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FILM-INDUCED EFFECTS AND INTENTION TO VISIT: THE INTERVENING ROLE OF COUNTRY IMAGE OF SOUTH KOREA

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ABSTRACT

In the realm of film tourism, film-induced effects have been identified to be integral factors in the formation of intentions of a viewer to visit a destination. Grounded on the stimulus-organism-response (SOR) model, the present study aims to examine how Korean film-induced effects (visual, vocal, and celebrity) influence viewers' intention to visit South Korea. Furthermore, it investigates the intervening role of country image on the relationship between film-induced effects and intention to visit South Korea. The respondents were Filipino viewers of Korean movies and dramas, and they were selected using the river sampling technique. Using variance-based (partial least squares) path modelling, the results revealed that film-induced effects significantly and positively influence viewers' intention to visit South Korea, and visual effect largely contributes to the formation of these intentions. Country image was also found to significantly influence intention to visit, and act as a mediator on the link between film-induced visual effect and intention to visit South Korea. The present study addresses the gap in literature as it showed the indirect role of country image on the relationship between film-induced visual effect and intention to visit South Korea.

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INTRODUCTION

The increasing admiration of different people towards Asian popular culture has been noted to have favorable effect on tourism destinations (Ng & Chan, 2020). The prominence of television (TV) is an integral factor why

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a lot of destinations have attracted and gained tourists in the past years. Dramas on TV and movies have significantly influenced the level of travel motivation among viewers (Wen et al., 2018). Shooting locations of several TV dramas and movies have been noted to affect the decision-making process of viewers when looking for destinations (Josiam et al., 2015). Hence, films, in general, are found to be an effective way to promote and market destinations (Rajaguru, 2014).

In Asia, South Korea has been successful in merging popular culture and tourism. The fame of Korean popular (K-pop) music and Korean dramas (K-dramas) has resulted to curiosity of people towards the attractions in South Korea (Ho, 2020). The rise of fandoms among K-pop music icons and celebrities is an evidence of the favorable reputation of Korean popular culture in the world (Lee et al., 2008). The influence of Korean popular culture, also known as Korean Wave or the *Hallyu* phenomenon, has been positively affecting the economy of South Korea. Furthermore, the Korean Wave is diffusing in different industries of the country, benefiting various sectors including the tourism sector (Bae et al., 2017).

The admiration of many on Korean popular culture is now felt around the world, especially among countries in Asia. Different people, in particular, Asians are consuming South Korean popular cultural products – movies, dramas, and popular music (Lee & Bai, 2016). The increasing consumption of these popular cultural products has resulted to greater interest and desire to visit South Korea (Lee et al., 2018). Several studies have established how *Hallyu* reinforced Korean dramas and movies the decisions of film viewers (Han & Lee, 2008; Jeon, 2013; Kim et al., 2007;). They further noted that the shooting locations of these Korean films are considered an ultimate consideration for viewers to visit South Korea. Hence, film-induced tourism has been favorably affecting the image of South Korea as a destination.

The invasion of Korean popular culture is also evident in the Philippines. Many Filipinos are now considered avid fans of K-pop groups and entertainers, and actors and actresses of K-dramas (Arayata, 2018). The presence of K-dramas (also known as *Koreanovelas*) in the Philippine mainstream media as early as 2003 (Igno & Cenidoza, 2016) up to the present is a clear manifestation of the admiration of Filipinos to popular culture of South Korea. Moreover, the number of K-pop groups, bands, and celebrities who have visited the Philippines and staged concerts (Mogol, 2019) is an indicator of the *Hallyu* effect among Filipinos. And the Korean

Wave phenomenon is evident when in 2020 Filipinos were noted to be the utmost fans of K-pop based on the number of Twitter posts. The Philippines is 5th among the countries with unique voices regarding K-pop and 4th among the nations with the largest volume of tweets (Madarang, 2020).

