts Museum were not found to be understandable by most participants, the sincerity of the artist was not mentioned very positively. Sincerity can be thought of as a phenomenon formed by the artist's own will. However, in cases where the artist is asked to produce a subject that does not require creativity, he becomes unable to benefit from his own sincerity and creativity. An example of this case is the video artefacts in the City Memory Museum. The visitors state that they have learned historical information about certain subjects from these artefacts, but they do not feel any sincerity from the artist. The exhibition opportunities of the artefacts also affected the sincerity. For instance, souvenir shops and sales activities in the Meerschaum Museum negatively affected emotional transference. Many indigenous Meerschaum artefacts have been commercial commodities. In addition, some participants felt spontaneous sincerity from the artefacts created by an unknown artist. The Woodworks Museum and the Contemporary Glass Arts Museum are examples of this situation. The participants felt sincerity between the artefacts and themselves without needing to know the feelings of the artist. As a result, the sincerity of the artefacts was accepted by the visitors with a significant rate (63%), although it varied according to the type of work, the recognition of the artist, the story of the creation and the venue of the exhibition.

> *"The artefacts were very successful. The talent of the artist was hidden in every detail of his artefacts... It was clear that the artist was doing the work by revealing all his sincerity and feelings."* (Wax Museum- P11)

> *"In some artefacts, it is very difficult to derive emotions and thoughts from abstract artefacts, but each work already leaks information about its artist in every way."* (Contemporary Arts Museum - P5)

> *"If we're talking about this place, I don't think so, it's a little more commercial. I was expecting bigger place when the museum was called, but the shops were obviously not. It's called a museum, but there are shops inside. Sales are a priority, rather than reflecting something."* (Meerschaum Museum-P1)

> *"If you're talking about City memory, you need to make sure that foreigners who live or come to that City have that connection. It must be sincere and the participants in the video need to reflect this sincerity somehow. There is no good video editing. There is a chain of videos shot with a single camera, sometimes supported by some images. So, I think it's weak in terms of cinema and video. There's mould. In all the videos, it is the matter that you can see the same pattern. I didn't see much creativity there. I have not seen sincerity."* (City Memory Museum- P11)

Findings on the "Nature of Emotions" theme

In the nature of emotions, the kind of emotions that are felt during the transfer is evaluated. In theory, the emotions that an artwork can convey are either "universal emotions" or "religious emotions". Universal feelings can be understood by all segments of society. These can be simple and understandable basic emotions or emotions that are a combination of a few basic emotions. From this point of view, universal feelings in the study were discussed as two sub-themes: "*basic emotions*" and "*combined emotions*".

Plutchik (1980) also supports Tolstoy's notion of universal feelings. Plutchik (1980) considers the basic emotions to be *joy, trust, fear, surprise, sadness, disgust, anger,* and *anticipation*. In this context, the participant statements were analysed, and the findings related to the basic emotions are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. *Reference Distribution of Nature of Emotions*

Museum Codes	**1**		**2**		**3**		**4**		**5**		**6**		**7**		**8**		**9**	
Nature of Emotions	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**
Universal emotions	23	12	16	9	21	11	21	11	13	7	24	13	23	12	15	8	35	19
Basic emotions	18	12	9	6	18	12	17	12	8	6	21	15	16	11	12	8	25	17
Combined emotions	5	12	7	17	3	7	4	10	5	12	3	7	7	17	3	7	10	24
Religious emotions	23	17	11	8	11	8	15	11	11	8	16	12	14	10	16	12	20	15
The participants	**n**		**n**		**n**		**n**		**n**		**n**		**n**		**n**		**n**	
	19		**9**		**11**		**14**		**11**		**15**		**14**		**15**		**19**	

The feelings of surprise, sadness and joy have been felt more in the basic emotions. While 52 expressions of surprise were referenced, 40 expressions were conveyed for the feeling of sadness. For joy, there were 28 expressions. The Contemporary Glass Arts Museum is the most cited museum for the sense of surprise. The participants expressed the feeling of surprise with 15 times. To generate feelings of surprise, the artefacts needed to demonstrate that the artist used different techniques, used combinations of many different colours, and gave the glass unusual shapes. For the feeling of sadness, the participants mostly commented in the Liberation Museum and Wax Museum. Eleven expressions were stated for both museums. Viewing artefacts that reminded visitors of important issues in history caused participants to be sad. When the theme of joy is examined, the participants made the most references to the Cartoon Museum (7 references). Cartoons are artefacts that can cheer people up. Therefore, some of the participants were feeling cheerful and having fun while others expressed their deep thoughts. Some of the interpretations of basic emotions are:

"I'm surprised how beautiful artefacts can emerge from a simple substance. I was astonished. As I said, they made so many interesting shapes from the glass that I

couldn't stop thinking about how they did it."(Contemporary Glass Arts Museum-P6)

"Some of the artefacts were the people sculpture and when I read their lives, the artefacts made me feel sadness and joy." (Wax Museum- P15)

"While visiting the artefacts, it was generally fun and joyful. Since it is a cartoon museum, we laughed and had fun with most of the artefacts we looked at." (Cartoon Museum- P10)

"The artefacts based on freedom made me sad. War-themed cartoons made me sad, especially with children." (Cartoon Museum - P1)

Anger, fear and disgust are the basic emotions that were least felt during the museum trips. In terms of interpretations where feelings of anger and disgust were felt, this was due to the theme and content reflected by the artist. However, it can be said that the artefacts that created fear or disgust were the ones that reflected the creativity and imagination of the artist more clearly. Some of the artefacts in the Woodworks museum or the Contemporary Glass Arts Museum are examples of this.

"It made me feel that there might be something inside the artist's inner world, and I thought there might be anger towards the world because it seemed ugly to me. It was disgusting." (Woodworks Museum- P6)

It is possible to reach the conclusion that emotions such as fear, disgust and anger, which may be more related to the inner world of the artist, are felt more clearly in artefacts. Moreover, the findings explained above regarding basic emotions support this conclusion. The common factor of the artefacts that reflected joy, surprise and sadness are that the subjects they convey are known to the masses. Therefore, the reason that the work triggers a sad emotion may not be the emotions conveyed by the artist. The theme of the museum and the event or personality in which the work is concerned play a greater role in affecting visitors. On the other hand, it can be said that the artefacts in which emotions such as fear, disgust and anger are processed reflect the inner world of the artist in a sincerer way.

Optimism, submission, disapproval, contempt, love, aggressiveness, awe and remorse are the sub-themes of the combined emotions that occur through mixing of more than one basic emotion. The exhibition spaces in the museums, the emotions of the participants and the artistic qualities of the artefacts are effective in forming combined emotions. In addition, the participants experienced intense feelings of excitement, loneliness and disappointment. The museums where the sensation of excitement was felt most clearly were the Archaeology Museum and the Contemporary Glass Arts Museum. The feeling in the glass museum shows itself as an excitement due to different shapes, forms and artistic styles of the artefacts. It was observed that the feeling of longing was reflected in different artefacts, sometimes for people and sometimes for a certain time or event. For example, the participants at the Wax Museum felt a longing for the real people represented by the statues. Disappointment was felt at the Wax Museum (2 references) and the Meerschaum Museum (2 references). In the Wax Museum, the participants were disappointed since the artefacts do not look real. The statements of the participants that reflect combined emotions are:

> *"The artefacts they did with the technology of their time excited me."* (Archaeology Museum-P5)

> *"Some artefacts are very exciting. When I look at the colours, I find some colours much closer to myself. It excites me, I can say that it actually gives a feeling of excitement."* (Contemporary Glass Arts Museum-P1)

> *"Even though I do not know the past, there have been artefacts that arouse a historical longing."* (Wax Museum-P8)

> *"My mood changed a bit because some of the artefacts narrate old times. I've been thinking about the old ones, and that's a little emotional."* (City Memory Museum-P7)

> *"...those who are not alike are disappointing."* (Wax Museum-P2)

The transference of religious emotions may vary depending on the subject and the religious view of the artist. Therefore, the theme of religious feelings is explained by three sub-themes; "*religious beliefs*", "*not religious beliefs*" and "*religious messages*". It was questioned whether the participant emotions were related to religious beliefs and the relationship between the work and religious beliefs. According to the frequency distribution in Table, 3, 68% of references noted that the artefacts were not related to religious beliefs compared to 93 of references that expressed the artefacts did reflect religious beliefs. The most prominent museums reflecting feelings that the artefacts were not related to religious beliefs were the City Memory Museum, the Cartoon Museum, and the Archaeology Museum. However, due to the theme of some museums, the artefacts contain religious messages. An example of this is expressed by 12 references, mostly from the Woodworks Museum. While universal emotions are expressed in a total of 186 references, reflecting religious emotions is expressed in only 16 references. Based on the observations, it is very rare for the artefacts to convey religious feelings. The artefacts are more about education, culture, history, economy and human rights that concern society in different ways. Other issues affecting the expression of religious feelings were the location and physical characteristics of the museum. The fact that the Woodworks Museum and the Meerschaum Museum are in the Kursunlu Complex (an old mosque) can be cited as an example.

> *"I don't have any religious feelings. Eskisehir is a very cosmopolitan city in this sense. And I don't look at it from that perspective. It didn't make me feel any religious things."* (City Memory Museum- P11)

> *"No, no religious issue was addressed. I didn't think so because I didn't see this."* (Cartoon Museum-P4)

> *"There was nothing to trigger my religious feelings. It was not designed for that purpose either."* (Archaeology Museum-P4)

> *"I have not seen much religious-themed artwork except for examples that resemble Buddhist beliefs."* (Woodworks Museum-P15)

CONCLUSION

The goal of this study was to explore how the artefacts exhibited in museums compose the emotional transference to visitors. To accomplish this aim, the emotional transfer theory was adopted as the main framework in the current study. The findings were first evaluated in the context of anti-mimesis, romanticism and expressionism themes. On the theme of anti-counterfeiting, the participants were questioned on their awareness as to whether the artefacts were real or replicated. As a result, awareness of the artefacts as real or replicated was not found in the museums, except the Wax Museum and the Meerschaum Museum. It is thought that this situation varies according to the theme of the museums and whether the collections that do not contain real artefacts are more prominent. Regarding the theme of romanticism, artists convey their feelings through the work. It is noted that museums that contain abstract artefacts in their collection were more sentimental than the other museums. The visitors stated that these artefacts had high artistic qualities and reflected the creativity of the artist better than other artefacts. Therefore, the exhibitions attracted the attention of the audience and were able to generate emotions in them. The Contemporary Glass Arts Museum and the Contemporary Art Museum emerged in this theme. Lastly, on the theme of expressionism, it was evaluated whether the artefacts that contain certain emotions illustrate these feelings to the audience or not. It has been observed that the artefacts provide an acceptable level of emotional expression throughout the museums. The common aspect of the museums that stand out in this theme is that they use contemporary exhibition methods well and exhibit real and original artefacts. It has been seen that museums with these qualities have generated more emotional expressiveness in their visitors.

In the second phase, the intensity of emotions conveyed in the artefacts was evaluated in terms of individuality, clarity and sincerity. Regarding individuality, it was revealed that the participants evaluated the tangible artefacts that they could see and make sense of objectively. In the case of clarity, if the work could be understood, it is expressed clearly and plainly. Regarding sincerity, it has been determined that this condition varies according to the type of work exhibited, the artist's experiences in the field, and the level of visitor's awareness of the story that is the subject of the work. Consequently, the artefacts in the Liberation Museum and the Wax Museum were found to be sincerer than in other museums. The fact that the artefacts in museums have provided three conditions that determine the intensity of emotional transference indicates that the artefacts are more artistic and valuable. As such, individuality was accepted by 59%, clarity by 66% and sincerity by 63%. Therefore, the artefacts in the museums provided enough transfer of emotions.

Finally, the existence of universal feelings and religious feelings in the artefacts was assessed. The most basic emotions, surprise, sadness and joy, were felt within the universal emotions. However, it has been determined that the formation of these emotions may be the result of external factors along with the artist's feelings. Another important result is that although the feelings of fear, anger and disgust were felt less often, the artefacts containing these emotions were considered to reflect the sincerity of the artist better. With such artefacts, the participants felt more connected to the artist. It is thought that the reason the combined emotions were felt less often is a result of the scarcity of the artefacts that reflect combined emotions, the feeling of different emotions from each work, the spontaneous emotional changes of the participants and different experiences according to the themes of museums. Hence, excitement, longing, and disappointment were felt as united emotions. It is concluded that religious emotions do not exist effectively in the artefacts, that the audience did not feel such emotions often and that the artists created their work with different concerns than religious beliefs. However, it is emphasized in the theory that both types of emotions are important for society's understanding of art and that religious thought will give direction to society on many issues. Nevertheless, religious emotions remained weak in the museums. The artefacts convey the emotions that are more relevant to society such as education, culture, history, economics, geography and human rights. The reflection of universal emotions enables the artefacts to be transferred to wider audiences. In addition, providing the conditions of clarity and individuality in the intensity of the transference and the feeling of the basic emotions in universal emotions is the result of supporting each other. Moreover, most artefacts in which combined emotions were reflected were complex and difficult to understand. As a result, in general, it can be concluded that artefacts in museums provide a transfer of emotion to the visitor, except for the anti-mimesis and religious emotions.

The previous studies dealing with the visitor experience in the existing museum and tourism literature (Dierking & Falk, 1992; Falk, 2009; Chan & Yeoh, 2010; Dirsehan, 2011; Alelis et al., 2013; Allan & Altal, 2016; Geiling & Ong, 2016; Çetinsöz, 2017; Kaygusuz, 2017; Kılıçarslan & Caber, 2018) evaluate the experience with other subjects or discipline. For instance, they try to explain the visitor's experience with the subjects like atmosphere, and physical facilities of a museum, new technologies or with disciplines like marketing, aesthetic, education. Moreover, since the artefacts are in the foreground to the museum experience in terms of visitors, there is a lack of studies focusing on the relationship between artwork itself and visitors in the existing museum experience literature. The main contribution of this study is to explore the visitor's feelings about artefacts and their emotional transferences. This theoretical contribution of the research, thanks to the results obtained, provides beneficial information about the museum experience from the perspective of art history and art philosophy.

The results of the study lead to certain practical implications. Firstly, the most insufficient perception in terms of emotional transfer among the nine museums was found in the City Memory Museum and the Meerschaum Museum. Most of the artefacts in the City Memory museum are digital video artefacts and the use of a different display technique may have been more effective. In order to improve this situation, museum managers may be advised to use a different audio presentation technique of video artefacts. Secondly, in the Meerschaum Museum, the collection consists of unique and valuable artefacts of Eskisehir. However, the presence of souvenir sales in the museum has led to the perception of the artefacts as commercial objects. Therefore, it may be suggested that the interior of the museum is reorganized, providing more space to the Meerschaum artefacts and that souvenirs are sold outside of the museum.

Lastly, the contents of the collections vary according to the theme and purpose of the museums. Museum management and curators decide how the artefacts will be exhibited. In the study, the collections have been highly influential in the emotional transference of the artefacts in museums. The way the collections were exhibited influenced some participants to experience complex and meaningful emotions. Thus, the current study may also be a guide to curators to consider the issue of emotion transfer when editing artefacts.

There are certain limitations to this study. As a study site, it solely focused on the museums located in the city centre. If different study areas are chosen, the results of further research may be different. Another limitation of the study is that emotions were assessed according to the museum themes. In other words, the study, in general, focused on exploring the emotional experiences of participants. Thus, the demographic information of the participants such as age, sex, marital status, etc, were not included in the research process. As a direction to future research, it is suggested to examine the role of demographic variables on emotional transference. In the data collection, the interview technique was chosen in order to get in-depth information about the nature of the participants' emotional experiences and their understanding of art. On the other hand, according to the findings, the insight of art and level of knowledge of the participants quite affect the experience. It may be suggested to future researchers to conduct the studies by controlling or manipulating these factors in order to achieve more obvious results via mixed research approaches. Moreover, the emotional formation of different presentations which concern the art field, such as cinema, theatre, or opera may differ between each other. Therefore, further research can explore these study sites as well.

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THE MEDIATING ROLE OF THE TOURISTS' CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR BETWEEN THE VALUE CO-CREATION AND SATISFACTION

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the mediating role of the tourists' citizenship behavior between the value co-creation with customers and customer satisfaction. The data of the study was collected through a survey administered to the tourists who visited Antalya and purchased the touristic products through the co-creation. Confirmatory factor analysis, structural equation modeling analyses, and SPSS process extension analysis were carried out on 252 valid survey data collected from the sample. The results of the study showed that the value co-creation with customers was clustered in two factors: (i) experience quality value and (ii) individual value. The tourists' citizenship behavior consisted of four factors: (i) advocacy behavior, (ii) tolerance behavior, (iii) helping behavior and (iv) feedback behavior. According to another result of the study, the value co-creation with customers had a statistically significant and positive direct effect on customer satisfaction and the dimensions constituting the citizenship behavior of the tourists. Furthermore, it was concluded that the mediating effects of the advocacy and tolerance dimensions on the relationship between the value co-creation with customers and customer satisfaction were found to be statistically significant and positive.

