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COVID-19, WINE ROUTES, CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND RESILIENCE AMONGST RURAL WINE TOURISM BUSINESSES

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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on wine route related rural tourism along two Portuguese wine routes, as perceived by agents of supply on those routes. Discourses from 47 interviews are subjected to content analysis, considering impact perception and crisis management approaches. The results highlight COVID-19's impacts on wine tourism businesses, including financial losses, negative emotions and systemic effects, the latter illustrating the chain of adverse effects caused by COVID-19. Many uncoordinated strategies employed to cope with the pandemic are noted. The research suggests that perceived impacts of COVID-19 relate to business profiles, to the regional context, to the stage of the crisis and specific strategies adopted. The theoretical and practical implications for future tourism management, especially in the context of wine and rural tourism, as well as sustainable tourism, are discussed, including the need for social capital creation, partnership work and product development through innovation.

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INTRODUCTION

As this paper was being written, tourism was and is in crisis. Many commentators expect the COVID-19 pandemic to change whole societies and their economies totally. Margaret MacMillan, historian and professor at the Universities of Oxford and Toronto, writing in May, 2020 said: "the pandemic is a turning point in history. The crisis exposes our weaknesses. Will our leaders choose reform or calamity?" (MacMillan, 2020).

How might tourism be affected? Will progress towards more sustainable forms of tourism stop or accelerate? Will some forms of tourism be affected more than others? Gössling et al. (2021) give early reactions to many tourism and COVID-19 issues based on published sources. Nevertheless, no research was found that addresses explicitly how relevant specific forms of tourism such as wine and rural tourism are affected by, or react, to that crisis. This paper looks at new, specific, and detailed research on crisis management by tourism providers on two wine routes in rural Portugal, assessing the impacts they felt, their "real world" reactions, the implications for other wine routes, and for rural tourism in general, regarding COVID-19 and other potential crises.

LITERATURE REVIEW

COVID-19 – Risks and Resilience

COVID-19, a new type of coronavirus, with high rates of propagation even before diagnosis, began in China, apparently in December 2019 and quickly spread worldwide (WHO, 2020a). With case numbers increasing exponentially, on March 11th 2020, the World Health Organization declared it a pandemic affecting the whole world population (WHO, 2020b). As its spread accelerated, jeopardizing public health systems, measures were put in place to prevent its propagation. In many countries, mandatory "lockdowns[2]" were decreed, and borders closed (Gössling et al., 2021). With many public spaces and businesses closed, there were severe immediate repercussions, such as rising unemployment (Forbes, 2020). Social distancing became the new responsible behaviour, together with using facemasks, sanitisers, and disinfectants. (WHO, 2020c).

[2] The term "lockdown" refers to periods when the state seriously restricts activities, typically including non-essential travel, staying overnight in accommodation other than your own, going to bars and restaurants, closing non-food shops, entertainment, etc.

The prophylactic measures taken by many countries have had abrupt economic impacts: markets have stalled, enterprises have gone bankrupt, an unprecedented global economic recession is predicted, with rising unemployment (Statista, 2020a). This situation is aggravated in countries and regions that have economies that primarily rely on tourism (Statista, 2020b). Global tourism revenues could fall by around 20% (Statista, 2020c), requiring new resilience strategies amongst tourism stakeholders.

Crisis Management in Tourism

According to Blake and Sinclair (2003), tourism demand is susceptible to security and health concerns. The pandemic highlights the urgent need for widespread strategic action to prepare for future threats to health, tourism, and social well-being (Jamal & Budke, 2020).

'Crisis management' is well researched in the tourism literature. It is based on coping with situations that are unwanted, unpredicted, extraordinary, and almost uncontrollable, instigating widespread disbelief and discomfort (Rosenthal et al., 1989). COVID-19 is clearly a tourism crisis for all forms of tourism, including wine and rural tourism, as discussed below. It also has increasing relevance for the concept of sustainable tourism.

Most tourism crisis management models are influenced by Mitroff's model classifying organizations as either 'crisis prone' or 'crisis prepared' (Pearson & Mitroff, 1993). Mitroff's model has six stages: signal detection, preparation, prevention, containment (damage limitation), business recovery, learning and redesign. The tourism literature is more concerned with emergent crises and takes a resource-based approach, focusing on personnel training, equipment, and crisis response planning (Paraskevas & Quek, 2019).

Risk, the quantified expression of an organization's vulnerability to hazards/ threats, refers to potential future crises, "whereas a crisis occurs now, is characterized by ambiguity of cause, effect and means of resolution and necessitates immediate action" (Paraskevas & Quek, 2019, p. 420). Risk and crisis management are complementary learning-based stages that seek to limit the consequences of disruption and then bring recovery. This capacity – referred to as "resilience" - is "a function of an organization's overall situation awareness, management of keystone vulnerabilities and adaptive capacity in a complex, dynamic and interconnected environment" (McManus et al., 2008, p.82). Cartier and Taylor (2020) argue that a destination’s resilience depends on decision-making practices surrounding the reduction of disaster impacts, involving all destination stakeholders. Recovery depends on a holistic view of how economic losses are minimized without compromising a region’s natural and human resources. A crisis can, however, despite losses, also be an opportunity to gain resilience through wise “post-disaster reconstruction”, involving new tourism enterprises, management, projects and enhanced social capital (Nian et al., 2019). Resilience in tourism destinations, making them more capable of handling crises, could imply significant changes in: (1) tourism facilities, services, and infrastructure; (2) environmental and cultural tourism resources; (3) tourist markets; and (4) skilled employees (Lew, 2014).

Success depends on timely communication, creating a collective community spirit, and support for future disaster management activity plans at the community level (Cartier & Taylor, 2020). A community's resilience thus reflects on its ability to adapt collectively to catastrophes, which positively correlates with its post-catastrophe recovery and transformation, and a destination’s ability to handle successfully impacts and stress related events (Tsao & Ni, 2016).

A crisis precipitates complex, changing situations where standard rules of action for the organization are suspended and other tasks take priority. Laws et al. (2007) write that crisis solutions may involve the entire community, other organizations, and government agencies, each having their ways of operating and set of priorities. This complex managerial environment calls for destination coordination and a common future vision, i.e., strong whole destination governance (Laws et al., 2007).

Policymakers are confronted with three central issues relevant to any downturn in tourism activity (Blake & Sinclair, 2003): (a) whether the downturn is sufficiently large to merit offsetting measures; (b) the duration of the downturn; and (c) choice of recovery policies and their implementation. In their study of the September 11 terrorist attacks, Blake and Sinclair (2003) concluded that sector-specific targeted subsidies and tax reductions were the most effective in handling the crisis, policies which perhaps are also appropriate for the COVID-19 crisis.

Previous research on health crisis management in tourism, related to COVID-19 or diseases such as SARS (Henderson, 2004; Kim et al., 2005) shows that tourism businesses may have to: cancel activities; take special measures concerning human resources (e.g. unpaid leaves); adopt hygiene measures (e.g. face masks); ensure social distancing (e.g. placing tables further apart); adopt other measures (e.g. taking visitor temperatures); train staff; focus on domestic markets and lower prices. It also highlights the need to redesign marketing strategies (e.g. developing joint marketing campaigns), transmit confidence to visitors (e.g. through safety certificates) and develop coordinated actions with other organisations. Some research concerning COVID-19, mainly research agendas or summaries of guidelines (e.g. Sigala, 2020; Zenker & Kock, 2020), also suggest that some of these strategies, such as staff training and coordinated action, as well as relying more on online and social media promotion, will be important approaches in this pandemic period. However, there are, so far, few studies that identify the strategies adopted by tourism supply agents in this crisis. This is especially true for wine tourism and associated types of rural tourism.

Wine Tourism in Crisis? Challenges and Opportunities

Anecdotal, but un-researched, evidence from rural tourism destinations in Europe suggests that most forms of rural tourism could be relatively unaffected in the long term by COVID-19. Rural tourism activities – walking, climbing, horse riding, bird watching, farm visits, etc, are outdoors (Lane, 1994, 2020), reducing perceived risks of infection, compared to large resorts and crowded cities.

Wine tourism is a form of rural tourism involving visits to wine-producing areas and to attractions such as wineries and wine-related events; wine is, the, or one of the main motivations for the rural visit (Charters & Ali-Knight, 2002; Hall et al., 2000). More holistic rural wine tourism experiences are sometimes conceptualized as "Terroir Tourism" (Holland et al., 2017). Wine tourism, and wine routes, have strong roles in sustainable rural development, benefiting not just wine producers but also many other economic, social, and cultural rural activities (Guedes & Joukes, 2015; Pellin & Vieira, 2015).

From a supply-side perspective, wine tourism focus on activities increasing wine sales, especially in European countries with long wine traditions. Wine tourism, like many other forms of rural tourism, is a diversification and sustainable development tool (Correia et al., 2014). Many producers still consider the wine business their primary activity, with wine tourism creating a useful promotional or branding effect (Bruwer et al., 2013). During the pandemic crisis, with social distancing and mobility constraints, the provision of wine tourism activities, particularly those taking tourist groups with close contact between winery staff and travellers, probably required numerous safety measures. Some producers, therefore, closed their tourism activities and focused on wine production. Others say that, in certain circumstances, even during the pandemic, new tourism opportunities may arise, paying off in the post-COVID-19 future. Nevertheless, further research is needed to provide a full understanding of: (a) the challenges brought to rural wine tourism businesses and territories by the constantly changing COVID-19 context; (b) longer-term market trends in tourism that may be stimulated by today's restrictions and redefinitions of tourism and lifestyles in general and (c) other potential benefits and reforms.

Some rural wine terroir visitors' motivations may, indeed, present a search for a distinct type of tourism, a quest for unique, personalized experiences in rural, non-crowded territories, with opportunities to escape and make contact with nature, enjoying beautiful landscapes (Carneiro et al., 2015; López-Guzmán et al., 2014; Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2012; Ye et al., 2017). Additionally, an increasing search for the local and particular, rather than the global and standardized, associated with the quest for authenticity, is visible in tourism in general (Kastenholz, 2018) and food tourism in particular (Sidali et al., 2015). This trend also relates to 'slow tourism', the search for locally shaped, 'authentic' tourist experiences enjoyed sincerely and slowly (Oh et al., 2016).

Although tourism demand is suffering greatly from COVID-19, many individuals may feel the urge to travel again, and (see earlier), that may favour rural wine tourism destinations as safe non-congested places that offer contact with nature. The risks associated with wine tourism in a pandemic scenario differ according to the activities offered. Indoor activities, such as winery or wine museum visits (Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2012) demand carefully demarcated social distancing, but outdoor activities such as walking or cycling through vineyards (Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2012) imply much less risk. Some activities, like tasting wines, having a meal in a winery and participating in winemaking activities (e.g. López-Guzmán et al., 2014; Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2012; Ye et al., 2017), bring particular challenges since visitors touch and manipulate products, equipment, and objects. There is also a strong social element because of the highly appreciated direct contacts with winemakers (Bruwer & Rueger-Muck, 2019): specific visitor management measures are required. Furthermore, a wine tourism trip may include activities in different places managed by different suppliers; the pandemic may require enhanced supplier/ network coordination to ensure safe experiences, essential for the entire destination and its image. The empirical research in this paper provides a deeper analysis of these issues as seen by suppliers coping with the crisis. The findings below explore what is probably the first detailed research evidence of the impacts of COVID-19 felt by businesses working in wine tourism in rural areas and the strategies adopted to deal with these impacts.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study uses data collected during a research project on wine tourism experiences in rural areas, specifically data from two wine routes in Central Portugal, the Bairrada Region (between Aveiro and Coimbra) and the Dão Region (near Viseu). The project[3] comprehensively studies facets of the rural wine tourism experience, as co-created by supply, communities and markets, living and sharing such experiences, considering views from all stakeholders involved.

Data were collected and analysed using ongoing in-depth interviews with wine tourism suppliers. Wine route stakeholders interviewed for this paper included wine producers offering traditional wine tasting, selling and winery tours, accommodation unit owners, restaurant managers, tour operators/ agents and companies with two or more of these business types. In total, 47 interviews were done, 24 on the Dão route and 23 on the Bairrada route. Most interviewees (n = 33) were interviewed during the lockdown and 14 were done post lockdown. Qualitative data collection was particularly suitable for this study to: (a) obtain rich in-depth information regarding the development of relatively recent activities and innovative approaches in emerging wine tourism destinations; (b) understand the perception of complex and subjectively lived wine tourism experiences and dynamics from the perspectives of agents of supply; and very particularly (c) assess the perceptions and intentions of tourism suppliers now facing an unforeseen, hard-to-manage crisis (Mohajan, 2018).

After assessing the profiles of respondents and their business, the interviews addressed respondents' views regarding the impact and management approaches for coping with the pandemic crisis, asking: (a) What impact is COVID-19 having on your business?; and (b) What approaches or measures might you soon implement to cope with the pandemic?

Interviews, lasting 40 to 90 minutes each, were undertaken online or via telephone. Data collection coincided with the COVID-lockdown phase in Portugal, being carried out from March 16th to May 29th, 2020.

[3] This paper is a partial result of the three-year research project financed by the Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia (co-financed by COMPETE 2020 and FEDER), «TWINE – Co-creating sustainable Tourism & WINe Experiences in rural areas», initiated in June 2018.

Discourses were recorded, with respondents' authorization, and transcribed, resulting in c. 36,000 words uploaded for analysis on an NVivo database. This data was subsequently coded and subjected to content analysis using NVivo 12. For codification, previously identified key concepts from the literature and media debate were used as initial codes, with other codes emerging from the interpretation and codification process. Codes and sub-codes were constantly reviewed for consistency and recoded when necessary (Miles et al., 2014). To assure reliability, two authors coded all narratives together and, when necessary, a third author was consulted to overcome lack of agreement. The content analysis followed an interpretive perspective, with overlapping content observable and the same comment possibly being coded into more than one category.

NVivo provided the frequency of references of categories coded, 'encoding matrix queries' (relations between variables, for example, frequency of categories by gender), frequency of words (word cloud and word trees), and the correlation between categories (based on Pearson's coefficient). Finally, results were presented and discussed using examples of narratives extracted from the analysed comments, always protecting the respondent's identity.

RESULTS

Interviewees' Profiles

To assess the numerous perspectives across diverse types of tourism businesses, a range of agents of supply were interviewed (see Table 1): 29 wine producers offering traditional wine tasting, selling and winery tours; six accommodation owners; four restaurant managers, five tour operators/ agents, and three companies with two or more of some of these business types. In total, 47 interviews were carried out, 24 on the Dão wine route and 23 on the Bairrada wine route. Respondents mainly were aged over 40 and had completed higher education. On the Dão route women predominated; on the Bairrada, men predominated.

Word cloud

A word cloud reveals words most often used in a text, the size of each word indicating its importance. The word cloud shown in Figure 1 illustrates the most frequent words used in the narratives of wine tourism suppliers. These words are, in decreasing order of importance: act (fazer) (1.2% of total references), wine (0.7%), restaurant(s) (0.7%), market (0.5%), client (0.5%), moment (0.5%), price (0.3%), selling (0.3%), company (0.3%), online (0.3%), problem (0.3%), time (0.3%), and impact (0.2%).

These results show that suppliers now live in a period that urges timely action to respond to the pandemic's impacts. Wines are amongst the main products of these regions, but their sales are highly dependent on the activity of restaurants, often tourist related. There is a concern to reactivate the markets, with price and sales strategies to attract customers, increasingly adopting online strategies to solve problems and counter the pandemic's impacts, in part switching from wine tourism to wine selling.

Table 1. *Sample Characterization*

	Bairrada Wine Route	Dão Wine Route	Total
Type of business			
Wine producer	15	14	29
Accommodation	2	4	6
Restaurant	2	2	4
Tour operators/ agencies	2	3	5
Companies with two or more business types	2	1	3
Gender			
Male	16	7	23
Female	7	17	24
Age			
below 40	4	6	10
40 years or above	19	18	37
Higher education			
Yes	13	19	32
No	2	1	3

Figure 1. *Word cloud*

Impacts of COVID-19 on Wine Tourism

Views on the impacts of COVID-19 are presented in Table 2. They refer to impacts on a) agents' internal operations, b) their markets/ customers, c) the entire value chain/ system and d) managers'/owners' personal beliefs.

Table 2. *Perceived impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic – Category tree and respective absolute frequencies (n = 47 interviewees)*

Category	Description: *SUPPLIERS COMMENT*	Number of interviews	Number of references
	IMPACTS ON AGENTS' INTERNAL OPERATIONS:		
Increased responsibilities/work load	COVID-19 added responsibilities/ tasks	4	6
Lack of storage capacity	lack of space to store new harvested wine	7	8
Financial effects	TOTAL	47	96
Financial losses	financial losses due to COVID-19	46	85
Unexpected spend	unexpected expenses in dealing with COVID-19	6	11
	IMPACTS ON CONSUMERS / MARKETS:		
Incompatibility	inconsistency between the product (wine), its social nature and COVID-19 constraints	2	3
Disturbed experience	compliance with new rules disturbs customer experience	3	3
New demand requirements	new demands of clients (actual; anticipated)	4	4
	IMPACTS ON THE SYSTEM / DESTINATION/VALUE CHAIN:		
Systemic effect	interaction between consequences of COVID-19.	31	57
	IMPACTS ON MANAGERS' / OWNERS' PERSONAL BELIEFS:		
Emotional tone	Emotional tone in suppliers' narratives.	47	174
Negative	TOTAL	47	117
Discontent/contestation	Suppliers: express discontent, distrust or incomprehension of government and public institutions	6	11
Disappointment	… describes a scenario that removes high expectations for the current year	13	16
Uncertainty	… are doubtful	18	33
Fear	… are afraid / refer to the fear of others	13	21
Anxiety	… are stressed/ refer to the stress of others	7	9
Pessimism	… are pessimistic	12	20
Sadness	… express sadness	2	2
Anger/revolt	… express anger / revolt	4	5
Positive	TOTAL	35	57
Acceptance	Suppliers: are resigned to or accept the new circumstances	8	11
Optimism, hope	… are optimistic or confident	16	27
Resilience	… show the ability to face adversity	11	19

With regards to the impact of COVID-19, suppliers refer, above all, to direct impacts on their own businesses, particularly to severe financial losses (n = 85): *"We had brutal drops in our income, in our sales abroad, all those existing were cancelled. It had a tremendously negative impact". (Wine producer, Bairrada)*

Six supply agents also pointed to unexpected expenses (n = 11) (e.g., purchase of new protective equipment such as masks and disinfectant). One accommodation manager remarked: *"Those who live on it are trying to take action, but those who don't live on it are wondering if the investments they have to* *make and the opening costs will pay off, which is our case. Our costs are too high..."* (Accommodation owner, Bairrada)

Associated with additional costs are increased responsibilities and new tasks (*n* = 6) due to the pandemic. Other relevant impacts on businesses referred to lack of wine storage capacity, (*n* = 8): *"I have a cellar full of wine and I have nowhere to put the next harvest. This is happening with more than 50% of producers".* (Wine producer, Bairrada)

Another massively recognized impact is the pandemic's systemic effect (*n* = 57), i.e. the highlighted interdependence of adverse crisis-linked effects amongst different agents of supply and at regional, national and even global scale: *"The national market is largely paralyzed because we work through regional distributors. We have someone who distributes [our wines] in the Algarve, in Lisbon and, as you know, these distributors have the restaurants and some stores as main customers and all these activities have suffered tremendously from this situation and continue to suffer because naturally the here predominant customers being international tourists who are not going to a country with very alarming numbers".* (Wine producer, Bairrada)

Only a few remarked-on impacts on consumers and markets. For example, some suppliers consider that COVID-19 has created incompatibility between their main product (wine), what it represents and the general state of mind of their clients (*n* = 3): *"(…) people are also desolated; they do not have a great appetite for drinking and end up drinking what they have in the cellar. Not going to the restaurant, not going to the street ... There are no celebrations at all, it's sad ... our business represents joy, celebrating ..."* (Wine producer, Bairrada).

Tourists were felt to be disturbed by the rules imposed to deal with COVID-19 (*n* = 3), as described by a restaurant owner: *"the tables are not set, we have to set them on the spot, which is horrible, it is very impersonal and it gets hideous. The serviettes have to be put on the spot, the cutlery, the glasses, that is, the tables are on display are visible and it is very ugly …"* (Restaurant, Dão). Some also reported visitor fears about getting a guaranteed safe experience, e.g.: *"Portuguese people started asking a lot of questions and the question they asked most was about the pool, whether the pool was in common use or whether it was private, which in this case it is not, it is common to [several] houses…"* (Accommodation owner, Dão)

All suppliers expressed negative emotional reactions to the pandemic: sadness, revolt, discontentment, anxiety, disillusion, pessimism, fear and uncertainty – the last three being the most evident with 20, 21 and

33 references, respectively. An interviewee from the Dão wine route said: *"This is a year to forget. I put that in my head to hurt less. I got it in my head that we would only work for next year, losing the summer. I think we lost everything".* (Wine producer, Dão)

The positive emotional tone is represented by acceptance, resilience and optimism/ hope, the latter being the most evident (*n* = 27), as visible, for example, in the answer of an interviewee: *"But let's hope that this is going to get better, everyone says it will pass and it will get better and I am an optimist by nature".* (Wine producer, Bairrada).

Management Approaches Adopted by Wine Tourism-Related Businesses

Data reveal the strategies and approaches adopted by wine tourism-related businesses, that may be classified according to the Mitroff model's different stages (Pearson & Mitroff, 1993, see section 2.2.), namely 1) Prevention, 2) Containment (damage limitation), 3) Learning and redesign and 4) Business recovery. It is noteworthy that these stages often overlap; for example, a learning and redesign measure can be simultaneously a containment effort, while planning activities are also future-orientated, imply analytical learning and present the basis for the redesign. Management strategies in the containment stage are the most prominent, as documented in interviewees' discourses in Table 3.

Table 3. *Approaches adopted by wine tourism-related businesses – Category tree and respective absolute frequencies (n = 47 interviews)*

Category	Description *SUPPLIERS*	Number of interviews	Number of references
PREVENTION	… note that they had prepared in some way for situations of difficulty or crisis	4	5
CONTAINMENT (damage limitation)	Actions were taken to limit pandemic crisis spread	47	311
Passivity		**14**	**17**
Devaluing the problem	Suppliers dismiss the problem.	1	2
Waiting for it to pass	…. have a passive attitude towards the problem, expecting an external change that might solve their business problems	7	9
External control locus/ Visitor behaviour	… value the behaviour of customers for the evolution of the situation	6	6
Planning	**Set of strategies enhancing the analytical capacity of suppliers about the COVID-19 context**	**31**	**43**
Analyse the situation	Suppliers think about the COVID-19 situation, try to understand, look for expertise (e.g., training), place comprehensive hypotheses	14	19
Privileging the sale of wine over wine tourism	…favour the sale of wine, placing wine tourism second	4	5
Cancellation of planned investments	Suppliers cancel planned investments	2	3
Recognition of the need for change	… recognizing the need for change to adapt to new realities, even if doing nothing concrete yet	8	13
Follow other models	… observe what colleagues are doing, seek to adopt/ import existing models to face the pandemic	3	3

Human resources	**Impact described at HR level**	**13**	**16**
Dismissals	Suppliers dismiss employees not needed	2	3
Lay-off	or lay-off staff	2	2
Homeworking	Adopt teleworking when possible	3	3
Training	Investment in training.	6	8
Finance	**Strategies referred to financial aspects**	**3**	**4**
Financial support (subsidies and tax reductions)	Activation/use of specific financial or social state support	3	4
Operational strategies	**Diverse operational measures including**	**95**	**140**
Face-to-face work activity	Regulate face-to-face components of the business	28	34
Acquisition of new equipment	Investment in further protection (e.g., masks) and signage equipment	5	9
Social distance	Measures to improve social distancing (e.g., reducing the capacity of spaces)	12	25
Hygiene measures	Adoption of sanitary measures	18	31
Protection, involvement with the community/ solidarity actions	Involvement in solidarity actions to combat COVID-19 or valuing those "on the front line"	2	5
Signage	Investment in signage reminding visitors of safety norms/ behaviours	2	2
Temporary closure	Temporarily close business activity (optional or mandatory)	22	27
Keeping the business open	Maintain face-to-face activity during lockdown	5	6
Work schedule change	Adapt work schedules to the COVID-19 context	1	1
Marketing		**72**	**96**
Markets	Type of privileged marketing during pandemic	14	21
International		3	4
National/Local		11	17
Experience design		31	39
Strengthen the relationship or face-to-face contact	Valuing personal contact with consumers or distributors.	2	3
Authentic experiences	Promoting authentic, unique experiences	2	2
Outdoors/ Nature	Favouring outdoor spaces for activities	9	11
Smaller groups	Offering personalized service	4	4
Transmitting confidence to visitors	Promoting a feeling of security (e.g., acquiring the official certificate *Clean & Safe*)	14	19
Communication and Distribution		21	28
Digital communication	Invest in the online presence (e.g., social networks)	7	8
Large commercial areas	…seeking to sell products in large commercial areas	2	3
Search for customers	…try to recruit "door to door" customers	1	1
Sales promotions	...adjust prices to target market identified during the pandemic or adapt offer	8	13
Take away and delivery services	…develop or favour takeaway or delivery services	3	3
online market	…using the online market as an alternative to face-to-face sales	12	18
Evaluation of online market as insufficient	… assess the online market as insufficient to cover financial losses due to COVID-19	8	11
Prices	Price impact	6	8
Increase prices	Need to increase prices	2	2
Lower prices	Need to lower prices	4	6
BUSINESS RECOVERY	Suppliers show signs of business recovery	8	10
LEARNING AND REDESIGN	… reveal learning (better prepared for future crises) and proactivity (opportunity to reinvent the business)	16	24

Prevention (n = 5)

Few interviewees mentioned that they had prepared for a possible crisis by saving for unforeseen difficulties: a wine producer said: *"I am spending money from a secured account that I had previously from last year … and now I am using it"*. (Wine producer, Bairrada).

Containment / lockdown (n = 311)

The aspects mentioned here show interviewees' concern with the most significant impacts of the pandemic. Financial problems resulting from the compulsory shutdown, decrease in demand, and new operational requirements were preeminent issues. The following strategies were the most evident:

Because the pandemic was totally unexpected, it requires careful and continuous monitoring, analysis, planning and sometimes radical changes (*n* = 43); in the words of this interviewee: *"We are rethinking the whole commercial strategy".* (Wine producer, Dão)

Many supply agents (*n* = 34) adopted strategies to regulate the face-to-face component of their business. Most businesses temporarily closed, at least during the lockdown (*n* = 27), e.g.: *"In wine tourism, it [business] stopped completely, even by our decision, even though we had the opportunity to reopen doors little by little, we decided for the sake of conscience and protection of our team and our work not to open the doors".* (Wine producer, Dão)

Hygiene related measures are a strong concern for supply agents (*n* = 31), as well as social distancing measures (*n* = 25), introduced into the tourist experience design, illustrated below:

> *"Access to the store is only allowed to two people…. wearing masks, with hand hygiene, with the rules that everyone is adopting, access to the cellar to make the visit, a maximum of six people. I work in terms of corridors, and I will be able to separate three people on each side with a distance of two metres between them so without any kind of problem. For now, we will have to work like this, and we cannot work with crowds…".* (Wine producer, Dão)

The transmission of trust to customers also emerged as an important strategy (*n* = 12). An example of this follows: *"I will try to pass on some confidence so that people can visit this small space because small [scale] environments can be more controlled".* (Wine producer, Bairrada)

Some suppliers are also trying to develop activities outdoors (*n* = 11), for example: *"We are going to be working harder this year than other years on the outdoor part, the terrace part".* (Wine producer, Dão). Some strategies concerning experience design stress the promotion of authenticity, prioritizing smaller groups, the role of new equipment and staff training.

Many wine producers are trying to take advantage of online sales (*n* = 18), despite recognizing them as insufficient to cover their financial losses (*n* = 11), e.g.: *"On the one hand, [we try] to diversify the product supply channels. Social networks, online sales, everyone says they sell, but it is very residual because direct contact is very important".* (Wine producer, Bairrada)

Some agents are also trying to diversify their communication and sales channels and targets (*n* = 28), using promotions or adapted packages (*n* = 13) and focusing on national markets (*n* = 17), illustrated by: *"What I'm doing is, since I worked a lot with the foreign market and I can't do it, I created new packages, shorter for the weekend, 4 or 5 days, and aimed at a national target because there is no other option".* (Tour operator, Bairrada)

Notwithstanding the above, some suppliers present a posture of passivity (*n* = 17), essentially in three different ways:

- *devaluation of the problem (n = 2)*

"Yesterday I saw an interview with the main virologist in Portugal that devalued COVID a lot. It was an opinion I shared" (Wine producer, Bairrada)

- *"waiting for it to pass" (n = 9)*

"Right now, we're just waiting for the market to reactivate itself. Because, the solutions to find new customers ... other countries are going through the same thing as us and, therefore, it is not there and therefore, the strategy is to wait for it to reactivate." (Wine producer, Bairrada)

- *external locus of control (visitor accountability) (n = 6)*

"Going to the restaurant is the situation of being seated next to other people who may not be sensitive to the disease, may not be responsible and this can create discomfort for the customer … I don't want to go to the restaurant because I don't feel good because people are not careful about anything. What is at stake here is the extent to which people's behaviour in restaurants will allow confidence so that we can continue to go to the restaurant". (Restaurant, Bairrada)

Although mentioned only by a few interviewees, it is essential to list other aspects that required the strategic attention of the agents (Table 3): human resources management, redefinition of prices, activation of financial support (subsidies and tax reductions), involvement with the community/solidarity actions, strengthening relationships with clients or distributors.

Learning and redesign (n = 24)

Many supply agents were proactive, creating new products suitable for the pandemic period, thus: *"We will adjust our programmes and our costs more to the national market, in a Road Trip, in which people do not leave the car and visit the places. There, it will be more in that scope". (*Tour operator, Bairrada*)*

Learning and redesign emerges, see above, as a form of crisis damage containment.

Business recovery (n = 9)

Some supply agents mentioned that business was recovering after a few months of enormous difficulties, as in this case: *"I honestly thought it was worse. In the first two months it was challenging, but at the moment I cannot be a hypocrite, it is going well".* (Wine producer, Bairrada)

Association Between Impacts Perceived, Stage of The Crisis, Region and Sample Profile

As expected, the average number of references (sum of references ÷ number of interviews) related to the impact of the pandemic was higher during the lockdown than afterwards (M = 3.22 vs M = 2.21). The same trend is observable in the higher negative emotional tone in the confinement phase compared to post-confinement (M = 2.00 vs M = 0.43).

Interestingly, although there was a more minor difference between the two phases, in the first phase, the average number of positive references remains higher than later (M = 0.75 vs M = 0.57), perhaps due to higher uncertainty about the pandemic at first, mixed with the expectation of the crisis passing quickly.

As for the stages of the Mitroff model, reports of business recovery are present mainly after lockdown (M = 0.03 vs M = 0.29), despite lockdown approaches dominating both periods. Congruent with this idea of recovery after lockdown, passivity is present mainly in narratives collected during lockdown (M = 0.37 vs M = 0.07).