Film-induced tourism is getting more attention not only from researchers but also from tourism practitioners. It is basically about viewers exploring locations and tourism destinations that appeared in a film (drama or movie) (Beeton, 2016). Because of its marketing potential, film-induced tourism has been examined in the context of tourist motivation (Heitmann, 2010). Film-induced effects have been found to be significantly related to tourism motivation (Rajaguru, 2014). Precedent studies on Korean film-induced tourism focus on how K-dramas affect the motivation and intention to travel of potential foreign tourists. For instance, Chan (2007) qualitatively measured motivation of Singaporean viewers to visit South Korea because of K-dramas. Moreover, Ng and Chan (2020) quantitatively gauged how Hong Kong viewers are influenced by K-dramas in terms of their intention to visit film destinations. Rittichainuwat and Rattanaphinanchai (2015), on the other hand, applied mixed method design to elucidate travel motivation of viewers to visit shooting locations of K-dramas. Despite these studies on Korean film tourism, there is a dearth of scholarly works on the indirect effect of the country image of South Korea on the relationship between film-induced effects and intention to visit. Chaulagain et al. (2019) contended that, in the field of tourism, country image is considered underexplored. Thus, the present study addresses this gap by exploring how visual (focusing how South Korea is portrayed in Korean films), vocal (referring on Korean language and popular music), and celebrity (pertaining to Korean actors or actresses in Korean films) effects influence visit intention of Filipino K-pop viewers, and the mediating role of the country image of South Korea. This study further examines how the relationship of film-induced effects and visit intention may indirectly be influenced by the country image of South Korea using the stimulus-organism-response (SOR) model.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The present study is drawn from the SOR model. The SOR model is a theoretical framework which explains that the relation of stimulation and behavior of humans is mediated by organismic factor (Buxbaum, 2016). In short, the emotional state of an individual (organism) mediates the relationship between the environment (stimulus) and the human actions (response) (Lee et al., 2011). The model has been used to understand the intricacy of human behaviors.

In the present study, the stimuli are represented by the three film-induced effects – visual, vocal, and celebrity. These stimuli may trigger a response, which is represented by intention to visit South Korea. And the relationship of the stimuli and the response is mediated by an organism, which is signified by image of South Korea.

Film-Induced Tourism

Film-induced tourism refers to on-location tourism that is due to the success of a movie or drama (Beeton, 2016). Because of consumption of media products (films), viewers form unique experiences which may result to visiting a destination depicted in those movies or dramas (Beeton, 2016; Macionis, 2005). There are several factors that may trigger motivation from viewers to visit a destination because of their exposure to a film. These factors include film elements such as escape, fantasy, vicarious experiences, or romance. The images from a film may affect the decision of an individual to visit locations of a movie or drama (Macionis & Sparks, 2009). It has been noted that film tourists exhibit higher willingness to visit a destination that is shown in a film or drama (Bąkiewicz et al., 2017). Riley et al. (1998) contended that visual media such as films are used to attract and induce individuals to travel. Tooke and Baker (1996) also argued that films attract potential visitors, and film locations are valuable tools to increase the propensity of people to visit a destination. Hence, films may extend favorable impacts to shooting locations (Kim & Kim, 2018) because they arouse viewers' interests, which may influence their decisions to visit a tourism destination (Chen, 2018).

Many of the recent studies on film and film-related tourism are in the setting of K-dramas. The popularity of K-dramas has attracted a lot of viewers from different parts of the world (Elaskary, 2018) and this is because of the Korean Wave. Excellent soundtracks and outstanding production values contribute to the success of K-dramas worldwide. Compared to Western shows, K-dramas are relatively shorter, and because of their phenomenal accomplishment, video-streaming applications are carrying Korean films (Donohoo, 2021).

Korean dramas are also popular among Filipino viewers and fans. The level of sophistication and creativity of Korean entertainment firms, massive marketing initiatives, and loyal fan bases are the primary reasons for the fame of Korean films in the Philippines (ABS-CBN News, 2020). In addition, because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic where mobility is limited, more and more Filipinos showed interest to K-dramas that are available online or through video-streaming applications (Nonato, 2020).

Film-Induced Effects and Intention to Visit South Korea

In the field of tourism, intention to visit a destination is considered a behavioral intention (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2010). It is the propensity of an individual to visit a destination in a particular period of time (Ahn et al., 2013), and a cognitive process where travel motivation transforms into a behavior (Jang et al., 2009). Perceptions and attitudes of tourists towards an attraction or destination are factors that can affect targeted behavior (Sparks & Pan, 2009). In the realm of film-induced tourism, visual, vocal, and celebrity effects from films induce viewers' intention to visit a destination (Rajaguru, 2014).