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INTRODUCTION

The businesses in the tourism sector seek ways to interact and cooperate with customers in practice (Park & Ha, 2016). Co-creation is a business strategy used in the practices based on the cooperation with customers (Parks et al., 1981). Referring to the support of more than one and often different actors for the production at the sectoral scale through the cooperative and participatory practices (Phi & Dredge, 2019, p. 281), co-creation is today accepted as a strategy that businesses use for ensuring the innovation, production and the interaction with customers (Bason, 2010). Businesses involve their customers in the production process in order to achieve more productive results from their customer-oriented initiatives. While the customers' participation in the production ensures their active role in the production process, it puts the role of value co-creation on the customers (Vargo & Lusch, 2004; Prebensen & Xie, 2017). In today's fast-growing market where the customers are regarded as the dominant dynamic; the value creation goes beyond the businesses (Ulaga & Chacour, 2001; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004), which makes it difficult for the businesses to create value independently from the customer (Arnould, 2008; Flores & Vasquez-Parraga, 2015). This makes the customers one of the key components of the value co-creation. The value created with the participation of customers as a producer in the production activities is explained by the concept of mutual value creation in the literature. In this regard, value is accepted as one of the main outputs of the co-creation with customers (Ranjan & Read, 2014; Flores & Vasquez-Parraga, 2015). Customers' participation in the production not only puts the responsibility of functioning as the value-creator on their shoulder, but also allows them to affect the service outputs delivered and perceived (Ford & Heaton, 2000; Arıca & Kozak, 2018; Phi & Dredge, 2019). The opportunities provided by the co-creation in terms of supply and demand cause these concepts to be evaluated within different frameworks in the literature on tourism.

Co-creation effects service outputs in two ways. The first is to improve business outcomes, the second is to improve customers' perceptions. The basic assumption in these studies is that the co-creation with customers produces a value and this value has an effect on the service outputs such as quality (Grissemann & Stokburger-Sauer, 2012; Prebensen et al., 2013; Bell & Babyak, 2018), satisfaction (Namasivayam & Guchait, 2013; Flores & Vasquez-Parraga, 2015; Prebensen & Xie, 2017; Assiouras et al., 2019), re-purchase (Fitzpatrick et al., 2013; Park & Ha, 2016; Arıca & Kozak, 2018), and customer citizenship behavior (Yi & Gong, 2013; Assiouras et al., 2019; Gong & Yi, 2019). Likewise, some researchers argue that in the tourism sector, the information shared between the business and customers nourish each other by means of the value co-creation with customers, thereby developing the service outputs through improving and personalizing services (Ford & Heaton, 2000; Chan & Guillet, 2011; Sugathan et al., 2017; Arıca & Kozak, 2019). On the other hand, some researchers emphasize that the co-creation with customers may cause negative effects on the quality of the service outputs due to the following: complexity in the service processes and performance management; economic burdens; risk of failure to manage customer expectations and relationships; making it difficult to control strategic plans; and complicating the business management (Kelley et al., 1990; Ford & Heaton, 2000; Hoyer et al., 2010). The value co-creation with customers is important in terms of not only its impacts, but also strengthening the behaviors (such as customer feedback, tendency to advocate the business, tolerance to the faults of the business) that express the belongingness of customers to the experience and business and, thereby, improving the customer satisfaction. The purpose of this research, was to determine the mediating role of tourists' citizenship behavior between the value co-creation with customers and the customer satisfaction. This study provides a path for future studies by focusing on the causal relationships between the value co-creation with customers, tourists' citizenship behavior, and the customer satisfaction. Furthermore, by virtue of the measurement model of the study, it will be possible for the touristic business managers to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the value co-creation with customers, customers' citizenship behavior, and the customer satisfaction. The data obtained in this regard will be able to be used in planning, monitoring, and evaluating the process of value co-creation with customers in the tourism businesses.

The structure of the research is as follows: In the literature section of the study, co-creation, value co-creation and customer citizenship behavior are explained. Then the framework for developing study hypotheses, data collection and analysis methods are explained. Finally, results were presented and discussions were made in line with the obtained findings.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Co-creation, value co-creation and customer citizenship behavior

In the experience economy, co-creation is defined as a business strategy, the production structure composed of the producers but which allows the consumers to be a part of the production process (Oxenswardh, 2018, p. 38). Vargo and Lusch (2008) describe the co-creation as the involvement of two or more stakeholders in the production and consumption process and their engagement in the interaction, relationship, and communication within this process. Being the output of a process, the co-creation is realized by the contributions of different stakeholders. Whereas in the traditional paradigm, co-creation is realized through the inter-business cooperation; in the modern paradigm, the inter-customer cooperation and the cooperation between the business and customer are accepted as the common forms of production in the market (Li & Petrick, 2008). Nevertheless, today, the most common form of production is the co-creation with customers in which the cooperation takes place between the business and the customer in the production process and the customers make an effort in the production process (Sugathan et al., 2017). Co-creation with customers refers to the active involvement of customers in the information production, information management, and experience production processes (Etgar, 2008). The companies' need for reaching the environmental resources and the technological developments are main factors in the development of the co-creation with customers in practice (Arnould, 2008; Sugathan et al., 2017). The technological developments have made it easy for businesses to reach the environmental resources through cooperation, interaction, and communication. This has created platforms where the customers produce information and create value among themselves through co-creation environments between the business and customer (Rihova et al., 2018; Buhalis & Sinarta, 2019). Thus an important role and function is put on the customers as the co-creators in practice and, furthermore space is opened for development of practices where customers are encouraged to take the creator role. The framework of the concept of co-creation with customers, the development process of which has been associated with technology, has been drawn by the service-dominant logic.

The foundations of the concepts "co-creation", "co-creation with customers", and "value co-creation" in the academic literature were laid in the study carried out by Vargo and Lusch (2004) in which the transition from the product dominant logic into the service dominant logic was explained. In the study in question, a framework was drawn in order to understand the changes in the production patterns and the role of the customers in value creation (Li & Petrick, 2008). According to the service-dominant approach, the developing momentum of the service economy and the increasing importance of knowledge and skills in the market increase the function of the operational resources in the production and marketing approaches of businesses (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Customers take part as the operational resources in various stages of production and consumption processes with their resources such as knowledge, skills, and effort and assume the role of co-creator for the companies. This approach, in which the business and the customers are considered together in the production, attributes the role of value co-creator to the customers as the operational resource in today's market structure (Li & Petrick, 2008; Vargo et al., 2008). According to this approach, customers determine, create and purchase the value they created. On the other hand, the businesses are the element that prepares the value propositions and responds to the personalized demands of customers (Vargo et al., 2008). Vargo and Lusch (2004) interpret the customers' role as the value co-creator in two dimensions: value in use and value in exchange. While the *value in use* refers to the exchange of skills and services between the business and the customer in order to gain benefit; the *value in exchange* is explained as the benefit gained by the customers and businesses as a result of production (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, p. 7). Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004), who asserted that the value co-created with customers differed from the traditional value creation approach and placed the value at the center of experience, significantly contributed to the development of the concept of value co-creation with customers. Researchers associate the value co-creation with customers with the consumer experience theory and explain it by the changing role of the customer in the industrial system. The changing role of customers in the industrial system transforms the value creation from being product- and business-oriented into being customer-oriented. Accordingly, today, the value creation consists of a combination of internal and external resources with customers playing an important role in value creation as the external resource. Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004, p. 8) explain the building blocks of interaction in the value co-creation with customers by the DART (Dialogue-Access-Risk Assessment-Transparency) model. Different combinations in the DART model are important for the development of business capabilities, the development of relationships between the customer and the business, and a more efficient and effective value creation process.

More recent research suggests that customer value creation behavior could be considered as a customer citizenship behavior, which focuses on the extra-role behavior that provides extraordinary value to the firm (Yi & Gong, 2013; Arıca & Kozak, 2019; Assiouras et al., 2019). Van Doorn et al. (2010) propose that customer behaviors such as making suggestions to improve the service experience, helping service employees, and helping other customers are all aspects of customer value creation behavior. Ford (1995) argues that like employees, customers engage in a variety of citizenship behaviors such as reporting problems to employees, recommending a place of business to friends, or displaying a bumper sticker advertising their support for an organization. Assiouras et al. (2019) explain some initiatives of customers by the citizenship behavior. In these initiatives, the customers assume extra responsibilities, apart from the co-creation role, and take some actions towards other customers, employees and/or firms. The customer citizenship behavior is related to their attitudes and behaviors both before and after the production and directly affects the position of the companies in the market (Groth, 2004). Groth (2004) explained the dimensions of customer citizenship behavior in three categories: recommending helping and providing feedback. In evaluating the customer citizenship behavior in terms of participation in production, Yi and Gong (2013) explain the citizenship behavior through four factors: feedback, advocacy, helping, and tolerance. Arıca and Kozak (2019) evaluated the customer citizenship behavior in terms of participation in production and discussed it through behaviors such as advocacy, helping and feedback.

The findings in the literature on the dimensions of citizenship behavior have been similar and these dimensions were explained by Yi and Gong (2013). According to these researchers, *feedback* is the evaluation of the products and the employee attitudes co-created with the customer in order to provide better service to the customers. *Advocacy* refers to the attitudes and behaviors voluntarily displayed by the customers for the successful co-creation practices. *Helping* is the case where some customers feel responsible for eliminating the difficulties that other customers, who purchased the same product, experience. *Tolerance* explains the case where the customer behaves patiently when the customers' requests are not met by the business and there are some unexpected service failures (Yi & Gong, 2013, p. 1280-1281). When considered in terms of tourism sector, the customer citizenship is related to the followings: tourists' behavior towards the problems experienced during the service; support to the business and other tourists in finding solution to the problems; attitude in the process of online and offline information-sharing about the business and the experience during and after the experience (Assiouras et al., 2019). While the positive support of the tourists to the business adds value to the touristic experience and the business; the negative support worsens the problems and negatively affects the quality of the experience and thus, the customer satisfaction. Since the posts shared by the tourists about their experience and the business affect the decision making process of the potential tourists, especially in today's developing social communication networks; the quality of the posts shared in these networks by the tourists who experienced a service will be one of the important determinants of the competitiveness and continuity of the business (Law et al., 2014; Rihova et al., 2018; Buhalis & Sinarta, 2019).

Effect of value co-creation on the customer citizenship behaviors and customer satisfaction

Co-creation with customers explains the value creation through cooperation and partnerships (Prebensen & Xie, 2017). By taking part in the production activities, customers carry out value-creation activities for both themselves and the potential customers. Value co-creation with customers is one of the business strategies that make it possible to align the productions with the customer's requests and needs (Prebensen & Xie, 2017; Phi & Dredge, 2019). The businesses and customers cooperate in value creation activities, and their basic expectation from this process is to gain benefit. Mutual benefit is the main purpose of the value co-creation with customers (Vargo & Lusch, 2004; Chan et al., 2010). While the tourism businesses aim to improve the quality of services they offer through the mutual value creation, and by doing so, generate revenue, profit, and competitiveness and thus ensure their continuity; the tourists, through the mutual value creation, expect to receive high quality and satisfying services that are in line with their requests and needs. The more the benefit expectations of the tourists are met in the mutual value creation process, the more their belonging to the process increases (Ford & Heaton, 2000; Groth, 2004; Assiouras et al., 2019). The tourists who have a high level of citizenship behavior tend to re-choose the business, provide feedback about the business and advocate for the business in online and offline platforms (Groth, 2004; Barnes et al., 2014). Furthermore, the tendency of the tourists, who develop a citizenship behavior, to help other tourists in the experience process increases (Groth, 2004; Assiouras et al., 2019; Gong & Yi, 2019). Therefore, it is expected that the value co-creation with customers improves the citizenship behavior of tourists. In this regard, it is assumed in the literature that the value co-creation with customers is related to the behaviors such as advocacy, feedback, recommendation, and helping, which constitute the dimensions of the citizenship behavior. Within this framework, the hypotheses of this study are as follows:

H_1: *Value co-creation with customers directly and positively affects the advocacy behavior of tourists.*
H_2: *Value co-creation with customers directly and positively affects the tolerance behavior of tourists.*
H_3: *Value co-creation with customers directly and positively affects the helping behavior of tourists.*
H_4: *Value co-creation with customers directly and positively affects the feedback behavior of tourists.*

In general, satisfaction is defined as the contentment felt by the customers from the services and the positive feelings towards the service (Blazquez-Resino et al., 2015, p. 711). Etgar (2008) emphasizes that the value co-creation with customers can improve the customer satisfaction by means of ensuring the identification of the customer demands, requests, and needs that are difficult to predict and meet. Another view asserts that ignoring the knowledge and skills offered by the customers during the process of value co-creation with customers leads to the dissatisfaction (Ford & Heaton, 2000). In the literature on tourism, the widely accepted view is that the co-creation with customers improves the satisfaction (Namasivayam & Guchait, 2013; Prebensen & Xie, 2017; Assiouras et al., 2019). However, in some studies, it has been argued that the effect of the value co-creation with customers on satisfaction may vary depending on the mediating variables. In this regard, there have been some findings asserting that the perceived value (Chan et al., 2010; Prebensen et al., 2015) and quality (Prebensen et al., 2013; Bell & Babyak, 2018; Arıca & Kozak, 2019) have a mediating effect on the value co-creation with customers and the customer satisfaction. Likewise, it has been argued in the literature on tourism that the development of citizenship behavior through the value co-creation with tourists improves satisfaction (Assiouras et al., 2019). The view supported in the literature is that the value co-creation with tourists has both direct and indirect effects on satisfaction. Within the framework of these assumptions, the following hypotheses will be tested in this study:

H_5: *Value co-creation with customers directly and positively affects the satisfaction of tourists.*
H_6*: The dimensions of the citizenship behavior of tourists have a positive mediating role between the value creation with customers and the satisfaction.*

The theoretical model proposed in the current study determined in the axis of hypotheses is presented in Figure 1.

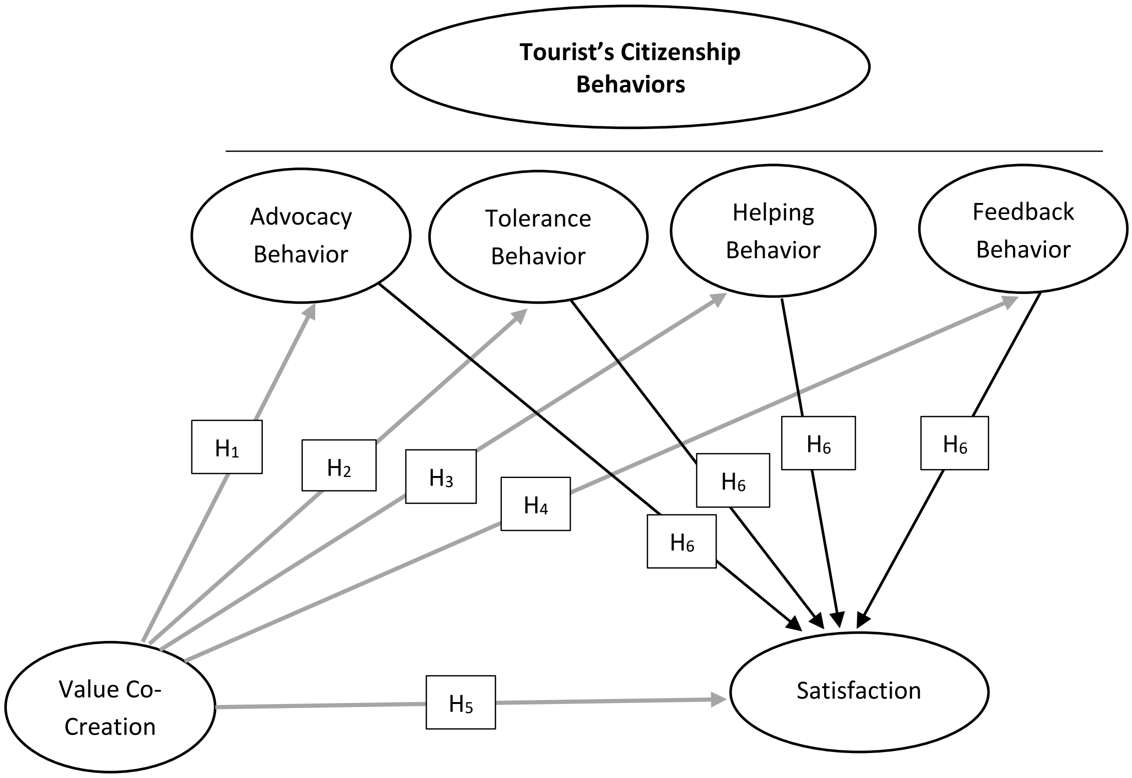

Figure 1. *Theoretical Model*

In the literature examining the direct and indirect effects of the value co-creation with customers on the service outputs delivered and perceived; there is a gap in terms of evaluating the effects of the value co-creation with customers on the willingness to engage in the citizenship behavior and the effects of citizenship behavior on the perceived service outcomes such as customer satisfaction (Groth, 2004; Assiouras et al., 2019; Gong & Yi, 2019). The research was carried out on local tourists. In the literature, the participation of tourists in production, especially in developed countries, and the impact of participation on business and customer outcomes were evaluated and different results were achieved (Park & Ha, 2016; Phi & Dredge, 2019). These researches were carried out especially in developed countries where co-creation implementation strategies are integrated into business structures. However, in developing countries, co-creation strategies are not used adequately in businesses in the tourism sector. In this context, determining the effect of the co-creation strategy on the service outputs in developing countries is important in the context of providing clues regarding the future business structures.