The two routes differ mainly concerning the impact of COVID-19, with more negative references (M = 3.22 vs M = 2.58), and negative emotional tone slightly more evident in Bairrada compared to Dão (M = 1.87 vs M = 1.30). But on the Dão route more references to containment measures are reported (M = 4.45 vs M = 3.87), suggesting more proactivity there regarding the adoption of strategies to minimize negative impacts.

When comparing wine tourism businesses with those without (only with wine production), the most evident difference related to the emotional tone, markedly more negative in businesses with wine tourism (*M* = 1.82 vs *M* = 0.50), which may be due to the higher pandemic risks in tourism activities associated with their social component.

Older respondents (41 years old and over) tend to report, on average, more impacts from COVID-19 (*M* = 3.06 vs *M* = 2.40) and a more expressive emotional tone, both with a negative (*M* = 1.77 vs *M* = 0.68) and a positive valence (*M* = 0.65 vs *M* = 0.10). Interestingly, men interviewed also referred, on average, to a greater number of impacts (*M* = 3.30 vs *M* = 2.64) and presented a more negative emotional tone (*M* = 2.04 vs *M* = 1.14), than women.

Associations Between Types of Impacts, Emotions and Strategies Adopted

Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) was calculated to analyse the relationship between coded categories, considering only strong correlations, with a cut-off value of 0.7 (Pestana & Gageiro, 2008).

Firstly, we found that financial losses appear strongly and positively correlated with the systemic effect (*r* = 0.98), illustrating the role of interdependence between agents of supply, in particular between wine producers and restaurants. In addition, financial losses are also positively and strongly associated with both negative emotional tone – pessimism (*r* = .93), uncertainty (*r* = .92) and fear (*r* = .91) – but also with positive emotional tone – optimism/hope (*r* = .93).

This paradoxical emotionality extends to strategies adopted. For example, hygiene measures and social distancing appear simultaneously associated with hope and uncertainty (.88 < *r* < .92). The same is true regarding sales promotions, both positively correlated with hope (*r* = .90) and uncertainty (*r* = .90). Also, the category 'analyse the situation' appears associated with uncertainty (*r* = .91), pessimism (*r* = .88) and fear (*r* = .87) but also with hope (*r* = .87). Similarly, the containment strategy 'favour the national market' is associated with both hope (*r* = .89) and uncertainty (*r* = .87). Even 'learning and redesign', which appears mainly related to hope (*r* = .90) and resilience (*r* = .89), is also positively associated with pessimism (*r* = .88). Therefore, this pandemic context seems to be bounded by doubts, paradoxical emotions and uncertainties about COVID-19 coping strategies, which makes sense in this period of unknown/ uncontrollable futures.

Secondly, considering the stages of the Mitroff model, it is important to highlight that containment (damage limitation) – social distance, hygiene measures, sales promotion – and business recovery are positively and strongly associated ($0.7 < r < 0.9$). The latter is also positively and strongly associated with the learning and redesign stage ($r = 0.74$).

Importantly, passivity appears positively and strongly associated with pessimism ($r = .86$), financial losses ($r = .85$), fear ($r = .84$), discontent with /contestation of the macrosystem ($r = .83$) and disillusionment ($r = .78$).

Semone (2007) wrote "there will be another crisis for the tourism industry, and when it rears its ugly head we must respond in a quick, agile and professional fashion" (p. xvii). These words are very relevant, and, as Scaglione (2007, p.13) puts it: "How bad will the effects be, and how long will they last?".

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

According to Hall (2010), many of the crisis events now affecting tourism have been distressing societies for millennia. What has changed is the dramatic growth in the scale of travel in our hypermobile society. This increases the potential impacts of disasters and crises affecting it (Folinas & Metaxas, 2020; Scott et al., 2012). Tourism had experienced crises before COVID-19, related to contagious diseases (e.g. the 2003 SARS virus), terrorist attacks (e.g. 11-09-2002) or the 2008-2018 economic crisis. In all previous cases, international travel continued growing, despite occasional decreases or stagnation. The tourism system has proven to be resilient to external shocks (Gössling et al., 2021). However, the systemic impact of COVID-19, which affects all human activities, particularly those driven by social gathering and mobility, is disastrous for the tourism sector (Folinas & Metaxas, 2020). Many tourism-related industries, such as airlines, are deeply affected (IATA, 2020). Several airlines are close to collapse. Many of Portugal's tourists – including wine tourists - come by air. Air travel seems likely to continue to be reduced throughout 2021.

This research shows the wine tourism sector of rural tourism to be impacted by COVID-19 in many and quite complex ways. It provides several theoretical and practical contributions. Overall, businesses feel the need to act urgently but appear very unsure about how to act. They appear to have had little advice about how best to change their operational practices, nor have they developed new marketing policies to help overcome the fears of potential tourists.

Negative emotions were strong and, notably, correlated to passivity and contradictory feelings. This situation, associated with a highly uncertain future context, calls for the need to strengthen individual and collective resilience (Cartier & Taylor, 2020; Dahles & Susilowati, 2015; McManus et al., 2008). Recovery (the ability to return to the original state) and transformation (the ability to create new development opportunities for a system) are two possible paths to resilience (Tsao & Ni, 2016) and, in the case of this pandemic, necessary changes are eminently of a structural nature. These clearly imply the transformation of the systems involved rather than the recovery of the original balance, which is why it is essential that the systems find new equilibrium states for their survival, building a new normality. Social change and social resilience are needed in this context and can contribute to new structures that help overcome barriers to economic development and social shortcomings (Diedrich & Aswani, 2016), which in turn influence and are influenced by tourism itself as an important driver of social transformation (Füller & Michell, 2014). In fact, an event such as a pandemic requires social depth and the capacity of societies to rise up in the face of the stress generated, thus enabling human development and social futures (Cheer & Lew, 2018).

Businesses seem very aware of the systemic impact of the pandemic on wine tourism, amplifying the consequent economic and social crisis. These systemic impacts that easily disseminate from company to company, from one place to another and even from one sector to another, reflect the nature of tourism as an open system and call for coordination and concerted strategies for 'post-disaster reconstruction' (Nian et al., 2019). They also echo the call for second-generation rural tourism, with its decentralised sustainable destination management, to collectively cope with such situations (Lane & Kastenholz, 2015).

Second, the study identifies low levels of preparedness for the crisis, and a variety of ad-hoc strategies adopted by wine tourism suppliers. The approaches most adopted are hygiene and social distancing measures, temporary business closures, careful analysis and planning of operations, and using online promotion and distribution more intensely. Findings partially corroborate the results of previous research on strategies adopted in health crises in tourism (e.g. Henderson, 2004; Kim et al., 2005). Specific responses developed by wine tourism agents, focus on online wine sales versus wine tourism or favouring the development of activities in outdoor sites. The latter is particularly appropriate when considering not only the lower risk of contagion outdoors, but also the particular landscape appeal of wine regions and wineries. This, together with the search for authentic, slow and personalized, non-mass tourist experiences in rural and natural settings (Oh et al., 2016; Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2012), should be understood as a valuable new experience proposal, a redesign strategy to be maintained in the post-COVID reality. Results also suggest the need for investing more in social measures as an opportunity to develop community/solidarity actions, eventually enhancing the building of community resilience and social capital at the destination level (Cartier & Taylor, 2020). As a consequence, crises may not only bring challenges and oblige people to drastically change plans and operations (Laws et al., 2007), but they may also bring opportunities (e.g., the quality of the health response; the acceleration of the digitalization of tourism operations) to redesign businesses, creating more attractive, innovative and successful wine tourism products and destinations (Almeida & Silva, 2020; Nian et al., 2019).

Third, the results suggest that the perceived impacts of COVID-19 on wine tourism and consequent strategies adopted depend not only on the crisis stage, but also on the profile of the respondent, such as gender and age, with men and older respondents perceiving relatively more impacts and reporting more emotional reactions (men particularly negative ones). The regional context is shown to affect perceptions of the crisis and strategies developed, with agents from the Dão route being slightly more optimistic about the impacts of the crisis and also presenting more strategies to overcome it. This may be linked to the route's poorer tourism development, with impacts not felt as much as in Bairrada. Also, this interior region's agents may expect more tourists eventually seeking rural, less congested areas in the post-containment period.

Fourthly, there are lessons for the concept of sustainable tourism as well as rural tourism. Early results from work in progress in Italy's South Tyrol show that the environment and its conservation dominates the sustainable tourism thinking of most tourists[4]. The concept of the "triple bottom line" (environment, society/ culture, and economy) receives little attention, with the local economy often totally taken for granted, an issue also noted by Moyle et al. (2020). More attention needs to be paid to the local economy, and to drawing up crisis management plans as an integral part of sustainable tourism strategy planning for both COVID and other crises (see Bausch et al., 2021).

Additionally, this research almost accidentally provides insights into the potential consequences of a concept that has fascinated academic

[4] See https://sustainabletourism.eurac.edu/publications/#report2020

commentators on sustainable tourism for many years. De-growth has long been discussed as a way to achieve sustainability (Hall, 2009; Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2019). De-growth continues to haunt the thoughts of the industry who fear its financial and political consequences. COVID-19 has created unexpected and sudden de-growth situations. The findings in this paper reveal both the practical and deep psychological impacts on all who are working to manage and deliver tourism in de-growth situations.

Finally, what do results mean for rural tourism? The ongoing rise of rural tourism since the 1970s as a low cost and proven way of achieving rural regeneration, with strong environmental conservation possibilities (OECD, 1994; Lane, 2009), is now questioned. Specifically, many wine tourism businesses talked about abandoning tourism and pluriactivity, relying solely on wine production and selling through (online) agents, thus withdrawing from the diversification of agricultural and other rural businesses into tourism while retaining their original activity (Stanford & Guiver, 2016; Sharpley & Pearce, 2007). Wine and rural tourism have suffered the severe negative financial impacts of crises in tourism as have other forms of tourism (Page et al., 2012; Zeng et al., 2005). The research presented here also shows the tremendous negative psychological effects of COVID-19 on these tourism businesses, impacts that are conditioning their future plans, strategies and actions.

Rural tourism's inherent weaknesses have been exposed: its many independent businesses, its lack of partnership working, and its lack of skilled governance have rendered its businesses open to fear, uncertainty and lack of leadership about the future of tourism as a revenue earner. At this time, local and regional marketing is especially essential to stress the relative safety of rural tourism. However, many of the local and national rural tourism management and marketing groups have been abandoned in favour of using low cost internationally managed internet-based booking companies such as booking.com (Gössling & Lane, 2015). Numerous research respondents felt alone and disillusioned by the lack of local and national guidance and assistance.

This paper thus offers some important practical and theoretical contributions. It highlights the need for strategies that are adopted by a more closely linked and innovative set of players, possibly leading to the development of more appealing and sustainable wine destination experiences. These approaches include personalization, small scale enterprise development, ascribing and interpreting value to nature and landscape, community involvement and social responsibility, making the entire destination system more resilient for future crises. One growing area is that of using a personal smartphone to access guided interpretive walks available on the web (go to: https://soundcloud.com/tom_lane/tom-lane-stream-of-consciousness/s-2NthNpv1gCe, to experience an urban example). Such systems are COVID proof, give access to music, song and poetry, and have proven to be popular and fashionable where introduced. They exemplify the advantages of businesses working in partnership to spread innovation costs and benefits.

However, the study also reveals that some interviewees still have a passive attitude towards the crisis and are mainly concerned with short-term measures and financial survival. Although understandable, a more ambitious approach implying learning and improved future action would probably require the acquisition of skills by both single actors as well as destination systems. Social capital creation to cope with present pandemic as well as future crises in a more appropriate way, i.e. combining both competences of risk and crisis management (McManus et al., 2008) could have significant advantages.

This paper has some limitations. It only analyses the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in two wine tourism regions in Portugal; an extension of the study to other locations would permit validation of some results or understanding of additional moderating, context-dependent variables. Longitudinal research, analysing the impacts and strategies developed, according to the evolution of this ongoing crisis, is also needed. Research regarding the crisis' effects on other stakeholders, specifically on travellers, to adapt supply more appropriately, and on the local communities, co-creating wine tourism experiences would also be interesting.

Rural tourism businesses act very independently, as described long ago in Lane (1994). Lane and Kastenholz (2015) envisaged a more secure future for new generation rural tourism based on sustainable local partnerships, creating decentralized rural destinations, a concept well suited to wine routes. But partnerships are complex and time-consuming to create and operate, and need incentives, professional skills and advice (Selin, 1999). Continuous research on practical network cooperation and governance is, therefore, still needed to help create thriving and resilient rural wine tourism destinations. Ideas for doing that could be taken from healthcare reactions to COVID 19, which seek to show scientific and well thought out approaches, and to combat the feeling of helplessness affecting many small tourism businesses. A national – or regional - advisory group could be created, bringing together informed academic researchers, aware of local and international research on the subject, tourism consultants, used to working with tourism businesses, and public sector experts and politicians, together with communicating ways forward via the media, the web and zoom meetings to those many businesses that are pessimistic and fear collapse.

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DETERMINING THE CRISIS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES APPLIED BY HOTEL MANAGERS DURING THE OUTBREAK OF CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to determine the crisis management strategies that city hotel managers applied during the Covid-19 pandemic period. The data for the research were collected from the managers in Eskişehir, which is popular with city tourism. Findings may contribute to the literature by offering crisis management strategies that can be guiding for managers of other city hotels. Semi-structured interview questions as a part of qualitative method were used to collect the data. The interviews were held with 13 hotel managers between 25th September and 21th October 2020. Thematic analysis was used and three main themes and nine sub-themes were revealed. The findings showed that hotel managers felt the negative effects of the crisis in the hotels where they worked. Despite the fact that hotel managers were caught unprepared for the coronavirus (Covid-19) crisis, they managed to control the crisis process well with their knowledge, skills and experience. Managers adopted a reactive approach since there was no similar crisis situation before and made the necessary efforts to overcome the crisis. Suggestions were presented to researchers for future studies on the subject and to practitioners in the tourism sector on the development of crisis management strategies.

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INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic, which emerged in the Wuhan province of China in late December 2019 and caused millions of cases and the death of more than two million people worldwide, has been one of the largest pandemics in human history, threatening the entire world. By its nature, tourism is one of the sectors that are first affected by the global crises (Vaishar & Šťastná, 2020). Following the rapid spread of the Covid-19 pandemic around the world, adversities have occurred in the tourism sector, as in many other sectors. With the rapid spread of the pandemic, there has been a rapid increase in cancellations of trips, flights, and holiday reservations due to security concerns (Jin et al., 2021). Some measures taken to prevent the spread of the pandemic, such as the introduction of national and international travel restrictions, the closing of border gates mutually in many countries, the introduction of curfews and quarantine practices, the cancellation of events, and the closing of many businesses connected to tourism, have negatively affected national and international tourism movements and brought tourism activities to a halt (Baum & Hai, 2020; Bai, 2020; Čorak et al., 2020; Fotiadis et al., 2021; Fu, 2020; Gössling et al., 2021). Also, many accommodation establishments have stopped providing services due to the pandemic. Some accommodation businesses, on the other hand, went downsizing or completely closed due to the economic difficulties caused by the pandemic.

Effective crisis management makes it possible to overcome the crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic in tourism enterprises with the least damage, to avoid further losses in tourism and to turn the crisis into an opportunity. Since times of crisis are the times when managers are most needed, managers have a great role in managing the crisis. Skills that managers will exhibit in times of crisis save the business from falling apart and by eliminating the panic created by the crisis, ensure that this situation will be overcome as soon as possible (Demirtaş, 2000). In this context, managers should be prepared as if they would face a possible crisis at any time and prevent the formation of a crisis as much as possible. However, in some cases, crises are inevitable despite the proactive efforts of the managers. The Covid-19 pandemic, which emerged suddenly and did not give any signals before, exposed tourism businesses to an inevitable situation of crisis.

Among the tourism businesses, city hotels are among those which were most affected by the negativities of the pandemic. The ability of hotels to resist these adversities and to survive depends on the crisis management strategies developed and implemented by managers. The literature lacks studies revealing how hotel businesses were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and determining the crisis management strategies implemented by city hotel managers during the pandemic period. In addition, proactive and reactive approaches adopted during the Covid-19 pandemic crisis and the role of managers in managing the crisis have not been studied in the literature. Thus, understanding how hotel businesses were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and determining the crisis management strategies implemented by city hotel managers in the face of the pandemic emerge as an important research problem.

THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) PANDEMIC AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN TOURISM

Coronaviruses (CoV) are a big family of viruses that cause various diseases that are more serious than colds, such as the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV). Covid-19 is a virus identified on January 13, 2020, as a result of research on a group of patients with respiratory symptoms (fever, cough, and shortness of breath) in Wuhan province, China, in late December 2019. Novel Coronavirus disease is caused by SARS-CoV-2 virus (TR Ministry of Health, 2020). The World Health Organization (WHO) classified the Covid-19 outbreak as an "International Public Health Emergency" on January 30, 2020, and due to the occurrence of Covid-19 cases in 113 countries outside China, where the pandemic started, and the spread and severity of the virus, defined it as "Global Epidemic (pandemic)" on March 11, 2020 (TR Ministry of Health, General Directorate of Public Health, 2020).

Several measures were taken in tourism destinations to prevent the spread of the virus through travel. The most important one of these measures is the introduction of travel restrictions for tourism destinations. Therefore, with the pandemic reaching a global dimension since the first case was detected, the majority of tourism businesses were closed and travel restrictions were imposed on all tourism destinations around the world. In order to prevent the spread of the pandemic, for the first time in the history of tourism, 100% of tourism destinations across the world (217 tourism destinations) had travel restrictions by closing their borders completely or partially and cancelling international flights (UNWTO, World Tourism Barometer, 2020a). This situation has caused serious declines in international tourist numbers and tourism revenues. Due to travel restrictions imposed because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the loss of income in international tourism was recorded as $ 320 billion at the end of May (UNWTO, 2020). Also, in the first quarter of 2020, there was a significant decrease in the number of international tourists compared to the previous year. Available data show that the Covid-19 pandemic, which has had a great impact on tourism worldwide, caused a 22% drop in international tourist numbers in the first quarter of 2020. These data show that there was a loss of 67 million in the number of international tourists in the first three months of 2020 compared to the same period of the previous year. According to the data of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), international traveling decreased by 70% in the first eight months of 2020 compared to the same period of the previous year. This decline from January to August 2020 shows that there were 700 million fewer tourist arrivals compared to the same period in 2019. At the same time, this decrease indicates a loss of 730 billion dollars in export revenues from international tourism. This figure constitutes more than eight times the revenue loss caused by the 2009 Global Economic Crisis (UNWTO, World Tourism Barometer, 2020b).

The emergence of the above-mentioned negative outcomes once again revealed the importance of crisis management in tourism businesses. Crisis management in tourism businesses is defined as "*the totality of the work done for detecting the dangers that could cause tourism and tourism businesses to fall into a crisis, taking precautions, and for the business to get out of the crisis quickly with the minimum loss and even to avoid any damage and to turn the crisis into an opportunity in case of a possible crisis*" (Göral, 2014, p. 421). Researchers generally divide the crisis management approaches into two groups; proactive crisis management approach and reactive crisis management approach. The proactive approach is based on a preventive perception that includes monitoring early warning signals, preparing for possible crises, and preventing crises from occurring (Glaesser, 2005). On the other side, reactive approach is the crisis management approach adopted in cases where the crisis actually occurs and the proactive crisis management approach is insufficient and tries to minimize the effects of the crisis on the business. In this approach, managers aim to eliminate the crisis, control the crisis, and overcome it with minimum loss by trying to eliminate the negative effects of the crisis on the business (İpçioğlu, 2013).

In the literature, there are studies on crisis management strategies applied by managers in the tourism sector. In a study conducted by Asunakutlu et al. (2003) in the context of pre-crisis preparation, managers mostly adopted strategies such as reviewing their business connections and debts, and reducing costs. Lai and Wong (2020) aimed to compare how hotel managers reacted to the Covid-19 crisis at the initial and pandemic stage in Macau. According to their findings, in the first phase, priority strategies should be implemented in all pandemic prevention, pricing and maintenance practices and in two governmental assistance and human resources practices. During the pandemic phase, all pandemic prevention apps remain in the priority quadrant, but two pricing apps are downgraded. Hotels tended to force their workforce into unpaid vacations and delay office and system maintenance. Pavlatos et al. (2021) investigated crisis management practices in the Greek hotel industry in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and determined that government and marketing practices are considered more important than operation practices, cost reduction and pricing practices. In addition, there were differences in the importance and usage levels of the crisis management practices decided by the hoteliers according to the characteristics of the hotels. Yacoub and ElHajjar (2021) investigated how hotel managers in Lebanon are managing the Covid-19 crisis. Research findings showed that the level of preparedness of hotels to combat such a pandemic is low. The hotels focused on providing transparency to employees, providing adequate information and decentralized power to department levels in order to deal with the impacts of COVID-19. Another study was conducted by Anderson (2006) to investigate the crisis management practices of businesses operating in the tourism sector in Australia. The findings showed that businesses try to adapt quickly to their environment and changes, and that they use unpaid leave without firing staff with the human resources strategies they apply. In a study conducted by Seçilmiş and Sarı (2010), crisis management strategies applied by accommodation businesses during crisis periods were examined. According to this study, managers prepared a crisis management plan before the crisis and benefited from the decision-making techniques in the pre-crisis planning and during the crisis. However, majority of the managers did not form a crisis management team, did not attach importance to crisis management training and did not create early warning systems against crisis in enterprises. Israeli et al. (2011) conducted a study to investigate crisis management practices in luxury hotels in India, and it was found that they followed strategies such as reducing costs and increasing efficiency against crises. In another study by Bulgan and Aktel (2017), interviews were conducted with hotel managers in order to reveal the crisis management strategies applied in five-star hotels in Antalya. Study findings showed that managers took measures to increase productivity and they also attached importance to personnel in order to overcome the crisis. Lai and Wong (2020) investigated the hotel industry's responses to the Covid-19 crisis at the initial stage and during the pandemic phase. In the first stage, some strategies were applied namely; pandemic prevention, pricing, care practices, grant-in aid and human resources. In the pandemic phase, crisis prevention efforts were continued, pricing efforts were decreased, hotel employees were directed to unpaid leave and the maintenance works of the hotel were postponed. At this stage, grant-in aid has a low priority. Based on the studies, it is possible to say that crisis management styles differ from country to country.

METHOD

The semi-structured interview technique was used in this research. The reason to prefer interviewing as the data collection technique in the study is that it is possible to obtain in-depth information on a particular subject, it is easier to examine the cause-effect relationship with the comprehensive information obtained, and it is easier to intervene in the unclear parts (Tutar & Erdem, 2020). This research aims to reveal how hotel businesses operating in Eskişehir were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and determine the crisis management strategies that hotel managers implemented during the pandemic period.

Sample

The sample of the study includes managers of 13 hotels with ministry and municipality certificates, who provide services in Eskişehir and volunteered to participate in the study. Snow-ball sampling method, which is one of the non-probabilistic sampling methods, was used in the research. The data were collected by interviewing the managers face-to-face (12) and through the online interview program Zoom (1) between 25 September 2020-21 October 2020. An appointment was requested from the hotel managers on phone by the researchers, and considering the availability of the managers, the interviews were initiated. All interviews were conducted in the managers' offices, and one interview was conducted online via the internet.

Located in the Central Anatolia Region and neighbouring Turkey's capital Ankara, Eskişehir is a province with 888,828 inhabitants as of 2020. Eskişehir has the characteristic of a continental climate due to its geographical conditions, elevations, landforms, and distance to the sea. Founded by Phrygians by the Porsuk River in the first millennium before Christ, Eskisehir is one of Turkey's most important intersections. Eskişehir, which has brought up historical figures such as Yunus Emre and Nasreddin Hodja, is also famous for its Meerschaum and hot springs that are good for various diseases. Eskisehir aims to be an important tourism attraction centre with its natural beauties, cuisine and shopping opportunities as well as its cultural richness (Eskişehir Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism, 2021). Especially in recent years, Eskişehir has started to gain momentum with domestic tourism and city tourism. Historical Odunpazarı Houses, which are Eskişehir's oldest settlements, events organized throughout the year (festivals, theaters, performances etc.), Porsuk Stream, Kent Park where various recreational activities can be performed, Sazova Science Art and Culture Park, museums in the city (Yılmaz Büyükerşen Wax Sculptures Museum, Kurtuluş Museum, Meerschaum Museum, Contemporary Glass Arts Museum, Eskişehir Eti Archeology Museum, Yunus Emre Museum etc.) are among the main factors of Eskişehir's acceleration in city tourism (Çoban et al., 2019). Eskişehir's tourism supply is generally oriented towards city tourism. Therefore, the suggestions developed in this study can easily be applied in other city destinations. In addition, it is known that Eskişehir Tourism Association, which is an initiative that made important efforts for the development of tourism in Eskişehir province and a significant part of members of which consists of hotel managers, collectively struggled against the pandemic before, during, and after the pandemic and acted quickly regarding the measures that could be taken. However, what difficulties faced by the members of the association in the face of the pandemic and what kind of crisis management strategy they implemented are not known. The perspective of the managers of the hotel businesses operating in Eskişehir on the subject and the effects of the pandemic on these businesses are the objects of curiosity. Table 1 contains general information about the hotel managers who participated in the interview.

Table 1. *General Information on Hotel Managers*

Participants	Age	Education Level	Crisis Management Training	Total Experience in the Tourism Sector (years)	Working Time in the Hotel (years)
P1	42	Bachelor's Degree	Yes	30	4
P2	41	Bachelor's Degree	No	21	5
P3	43	Bachelor's Degree	Yes	23	4
P4	35	Bachelor's Degree	Yes	15	1
P5	36	Associate Degree	No	20	1
P6	36	Associate Degree	No	13	11
P7	38	Bachelor's Degree	Yes	21	7.5
P8	50	Bachelor's Degree	No	34	10
P9	43	Bachelor's Degree	Yes	24	5.5
P10	29	Bachelor's Degree	Yes	9	4
P11	27	Bachelor's Degree	No	7	7 (months)
P12	47	Bachelor's Degree	Yes	25	2
P13	47	Bachelor's Degree	Yes	28	3

Data Collection

In order to get in-depth answers from the participants, it was decided to use semi-structured interview questions in accordance with the purpose of the research. Semi-structured interview questions were prepared as a result of a comprehensive literature review on the field of crisis management. In order to ensure the content validity of the research, the opinions of five academicians who are experts in the field of management and crisis were consulted while creating the interview questions. As a result of the additions, corrections, and changes made on the interview questions by considering the expert opinions, the statements that were thought to represent each question best were added to the interview guide.

The interview guide consists of three parts. In the first part, there are questions to find out the general information of the participants such as age, educational status, training received in the field of tourism, experience in the tourism sector, current position in the hotel, year of operation in the relevant hotel. In the second part, there are questions about the general information of the hotel such as how many stars the hotel has, the type of the hotel in terms of its legal characteristics, the number of years the hotel has been providing service, the total number of staff and the total number of rooms in the hotel. In the last part, there are 14 open-ended questions aiming to reveal how hotel businesses were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and to determine the crisis management strategies hotel managers implemented during the pandemic period. When answers to all the questions were sufficient in the interviews and the data started to repeat itself, the saturation point was reached and the data collection process was ended (Tutar & Erdem, 2020).

Credibility of the Data

McMillan (2000) explained that the most important criterion used in the evaluation of qualitative research is the reliability and credibility of the data obtained in the research, the analysis of these data and the results. Validity in qualitative research means that the researcher handles the matter of fact s/he is researching as it is and as objectively as possible (Kirk & Miller, 1986). Reliability in qualitative research generally means stability in the answers of more than one coder in the data (Creswell, 2020). Within the scope of this research, first of all, the purpose of the research was stated clearly and the research method most suitable for this purpose was chosen in ensuring validity and reliability. Then, semi-structured interview questions were prepared in accordance with the purpose and method of the research. The content validity of the study was ensured by benefiting from the opinions of academicians who are experts in their field. A pilot interview was held with a participant in order to test the comprehensibility of the interview questions, which were revised by considering the expert opinions. In the research, reliability was increased by using a voice recorder during interviews to prevent possible data loss. Also, quotations were taken from the responses of the participants and the reliability of the study was increased by giving the quotations as they were without adding anything. In addition, explaining each step of the research in detail to the participants was also effective in increasing the reliability.

Analysis of the Data

After the data collection process was completed, the data obtained were transcribed directly with no changes. However, the colloquial language, which is difficult to understand, has been translated into academic language while the research findings are being reported (Kozak, 2014). The texts were reviewed by the researcher to prevent any erroneous information. The names of hotel managers were hidden and codes were given such as P1 and P2 for each participant.

A qualitative approach was chosen for the study and thematic analysis was used to analyze the transcribed interview data. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes the data set in (rich) detail (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A five phases approach suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) was used while conducting the analysis. The first phase involved researchers' familiarization with the data set. This means the researchers repeatedly read the data searching for meanings and patterns. This phase paved the way to determining indicators. In this phase, the researchers tried to organize the data into meaningful groups and attached labels to each group in relation to the research questions. After all the indicators were determined, the researchers sorted the similar indicators into themes (Phase 3). In the fourth phase, themes were checked to ensure that data within the themes cohere together meaningfully (Braun & Clarke, 2006). By this means, all themes were reviewed and refined. The last phase consisted of defining and naming themes. In addition, direct quotations were used to reflect the views of the participants.

FINDINGS

Three main themes and nine sub-themes emerged from the interviews. Table 2 outlines the themes and sub-themes, its indicators (words and phrases taken from the interview transcriptions) and a definition and description of each.

Hotel Managers' Perspective on Crises

The perspective of hotel managers on crises is explained under three headings by the necessity of crisis management works in tourism businesses, whether the managers have a crisis scenario or a crisis management plan, and whether the managers have a crisis management team to be assigned at the hotel during the crisis.