Film-Induced Visual Effect

Images are considered important factors when it comes to tourism destinations because they shape perceptions of individuals (Vila et al., 2021). Visual images in films are considered by marketers to be valuable tools to promote tourism attractions and destinations (Belch & Belch, 2018). Promotion through films combines visual and emotional appeals to attract potential tourists and provide them with a prior taste of the attraction or destination (O'Connor & Bolan, 2008). And because visual images in films are influential factors to promote an attraction or destination, more and more destination marketers are taking advantage of the power of films to attract local and foreign tourists (Kim & Richardson, 2003).

When watching a particular film, viewers may find meanings that are associated with the visual images depicted in a drama or movie (Croy & Walker, 2003). When a tourism destination is portrayed in a film, viewers may find meanings from the shown destination and may induce their intention to visit the location (Hudson, 2011; Kim et al., 2009). This phenomenon is known as film-induced visual effect (Rajaguru, 2014). In the present study, film-induced visual effect is defined as the visual images in a film that stimulate the interest and curiosity of a viewer towards a tourism destination. Hence, visual images in a film pull viewers (Riley & Van Doren, 1992), thus, create awareness and interest towards the shooting location or destination depicted in a drama or movie (Kim, 2012).

Film-Induced Vocal Effect

Aside from visual images, language, sound, and music are also integral components that stimulate curiosity and interest among travelers and tourists (Rajaguru, 2014). This situation is called film-induced vocal effect (Rajaguru, 2014). Film-induced vocal effect refers to the language, sound, and music in a film that trigger viewers' curiosity and interest towards a tourism destination. Sound and music are claimed to influence the perception of an individual (Sunaga, 2018). It has been also noted that music is a significant factor in the decision-making process of a person in choosing a destination (Oh et al., 2015). Music, in particular, is an influential tool in unifying global demography (Ryu et al., 2020). If treated as a brand, music tends to create emotional bonds (Decrop & Derbaix, 2014; Saboo et al., 2016). This has been the case of K-pop music and its impact in the world market where non-Koreans tend to have an appreciation of this music that is not even written in their own or native language (Capistrano, 2019).

K-pop idols and their music have been utilized by different brands around the world. Furthermore, music videos of these K-pop idols are also incorporating the power of advertisement. For instance, the popular K-pop group BTS has been taking the world of advertising through their music and music videos (Lyons, 2020). In the Philippines, a world-renowned fast-food chain recently launched Korean burgers in their menu and creatively incorporated the Korean language in their TV commercial (Rappler.com, 2021) to attract Filipino K-pop fans and Korean food lovers. Additionally, destination and tourism marketers have been using music and language (vocal effects) in various promotional and marketing campaigns. With the popularity of Korean popular culture, K-pop music idols and the Korean language itself are now widely utilized as means to promote attractions and destinations and to arouse the interest of domestic and foreign tourists to visit these locations (Morrison et al., 2011; Rajaguru, 2014). The power of language, sound, and music has the capacity to attract consumers; hence, vocal effect is considered an important tool in tourism and destination marketing (Rajaguru, 2014).

Film-Induced Celebrity Effect

Celebrities are considered as icons of culture and ambassadors in societies driven by mass media (Lee et al., 2008). As brands, they are useful in attracting viewers to visit shooting locations (Yen & Teng, 2015). This phenomenon is termed as film-induced celebrity effect (Rajaguru, 2014). In the present study, film-induced celebrity effect is operationally defined as the effect where the actors and actresses (or celebrities) in a film activate the interest and curiosity of a viewer towards a tourism destination. Film celebrities have the capacity to touch the emotions of the viewers. The bond formed between the celebrities and the viewers creates memorable and personal meanings which may trigger the propensity to visit the destination where the film was shot (Reader, 2007). Moreover, film tourists often show admiration to celebrities which may lead them to visit shooting location (Lee et al., 2008).

Korean celebrities are believed to be one of the driving forces for influx of foreign tourists in South Korea (Lee et al., 2008). The Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) reported that approximately 1.11 million foreign tourists visited South Korea in 2019. The huge number of tourist arrival in South Korea is attributed to the Korean Wave, the popularity of Korean popular culture and K-pop celebrities and idols (Yonhap, 2020). In the study of Bae et al. (2017), Korean Wave was found to be statistically related to tourism demand and has been noted to be a prime indicator of attracting tourists from United States of America (USA), Hong Kong, Japan, and China to South Korea. The Philippine Department of Tourism is also seeking the popular K-pop group BTS and South Korean actor Hyun Bin to visit the Philippines to augment its tourism sector (GMA News Online, 2021).