METHODOLOGY

Survey Instrument

Questionnaire was used as the data collection tool in this study. The questionnaire form was created by benefiting from the studies in the literature. The data collection tool used in the study consists of four parts. The first part is composed of the statements measuring the value co-creation with customers. These statements were created using the measurement models developed by Chan et al. (2010) and Flores and Vasquez-Parraga (2015). The statements in the second part of the data collection tool measure the citizenship behavior of the tourists. The statements measuring the citizenship behavior of the tourists were adapted from the measurements model developed by Yi and Gong (2013) and Assiouras et al. (2019). The third part consists of the statements on satisfaction, which were adapted from study carried out by Chan et al. (2010). In total, 32 questions adapted from these studies constitute the measurement tool of the research. In the fourth part, there are some variables that make it possible to determine the demographic characteristics of the participants (age, gender, educational background, occupation, marital status, and income level). Since this study was to be carried out with the participation of the domestic tourists in Turkey, the measurement tools were translated into Turkish. Furthermore, in order to test the intelligibility of the statements, the opinions were received from 20 academic experts. Following this process, the corrections proposed for the questionnaire were made and the questionnaire used in the study was finalized. Five-point Likert scale was used in the questionnaire (1-Strongly Disagree, 5- Strongly Agree).

Data Collection

The data of the study were collected using the survey method. The survey was administered to the tourists who visited Antalya between 10 June 2019 - 20 August 2019. Antalya was preferred due to being one of the top tourist attraction places in Turkey. The sample of study is consisting of local tourists who purchased tour from travel agency through the co-creation. Tourists who participate in any stage of co-creation and buy private tours from travel agencies were preferred. The data were collected in this region from 252 tourists identified by purposive sampling method. During the determination of the tourists participating in the study, the co-creation status of the tourists was evaluated with three pre-test questions. These questions are: (i) We produced tour together with the travel agency, (ii) I have contributed to the production process intellectually, (iii) I have contributed to the production process with my experience. In the process of preparing the data for the analysis, first of all, the questionnaires were reviewed and the forms having contradictory and incomplete answers were considered invalid. In the second phase, the mean and standard deviation values which were not within the possible limits were examined and the missing data were checked through the descriptive analyzes conducted for the data set. The questionnaires (17) that caused problems due to the missing data were removed from the data file. In the third phase, the extreme values that could cause critical problems in the analyzes were determined. Extreme values may arise from the errors in data entry and the situations in which the subject is different from the rest of the sample and is not a member of the population from which it is selected (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). The data set of the research was cleared from the extreme values which may disrupt the results of the statistical tests. Based on the recommendation that the data out of the ± 3 standard deviation values should be excluded (Çokluk et al., 2016), the data which had extreme means greater than + 3 or smaller than -3 standard deviation, were excluded from the research sample. Finally, in order to prepare the data for the analysis, the distribution probabilities were evaluated with the normal distribution criterion (Alpar, 2010). In the research, the conformity of the data to the normal distribution was examined with univariate normality, coefficient of kurtosis and skewness. Although there is no commonly accepted standards in the literature about the normal distribution, it is stated that when the skewness and kurtosis values are between -2 and +2, the normal distribution assumption is valid (Kalaycı, 2016). When the data of the research were subjected to normal distribution test, it was seen that the skewness and kurtosis values of all questionnaire expressions were in the appropriate range. After these findings, the descriptive statistics such as percentage and frequency analysis were used primarily in the analysis of the data set in order to determine the characteristics of the tourists in the sample. Then, the factor structure of the data set was determined and confirmed by applying the Confirmatory factor analysis to the data set. After structural equation modeling analyses, and SPSS process extension analysis were carried out on 252 valid survey data collected from the sample.

FINDINGS

Sample Characteristics

When the demographic characteristics of the tourists are examined, it is observed that their ages vary between 19 and 68, but the majority (42.0%) is in the age group of 30-39. Besides, the ratio of female (44.4%) and male (55.6%) participants are close to each other, and the findings regarding their educational status indicate that the education level of the participants is high. 5.2% of the tourists participating in the research had a lower level of education than the high school, 14.6% of them had high school education, and 80.2% of them graduated from an associate degree, graduate or postgraduate program. Also, when the employment status of the participants was considered, it was observed that almost 90% of the participants were employed either in public or private sector. On the other hand, the participants had a substantially varying income structure, it was found that 5.6% of them had minimum wage or lower income. A significant part (90.0%) of this aforementioned 5.6% is composed of the housewives and students without income.

Table 1. *Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents*

Age	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
19-29	72	28.6
30-39	106	42.0
40-49	50	19.9
50 and above	24	9.5
Gender		
Female	112	44.4
Male	140	55.6
Education		
High School and Below	50	19.8
Associate Degree	29	11.5
Graduate Education	137	54.4
Postgraduate Education	36	14.3
Occupation		
Public Sector	131	52.0
Private Sector	92	36.5
Housewife	13	5.2
Retired	9	3.6
Student	7	2.8
Marital Status		
Married	129	51.2
Single	123	48.8
Monthly Income (in Turkish Lira)		
0-2000 TL	14	5.6
2001-4000 TL	71	28.1
4001-6000 TL	107	42.5
6001 TL and above	60	23.8
Total	252	100

Findings of Confirmatory Factor Analysis

In the first stage of structural equation modeling, the confirmatory factor analysis was applied to the measurement models. Confirmatory factor analysis is a test method generally used in the scale development and validity analyses or in the validation of a predetermined structure (Yaşlıoğlu, 2017, p. 78). In this study, the confirmatory factor analysis was individually applied to test the validity of each measurement model explaining the value co-creation with customers, the tourists' citizenship behavior, and their satisfaction. Within this framework, first of all, the statistical significance of the model-data compatibility was evaluated using the fit indices. When the statistical significance of the model-data compatibility was evaluated using the fit indices of the measurement models of the value co-creation with customers, the tourists' citizenship behavior, and the satisfaction; after the recommended modifications, all the values were found to be within the acceptable fit range (See Table 2).

Table 2. *The Fit Indices of the Measurement Models*

Measurement Models	**$\chi 2$/sd**	**p**	**NFI**	**CFI**	**GFI**	**AGFI**	**RMSEA**
Value Co-Creation	2.346	.000	0.931	0.958	0.949	0.904	0.07
Customer Citizenship Behavior	2.361	.000	0.894	0.954	0.916	0.889	0.07
Satisfaction	3.829	.003	0.976	0.982	0.976	0.909	0.09

In addition to the model-data fitness, the structural reliability and the explained variance values of the measurement models of the value co-creation with customers, the tourists' citizenship behavior, and the satisfaction were calculated. The structural reliability of the measurement models of the value co-creation with customers, the tourists' citizenship behavior, and the satisfaction were determined to be 0.89, 0.91, and 0.88, respectively. As a result of the confirmatory factor analysis, the variance explained by the two-factor structure in the measurement model of the value co-creation with customers was determined to be 0.46; the variance explained by the four-factor structure expressing the tourists' citizenship behavior was determined to be 0.54; and the variance explained by the satisfaction dimension was determined to be 0.57.

Table 3. *Confirmatory Factor Analysis*

	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Square root of the AVE
Value Co-Creation	**0.89**	**0.46**	**0.678**
Value of Experience Quality	*0.80*	*0.50*	*0.707*
Individual Value	*0.82*	*0.44*	*0.663*
Customer Citizenship Behavior	**0.91**	**0.54**	**0.735**
Advocacy Behavior	*0.82*	*0.54*	*0.735*
Tolerance Behavior	*0.83*	*0.62*	*0.787*
Helping Behavior	*0.81*	*0.51*	*0.714*
Feedback Behavior	*0.79*	*0.55*	*0.742*
Satisfaction	**0.88**	**0.57**	**0.755**

Test of the Hypotheses

The theoretical models and hypotheses developed within the scope of the study were examined using the structural equation modeling. Structural equation modeling is a statistical technique that reveals and tests the relationships between the multiple, independent, and dependent implicit variables, each of which can be measured with more than one observable variable. It incorporates the measurement errors into the model and takes into account the measurement errors correlated with each other (Taşkın & Akat, 2010). The values showing the integrity and fitness of the structural equation modeling created between the measurement models of the value co-creation with customers, the tourists' citizenship behavior, and the satisfaction were given in the Table 4.

Table 4. *Fit Indices* (n=252)

$\chi 2/sd$	p	NFI	CFI	GFI	AGFI	RMSEA
2.137	.000	0.879	0.94	0.895	0.845	0.067

When the fit values are examined, it is seen that the values are within the acceptable limits. This finding indicates that there is no difference between the covariance matrix and the sample covariance matrix of the theoretical relational model, in other words, the theoretical model fits the sample data. Cronbach's Alpha (α) coefficient, which was used to determine the internal consistency of the data set, was calculated to be 0.929. This value (α) indicates that the data set is reliable. Convergent validity and discriminant validity techniques were used to determine the consistency and validity of the model. Convergent validity was evaluated taking into account the variance explained by the measurement models. In this regard, the variance explained in the measurement model of the value co-creation with customers was determined to be 0.46; the variance explained by the structure in the tourists' citizenship behavior was determined to be 0.54; and the variance explained by the structure of the satisfaction was determined to be 0.57. While Hair et al. (2010) suggest that the variances equal to or above 0.50 are acceptable; in the literature, it is argued that the variances equal to or above 0.40 could be acceptable (Huang et al., 2013). When the variance explained by the measurement models is considered, it is seen that the convergent validity of the scale is ensured. The Fornell-Larcker criterion was used for discriminant validity. Accordingly, if the multiple correlations of the structure do not exceed the square root of the explained variance, the distinctive validity is ensured (Fornell & Larcker, 1981, p. 45). The correlation values obtained as a result of the analyzes are given in Table 5.

Table 5. *Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations of the Constructs*

	Mean	SD	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. Value Co-Creation	4.01	0.505	0.678					
2. Advocacy Behavior	4.12	0.583	0.487	0.735				
3. Tolerance Behavior	3.69	0.659	0.518	0.558	0.787			
4. Helping Behavior	4.09	0.572	0.537	0.435	0.397	0.714		
5. Feedback Behavior	4.06	0.629	0,469	0,347	0,302	0.551	0.742	
6. Satisfaction	4.20	0.515	0.458	0.346	0.429	0.443	0.486	0.755

After ensuring the validity and reliability of the measurement model which evaluated the effect of the value co-creation with customers on the dimensions of the tourists' citizenship behavior and the effect of the value co-creation with customers on the satisfaction through the dimensions of the tourists' citizenship behavior; the hypotheses of the study were tested. The direct effect of the value co-creation with customers on the dimensions of the tourists' citizenship and the customer satisfaction was calculated and the values obtained were showed in the model (See Figure 2). Accordingly, it is seen that there are direct effects between the measurement models constructed of the latent variables in the path chart. The mediating effects were analyzed by SPSS Process Extension. It was found that the effect of the value co-creation with customers on the satisfaction through the advocacy and tolerance behavior was statistically significant and positive.

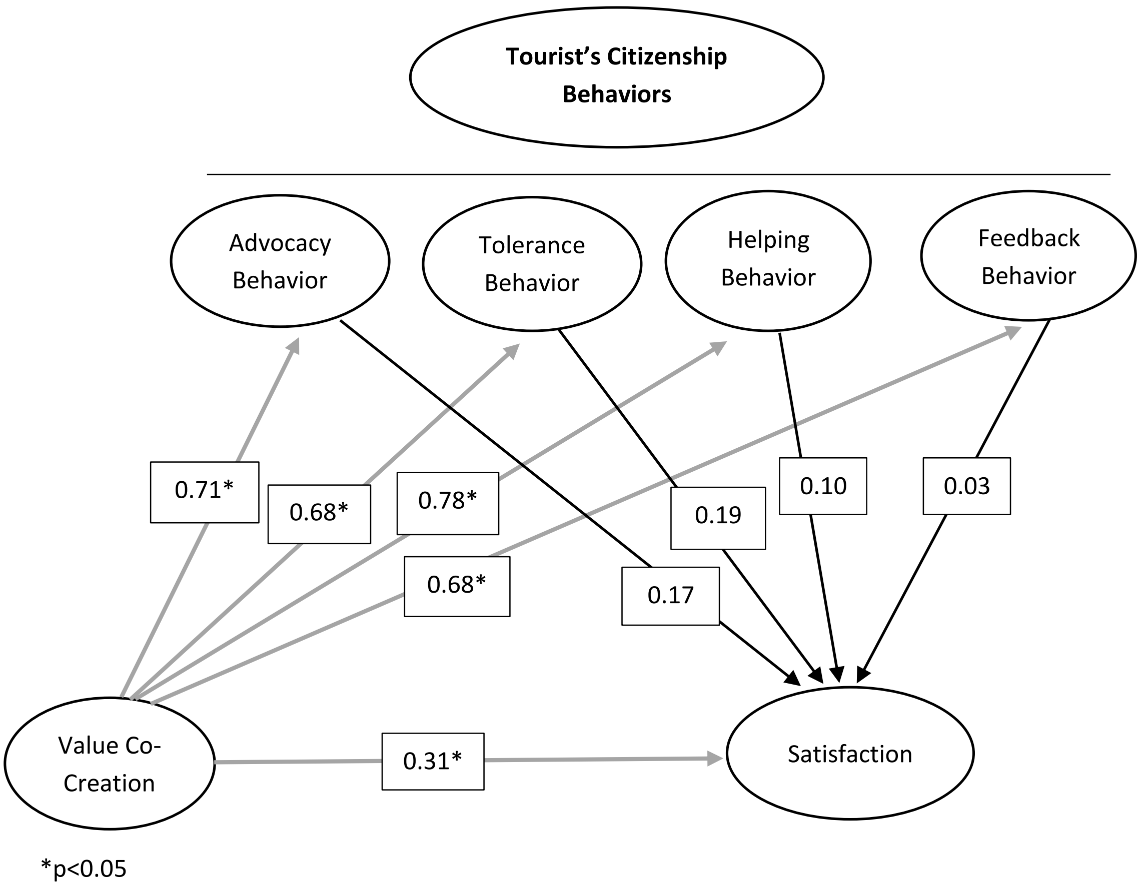

Figure 2. *Structural Model*

In the path chart given in the Figure 2, it is seen that there are direct effects between the measurement models constructed of the latent variables. Based on the findings reached in the study, it can be stated that the value co-creation with customers has direct effects on the dimensions explaining the tourists' citizenship behavior and the customer satisfaction. Accordingly, the value co-creation with customers has a direct, significant, and positive effect on the dimensions of the tourists' citizenship behavior and the customer satisfaction. The standardized regression coefficient between the value co-creation with customers and the advocacy behavior (H1) is β=0.71. In other words, a one-unit increase in the value co-creation with tourists will lead to a 0.71-unit increase in the advocacy behavior exhibited for the business. Similarly, the standardized regression coefficients between the value co-creation with customers and the dimensions "tolerance behavior (H2)", "helping behavior (H3)", and "feedback behavior (H4)" were found to be (β = 0.68), (β=0.78), and (β =

0.68), respectively. All these findings reveal that the value co-creation with customers has a statistically significant and positive effect on the dimensions of the tourists' citizenship behavior. On the other hand, the standardized regression coefficient between the value co-creation with customers and the satisfaction (H1) is β=0.31. In other words, a one-unit increase in the value co-creation with tourists will lead to a 0.31-unit increase in the customer satisfaction. It was also found that the behaviors "advocacy (0.10)" and "tolerance (0.13)" had a statistically significant and positive mediating effects on the relationship between the value co-creation with customers and the satisfaction. Accordingly, a one-unit increase in the participation of the customers in the value co-creation will lead to a 0.10-unit increase in the customer satisfaction through the advocacy behavior. Furthermore, a one-unit increase in the participation of the customers in the value co-creation will lead to a 0.13-unit increase in the customer satisfaction through the tolerance behavior. Hypotheses and their support status are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. *Supported and Unsupported Status of Research Hypotheses*

Hypotheses	**β**	**p**	**Results**
H_1: *Value co-creation with customers directly and positively affects the advocacy behavior of tourists.*	0.71	.004	Supported
H_2: *Value co-creation with customers directly and positively affects the tolerance behavior of tourists.*	0.68	.000	Supported
H_3: *Value co-creation with customers directly and positively affects the helping behavior of tourists.*	0.78	.000	Supported
H_4: *Value co-creation with customers directly and positively affects the feedback behavior of tourists*	0.68	.001	Supported
H_5: *Value co-creation with customers directly and positively affects the satisfaction of tourists.*	0.31	.005	Supported
H_6: *The dimensions of the citizenship behavior of tourists have a positive mediating role between the value co-creation with customers and the satisfaction.*			
• H_6: *Advocacy behavior has positive mediation role between the value co-creation with customers and the satisfaction.*	0.12	.002	Supported
• H_6: *Tolerance behavior has positive mediation role between the value co-creation with customers and the satisfaction.*	0.13	.023	Supported
• H_6: *Helping behavior has positive mediation role between the value co-creation with customers and the satisfaction.*	0.10	.138	Unsupported
• H_6: *Feedback behavior has positive mediation role between the value co-creation with customers and the satisfaction.*	0.06	.326	Unsupported

DISCUSSION

The primary focus of the study was to test the research model, the basic variables of which were developed based on the models and scales in the literature. Within this framework, the effect of the value co-creation with customers on the tourists' citizenship behavior and satisfaction was examined. When the relevant literature is examined, it is seen that the effect of the value co-creation with customers on the service outputs such as quality (Prebensen et al., 2013; Bell & Babyak, 2018), satisfaction (Groth, 2004; Flores & Vasquez-Parraga, 2015; Prebensen & Xie, 2017; Assiouras et al., 2019), and re-purchase (Fitzpatrick et al., 2013; Park & Ha, 2016; Arıca & Kozak, 2018) has been questioned. Going beyond this, in this study, a model was developed from a holistic point of view to evaluate the effect of the value co-creation with customers on the citizenship behavior and satisfaction of the tourists, which are important both during and after the experience.