The Necessity of Crisis Management in Tourism Businesses

All managers argued that crisis management works are necessary in tourism businesses and that crisis management is possible with crisis management works. P1, who thinks that crisis management works are necessary for tourism enterprises and that crisis management works in hotels are hotel managers' duty, expresses his thoughts on this issue as follows: *"A general director or manager in tourism businesses must know crisis management strategies. Thus, of course, it is possible to manage crises ... "* Arguing that managers should always be prepared for the crisis, P4 expresses his opinions as follows: *"Managers must always have an opinion, an idea and an action against the crisis. Businesses will have trouble if the managers only think about the moment and do not foresee what tomorrow will bring. "*

Preparedness for the Crisis

Eight hotel managers interviewed had a pre-prepared crisis scenario or an emergency action plan in the face of a possible crisis, while five hotel managers did not have any crisis scenario or emergency action plan. Stating that they have an emergency action plan for a possible crisis in their hotel and that they are regularly updating these plans, P13 expressed his opinions on the subject as, *"We have standard operating instructions issued by our hotels. For example, we have a written standard of about 80 pages on Covid-19; it is about what we need to do. Our emergency action plan is included in these standard operating instructions. And it is regularly being updated ... "*

Table 2. *Summary of interview data thematic analysis*

1. Themes and Sub-Themes	2. Indicators	3. Definition and Description of Themes
Hotel Managers' Perspective on Crises -The Necessity of Crisis Management in Tourism Businesses -Preparedness for the Crisis -Having a Crisis Management Team	One of the duties of managers, necessity of having an opinion against the crisis, necessity of making long-term plans, the need for written procedures and instructions, the importance of staff training, crisis management activities make personnel more self-confident, the need to have an emergency action plan and crisis scenario, constantly updated procedures, measures/manifestos taken on a business basis, having a crisis management team, predefined job descriptions such as communication/spokesperson/secretariat, occupational health and safety training, all personnel must have crisis management awareness, staff assignments on crisis management.	This theme reveals hotel managers' point of view on the necessity of crisis management practices in tourism enterprises, their preparedness for a possible crisis (whether managers have a crisis scenario or crisis management plan), and whether they have a crisis management team that can be assigned in a possible crisis. This theme offers an overview of crises.
Crisis Management Practices of Hotel Managers Approach Adopted Against the Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic Strategies Implemented in the Face of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic -Strategies About Human Resources -Strategies Regarding the Energy (Saving) -Strategies on Food & Beverage -Marketing Strategies -Measures Taken in the Face of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic	Reactive crisis management approach, the obligation to temporarily close hotels, stoppage of service, employing staff for equal periods of time, getting illness report for staff, benefiting from the short-time working allowance and unpaid leave of the personnel, using energy-saving light bulbs, placing guests on the floors according to the occupancy rate, air conditioning, saving electricity, converting the open buffet breakfast into a plate breakfast, preferring single-use products for breakfast, announcing the applications within the scope of coronavirus (Covid-19) to the guests from various channels, obtaining the Safe Tourism Certificate, additional measures taken in addition to official measures for hygiene and safety.	This theme reveals which approach (reactive or proactive) hotel managers adopt in the face of the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, which strategy they follow in terms of human resources, energy saving, food and beverage and marketing and which measures they have taken in the face of the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.
Consequences of the Crisis for Hotels and Inferences -Negative Consequences of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic for Hotels -Positive Consequences of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic for Hotels -Inferences Hotel Managers Obtained from the Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic	Economic and psychological problems, the process of learning, evaluation and gaining experience for managers, allocating time for seasonal works of the enterprise, holding online meetings, lessons learned from the crisis, greater attention to hygiene and safety, recognition of missing or wrong work, understanding in which areas the business is successful, understanding the necessity of making long-term plans, understanding that crises will also lead to opportunities, once again understanding that tourism is vulnerable to crises, understanding the necessity of having a strong financial structure in the face of possible crises in tourism.	This theme reveals what negative consequences the coronavirus (Covid-19) crisis has caused for hotels, whether the crisis has any positive consequences for hotels, and what positive consequences, if any, are, and what inferences hotel managers have drawn from the crisis.

Having a Crisis Management Team

Apart from one hotel, all hotels had a crisis management team that hotel managers can assign in case of crisis. Hotel managers who had a crisis management team in the hotels they work at, stated who the crisis management team consisted of and what activities this team is engaged in as follows: *"We have a national and international crisis management support team. We have a crisis management team against a possible crisis (armed action, fire, detention, robbery, accommodation of a wanted criminal, etc.)* (P9). Stating that the crisis management team consists of department managers, hotel managers communicate their opinions as follows: *"Absolutely. It consists of all department managers of the hotel. There are also a few active staff members included. All department managers are given written notice about what needs to be done before. Their training is provided by occupational health safety experts and hotel managers. Later, these situations are practiced"* (P4).

Crisis Management Practices of Hotel Managers

The crisis management practices of hotel managers were explained in three stages according to the approach adopted in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic in hotels, the strategies applied for the pandemic, and the measures taken.

Approach Adopted Against the Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic

Most of the managers (12) have experienced a crisis originating from Covid-19 in the hotels they work at. On the other hand, the 13th manager stated that, with the effect of the special measures (manifesto) applied in their hotel chain, their guests felt safe, that they did not receive any reservation cancellations, and therefore they were not affected by the crisis. In this context, all hotel managers have adopted a reactive approach and tried to manage the crisis in the best way by prioritizing the health of guests and employees in order to overcome the negative effects of the crisis with the least damage to their businesses.

Among the hotels where the meetings were held, all managers, except for two hotel managers, stated that they decided to close their hotels temporarily between March and June of 2020 particularly when the pandemic was intense. Stating that they had a crisis in their hotels due to the Covid-19 pandemic and had to close their hotels, P1 expresses his opinions on the subject as follows: *"We experienced a difficult period when the pandemic first appeared in Turkey. As such, we had to decide to close the hotel in* *the first place, like everyone else. During this period, we closed our hotel for three months for reasons not caused by us".* Some of the managers of hotels that were closed during the pandemic added that they hosted healthcare professionals free of charge in their hotels. P3 states that they kept their business closed and hosted healthcare personnel in this process as follows: *"Our hotel was closed from March to June. We provided free support to healthcare professionals from the end of March to June. Nearly 60 of our rooms were used by doctors, nurses, and other healthcare professionals".*

Strategies Implemented in the Face of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic

In order to understand what strategies the hotel managers were following in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic, the managers were asked the question *"What strategy did you follow for the coronavirus (Covid-19) crisis?"*; and the answers were analysed. In this context, the managers explained what activities they have undertaken for the crisis on behalf of their hotels and what strategies they followed in the face of the crisis.

Strategies About Human Resources: The managers stated that they followed various strategies regarding human resources during the pandemic and benefited from some rights granted to them by the state. Stating that they had the staff work for equal periods, got reports for them, and benefited from short-time work allowance and unpaid leave. P1 conveys the strategies they followed with the following words: *"Due to the pandemic, to be fair, we have one team working for 15 days and the other team for 15 days. We try not to make anybody suffer by solving the problem with a partial work allowance. We have not fired anyone".* Arguing that personnel expenses are one of the biggest expenses for hotels, P13 stated the strategy they followed regarding the personnel during the pandemic process as: *"We work with a staff according to occupancy as much as possible, and have the rest benefit from short-time work allowance".*

Strategies Regarding the Energy (Saving): Hotel managers also followed some saving strategies in various ways. Here are some opinions of those managers: *"Formerly, the whole hotel was lightened with a single switch, now we have made it floor by floor. We place the guests floor by floor. When the first floor is full, we take guests to the second floor. Therefore, we make costs according to the work, and when this is the case, we somehow manage to go at par"* (P1). Similarly, P5 expresses that as the rooms are occupied, they place the guests on another floor: *"During the Covid-19 process, we tried to go by occupying floor by* *floor. We had completely turned off the energy of the other floors. We operated not industrial machines but our small machines in laundries".*

Strategies on Food & Beverage: Most of the hotel managers interviewed state that, with the normalization process, they have transformed the breakfast service they normally give as an open buffet into a plate breakfast. Some of the opinions of the managers, who stated that serving breakfast as a plate service has caused reductions in their costs, are as follows: *"We removed the buffet. We gave it in the form of a breakfast plate. But the number of products we can put on the plate is limited. For this reason, there was a decrease in the costs of the buffet"* (P5). Similarly, P1 states that they switched to plate service and this reduced their costs: "*One of our biggest cost items was the breakfast buffet. During this period, there was a significant decrease in our breakfast costs when we made the breakfast items for single-use".*

Marketing Strategies: Managers announce the measures they have taken and the applications they have put into action on behalf of their hotels due to Covid-19 in various channels. Some of the statements of the managers, who stated that they announced the measures they took in their hotels to the guests and companies in various ways, are as follows: *"We followed the marketing strategies in this process. We shared and advertised the measures we took regarding our hotel on our hotel's website and social media accounts* (P1). P5 states that they announced the measures they took to the companies via mass e-mail and reduced room prices due to the crisis: *"We announced the measures we took regarding the hotels to the companies we worked with by mailing. We lowered the prices of our permanent guests because we did not have an open buffet. We reflected the low cost to our guests too by lowering the room prices"* (P5). P10 expresses the advertising and promotion strategy they make to make guests feel safe with the following words: *"On our hotel's Instagram page, we posted everything to reassure our guests by showing how we disinfect our rooms, what kind of precautions are taken in our hotel, and what we do".*

Measures Taken in the Face of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic

Most of the hotel managers (11) received the Safe Tourism Certificate and, in addition to this certificate, they also took various measures themselves in the face of the pandemic for their businesses. Hotel managers who did not receive a Safe Tourism Certificate stated that they implemented the measures they took by themselves. Safe Tourism Certificate ensures that high-level health and hygiene conditions are met in airlines, airports and other means of transport, accommodation, and food and beverage facilities (Turkey Tourism Promotion and Development Agency, 2020).

The majority of managers stated that they started to implement the items in the Safe Tourism Certificate before the certificate was issued. P7 expressed his opinions on the subject as *"Before the certification program was compulsory, we made all our informing, preparations and prepared our visuals. We immediately switched our open buffet to breakfast plate service. We put disinfectant at the entrance of all our restaurants"*. Similarly, P1, stating that they had already implemented the items in the certificate, also states the additional measures they have taken in addition to the certificate as follows: *"We had already started to apply the things that the state requires us to practice in our business. Apart from that, we removed the carpets and made ceramic parquets to be hygienically healthier when wiped. We have turned everything that you can think of to be touched by human hands into a disposable product. Disposable cheese, honey, cutlery, personal hygiene sets, etc... We switched to disposable paper cups. The gloves, masks, helmets of the personnel... We started to practice these before they were enacted by the law.* P3's views also support P1's: *"We received the Safe Tourism Certificate. We have taken precautions by ourselves without anyone telling us anyway, by maintaining social distance in terms of hygiene, using masks, and various protective clothing. During the period when our hotel was closed, we ensured the hygiene of all rooms by bringing companies from outside, from ozonation to other methods. We retrained all staff on what chemicals should be used and on clothing"*. P12 expresses the measures they took within their own organization in addition to the Safe Tourism Certificate as follows: *"As from the opening of the hotel, we have disinfectant, temperature measurement system and floor disinfectants in the hotel starting from the entrance. We clean the luggage of our guests with various disinfectants. We have plexy (plastic glass) barriers in the lobby area and reception. Even the pens, the guests sign with at the reception, are kept in a device that is cleaned with ultraviolet rays. Our rooms are kept for 24 hours after the use of the previous guest and then served. The hotel is disinfected by fogging method during the day"*.

The managers who stated that they have not obtained the Safe Tourism Certificate since hotels with less than 50 rooms are not required to obtain it, express the measures they have taken on behalf of their hotels as follows: *"We took measures ourselves. For example, we pulled security tapes, warnings were placed in various parts of the hotel, we had all our employees trained by companies, and we gave training ourselves. We put distance between tables in restaurants"* (P5).

Consequences of the Crisis for Hotels and Inferences

The consequences of the crisis for hotels and inferences are explained under three headings as the negative consequences of the crisis for hotels, the positive consequences of the crisis for hotels, and the inferences of hotel managers for the crisis.

Negative Consequences of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic for Hotels

Crisis in hotels has caused negative consequences mostly in terms of economy and psychology: *"Our employees were very affected psychologically. There was anxiety and fear. But as they went through it, they saw that everything is actually about the correct measures taken. But we were affected most negatively in terms of economy"* (P5). P10 stated that the crisis had more severe consequences psychologically for them: *"We were affected economically, but also psychologically. Its psychological extent was much heavier than its economic extent. Even when the guest coughed a little, our staff had the feeling: "I wonder if the guest had Covid?". Since a few of our staff did not want to go to their homes during this period, we had them sleep in the hotel so that they would feel comfortable. I even had staff with anxiety disorders. Two of my staff will use antidepressants for anxiety disorder for a while"*. P11 expresses the negativities they have experienced in economic and psychological terms with the following words: *"Regular guests stopped coming. Disinfectants and masks were an extra cost for us. We were also negatively affected in terms of the psychology of the staff. We agreed with a hospital, and we said that we could have them take a test there if they wanted. I can say that it affected us psychologically and economically the most"*.

Positive Consequences of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic for Hotels

It is seen that the crisis has positive consequences for businesses in terms of learning, evaluation and gaining experience, and allocating time for seasonal works of the business. Stating that they have learned from the crisis, P1 expresses their thoughts as follows: *"We learned how it should be not to catch a crisis like this suddenly again, that there should always be a saving and capital aside, and how we can motivate employees"*. P9 states that the crisis has contributed to hygiene and cleanliness: *"This process has contributed to the customers and staff to pay more attention to cleaning and hygiene rules."* P13 states that the use of technology during the crisis has had a positive contribution and that the crisis has been a learning process for them as follows: *"For example, we learned that 17 hotels could hold meetings without gathering in a place. Zoom has now begun to be in the centre of our lives. We learned what we can do, how fast we can move, and all"*. P11 states that the feedback from guests has been a positive consequence for them: *"The guests come and stay, and then they make comments on us such as 'The hotel was very clean, we were very pleased even though it was in the pandemic period' or 'It had a*

Safe Tourism Certificate and that relieved us very much'. In this way, we understand that we are on the right track and we provide a clean service. Since we know what to do if we encounter such a situation in the future, we will not approach with concern".

Inferences Hotel Managers Obtained from the Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic

Regarding the inferences that hotel managers have made from the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, P9 states that they once again feel that tourism is a fragile sector with the following words: "*I think one of the best teachings given by this process is that good feasibility must be done and you must have a strong financial background before investing in fragile sectors without having a strong financial structure in general".* P12 expresses his opinions on the subject as follows: *"We realized our shortcomings. The fact that the things we have done well are also noticed by the guests will guide us in our investments and various activities in the future. When we go over the things we do well, we will get better numerical results".*

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

According to the results obtained from the study, all hotel managers argue that crisis management works are necessary for hotels and thus, crises can be controlled. Hotel managers argue that when managed well, crises can be opportunities for businesses. Most hotel managers have a written crisis scenario (emergency action plan) that clearly states who will participate, what activities will be carried out, and what the instructions are in case of a potential crisis. Managers who do not have a pre-prepared crisis scenario create an emergency action plan during the crisis. In addition, managers have formed a specific crisis scenario and a crisis management team for Covid-19.

All hotel managers have adopted a reactive approach and tried to manage the crisis in the best way by prioritizing the health of guests and employees in order to overcome the negativities created by the crisis with the least damage to their businesses. Regarding the management of human resources, the managers made use of the rights granted to them by the state and enabled the personnel to benefit from the short-time working allowance. Contrary to these results, the study conducted by Salem et al. (2021) stated that 7800 out of 20,000 employees were asked to leave unpaid leave and their salaries were cut during the pandemic process in the five-star hotels in Egypt. In addition, hotel managers in our study have followed an energy-saving strategy without compromising the health, safety, and comfort of the guests throughout the pandemic period. Switching to plate service instead of the open buffet in food and beverage strategies caused an increase in costs in some hotels and a decrease in costs in others.

Managers have advertised the measures they have taken within the scope of the Covid-19 pandemic, the strategies they have implemented, the procedures they have followed, and the hygiene standards in the hotels they work at visually and in written form to their guests in social or corporate mediums. This situation, which is supported by previous works, has positively affected the image of the hotels. A similar marketing strategy was followed by hotels in Egypt (Salem et al., 2021). It was concluded that hotels, in cooperation with cleaning companies, apply cleaning and disinfection processes in front their guests in order to strengthen their "clean and safe" image. A study conducted by Kılıçdere (2017) on the determination of crisis management practices of travel agencies, showed that travel agencies implemented a marketing strategy by increasing their advertising activities in the management of the crises experienced in 2016. On the other hand, Lai and Wong (2020) concluded that during the Covid-19 pandemic process, managers reduced their marketing activities in hotels.

It was observed that many of the managers had already implemented various measures taken by themselves on issues, such as social distance and hygiene, before obtaining the Safe Tourism Certificate. In addition to the negative consequences of the crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic in hotels, there are also some positive consequences. Due to the crisis, learning, evaluation, and gaining experience for managers and staff, understanding the importance of keeping staff morale and motivation high and the need to have savings that businesses can use in difficult times, paying more attention to hygiene and cleanliness in hotels, increasing use of technology in hotels, holding meetings online, the positive comments made by the guests, doing seasonal works during the period when the hotels were closed, and creating a period of time to eliminate the deficiencies in the hotel are among the positive results of the crisis for the hotel. It has also been revealed in studies on the subject that the Covid-19 pandemic has positive consequences for tourism. In a study conducted by Everingham and Chassagne (2020), it was pointed out that as well as the negative consequences on national and international travel due to quarantine practices, job losses, and public health concerns, the Covid-19 crisis had positive consequences in terms of creating opportunities for different planning of tourism in the future. Also, Higgins-Desbiolles (2020) argues in the study that the Covid-19 pandemic offers an opportunity in terms of evaluating sustainability for the tourism industry. The study by Smart et al. (2021) pointed out that Covid-19 crisis has some positive consequences. Contactless check-in/out practices, disinfection of all rooms with machines, and the use of medical disinfectants to disinfect air-conditioning units are among those positive consequences.

Hotel managers, despite the uncertainty and chaotic environment, have tried to manage the crisis effectively by intervening immediately in the situation and taking necessary measures from the time the first case in Turkey occurred. The managers, in addition to following the instructions of the relevant ministries and official institutions, have taken into account the standards and procedures they have prepared within their organization and managed to control the crisis by prioritizing both guest and personnel health. There are studies in the literature that support these results. For example, Pavlatos et al. (2021) stated that in addition to the changes brought about by the health protocols in Greek hotels, managers carried out some additional activities to ensure hygiene and safety of employees and customers. It was seen that the managers felt the negatives of the crisis in the hotels they work significantly. Hotel managers managed the process in the best way by adopting a reactive crisis management approach since there had not been a similar crisis situation caused by an pandemic that affected the tourism industry to this extent before. It has been observed that managers have crisis management plans, they keep them in physical files and folders, but these plans do not contain information about the actions that can be taken when a risk of pandemic disease such as COVID 19 occurs. In other words, the crisis management plans and strategies of managers do not cover the Covid-19 crisis. Therefore, although hotel managers were caught unprepared for the Covid-19 crisis, which emerged unexpectedly, they managed to control the crisis process with their knowledge, skills, and experience and made the necessary effort to overcome it with the minimum damage to the hotels they work at. Also, Eskisehir Tourism Association, which makes important efforts for the development of tourism in Eskisehir and a significant part of members of which mainly consists of hotel managers, has tried to manage the crisis process effectively by acting in unison with the managers from the beginning of the pandemic. Thanks to the active communication network and effective communication of the group, every new development was shared with the group, and action was taken with the common mind around the measures and solutions that can be taken. In this context, it is possible to say that the unity and solidarity in Turkish culture has an important place in the effective management of the crisis process. At the same time, managers have learned important lessons from the crisis they experienced and, in some cases, turned the crisis into an opportunity. Managers, who have taken the crisis under control, currently continue to provide services by adapting to the conditions required by the new normal and continuing their crisis management works.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRACTICE AND LITERATURE

Based on the results obtained from the interviews with the participants and the field experiences of the researchers, suggestions were made for practitioners and researchers. Although the measures taken during the pandemic are sufficient, these measures should be updated according to the circumstances and changes in tourist behaviour should be monitored constantly. During the pandemic period, the use of technology has increased, and significant developments have been experienced in the fields of digitalization and automatization. Tourism businesses should also benefit from these developments and businesses should implement smart applications that provide convenience in many areas (smart disinfectant and thermometer devices, online check-in/out services, mobile applications, smart menus, etc.). Businesses should also follow innovations in informatics and technology to improve their online sales, advertising, and marketing channels. In addition, in order to manage the crisis process more effectively, it may be suggested to establish a Tourism Scientific Board that consists of tourism academics and industry stakeholders.

Hotel managers providing services in city hotels were included in the scope of this research. Since the crisis management practices of managers may differ in coastal hotels, further studies can be conducted on hotel managers who provide services in resort hotels. This study can also be carried out in other tourism-oriented sectors such as food and beverage, aviation, travel agency, and the strategies implemented by managers in other sectors related to tourism can be revealed.

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THAILAND'S IMAGE FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF CHINESE NON-VISITORS AND VISITORS

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ABSTRACT

This study examined Chinese non-visitors' and visitors' perceptions of Thailand as an outbound destination. It employed a qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews. Data were gathered from 24 Chinese respondents, of which 12 had visited Thailand and 12 had not. Thematic analysis was undertaken. The findings showed that the perceptions of non-visitors and visitors were quite different, mainly due to the types of information sources these people used in their destination image formation process. The non-visitors tended to have positive images, whereas the visitors had more mixed perceptions of Thailand.

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INTRODUCTION

Many countries around the world have become aware of the need to develop a positive image among their target markets as a way to gain a competitive advantage (Carballo et al., 2015; Magnusson et al., 2014; Qu et al., 2011). Destination image plays a vital role in destination marketing as it helps differentiate a destination from its competitors (Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2009; Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Stylidis & Cherifi, 2018), thus making places attractive for potential visitors (Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Papadimitriou et al., 2015). Destination image is also believed to influence visitors' awareness and decision-making processes (Carballo et al., 2015; Perpiña et al., 2019). Existing literature (Alcocer & Ruiz, 2020; Stylidis et al., 2017; Stylidis & Cherifi, 2018) agrees that positive destination image

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increases peoples' likelihood of visiting that destination and positively affects their on-site experiences. It also positively affects visitors' post-visit behaviours, such as repeat trips, and favourable recommendations of a destination (Ahmad et al., 2020; Hernández-Mogollón et al., 2018), and increased visitors' loyalty (Qu et al., 2011). Therefore, understanding visitors' and potential visitors' perceptions of destination image is pivotal (Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2009; Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Stylidis & Cherifi, 2018).

Thailand has become increasingly famous as a major international tourism destination. According to the World Tourism Organisation (2019; 2021), Thailand is the eighth most-visited destination by international tourists in 2018 and 2019, receiving 38,277,000 and 39,797,000 tourists, respectively. Among these visitors, many came from China, representing approximately 27.52% and 27.63% of the total international tourists visiting Thailand during these periods (National Statistical Office, 2021; World Tourism Organisation, 2019; 2021). Between 2012 and 2019, China has been the top tourist source market for Thailand, with a sharp rise from around 2.79 million in 2012 to almost 11 million in 2019 (National Statistical Office, 2021). In 2019, visitors from mainland China contributed $17,120 million to the Thai economy (National Statistical Office, 2021). This huge number of Chinese visitors was the result of the Thai government's ongoing efforts to implement proactive promotional campaigns, the introduction of an exemption for visa-on-arrival fees for Chinese visitors, and intensive marketing campaigns by relevant Thai public and private agencies in China to attract Chinese visitors (Kasikorn Research Center, 2018; 2019). The Kasikorn Research Center (2018) ranked Thailand as the most favourite destination of Chinese visitors in 2018. A close look at the Chinese market is therefore crucial for tourism sector in Thailand, especially the examination on how Chinese visitors and potential visitors perceive Thailand as a tourist destination.

Although there is extensive research on destination image, studies on image of Thailand are still limited, with the majority of studies employing a quantitative approach (e.g. Henkel et al., 2006; Promsivapallop & Kannaovakun, 2019; Rittichainuwat et al., 2001). Although these studies have contributed to the knowledge on destination image of the country, their findings rely on a predetermined set of destination attributes, developed by the researchers, without allowing respondents to freely name attributes, beliefs, impressions, and feelings that shape their image of Thailand. Tapachai and Waryszak (2000) argue that this approach has limitations in that it forces the respondents to respond to destination attributes that may not reflect their perceptions, and that this could lead to inaccurate conclusions.

To gain a more complete picture of Thailand's image in the perceptions of visitors and potential visitors, additional studies using a qualitative approach are therefore needed, providing respondents with the freedom to describe the country based on the attributes they consider relevant, thereby capturing more in-depth insights on this issue, and making a better understanding of the image of Thailand as a tourist destination.

To address this gap in the literature, this study employed a qualitative approach to examine the differences in the perceptions of Chinese non-visitors and visitors on the image of Thailand as a tourist destination. Specifically, it aimed to: (1) explore their perceptions on cognitive (beliefs or knowledge about Thailand's attributes), affective (feelings towards Thailand), and conative dimensions (intentions to visit/revisit Thailand) of Thailand's image, both in positive and negative way, and investigate whether and how differences exist in the perceptions of these two groups; and (2) examine factors influencing their perceptions.

Chinese respondents were selected because, as mentioned, Chinese market represents an important market for inbound tourism of Thailand, and to date, there is very limited research on this topic from the perspectives of Chinese people specifically. Previous research studied the perceptions of a mixed group of international tourists, which might or might not include Chinese respondents. Moreover, perceptions of non-visitors and visitors on Thailand's image also represent a gap in the literature as previous studies on Thailand's destination image focus on the comparison between first-time travellers and repeat travellers (Rittichainuwat et al., 2001) or between international tourists and residents (Henkel et al., 2006). To address these research gaps, this study aimed to compare the perceptions of non-visitors and visitors, which has not yet been done in the context of Thailand's destination image. Such knowledge not only add empirical evidence to the existing literature on destination image of Thailand, but can also help tourism policy-makers, destination planners, and the destination marketing organizations (DMOs) to understand in what ways the perceptions of these two groups are different and what factors contribute to such differences as well as find effective marketing and promotion strategies to attract the visitors to make a repeat visit and the non-visitors to make an actual visit in the near future.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definitions, Components, and Characteristics of Destination Image

Several definitions of 'destination image' were found in existing literature. Some authors and researchers describe destination image by emphasising only its cognitive aspect, while others recognise the coexistence of cognitive and affective dimensions in the construct of destination image, thereby including the affective dimension. Cognitive dimension of the destination image refers to individual's beliefs or knowledge of the attributes of a tourist destination (Baloglu, 1999; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a; Pike & Ryan, 2004), while the affective component is associated with feelings towards a tourist destination (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a; Krider et al., 2010). Many researchers (Agapito et al., 2013; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a; Li et al., 2010) also point out that cognitive and affective images are interrelated, and affective images depend on individuals' assessment of their cognitive images.

The examples of the definitions which emphasise only the cognitive image are: Gartner and Hunt (1987) who define tourism image as the impressions that individuals hold about a particular place in which they do not reside; and Echtner and Ritchie (1991) who note that destination image should encompass perceptions of individual attributes (such as weather, transportation, accommodation, and friendliness of local people) as well as more holistic impressions of the place. As for definitions that include both cognitive and affective dimensions of destination image, the widely-cited ones include: Baloglu and McCleary (1999a) defining this concept as an individual's beliefs, knowledge, feelings, and global impression about a destination; and Kim and Richardson (2003) describing this term as a totality of beliefs, impressions, opinions, expectations, and feelings people have and accumulated towards a place over time.

Apart from cognitive and affective components of destination image, many researchers (Afshardoost & Eshaghi, 2020; Kladou & Mavragani, 2015; Michael et al., 2018) note that the conation dimension, representing an individual's behaviour, such as his/her intention to visit/revisit a destination and/or recommend it to other people, should also be regarded one of the main components of destination image. Many researchers (Afshardoost & Eshaghi, 2020; Agapito et al., 2013; Peña et al., 2012) argue that the three components of destination image are hierarchically related, with cognitive and affective images influencing conative images.

A destination can be perceived positively or negatively (Perpiña et al., 2019), encouraging or discouraging potential visitors to visit a certain destination. Several researchers (Alvarez & Campo, 2014; Perpiña et al., 2019) argue that negative images are formed based on individuals' perceptions of risks such as crime, terrorism, robberies, diseases, and harassment. Other authors (Reisinger & Mavondo, 2005; 2006; Quintal et al., 2010) add that perception of risk is closely related to individuals' feelings of uncertainty, fear, worry, and anxiety. In this sense, risk perception can become part of the cognition and affective evaluations of the image of a certain destination.

Regarding destination image's characteristics, the study by Gallarza et al. (2002) contributes by identifying four main features of the destination image including complex, multi-dimensional, relativistic, and dynamic. This argument has been agreed upon by many other researchers (e.g. Chi & Qu, 2008; Martín & Rodríguez del Bosque, 2008; Stylidis & Cherifi, 2018). In terms of complexity, the three aspects of destination image (cognitive, affective, and conative components) play an important role in making this phenomenon complex (Gallarza et al., 2002). As for its multiplicity, many studies (Chi & Qu, 2008; Glover, 2009; Stylidis & Cherifi, 2018) reveal that individuals described their destination image of a certain place using a number of attributes (e.g. tourist attractions and activities, natural environment, climate, accessibility, friendliness of the locals and culture) and feelings.

As for the relativistic nature of destination image, existing literature (Smith et al., 2015; Stylidis & Cherifi, 2018; Tan & Wu, 2016) found that differences of destination image exist between non-visitors and visitors to a certain destination. For example, Stylidis and Cherifi (2018) report that images of non-visitors to London tend to be vague and simplistic, whereas those of visitors are more specific and concrete. Kotler and Gertner (2002) explain that the vague images held by non-visitors are a result of a lack of concrete images for that given destination, and therefore, they often base their perceptions on stereotypes or simplifications.

As for the dynamic characteristic of destination image, several researchers (Chen, 2019; Kong et al., 2015; Stylidis & Cherifi, 2018) agree that destination image is not static, but is subject to constant change. These researchers explain that destination image constantly evolves from stereotypes and simplifications to more complex, multi-dimensional images. Chen (2019)'s study, comparing traveller's pre-trip and post-trip perceptions to Macau by collecting data from the same groups of visitors, reveals that before visiting Macau, visitors had stereotypical and simple images of Macau, but after the trip, their ideas became more concrete and detailed. They also explain that the dynamic nature of destination image is a result of visitors' assessment of their on-site experiences, gained through their encounter with the place and its people.

Perceptions of Destination Image between Non-Visitors and Visitors

Several researchers (Riscinto-Kozub & Childs, 2012; Smith et al., 2015; Tan & Wu, 2016) establish that perceptions of destination image of visitors differ from those of non-visitors, generally because visitors tend to have more knowledge of a destination than non-visitors, and therefore can describe more attributes of a destination in detail, whereas non-visitors seem to have general knowledge only of a destination and can speak in broad terms only (Hughes & Allen, 2008; Song & Hsu, 2013; Stylidis & Cherifi, 2018).

Sources of information are found to play a vital role in formulating differences in the perceptions of a destination image between non-visitors and visitors (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b). Baloglu and McCleary (1999b) point out that non-visitors form their perceptions based on secondary information such as word-of-mouth, movies, and media, whereas visitors' perceptions of destination image are based on their on-site experiences, including contact with local people and facilities. On-site experiences lead visitors to create a more complex, specific, and differentiated image of the destination than non-visitors (Song & Hsu, 2013; Stylidis & Cherifi, 2018).

Factors Influencing Destination Image Formation

Several studies (e.g. Kim & Chen, 2016; Pan & Tsang, 2014; Terzidou et al., 2018) have reported that formation of destination image in the perceptions of individuals is influenced by various factors. Baloglu and McCleary (1999a) pioneered this area by developing a model of destination image formation. Based on their model, destination image is influenced by individuals' factors and stimulus factors. Personal factors include motivations and socio-demographics (i.e. age and education) whereas stimulus factors refer to variety (amount) and type of information sources. They also point out the roles of these factors in influencing each component of the destination image by stating that age, education, and variety (amount), and types of information sources (i.e. word-of-mouth, movies, advertisement, books, news, and professional advice) have an influence on cognitive image, and all of these factors together with motivations influence the affective image of individuals.

The factors in Baloglu and McCleary's (1999a) model have been studied by others. In relation to motivations, Martín and RodrÍguez del Bosque (2008) and Khan et al. (2017) support Baloglu and McCleary's (1999a) model, arguing that individuals with different motivations tend to have different images of the same destination. Regarding information sources, Stylidis and Cherifi's (2018) study found that the complex images of London hold by visitors are a result of a variety of information sources consulted before visiting, such as word-of-mouth and internet research. Moreover, other studies found that non-visitors' increased interest in a certain destination is influenced by movies, dramas, and documentaries (Kim, 2012; Pan & Tsang, 2014; Terzidou et al., 2018), travel blogs (Gholamhosseinzadeh et al., 2021), and user-generated content (UGC) (Xu et al., 2021)

In addition, there is common agreement among many researchers (e.g. Konecnik & Ruzzier, 2006; Smith et al., 2015; Stylidis et al., 2017) that on-site travel experiences also serve as an important factor influencing the formation of the destination image. These researchers note that visiting a destination led visitors to modify their prior knowledge. Such modification is a consequence of several factors, including increased knowledge (Stylidis & Cherifi, 2018), familiarity (Baloglu, 2001; Stylidis & Cherifi, 2018), and feeling connected to the place (George & George, 2004).

METHODOLOGY

As mentioned above that it has been widely agreed that destination image is complex, multi-dimensional, relativistic, and dynamic, so this phenomenon cannot be sufficiently captured by data gained from a questionnaire comprising a predetermined set of destination attributes (Ryan & Cave, 2005). In contrast, a qualitative approach allows the respondents to freely describe their knowledge, feelings, and behavioural intention concerning a given destination image, as well as factors influencing their perceptions. Thus, the researcher believed that a qualitative methodology deems appropriate for this study.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with Chinese non-visitors and visitors to Thailand. The rationale for employing semi-structured interviews lies in their potential to enable the researcher to gather rich data because she could clarify questions to interviewees (Carey, 2013). If the answers given by interviewees are unclear or too brief, this technique allows the researcher to probe for more clarification (Carey, 2013). The interview guide was developed by the researcher based on the literature review and was tested for its effectiveness in eliciting all the data needed to fulfill the research objectives during the pilot study (Jennings, 2011).

Table 1. *Interview guides used during the pilot study and the main study*

Interview guide (pilot study)	Interview guide (main study)	Reason for revision
What do you think about Thailand? Why?	What images, pictures or characteristics first come to your mind when you think of Thailand as a tourist destination? Why?	The question is too general. Some respondents answered this question by thinking of Thailand in general, not as a tourist destination.
	What factors make you have such perceptions?	This question was added to encourage the respondents to discuss the factors influencing their perceptions.
	Could you please tell me about your experiences regarding these perceptions? (for visitors) Could you please tell me about your reasons/factors making you have such perceptions? (for non-visitors)	These questions were added to allow the researcher to probe for deeper details.
What do you like most and least about Thailand? Why?	What do you like most and least about Thailand? Why?	Unchanged
What are the unique or distinctive things that you can think of about Thailand? Why do you hold such perceptions?	What are the unique or distinctive things that you can think of about Thailand? Why do you hold such perceptions?	Unchanged
How would you describe your feelings, moods, or emotions about Thailand? (for non-visitors)	How would you describe your feelings, moods, or emotions about Thailand as a place to visit or a tourist destination? (for non-visitors)	This question was revised by emphasizing Thailand 'as a place to visit' or 'a tourist destination' because some respondents answered this question by thinking of Thailand in general, not as a tourist destination.
How did you feel about Thailand while visiting the country? (for visitors)	How did you feel about Thailand while visiting the country? (for visitors)	Unchanged
Do you a plan to visit/revisit Thailand in the near future? Why? Which places do you plan to visit?	Do you a plan to visit/revisit Thailand in the near future? If yes, why, when and which places do you plan to visit? Why? If not, why?	The word 'when' was added in order to gain more information on the intended behavior of the respondents.

A pilot study was carried out with five respondents whom the researcher had personal contact with. Two were non-visitors and the other three had been to Thailand at least once during the past five years. The pilot study not only tested the effectiveness of the interview guide, but also allowed the researcher to become familiar with the interview questions (Jennings, 2011). As a result of the pilot study, some questions were found to be ambiguous and were revised, and some questions were added. Table 1 illustrates the questions in the interview guide employed during the pilot study and the revised/added questions from the main study. Some follow-up questions may also be added based on the stories told by the respondents.

The main study was conducted between June and August 2019. As the researcher was not able to communicate in Chinese, the interviews were conducted either in English or Thai, so only individuals who could speak either of these languages were approached. Twenty-four semi-structured interviews were conducted, including those carried out during the pilot study. This number of respondents was defined by the saturation point of the data, which was when the answers of the respondents became repetitive.

Purposive and snowball sampling were employed to identify and reach interviewees based on the determined criteria which included: (i) being Chinese people who had never visited Thailand or those who had visited the country at least once during the past five years; (ii) being able to communicate in English; and (iii) eighteen years old and above for ethical reasons. Purposive sample was mainly used during the pilot study to identify the first set of the respondents whose qualifications met with the determined criteria and was also used during the main study. According to Patton (2014), the effectiveness of this sampling technique lies in its ability to allow the researcher to gain access to information-rich participants who have direct experiences that yield valuable insights for the research questions. As for the snowball sampling, this technique was employed during the main study. It enabled the researcher to take advantage of social networks by asking the first set of interviewees to nominate other individuals with required qualifications who may be willing to be interviewed (Emmel, 2013).

As a result, seven interviewees were approached directly by the researcher herself through the purposive sampling, and the rest were reached via recommendations from other interviewees. This study achieved a good balance between respondents who had never visited Thailand (twelve) and those who had visited Thailand (twelve). Of 24 respondents, 16 were female and all the respondents were aged 19-48 years old. For those who had visited Thailand before, four had visited only once. The demographic profiles of each group of respondents were displayed in Table 2 and Table 3 below.

Table 2. *Profiles of respondents who had not visited Thailand*

Name	Gender	Age	Marital Status	Education	Occupation
NV1	M	37	Single	Master's degree	PhD student
NV2	F	38	Married	Bachelor's degree	Housewife
NV3	M	22	Single	High school	Student
NV4	F	21	Single	High school	Student
NV5	F	29	Married	Master's degree	Engineer
NV6	M	32	Married	Master's degree	Hotel employee
NV7	M	19	Single	High school	Student
NV8	F	34	Married	Bachelor's degree	Self-employed
NV9	F	48	Married	Doctoral degree	Lecturer
NV10	M	32	Single	Bachelor's degree	Doctor
NV11	F	34	Married	Master's degree	PhD student
NV12	F	26	Single	Bachelor's degree	Self-employed

Table 3. *Profiles of respondents who had visited Thailand*

Name	Gender	Age	Marital Status	Education	Occupation	Frequency of visit	Travelling with
VT1	F	19	Single	High school	Student	Once	A friend
VT2	M	43	Married	Master's	PhD student	Twice	Family
VT3	F	38	Single	Master's	Lecturer	Three times	Family
VT4	F	48	Married	Bachelor's	Business owner	Once	Friends
VT5	M	38	Married	Doctoral degree	Government officer	Once	Family
VT6	M	37	Married	Bachelor's	Master's student	Four times	Family
VT7	F	24	Single	Bachelor's	Self-employed	Twice	Friends
VT8	F	25	Single	Bachelor's	Hotel employee	Once	A friend
VT9	F	24	Single	Bachelor's	Travel agent	Twice	Family
VT10	F	36	Married	Master's	Government officer	Three times	Friends
VT11	F	33	Married	Bachelor's	Business owner	Twice	Friends
VT12	F	31	Single	Master's	Computer consultant	Twice	Family

Topics of discussion in the interviews were designed around the three dimensions of Thailand's image (i.e. cognitive, affective, and conative), as well as the factors leading the respondents to hold such images (see Table 1 above). The researcher encouraged all the respondents to freely express their opinion and share their truthful views of Thailand as a destination, both positive and negative. All interviews were carried out online through Google Meet and were recorded for data collection after obtaining the written consent of respondents. Each interview lasted about 40-75 minutes. All the interviewees were ensured of the anonymity and confidentiality of their information through the use of pseudonyms (VT is used for visitors to Thailand whereas NV is for non-visitors).

The interviews were transcribed by the researcher, and the transcriptions were manually analyzed using thematic analysis, following the stages suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). After transcribing the interviews, the researcher repeatedly read the data in order to familiarize herself with them and search for meaning and patterns. She took notes and marked ideas for initial coding as well as collating relevant data extracts together within each code. These codes were developed based on the main points and common meanings that recurred throughout the data. For example, when a respondent stated '*I always think about Thai food and Thai temples when I visit Thailand*' (VT1), the researcher coded this as 'local cuisine' and 'tourism attractions and activities'. Then, the researcher reviewed all the identified codes and sorted them into potential themes. All the relevant data extracts were collated into each theme. Then, all the identified themes were reviewed, together with the collated data extracts. A candidate thematic map was then created, and the sub-themes were also developed to give structure to a large theme. The candidate thematic map was checked and revised to ensure that it accurately represented the meaning of the data as a whole. The names of the themes were given based on the essence of each theme or what story it tells. The researcher also compared the names of these themes to those used in previous related literature.

RESULTS

This section categorises the findings based on the three main components of destination image (cognitive, affective, and conative). Factors influencing the destination image formation of the respondents are also presented and discussed. This section also intends to reflect the respondents' 'true voice', and therefore interviewees are quoted verbatim, referred to by pseudonyms.

Cognitive Images

Based on the data analysis, seven attributes representing the cognitive images of Thailand were identified: local cuisine; tourist attractions and activities; local people; political issues; tourist facilities and infrastructure; and lady boys. All these attributes were mentioned by the respondents who had visited Thailand, whereas the non-visitors only mentioned local cuisine, tourist attractions and activities, and lady boys.

Local cuisine

Local food, snacks, desserts, and fruits, especially street food, were the most frequently mentioned attribute by all respondents from both groups and was a 'must-do' activity for many respondents from both groups. The majority of the respondents also stated that the reputation of Thai cuisine as cheap, varied, and deliciousness was the main motivator making them want to visit Thailand. Many non-visitors mentioned the recommendations of bloggers, reviewers, media, and/or friends to try famous local food, snacks, desserts, and fruits.

For both groups, frequently mentioned food included *Phad Thai* (stir-fried noodles), *Som Tam* (green papaya salad), *Tom Yam Kung* (spicy prawn soup), durians, and coconuts. However, the visitors' perceptions of Thai cuisine were found to be much more detailed and specific than those of non-visitors, as they could explain the taste, look, and price of food/fruit they had tried (although some visitors could not remember the names of some dishes). For example, VT3 said that *'I really like Tom Yam Kung although it is a bit spicy…. It has a lot of Thai herbs in the soup which makes it unique and very tasty'*; and VT7 who stated that *'I ate a lot of durian during that trip. The smell and taste is so good, and the price is not expensive.'*

Different experiences of Thai street food were shared by the majority of visitors. They describe it as authentic, freshly cooked, novel, tasty, inexpensive, and an insight into local ways of life and eating habits. Many visitors also stated that having authentic Thai culinary experiences of street food was their key motivation to visit Thailand. For example, VT3 stated that *'I always wanted to have the experience of Thai street food, and it was the main reason for visiting Thailand'.* Similar findings were also highlighted by Cifci et al. (2021).

Although local food and fruits were highly praised by the respondents, three visitors who said they liked Thai cuisine also had concerns about food sold by hawkers, street food vendors or in traditional markets, in terms of hygiene, sanitation, cleanliness, and quality. For example, VT3 said; *'I found that most of the street food did not have anything to cover it, so you could see flies on the food'.* However, these concerns were not shared by non-visitors.

Tourist attractions and activities

Tourist attractions were also cited by all the respondents from both groups, and all responses were positive. Thailand's tourist attractions were praised for their diversity and beauty. Both cultural and natural tourist sites were mentioned by both groups. Non-visitors focused on iconic places in Bangkok and famous seaside cities that they wished to visit. Interestingly, responses from some non-visitors were quite detailed, including the locations, and specific features of certain tourist sites, even though they had not visited these places. These non-visitors explained that they had read many reviews from travel blogs and other online user-generated content (UGC). However, many of these non-visitors were not able to remember the exact names of the sites, especially the names of Buddhist temples. For example, NV4 said, '*I had seen from TV documentaries that there were many magnificent Buddhist temples in Bangkok. I don't remember their names, but one of them is the temple with a very big reclining Buddha image*'.

For visitors, their impressions were also centered around iconic features of Bangkok, such as Buddhist temples including the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, the Temple of Dawn, and the Temple of the Reclining Buddha Image, as well as famous seaside cities including Pattaya, Phuket, and Krabi. These places were noted by many visitors as must-visit sites for first-time visitors. The Buddhist temples were highly praised for their extravagant, magnificent and unique architectural style, and decoration, while the seaside cities were complimented in terms of their beautiful beaches, clear sea-water, variety of beach activities, and water sports for tourists. Some visitors mentioned other lesser-known cities favourably, such as Kanchaburi, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya, and Sukhothai. However, some visitors could not remember names and/or precise descriptions of some places.

In terms of activities, one non-visitor expressed a willingness to learn Thai boxing, whereas two non-visitors would like to get a Thai massage and felt these activities were must-do things if they visited Thailand. Thai massage was also mentioned by one visitor as something she would definitely do again if she revisits Thailand.

In addition, shopping was also mentioned as one of the most interesting tourist activities to do in Thailand. More than half of respondents from both groups mentioned that Thailand was a very good place for shopping. In their view, products in Thailand were cheap and varied, including many attractive products including tourist souvenirs (e.g. magnets, hats, folding fans, etc.), clothes, accessories, appliances, food, and snacks. The respondents were able to name many shopping places in Bangkok such as Chatuchak Weekend Market, Pratunam, Platinum Fashion Mall, Central World, Siam Square, and Asiatique.

Local people

The cognitive images concerning local people were expressed by only respondents who had visited Thailand. In general, these respondents had very positive views of Thai people. They said that based on their own encounters with the locals, they were very impressed by hospitality, friendliness, and warmness of these people. Below are some comments shared by the respondents:

> *'I was impressed by friendliness, care, and kindness of Thai people. There was one time when my friend and I were trying to find a direction to the nearest skytrain station, one girl offered to help us. She could speak some Mandarin … She was very nice and kind.'* (VT1)

However, three respondents had negative views of local people, whom they said had been very rude. VT7 stated that her friends and she were once harassed by a group of teenagers on the street. Although she could not understand what these people said, she could guess from their actions that these people were mocking them, and the incident made her feel ashamed.

Political issues

Political issues in Thailand were found to be connected to a negative image of the country for respondents. This attribute was mentioned by two respondents who had visited Thailand, who described an encounter with an anti-government protest during a trip to Bangkok in January 2019. One respondent visited Thailand independently with two friends, while the other was on an organised group tour. They similarly noted that they were unfortunate to visit Thailand at that time, and the protest negatively affected their holiday, as the protesters blocked important spots and streets in Bangkok. VT10 stated that she saw thousands of people gathering on major spots in Bangkok, and many of these people shouting and holding anti-government banners. She was scared to travel to tourist attractions situated near the protest sites.

Tourist facilities and infrastructure

This was mentioned only by respondents who had visited Thailand, who spoke of local transportation and accommodation. Regarding local transportation, the respondents' perceptions were extremely negative, describing transport in Bangkok and between Bangkok and other cities. Specifically, the lack of orderliness and convenience was highly criticised.

They found that there were very limited skytrains and subways in Bangkok, that did not go to the main tourist attractions such as the Royal Palace and the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, and the Temple of Dawn. There were only buses going to these places. Travelling by bus in Bangkok was not easy for foreigners because all the signs were in Thai, and the bus drivers and the ticket takers could not speak English nor Chinese. VT4 remarked that *'My friends and I tried to use a public bus to go to the Royal Palace, but we had to change our mind to take a taxi after trying to figure it out which bus to take. The bus system in Bangkok is very confusing. Everything is in Thai.'*

The inconvenience of public transportation between Bangkok and other cities was also discussed by two respondents. They stated that the train system in Thailand was very outdated and inconvenient and that they had taken coaches or flights. Traffic in Bangkok was also a source of complaint for many respondents, who were shocked by the congestion and were annoyed to be stuck on the road.

As for accommodation, three respondents shared similar views that Thailand was a perfect tourist destination in terms of accommodation for tourists because there was a great range of accommodations, from very well-known branded hotels to budget guesthouses; prices were affordable, and hotel staff very professional.

Lady boys

Two non-visitors and five visitors mentioned the lady boys. They found that, compared to other countries, Thailand was much more open to LGBT culture. Below are some comments illustrating opinions of the respondents on this attribute:

> *'I was shocked when my friend who visited Thailand showed me pictures of lady boys who were performers of the show in Thailand. I could not believe that they were men. They really looked like girls, and they were more beautiful than many girls I had seen'* (NV12).

> *'I think Thailand is the country that has the highest number of lady boys in the world. You can see them everywhere in Thailand. I am not exaggerating. They dressed in female costume, and acted just like women. Many of them looked really like real women'* (VT2).

Affective Images

Non-visitors used a limited range of terms to describe their feelings towards Thailand, but they all demonstrated positive feelings, such as 'joyful', 'excited', 'relaxed', 'fun', and 'calm'. Visitors were more mixed. Positive terms included 'happy', 'relaxed', 'fun', 'excited', 'surprised' and 'impressed', whereas negative feelings were 'scared', 'worried', 'upset', 'annoyed', 'tired', and 'ashamed'.

The data analysis shows that the respondents described their feelings based on both the overall expectations of a trip to Thailand (for non-visitors) or the overall experiences of visiting Thailand (for visitors), and on specific attributes such as local cuisine, tourist attractions, local transportation, and political issues. The overall expectations/experiences of the respondents were reported to be only positive, while those attached to specific attributes were mixed. Examples of opinions of the non-visitors regarding their overall expectations include: *'I am very excited to visit Thailand'* (NV2); and *'I think Thailand is a relaxed country'* (NV4). As for the visitors, examples of their comments on their overall experiences of visiting Thailand include: *'I had a very impressive and fun experiences'* (VT9); and *'It was a mix of relaxing and exciting'* (VT12). The comments on specific attributes are as follows: *'I was very excited to see a variety of street food'* (VT3); *'I was very annoyed to be stuck on the road because of the heavy traffic in Bangkok'* (VT8); and *'My friend and I were very ashamed when we were harassed by local teenagers'* (VT7).

Moreover, it was interesting to find that some visitors compared their feelings before and during the trip and mentioned that their feelings towards specific attributes had changed. For example, VT8 stated that *'I was very surprised by the taste and price of Thai food. I assumed that Thai food might be too spicy, but I found that they were very tasty…These exceeded my expectation'*; and VT 9 said, *'Before visiting, I didn't imagine that Thai temples would be very beautiful and elegant. The style and decorations were more than what I expected.'*

Conative Images

Both groups of the respondents had mixed intentions to visit/revisit Thailand. For the non-visitors, although all of them expressed their intent to visit Thailand, their plan varied from vague and uncertain, to clear intentions to visit in the next few months. For those who were uncertain, their reasons were mainly related to their unreadiness in terms of time and budget for a trip. For the visitors, ten respondents showed willingness to revisit Thailand, for the following reasons: expecting that a further trip would be as joyful as previous trips; a desire to take family members or friends to Thailand; a desire to do things they found attractive and interesting again; and a desire to visit new places, do new activities, and/or try more foods.

It was interesting that some visitors who mentioned negative experiences/feelings were still keen to visit Thailand again. They explained that, based on their overall perception, their positive experiences/feelings on some specific attributes outweighed the negatives, and they believed the problems they faced during the trip could be avoided. For example, VT7 who had been harassed by local teenagers said that *'Oh, I will definitely visit Thailand again... I believe that not every Thai people are not like those people who harassed me'*; and VT10, who mentioned about her negative feelings about the anti-government protest, noted, *'Next time, I would definitely check before whether there is a protest in Bangkok or not, or if there is, I will visit other cities in Thailand'.*

It was also found that revisiting Thailand was unlikely for two visitors, even though they had very positive perceptions of Thailand both in terms of their cognitive image and affective image. These respondents explained that they wanted to explore new countries, instead of returning to a destination that they had already visited.

Factors Influencing Destination Image Formation

The data analysis showed that a variety of factors influenced the destination image formation of the respondents. For non-visitors, factors used to form their images of Thailand included various information sources (i.e. word-of-mouth from friends/family members, online UGC, travel blogs, promotional materials of tourism-related organisations, tour companies, and/or travel agencies, TV documentaries, movies, TV dramas, magazines, guidebooks, websites, and social media). Among these, word-of-mouth from friends/family members, online UGC, and travel blogs were found to be the most trusted sources. Interestingly, online UGC in a form of clips posted on social media was found to make non-visitors more familiar with many attributes of Thailand, thereby developing their cognitive, affective, and conative images. Many non-visitors similarly stated that these clips helped them see how Thailand really looks. NV1 said that *'I felt like I was really travelling in Thailand with the presenters'*. The responses demonstrate their confidence in the images of Thailand they held, as they could name locations, and interesting features of many local dishes and tourist sites correctly.

For visitors, on-site experiences, including visiting places, doing activities, having interactions with people, using tourism facilities and infrastructure, served as the main factors in their destination image formation. The data showed that all the visitors based their perceptions on past experiences of visiting Thailand. The respondents explained that direct experiences and encounters increased their knowledge of and familiarity with Thailand, and they felt more informed compared to their pre-trip stage.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The analysis shows that there are differences in the perceptions of Thailand's image between non-visitors and visitors. In terms of their cognitive images, non-visitors mentioned fewer attributes of Thailand in their perceptions than visitors did. Many of these attributes were also reported in previous studies. For example, local cuisine, tourist attractions and activities, local people, and tourist facilities and infrastructure were reported as relevant by Rittichainuwat et al. (2001) and Henkel et al. (2006), and all of these attributes, except tourist facilities and infrastructure, were reported by Tapachai and Waryszak (2000). Among the reported cognitive images, anti-government protests and lady boys were not mentioned in previous studies, which may be because previous studies employed a quantitative research approach using a list of pre-determined attributes that did not include these aspects. Moreover, the time period in which the research was conducted could possibly affect the findings. This current research was conducted long after the majority of this previous research, and therefore perceptions of the respondents may have changed, denoting the dynamic nature of destination image as suggested by existing literature (Chen, 2019; Kong et al., 2015; Stylidis & Cherifi, 2018).

The findings on cognitive images also indicate differences between non-visitors and visitors in terms of positive and negative views. Non-visitors were found to have only positive images on all of the mentioned attributes, whereas visitors expressed both positive and negative views. Specifically, visitors showed mixed perceptions on local cuisine, local people, and tourist facilities and infrastructure; only positive views on tourist attractions and activities, and lady boys; and only negative opinions on political issues. Similar patterns of findings were detected for affective images. Non-visitors expressed only positive feelings towards Thailand and used a very limited range of terms to illustrate them, whereas visitors had more varied feelings and vocabularies.

Lastly, for conative images, both groups reported a mixed intention to visit/revisit Thailand. All non-visitors intended to visit, but their plan varied from being uncertainty to having a definite plan. The study found that positive cognitive and affective evaluations of the images of Thailand did not always lead respondents to visit/revisit the country, and negative cognitive and affective images did not make the respondents avoid visiting the country either. This challenges existing literature (Afshardoost & Eshaghi, 2020; Agapito et al., 2013; Peña et al., 2012) that argues that individuals' assessment of cognitive and affective images influences their conative image or intention to visit/revisit the destination. Rather, this study argues that although the cognitive and affective images were taken into account when the respondents decided to visit/revisit Thailand, such a decision depended on other factors, such as their readiness in terms of time, budget and motivations.

The above findings show that destination image is complex, multi-dimensional, relativistic, and dynamic, which supports existing literature (Gallarza et al., 2002; Martín & Rodríguez del Bosque, 2008; Stylidis & Cherifi, 2018). Complexity and multiplicity in images of Thailand are evident from the responses that identify a number of attributes and have mixed opinions on these attributes, as well as various feelings about whether to visit/revisit the country. This study adds additional insight, finding that some respondents held both positive and negative images on specific attributes. For example, three respondents who had visited Thailand were excited to find varied street food and fruits in Thailand, but were also worried in terms of hygiene and cleanliness. It can be concluded that the visitors can have both positive and negative opinions (cognitive image) and feelings (affective image) on a certain attribute.

With regard to the relativistic nature of the image of Thailand, the findings agree with the studies of Kotler and Gartner (2002) and Stylidis and Cherifi (2018), that notable differences exist between non-visitors and visitors in terms of the clarity and details of their perceptions. Non-visitors' perceptions of Thailand, mainly based on secondary sources of data, were relatively vague and brief, whereas those of visitors appeared to be more specific and detailed, resulting from previous trips. These findings also support existing literature (Smith et al., 2015; Song & Hsu, 2013; Stylidis & Cherifi, 2018) that actual visits enable individuals to have first-hand encounters with people, tourist infrastructure, and facilities, which then are significant in forming their images of Thailand, as they had greater knowledge of and familiarity with the country.

Moreover, this study provides additional knowledge of the phenomenon of destination image in terms of the concrete in the perceptions of non-visitors and visitors. This study argues that non-visitors' perceptions of a destination are not always vague and brief, as some non-visitors had quite detailed perceptions on many attributes of Thailand due to their exposure to reviews from travel blogs and clip videos about Thailand, denoting the important role of these factors. For visitors, the study found that although the cognitive perceptions of the visitors were found to be more concrete and detailed than those of the non-visitors, some visitors could not provide precise descriptions of some attributes (e.g. the names of foods or the locations of certain tourist attractions). This means that vagueness in the perceptions of some destination attributes could still exist among some visitors, despite their experience of a destination. This should be addressed by destination marketers because vagueness may affect negatively the overall image of a destination.

In terms of the dynamic features of destination image, changes in cognitive and affective images of the visitors were evident, which is in line with existing literature (Chen, 2019; Kong et al., 2015; Stylidis & Cherifi, 2018). In this study, this characteristic of destination image was prominent in the group of visitors as their responses indicated comparison between their expectations before visiting and their real experiences during the trip. They spoke of being surprised and having their expectations exceeded.

Moreover, the findings of this study support existing literature (Agapito et al., 2013; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a; Li et al., 2010) that argues that affective images are influenced by individuals' evaluations of their cognitive images, and therefore they are formed as a function of cognitive images. This study found that these two dimensions had hierarchical relations, with cognitive images serving as preceding factors, whereas affective images were the consequences of cognitive images. In order words, both non-visitors and visitors expressed their feelings based on their evaluations of specific attributes. However, this study also found that respondents from both groups also described their feelings based on their overall expectations of a trip to Thailand (non-visitors) or the overall experience of visiting Thailand (visitors).

In relation to the factors influencing the formation of the image of Thailand, although the findings of this study are similar to previous studies stating that information sources (Pan & Tsang, 2014; Stylidis & Cherifi, 2018; Terzidou et al., 2018) and on-site experiences (Smith et al., 2015; Song & Hsu, 2013; Stylidis et al., 2017) are important factors, this study also reported the role of these factors in each group of respondents. Information sources, especially word-of-mouth from friends/family members, travel blogs and UGC were found to play an important role in formulating the images of Thailand for non-visitors, which is in agreement with

Gholamhosseinzadeh et al. (2021) and Xu et al. (2021), whereas on-site experiences represented the main factors for destination image formation in visitors. In addition, this study found that non-visitors played attention to the reliability of the information sources in the hope of gaining a more accurate view of Thailand.

This study reinforces the knowledge on destination image, especially in the context of Thailand by adding empirical evidence to existing literature. First, it employed a qualitative research approach to investigate the topic. This study not only confirms the argument made in existing quantitative literature that destination image is complex, multi-dimensional, relativistic, and dynamic, but it also reports on 'how', and 'why' relating to each of these features. Secondly, it is one of very few studies examining the image of Thailand from Chinese people's perspectives, and the first study that compares Chinese non-visitors' and visitors' perceptions.

Third, this study makes an argument in terms of relationship between cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions of the destination image. Previous studies (Afshardoost & Eshaghi, 2020; Agapito et al., 2013; Peña et al., 2012) report the hierarchical relationship between these three dimensions and argue that cognitive and affective images influence the conative dimension. This study shows that individuals' evaluations of cognitive images and affective images do not always influence their conative image or their intention to visit/revisit the destination. Some individuals who had positive cognitive and affective images of Thailand did not intend to visit Thailand, and some respondents who had negative views and/or feelings said that, nevertheless, they had a plan to visit Thailand in the near future. This study argues that conative images held by individuals may partly depend on the evaluations of their cognitive and affective images, but it is also affected by other factors, including their readiness to travel in terms of time and budget, and motivations.

Lastly, this study extends the knowledge on the role of factors in destination image formation by arguing that, in the digital age, reviews on travel blogs and UGC play an important role in the non-visitors' destination image formation process. While other factors, as reported in existing literature, still have a role in such processes, these two factors appear to dominate, as they are reliable in the views of these individuals, enable the non-visitors to become familiar with the destinations before visiting, and help them to form a more accurate image of the destination.

The study has practical implications for tourism policy-makers, destination planners, and destination marketing organisations (DMOs) of Thailand. In-depth understanding of the images of the country held by Chinese people, who are its main target market, is a key for success in the development and marketing of the country. First, knowledge on their positive and negative opinions on and feeling towards certain attributes of the country can help policy-makers and destination planners to assess strengths and weaknesses of Thailand based on the views of this market, and use such insight to develop strategic plans and communication strategies that focus on informing the Chinese market on practices and measures that have been implemented to eliminate or minimise risks in the country as well as marketing strategies aiming to strengthen positive aspects of the country. For example, as reported in this study that local food and fruits, especially street food, were highly praised by visitors and were also their key motivation for visiting Thailand. However, some visitors were concerned about its hygiene, cleanliness, and the quality. With this knowledge in mind, DMOs should develop standards and measures aiming to improve these issues. The study by Cifci et al. (2021) reports that local guides play a significant role in promoting Thai street food and reducing perceived risks concerning its hygiene and cleanliness among visitors by informing them about Thai street food (e.g. background information, cooking techniques, interesting facts, recipes, etc.), taking them to clean settings offering street food, trying food first before visitors to reassure them that it was safe, and recommending food to visitors with dietary needs such as allergies. Such actions by local guides can significantly enhance the visitors' experiences and help them overcome the fear or perceived risks of Thai street food. Therefore, the DMOs should cooperate with local guides in promoting local foods within this market.

In addition, knowledge on factors playing an important role in the formation of destination image of Thailand can be beneficial for tourism practitioners as well. As this study identified the important role of reviews from travel blogs and UGC in helping Chinese non-visitors become familiar with Thailand, DMOs should aim their marketing efforts more at these communication tools. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, vagueness in the perceptions of some destination attributes still exists among some visitors, despite their actually visiting Thailand. Such vagueness may damage the image held by non-visitors because these visitors may describe Thailand inaccurately to their friends/family members who have never visited Thailand. It is agreed that word-of-mouth of previous visitors is a major factor in the formulation of destination images for non-visitors, so vague information given by previous visitors may be problematic. Therefore, destination planners and DMOs should develop strategies to enhance on-site experiences of visitors in order to make their experiences memorable. Cooperation from local tourist guides and implementation of effective tourism interpretation techniques can serve as the main tools in this regard.