The results of the study showed that the value co-creation with customers had a positive and direct effect on the dimensions constituting the citizenship behavior of tourists. These results are in line with the relevant literature. Similar to this result, Groth (2004) found that customers' co-creation with customers affects customer citizenship behavior. Yi and Gong (2013) explained the value co-creation with customers through the participation behavior and citizenship behavior and found that the value co-creation with customers positively affected the citizenship behavior. Likewise, Assiouras et al. (2019) found that there was a relationship between the value co-creation with customers and the customer citizenship behavior. In the present study, the effect of value co-creation with customers on the customer satisfaction was found to be significant and positive. This result is in line with the relevant literature (Flores & Vasquez-Parraga, 2015; Prebensen & Xie, 2017; Assiouras et al., 2019). However, some researchers found that the value co-creation with customers negatively affected the satisfaction (Parks et al., 1981; Etgar, 2008; Ford & Heaton, 2000; Arıca & Kozak, 2018). In this regard, this study differs from the literature. As a matter of fact, the case in which the tourists exert effort for and provide support to the production process, but do not find the desired products as a result of this process will negatively affect the satisfaction level. It is obvious that the different results obtained from different studies contribute to and enrich the literature from different perspectives. Furthermore, in this study, it was concluded that the value co-creation with customers positively affected the satisfaction through some dimensions of the tourists' citizenship behavior, that is, the advocacy and tolerance. Based on all these findings, it was proved that the research model, supported by the results obtained from empirical data and analyses, was feasible. A contribution was made to the literature on tourism with the model validated in this study.

The findings of the study showed that the value co-creation with customers had a two-dimensional structure, consisting of the experience quality value and the individual value. In many studies in the literature, the value co-creation with customers has been discussed on the basis of a multidimensional structure (Prebensen et al., 2015; Park & Ha, 2015; Prebensen & Xie, 2017; Assiouras et al., 2019). In these studies, it was asserted that the value co-creation with customers created a quality of experience by means of enhancing the quality standards perceived, the performance expected, and the benefit obtained by the customer (Cassia et al., 2014, p. 54) and that it created an individual value by means of providing a sense of achievement, prestige, personal development, and satisfaction (Flores & Vasquez-Parraga, 2015, p. 16). In this regard, it is seen that the results of the study are similar to the results reached in the related literature. However, in this study, it was found that the tourists' citizenship behavior had a multidimensional structure. These dimensions are the behaviors of advocacy, tolerance, feedback, and helping. In the previous studies, Yi and Gong (2013) and Assiouras et al. (2019) determined the dimensions of advocacy, tolerance, feedback, and helping in customer citizenship behavior. On the other hand, Arıca and Kozak (2019) identified the main dimensions of the customer citizenship behavior as advocacy, helping, and feedback. These results show that the dimensions specified in this study overlap with the literature.

Based on the direct effect analyses carried out within the scope of the study; it was concluded that the value co-creation with customers had a positive effect on the advocacy, tolerance, feedback, and helping behaviors of tourists. Likewise, in the studies carried out by Yi and Gong (2013) and Assiouras et al. (2019), it was found that there was a relationship between the value co-creation with customers and the customer citizenship behavior. Considering within the framework of the previous studies, it is seen that the results of this study are similar to those in the literature. Assiouras et al. (2019) explain the effect of the value co-creation with customers on the citizenship behavior as follows: The customer participation in production makes it possible for the customers to align the production with their requests and needs and allow them to attach value to what is unique to them. The customers' creation of value unique to them encourages them to show belongingness to the business and the experience process and to display behaviors that can contribute to the business and the experience process by means of undertaking voluntary, optional, and extra responsibilities that are not required in the production process (Groth, 2004). When the mediating structures established in the study were examined, it was found that the behaviors "advocacy" and "tolerance" had a mediating role in the positive effect of the value co-creation on the customer satisfaction. The satisfaction levels of individuals, who tolerate the experience and business faults and tend to advocate the business in a positive way, are also high (Gong & Yi, 2019). In this regard, it can be stated that the results obtained in this study overlap with the literature.

Furthermore, the findings obtained as a result of the analysis of the demographic characteristics of the tourists indicated that the education and income levels of the tourists who participated in the co-creation were high. Likewise, in the studies carried out in the United States by Park and Ha (2016) and in Turkey by Arıca and Kozak (2019); it was found that the education and income levels of the tourists who purchased the touristic products through the co-creation were high. This finding can be interpreted in terms that the touristic services co-created with customers are preferred by the tourists with high education and income levels.

CONCLUSION

The customer participation in value creation explains how the customers provide input into the production stages in line with their requests and needs in terms of product design, new product development, and personalization of services. Tourism businesses are able to determine the requests and needs of tourists by means of the value co-creation with customers and thus produce the personalized products that are in line with the requests and needs of the customers (Groth, 2004; Prebensen & Xie, 2017). In this regard, the value co-creation with customers makes it possible for the tourism businesses to offer the differentiated options as an alternative to the mass offers dominant in the market. The personalized productions not only enable the tourism businesses to differentiate in the market, but also improve the customers' value judgments and satisfaction levels regarding the touristic experience (Ford & Heaton, 2000; Prebensen & Xie, 2017). That being said, the results of this study reveal that the customers' participation in the value co-creation improves the satisfaction. This indicates that practicing the strategy of value co-creation with customers in the tourism businesses will help the businesses in differentiating their services and ensuring the customer satisfaction in the tourism market. Grissemann and Stokburger-Sauer (2012) asserted that the development of the value perceptions and satisfaction of tourists would contribute to the improvement of the financial indicators of the businesses. In this regard, it is obvious that the value co-creation with customers will function in the improvement of both the non-financial and financial performance outputs and make significant contributions to the competitiveness and continuity of the businesses.

Assiouras et al. (2019) suggest that as the perception of tourists towards the service develop, their citizenship behavior towards the business and experience will also develop. This argument is supported in the present study. According to the results of the study, the value co-creation with customers improves the citizenship behavior of the tourists. The customer citizenship behavior is effective in increasing the quality of experience, gaining marketing opportunities, and influencing the preference of the potential tourist groups who have similar interests. Accessing these opportunities is only possible for the businesses if they can develop the tolerance, helping, advocacy, and feedback behaviors, which the tourists display before, during, and after the experience. The tourists who have a high level of citizenship behavior towards the business and the touristic experience, exhibit a constructive attitude when they encounter a fault in the service or business, help the customers who are in a difficult situation during the experience, provide positive feedbacks to the business and employees, and support the process of developing and improving services. These situations explain that the customers who develop a citizenship behavior take extra responsibilities and make efforts to improve the quality of the experience (Groth, 2004). As it is observed in the results of the study, the participation of customers in the value co-creation enables them to display advocacy behaviors and, in turn, the tourists who develop an advocacy behavior have a higher level of satisfaction. In this regard, it is obvious that the value co-creation with customers will contribute to the development of tourists' advocacy and thus to the enhancement of the satisfaction of tourists. Being displayed offline or online, the advocacy behavior can be used as one of the important marketing tools in today's market. So, the tourists can influence the decision-making processes by recommending the business and employees in offline platforms to the potential tourists such as friends or families (Buhalis & Sinarta, 2019). The tourists can also display an advocacy behavior for the business and touristic experience in an online platform. Due to the developments in the information and communication technologies, the social communication networks have become a strategically important medium where the information is shared online between the customers and between the business and customer (Law et al., 2014; Buhalis & Sinarta, 2019). As emphasized by Rihova et al. (2018), the widespread use of the social communication networks increases the sphere of influence of the posts shared in these networks. The widespread use of social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and travel consultant and the increase of the shares of consumers in this field expands the domain of their shares in these fields (Arıca, 2019). Tourists significantly influence the potential tourist groups having similar interests by means of their sharings in the social networks, and the experiences shared in this way serve as a stimulant in the decision-making processes of the tourists (Groth, 2004; Chan & Guillet, 2011). So, creating platforms for the value co-creation with customers ensures the development of the advocacy behavior for the business and touristic experience and by doing so, improves the satisfaction of the tourists; contributes to the marketing activities of the business; and supports the business in retaining the existing customers and gaining new ones.

The effect of the value co-creation with customers on the delivered and perceived service outputs, the financial performance indicators of the businesses, the citizenship behavior, and the satisfaction of tourists requires the integration of the structure of the value co-creation with customers into the business processes of the tourism companies. Adoption of the strategy of value co-creation with customers by the businesses contributes to gaining a long-term competitive advantage, strengthening their sectoral position, and ensuring a sustainable development. There are a number of requirements for the businesses to optimize the benefits of the strategy they practice. The most important of these requirements is the development of the systems to support the active participation of tourists in production (Buhalis & Sinarta, 2019). These systems play a major role in realizing the value co-creation with customers and strengthening the employee-customer, customer-company, and customer-customer interaction. Therefore, it is important for the businesses to adapt the co-creation infrastructure modules, which will support the processes before, during, and after the tourist travels, to the business processes. By this means, it will be possible for the businesses to understand the requests, needs, and preferences of the tourists before, during, and after the travel experiences and a structure will be established to facilitate the interaction with the tourists. Systems should be designed in a way that all tourists can understand the processes and everyone can participate in the production (Chan & Guillet, 2011; Buhalis & Sinarta, 2019). Furthermore, the processes designed for the co-creation with customers should be supported by the technological devices and systems, and some platforms should be created to support the interaction. By the same token, it is essential to establish the feedback platforms, to ensure the sustainability in the auditing through the social communication networks, and to create systems that ensure the analysis and evaluation of the feedbacks received from the customers through these networks. The success in value co-creation with customers and the infrastructure investments depends largely on the skills of the employees (Etgar, 2008). Therefore, the businesses should employ the personnel who have a high technological knowledge and awareness required to use this structure efficiently. In this regard, it is important for the businesses to employ the individuals who can manage their own business within their responsibility and authority, have advanced communication and analysis skills, and create a synergy and team spirit.

Limitations and recommendations

Although the research reached some important results in general, there are also some limitations. It is possible to test the measurement model used in the research in different sample sets and at different times in the tourism sector. Thus, the scope of the research results can be expanded. This study focused on the effect of value co-creation with customers on the citizenship behavior of tourists. When the relevant literature is examined, it is seen that the value co-creation with customers has been generally evaluated in terms of the customer-oriented outputs. In this regard, in future studies, examining the value co-creation with customers from the perspective of management and addressing the business-oriented outputs will contribute to the holistic evaluation of the outputs to be obtained through this strategy. In addition, a possible field of research is the assessment of the changes to be caused by the products differentiated through the value co-creation with customers in the tourism market and the examination of the future production structures.

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THE EFFECT OF ABUSIVE SUPERVISION ON SERVICE SABOTAGE: A MEDIATION AND MODERATION ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study is to understand how abusive supervision affects service sabotage. In this context, the mediating role of job alienation was examined. In addition, other purpose of this research is to investigate whether organization-based self-esteem moderates the relationship between abusive supervision and job alienation. The study was carried out with the participation of 336 employees working in hotel companies in different regions of Turkey. It was revealed that abusive supervision impacts on job alienation and service sabotage. Moreover, the study results showed that job alienation affects service sabotage. Job alienation has a mediating role whereas organization-based self-esteem does not have a moderating role. Finally, this study contributes to the management literature by providing a cross-section on the consequences of abusive supervision.

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INTRODUCTION

Supervisors' verbal or nonverbal impairing behaviors, which do not include physical contacts, get more and more attention every day (Jian et al., 2012; Haar et al., 2016). What lies beneath this interest is the widespread occurrence of abusive supervision in work places. For example, it is pointed out that 27% of the employees are being abused at work (Tu et al., 2018). This rate is significantly high, translating abusive supervision into a topic that is worthy to be investigated. Although supervisors are expected to treat their subordinates in a good manner, they may sometimes use their powers and authorities to mistreat them (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007). When the importance of service quality is taken into consideration, harmful effects of abusive supervision become more evident in the hotel industry. The willful misconducts from supervisors may decrease the quality of service provided by employees and damage the image of the organization (Hon & Lu, 2016; Yeşiltaş & Gürlek, 2019). In this vein, it is important to understand the extent of damage abusive supervision may cause in the hotel industry.

Previous research points out that abusive supervision decreases helping behaviors (Zhao & Guo, 2019), work engagement, customer-oriented organizational citizenship behavior (Lyu et al., 2016a), organizational identification, proactive costumer service performance (Lyu et al., 2016b), and service performance (Jian et al., 2012), while it increases job dissatisfaction, deviant behaviors (Pan et al., 2018) and abusive subordinate behaviors (Hon & Lu, 2016). Despite growing number of studies on abusive supervision in recent years, as mentioned above, only one study (Park & Kim, 2019) examines the effect of abusive supervision on service sabotage. Service sabotage is a highly significant problem in hotel companies, so much that more than 90% of the employees report that service sabotage happens in their workplace every day (Harris & Ogbonna, 2002). Thus, the relationship between abusive supervision and service sabotage needs to be investigated further.

In this study, it is argued that job alienation may have a key role in the relationship between abusive supervision and service sabotage. Therefore, the primary aim of the study is to explore whether job alienation has a mediating role. Despite the fact that job alienation is common among lower-level employees, still, not enough attention is given to the concept. (Nair & Vohra, 2009). Job alienation is defined as employee's feeling of quit/avoidance/withdrawal from the workplace and the job (Ashforth, 1989). Being degraded and dismayed by abusive supervisors increases the possibility that subordinates psychologically break off with the job and become alienated (Lyuet al., 2016a). Treatments such as despising and punishment undermine a subordinate's psychological commitment to the job and the organization (Ashforth, 1997). If supervisors behave unethically, employees may feel that their association with the organization is broken and their feelings of alienation may intensify (Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara & Viera-Armas, 2019). The Alienation Theory emphasizes that the negative experiences (e.g. deviation, abuse, exploitation) that employees have in their work places result in job alienation (O'Donohue & Nelson, 2014).

Employees facing with exploitative and abusive supervision become alienated to their jobs (Behery & Al-Nasser, 2016). Alienated employees feel discontented with their jobs and the likelihood of complaining about and harming the organization on purpose gets higher (Chiaburu et al., 2014). It is pointed out that job alienation is one of the reasons underlying employees' sabotage behaviors (Harris & Ogbonna, 2010). The Alienation Theory emphasizes that alienation brings out normlessness, referring to the fact that the organizational norms become meaningless to the employee (Seeman, 1959). Accordingly, individuals who are alienated to their jobs may display sabotage behaviors by violating organizational norms without any hesitation. In sum, abusive supervision may lead employees to engage in more sabotage behaviors through increasing job alienation.

Supervisors' verbal or nonverbal harmful behaviors toward employees may result in job alienation (Shantz et al., 2015). However, under which circumstances abusive supervision causes job alienation remains unclear (Han et al., 2013). So, the secondary aim of the current study is to identify the circumstances under which abusive supervision results in job alienation. Organization-based self-esteem (OBSE) may alter the degree of relationship between abusive supervision and job alienation. OBSE refers to "the degree of an individual believing in him/herself to be capable, significant and worthy as an organizational member" (Pierce& Gardner, 2004, p. 593). In organizational contexts, employees with high OBSE may display less negative reactions against abusive supervision when compared to the ones who have low level of OBSE. When employees are treated with abusive supervision, employees with low OBSE alienate to their job more than employees with high OBSE (Hui & Lee, 2000). Hence, according to the Behavioral Plasticity Theory (Brockner, 1983, 1988) individuals with low self-esteem are more vulnerable to negative incidents they experience than those with high self-esteem. In other words, behaviors of individuals who have low self-esteem are further affected by negative experiences (Pierce et al., 1993). For example, Kiazad et al. (2010) identified the moderating role of OBSE in the effect of authoritarian leadership on abusive supervision. In this scope, this study claims that OBSE plays a moderating role in the effect of abusive supervision on job alienation.

The current study contributes to the literature on several aspects. First, it contributes to understanding the consequences of abusive supervision in the context of the hotel industry. Second, it puts forward how abusive supervision increases service sabotage by way of identifying the mediating role of job alienation Third, it reveals that OBSE does not play a moderating role in the effect of abusive supervision on job alienation in the context of the hotel industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Abusive supervision and service sabotage

Abusive supervision refers to "subordinates' perceptions of the extent to which supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors, excluding physical contact" (Tepper, 2000, p. 178). Among the typical examples of abusive supervision are yelling, having tantrums, humiliating or mocking someone in front of others, damaging someone's status, withholding information that someone needs, freezing someone out by not talking to, and to put pressure on (Xu et al., 2012). Nowadays, abusive supervision is widespread in organizations and is one of the factors driving employees to exhibit deviant workplace behaviors (Wang et al., 2012).