With regard to the limitations of this study, two main limitations were identified. First, as this study employed qualitative research, with the findings arising from a small number of respondents obtained via non-probability sampling, there is a limitation in terms of generalisability. However, it is the main aim of this study to gain rich and in-depth insights of the issue being investigated, rather than to generalise its findings. Secondly, the findings of this research were based only on the data gained from Chinese respondents who could speak either English or Thai, due to the researcher's limited ability to communicate in Chinese language. As a result, some possibly different or additional data which would have been obtained from non-English speaking Chinese respondents were omitted.

To address the limitations acknowledged above, future research on Thailand's image should include non-English Chinese respondents to provide a more complete picture of the image of the country in the perceptions of Chinese people. Moreover, to create a competitive advantage for any destination, understanding perceptions of non-visitors/visitors on that particular destination is not sufficient, therefore future research on comparison of the visitors' perceptions of Thailand's image in relation to its main competitors is recommended.

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TURKEY'S COFFEE ADVENTURE: AN ANALYSIS OF COFFEE EXPERIENCE TYPOLOGIES AND BUSINESS TYPE PREFERENCES

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ABSTRACT

The rise in the coffee consumption, as one of the most popular beverages in the world, has opened the door to "coffee shops" in their modern form. The present study analyses the type of Turkish consumers who prefer national and international coffee shops based on their demographic characteristics and motivations. A total of 448 visitors to coffee shops during the Istanbul Coffee Festival filled out the developed survey form. 411 of these were used for data analysis. The data obtained in the research were divided into four groups through a Chi-squared Automatic Interaction Detection (CHAID) Analysis and Correspondence Analysis, depending on the demographic and motivational characteristics of the consumers with experience of national and international coffee shops. Consumers attribute importance to the atmosphere, image, coffee quality and location of coffees shops, while the target market of coffee shops is generally well-educated, consisting of mostly female consumers over the age of 30. The first and the second group preferred the coffee experience of international coffee shops, while the third group preferred only national coffee shops. The respondents in the fourth group preferred the national coffee shops, but also stated a desire to experience coffee in international coffee shops.

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INTRODUCTION

The coffee experience has been affected by periods of modernization and change in recent years, and, with a Western style, it has entered a new period of change (Hu & Lee, 2019; Spence & Carvalho, 2020). According to this change people started to consume different types of coffee, and to experience the new-generation coffee trends (Brown, 2018). This change has not affected only coffee consumption habits, but also locations where the coffee is consumed. "Coffee Shops" emerged in the modern sense after coffee started to be affected by consumption patterns (White, 2012). Although coffee shops seem to be the places where people meet their need for food and drink, they also include a socialization aspect, which is another basic need. Coffee shops offer the spatial means for the development of social relations, as places where people meet and interact (Çakı & Kızıltepe, 2017).

Grigg's (2003) analysis of the coffee consumption found that it is consumed in many countries, but that its popularity changes from country to country. He states that coffee consumption was limited to the Islamic world until the early 18th century, but that today it is consumed more in Europe and America. In Turkey, Turkish coffee is what first comes to one's mind when talking about coffee (Özcan, 2016). However, the recent arrival of global coffee shop chains has induced an increase in similar local chains established by Turkish entrepreneurs, with various types of coffee being included on their menus. With the rise in number of such coffee shops, different types of coffee have started to be consumed in large quantities, along with Turkish coffee. In particular, espresso, latte, cappuccino, drip coffee, etc., known collectively as European coffees, have started to be consumed by many consumers in daily life in Turkey.

Coffee shops, with customer portfolios of all ages and from all levels of the social strata, sell not only the products on their menus, but also an atmosphere in which people feel comfortable (Spence & Carvalho, 2020). In order to pull more customers in, coffee shops provide services such as Internet access for those clients who wish to use computers while enjoying in music and a cup of coffee (Said, 2012; Susanty & Kenny, 2015). Thus, it can be concluded that consumer preferences for coffee shops are attributable to a variety of factors (Filimonau et al., 2019). Firstly, consuming hot drinks in coffee shops as Oldendurg's "third places" has become a routine for consumers (Kanjanakom & Lee, 2017); secondly, coffee shops provide the opportunity to try unique and high quality drinks that are hard to prepare at home (Glazer, 2015); thirdly, coffee shops increase customer loyalty by encouraging revisits through quality customer service and novel experiences (Aries & Eirene, 2015); fourthly, coffee shops provide comfortable spaces in which people can socialise and conduct business interviews (Yu & Fang, 2009); and finally, consumers consider going to coffee shops since these are offering them a means of expressing themselves, and may represent a sign of status in social life, which is an aspect that significantly affects the success of coffee shops (Aşık, 2017; Kang et al., 2011).

Coffee itself has played an important role in politic, economic, and cultural terms, both in the past and present. This has gradually increased under the effect of its shaping of social and cultural life along with its consumption as a drink (Alyakut, 2017). Importance of coffee has led to an abundance of studies of coffee and coffee shops. As the popularity and importance of coffee have increased, many studies have been conducted to understand the consumption of coffee and coffee shops in recent years (Aşık, 2017; Samoggia & Riedel, 2018). An examination of these studies reveals that these studies of coffee and coffee consumption have focused on the adventure of coffee from past to the present, the coffee culture and sustainability issues (Argan et al., 2015; Grinshpun, 2014; Schüβler, 2009), while other studies have focused rather on the results of behaviours (satisfaction, the continuation of the behaviour in the future, etc.) (Kim, 2008; Ko & Chiu, 2008; Nadiri & Günay, 2013; Yan & Li, 2016).

Pozos-Brewer (2015) found that every coffee and coffee shop movement address different demographic characteristics and different lifestyles. It has been further stated that coffee drinking habits, and their hedonic and pragmatic consumption motivations, are different from consumer to consumer (Labbe et al., 2016), and that the participation of consumers in the coffee drinking culture varies considerably from person to person (Kim et al., 2016).

Typology refers to compartmentalisation as a means of determining and distinguishing between types of humans. The main purpose of consumer-oriented typology studies in the field of marketing is to separate consumers into specific classes based on such variables as demographics, psychological profile, behaviour and consumption characteristics (Şimşir, 2018). Thanks to the determined typologies, market segmentation can be structured correctly and consistently. Gathering of consumers with similar preferences into homogeneous groups provides businesses with the opportunity to apply special marketing strategies to consumer groups based on their preferences. In this way, the satisfaction of not only the consumers, but also the enterprise in question increases significantly through the application of more effective marketing practices (Karadaşlı, 2019).

An analysis of tourism and gastronomy literature reveals that typology studies are used to segment the target market (Phillip et al., 2010). There have been few studies to date investigating the typology of consumers with coffee experience and investigating coffee shop preferences. To address this gap in literature, the present study determines consumer typologies, including demographic characteristics and motivations of the consumers who prefer coffee shops with rich historical, cultural, social, and economic characteristics.

LITERATURE REVIEW

People prefer spaces that meet their need to feel good about themselves and become loyal. Oldendurg (1989), who developed the third-place concept (referring to places where people spend time), states that people who repeatedly travel between home and work become bored. Thus, they are in need of third places that they can easily reach during the day, and where they can meet their socialisation needs. According to Oldenburg (1989), coffee shops can be considered as third places, being an alternative to home and workplace, where people can socialise and relax.

Fendal (2007) claims that coffee and coffee shops with local cultural characteristics have been affected by consumption patterns and entered into a period of significant change. Such coffee shops that have been affected by the consumption patterns have started to convert into coffee shops in the modern sense by developing both their appearance and their physical structures, along with the service and the product range they provide. With the rise of modernism, coffee shops have become important spaces in the hearts of cities, where the masses can congregate away from their private spaces (Manzo, 2014). These spaces accompany the ordinary flow of daily life, and also function as a space for relief, relaxation, escape, freedom, etc. (Aytaç, 2007).

Woldoff et al. (2013) notes that coffee shops have grown into big companies from small businesses, with some of them becoming chains. It has also been stated that coffee shops have come to meet social expectations, aside from being Oldenburg’s “third place”. The second wave coffee movement period has seen coffee shops opening in many countries (Coffeemag, 2016). Cafes in Turkey have now come to be referred to as "coffee shops", existing alongside the "coffee shops" coming from the West. Coffee shops in which many types of coffee are sold, prepared, served and drunk have established an important place in the city centres in Turkey as spaces where people can socialise economically (Tucker, 2011). National coffee shop chains have increased in recent years in Turkey alongside the rise in international coffee shop chains. With the rise of a coffee culture, both national and international coffee shops are commonly preferred by consumers and maintain their existence as an expanding field within Turkey's consumption culture (Aydın & Bakır, 2016). In Turkey, coffee shops are frequently located in thoroughfares, shopping centres, airports, on many university campuses and on city coastlines. Due to the different atmosphere, they cultivate, coffee shops are not just places that sell coffee, but social spaces that represent an alternative to the people's ordinary lifestyles.

The coffee shop experience is a hedonic and pragmatic source of motivation for consumers. The coffee drinking motivations of consumers in coffee shops differ from person to person (Labbe et al., 2016). In the Bourdieu's study *Distinction*, he argues that, when it comes to eating-drinking style, music taste, and clothing, taste patterns bring together consumers with similar preferences and behaviours, while those with different tastes differ or separate from each other (Arun, 2013; Bourdieu, 1984). At this point, it is assumed that the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the consumers, as well as their tastes, will affect their coffee shop preferences. Determining the typologies of coffee shop users will help clarify their individual preferences and allow coffee shops managers to prepare appropriate marketing strategies. In this process, grouping coffee shop consumers with similar characteristics in terms of behaviours, motives and product expectations is of great importance as it will assist in effectively meeting desires and expectations of each market segment.

Typology studies are frequently used in marketing for the categorisation of consumers into homogeneous groups to aid the development of market targeting, segmentation and positioning strategies (Decrop & Snelders, 2005). Specific variables such as demographic (age, gender, education), socio-economic (income, occupation) and psychographic (motivation, beliefs, personality) are used to determine a consumer typology. Age, gender, marital status, education level and socio-economic status are important variables explaining different food-beverage consumption habits. In a review of literature in the present study, research paper determining different typologies of coffee consumers was not identified. While there were studies that investigated differences in demographic characteristics, there were no studies revealing the typologies of consumer preferences related to coffees shops. Therefore, in order to determine the typologies of consumers in the rapidly growing coffee market and to understand their consumption behaviour, examining the motivations of consumers regarding their coffee shop experience, along with demographic and socio-economic variables, will provide clearer and more significant results.

In line with the current study's goal, studies that take into account the demographic variables and motivations of consumers who prefer coffee shops were examined. Shaker and Rath (2019) stated that those who prefer international coffee shops have generally high levels of cognitive and cultural skills; they are mostly young, well-educated, environmentally conscious and have good financial situation; and they seek authenticity. Kim and Jang (2017) found that companies referred to as international coffee shops are generally preferred by young consumers, who find it easy to express themselves in such establishments, seeing these as a means of connecting to the desired lifestyle symbols. Moreover, it was also found that women prefer international coffee shops more than men, with the type of coffee shop not being of great importance for men.

Zhang et al. (2019) analysed the attitudes and behaviours of consumers with coffee shop experience, and found that the coffee quality, service quality and atmosphere were all important for customer satisfaction and loyalty. A comparison of different consumer groups has been presented in the current study, with the recommendations made to coffee shop managers on how to establish more effective marketing strategies. It has been stated that young consumers are not loyal to coffee shops and may visit different coffee shops in search for different coffee shop experiences. For this reason, offering incentives such as free Wi-Fi or giving importance to social media marketing strategies are considered as important factors in ensuring the loyalty of young customers.

METHODOLOGY

In parallel with the change in purchasing power within Turkey's food and beverage culture, coffee has witnessed an increase in popularity. With the rising consumption mentality of sitting and chatting in coffee shops, consumption in locations such as home, workplace and school has increased as well (Akarçay, 2012; Aşık, 2017). Recently, number of national and international coffee shops has increased, significantly changing coffee consumption habits. As a result of this change, the interest of consumers in coffee shops and new coffee types has also increased significantly. It is thought that consumers who are motivated to drink coffee in coffee shops may have different coffee consumption habits. In the present study, an attempt is made to clarify the different consumer typologies based on their demographic characteristics and motivations.

The survey technique, which is an important factor in quantitative research, was used for the collection of data, being deemed appropriate for the research goal. The questionnaire contained items on the frequency of going to coffee shops, the preferred coffee shop type, the types of beverages consumed and the primary motivations for visiting coffee shops, alongside items to determine the demographic characteristics of the respondents. For the questions and statements in the survey, Kanjanakom and Lee (2017) and Jang et al. (2015) studies have been used. The menus of coffee shops were used for the following question "What type of beverage do you usually prefer in coffee shops?". In addition to four expressions derived based on experts' opinion, three more statements were added for question "Which factor do you pay attention to when choosing coffee shops?" and these are: "Employees", "Business Image" and "Products other than coffee".

In the scope of the research consumers who drink coffee in coffee houses were determined as a sample. Initially, in accordance with the purpose of the study, the survey questionnaire was meant to be applied on consumers who came to the coffee shops. However, coffee shop managers did not accept conducting of a survey in their properties, anticipating that customers might be disturbed and might have negative thoughts about the company. Since it was difficult and costly to reach coffee shops and their customers, the participants of the Istanbul Coffee Festival, which was held in Istanbul on 21-24 September 2017, and which brought together many coffee brands, coffee shops and thousands of coffee consumers, were considered suitable for the scope and purpose of the current research. Data was collected from attendees of the 4th Istanbul Coffee Festival using a survey form and a convenience sampling method, with voluntary participation. During the festival day there were two sessions, each lasting for four hours. Time between 14:00 and 15:00 was used for baristas to have a break, to clean the coffee counters and to prepare for the next session. At this time, the participants usually sat with their friends or families on cushions and chairs in the grass area reserved for rest. Since this was the time when festival attendees did not join any of the seminars, workshops and coffee tasting practices, it was suitable for the researchers to reach the potential survey participants in a more convenient and comfortable environment. During data collection process, face-to-face interviews were conducted with the participants, and they were asked to fill out the questionnaire. Of the 448 respondents who filled out the questionnaire, 37 were excluded from the study due to incorrect or incomplete forms, meaning that 411 survey forms were included in the analysis.

In accordance with the research aim, various statistical procedures were followed. As a first step, the frequency and percentage distributions were examined while evaluating the responses given to the statements about the participants' motivation for visiting coffee shops.

Second, demographic characteristics that differentiate participants' reasons to prefer coffee shops were identified with using a decision tree algorithm. The age, education level and income data of the Turkish customers consuming coffee in national and international coffee shops were classified with the CHAID, and the independent variables that were effective in this classification were determined. CHAID analyses are used for the classification of variables. As an explanatory approach, CHAID analysis is used in studies aimed at determining the relationships between a dependent variable and a series of independent variables (Doğan & Özdamar, 2003). The groups demonstrating differences are grouped based on their relationship level using a Chi-square metric, with the leaves of the tree branching based on the number of different structures in the data (Demirel, 2010; Aksu & Karaman, 2016). A correspondence analysis was then applied to explain the relationship between the categorical variables in the data matrix in complex structure with graphic and matrix in a more comprehensible and simpler structure.

A Correspondence Analysis is a descriptive multivariate statistical method that is used in situations where there is a need to examine the relationships between variables with crosstabs in two or more dimensions (Yıldıztekin, 2016). At the end of the analysis, the relationships between the categories of each variable in the crosstabs with two or more variables are examined graphically and interpreted (Alpar, 2013). Similar categories in the graphic are positioned closer, while incompatible structures are positioned at more distant points (Clausen, 1998). In the correspondence analysis, the interrupted continuous numeric data which are characteristics or made characteristics are used. In the analysis, first, the categorical profiles are calculated, followed by the weights, and finally the distances between points for the row and column categories. The row and column categories are formed by specifying the frequencies in the crosstabs. The distances are the Euclid and Chi-square distances. The equivalence of variance in a correspondence analysis is the phrase "inertia", being the total measure of the distances between the profile points and the centre. As the total inertia value comes closer to zero, the column profiles are gathered in the centre, and move away from the centre otherwise. Multiple correspondence analyses were used to determine the typologies of Turkish customers' demographic characteristics and motivations.

RESULTS

The results related to gender, marital status, age, educational status, and monthly income of the respondents are presented in Table 1, while the finding of frequency of coffee shop visits, the preferred coffee shop type, the type of beverages consumed, and the effective factors in coffee shop preferences are presented in Table 2.

Table 1. *Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents*

Gender	**Frequency (n)**	**Percentage (%)**
Female	217	52.8
Male	194	47.2
Total	411	100
Marital status		
Single	250	60.8
Married	161	39.2
Total	411	100
Age		
18-23	119	29.0
24-29	164	39.9
30-35	64	15,6
36-41	30	7.3
42-47	26	6.3
48 and above	8	1.9
Total	411	100
Educational Status		
Primary school	9	2.2
Secondary School	34	8.3
High school	101	24.6
Associate degree	37	9.0
Undergraduate	173	42.1
Graduate	57	13.9
Total	411	100
Monthly Income Status		
Less than 1000 TL	85	20.7
1000-2000 TL	102	24.8
2001-3000 TL	81	19.7
3001-4000 TL	45	10.9
More than 4000 TL	98	23.8
Total	411	100

As can be seen in Table 1, 52.8% of the participants were female, 60.8% were single, 39.9% were within the 24-29 age range, and 42.1% had a bachelor's degree. When the average monthly incomes were examined, it was observed that 24.8% of the respondents had a monthly income of between 1000 and 2000 TL.

Table 2. *Coffee Drinking Habits in Coffee Shops*

Frequency of Coffee Shop Visits	**Frequency (n)**	**Percentage (%)**
Once a month	87	21.2
1-2 times a week	170	41.4
3-4 times a week	79	19.2
Once a day	47	11.4
Twice a day or more	26	6.3
Other	2	0.5
Total	411	100
Preferred Coffee Shop Type		
National	203	49.4
International	208	50.6
Total	411	100
Preferred Coffee Type		
Turkish coffee or its varieties	135	32.8
Espresso or espresso-based beverages	171	41.6
Granulated, instant coffee	19	4,6
Drip Coffee	57	13.9
Other	29	7.1
Total	411	100
Factors Effective in Coffee Shop Preferences		
Coffee quality	149	36.5
Atmosphere	84	20.6
Service quality	71	17.3
Location	32	7.8
Employees	37	9
Business image	16	3,9
By-products apart from coffee	19	4.9
Total	411	100

It can be seen from Table 2 that 41.4% of the respondents frequented coffee shops 1-2 times a week, 50.6% of them preferred international coffee shops and 41.6% opted for espresso or espresso-based beverages. Furthermore, 36.5% of the respondents gave priority to coffee quality in their coffee shop preferences; 20.6% to the atmosphere, 17.3% to service quality, 9% to location, 4.9% to the products on sale other than coffee, and finally, 3.9% prioritised the business image. The three participants who marked the "other" option stated that their preference was based on campaigns.

The respondents were asked about their motivations for going to coffee shops with open-ended questions. Among the motivations for going to coffee shops were: to drink coffee, to socialise and to rest/work, and these were included in the analysis.

Prior to the correspondence analysis, a Chi-squared Automatic Interaction Detection (CHAID) analysis was performed, primarily to provide an income classification in accordance with the context. The division structures in the independent variables making significant difference for the dependent variable were determined by CHAID analysis.

A further CHAID analysis was carried out to examine the income-based breakdown of the socialisation, rest/work, and drinking coffee motivations. The income-based breakdown related to socialisation motivation was found to be statistically significant (F: 6,422, df=409, p=0.047). For the income-based breakdown, income was divided into two categories, being 2000 TL and below and over 2000 TL, and included in the correspondence analysis.

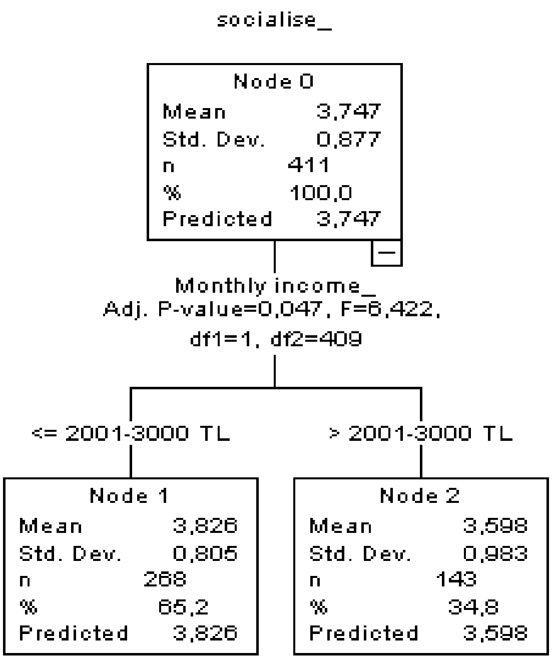
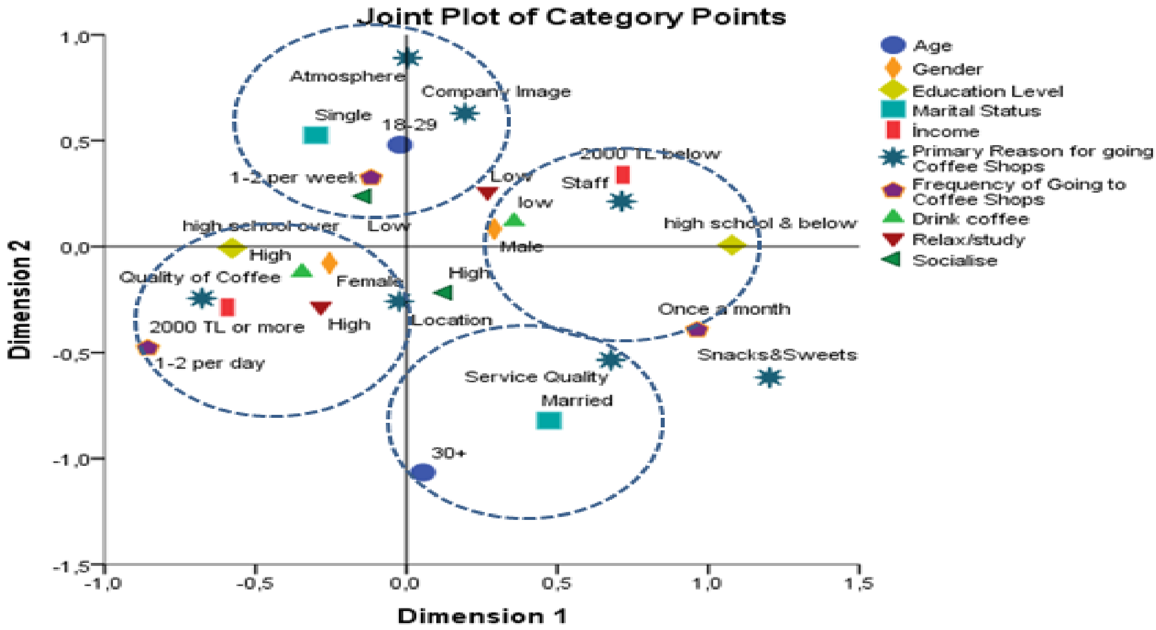


Figure 1. *CHAID Analysis Results*

The findings of the multiple correspondence analyses, conducted to determine the typologies of the demographic characteristics and motivations of the Turkish customers and their preferences for national and international coffee shops, are demonstrated in Graphic 1.



Graphic 1. *Coffee experience typologies and coffee shop types (correspondence analysis)*

Four groups were formed based on the results of the correspondence analysis.

The first group was composed of consumers between the ages of 18 and 29, who were single, well-educated and preferred going to coffee shops 1-2 times a week. The consumers included in this group generally frequented coffee shops for socialisation. The coffee shop type they preferred was international coffee shops. The most important factors influencing their frequenting of coffee shops were atmosphere and business image.

The second group was composed of consumers with an income over 2000 TL, who were mostly women, and who preferred going to coffee shops once a day or more. Those included in this group preferred international coffee shops. They generally went to coffee shops to drink coffee, to rest and to study. The most influential factors affecting the coffee shop preferences of the people in this group were location and coffee quality.

The third group was composed of poorly educated people with an income lower than 2000 TL who were mostly men, and the consumers in this group tended to prefer national coffee shops. It was observed that these consumers generally went to coffee shops to drink coffee, and only a few times a month. The most important motivation for these consumers in their coffee shop preferences was the employee profile.

The fourth group was composed of married consumers over the age of 30 who frequented both national and international coffee shops equally. Service quality was the most important factor affecting their coffee shop patronage.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this study, different consumer typologies were tried to be clarified based on their demographic characteristics and motivations. For this purpose, analyses were carried out with the data obtained from the participants. The correspondence analysis identified four groups. ***The first*** and ***the second*** group preferred consuming their coffee in international coffee shops, while ***the third*** group preferred the coffee experience of national coffee shops. The respondents in ***the fourth*** group preferred national coffee shops, but also stated a desire for coffee experience in the international coffee shops.

Consumers in the first group are young, educated, single and frequently visiting international coffee shops. Starbucks, which is the international coffee shop chain with the most branches in Turkey, is shown as one of the most successful representatives of the global and standardized coffee flavour with its distinct atmosphere (Kaptan, 2013). Consumers in this group generally prefer international coffee shops such as Starbucks because they are open to different coffee experiences and pay attention to atmosphere. Samoggia and Riedel (2018) found that the consumers generally prefer coffee shops in groups and for socialising, which they attributed to the modern lifestyle and the desire for social status. In their study on examining the relationship between lifestyle and coffee consumption, Limón-Rivera et al. (2017) found that coffee shops are often preferred by young consumers. Although coffee shops are places where people of all ages can go, Aydın and Bakır (2016) point out that these are frequently visited by university students.

In his study examining the effect of globalization on coffee shops, Typaldos (2016) emphasized that consumers who prefer coffee shop generally want to enjoy in its atmosphere. While investigating the aspects of coffee shops that affect the coffee drinking experience, Spence and Carvalho (2020) found atmosphere to be an important factor for consumers in their coffee shop experience. It has been stated that interest in coffee shops is increased when the coffee shop manager takes the atmosphere into consideration and makes the appropriate arrangements. Wakefield and Blodgett (1996) found that décor increases the quality of coffee shops, with consumers spending more time in these due to atmosphere, while also contributing to return custom. However, it was observed that every coffee shop that takes consumer preferences into consideration develops its own marketing strategies, aiming to increase customer loyalty to their trademarks by providing customer satisfaction, offering the highest quality coffee with the largest range, providing a comfortable environment, being environmental-friendly and using energy resources efficiently (Kadıoğlu, 2017).

As the consumers in the first group give importance to atmosphere and business image, an interior design that allows them to socialise may be prepared by investing into the international coffee shop concept through franchising. Loyalty to a coffee shop that reflects the style of the consumers may be provided with a more modern atmosphere. This customer profile aged 18–29, may be reached faster by making use of the social aspect and atmosphere of the venue, promoted through social media.

It was observed that the high-income consumers included in the second group preferred coffee shops generally for work and rest. The consumers in this group paid attention to coffee quality. Kim et al. (2014) examined whether there is any difference in the behaviour of coffee shop consumers according to monthly income. As a result of the findings, it was found that high-income consumers pay more attention to the brand and quality of the product than low-income consumers. Samoggia and Riedel (2018) found that the consumption of high-quality branded coffee is generally preferred by high-income consumers. The analyses in the present study revealed that the consumers included in the second group, with an income over 2000 TL, paid attention to coffee quality in their coffee shop preferences.

Communication with the employees was important for the consumers in the third group. An employee of a coffee shop may be a critical source for obtaining information on, for example, the wishes and expectations of the consumers in this group. The most appropriate information system will be provided for coffee shop managers by providing in-service training in such areas as effective communication and persuasion methods to employees. That said, as these consumers have low income, and in accordance with the likelihood that these consumers will consume only a limited amount of coffee, good pricing strategies are required if the profitability of the coffee shop is to be assured. For example, coffee sales may be increased through psychological pricing, while pricing strategies may be used more effectively in coffee-related promotions and campaigns in coffee shops.

As the consumers included in the fourth group, who were married and over the age of 30, gave more importance to family ties, they tended to visit coffee shops to spend time with their families. One of the most important demographic characteristics that affect consumers' purchasing decisions is age (Kotler, 2000). Each age has its own expectations, experiences, lifestyles, and values, and all these factors are an important factor in the behaviour of consumers (Sarıtaş & Barutçu, 2016). In his study, Yazıcı (2018) stated that quality is the most important factor in product and service for Y-generation consumers. Spence and Carvalho (2020) found that consumers of advanced ages preferred coffee shops with comfortable armchairs and chairs, without loud music, and with more space between tables. These customers pay attention to the way employees take orders at the table and prefer their orders to be served to their table in porcelain or glass. In their study, Acar et al. (2019) found that married consumers attribute more importance to the physical characteristics of coffee shops. Coffee shop managers should pay attention to details that provide customer satisfaction, especially for those consumers who prioritise service quality.

The results of the present study may contribute to the success of coffee shops operating in the sector by providing information on customer profiles and the strategies to be developed to meet customer expectations. It is understood that a coffee shop owner, manager or employee may be able to recognise consumer characteristics, and address and shape how they deliver service quality in accordance with these characteristics. Thus, it may be useful to make some recommendations to entrepreneur owners and managers of national and international coffee shop about customer profiles and their target markets. Consumers attribute importance to the atmosphere, image, coffee quality and location of coffees shops. The target market of these kinds of coffee shops is generally well-educated, mostly female consumers over the age of 30. Atmosphere, business image, location, and coffee quality influence customer preferences of international coffee shops, and this can guide managers in reaching their target profitability. For example, attention may be paid to the harmony of the atmosphere, image, location, concept, physical characteristics, menu, table settings, employee uniforms and interior designs; or promotions and campaigns may be launched that are suitable for the target market, encouraging the return custom of those who visit coffee shops at least a few times a day. When developing a new product, they may be designed to suit the customer profile and to be included on the menu.

As in every research, this study has some limitations, the main limitation is the scope of the research. The research population were visitors of the Istanbul Coffee Festival, and further detailed and more comprehensive studies may be conducted with a different sample, involving coffee shops located in different cities or those of a specific brand. Furthermore, the research may be extended through the addition of other demographic variables and coffee experience motivations. Finally, the use of different research techniques, such as observation, participant observation or scenarios in determining coffee consumer attitudes and their effects on the intention to drink coffee in coffee shops, will contribute further to the relevant literature.

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THE VALIDITY OF TOURISM-LED GROWTH HYPOTHESIS FOR THE TOP TEN TOURISM REVENUE GENERATING COUNTRIES

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to test the validity of the tourism-led growth hypothesis. For this purpose, ten countries with the highest tourism income (USA, China, Australia, France, Italy, England, Spain, Germany, Japan, Thailand) are included in the analysis covering the period 1995-2018. Pedroni cointegration, panel Dynamic Ordinary Least Square (DOLS) and panel Fully Modified Ordinary Least Square (FMOLS) methods are utilized by using economic growth, tourism revenues and exchange rate series. According to panel DOLS and panel FMOLS test results, tourism revenues and exchange rate have a positive effect on economic growth. Furthermore, Granger causality analysis findings indicate a uni-directional causal relation from tourism revenues to economic growth and from exchange rate to tourism. The overall results of the empirical analysis verify the tourism-led growth hypothesis for the ten countries with the highest tourism income.

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism activities have strategic importance for the economies of all the countries because of their contribution to export performance (Sinclair & Tsegaye, 1990), the balance of payments (Arslanturk, 2012), employment (Lin et al., 2019) and economic development (Clancy, 1999; Belloumi, 2010). Tourism revenues arise from tourism expenditures, referring to the payments for goods and services within the scope of tourism activities and the demands for valuables and gifts during tourism tours (Çuhadar, 2020).

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The emerging advancements in the tourism field have direct and indirect positive effects in many sectors (Tang & Tan, 2013; Paramati et al., 2017). For this reason, tourism is thought to be one of the driving engines of the economy because it stimulates economic activities in place of origin, destination, and regions (Gavurova et al., 2020). As reported by the tourism-led growth hypothesis, tourism revenues increase income in two ways. First, with the multiplier effect, tourism revenues increase the productivity of local firms through increasing competitiveness. The second way is that economies of scale increase their impact on local firms (Balaguer & Cantavella-Jorda, 2002). Concordantly, a rise in tourism revenues will increase employment in this sector, contribute to the development of other tourism-oriented industries, enhance the balance of payments, and pave the way for a positive environment for the countries (Chatziantoniou et al., 2013; Liu & Song, 2018). The tourism sector has a decisive role in investing in infrastructure, labor, and competition (Brida et al., 2016).

As a consequence, tourism can be regarded as one of the essential drivers for economic growth (Oh, 2005; Zortuk, 2009). As stated by Çuhadar (2020), there is a global competition in tourism today and many countries are trying to increase international tourism revenues to attract foreign exchange inflows and create new business and employment opportunities. However, governments should be careful about the high-income elasticity of demand for tourism (Kozak & Bahar, 2013). Severe decreases can be seen in the tourism market due to the economic or political crisis. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic, which emerged at the beginning of 2020, has led to a significant shock in the global economy. Measures and bans imposed by countries and individual measures affected almost all sectors negatively. Consequently, severe contractions have occurred in the tourism sector and economic performance has been negatively affected (Gössling et al., 2020; Mariolis et al., 2020; Farzanegan et al., 2021). As global prosperity increases, so will tourism income. In this context, innovations and increasing the use of technology can contribute to ensuring a sustainable infrastructure in the tourism sector and cost reduction (Balsalobre-Lorente et al., 2020), therefore, these developments might help reduce the negative effects of the crisis on the tourism sector.

There are different approaches for modeling the tourism-led growth hypothesis. According to Tugcu (2014), the tourism led-growth hypothesis can be interpreted under four different assumptions, based on the energy-growth hypothesis in Ozturk (2010). Accordingly, i) *"the growth hypothesis"* suggests tourism has both direct and induced effects in the process of economic growth. ii) *"The conservation hypothesis"* suggests that economic growth strengthens the tourism sector. iii) *"The feedback hypothesis"* shows a mutual relationship between tourism and growth. Finally, iv) *"the hypothesis of neutrality"* claims that tourism revenues do not affect economic growth.

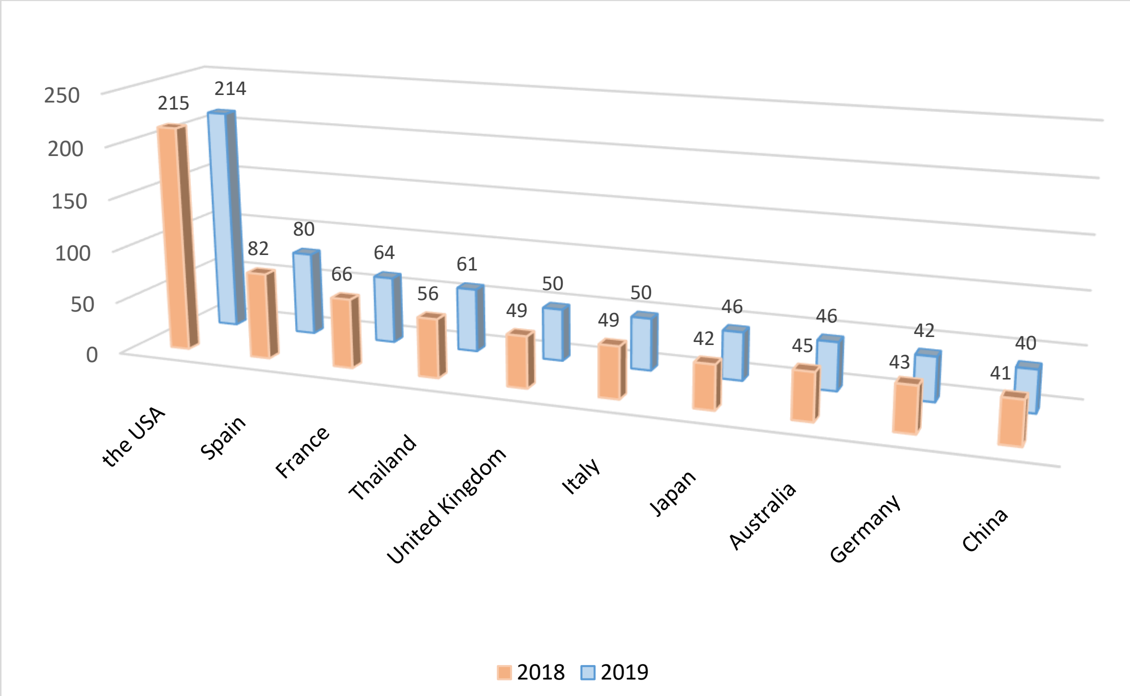

Figure 1. *International Tourism Receipts (Top Ten Countries, USD billion)* (Source: UNWTO, 2020)

Figure 1 shows the tourism revenues of the top ten countries with the highest tourism revenues in 2018 and 2019. Accordingly, the United States ($215 billion) ranks first with the highest tourism revenue, followed by Spain ($82 billion) and France ($66 billion). China ($41 billion) is the last country in the group.

Despite the steady growth of the tourism sector in many countries in recent years, it is seen that the impact of tourism revenues on economic growth is not the same for all countries. In this context, countries can be studied in groups to achieve a better understanding of tourism and economic growth. In countries where the tourism-led economic growth hypothesis is valid, it is essential to identify the underlying factors. Conversely, where tourism does not affect economic growth, tourism policies should be comprehensively reassessed. This study aims to examine the tourism-led growth hypothesis for the top ten tourism generating countries. The main reason for this choice is to show the tourism industry's contribution to the economic development in developed countries. The study is comprised of three parts. The introduction part presents theoretical information about the tourism-led growth hypothesis and discusses the tourism sector by statistical data about the international tourism receipts. Afterwards literature review is discussed. In the second part, the empirical method is introduced and the findings are reported. Finally, the empirical results are discussed and some policy recommendations are suggested.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The tourism sector has grown very fast for the last 60 years (Liu & Song, 2018). However, the impacts of tourism activities on the economy were neglected by economists and policymakers, and tourism revenues were ignored in economic growth models (Tang & Tan, 2015). Two fundamental indicators are used to evaluate tourism activities: the number of tourists visiting the country and tourism revenues (Cernat & Gourdon, 2012).

When the tourism-economic growth relationship is examined, it is generally seen that tourism activities affect economic growth positively. However, empirical findings might be varied because of the methods, variables, or data. Table 1 presents a brief review of the studies examining the tourism and economic growth relationship with the details for the period, method, and empirical findings.

According to the Table 1, the general view is that tourism supports economic growth. However, there are also studies in which this relationship has not been determined. Studies generally claim that the tourism-led growth hypothesis is valid (e.g., Balaguer & Cantavella-Jorda, 2002; Kreishan, 2010; Schubert et al., 2011; Polat & Günay, 2012; Selimi et al., 2017; Ribeiro & Wang, 2020; Osinubi & Osinubi, 2020), but there are also studies do not support this hypothesis (e.g., Oh, 2005; Gunduz & Hatemi-J, 2005; Yavuz, 2006; Ozturk & Acaravci, 2009; Figini & Vici, 2010; Payne & Mervar, 2010; Cortes-Jimenez et al., 2011; Ekanayake & Long, 2012; Rout et al., 2019). Some studies also found a bi-directional causality relationship (e.g., Katircioglu, 2009a; Perles-Ribes et al., 2017), which indicates a feedback mechanism between tourism revenues economic growth. According to Zuo & Huang (2018), there is no statistically significant relationship between tourism and economic growth in the long term. Therefore, comments according to the empirical results would not be trustworthy. Osinubi & Osinubi (2018) determined that there is no causality relationship between the variables.

Table 1. *Literature Review*

Author	Country	Period	Method	Results
Balaguer & Cantavella-Jorda (2002)	Spain	1975-1997	Granger Causality Test	Findings indicate that tourism-led economic growth is valid for Spain.
Oh (2005)	Korea	1975-2001	Granger Causality Test	The findings of the research show that economic growth based on tourism is not valid for Korea.
Gunduz & Hatemi-J (2005)	Turkey	1965-2002	Bootstrap Causality Tests	The research results verify the tourism-led economic growth for Turkey.
Ozturk & Acaravci (2009)	Turkey	1987-2007	ARDL Bound Test	The tourism-led economic growth hypothesis is supported in Turkey.
Katircioglu (2009b)	Malta	1960-2006	Granger Causality Test	The findings show that tourism-led economic growth is valid for Malta and there is a two-way causality relationship.
Chen & Chiou-Wei (2009)	Taiwan and Korea	1975-2007	EGRACH-M Model	Empirical results confirm that the tourism led-growth hypothesis is supported in Taiwan.
Figini & Vici (2010)	150 Selected Countries	1980-2005	Panel Data Analysis	As a result of empirical applications, no meaningful conclusion could be reached regarding the existence of tourism-led economic growth.
Payne & Mervar (2010)	Croatia	2001-2008	Toda-Yamamoto Causality Test	The results obtained in the study show that there is a uni-directional causal relation from GDP to tourism income. The tourism led-growth hypothesis was rejected.
Cortes-Jimenez et al.(2011)	Tunisia	1975-2007	Granger Causality Test	Tourism-led economic growth was rejected, with the results of the study.
Lionetti & Gonzales (2012)	Latin American Countries	2001-2008	Granger Causality Test	While tourism-led growth is invalid in Latin American countries, no causality is found.
Ekanayake & Long (2012)	140 Selected Countries	1995-2009	Granger Causality Test	The tourism-led growth hypothesis is not supported.
Ridderstaat et al. (2013)	Aruba	1972-2011	Granger Causality Test	The tourism led-economic growth hypothesis is supported in Aruba.
Ivanov & Webster (2013)	174 Selected Countries	2000-2010	Growth Decomposition Methodologies	While tourism led-growth is confirmed at the highest level in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and Latin American countries, it is at a negative level in Europe, America and Oceania.
Terzi (2015)	Turkey	1963-2013	Granger Causality Test	The results present that the tourism-led growth hypothesis is valid for Turkey.
Chiu & Yeh (2017)	84 Selected Countries	1995-2008	Threshold Regression Model	The empirical results obtained in the research show a strong nonlinear relationship. Tourism-led growth hypothesis is confirmed.
Tang & Tan (2018)	167 Selected Countries	1995-2013	Dynamic Panel GMM	According to the research, tourism-led growth is valid, tourism income acts as a stimulant factor for economic growth.
Zuo & Huang (2018)	China (31 Region)	1995-2013	SYSGMM	There is no significant result for tourism-led growth.
Perles-Ribes et al. (2017)	Spain	1957-2014	Toda-Yamamoto Causality Test	Tourism-led growth hypothesis is supported in Spain and bi-directional causality relation is detected.
Rout et al.(2019)	India	1995-2016	Panel Causality Analysis	In the study, there is a long-run relation among tourism income and economic growth. However, tourism-led economic growth is not valid in the short run.
Lin et al.(2019)	China (29 Region)	1978-2013	Bayesian Probit Model	Findings show that the tourism-led growth hypothesis is valid for 10 of 29 regions. However, in the 9 regions, economy-driven tourism growth is detected.
Ribeiro & Wang (2020)	Sao Tome and Principe	1997-2018	Granger Causality Test	In the study, findings support the tourism-led growth hypothesis. In addition, one-way causality relationship has been identified.
Osinubi & Osinubi (2020)	Nigeria	1995-2018	Granger Causality Test	The results obtained from study affirm the tourism-led growth hypothesis and no meaningful result was obtained regarding causality.

METHODOLOGY

Variables and Data

The linear regression model of the tourism-led growth hypothesis is established as a panel data format in Equation (1).

$$GDP_{it} = \alpha_{0i} + \alpha_{1i}TRSM_{it} + \alpha_{2i}ER_{it} + u_{it} \qquad i=1, ..., N; t=1, ...T \qquad (1)$$

In the equation above, GDP represents the gross domestic product, TRSM represents tourism revenues and ER represents exchange rate. The data utilized in the analysis covers the period 1995-2018 and includes the ten countries with the highest tourism income in 2018. Countries are the USA, China, France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Japan, Thailand, Australia, and England. The data was compiled from the World Bank.[2]

Table 2 indicates the descriptive statistics and correlation matrix belong to the variables. These statistics provide some preliminary information about the relationships between variables.

Table 2. *Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix (2000-2016)*

	GDP	**TRSM**	**ER**
Descriptive Statistics			
Average	3,78	4,72	0,91
Median	2,41	3,79	1,00
Maximum	1,79	2 ,56	1,86
Minimum	1,99	4,89	0,25
Standard Error	4,01	4,42	0,31
Number of Observations	240	240	240
Correlation Matrix			
GDP	1		
TRSM	0.79	1	
ER	0.18	0.12	1

Methods and Empirical Findings

In this section, the tourism-led growth hypothesis is analyzed via the cointegration method. There are three stages for the empirical approach. In the first stage, the stationarity of variables is tested with the panel unit root test methods as suggested by Levin et al. (2002) and Im et al. (2003). In the second stage, the long-run relationship among the variables is examined via Pedroni (1999) panel cointegration test method. Finally, coefficients of

[2] The data is available online at https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ST.INT.RCPT.CD

cointegration are calculated by the panel DOLS and panel FMOLS approaches.

Panel Unit Root Tests

The stationarity of the variables should be estimated before applying panel DOLS and panel FMOLS long-term coefficient tests. If the data for the analysis is stationary, regression analysis could be employed to examine the relationship. If not, a spurious regression problem will emerge. Within this context, LLC (Levin et al., 2002) and IPS (Im et al., 2003) methods will be used for panel unit root testing.

To apply the LLC panel unit root test, the following model must be estimated.

$$\Delta y_{it} = \mu_i + \varrho y_{it-1} + \sum_{j=1}^{m} \alpha_j \Delta y_{it-j} + \delta_{it} + \theta_t + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (2)$$

Here, Δ is the first difference operator, m lag length, μi, and θt are unit-specific constant and time effects. The null hypothesis $\varrho = 0$ for all i is tested against the $\varrho < 0$ hypotheses for all i. Rejecting the null hypothesis means that the series is stationary.

Under other conditions, Im et al. (2003) apply individual unit root tests for time series for all units, and the test values are taken from the mean of all individual ADF test statistics. IPS test is derived from the following model:

$$\Delta y_{it} = \mu_i + \varrho y_{it-1} + \sum_{j=1}^{m} \alpha_j \Delta y_{it-j} + \delta_{it} + \theta_t + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (3)$$

The null hypothesis of this test and the p alternative hypothesis, under the assumption that ϱ changes from unit to unit, as follows: Ho: $\varrho = 0$ contains serial unit root for all i. H1: $\varrho < 0$ does not include unit root for at least one i or part i. To test the null hypothesis with the IPS test, firstly, the t-statistic for each section is estimated for the ϱi coefficient. Secondly, the ADF test statistics are averaged and finally normalized to show standard normal distribution. The terminal decision towards to the null hypothesis is made considering the values obtained from the test statistics.

The empirical findings obtained from the panel unit root tests are shown in Table 3. According to the results, while the general appearance of the variables is not stationary at level value [I (0)], variables are stationary at the first difference [I (1)] level. Therefore, the existence of a cointegration relationship might be searched in the long run. If the relationship is detected statistically, it means that the regression which is estimated is reliable.

Table 3. *Findings from LLC and IPS Panel Unit Root Test Results*

	LLC Test		**IPS Test**	
	Statistics Value	**Prob. Value**	**Statistics Value**	**Prob. Value**
GDP	1,21	0,20	-0,57	0,28
TRSM	3,47	1,00	7,44	1,00
ER	-0,13	0,99	-0,76	0,22
ΔGDP	-3,68*	0,00	-3,68*	0,00
ΔTRSM	-5,53*	0,00	-3,72*	0,00
ΔER	-7,27*	0,00	-3,83*	0,00

*p <0.01

Panel Cointegration Tests

The panel cointegration test developed by Pedroni (1999; 2004) is generally utilized to check the long-term relationship in the long run. Pedroni (2004) specified seven different test statistics to examine the null hypothesis identified as there is no cointegration relationship between the variables. Statistics are obtained from the residual values in the panel cointegration regression.

Table 4 shows the Pedroni panel cointegration test results. Three test statistics are statistically significant when the fixed model is considered; in the fixed and trend model, four test statistics are statistically significant. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. These results reveal the existence of a long-term relationship between variables.

Table 4. *Pedroni Panel Cointegration Test Results*

Test	Constant	Constant and Trend
Panel v-Statistic	1,37**	26,26*
Panel rho-Statistic	1,52	-0,48
Panel PP-Statistic	2,06	-3,13*
Panel ADF-Statistic	-5,23*	-3,63*
Panel rho-Statistic	1,80	2,21
Group PP-Statistic	0,15	-0,15
Group ADF-Statistic	-1,38**	-2,83*

*p<0.01 and **p<0.1

Estimating Panel Cointegration Coefficients

After obtaining the long-term relationship, the next step is to estimate the long-run coefficient of cointegration. To this extent, FMOLS and DOLS approaches developed by Pedroni (2000, 2001) are utilized. FMOLS and DOLS estimators have been established on the emergence of biased results when the series with long-term relationships are estimated by using the least-squares mechanism. If a model has autocorrelation and endogeneity problems, it means the findings are not significant. While the FMOLS approach reorganizes the autocorrelation and endogeneity problem with the nonparametric approach, variables are taken with their lagged values and autocorrelation is eliminated in the DOLS approach. Table 5 presents the panel FMOLS and panel DOLS findings.

Table 5. *Panel Cointegration Coefficients (Dependent Variable: GDP)*

Variables	**Panel FMOLS**	**Panel DOLS**
TRSM	4,64* [0,00)	4,24* [0,00]
ER	6,46* [0,00]	2,24** [0,03]

*p<0.01 and **p<0.05.

According to panel FMOLS and panel DOLS results, GDP, TRSM and ER long-term coefficients are statistically significant. Consistent with these results, tourism and exchange rates positively affect economic growth.

Table 6. *Granger Causality Test Results*

Null Hypothesis	**Number of Observations**	**F – Statistic**	**Probability Value**
ER → GDP	230	47.52	5.33
GDP→ER		0.76	0.38
TRSM→GDP	230	8.72	0.00*
GDP→TRSM		1.17	0.28
TRSM→ER	230	0.79	0.38
ER→TRSM		3.20	0.07

*p<0.01

In Table 6, Granger causality test results reveal a causal relationship from tourism revenues to GDP and from exchange rate to tourism revenues. Other results are not statistically significant. The overall results show the evidence of the tourism-led growth hypothesis in the ten countries with the highest tourism income.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In many economies, the tourism sector increases household and government incomes, contributes to the employment rate and improves the balance of payments (Solarin, 2018; Lin et al., 2019). In this paper, the validity of the tourism-led growth hypothesis is analyzed for the countries.

To this end, ten countries with the highest tourism revenues were examined for 1995-2018. After confirming the cointegration between GDP, tourism income, and exchange rate, the long-term coefficients are obtained. Accordingly, tourism and exchange rate increase economic growth and a uni-directional causal relationship from tourism to economic growth and from exchange rate to tourism is detected.

Empirical findings support the tourism-led growth hypothesis for the top ten tourism revenue-generating countries. That means the tourism industry is one of the main factors contributing to economic growth in these countries. Many studies bear similarities to the empirical findings of the present research (e.g., Balaguer & Cantavella-Jorda, 2002; Gunduz & Hatemi-J, 2005; Ozturk & Acaravci, 2009; Kreishan, 2010; Schubert et al., 2011; Polat & Günay, 2012; Kızılkaya et al., 2016; Chiu & Yeh, 2017; Selimi et al., 2017; Shahzad et al., 2017; Tang & Tan, 2018; Ribeiro & Wang, 2020; Osinubi & Osinubi, 2020; Rasool et al., 2021).

Tourism revenues have many advantages for countries. These advantages can be sorted as follows; increase in income from tourism-oriented different sectors, rise in infrastructure investments, encourage competition and productivity, increase employment opportunities, improve the balance of payments performance, and contribute to the international brand of countries. However, countries should be prepared for the shocks that may occur in tourism income. The tourism sector is one of the most fragile sectors in terms of its dynamic structure. The impacts of shocks might be felt in a short time. Therefore, it would be better for countries to make regulations that could protect firms and employees in the tourism sector against possible shocks. Policymakers should reconsider their tourism policies, especially for the post-COVID-19 period, and include the new sector dynamics in their medium- and long-term strategies. In particular, governments should implement economic stimulus packages via either fiscal or monetary policies to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism industry. In addition, nature conservation and tourism development are closely linked (Dunets et al., 2020). Therefore, countries should increase their infrastructure capacity to protect nature.

While some developed countries get high tourism income, there are some less developed countries have low tourism income despite their high potential. Today, some countries that suffer political instability are deprived of tourism revenues. The Middle East, North Africa, South America, and some Asian countries can be listed as an example of this situation. Within this context, reducing global instabilities and uncertainties will increase countries' welfare and encourage tourism activities. Establishing and strengthening democracy, freedoms, and the rule of law improve many economic indicators, and tourism is one of these indicators.

The results of this study clearly show that the tourism-led growth hypothesis is valid for the Top 10 countries with the highest tourism receipts. However, some limitations require further research. What is less clear is the first individual findings for the countries in the panel. Researchers may contribute to the literature by applying other approaches to obtain individual results and discuss the hypothesis for each countries' economic structure. Therefore, the findings and policy implications may be considered for each country in the panel. Secondly, the empirical model comprises three variables: tourism income, economic growth, and exchange rate. It is possible to discuss the tourism-led growth hypothesis within the scope of different variables such as labor productivity, employment, and globalization.

The empirical findings of this study contribute to the literature. However, there are some questions to be addressed. For future studies, nonlinear approaches such as NARDL (Nonlinear Autoregressive Distributed Lag) are suggested to be employed to test the dynamic relationship between tourism income and economic growth.

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INVESTIGATING WHICH SERVICES ARE EFFECTIVE ON RECOMMENDATION OF THE AIRLINE COMPANIES

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine which services provided by airlines had an influence on recommendations. The authors collected passenger scores from the years between 2014 to 2019 concerning the top 10 airline companies of 2019 from the website www.AirlineQuality.com, which is the site most commonly used by passengers to evaluate airline companies and airports worldwide. In total, we analyzed 5512 ratings. Binary logistic regression was applied to test the hypothesis. According to the results, the most influential criterion is value for money. The second most important criterion is customer relations. Seat and cabin space and meals and beverages follow customer relations. The least important criterion related to recommendations is in-flight entertainment. Previous studies were conducted using surveys. The present study used online ratings to determine airline attributes with the most and least influence on recommendations.

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INTRODUCTION

Businesses operating in the airline industry, which has accelerated with the introduction of private airlines since the early 1980s (Kos Koklic et al., 2017), are now facing difficulties such as increasing costs, fluctuations in demand, and quality expectations (Baker, 2013). In addition to these difficulties, the

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intense competition in the sector reveals the importance of passengers' perception of service quality. Understanding the factors that affect passengers' preference for an airline is an indicator that enables companies to take advantage of the competition (Lin & Huang, 2015; Namukasa, 2013). The companies that understand these factors may provide more suitable goods and services to satisfy passengers and make them loyal. Eventually, loyal passengers will be an important advantage in terms of competition. Although price is one of the most important of these factors, research shows that service quality is also a vital factor (Bubalo & Gaggero, 2015; Kim & Lee, 2011; Suki, 2014). Tangible features such as furnishing and seat comfort and intangible features such as security, cleaning, and customer service, are also important in quality perception of the provided service.

The authors observed that the academic research about the products and services offered by the airline companies was mostly conducted with SERVQUAL-based surveys (Aydın & Yıldırım, 2012; Başfırıncı & Mitra, 2015; Chou et al., 2011; Du et al., 2012; Farooq et al., 2018; Ganiyu, 2017; Hapsari et al., 2016; Huang, 2009; Hussain et al., 2015; Hussain, 2016; Jiang & Zhang, 2016; Kağnıcıoğlu & Özdemir, 2016; Leong et al., 2015; Pakdil & Aydın, 2007). As another observation, travel review and rating sites focus mostly on accommodation businesses (Banerjee & Chua, 2016; Bayram, 2017; Cezar & Öğüt, 2016; Doğan, 2017; Hu & Chen, 2016; Min et al., 2014; Neirotti et al., 2016; Pacheco, 2016; Raguseo et al., 2017; Sparks et al., 2016) and food and beverage businesses (Bertan, 2016; Cheng & Ho, 2015; Dalgıç et al., 2016; Doğan et al., 2016; Erdem & Yay, 2017; Eren & Çelik, 2017; Kim et al., 2016; Taştan & Kızılcık, 2017; Zhu et al., 2018). More people use these types of websites to share their experiences and opinions about companies by writing reviews or scoring different criteria. The influence and the importance of other people's opinions on purchase, re-purchase, and recommendation behavior have been investigated and proved by many scholars (Chakraborty & Bhat, 2018; Cheong et al., 2020; Filieri et al., 2018; Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012; Jimenez & Mendoza, 2013; Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017; Lin et al., 2011; Thomas et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2014).

It was seen that research related to online reviews and ratings for airlines was very limited (Bogicevic et al., 2017; Brochado et al., 2019; Güngör et al., 2019; İbiş & Batman, 2016; Lacic et al., 2016; Siering et al., 2018a; Stamolampros et al., 2018; Yao et al., 2015). Using online reviews and ratings as data might help us to understand passengers' general overview regarding the airlines' services. It also might be possible to determine the most important factor(s) influencing passengers' airline recommendations. In this context, the purpose of the present study was to determine the effect of airlines' ratings according to five criteria on recommendations for the top 10 airlines in 2019 selected by the website www.WorldAirlineAwards.com, which has been announcing the top 100 airlines of the year based on the passengers' votes since 2012 (World Airline Awards, 2020). Even though the website asks the users if they recommend the airline to others, scores given to the specific criteria may have a significant effect on the recommendation, because these scores represent the level of satisfaction. The authors claim that if the passengers are satisfied with the specific criteria related to the goods and services provided by the airlines, they will recommend the airline.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Online Customer Reviews and Ratings

According to the report entitled "Digital in 2020" prepared by the research company *We Are Social*, as of January 2020 the number of Internet users worldwide reached 4.54 billion. This figure corresponds to more than half of the world's population (59%). In the same report, it is stated that the number of social media users worldwide constitutes 3.8 billion people which is equal to 49% of the world's population (We Are Social, 2020). Consumers share their experiences with any product or service on the Internet. These sharing platforms, where word-of-mouth communication takes place electronically, are online customer commenting and rating websites (Siering et al., 2018a). These online customer comments and evaluations make up the content of the website, consisting of the opinions and ideas of the customer experiencing any goods or services. These comments and assessments are considered a reliable source of data and provide information and recommendations on goods and services from a customer perspective (Rose & Blodgett, 2016). These comments and assessments give consumers insight into real users' experiences but are also seen as an important monitoring tool for businesses (Lee et al., 2011). Research reveals that 24,000 new comments or ratings per minute are found on these sites. Some 85% of Internet users rely on these comments and scores. One-third of travelers write reviews, score goods and services on these websites, and regularly visit them. At this point, it is seen that these websites are the most effective source of information for the purchasing decision (Eslami et al., 2018; Gretzel & Yoo, 2017; Guo et al., 2017; Hong et al., 2017; Siering et al., 2018b; Stringam & Gerdes, 2010).

Online consumer reviews and ratings are particularly important because the quality of tourist goods or services cannot be understood without experiencing them (Book et al., 2018; Doğan et al., 2016; Güngör et al., 2019; Park & Nicolau, 2015; Xie et al., 2017). According to the "Travel Consumption Report" published by Deloitte (2015) based on a survey of 40509 people, 42% of consumer review commentary sites, 31% review the website of the travel company, and 21% review the website of online travel companies. Travelers tend to prefer high-rated accommodation, transport, travel, and food and beverage businesses (Schuckert et al., 2016). On the other hand, it is stated that the comments and scores on these websites contain more up to date, more detailed, and more accurate information (Stringam et al., 2010). These reviews and ratings can be more helpful and insightful compared to traditional information sources (Mellinas et al., 2019), and they are recognized as the second most frequently used information source by Internet users (Bigne et al., 2020). Moreover, scholars claim that online ratings are relatively objective, considered numerical evidence of different attributes of a service or product, and reflect the extent of consumers' satisfaction (Hong & Pittman, 2020; Zhu et al., 2019). These ratings, which are scored on a scale between one and five, represent a summary of a consumer's opinion about a product or service that might encourage other consumers to make a purchase decision (Hong & Pittman, 2020), help them to gather information about different attributes in a utilitarian nature, and are used to evaluate companies' products and services (Thuy Tran et al., 2019a). Thuy Tran et al. (2019b) also found that online ratings have a significant effect on continuance intention and presented *"the positive perceived usefulness and attitude towards the continuous usage of the relevant company"* (p. 315). Moreover, the reviews and ratings on these websites provide various types and amounts of data for scholars. These data can be used with either quantitative or qualitative techniques to gain insights into consumers' decision-making process and companies' performance (Phillips et al., 2020).

The main websites that include travelers' reviews and ratings on travel are TripAdvisor, Yahoo Travel, Igougo, HolidayCheck, and Lonely Planet (Browning et al., 2013). The websites where airlines are evaluated include Airline Ratings, Airline Quality, TripAdvisor, Flight-Report, and Trust Pilot.

Airline Services and Recommendation

According to the product classification formulated by the United Nations, the transportation sector within the service industry is based on the displacement of humans or human belongings. It is defined as the sector that enables the transportation of people and manufactured goods or services from one place to another (Doğan & Beller Dikmen, 2018a, p. 758; 2018b, p. 25).

Air transportation, which took on a commercial dimension after World War II, is the realization of transportation, as mentioned above, by air vehicles. Apart from revenue-based transport, flights for individual purposes are also considered within this scope. Air transport is considered a sector that is influenced by national security and public interests and that has an international aspect compared to other sectors. Globalization, technological developments, prosperity, the development of international trade, the development of airline transport networks, and increased tourism opportunities led to rapid growth in air transport in the 20th century (Bahar, 2018, p. 26).

The Service Quality Scale (SERVQUAL), developed by Parasuraman et al. (1991, 1994a, 1994b), has been used by many researchers to date. In the research conducted on airline companies, it was determined that the dimensions of the scale were concrete features, interest/relevance, reliability, intervention to problems, and safety (Wang et al., 2011, p. 433). The tangibles among these dimensions are physical assets such as footrests, the distance between seats, magazines, food and beverage types, pillows, blankets, sleeping goggles, cleaning of airplanes and toilets, in-flight entertainment (such as film, music, and game facilities), employee behavior as a measure of service quality, the technical components of the aircraft, and the offices of the airline company (Kim & Lee, 2011; Nadiri et al., 2008; Suki, 2014). Ali et al. (2015) specified the general condition of the aircraft, the quality of food and beverage services, seat comfort, and general cleaning factors among the physical features of the airline.