According to the negative reciprocity norm of the Social Exchange Theory, when individuals perceive negative treatment, they reciprocate with negative treatment or behavior (Gouldner, 1960). Negative reciprocity norm emphasizes that individuals may perceive revenge as a right and suitable way of reciprocating against the negative treatment (Eisenberger et al., 2004). Employees suffering from abusive supervision bear the feeling of revenge, an act displayed in response to certain harm or wrong doing by another party. As a result of the perception of ill treatment, individuals may resort to deviant behaviors to take revenge (Liu et al., 2010). Victims of abusive supervision may utilize service sabotage, which is recognized as a type of deviant workplace behaviors, to retaliate against the organization they work for (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007). Service sabotage refers to service employees' intentional behaviors to give damage to costumer services (Harris & Ogbonna, 2006). Slowing down service speed and behaving aggressively toward costumers are examples of service sabotage (Lee & Ok, 2014). To explain how the negative reciprocity between abusive supervision and service sabotage occurs, the Displaced Aggression Theory provides a useful theoretical foundation. Displaced aggression occurs when individuals display deviant workplace behaviors toward another party instead of the one responsible for the ill treatment they faced (Harris et al., 2011).

According to the Theory, individuals suffering from ill treatment do not direct their feelings of revenge toward the actual source due to fear of retaliation. Instead they direct those feelings to safer targets (Hoobler & Brass, 2006). Employees confronting with abusive supervision tend to harm the organization or the organizational processes rather than harming their supervisors due to fear of retaliation (Burton et al., 2012). For example, a hotel employee might break the plates in the restaurant instead of responding to the supervisor when the supervisor gets angry and yells at him/her (Gürlek, 2020a). Although abusive supervision and service sabotage are widely observed in the hotel industry, there exists only one study investigating the relationship between the two variables. Park & Kim (2019) confirm that there is a strong link between abusive supervision and service sabotage. Based on the aforementioned arguments, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1. *Abusive supervision affects service sabotage positively and significantly.*

Abusive supervision and job alienation

The basis of the concept of alienation is rooted in the studies by Karl Marx on the effects of capitalist labor process on employees (Marx, 1963; Marx, 1969). Marx emphasizes that employees become alienated to their jobs because they are seen as slaves or physical entities for more labor by capitalists (Özer et al., 2019). Seeman (1959) provides a more contemporary interpretation of alienation, which constitutes the cornerstone for modern research on alienation. Seeman (1959) states that alienation is a multi-dimensional structure that consists of powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, social isolation and self-alienation. Although later studies (Dean 1961; Blauner, 1964; Affinnih, 1997) provide new interpretations of multi-dimensional nature of alienation by decreasing the number of Seeman's dimensions, multi-dimensional structure has been criticized because it includes the antecedents of alienation rather than representing it. For example, it is argued that meaninglessness and powerlessness are not the dimensions but the antecedents of alienation (Twining, 1980; Kanungo, 1982; Nair & Vohra, 2012; Shantz et al., 2014). Nowadays, researchers suggest that alienation should be examined as a unidimensional factor (Nair &Vohra, 2009, 2012; Shantz et al., 2014). In the scope of the current study, a unidimensional point of view is adopted and job alienation is defined as "the extent to which a person is disengaged from the world of work" (Hirschfeld & Feild, 2000, p. 790).

Job alienation emerges as a consequence of the negative workplace experiences of an employee (Richman et al., 1996). Abusive supervision is a significant part of the negative experiences in question (Tu et al., 2018). Studies show that abusive supervision is a significant antecedent of job alienation (Ashforth, 1994; Tepper, 2000). Hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors can cause an individual become alienated to the job and the organization (Ashforth, 1997). Tyrannical behaviors by supervisors reflect central characteristics that break employees' connection with their social circles and the working environment (Schyns & Schilling, 2013). When supervisors despise, humiliate and insult their subordinates, the subordinates have the feeling of isolation from their jobs (Akhtar & Shaukat, 2016). The Alienation Theory assumes that negative experiences (deviation, abuse, exploitation) that employees have in their work places result in job alienation (O'Donohue & Nelson, 2014). On the other hand, the Conservation of Resources Theory indicates that individuals tend to keep and protect the personal sources that they value. According to the Theory, individuals experience high levels of stress when their sources are damaged and lost, and as a result, they might disengage from the job (Hobfoll, 1989). Abusive supervision, as a factor which threatens individuals' personal resources, may cause individuals to be alienated from their jobs. Individuals confronting with abusive supervision may lose some emotional resources such as control, freedom and self-expression, which may break their connection with the job (Rousseau et al., 2014; Fatima et al., 2018). A few studies (Han et al., 2013; Finney et al., 2018) in literature highlight that abusive supervision increases job alienation. Based on the above-mentioned theoretical background, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2. *Abusive supervision affects job alienation positively and significantly.*

Job alienation and service sabotage

Jermier (1988) points out that alienation is one of the significant antecedents of service sabotage. Sabotage can emerge as a manifestation of job alienation (Nair & Vohra, 2012). To explain the relationship between job alienation and service sabotage, the Strain Theory (Merton, 1938; Mitchell, 1984) can be utilized. By applying for innovative solutions to cope with the strain resulting from alienation, individuals can render their lives more meaningful and different. For example, a husband who is dissatisfied with his relationship may become alienated to his wife and may display a behavior such as cheating on his wife with his secretary. Individuals who have been alienated to their jobs may exhibit deviant creative actions in their jobs although they have the chance to take up creative activities outside (e.g. hobbies, alternative activities) (Mitchell, 1984). Hence, individuals who have been alienated to their jobs may display sabotage behaviors by violating the organizational norms with no hesitation. A few studies in the literature indicate that alienation increase deviant behaviors (Shantz et al., 2015; Li & Chen, 2018). Based on the above-mentioned theoretical foundations, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3. *Job alienation affects service sabotage positively and significantly.*

Mediating effect of job alienation

In their longitudinal study, Brondolo et al. (2018) demonstrated that traumatic events in workplaces push employees behave negatively through the mediating effect of job alienation. The negative reciprocity norm of the Social Exchange Theory (Gouldner, 1960) claims that an individual reciprocates with negative behavior and attitude against the other party that treats him/her in an unfavorable manner. In other words, when individuals perceive unfavorable treatment (e.g. abusive supervision) they reciprocate with a negative attitude or behavior. The negative reciprocity norm points out that this reaction feeds on a feeling of revenge (Eisenberger et al., 2004). Individuals may direct their vengeance stemming from abusive supervision to their supervisors. Yet, as highlighted by the Displaced Aggression Theory (Hoobler & Brass, 2006), these individuals generally direct their vengeance not to their supervisors but to the organization due to fear of retaliation. In this context, employees being exposed to abusive supervision may not retaliate directly against their managers, as they may have fear of further retaliation (e.g. layoff). Instead, they may prefer engaging in deviant behaviors that may harm the organization. To put it in a different way, employees can manage the negative reciprocity driven by abusive supervision and can display service sabotage which is a kind of deviant workplace behaviors (Tepper et al., 2008). Job alienation may explain how the negative reciprocity occurs between abusive supervision and employees. As a matter of fact, Li & Chen (2018) find out that job alienation has a key role in individuals' displaying deviant workplace behaviors as a negative response resulting from the psychological contract breach. Alienation occurs as a response to negative organizational conditions and unfavorable treatment (Fatima et al., 2018). For example, Ashforth (1997) states that supervisors' tyrannical behaviors increase job alienation. Supervisors' verbal or nonverbal harmful behaviors may break the bond with the job and employees may become alienated (Akhtar & Shaukat, 2016). Hence, they may engage in more sabotage behaviors. In sum, abusive supervision may increase service sabotage through giving rise to job alienation. Based on the above-mentioned theoretical discussion, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4. *Job alienation has a mediating effect on the relationship between abusive supervision and service sabotage.*

Moderating effect of OBSE

Poor management styles (e.g. abusive, authoritarian) pave the way for subordinates to feel more vulnerable and get alienated to their jobs due to the weaknesses they have (Finney et al., 2018). When employees get defenseless against such kind of supervision, it becomes more likely that abusive supervision results in job alienation (Kiazadet al., 2010). With the purpose of verifying this argument, the moderating role of OBSE between abusive supervision and alienation is investigated in the current study. OBSE reflects the degree to which an employee feels important and valuable as an organizational member (Gardner & Pierce, 1998). To investigate the moderating role of self-esteem between the negative behaviors that an employee is exposed to and his/her reactions to these behaviors, the Behavioral Plasticity Theory can provide a highly effective background (Pierce et al., 1993; Hui & Lee, 2000; García-Cabrera & García-Barba Hernández, 2014; Ekrot et al., 2016). Employees with low OBSE are more defenseless against the negative incidents they are exposed to and the unfavorable experiences they have in the organization (Burton et al., 2011; Vogel & Mitchell, 2017). The Behavioral Plasticity Theory (Brockner, 1983, 1988) claims that employees with lower self-esteem are more vulnerable and sensitive to negative incidents than the ones with higher levels of self-esteem are. When the level of self-esteem is low, negative experiences affect individual's behaviors more (Kiazadet al., 2010). Therefore, in scope of this study, employees with high OBSE levels are expected to display fewer negative reactions against abusive supervision than those with low OBSE levels. In this respect, when employees face with abusive supervision, employees with low levels of OBSE become more alienated to their jobs whereas those with high levels of OBSE become less job alienated. Based on the above-mentioned theoretical arguments, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5. *OBSE has a moderating effect upon the relationship between abusive supervision and job alienation.*

RESEARCH METHOD

Sample and procedures

The data which were used in this study were obtained from the employees working in five-star hotels in Antalya, Muğla, and Ankara, which are among the provinces that have the highest bed capacity and attract most of the tourists in Turkey. For example, Antalya is in the first place, Muğla on the second and Ankara in the fifth place in the ranking of overall bed capacity (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2020). Therefore, these provinces are considered more suitable places for the research sample. The hotel companies in these provinces were selected via convenience sampling method. Researchers included hotels into the research via their personal connections. All of the five-star hotels selected are involved in the list of facilities with tourism operation certificate published annually by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (2019). To collect data, human resources managers were contacted, the content of the research was explained, and they were asked to give consent to be involved in the research. 400 questionnaires were sent to a total of eight five-star hotels in Antalya (n=3), Muğla (n=3) and Ankara (n=2). 50 questionnaires per hotel were distributed. Human resources managers were recommended to hand in questionnaire forms to the employees working in different departments. In addition, the managers were asked to inform employees not to provide any personal information while filling in the forms. Thus, the confidentiality in the study was ensured. 350 questionnaires were received back. Following the omission of the cases with missing values or unengaged responses, the study was completed with 336 questionnaire forms.

Measures

Researchers in this study used 15-item scale developed by Tepper (2000) to measure abusive supervision. This scale was also applied and validated by

Ülbeği et al. (2014) in Turkish. A sample item is “supervisor tells me my thoughts or feelings are stupid”. A five -point Likert scale was used (5 = frequently, 1 = never).

To measure OBSE, 10-item scale originally developed by Pierce et al. (1989) was used. This scale was also applied and validated by Akalın (2006) in Turkish. A sample item is “I am valuable at this organization”. A five-point Likert scale was used (5 = strongly agree, 1 = strongly disagree).

A-10 item scale developed by Hirschfeld & Feild (2000) was used to measure job alienation. The Turkish validity and reliability study of the scale was carried out by Özbek (2011). A sample item is “Most of work life is wasted in meaningless activity”. A five-point Likert scale was used (5 = strongly agree, 1 = strongly disagree).

The scale developed by Harris & Ogbonna (2006) was used to measure service sabotage. The scale is unidimensional and composed of nine items. A five-point Likert scale was used (5 = strongly agree, 1 = strongly disagree). The adaptation of the scale items into Turkish was performed by Kanten et al. (2015). As a result of the analyses in the study, it was found that three items violated the unidimensional structure and did not provide the sufficient degree of factor reliability. Kanten et al. (2015) confirmed the unidimensional construct with six items. A sample item is “People here slow down service when they want to”.

Data analysis

Preliminary statistics were obtained using SPSS 21.0 including data screening and preparation. PLS-SEM software was preferred to test the hypotheses developed in the study. The reason for preferring PLS-SEM is that it can also be used when the normality assumption is violated (Ali et al., 2018). As suggested by Hair et al. (2014) and Merli et al. (2019) kurtosis and skewness coefficients were calculated by using the kurtosis and skewness coefficients calculation software (https://webpower.psychstat.org/models/kurtosis). Mardia's multivariate skewness value (β=2.782, $p < 0.01$) and multivariate kurtosis value (β=27.830, $p > 0.05$) violated multivariate normality assumption. In the light of the results, it was concluded that the research data were not normally distributed. Therefore, Smart PLS v.3.2.7 statistical software and Partial Least Squares method were utilized for data analyses (Ringle et al., 2015).

RESULTS

Respondent characteristics and descriptive statistics

After the omission of missing or incomplete surveys, the analysis process was carried out over 336 cases. 63% of the participants are male. A significant part of the respondents are young employees (over 70%). More than half of the participants have at least high school degree (55%), which is followed by associate degrees (20.8%) and bachelor degrees (20.5). A significant number of the respondents work in the same hotel for 1 to 5 years (43.8%), and this is followed by the ones who work in the same hotel for less than a year (39.1%). 34.1% of the respondent employees are from the F&B (Food and Beverage) department, 18.4% from the front office department and 17.4% from the kitchen department.

Table 1. *Sample's Socio-Demographic Profile*

Gender	Female	37.0	Job Tenure (in this hotel)	Under 1 Year	39.1
	Male	63.0		1-5	43.8
Age	Below 18	7.5		6-10	16.1
	18-25	33.2		10+	1.1
	26-33	30.4	Department	F&B	34.1
	34-41	17.4		Kitchen	17.4
	42-49	10.6		House Keeping	8.9
	Above 49	0.9		Front Office	18.4
Educational Level	High School	55.0		HR	1.6
	Associate degree	20.8		Accounting	4.9
	Bachelor's degree	20.5		Other	14.8
	Master & PhD	3.6			

Common method variance (CMV)

Researchers argue that CMV is a common problem for the studies in social sciences. It is indicated that there are quantitative and qualitative ways to eliminate this problem (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Anonymous application of surveys and not asking questions that might reveal the personal identities of the participants are among the qualitative techniques. In the current study, the suggestions proposed to eliminate CMV were taken into consideration. To identify whether CMV constitutes a problem, Harman's single factor test was applied and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were checked. The results of the study indicate that the total variance explained was 66.4% and the first factor explained 34.4% of the total variance (less than 50%). Moreover, VIF values were checked. The fact that

VIF value for each latent variable is greater than 3.3 indicates multicollinearity problem, which signals that CMV constitutes a problem (Kock, 2015). Nevertheless, it is seen in the current study that VIF values for the latent variables range between 1.021 and 1.535. Therefore, it can be stated that there is no CMV problem in this study.

Table 2. *Outer Model Results*

Constructs	Item	Factor Loadings	CA	CR	AVE
Abusive Supervision			**0.954**	**0.959**	**0.609**
	ABSPV1	0.759			
	ABSPV10	0.801			
	ABSPV11	0.841			
	ABSPV12	0.789			
	ABSPV13	0.760			
	ABSPV14	0.816			
	ABSPV15	0.767			
	ABSPV2	0.792			
	ABSPV3	0.729			
	ABSPV4	0.792			
	ABSPV5	0.711			
	ABSPV6	0.805			
	ABSPV7	0.759			
	ABSPV8	0.799			
	ABSPV9	0.773			
Job Alienation			**0.823**	**0.875**	**0.585**
	EMPAL4	0.749			
	EMPAL5	0.803			
	EMPAL7	0.728			
	EMPAL8	0.784			
	EMPAL9	0.758			
OBSE			**0.904**	**0.923**	**0.633**
	OBSE10	0.717			
	OBSE4	0.764			
	OBSE5	0.774			
	OBSE6	0.827			
	OBSE7	0.848			
	OBSE8	0.833			
	OBSE9	0.798			
Service Sabotage			**0.902**	**0.924**	**0.671**
	SERVSAB1	0.778			
	SERVSAB2	0.812			
	SERVSAB3	0.813			
	SERVSAB4	0.858			
	SERVSAB5	0.841			
	SERVSAB6	0.809			

Outer model assessment

To validate convergent validity, factor loadings, Cronbach's Alpha (CA), Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were calculated at first. The recommended values for factor loadings were set at >0.70, for the CA at>0.70, for the AVE at>0.50 and for the CR at >0.70 (Ali et al., 2018; Hair et al., 2014). Preliminary analyses indicated that some factor loadings were below the accepted cut-off values (5 items in Job Alienation scale and 3 items in OBSE scale) and since these values affected the reliability values, they were excluded from the analyses. When Table 2 is analyzed, it is seen that all values range between the cut-off values.