Furthermore, different factors have been identified in studies conducted by various researchers to determine passenger satisfaction with airlines. Gourdin (1988) stated that price, security, and punctuality are the three dimensions of airline service quality. Ostrowski et al. (1993) noted the comfort of seats, food and drink, and the punctuality of flights. Truitt and Haynes (1994) stated that the cleanliness of seats, flight procedure, punctuality of flights, handling of food and beverages, and dealing with passenger complaints are essential factors. Nadiri et al. (2008) determined that the physical characteristics of the airline are essential factors for passenger satisfaction and intention to buy again. Ng et al. (2011) mentioned flight services such as the attendants and cabin supervisor, while Kim and Lee (2011) stated that creating fast solutions with particular features has an impact on passenger satisfaction. Wu and Cheng (2013) highlighted the importance of eleven factors: cleanliness, problem-solving skills, general management, personnel expertise, comfort, safety and security, physical features, waiting time, convenience, value, and access to information. Suki (2014) determined that the particular characteristics of the airline had a positive and direct significant effect on passenger satisfaction, while Farooq et al. (2018) listed the service provided by the staff and the particular characteristics of the airline.

Additionally, if the concrete features of the airline and value for money are sufficient to ensure passenger satisfaction, the passenger will continue to choose the airline and recommend it through social networks even if the ticket prices of another company are more favorable (Ali et al., 2015; An & Noh, 2009; Bejou & Palmer, 1998; Chiou & Chen, 2010; Kos Koklic et al., 2017; Mohsan et al., 2011; Namukasa, 2013; Park et al., 2004; Suki, 2014). Brochado et al. (2019) conducted content analysis on a total of 1200 reviews for six different airline companies on TripAdvisor and concluded that the essential services are those offered by the airline during the flight (in-flight entertainment, food, drinks, etc.) in terms of value for money.

On the other hand, loyalty, which is defined as "the continuous repurchase and use of a product or service in the future with deep commitment" and which has a direct positive relationship with customer satisfaction, is examined as behavioral loyalty and attitude loyalty. Behavioral loyalty includes not the only repurchase but also less price sensitivity, a better alternative, and recommending it to others (Akamavi et al., 2015; Amin et al., 2012; Jahanshahi et al., 2011; Kasiri et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2013; Liu et al., 2011, Noyan & Gölbaşı Şimşek, 2014; Nyadzayo & Khajehzadeh, 2016; Pan et al., 2012; Rahman & Ramli, 2016; Srivastava & Kaul, 2016; Zakaria et al., 2014). An important indicator of behavioral loyalty is recommending a satisfactory good or service (Bandyopadhyay & Martell, 2007; Cheng, 2011). Passengers who are satisfied with the airline's services are more likely to spread positive opinions about the airline company and recommend it (Shah et al., 2020; Suki, 2014).

As mentioned above, different factors can impact passengers' satisfaction leading to behavioral loyalty, which is their recommendation of the airline company. The authors aimed to identify the level of the impact of the factors that are provided on the Airline Quality website by using passengers' online scores. In this context, the hypotheses were determined as follows:

H_{1a}: The scores that show the satisfaction level of the passenger given for *the overall value-for-money criterion* have an impact on their recommendation of the airline.

H_{1b}: The scores that show the satisfaction level of the passenger given for *the seat space and cabin space criterion* have an impact on their recommendation of the airline.

H_{1c}: The scores that show the satisfaction level of the passenger given for *the customer services criterion* have an impact on their recommendation of the airline.

H_{1d}: The scores that show the satisfaction level of the passenger given for *the in-flight entertainment criterion* have an impact on their recommendation of the airline.

H_{1e}: The scores that show the satisfaction level of the passenger given for *the meals and beverages criterion* have an impact on their recommendation of the airline.

The effect of independent variables on recommendation was analyzed within this scope.

METHODOLOGY

The research question was determined as "What is the level of effect of the scores given to various criteria on the same website for the recommendation of the airline for the top 10 airlines of 2019 on www.AirlineQuality.com?" The passengers create a profile for themselves on this website to evaluate the airline companies' attributes and services by writing detailed reviews or by giving scores between 1 and 5 for different criteria provided by the website. These criteria were overall value for money paid, seat space and cabin space, customer services, in-flight entertainment, meals and beverages, ground services, and Wi-Fi connectivity. Because there were too many missing values for the last two criteria, which means many users did not rate them, these criteria were excluded from the analysis.

Sample of the Study

There are different airline review and rating websites on the Internet such as AirlineRatings.com, AirlineQuality.com, and Flight-Report.com. AirlineRatings.com contains limited numbers of ratings and Flight-Report.com does not provide users' ratings; it provides only reviews. In this case, AirlineQuality.com was used as the data source because it is the subinitiative of Skytrax, the oldest airline evaluation system, established in 1989. The website provides reviews and ratings regarding the services of airlines, airports, and lounges. Passengers have been sharing their opinions about airlines and scoring the services since 2010.

Since all the scores on that website are difficult to collect due to time constraints, we chose convenience sampling as a non-random sampling method. In convenience sampling it is the researcher's judgments that determine a non-random sampling method in which the sample is to be selected from the universe. With inconvenience sampling, data are collected from the universe in the easiest, fastest, and most economical way. In this respect, the authors determined the scores given to various criteria between January 1, 2014 and December 31, 2019, for the top 10 airlines in 2019. The airlines are listed below (World Airline Awards, 2019):

1. Qatar Airways
2. Cathay Pacific
3. Singapore Airlines
4. Emirates
5. All Nippon Airways
6. Lufthansa
7. Qantas
8. Thai Airways
9. Ethiad Airways
10. EVA Air

Data Collection Method and Tool

The data were collected manually between August 25 and September 5, 2020. The oldest score for the criteria of the above airlines was given in 2014. An evaluation form was created to collect the data manually. Information about the user's year of travel, month, class of travel, and ratings for the criteria were recorded on these forms. In total, 5784 scores for ten airline companies were collected, but some users did not score one or more criteria, so missing data were excluded from the analysis and a total of 5512 scores were analyzed.

Variables

Accordingly, the dependent variable was whether users recommend the airline or not, and the independent variables were value for money, seat and cabin space, customer service, in-flight entertainment, meals, and beverages. The dependent variable was identified as recommended and not recommended. In this context, the non-referral behavior, which is no recommendation, was coded as 0 (zero) and the referral behavior, which is recommendation, as 1 (one). The independent variables value for money, seat space and in-cabin space, customer service, in-flight entertainment, and food and beverages were scored between 1 and 5.

Data Analysis

Binary logistic regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses determined for the study since the dependent variable had two categories as "yes" and "no". Logistic regression analysis, also known as the logit model, is used in studies in the field of medicine. However, it is an advanced regression method that has been used in social sciences in recent years. Logistic regression analysis is used when the dependent variable consists of two- or multi-level categorical data, and the cause-and-effect relationships between the dependent variable and independent variables are examined (Arabameri et al., 2019).

Logistic regression analysis is a type of regression analysis, but also it is a differential analysis technique. In this context, there are three important differences from regression analysis:

- While the dependent variable is numerical in regression analysis, it is a discrete value in logistic regression analysis.
- In regression analysis, the value of the dependent variable is estimated and, in logistic regression, the probability of one of the dependent variables is estimated.
- In regression analysis, it is necessary to have multiple normal distributions of independent variables. At the same time, no conditions are required for the distribution of independent variables in order to apply logistic regression.

Binary logistic regression analysis is based on the probability ratio. The probability ratio compares the likelihood that an event will occur and the likelihood that it will not. In the present study, the non-referral behavior was 0 (null) and the referral behavior was 1 (one). The binary logistic regression model describes the relationship between a binary outcome variable and one or more predictor variables (Fagerland & Hosmer, 2012:447).

RESULTS

As mentioned above, binary logistic regression analysis was performed to test the hypotheses of the study. The first test to be performed when performing this analysis is the Hosmer–Lemeshow test. The goodness of fit of the model is a measure of the effectiveness of the model created to explain the dependent variable. The Hosmer–Lemeshow test was used as a measure of goodness of fit of the model. Chi-square was 17.902 and the p-value was 0.472. The significance level of the Hosmer–Lemeshow test was higher than 0.05, indicating that the model is appropriate for the data (Cavagnaro et al., 2016, p. 139; Force et al., 2018, p. 436; Zaidan, 2017, p. 257). The p-value is significant since it is 0.295> 0.05. Thus, the model is suitable for performing logistic regression analysis.

Table 1. *Classification Table*

Observed		Estimated		
		Recommendation Behavior		Accurate Estimate %
		Recommendation	Non-recommendation	
Recommendation Behavior	Recommendation	1582	0	100.0
	Non-recommendation	3930	0	0.0
General %				73.1

According to Table 2, 100% of the model was able to predict the recommendation behavior of the users correctly. In general, the correct classification rate of the model is 73.1%. After determining the suitability of the proposed model for logistic regression analysis according to the data obtained from the participants, it was necessary to look at whether the independent variables were significant in explaining the dependent variable. The omnibus test, which measures the significance of model coefficients, was performed to test the difference of parameters from zero.

Table 2. *Omnibus Test of Model Coefficients (Significance of Coefficients)*

Step 1		Chi-Square	sd	Significance (p)
	Step	4318.098	5	0.000
	Block	4318.098	5	0.000
	Model	4318.098	5	0.000

Significance values are less than 1%; logistic regression coefficients are not equal to zero at the same time. Thus, the model is statistically significant at 1% level (Wan Daud et al., 2011, p. 211).

After finding the model coefficients were significant, it was necessary to look at the percentage of changes in the dependent variable explained by the independent variables proposed in the model. According to Table 4, the increase or decrease in the dependent variable in the model is 54.3% according to Cox–Snell and 77.8% according to Nagelkerke. In other words, 77.8% of users' behavior regarding their recommendation of the airline can be explained by the independent variables in the model (value for money, seat space and cabin space, customer service, in-flight entertainment, and meals and beverages). Therefore, it can be concluded that 22.2% of different independent variables affect the recommendation or non-recommendation behavior.

Table 3. *Model Summary Table*

Step	-2 Log Likelihood	Cox and Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	2290.271	0.543	0.778

The last table to look at in logistic regression analysis is the parameter estimation table. Table 4 shows the parameter estimation obtained from the model proposed to measure the effects of independent variables on the behavior of recommending or not recommending the airline as a dependent variable.

Table 4. *Parameter Estimation Table*

	(β) (Reg. Coef.)	S.E. (Standard Error)	Wald Statistics	sd	Significance (p)	Odds Ratio Exp (β)
Overall Value for Money	1.408	0.062	507.552	1	**0.000**	4.087
Seat and Cabin Space	0.481	0.052	84.499	1	**0.000**	1.617
Customer Relations	0.558	0.049	130.324	1	**0.000**	1.747
In-flight Entertainment	0.257	0.052	24.647	1	**0.000**	1.292
Meals and Beverages	0.368	0.051	51.802	1	**0.000**	1.446
Constant	-9.677	0.307	991.138	1	**0.000**	0.000

The β values (regression coefficient) in Table 4 show the effective coefficient of each independent variable. Wald statistics are used to test whether each independent variable is significant in the model. If the Wald statistic exceeds 2, it is an indication that the variable is significant. The values in the Exp column in the table show the odds ratios of the independent variables. Exp shows the change in the level of superiority if the other variables in the model are kept constant, and the relevant variable will be increased by 1 unit. To summarize the interpretation of the odds ratio briefly: if the odds ratio is greater than 1, then A and B are associated (correlated); conversely, if the odds ratio is less than 1, then A and B are negatively correlated, and the presence of one event reduces the odds of the other event (Park, 2013, p. 161; Sarkar & Midi, 2010, p. 481; Tessema Zewude & Meskele Ashine, 2016, p. 6; Zhang et al., 2013, p. 124).

According to Table 4, the independent variables (value for money, seat space and cabin space, customer service, in-flight entertainment, and meals and beverages) have an impact on whether the airline is recommended. At this point, the hypotheses H_{1a}, H_{1b}, H_{1c}, H_{1d}, and H_{1e} determined within the scope of the study were supported.

According to the table, overall value for money is the most important criterion for recommendation. The second most important criterion is customer relations. Seat and cabin space and meals and beverages follow customer relations. The least effective criterion influencing the recommendation is in-flight entertainment. According to these results, overall value for money had the most significant impact on recommending the airline among the five criteria and the in-flight entertainment had the lowest impact. This result supports the literature, which is discussed below.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In the present study, we evaluated the services offered by airline companies through online consumer ratings. For this assessment, we used data from www.AirlineQuality.com and analyzed the companies selected as the 10 best airlines. Attempts were made to answer the question of whether they affect the airline's recommendation given according to different criteria. The criteria included in the hypotheses developed according to the theoretical background are value for money, space for the seat area and cabin, customer service, in-flight entertainment services, and food and beverages.

As a result of the logistic regression analysis, the developed hypotheses were supported. In other words, when in-flight entertainment and food and beverage facilities are not satisfactory, when there is a high price compared to the service received, when the seat space and in-cabin facilities cannot be raised to the desired level, and when customer service is insufficient passengers tend not to recommend the airline. As a result of the study, we determined that overall value for money was the criterion with the most significant impact on the recommendation of the airline. This result supports Gures et al.'s (2014) research, as they found that the price and value for money were the most critical factors influencing recommendations. In our study, 73% percent of the passengers flew in economy class. Economy class ticket rates are cheaper than other flight classes. It seems that other services are more important than the price for the passengers who rated the attributes and services provided by flight companies that were the sample of the present study. Similarly, Forgas et al. (2010) found that value for money for the airline is a factor that affects satisfaction and recommendation behavior, especially for low-priced airlines.

The second more effective criterion was customer relations. This result also supports the previous literature. Kos Koklic et al. (2017) found that quality of customer service positively affected customer satisfaction and hence the recommendation of the firm. Calisir et al. (2016) determined that the passengers who were satisfied with the quality of the service offered by the airline made positive comments about the company and recommended the company to others as a result of their research with 237 passengers that participated on the Frankfurt–Istanbul flight. Milioti et al. (2015) found that the essential factors for passengers were the reliability and ready-to-help personnel during the flight and the in-flight entertainment facilities were relatively less important. Vlachos and Lin (2014) found that in-flight and out-of-flight personnel services were influential on the recommendation of the airline company in their survey of airlines operating in China. Archana and Subha (2012) surveyed 270 passengers flying with Indian Airlines and determined that the most critical factor affecting the perceived service quality was in-flight entertainment. Al-Refaie et al. (2014) and Kim and Lee (2011) emphasized that the staff's ability to deal with problems and complaints has an impact on passenger satisfaction and recommendation behavior.

The third factor influencing recommendations is seat and cabin space. The fourth important factor for the passengers is meals and beverages, and the least influential criterion for recommendation is in-flight entertainment. These results also support the previous research referred to above.

Theoretically, the present study showed that the data obtained from an online rating website could be used as a source to analyze passengers' satisfaction level and behavioral loyalty. These ratings might be more reliable that the surveys conducted by airline companies themselves because the passengers are more comfortable as they might choose to rate anonymously. The results supported several previous studies mentioned above. If the passengers are satisfied with the goods and services provided by the airline company, they are more likely give higher ratings on the related websites and recommend the company to others.

Individuals may prefer to express their opinions, feelings, and experiences on the Internet and social media platforms rather than calling the company and talking to an employee, because they might be more comfortable writing a review than talking to an employee. In addition, they can do it whenever and wherever they want. There will be no pressure, no concern about time, and no inconvenience of going to the company's office or making a phone call. In this sense, these online posts by passengers must be regarded as a valuable source by companies and they must monitor the comments and ratings shared on the Internet. It should be helpful to reach out to those who write negative comments and give low ratings and to strive to ensure their satisfaction. Airline companies can send feedback directly to their passengers by sending an online questionnaire after the flight. This might help to prevent online complaints and negative electronic word-of-mouth.

The present study was carried out by considering the data on the Internet. The number of websites providing these data is enormous, there is no standard evaluation form offered to consumers on these websites, and the data are updated frequently due to the nature of the Internet. The authors assumed that since the users who comment on airline companies on the relevant website and score various criteria differ in terms of demographic characteristics, the status of evaluating the airline companies was also different. Users who prefer any airline for transportation take their flight before commenting on the airline or rating various criteria and use the website www.AirlineQuality.com to comment and rate the various criteria. Comments and ratings on the website are published as they are, without any corrections or changes.

As with many other studies, this one also had limitations. First, the authors included only the ratings on the website www.AirlineQuality.com in the study and for the airlines selected as the top 10 airlines of the years between 2014 and 2019. Second, the scores given to various criteria on the same website were included in the study. Additionally, with COVID-19, which started with the report on December 31, 2019 and spread rapidly in 2020, air travel has decreased significantly. According to IATA reports, RPKs (revenue passenger kilometers, where the number of passengers and wages are calculated) were expected to decrease by approximately 40% with a revenue loss of US$ 252 billion in 2020 (Gössling et al., 2020; IATA, 2020). The decisions to be taken by the World Health Organization and the World Tourism Organization and tourism countries on this issue remain uncertain. COVID-19 was not mentioned during the period (2014-2019) when the data related to this research were collected. Therefore, the researchers chose the variables in the study independently from this pandemic.

Future studies may investigate some other variables' impacts. Moreover, it is predicted that the policies or practices such as eco-friendliness, green business, and sustainability implemented by airline companies will affect the evaluation criteria of studies to be carried out. More data can be obtained from different online rating websites for the same airline companies and comparative studies can be conducted. Furthermore, demographical differences can be included in the analyses and passengers who have different demographical characteristics can be compared as well.

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INFLUENCE OF INTERNET ON TOURISM CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims at identifying the state of academic research on the influence of Internet on tourism consumer behaviour. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) Methodology was used to select the data and the analysis was complemented with bibliometric indicators. This research identified 83 relevant articles related to the influence of Internet on tourism consumer behaviour. The systematic review of the academic literature demonstrated that the Internet influences tourism consumer behaviour during the entire travel cycle stages. During the pre-consumption stage, motivations and decision-making process are highly influenced by several online sources. However, in the case of expectations, limited research was found on this area. Value co-creation behaviour is influenced by Internet during the final two stages of the travel cycle stages. Finally, evidence suggests that loyalty is influenced during the consumption and post-consumption stages. These results provide a categorized analysis of the influence of Internet on the behavioural variables during each of the travel cycle stages for academicians and practitioners. The analysis was conducted on two major academic databases: Web of Science Core Collection and Scopus. The inclusion of other data sources and other types of secondary data could complement these results.

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism consumer behaviour (TCB) comprehends the group of activities, experiences, decisions involved in the obtaining and consumption of a tourism product or service (Cohen, et al., 2014). Several research works in the marketing field have been carried out to understand the drivers related to this construct and its relationships with other concepts of tourism, becoming one of the most popular research topics in tourism (Bigné et al., 2009; Cohen et al., 2014; Gössling et al., 2012; Moutinho, 1987; Strandberg et al., 2018; Swarbrooke & Horner, 2006; Tsang & Hsu, 2011).

According to Cohen et al. (2014), during the first decade of the new millennium, scholars focused on determining how consumers behave during the decision-making process, which the motivations that influence their decisions are, and the influence that expectations and perceptions have on satisfaction and further loyalty to the product or tourism destination. However, the Internet also allowed tourists to become value co-creators of the tourist experience, changing their behaviour under the service-dominant logic theory (Buhalis & Sinarta, 2019; Marine-Roig & Clavé, 2016; Yi & Gong, 2013). Tourists interact with online content during all different stages of the travel cycle: pre-consumption, consumption and post-consumption. Therefore, the development of methods to understand and predict those behaviours plays a key role in the future performance of tourism companies and destinations (Couture et al., 2015; Sotiriadis & van Zyl, 2013; Tsang & Hsu, 2011).

Cohen et al. (2014) conducted a review using a narrative approach of the articles in three major tourism academic journals between 2000 and 2012. Their results identified the main variables of TCB and its external influences. Serra Cantallops and Salvi (2014) used six major journals to analyse the influence of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) in the hotel industry between 2009-2014. Their study concluded that research was developed under two main lines: the review-generating factors and the impact of eWOM. Ulker-Demirel and Ciftci (2020) analysed the implementation of the Theory of Planned Behaviour in tourism, leisure and hospitality management. The authors concluded that in terms of managerial issues, there is still a lack of academic research in this area.

Based on the previous studies, it can be concluded that while there is abundant literature on this topic, it is scattered because the approaches that have been adopted analysed the travel cycle stages separately. Although several literature reviews and bibliometric analyses have been conducted in the past on this topic, to the best knowledge of the author, none of them has attempted to systematize the influence of the internet on TCB.

Therefore, this paper will focus on the variables of tourism consumer behaviour, i.e. motivations, expectations, decision-making, value co-creation, loyalty, and how they are influenced by the Internet. In this regard, this paper addresses and explores the following research questions:

- How has research related to the Internet and tourism consumer behaviour evolved over time?
- Which authors and journals are the most influential?
- Which publications are the theoretical basis for the studies on this field?
- How does Internet influence tourism consumer behaviour during the travel stage cycle?

To answer the research questions, a literature review was conducted based on a large body of academic articles. The conceptual analysis evidence that TCB is expressed by a tourist through five behavioural variables: motivation, expectation, decision-making, value co-creation, and loyalty. From the travel cycle stages perspective, these behavioural variables are present in the entire process and are influenced by the different sources of information.

This study analyses the influence of the Internet on tourism consumer behaviour using bibliometric techniques and content analysis. First, using bibliometric indicators, the study presents a list of the most influential journals, authors and the geographical distribution of the main research institutions. Secondly, the co-citation analysis provides some insights of the main theoretical clusters that support this research field. Finally, through content analysis, a categorization of the variables of tourism consumer behaviour is carried out during all the travel stage cycle, contributing to the existing academic body.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Consumer Behaviour

Consumer behaviour is considered to be the process that involves specific decisions, ideas, experiences or activities that satisfy a consumer wants or needs (Cohen et al., 2014). It refers to the process where consumer acquires and organizes information that leads to a purchase decision, its consumption and further evaluation (Moutinho, 1987). Among the marketing studies, consumer behaviour is one of the most researched topics by scholars. However, due to its complexity as a construct, consumer behaviour studies on tourism have focused on key conceptual variables that explain the behaviour of tourists during the travel cycle stages. Consumer behaviour theory in tourism has several unique characteristics that are different from other sectors. Tourism consumption is based on an investment with no tangible return which means that tourists will not expect any material return from their investment on holidays (Buhalis & Sinarta, 2019; Moutinho, 1987).

Several authors have agreed that consumer behaviour needs to be studied through the analysis of psychological variables (Cohen et al., 2014; Ma et al., 2016). TCB is a complex construct, that is formed during the interaction of other constructs studied in tourism (Cohen et al., 2014). To the extent of this study, a group of five variables will be considered in the analysis of the process of tourism consumer behaviour, that is present during the entire travel cycle. During the pre-consumption stage, scholars agree that TCB is influenced by motivations, expectations and the decision-making process (Afonso et al., 2018; Li & Cai, 2012; Qu, 2018; Rong et al., 2012).

Despite several years of study, researchers found difficult to evaluate TCB, the Internet and social media apps, significantly improved the evaluation tools and provided tourists and marketers new forms of interaction. Therefore, the value co-creation behaviour emerged in TCB theory as a new form of behaviours (Buhalis, 2019; Lončarić et al., 2019; Pera, 2017). After the consumption stage, a fundamental concept of tourism behaviour is loyalty, specially under the scope of behavioural loyalty, in the process when tourists decide to recommend or re-produce the consumption experience (Bigné et al., 2001; Cohen et al., 2014; Lanfranchi et al., 2015).

Role of The Internet and New Information Sources On Tourism Consumer Behaviour

Several marketing studies have been focused on identifying the role of information sources on TCB. Information sources are considered as a potential influence during the pre-consumption stage when the information is consulted and used by tourists (Frías et al., 2008). Moreover, information can be considered as the most important factor in influencing TCB (Murphy et al., 2007). Tourists require several types of information during all the consumption stage (Vogt & Stewart, 1998).

However, technological changes impacted the entire process of tourism consumption. The evolution of the Internet had several implications in the tourism industry and the ways companies launch their products and services online. Technology helps potential tourists to make better travel decisions and reduces their fear and risks perception (Buhalis & Sinarta, 2019). Therefore, the Internet changed the understanding of TCB and the role of sources of information, changing the ways in which customers plan, buy and consume tourism products (Del Chiappa et al., 2016).

Travellers share their stories in social media and forum sites and employ different un-structures big data sources like photos, videos, online comments, among others. Hence, traditional word-of-mouth communications dramatically changed with the Internet. Electronic worth-of-mouth (eWOM) became more relevant with the development of new online tools. This study utilizes the concept of Litvin et al. (2008, p. 461) considering eWOM as "*all informal communications directed at consumers through Internet-based technology related to the usage or characteristics of particular goods and services, or their sellers*".

According to scholars, the importance and fundamental difference between eWOM and WOM relies on the number of people who can be reached using the Internet. eWOM influence more tourists because of its speed and convenience, as well as the absence of face-to-face human pressure (Serra Cantallops & Salvi, 2014; Sun et al., 2006). From a consumer perspective, eWOM represents an opportunity to disseminate their feelings regarding a product or service and influence another consumers behaviour (Chen et al., 2015).

METHODOLOGY

Following the approach suggested by Reyes-Menendez et al. (2019), the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) methodology was employed, as presented in figure 1. The raw data used in this study was collected from the Web of Science Core Collection and Scopus, two of the most relevant academic databases recognized by scholars (Benckendorff & Zehrer, 2013; Saha et al., 2020). Similar to previous studies, the analysis only included articles written in English (Morosan & Bowen, 2018). Keywords were selected from terms commonly employed in the literature of this construct and were combined using the database operators to guarantee several output results. The inclusion criteria considered the presence of these keywords in the "Title, abstract or keywords" section (Table 1). Data was collected in January of 2021 and the total number of articles retrieved from this initial screening was 225.

Table 1. *Research criteria*

Databases	Web of Science Core Collection and Scopus
Keywords	Consumer behaviour, tourist behaviour, tourism, online, eWOM, online reviews, UGC, C2C, B2C
Search within	Topic (Title, Abstract and Keywords)
Document Type	Article
Language	English
Research Area	All

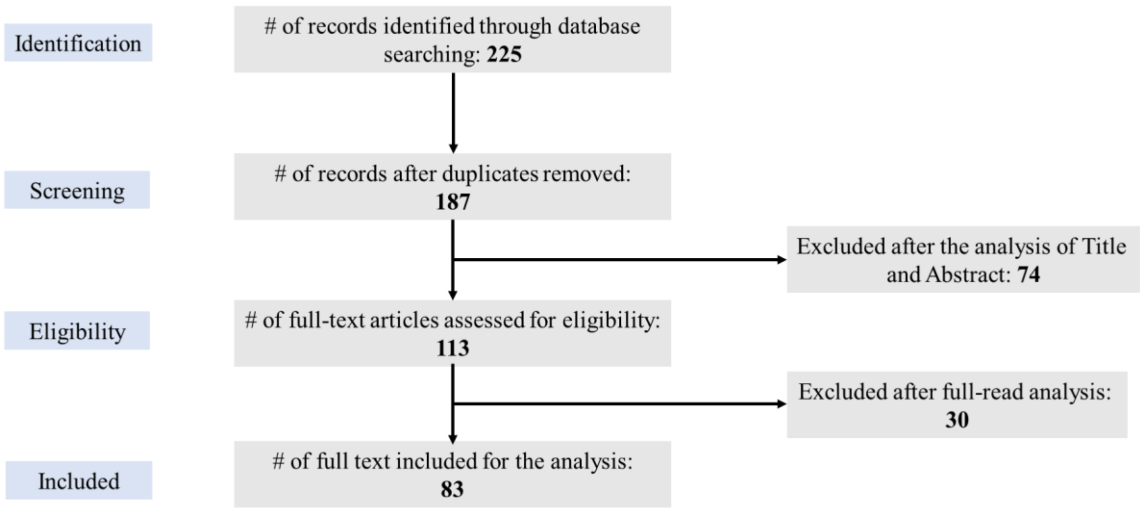

Figure 1. *PRISMA 2009 Flow Diagram*

The second step of the PRISMA methodology is to remove duplicate articles retrieved from the search. Using EndNote Reference Manager, a search for duplicate files was conducted to exclude them from the dataset, obtaining an output of 187 articles. Thirdly, while the selection process considered the presence of the keywords in the mentioned sections, through the full reading of titles and abstracts, articles not related to the industry or to the purpose of this study were found, even when they included some of the selected keywords. A total of 74 articles were excluded from the research, obtaining a list of 113 articles. The last step included a full-text analysis of the article to select the final sample to include in the systematic review. When reading the articles in-depth, 30 papers did not match with the inclusion criteria for the research or were inadequate for it, because led to inconclusive results or they were not in the scope of this investigation. Hence, a final list of 83 articles was selected for the analysis.

The bibliometric analysis developed employed two main techniques, evaluative methods and relational methods. The evaluative methods included productivity and impact metrics. Productivity metrics analyses the evolution of the research topic in the field and identifies the most influential journals and authors. The geographical distribution of research institutions analysis was performed using Microsoft Excel and VosViewer (Koseoglu et al., 2016; Qian et al., 2018, 2019). Impact metrics considered citation analysis, specifically h-index indicator. Relational methods were used while conducting the co-citation analysis of the references. Co-citation is considered as the most common bibliometric indicator employed to present the clusters of co-citation pairs (Leung et al., 2017). Finally, this paper employs a qualitative approach to analyse and categorize the variables of tourism consumer behaviour during the travel cycle stages.

RESULTS

The analysis of the 83 articles evidences an increasing interest by the academic community on this topic. Since 1998 when Bonn et al. (1998) published their article in the Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research, scholars have developed substantial research, as presented in Figure 2.