Discriminant validity means that each variable measured in a study has lower correlation than the other related constructs. In this study, for discriminant validity assessment, Fornell & Larcker's (1981) criteria and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) were calculated. As seen in Table 3, the square root of AVE values (figures in bold) are greater than the correlation of each related latent variable. In addition, Henseler et al. (2015) point out that HTMT value is more reliable in the context of discriminant validity assessment. Values at and below 0.90 thresholds indicate that criteria validity is provided (Rodríguez-Victoria et al., 2017). It is seen in Table 3 that the values range between the accepted cut-off points, which reveals that the measurement constructs are valid and reliable. In this respect, in the following section, the structural model test will be carried out based on these constructs.

Table 3. *Discriminant Validity*

Fornell – Larcker Criteria				
	1	2	3	4
Abusive Supervision	***0.780***			
Job Alienation	0.592	***0.765***		
OBSE	-0.313	-0.392	***0.796***	
Service Sabotage	0.570	0.438	-0.215	***0.819***
Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio				
	1	2	3	4
Abusive Supervision				
Job Alienation	0.663			
OBSE	0.328	0.436		
Service Sabotage	0.609	0.505	0.229	

The square roots of AVE values are shown in bold. Shaded boxes are the standard reporting format for HTMT procedure.

Inner Model Estimates (Hypothesis Testing)

To test the research hypotheses Smart PLS 3.0 software was utilized. For the calculation of statistically significant path coefficients 5000 iterations and bootstrapping methods were used.

As in CB-SEM (covariance-based structural equation model) models, conventional indices do not evaluate the model as a whole in PLS SEM models. Hair et al. (2014) argue that R^2 is an important variable for the evaluation of models' exploratory powers. PLS-SEM path model aims at maximizing the R^2 of endogenous latent variable. Therefore, in the study it is aimed to have a greater value. In studies, 0.25, 0.50, 0.75 values are assessed respectively as small, moderate and large (Hair et al., 2014). In Table 4, R^2 values of endogenous variables are provided. According to this, abusive supervision explained 39.8% (R^2=0.398) of the variance in job alienation and 34.1% (R^2=0.341) of the variance in service sabotage. In the study, the R^2 values for inner variables were above 0.25 and this indicated that the model was substantial (Hair et al., 2014). Merli et al. (2019) state that another value to be used in PLS models is the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR). In this study, SRMR value was found 0.056 and accepted as substantial since it was below the cut-off value 0.080.

It is important to know the extent to which an exogenous latent variable contributed to endogenous latent variable's R^2 value (Ali et al., 2016). In other words, the exploratory power of exogenous variables on endogenous variables should be evaluated. In this regard, effect sizes (f^2) values should be determined. Effect sizes (f^2) are calculated to assess how much a predicting variable contributes to an endogenous variable's R^2 value (Ali et al., 2016). The effect size (f^2) 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35 is small, moderate and large, respectively (Cohen, 1988). The effect sizes (f^2) presented in the Table 4.

As indicated before, unlike CB-SEM software, PLS-SEM cannot provide overall goodness of fit indices. Although R^2 is one of the basic evaluation measures, Goodness-of-Fit (GoF) value is among the fundamental evaluation measures, as well. This value is obtained by making use of the geometric mean of the average communality and the average of R^2 of the endogenous variables (Ali et al., 2016). In their evaluation of GoF values, Hoffmann & Birnbrich (2012) state that the cut-off values are GoF_{small}=0.1, GoF_{medium}= 0.25 and GoF_{large}= 0.36. In this study, GoF was 0.480. Therefore, it can be indicated that the level of goodness-of-fitness is high global model fit.

In addition, in PLS models, Stone-Geisser Q^2 values (Geisser, 1974; Stone, 1974) are effectively used for predictive relevance by blindfolding test (Akter et al., 2011). In line with the suggestions from the literature (Henseler et al., 2009), Q^2 values were calculated using cross-validated redundancy procedures. As Hair et al. (2017) suggest, when Q^2 value is bigger than 0, it means that model has predictive relevance whereas when a Q^2 value less than 0 model does not have predictive relevance. As shown in Table 4, Q^2 for job alienation is 0.227 and Q^2 for service sabotage is 0.242. According to this result model has acceptable predictive relevance.

Table 4. *Results of research hypotheses*

Hypotheses	β	***t-value***	***Decision***	f^2
Abusive Supervision –> Job Alienation	0.522	11.418*	Supported	0.402
Job Alienation –> Service Sabotage	0.156	2.566**	Supported	0.024
Abusive Supervision –> Service Sabotage	0.478	7.517*	Supported	0.225
Abusive Supervision*OBSE –> Job Alienation	0.002	0.338	*Not Supported*	0.001
Bootstrapping Results for Indirect Effects	β	***t-value***	***Decision***	***95% BCa LLCI - ULCI***
Abusive Supervision –> Job Alienation –> Service Sabotage	0.081	2.429	Supported	0.029-0.138
R^2Results	***Q^2Results***			
Job Alienation : 0.398	Job Alienation : 0.227			
Service Sabotage : 0.341	Service Sabotage : 0.242			

$^*p<0.01$; $^{**}p<0.05$; LLCI: Lower level confidence interval; ULCI: Upper level confidence interval

In the study, after evaluating the outer and inner model, hypothetical relationships in structural model were tested. First, the effect of abusive supervision on job alienation was tested and the hypothesis was supported (β=0.522; t=11.418). Second, it was found out that job alienation had effect on service sabotage (β=0.156; t=2.566). Third, it was revealed that abusive supervision affected service sabotage positively (β=0.478; t=7.517). Thus, H_1, H_2, and H_3 were supported (Table 4).

In the research, the bootstrapping method proposed by Preacher & Hayes (2008) was used to determine the mediating role of job alienation upon the effect of abusive supervision on service sabotage. According to Table 4, job alienation has a mediation role upon the effect of abusive supervision on service sabotage (β=0.081; t=2.429; LLCI=0.029-ULCI=0.138). Thus, H_4 is supported. Zhao et al. (2010) indicate that the existence of the direct and indirect effect (a x b) point out complementary mediation. Since the direct and indirect effects in the current study are significant, it can be highlighted that complementary mediation does exist in this study.

This study hypothesized that OBSE has a moderation role upon the effect of abusive supervision on job alienation. To analyze the effect of moderation variable, PLS-SEM product-indicator approach was used. PLS enables to validate the theory and more accurate calculation of moderation effect by calculating the errors in estimated correlations (Henseler & Fassott, 2010). As seen in Table 4, OBSE does not have a moderating effect on the relationship between abusive supervision and job alienation. This reveals that the level of OBSE, whether it is high or low, does not change the effect of abusive supervision on job alienation. Therefore, H_5 is not supported.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Evaluation of the Findings

In this study, it is found that abusive supervision has positive effect on service sabotage (H_1). This finding shows parallelism with the findings of Park & Kim (2019). In addition, it is also in line with the negative reciprocity norm of the Social Exchange Theory (Gouldner, 1960) and Displaced Aggression Theory (Hoobler & Brass, 2006). Accordingly, employees who encounter with abusive supervision may negatively reciprocate against the organization through service sabotage. The negative reciprocity between abusive supervision and service sabotage can be explained on the basis of the Displaced Aggression Theory. Individuals having the feeling of vengeance resulting from the ill treatment they have been exposed to may displace their aggressions toward the organization, which is perceived as a safer, instead of the actual source of ill-treatment due to fear of retaliation.

The results obtained in the current study showed that abusive supervision had a positive effect on job alienation (H_2). In accordance with the Theory of Conservation of Resources (Hobfoll, 1989), it was revealed that employees could not preserve their personal resources and experience job alienation when they face abusive supervision. Abusive supervisors cause their subordinates run out of their resources by humiliating them in public or threatening them to lose their jobs, which results in employees' suffering from job alienation.

Another finding in the current study indicated that job alienation had a positive effect on service sabotage (H_3). This is in line with the Strain Theory (Merton, 1938; Mitchell, 1984). Accordingly, because of the strain that result from job alienation, employees may display deviated behaviors. In addition, job alienated individuals take organizational norms into consideration less (Shantz et al., 2015) and, consequently, they may display more sabotage behaviors. The findings also showed that job alienation mediates the relationship between abusive supervision and service sabotage (H_4). According to this finding, by increasing the degree of employees' job alienation, abusive supervision increased service sabotage. In other words, alienation plays a key role in directing negative behaviors resulting from abusive supervision to the organization. In this study, it was found out that OBSE was not a moderator variable between abusive supervision and job alienation (H_5). Accordingly, OBSE neither enhanced nor reduced the effect of abusive supervision on job alienation. In other words, the effect of abusive supervision on job alienation does not depend on OBSE.

The research results indicate that OBSE has no moderating effect in this study. Thus, based on the abusive supervision's negative effect, employees may have alienation without considering OBSE. It can be inferred that this finding might have emerged as a result of the research context. For example, there is a high personnel turnover in the hotel industry and many employees do not stay in the same organization for a long time (Aksu, 2004). In the context of the current study, hotel employees did not consider whether their organization valued them as an organization member or not. Besides, they did not work for a long time in the same organization. Therefore, it is not expected that OBSE perception creates a significant effect on employees' behaviors. As seen in Table 1, 39.1% of employees work less than one year and 1.1% work more than ten years in the same organization.

Theoretical contributions

This study contributes to the literature on several aspects. First, one of the primary contributions is that the antecedents that affect service sabotage are investigated. In literature, there are few studies on service sabotage, which have been carried out with different aims and theoretical backgrounds (Lee & Ok, 2014; Yeşiltaş & Tuna, 2018; Zhou et al., 2018; Park & Kim, 2019). In this respect, this study contributes to the expansion of the related literature on service sabotage. Second, in the study, the effect of abusive supervision on job alienation, which has been ignored in the literature so far, is examined and the consequences of abusive supervision are expanded. In the scope of the study, not only the literature on abusive supervision is extended but also one of the antecedents of job alienation, which may produce significant results in managements, is investigated.

Third, unlike the other studies conducted in the context of the hotel industry, the effect of job alienation on service sabotage is examined in this study. Service sabotage is not only a concept that has managerial reflections in the hotel industry but also among the behaviors that negatively reflect on business performance. Therefore, its antecedents should be treated carefully and suitable solutions should be found. Hence, the findings of this study contribute to the literature by revealing that job alienation increases service sabotage.

Fourth, alienation has turned into a concept that has almost been forgotten in mainstream management studies (Shantz et al., 2015). Chi et al. (2018) point out that it would be fruitful to investigate mediation processes in the relationship between abusive supervision and service sabotage. Thus, the current study contributes to the literature by proving that job alienation has a mediating role upon the effect of abusive supervision on service sabotage.

The final theoretical contribution of the study is that OBSE does not have a moderation role on the relationship between abusive supervision and job alienation. The studies, which were implemented in the other industries, indicate that OBSE has a moderator role on the relationships between negative incidents and experiences confronted by employees and their behaviors (Kiazad et al., 2010; Burton et al., 2011). Unlike the previous researches, this study demonstrates that OBSE does not have a moderator role. According to this result, the perception of OBSE is not considered as a crucial factor which may lessen the negative experiences of the employees. Thus, this study contributes to the literature. This can be explained with the dynamics of the hotel industry. Characteristics that belong to the hotel industry such as long working hours, low wages, and job insecurity (Jung & Yoon, 2014; Gürlek, 2020a) may prevent individuals feel themselves important in the organization. And this may make the role of OBSE between the two variables insignificant.

Managerial Implications

The findings of the study show that abusive supervision increases job alienation and service sabotage. Supervisors can apply the following suggestions to eliminate the serious consequences of abusive supervision. The first step can be to identify the ones who display abusive supervision (Hussain & Sia, 2017; Thau & Mitchell, 2010). Superiors' ill-treatment to their subordinates, which is a kind of work place aggression, is not one of the specific interpersonal problems that can be solved by the victim (Pan et al., 2018). In this sense, for the solution of the problems that abusive supervision has created, problem-reporting centers can be established in organizations. Additionally, training for behavior control, anger management and communication skills can be arranged for the supervisors who have problems with employees or who display hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors. Besides, for employees who are being supervised with appropriate leadership styles, alienation is not a matter of question (Di Pietro & Pizam, 2008). So, organizations should choose their supervisors carefully and should not employ the ones who have shown negative tendencies in the tests administered at employment procedures to prevent abusive supervision. In this regard, selective recruitment practices are recommended for organizations (Gürlek, 2020b).

The findings of the study indicate that job alienation has an impact on the formation of service sabotage in the organization. Job alienation is a problem that must be dwelled upon by organizations, because this problem can cause individuals to put less effort and energy in the organization (Santas et al., 2016) while, at the same time, it can increase individuals' stress levels within the organization.

Job alienation shows that another mechanism has a significant role in the relationship between abusive supervision and service sabotage. The findings point out that abusive supervision triggers job alienation, which affects service sabotage in turn. Hence, this study can help organizations understand how abusive supervision affects service sabotage.

High level of OBSE does not have a decreasing effect on the relationship between abusive supervision and service sabotage. Accordingly, abusive supervision from the supervisors of the organization is so devastating that individual's feeling important and valuable in the organization does not minimize the negative consequences of abusive supervision. Moreover, in the hotel industry, employee turnover rate is considerably high, that is, employees change their jobs very frequently (Aksu, 2004). Therefore, employee behaviors may be shaped not by the views of the organization regarding their importance but by the actions of their supervisors (Gürlek & Uygur, 2020). In this respect, OBSE may not play a moderator role.

Limitations and Directions of Future Research

This study has several limitations. First, since self-reporting scales are used, CMV can turn into a factor that has to be considered (Podsakoff et al., 2003). To eliminate the CMV in the study, Harman's single factor test and VIF values were used. However, future studies can control CMV better by applying time-lagged data collection method. Second, this is a cross sectional study. Thus, there are no causality claims. Researchers are suggested to carry out more in-depth investigations for causal effects by obtaining longitudinal data.

Third, the abusive supervision scale utilized in the study consists of subjective statements. This is an important issue in that they could be perceived differently by different individuals. Xiaqi et al. (2012) state that abusive supervision is related to perception and add that "one subordinate may view a supervisory action as abusive, another may not" (p. 258). This view can be valid both at organizational environments and in the context of different societies. When this is taken into consideration, this may bring out a generalizability problem regarding the leadership differences between Western societies and others which are paternalist and collectivist and in which power distances are distinct such as Turkey. Thus, retesting the model in different societies is suggested. On the other hand, this study examined the moderator role of OBSE within the framework of some limitations. For future studies, it is recommended to investigate the moderator role of OBSE in the relationship between abusive supervision and service sabotage.

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WINNING THE BATTLE: THE IMPORTANCE OF PRICE AND ONLINE REVIEWS FOR HOTEL SELECTION

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ABSTRACT

Traditionally, price has been one of the main revenue management levers that allow hotels to sell the right product to the right customer at the right time. Recent research in the area of electronic word-of-mouth has found that travelers' online reviews may also be an influential factor affecting other customers' booking decisions. However, it is challenging to determine the value of online reviews for customer decision making and to compare this value to hotel room prices. Therefore, the main goal of this study is to investigate which factors (room rate, online reviews' rating score, or the number of reviews by other travelers) are more important for customers' booking decisions and the optimal combination of these factors for booking a hotel. Conjoint analysis was applied to measure the relative importance of the aforementioned factors for travelers' booking decisions. The results revealed that the overall online rating was the most influential factor with regard to customer decision making about

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booking a hotel. In addition, the following combination of factors was discovered to be optimal for attracting customer reservations: more than 107 reviews with an average rating of at least 3.3 (on a 5-point scale), and a price level of $130 or below.

INTRODUCTION

Revenue management (RM) has been defined as "the application of information systems and pricing strategies to allocate the right capacity to the right customer at the right place at the right time" (Kimes, 2000, p.121). In the past, hoteliers often relied on two strategic RM levers, price and duration, to drive consumer response to their offerings. However, with the development of information systems and technology, consumers now have almost instant access to abundant travel information (e.g., product descriptions, prices and reviews) at their fingertips. In such a digitally accessible world, consumers may not react to hotel price and duration control as they did before because they have a multitude of options, easy algorithms to compare hotels and pricing, and other sources of information fighting for a share of consumer attention. In light of these changes in consumer behavior and access to information, hotels may find it challenging to determine the right strategies for attracting consumers, and the task of RM is becoming more complex than ever.

In this transition, user-generated content (UGC) on social media, and particularly online reviews, may be a valuable source of data and a communication tool for RM (Noone et al., 2011). According to a description of American travelers, 79% reported consumer reviews on travel review websites as an influential factor when selecting accommodation (MMGY, 2019). This number is a 9.7% increase over the 72% of travelers who reported online reviews as influential in 2018. Given the growing importance of online reviews for selecting accommodation products, this research proposes to evaluate online reviews as one of the emerging levers of hotel RM.

When considering online reviews as one of the RM strategic levers, it is important to recognize that hotels have less control of online reviews compared to other RM levers such as duration and price. This paper does not propose fraudulent modification of a property's online reviews in an effort to increase attractiveness and financial performance of a subject hotel. It is, however, important to note that there are documented cases of this occurring in the hotel industry (Baka, 2016). This paper suggests using naturally occurring review metrics to support a hotel's RM practices and to possibly outperform or boost performance of other RM levers.

While it is unlikely that a hotel would impose duration restrictions based on its online review evaluations, the idea of manipulating the price based on favorable review recommendations has already been explored in the literature (Anderson, 2012; Noone & McGuire, 2013a). The impact of online reviews and price on booking decision was broadly studied in the academic fields of hospitality and tourism (Blal & Sturman, 2014; Book, Tanford, & Chen, 2015; Book, Tanford, Montgomery, & Love, 2015; Noone & McGuire, 2013a, 2013b). In addition, researchers have tested the impact of the characteristics and features of online consumer reviews on the number of the hotel bookings (e. g. Anderson, 2012; Ayeh et al., 2013; Book, Tanford, Montgomery, & Love, 2015; Mauri & Minazzi, 2013; Sparks & Browning, 2011) and the overall performance of hotels (e. g. Blal & Sturman, 2014; Neirotti et al., 2016; Öğüt & Taş, 2012; Torres et al., 2015).

In summary, online reviews have received considerable attention from hotel industry professionals and researchers. While acknowledging the overall importance of online reviews for hotel selection and purchase decision making, it is also crucial to note that online reviews come with a variety of attributes, and each of these attributes may be a factor driving consumer decisions. Despite the practical importance and extensive research conducted in the area of online hotel reviews, the value of the attributes of online hotel reviews, such as a rating score and number of reviews, for booking decisions is still unknown (Neirotti et al., 2016). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the relative importance of hotel room rate and online review attributes (online hotel rating score and number of reviews) in terms of their ability to drive hotel reservations and, therefore, revenue for a hotel.

LITERATURE REVIEW

User Generated Content in Hospitality Research

The development of the Web 2.0 has resulted in significant growth in user generated content (UGC) or consumer generated content (CGC). UGC may be found in different forms, such as "product reviews, descriptions of product usage, "homemade advertising," blogs, and other consumer-initiated contributions" (Fader & Winer, 2012, p. 369). Torres et al. (2013) separated various websites with UGC related to hospitality and tourism into three categories: social networking websites (i.e., Facebook, Twitter), online travel agencies (i.e., Expedia, Travelocity), and online feedback websites (i.e., Yelp, TripAdvisor). Similarly, Noone et al. (2011) suggested that "dominant sources of customer-generated content currently include user-generated content sites (for example, TripAdvisor and WikiTravel), reviews on online travel agent (OTA) sites (for example, Expedia), social networks and microblogging sites (for example, Facebook, Twitter) and media/video sharing sites (for example, YouTube)" (p. 296).

A study conducted by Fotis et al. (2012), in addition to others investigating UGC in hospitality (Anderson, 2012; Berezina et al., 2016; Book, Tanford, Montgomery, & Love, 2015; Lu & Stepchenkova, 2014; Mauri & Minazzi, 2013), illustrates the exponential utilization of UGC on websites for making decisions on travel products and shaping images and perceptions on travel offers and destinations. UGC platforms enable travelers who use online interactions to search for the opinions of those consumers who are similar to themselves for travel advice (Ayeh et al., 2013). This has resulted in numerous hospitality and tourism businesses paying more attention to the use of UGC websites in their online business strategies (Ayeh et al., 2013).

Since UGC websites play an important role in many aspects of the travel industry, including improvement of service quality and guest satisfaction, they have exponentially become significant for industry practitioners (Anderson, 2012; Jeong & Jeon, 2008; Wilson et al., 2012). However, UGCs have some problematic aspects. One of these may cause shifts in markets by changing or moving the purchasing pattern of consumers and affecting the performance of lodging businesses (Baka, 2016; Wilson et al., 2012).

Word-of-Mouth and Electronic Word-of-Mouth in Hospitality

When deciding whether or not to purchase a certain product or service, consumers often seek the opinions of others who have purchased those items previously. Such opinions may provide consumers with useful information regarding the experience with that particular service or product. This type of communication is commonly known as word-of-mouth (WOM) (Westbrook, 1987) and has been studied extensively.

Recently, researchers have been paying considerable attention to WOM communication, which is defined by Litvin et al. (2008) as "the communication between consumers about a product, service, or a company in which the sources are considered independent of commercial influence" (p. 459). Researchers have seen that purchasing decisions and customer engagement are considered to be highly influenced by WOM, and when such influence is positive, it may lead to increases in revenue generation (Baker et al., 2016; Litvin et al., 2008; Neirotti et al., 2016; Torres et al., 2015).

With the advancement and penetration of technology, such as the Internet and mobile devices, consumers are presented with opportunities to digitally engage in WOM communications. According to Litvin et al. (2008), today consumers have more ability and opportunities to post reviews of their experiences with the product online, which is called electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). Being aware of its impact is extremely important. These online reviews are strong enough to affect future customers positively or negatively, and thus, boost or terminate consumers' connection to the brand, which will consequently impact the reputation of a firm in either way (Baka, 2016).

Furthermore, consumers generate eWOM by discussing and assessing the attributes of products to provide others with an overview of the subject product or service (Jalilvand et al., 2011). Thus, potential buyers may receive insights on a product or service before making the purchase by learning from previous customers (Baker et al., 2016). Buying decisions and search for information are traditionally influenced by WOM (Brown et al., 2007) and, by using the Internet, a greater number of consumers seem to willingly rely upon eWOM, which has become the key information source for certain services and products (Litvin et al., 2008). Therefore, it is now important to understand eWOM, especially for the service companies such as hotels (Sparks & Browning, 2011).

eWOM communication has become a major component of consumers' marketing and decision making processes (Anderson, 2012; Fader & Winer, 2012; Wilson et al., 2012). Moreover, UGC is perceived as more trustworthy when compared to official tourism websites, travel agents and mass media advertising (Fotis et al., 2012). Ultimately, eWOM reviews have a strong influence on consumer choices when purchasing products or services (Chu et al., 2018; Noone & McGuire, 2013a, 2013b). Customers are no longer passive receivers of information from marketers, whether it is advertising or products featured on an e-commerce site. Instead, they interact with each other and the company, influencing consumer purchasing and decision making (Fader & Winer, 2012).

According to recent studies (Anderson, 2012; Blal & Sturman, 2014; Öğüt & Taş, 2012), eWOM affects overall hotel performance.

Effect of Online Hotel Reviews on Booking Decisions

Online consumer reviews are the most widely used form of UGC (Schuckert et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2016). According to Gursoy et al. (2017), online review sites are one of the most important external information sources for both domestic and international travelers. Furthermore, the number of consumers that consult TripAdvisor reviews before they book a hotel room has continuously risen, along with the number of reviews that they read before they choose a hotel (Anderson, 2012).

A minimum of two components are included in online consumer reviews: the valence, which is the customer rating score of the product or service; and the volume, which is the number of discussions about the product or service (Blal & Sturman, 2014; Cheung & Thadani, 2012). Different combinations of these components impact a traveler's booking decision (Gursoy, 2019). Moreover, the effects of online hotel reviews on consumers' booking decisions also depend on other characteristics/features of online traveler reviews, such as usefulness, reviewer expertise, timeliness, and comprehensiveness (Zhao et al., 2015). In addition, Filieri and McLeay's research (2014) suggests that a consumer's likelihood of using information provided in online reviews in their decision-making process depends on the perceived quality, accuracy, and timeliness of these reviews. The complexity and ubiquitous nature of online consumer reviews make it difficult to understand the specific effect of the reviews on a traveler's decision-making process (Book, Tanford, Montgomery, & Love, 2015) and on general hotel performance (Blal & Sturman, 2014).

Recent studies provide meaningful insights into the effects of negative and positive reviews on hotel sales. Several studies have demonstrated the significant effect of negative reviews, particularly recent reviews, on evaluations before the purchase and booking intention (e.g., Lee et al., 2008; Ye et al., 2009; Zhao et al., 2015). However, such effects may lack symmetry (Book, Tanford, & Chen, 2015). The negative online customer reviews, as one of the forms of social influence, cause customers to oppose their preexisting views and attitudes when they choose a resort holiday (Tanford & Montgomery, 2015). A single negative review, which was written anonymously, does not necessarily impact travelers' judgments when all other reviews about the hotel are mostly positive (Book, Tanford, & Chen, 2015).

Mauri and Minazzi (2013) and Leong et al. (2017) state that people tend to purchase more hotel products when the number of positive reviews is high, while Zhao et al. (2015) did not find any statistically significant effect between the valence of reviews and quantity of room sales. Park and Lee (2009) report that negative reviews have a greater effect on bookings than positive ones.

Studies confirm that rating scores have a positive effect on booking decisions: an increase in the review rating score leads to an increase in the likelihood of room sales (Mauri & Minazzi, 2013; Öğüt & Taş, 2012; Ye et al., 2011; Zhang et al., 2016). A study by Anderson (2012) illustrates that a 1% increase in a hotel's online rating score also leads to a 0.54% increase in a hotel's occupancy. Hu et al. (2014) find that online ratings impact sales indirectly via sentiments, and those sentiments affect sales significantly. However, Duverger (2013) reports a curvilinear relationship between the online ratings and market share; in other words, lodging properties with high online ratings would not necessarily see a benefit in market share.

Some research results reveal that the volume of online review content may be the predictor of consumers' purchasing decisions (Anderson, 2012; Blal & Sturman, 2014; Gavilan et al., 2018; Torres et al., 2015). Zhao et al. (2015) illustrate the positive effects of the timeliness and volume of online reviews on booking intentions. However, Filieri and McLeay's (2014) study suggests that travelers do not pay attention to the number of online reviews during the decision-making process.

Furthermore, Anderson (2012) found that both the volume and valence of online reviews were positively correlated to the probability of online booking. A hotel with a higher overall TripAdvisor rating and a larger number of reviews has a higher average value per online booking transaction (Leong, et al., 2017; Torres et al., 2015). Torres et al. (2015) also state that simply increasing the number of reviews, regardless of whether they are positive or negative, increases the popularity of a hotel and drives its sales and profitability up. However, Blal and Sturman (2014) report that the impact of a number of online reviews on sales performance (including revenue per available room) is greater for lower-end hotels than for higher-end hotels, and the review ratings have a more significant effect on luxury hotels than on lower-tier hotels. Moreover, the result of their study applies to franchised hotels, independent hotels, and properties operated by international chains (Blal & Sturman, 2014). Viglia et al. (2016) found that "the number of reviews does count for hotels with a small number of reviews" (p. 2045).

Effect of Hotel Room Rate and Online Hotel Reviews on Booking Decisions

One of the important topics of investigation in the area of RM is the relationship between travelers' online review attributes and hotel key operating metrics, such as average daily rate (ADR), occupancy rate (OCC), revenue per available room (RevPAR) and, in particular, the effect of travel reviews and room rate interaction on likelihood to book (Noone et al., 2011).

Price is one of the primary factors influencing a travel purchase. However, online traveler reviews have also been counted as a major and powerful source shaping travel purchase intentions (Book, Tanford, Montgomery, & Love, 2015). Price, brand name and online user-generated ratings have a significant effect on hotel choice. Of these, the ratings emerge as the strongest driver of choice (Noone & McGuire, 2013a). Moreover, consumers integrate price information with non-price factors to appraise the product before the purchase, and consumers may shift to a higher price if a superior travel experience is suggested by the non-price information (Noone & McGuire, 2013a). Furthermore, research demonstrates that, when online traveler reviews are available, price does not influence the perceived quality significantly, and price can be overridden by negative reviews (Noone & McGuire, 2013b). However, Book, Tanford and Chen (2015) found that the impact of unanimous negative reviews was too strong to be offset by a price reduction offered at any level, but purchase decisions were influenced by a price reduction at an extreme level when the negative reviews were anonymous. Positive reviews were more subject to the price anchoring phenomenon, which was seen as the increasing willingness to pay at higher levels of price references (Book, Tanford, & Chen, 2015; Nieto-García et al., 2017).

Furthermore, studies by Öğüt and Taş (2012) and Anderson (2012) indicated a positive relationship between online customer ratings and room price. Moreover, the high-end hotels' prices appear to be more sensitive to online customer rating scores (Öğüt & Taş, 2012). In addition, it was found that a hotel could increase the price for rooms and still maintain the same occupancy if it had a certain high level of online reputation (Anderson, 2012). An intriguing result from Anderson's research (2012) revealed that if a hotel's online rating score increased by 1 point on a 5-point scale, the hotel still maintained the same occupancy or market share after increasing its price by 11.2%. In addition, it was found that increasing an online reputation score led to increases in RevPAR (Anderson, 2012; Blal & Sturman, 2014; De Pelsmacker et al., 2018; Torres et al., 2015). Furthermore, the increasing importance of consumer generated online reviews is changing the character of hotel competition by focusing on volumes and higher room occupancy rates than on unit profit margin (Neirotti et al., 2016).

The joint impact of online hotel reviews and price on consumers' hotel booking intention has been a popular topic for academic investigation in the last two decades. This phenomenon has become particularly important for hospitality management with regard to developing pricing and marketing strategies (Book, Tanford, Montgomery, & Love, 2015). Despite this practical importance and academic attention, the interrelationship between attributes of online hotel reviews and travelers' booking decisions remains unknown. To fill this gap, this research examines the following research question:

RQ1. What is the relative importance of a hotel room rate, an online review rating score, and the number of reviews for a traveler's decision to book a hotel?

Conjoint Analysis

Conjoint analysis can be useful in almost any academic or business investigation that measures consumers' perceptions or judgments and decision-making processes (Netzer et al., 2008). It can be employed for a wide variety of market research questions (Orme, 2010). Therefore, this analysis method has become a popular tool in hospitality research (Gregory, 2011; Lee, 2016).

Recent research in hospitality RM has demonstrated the use of conjoint analysis in predicting consumer preferences and managers' decision-making processes. Consumer preferences and segmenting markets were investigated based on room rates and rate fences (Guillet et al., 2015); and hotel attributes, such as room rate, star rating, location, brand, and room type (Wong et al., 2002). Lee (2016) employed choice-based conjoint (CBC) analysis to understand the discount decision-making processes employed by hotel managers. This analysis was used to determine Chinese leisure travelers' preferences regarding rate fences

(Guillet et al., 2013); and values of different hotel rate fences with the joint influence of room rates that customers perceived while booking a hotel room (Guillet et al., 2014). Using conjoint analysis, Millar and Baloglu (2011) studied the environmentally friendly attributes that guests prefer to have in a hotel room. A fixed-choice set conjoint analysis was employed by Repetti et al. (2015) to measure hotel customers' preferences for pricing strategies for hotel amenities in the form of a resort fee. In addition, Gregory (2011, 2013) used conjoint analysis to check consumer preference and willingness to pay for vacation ownership (timeshare) products. Moreover, CBC analysis was used to evaluate the optimal online travel agency commission fee (Van der Rest et al., 2016).

Although many studies in the hospitality RM area have used conjoint analysis to investigate customer preferences regarding a hotel room rate, there is no direct empirical evidence or formal study that employed a conjoint analysis to predict relative consumer preferences regarding price and attributes of online hotel reviews for hotel booking decisions.

METHODS

This study employed a CBC method to determine the most influential attribute among room rate, online travel review's rating score and a number of the reviews for making booking decisions, together with the value of each of these attributes for consumers' decision making. CBC is an appropriate technique in this situation as it allows measurement of customer preferences in a common unit (utility scores or part-worth) under the joint effect of other attributes (Orme, 2010). Thus, it makes this method useful for this particular research as previous academic literature indicated that price has a positive correlation with online rating score and number of reviews (Anderson, 2012; Öğüt and Taş, 2012). In this case, the CBC survey method simulated close to real-world trade-off situations in the marketplace. Respondents were presented with several hypothetical scenarios that included various combinations of attributes for a hotel selection (Orme, 2010). Participants could choose one combination of attributes among a few available in each of the scenarios, exactly like they would in a real life situation involving choosing a hotel for their trip (Gregory, 2013).

The attributes and levels examined in the current study are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. *Conjoint attributes and levels*

Attributes	Levels
Online review rating score (out of 5.0)	1.8 2.3 2.8 3.3 3.8 4.3 4.8
Number of reviews by other travelers	4 24 107 256 547 1256 2689
Price (per night) ($)	$90 $100 $110 $120 $130 $140 $150 $200

The average nightly price of a hotel room was determined at US$130 based on the USADR of $129.83 reported by STR for 2018 (HotelNewsNow, 2019). The low and high prices were considered as $90 and $200, respectively, with a $10 spread of the price on either side of the average. The study did not use pricing specific to any particular market, but instead estimated low and high prices in relation to the national average. Such an approach did not require any specific market knowledge from the participants, but allowed respondents to rely on their travel experience in the US in general.

The number of online reviews was determined based on the previous literature. Gavilan et al. (2018) determined that, according to traveler perceptions, 102 represents a low number of reviews, and 913 represents a high number of reviews. The current study utilized an exponential distribution of 2 to produce different levels for the number of reviews. In these calculations, the authors tried to maintain equal representation of the numbers of reviews that fall on each interval suggested by the literature (below 102, between 102 and 913, and above 913). Since the exponential distribution of 2 contains several values under 102, the values were retained using the following logic. The lower boundary value was set at the second power of 2 (4). The upper boundary closest to 102 is the 7th power of 2, which is 128. The upper value was modified to 107 to be closer to the value of 102 recommended in the literature. To select the values between the second and the seventh powers, the third power was skipped, the values of the fourth and the fifth powers were averaged to produce a value of 24, and the sixth power was skipped. After the seventh power, the levels of the variable followed the exponential distribution of 2 closely, but the numbers were slightly manipulated to avoid resemblance of the selected exponential distribution and to create a more realistic look. The levels of this variable were stopped at the eleventh power, generating three values for the lower range, two values for the mid-range, and two values for the upper range of the numbers of reviews.