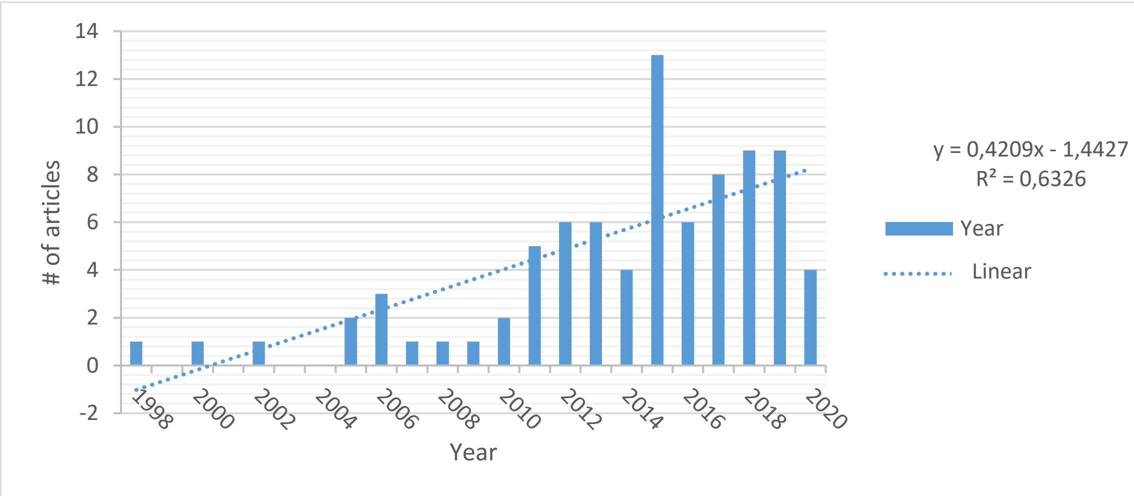

Figure 2. *Articles per year in the area of study*

Productivity per journals

The articles have been published in 47 journals, being *Tourism Management*, *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing* and *Journal of Travel Research* the most employed by authors to share their findings. Five journals gather 36% of the total research in this field, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. *Productivity of the main journals*

Source	Documents	Citations	% of total documents	Cumulative percentage
Tourism management	9	784	10.84	10.84
Journal of travel and tourism marketing	7	320	8.43	19.27
Journal of travel research	6	239	7.23	26.50
Annals of tourism research	4	473	4.82	31.32
International journal of contemporary hospitality management	4	112	4.82	36.14
Journal of hospitality and tourism technology	4	117	4.82	40.96
International journal of culture, tourism, and hospitality research	3	8	3.61	44.57
Asia pacific journal of tourism research	2	24	2.41	46.98
Information technology and tourism	2	5	2.41	49.39
International journal of hospitality management	2	324	2.41	51.80
Internet research	2	193	2.41	54.21
Journal of retailing and consumer services	2	260	2.41	56.62
Online information review	2	86	2.41	59.03

Furthermore, the up-to-dateness of the published articles was analysed to describe the publication pattern in the last five years. From the total amount of articles, 49 were published in the last five-year period, for a Price's Index of 0.5936. Furthermore, data showed that five journals have published two articles each on this topic, while 34 journals have published at least one article on this topic since 2015, as presented in Table 3.

Table 3. *Main journals with published articles in the area of study since 2015*

Journal Title	2015-2020	% of total
Tourism Management	5	10.20
International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	3	6.12
International Journal of Culture, Tourism, and Hospitality Research	3	6.12
Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing	3	6.12
Journal of Travel Research	3	6.12

Co-citation of references

The co-citation analysis was performed on the most cited references found in the analysed articles. A total of 5062 bibliographic references were found in the 83 articles, selecting for the cluster analysis papers with a minimum of four citations. Hence, the co-citation analysis was conducted on 27 articles. The cluster analysis was developed using the association strength method with VOSviewer software, obtaining three main academic clusters.

The first cluster, presented in green colour, includes eight articles (29.62%). Among them, there is a pioneering paper on the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989) that is the theoretical basis of several further articles. The second relevant article of this cluster is the Model of Information Systems Success (DeLone & McLean, 2003), which supports several research works on e-commerce and online tourism behaviour. The second cluster (red colour) comprises ten articles (37.03%) that are the pioneers in the analysis of the influence of eWOM and user-generated content on tourism. One of the relevant articles in this cluster is a conceptual model of the role of eWOM in hospitality and tourism management (Litvin et al., 2008). The final cluster (blue colour) includes nine articles (33.33%) and comprises some of the pioneer papers that analysed the impact of online content in tourism consumer behaviour, especially the influence on the decision-making process.

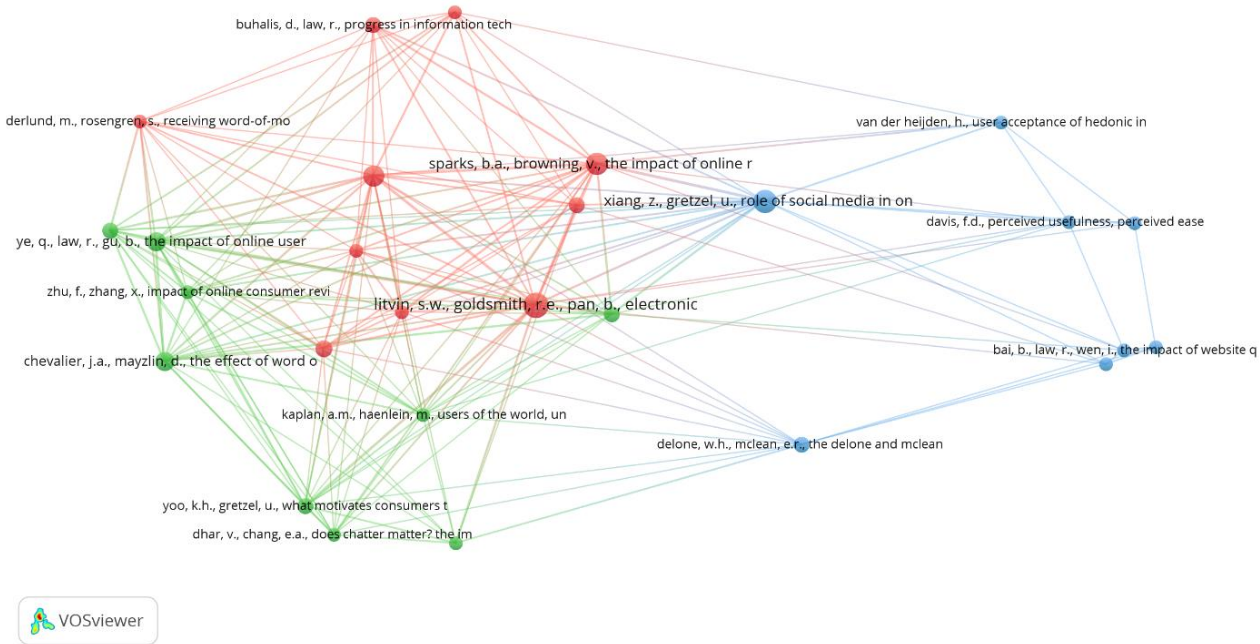

Figure 3. *Co-Citation network and Clusters*

Authors' productivity

Citation analysis evidence that Rob Law and Eleonora Pantano are the most productive authors and present on the same time the higher h-Index. The description of the breakdown of the main authors per article is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. *h-Index of the most relevant authors*

Author	Documents	Citation Sum Within H-Core	H-Index
Law R.	5	822	5
Pantano E.	3	117	3
Fesenmaier D.R.	2	436	2
Park S.	2	180	2
Backman S.J.	2	168	2
Vu H.Q.	2	137	2
Bai B.	2	119	2
Li G.	2	98	2
Di Pietro L.	2	87	2
Hernández-Méndez J.	2	67	2

Geographical distribution of the research institutions

The geographical distribution of the authors' institutions evidence that 17.95% are researchers located in the United States, followed by 11.97% in Spain and 6.48% in Australia (Table 5). However, the topic has gained interest in Malaysia, China, and South Korea since 2015.

Table 5. *Geographical distribution of the research institutions*

Country	Documents	% of total
United States	21	17.95
Spain	14	11.97
Australia	8	6.84
China	8	6.84
Italy	8	6.84
United Kingdom	8	6.84
Hong Kong	6	5.13
South Korea	4	3.42
Taiwan	4	3.42
Canada	3	2.56
Portugal	3	2.56
Austria	2	1.71
Czech Republic	2	1.71
Greece	2	1.71
Malaysia	2	1.71
Turkey	2	1.71

Influence of the internet on tourism consumer behaviour during the travel cycle stage

Several scholars have considered the analysis of the variables of tourism consumer behaviour (TCB) under the framework of the travel cycle stage. During the pre-consumption stage of the travel cycle, where tourists engage in the decision-making process, scholars conclude that motivations and expectations are formed. Once the decision is made and the tourism product or service is consumed, tourists engage in value co-creation behaviours. Finally, in the post-consumption stage, consumers' loyalty is expressed by the recommendation or re-purchase intention behaviour.

Traditionally, these sets of relationships have been considered linear. The influence was dominated by tourism providers advertising, and other sources like word-of -mouth was limited because of their reach levels. However, the Internet has a dual role in the influence of TCB. On one hand, the Internet is a facilitator of certain types of behaviours since consumers can develop the entire decision-making process on their own on the Internet. On the other hand, the Internet influences certain TCB. The infrastructure development on the tourism providers' facilities guaranteeing access to the Internet has allowed tourists to engage in real-time co-creation behaviours, especially on social media. Hence, this study explores the existing relationships to verify the hypotheses that the Internet influences tourism consumer behaviour during all travel cycle stages. The description of the results is presented using the travel stage process as a framework for the TCB, as presented in figure 4.

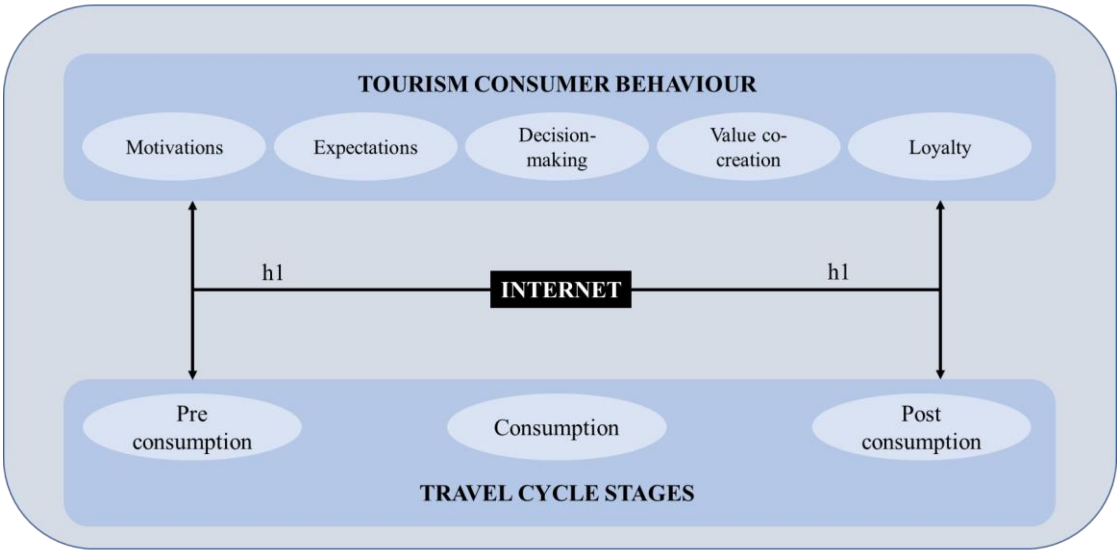

Figure 4. *Influence of the Internet on TCB during the travel cycle stages*

Pre-consumption stage

Several studies have been conducted to analyse the impact of the internet on tourism consumer behaviour during the travel cycle. The pioneer studies explored how pleasure travellers would engage with the Internet in the decision-making process (Bonn et al., 1998; Legoh É Rel & Guéguen, 2000). These earlier results showed that over 70% of customers were willing to use the Internet for travel-related seeking information process. Similarly, demographic analysis evidence that young people browse information for their trips online (Rong et al., 2012). Poria and Taylor (2002) found that the Internet influences the decision-making process for specific demographic market segments such as gays and lesbians since they could remain anonymous during the purchasing process. Furthermore, hotels that provide information using descriptive terminology familiar to them such as "gay-friendly" have a greater positive influence on their decision.

A study in Spain identified that women are more influenced to buy travel-related products online, as well as people between 35 and 44 years old (Garín-Muñoz & Pérez-Amaral, 2011). However, a study conducted in the European Union found gender differences being men more frequent online buyers than women and that the frequency of online travel-related buying depends on the nationality of the consumers (Szopiński & Staniewski, 2016) and the level of Internet penetration in the society (Garín-Muñoz & Pérez-Amaral, 2011). These results are similar to the findings of Martins et al. (2015) who expressed that males are more prone to purchase online. Complementary analysis of the types of devices used by Czech tourists during the online search of information evidence that they prefer desk computer or laptop because it is perceived as more comfortable. However, once in the destination, tourists use mobile or smartphones, especially male tourists (Vaško & Abrhám, 2015).

Law and Bai (2008) identified differences in tourist behaviour using the Internet, classifying tourists between buyers and browsers. Furthermore, they concluded that the purchase behaviour on websites increases with age, education level, and income. Western tourists are more incline to buy than Asians, who tend to browse. Tourists with buying behaviour rate more important products or services information, its quality, and purchase information. Other important elements that influence their purchase behaviour is website interface and navigation easiness. It was determined that travel website quality influences purchase behaviour.

Couture et al. (2015) affirmed that tourists with innovative behaviour are more willing to engage in the information search process online and that tourism innovativeness influences the online tourism consumer behaviour on the pre-consumption stage. They use proactive communication with tourism companies to look for information and help during the decision-making process, especially using chat applications. Email, on the other hand, is employed for complaints when tourists are not satisfied with the product or service consumed. Wozniak *et al.* (2018) analysed the use of smartphones during the travel cycle journey and found that self-efficacy, mobile-specific innovativeness, and personal attachment influence behaviour. Moreover, data suggest that the most innovative is the target group, the more willing is to book using the mobile, share an experience or write a review. Similarly, Bajpai and Lee (2015) found that in Taiwan the information search on the internet is one of the major determinants of online consumer behaviour during the decision-making process.

Pan and Fesenmaier (2006) proposed a conceptual model based on vacation destination planning through the Internet. According to their findings, decision-making online is composed of a set of hierarchical structures and that tourists have a different set of semantic mental models than the ones used by providers online. Travel planning is a complex process that faces several issues to be solved during the stages of the process. Besides, results suggest that each tourist has a different semantic model regarding a destination; therefore, they navigate through information using unique paths. Common online tourism behaviour showed that accommodation choices are made first, which indicates the importance of accommodation for the tourist.

A deeper analysis conducted in a study of 380 tourists in Portugal by Martins et al. (2015) evidence that five factors influence the online decision-making process. The first factor is convenience and satisfaction since the internet allows customers to purchase their tourist experience without travelling, waiting or dealing with unpleasant sellers (Martins et al., 2015). Couture et al. (2015) further concluded that immediate response has a greater influence on the pre-consumption stage since tourists are expecting a quick answer. The second factor is availability, recognized by tourists as the fact that the Internet is always available and that it influences their decisions. The third factor identified is information and planning, based on the amount of information that a tourist has on the Internet and the increasing exposure to travel-related information flow. Fourth, the Internet facilitates the evaluation of alternatives that allow tourists to fulfil easily their wants and needs related to the specific destinations. Finally, the last factor denominated bad experience relates to the availability of all types of information related to the product the tourist desires and the perception that buying online avoids intermediaries that increase the final price of the product. Furthermore, the authors found empirical evidence that the Internet influences two stages of the purchasing decision of the tourists: the evaluation of the alternatives and the purchase (Martins et al., 2015).

According to Öz (2015), social media is used by 56% of tourists on the pre-consumption stage of the travel cycle and it has a significant influence on the decision-making process. Tourists employ social media sites to get information related to the destination, hotel, attractions, transportation, prices, and travel budget, besides food and beverage information. Additionally, Kim et al. (2017) developed an analysis on the use of mobile social media networks (MSMN) by Korean senior tourists showing that 46.4% employed these sites between 10 and 29 minutes per day. Of all respondents, 91.6% used a smartphone to connect to MSMN and 80.4% used social media for posting or searching information, especially while being at home (64%). In addition, 48.8% used social media to purchase tourism products, being Facebook the most frequently search engine employed (17%). Similarly, the study conducted by Shen et al. (2020) on smart tourists found evidence that social network sites influence tourists during the three phases of consumption. However, the study unveiled a more influential relationship during the two first phases of consumption. Smart technologies influence sustainable behaviour in the pre-consumption stage of the tourist journey. These types of technologies are also more employed in the two first phases of the consumption process.

The study of Xiang et al. (2015) found evidence of the adoption of the Internet in the travel planning process. The study of American tourists showed that the influence of the Internet in the pre-consumption process is across all generations although generation Y is perceived as more engaged in the travel planning process online. Even more, they found that social media significantly influences travel planning, especially those sites where tourists can share pictures and videos. The adoption of Smartphones technologies has reduced the use of printed maps and increased the engagement with GPS and geo collaborative tools while tourists are at the tourism destination. Moreover, several significant decisions such as restaurants or sites to visit are made in the site because of the role of technology as a facilitator of information. These results support the analysis of Chung et al. (2011) who studied the influence of online content such as interactive maps in tourism consumer behaviour. Network analysis demonstrated that interactive maps increase the perceptions of engagement and trip planning in heritage activities more than traditional list displays. Furthermore, the study evidence that online interactivity influences attitudes and perceptions through a tourist product, service or destination.

Huang et al. (2016) analysed from the Technology Acceptance Model how ease of use of a virtual reality tool influences potential tourism experience and their behavioural intentions of visiting the destination. The results evidence that easiness to use a virtual tool enhances the experience and even more, websites using virtual reality influence the behavioural intention of tourists, especially because of the utilization of multimedia content. The perception of autonomy during the use of virtual reality tools is positively correlated to behavioural intentions to take a trip. Hwang et al. (2018) found evidence that extrinsic and intrinsic motivation on social media influences booking intentions. Elements such as relevance, flexibility, completeness, timeliness, and trustworthiness of the information received through social media positively influence travel behaviour and their satisfaction with online reviews and to purchase online.

One of the elements that influence the adoption of the internet in the decision-making process is perceived risk and trust (Hua et al., 2017). Izquierdo-Yusta and Martínez-Ruiz (2011) identified that the lack of trust in the Internet as a distribution channel negatively influences purchase decision. On the other hand, the analysis of the influence of Smart Booking Mobile Application in the airline industry demonstrated that smart pricing and security influences trust (Pradhan, 2019). Similarly, Bonsón Ponte et al. (2015) expressed that the influence of the Internet in purchasing behaviour is related to the perceived trusts and security of the online provider. Evidence suggests that Internet privacy concerns, the provider's reputation, and website investment are the main factors that influence online purchase.

Arsal et al. (2010) concluded that residents and experienced travellers' opinions in travel websites influence traveller's decision. A deeper analysis showed that experienced travellers' opinions are influential regarding travel-related issues such as transportation, accommodation, and monetary issues. On the other hand, residents influence travel decisions related to food and beverage, travel itineraries within the destination, as well as safety. These results supported the study of Beldona et al. (2005) who concluded that online shopping motivations of travel products in low and high complexity web environments are different and depend on user's skills related to online purchasing . Low complexity purchases, such as car rental are driven by transactional motivations while high complex purchases such as tours are influenced by informational parameters. High skilled users are influenced by the information parameters on their purchase behaviour. However, low skilled ones are influenced by availability parameters, especially related to accommodation services.

The study (Sabiote-Ortiz et al., 2016) on British and Spanish tourists showed that the Internet influences purchase decision due to the level of responsiveness, especially for Spanish tourists who avoid high uncertainty levels. On the other hand, British tourists, and those from similar cultures with a high level of uncertainty avoidance, are influenced when privacy and efficacy are perceived (Sabiote-Ortiz et al., 2016). A study of Turkish tourists (Alvarez & Asugman, 2006) evidenced the presence of two main categories, the online explorers and the risk-averse planners. The first group are less influenced by the content to complete the purchase online. Evidence of Turkish tourists showed that this group is fundamentally composed of males, who have negative attitudes toward various sources of information. On the other hand, the group of risk-averse planners are more influenced by the Internet and spend more time exploring travel-related content. This type of tourists are particularly female (Alvarez & Asugman, 2006).

Consumption stage

During the consumption stage of the travel cycle, tourists engage in value co-creation. According to Shen et al. (2020), social media significantly influence tourists in the consumption stage. Co-creation behaviour occurs in online reviews, where customers engage during the consumption of the experience. Storytelling in online reviews is an influential co-creation behaviour form. Storytelling reflects the whole consumption experience and influences other tourists decisions (Pera, 2017). Di Pietro et al. (2012) found that the use of Facebook by tourists expressing their judgment through a destination influences the tourism destination image. Öz (2015) concluded that social media influence tourist behaviour during the consumption stage because they use it to get information about travel. Besides, co-creation behaviour occurs in the consumption stage when having a mobile Internet connection during the consumption. It was found that value co-creation occurs when they share videos and pictures related to their experience during the consumption. Lee and Hyun (2015) studied the psychological factors that influence consumer behaviour and concluded that the socialization process among peers in online virtual communities influence behavioural intentions, especially related to follow travel advice from peers.

Similarly, Ben-Shaul and Reichel (2018) found evidence that the strongest consumer motives influence the degree of participation in virtual communities. The evidence showed that there is a positive and strong correlation between these two variables on Facebook. Pantano and Pietro's (2013) findings showed that Facebook is used limitedly for informative purposes on the decision-making process but highly used for complaining regarding the experience in the destination. The use of Facebook as an interactive platform for consumers to share their experiences in a user-friendly free platform and the opportunity to interact with tourism providers made the platform more effective.

In addition, there is a socio-psychological factor in value co-creation using Virtual Travel Communities (VTC) that relates to social interaction, information from previous tourists that support the decision and the interaction with people with similar interests. The study of Baglieri and Consoli (2009) found evidence that VTC boosts tourism innovation influencing customer relationships. These types of communities act as a form of value co-creation behaviour that benefits tourists and providers. This factor is perceived as a way to help tourism companies to be successful.

Co-creation on Facebook fans page is a hedonist motive for tourists that perceive it as a fun and entertained activity, as well as amusement from other customers (Ben-Shaul & Reichel, 2018). The frequency of co-creation patterns such as frequency of entrance and duration of the social media activities are influenced by sociopsychological, hedonist, and functional motives. It has been demonstrated that there is a social need that correlated with the motivation of being a "knowledge producer", which explains the value co-creation behaviour of tourists online, even more in communities such as Facebook. Additionally, findings suggest that functional and hedonist motives are associated with the frequency and duration of the interaction on social media, while sociological motives influence the degree of contribution (Ben-Shaul & Reichel, 2018).

Post-consumption stage

During the post-consumption stage, it was found that tourists only share videos and travel pictures. A 67% of the tourists engage in social media to share their experiences, if they are extremely satisfied with the experience, and 52% engage if they are dissatisfied. Even more, extreme sentiments regarding the experience influence the engagement with social media sharing (Öz, 2015). The study on Serbian tourists found evidence that the main motivation to post a review is to help other vacationers, a prosocial behaviour that is altruist and intends to help another person. Contradictory to literature, evidence was not found to affirm that there are significant differences in the motive to prosocial online behaviour regarding age groups. However, the study showed differences regarding gender and online sharing, being females the ones with a higher propensity to engage in online sharing (Mladenovic et al., 2019).

According to Ben-Shaul and Reichel (2018), the degree of participation in value co-creation influences customer loyalty. The level of recognition of the tourist as an active participant on a tourism Facebook brand page is a predictor of customer loyalty, in its level of revisiting or recommending to other tourists. Moreover, it was demonstrated that there is a relationship between the level of frequency and duration of the visit to the page with revisit intentions. Additionally, a study (Rong et al., 2012) in Hong Kong evidences that young people are more willing to share their experiences online than the elder ones. Educated people also engage in online sharing experiences more often than other demographic segments. Furthermore, past experiences influence sharing and browsing behaviour. People who travel long distances on their last trip, especially overseas, are more prone to look for online travel information, read online comments, and share their experiences online (Rong et al., 2012).

Ring et al. (2016) categorized tourists by the type of content used when recommending or sharing a tourist experience. The first group is called the online visualists and are characterized by the use of visual information. Evidence suggests that senior tourists are more likely to be visualists when sharing their experiences. Online verbalists segments, on the other hand, refer to those tourists who share their experiences using written language instead of sharing pictures and is mainly characteristic of female tourists.

DISCUSSION

During the pre-consumption stage, three main behavioural variables are influenced by the Internet: motivations, expectations, and decision-making. Motivations and expectations are formed by an accumulative process of reception of information through different sources. Therefore, the complexity of identifying the influence of the Internet on these variables is significant. However, the analysis of moderator variables has been used to explain this phenomenon. Elements such as flexibility, the relevance of the information, and convenience are relevant to influence tourism motivation on the Internet (Hwang et al., 2018; Martins et al., 2015). In fact, motivations are different in relation to the complexity level of the purchase travel product and tourists' skills. In the case of the formation of expectations through the Internet, surprisingly little research was found (Park & Nicolau, 2015).

Decision-making on the internet, on the other hand, has been well documented by academic research and several factors arose from them. First, early studies anticipated that tourists would engage with the Internet, especially due to the opportunity that it presented for access to information (Bonn et al., 1998; Legoh É Rel & Guéguen, 2000). Furthermore, the impact has been widely accepted on three stages of the decision-making process:

information search, the alternative of evaluation, and purchase decision (Bajpai & Lee, 2015; Pan & Fesenmaier, 2006). Using a gender approach, studies have concluded that the influence of the Internet on information search is higher in females than males (Garín-Muñoz & Pérez-Amaral, 2011). Females are influenced by online visual content, especially multimedia and storytelling content (Alvarez & Asugman, 2006; Ring et al., 2016). Males, on the other hand, are influenced by content related to functional benefit and are prone to complete the purchase decision more frequent than females (Alvarez & Asugman, 2006). Lastly, the influence of the Internet in the decision-making process is limited by the Internet penetration in the society (Garín-Muñoz & Pérez-Amaral, 2011), cultural characteristics (Hagag et al., 2015) and nationality (Sabiote-Ortiz et al., 2012; Szopiński & Staniewski, 2016).

During the consumption stage of the travel cycle, scholars have found that tourists engage in value co-creation behaviour. Three factors facilitate this type of behaviour: the access to new types of communication devices, the infrastructure conditions of the tourism destinations, and social media sites. During the consumption, stage tourists engage to share their experiences only if they have access to Internet connection (Öz, 2015) and using mobile phones (Vaško & Abrhám, 2015). Furthermore, co-creation behaviour during the consumption stage is related to picture and video sharing, and micro-blogging. Social media sites such as Facebook provide an interactive user-friendly platform (Pantano & Pietro, 2013) where tourists engage in a perceived fun and entertained activity (Ben-Shaul & Reichel, 2018).

During the post-consumption stage, the Internet also influences co-creation behaviour and loyalty. Co-creation behaviour in the post-consumption stage is related to prosocial behaviour that motivates tourists to write a post on their trip experience (Mladenovic et al., 2019), especially in the case of long haul trips (Rong et al., 2012). Evidence regarding a consumer participation behaviour type of value co-creation was not found in the analysed literature.

In the case of loyalty, traditional theories consider that it is expressed by the intention to recommend and revisit a destination. However, the results of this study showed that in the case of online environments, loyalty does not necessarily follow this longitudinal process approach. Tourists interact online with the providers and other tourists sharing reviews or posts, recommending the experience during and after the consumption which can be measured as a loyalty indicator. Ben-Shaul and Reichel (2018) concluded that the level of recognition of a tourist on a Facebook fan page of a tourism provider or destination is a predictor of their loyalty. Besides, demographic characteristics and the level of satisfaction with the experience determine the level of recommendation on the Internet. In the post-consumption stage, tourists engage in social media share more positive than negative experiences, especially in sharing economies platforms such Airbnb (Öz, 2015; Pera et al., 2019).

CONCLUSIONS

This paper offers an overview of the "state of issue" related to the existing literature on the influence of the Internet on tourism consumer behaviour. Scholars have studied TCB over the last six decades, providing several contributions. Moreover, TCB construct has been systematized by previous academicians who concluded that its main variables are motivations, expectations, decision-making, value co-creation, and loyalty (Cohen et al., 2014; Moutinho, 1987). However, the consensus has not been achieved yet on this topic, since it is a multidimensional and complex construct.

The adoption of the Internet drastically changed the role of the distribution channels of the tourism industry and the accessibility to information from the consumer perspective. Tourists are not only influenced by messages induced by tourism providers on traditional sources of information, but also by other tourists who expressed their opinions and experiences on the Internet (Xiang et al., 2015). Although several literature reviews have been conducted in the past on TCB (Cohen et al., 2014; Serra Cantallops & Salvi, 2014; Ulker-Demirel & Ciftci, 2020), to the author's knowledge, no systematic review has been conducted on the influence of the Internet on TCB. Thus, this research contributes to filling this academic gap, providing a deep analysis of how these behavioural variables are influenced during the different stages of travel cycle. From a methodological perspective, the PRISMA Methodology was selected to conduct the systematic reviews due to its applicability and re-applicability characteristic, under a rigorous scientific method (Moher et al., 2009; Reyes-Menendez et al., 2019).

Therefore, this paper contributes to the understanding of how the Internet influences tourism consumer behaviour. While Cohen et al. (2014) analysed the main concepts of tourism consumer behaviour and how are they influenced by elements such as technology, demographic characteristics, and the context, our paper focused on the influence of the Internet. Similarly, Vanhala et al. (2020) studied the usage of large datasets in online consumer behaviour, however, their study is not specific to the tourism industry context, and it focused only on papers published since 2000.

Using the previous conceptualization of the TCB construct as a starting point, this research attempts to find evidence on the academic literature of the impact of the internet during all travel cycle stages. During the pre-consumption stage, motivations and decision-making processes are highly influenced by several online sources. However, in the case of expectations, limited research on this area was found. One of the elements to understand this phenomenon could be related to traditional approaches of the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman et al., 1985) where expectations are typically analysed in relation to tourists' satisfaction.

Furthermore, evidence was found to conclude that value co-creation behaviour is influenced by the Internet during the final two stages of the travel cycle stages. Types of solicited behaviour in value co-creation online are still incipient according to academic literature, representing a further research area for academicians and practitioners. In the case of loyalty, evidence suggests that it is influenced by the Internet during the consumption and post-consumption stages.

The bibliometric analysis conducted identified the main journals and tendencies on the development of research in this field. Tourism management is the most influential journal while Eleonora Pantano and Robert Law are the most prolific authors in this field. Second, the co-citation analysis conducted on the references allowed to identify the theoretical foundations of the papers analysed in this review. Research conducted to identify the influence of the Internet on behavioural variables rely on the foundations of the Technology Acceptance Model. Third, the detailed review conducted allowed the categorization of the results according to the main behavioural variables during each of the travel cycle stages. The systematic review of the literature provides scholars and practitioners with a summarized "state of issue" of TCB during the entire travel cycle stages.

Some suggestion and managerial implications can be summarized from this research. As the study found, tourism consumer behaviour is influenced in a higher state during the first two stages of the travel cycle. Therefore, online content generated by tourism providers should aim to position messages that enhance tourists' motivations and expectations toward the destination. Advertising strategies and marketing campaign should consider decision-making process from an experiential perspective instead of the rational approach. Furthermore, the creation of content should be conducted under co-creation strategies, where consumers interact in the value creation process. In the specific case of social media, big data technologies provide an opportunity for practitioners to customize and re-design their message in real-time. The implementation of eye-tracking technologies or sentiment analysis on social media platforms can provide managers with information to personalize messages and content.

The main limitations of this paper are that data was collected only from the Scopus and Web of Science databases. Other academic databases should be included for a deeper analysis and comparisons. Despite the growing number of studies, several research gaps remain to be filled on further research. The adoption of unstructured methods of analysis provided by artificial intelligence tools might facilitate sentiment analysis on eWOM. Although some studies have attempted to analyse real-time value co-creation (Buhalis & Sinarta, 2019) on the Internet or used geotagged photos (Vu et al., 2015) to evaluate TCB, the amount of research conducted is significantly short. Further research should be conducted in this area, especially to conceptually delimitate the influence of value co-creation behaviour on the Internet on loyalty.

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