The levels of the online review rating score were determined based on the available literature and observation of these attributes on one of the most popular hotel online review websites, TripAdvisor. The extant research suggests that the distribution of hotel online reviews is negatively skewed with the majority of the ratings deviating towards the higher scores (Mariani & Borghi, 2018; Racherla et al., 2013). In addition, it was noticed that TripAdvisor averages the scores to the closest half of a star. Using this information, the upper level of the online review rating was set at 4.8 to come close to the perfect score of 5 but avoiding it because the perfect score is hard to achieve and maintain. The following values were determined using a 0.5 leg (4.3, 3.8, and so on), and stopped at 1.8 to reflect the trend of having more higher rated reviews. Overall, the chosen levels of the rating scores and the number of reviews were not extreme, as extreme levels may cause a reduction in believability (Hair et al., 2010).

A study of all possible attributes would require an analysis of 392 scenarios. To avoid frustrating the participants, the number of conjoint sets was reduced using a fractional factorial design (Orme, 2010) and QuestionPro's (online survey software) design functionality. QuestionPro randomly generated various versions of the CBC scenarios from the orthogonal array with a level balance. Every respondent was presented with three independent scenarios that required them to choose a hotel room that they would like to book. Each of the scenarios contained two conjoint choices and one *none* alternative. The *none* option was employed to improve the reliability of the study results.

The questionnaire started with two screening questions that checked whether respondents had stayed in a hotel within the last 12 months and checked at least one online hotel review on a customer travel review website (such as TripAdvisor) before booking a hotel. The survey also contained questions about the travel and sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents. Then each participant was presented with CBC scenarios and asked to choose a room that they would book based on the available alternatives.

To improve the design and external validity of the study, the survey was pilot tested through social media with a sample of 40 individuals. The respondents were asked to indicate on a 7-point Likert scale (from 1 – not realistic at all to 7 – very realistic) the realism level of conjoint scenarios presented to them. The respondents found the conjoint choices highly realistic (M = 5.97, SD = 1.221). Based on the feedback from the pilot test respondents, minor corrections were made to the survey instructions and content wording.

Sample

A survey of US hotel consumers who had stayed at a hotel within the previous 12 months and had checked a hotel review on consumer review websites (such as TripAdvisor) before booking a hotel was conducted. To ensure the accuracy of the study's conjoint instrument design, a sample size based on the formula of Johnson's rule-of-thumb recommended, by Orme (2010), was chosen:

$n*t*a/c > 500$,

where "n is the number of respondents, t is the number of tasks, a is the number of alternatives per task (not including the none alternative)," and "c is the largest number of levels for any attribute" (pp. 64–65). Thus, for this research, a minimum sufficient sample size for producing valid conjoint results of aggregate-level full-profile CBC analysis is 667 respondents. To achieve the desired sample size, a higher number of surveys (total of 900) was collected from travelers with the help of the Amazon Mechanical Turk website. After the data evaluation and cleaning, 851 usable responses were retained for further analysis. According to Goodman et al. (2013), Mechanical Turk generates high-quality, reliable data. It also helps researchers to collect more diverse demographic of respondents than traditional methods.

Data Analysis

In the current study, CBC analysis was used to measure customers' relative preferences for each level of three attributes: online review rating, number of online reviews and room rate. This analysis allows measurement of customer preferences in common units (utility scores or part-worth) under the joint effect of other attributes (Orme, 2010). Part-worth values were computed for each level of each attribute (Orme, 2010). Larger values corresponded to greater preferred levels (Orme, 2010). The attributes with the larger range of part-worth utilities were considered as more important in predicting preference than those with a smaller range of part-worth utilities (Orme, 2010). The hierarchical Bayes technique was used for estimation of individual-level part-worths and aggregated part-worths. Further, based on individual-level part-worths, the best and worst profiles of the attributes for a booking decision were found employing QuestionPro's conjoint simulator (Hair et al., 2010). In addition, market share simulations were performed to explore the value of one point of online review ratings. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data related to travel and sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents.

RESULTS

Almost equal number of males (54.27%) and females (45.73%) participated in the study. More than half the respondents were married, and 39.41% were single. The age of the majority of the respondents (81.18%) was between 18 and 54 years; among them, 46.04% were aged between 25 and 34. Approximately 38% of the respondents had a bachelor's degree, 28% had a master's degree or doctoral degree, and 25% had a two-year college degree or some college education. Around one quarter (26%) of the respondents earned an income of $25,000 or less; all other respondents' household income distribution was relatively even. More than half of the respondents were born in the US (57.19%), 25.45% were born in India, 2.38% in Turkey, and 1.19% in the UK; other countries were represented by 1% or less of the respondents. The demographic statistics for the respondents is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. *Respondents' demographic statistics*

Demographics	%	Demographics	%
Gender		**Education**	
Male	54.27	Less than high school	0.36
Female	45.73	High school/GED	6.51
Age		Some college	17.87
Under 18 years	0.00	2-year college degree	7.81
18 to 24 years	12.54	4-year college degree	38.58
25 to 34 years	46.04	Master's degree	24.02
35 to 44 years	22.60	Doctoral degree	4.14
45 to 54 years	11.12	Professional degree (JD, MD)	0.71
55 to 64 years	6.63		
65 to 74 years	0.95	**Household income**	26.04
75 to 84 years	0.12	under $25,000	11.95
85 years or over	0.00	$25,000–$29,999	9.35
Marital status		$30,000–$34,999	7.10
married	52.66	$35,000–$39,999	8.05
divorced	4.62	$40,000–$49,999	9.70
widowed	1.30	$50,000–$59,999	14.44
separated	1.42	$60,000–$84,999	13.37
single	39.41	Over $85,000	
stepparent	0.59		

The majority of the respondents (56.73%) stayed in a hotel from 1–10 nights a year. A total of 68.14% stayed in a hotel less than three months before participating in the survey. More than 70% see themselves as *savvy travelers*. About 17% travel for business, while 47.86% travel for pleasure, and 35.26% travel for both. More than 39% of the respondents spend between $50 and $100, and 38.90% pay $101–$150 per night at a hotel. The majority of the respondents check online reviews about a hotel before booking most of the time (30.38%) or always (29.80%). More than 80% of respondents indicated they trust other travelers' reviews about hotels.

Conjoint Results

The CBC analysis revealed that the most important attribute for respondents' booking decision is the online evaluation score (49% of relative importance). Moreover, the positive influence on their decision had a rating over 3.3 out of five. The importance level of a room rate was found to be 29%, making it the second most important factor for booking choice. A price higher than $130 per night had negative effect on booking decision.

The least influential attribute for booking the hotel among those included in the study was the number of online reviews (22% of relative importance). The number of the reviews greater than 107 had a positive impact on a hotel choice (see Table 3).

Table 3. *Relative attribute importance and the levels' part-worths*

Attributes	Relative Importance	Levels	Part-worth
Online review rating score (out of 5.0)	49%	1.8	-1.37
		2.3	-1.04
		2.8	-0.64
		3.3	0.08
		3.8	0.54
		4.3	1.08
		4.8	1.35
Number of reviews by other travelers	22%	4	-0.82
		24	-0.30
		107	-0.01
		256	0.33
		547	0.14
		1256	0.30
		2689	0.36
Price (per night) ($)	29%	$90	0.65
		$100	0.78
		$110	0.42
		$120	0.03
		$130	0.01
		$140	-0.43
		$150	-0.49
		$200	-0.97

Generated by the conjoint simulator, the best profile of hotel attributes for a booking decision included 1258 online reviews by other travelers, an online rating score of 4.8 out of 5.0, and a price of US$100 per night (see Table 4). Conversely, the worst profile of attributes for a booking decision was a combination of four online reviews, an online rating score of 1.8 out of 5.0, and a price US$200 per night (see Table 4).

Table 4. *Best and worst profiles of the levels of attributes*

Best Profile		Worst Profile	
Attribute	Level	Attribute	Level
Online review rating score (out of 5.0)	4.8	Online review rating score (out of 5.0)	1.8
Number of reviews by other travelers	1256	Number of reviews by other travelers	4
Price (per night) ($)	$100	Price (per night) ($)	$200

The results of 168 market share simulations revealed that a one-point increase in the online rating, while price and number of reviews were fixed, increased market share percentage, particularly in the case of the best profile combination price $100 and 1256 reviews. The market share of the hypothetical hotel (later *hotel*) with an online rating score of 2.8 out of 5.0 was greater than one with an online rating score of 1.8 out of 5.0 with an 11.90% difference (see Table 5). When one of the *hotels* had an online rating of 2.8 out of 5.0 and the other one had 3.8 out of 5.0 with the same room rate and a number of online reviews, their market share was 32.63% and 67.37% respectively. The *hotel* with an online review rating of 3.8 out of 5.0 had 11.42% less of market share than a *hotel* with an online rating score of 4.8 out of 5.0 while keeping price and number of reviews constant (see Table 5). All market share simulations indicated a greater difference in market share between hypothetical hotels with an online rating of 2.8 and 3.8 than between those with a rating score of 1.8 and 2.8 or 3.8 and 4.8.

Table 5. *Market share simulation results for the best profile combination of price and number of online reviews*

Price	Number of Online Reviews	Online Rating Score of Concept 1	Online Rating Score of Concept 2	Market Share of Concept 1	Market Share of Concept 2	Difference in Market Share
$100	**1254**	1.8	2.8	44.05%	55.95%	11.90%
		2.8	3.8	32.63%	67.37%	34.74%
		3.8	4.8	44.29%	55.71%	11.42%

Furthermore, the majority of respondents indicated that they were willing to pay more for a hotel if it had a one point higher online review evaluation score: 8.98% of respondents would pay US$5 more, 21.98% would pay US$10 more, 17.38% agreed to pay US$30 more. Only 9.55% of the respondents would not pay more for a hotel with higher online rating score.

DISCUSSION

Conclusions

This study examined three hotel attributes (price, number of online reviews and overall review rating) in terms of importance for customers' booking decisions. The results of the study indicate that the hotel room price is not the main factor for customer decision making. It is only the second attribute that customers take into consideration when choosing a hotel. The online hotel review rating is the most important attribute in the hotel selection. The number of reviews is less important than online rating and price, but still has a significant influence on a booking decision.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that optimal levels are at least 3.3 out of 5.0 for an online review, $130 per night or lower, and more than 100 reviews. The best profile of the hotel attributes for a customer's booking decision included 1258 online reviews by other travelers, an online rating score of 4.8 out of 5.0, and a price of US$100 per night. The worst hotel profile described a property with a 1.8 average rating based on four reviews, and a room rate of $200. It is interesting to note that while the worst hotel profile included most *undesirable* attributes that were included in the study (the lowest ranking and number of reviews, and the highest price), the best profile did not include all *best* attributes. The $100 price was below the US market average; however, it was not the lowest possible price included in the study. Similarly, the number of reviews (1256) corresponds with the high number of reviews, according to Gavilan et al. (2018), but does not require it to go higher.

Furthermore, the results of market share simulations reveal that only a one-point change in the online review rating score might significantly change the hotel market share (see Table 5). The results appear to be the most impactful when the review score crosses the line from an undesirable category into a desirable one. The current study determined the turning point in online review ratings at 3.3 out of 5.0. When the simulation results remained below (1.8 and 2.8) or above (3.8 and 4.8) this value, the forecast market share change was approximately 11%. However, when the simulation scenario crossed the 3.3 line, moving from 2.8 to 3.3, the results suggested a jump in acquired market share of 34%.

The findings of this study are in line with previous research (Book, Tanford, Montgomery, & Love, 2015; Noone & McGuire, 2013a) that suggest online traveler reviews are a major and powerful source of hotel booking intentions and a more influential factor than the hotel price (Noone

& McGuire, 2013a, 2013b). These findings reflect the highest importance of the online review rating score among the three attributes as well as confirming the findings of earlier studies (Anderson, 2012; Öğüt & Taş, 2012) that a hotel can increase the price for rooms and still maintain the same level of sales/occupancy if it has a certain high level of online reputation.

The optimal, best, and worst combinations of price, rating score, and number of online reviews found in this study should not be considered as *thresholds*, but rather as indicative levels, because the results were gained based on an experiment that included specific discrete combinations of three hotel attributes (see Table 1). Instead, researchers and practitioners should view the combinations of the hotel attributes presented in this study as reference points with a zone of tolerance; when implemented in practice, these points should be evaluated to reflect the specific characteristics of each hotel.

Theoretical Contributions

The fundamental theoretical contribution that distinguishes the current study from similar studies is that it provides the optimal combination of online review rating score (out of 5.0), number of reviews by other travelers, price per night ($), and the relative importance of each attribute for hotel room selection. Moreover, although other studies (Leong, et al., 2017; Mauri & Minazzi, 2013; Öğüt & Taş, 2012; Torres et al., 2015; Ye et al., 2011; Zhang et al., 2016; Zhao et al., 2015) mentioned the importance of the online review rating score, number of reviews and price, they could not sort these three attributes by their importance. The current study was able to accomplish this task by using experimental design and CBC analysis.

Another contribution of this research is that it utilized a CBC method for defining relative importance of price and online review attributes. This method is found to be very effective in predicting the preferences and relative importance of the studied variables for the customers (Orme, 2010). Furthermore, "attributes whose impacts are immediate and concrete come to the fore compared to those that are distant or abstract [rating or ranking tasks]" (Huber, 1997, p. 8). In addition, CBC is a preferred method compared to other types of conjoint analysis (Orme, 2010). When choice-based questions are provided, it becomes more powerful than analysis of traditional full profile questions. While the full-profile conjoint analysis is characterized by simultaneous presentation of a large number of product profiles, the CBC survey method simulates close to real-world trade-off situations in the marketplace. Therefore, the CBC method is more aligned with customer behavior when choosing a hotel room. Since this study utilized the choice tasks as sets of products in a competitive context, it contributes to the current literature by providing better and reliable results.

Managerial Implications

The results of this study suggest that online reviews may be considered and used as one of the strategic levers of RM. Since online review attributes were investigated in relation to hotel price in this study, three key conclusions may be made. First, if a hotel does not reach a certain desired level of online review ratings, it may lose the opportunity to compete on price. The relative importance of the studied attributes, as well as the simulation results, substantiate this conclusion. Second, hotels may earn a higher market share when their average review score increases. Third, hotels may integrate online review score as a factor in their pricing decisions.

The study provides the following suggestions for hospitality managers. Traditionally, hotels have built their pricing strategies on "forecasted levels of demand, the price elasticity of demand, or competitors' prices" (Nieto-García et al., 2017, p. 73). However, this study's findings, as is the case for many other studies (e.g. Book, Tanford, Montgomery, & Love, 2015; Nieto-García et al., 2017; Noone & McGuire, 2013a, 2013b), suggest that online reviews play an important role in customers' hotel booking decisions and should be taken into consideration in hotel pricing strategies. First, hotel operators should adjust their dynamic pricing practices depending on the online review rating score as, according to this study's results, the rating score is more important than price and number of reviews for travelers' hotel booking decisions. In addition, managers should always bear in mind that every additional one point of online rating score may increase their market share significantly.

The number of online reviews was found to be the least important attribute in comparison with online review rating score and price. However, this does not suggest that managers should not make an effort to increase the volume of the guest reviews in social media. The overall online review rating score can be increased by increasing the number of positive reviews. Therefore, hotel managers should encourage satisfied guests to leave feedback about their hotel on social media. Thus, their online rating will increase, allowing the hotel to raise prices.

In addition, the optimal combination of factors introduced in this study may help hotel managers to maintain a balance between attributes of travelers' online reviews and price and indicate the potential reason for an increase/decrease in bookings. These results may be used by the hotel groups, which includes all classifications of hotel, and serve travelers who have different characteristics and come from different sociodemographic backgrounds to determine their current situation in the market.

Limitations and Future Research

Several points should be discussed as they could be limitations of this study. First, the average nightly price for a hotel room in the US was taken as an average for all types of hotels. However, this study did not take into consideration classifications of hotels (e.g. star ratings, level of services, size, target markets, and chain scales). If these classifications of hotel are added to the study, based on Johnson's rule-of-thumb, a significant number of respondents is required, which is not feasible to achieve due to time and resource constraints (Orme, 2010). However, future studies may consider evaluating the studied variables in narrower contexts.

Although gender was almost equally distributed in the sample, respondents were not equally distributed in terms of travel purpose, length of stay and their latest travel before participating in the survey. Therefore, comparisons based on sub-categories' demographic features (e.g. travel purpose and length of stay) could not be included in the study. Thus, this research demonstrated the aggregate importance structure for all types of hotels and all types of travelers. However, this one-size-fits-all targeting approach is another limitation of this study.

Future studies may include segmentation analysis to compare differences in classification of hotels, demographics and characteristics of travelers. In addition, a cluster analysis could be run after reporting aggregated results to discover the difference in the attributes' importance for different homogeneous groups of respondents. It may help revenue managers to understand the market and build price strategies based on results. Moreover, similar research may be conducted in different geographical destinations. Thus, the importance of the attributes may be observed regarding different segments and groups.

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