Film-induced effects (visual, vocal and celebrity) are influential in shaping the formation of visit intention among viewers (Rajaguru, 2014). The fame of the *Hallyu* phenomenon led to the admiration of people from various parts of the globe to Korean popular culture (Trolan, 2017). Films (movies and dramas) are now used as mediums to attract the interest and curiosity of viewers to visit South Korea (Kim, 2012; Kim et al., 2012). Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H1a. *Film-induced visual effect significantly influences intention to visit South Korea.*

H1b. *Film-induced vocal effect significantly influences intention to visit South Korea.*

H1c. *Film-induced celebrity effect significantly influences intention to visit South Korea.*

Country Image of South Korea

The image of a country is affected by people's perceptions. Over time, these perceptions are affected by different factors. The impressions of individuals may initiate behaviors (Chaulagain et al., 2019) such as intention to visit a country. Country image is defined as the overall people's impressions and beliefs about locations or places (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). It refers to how individuals perceive, associate, or stereotype a particular place (Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009). It is considered as a mental map that forms perceptions towards a country (Nadeau et al., 2008), and related to country-of-origin image and product image (Lee & Lockshin, 2012).

Country image is often confused with destination image; this is due to similarities in certain features (Hahm & Tasci, 2019). Destination image is a construct that is defined as the perceptions of a possible tourist towards a place for vacation purposes (Hahm et al., 2018; Martinez & Alvarez, 2010) while country image focuses on overall perceptions, impressions, and beliefs of an individual towards a place (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). In this study, country image refers to the image of South Korea as a nation – looking into perceptions of individuals towards South Korea in terms of its overall reputation, level of advancement, economic stability, and social impression.

Films often portray the destinations and attractions of a country and depict aspects of a country – social, economic, and technological characteristics. Mossberg and Kleppe (2005) argued that the image of a country infuses products, people, and events regarding culture, politics, and global business. The power of mass media through films has generated boost in the image of a country. This is the case in New Zealand when the country was used as a location of the movie Lord of the Rings (Croy, 2004; Jones & Smith, 2005). Tasci (2009) even argued that visual information has the power to improve the image of a country's destination. In the case of South Korea, the *Hallyu* phenomenon has shaped the perceptions and impressions of people of various nationalities towards the country (Sung, 2010). Hence, it is hypothesized that:

H2a. *Film-induced visual effect significantly influences the country image of South Korea.*

H2b. *Film-induced vocal effect significantly influences the country image of South Korea.*

H2c. *Film-induced celebrity effect significantly influences the country image of South Korea.*

Country Image and Intention to Visit South Korea

Images are crucial in the formation of decision of an individual towards a product, service, or destination (Zhang et al., 2018). Country image is influenced by beliefs, familiarity, and reception of a tourist or potential tourist towards a destination (Elliot et al., 2011). The image of a country, including the level of development, influences the tendency of an individual to visit it (Alvarez & Campo, 2014). Tasci (2009) pointed out that because of visual information of a particular country and of a destination augments the intention to visit of an individual. Zhang et al. (2015) found that country image including character and competence of a country and its people translates into intention to visit. Moreover, it was found that the image of a country in terms of natural and cultural attraction and service facility influences visit intention. Chung and Chen (2018) and Chaulagain et al. (2019) contended that favorable country image leads to better image of the destination, which further leads to visit intention. Hence, it is hypothesized that:

H3. *Country image significantly influences intention to visit South Korea.*

Mediating Role of Country Image

Film-induced visual, vocal, and celebrity effects have been identified to be influential on the image of a country (Croy, 2004; Jones & Smith, 2005; Sung, 2010). Kim and Richardson (2003) claimed that people with exposure to an image of a country or a place in a film tend to exhibit positive attitudes towards that place. Yoo et al. (2014) contended the K-dramas have been favorably shaping the image of South Korea as a country. They further noted that the cultural and ethnic factors of K-dramas are influential in the formation of positive image for South Korea.

Furthermore, country image affects intention to visit. The favorable attitude towards K-dramas is identified to be a factor that affects intention of viewers to visit South Korea (Yoo et al., 2014). The *Hallyu* phenomenon and the love of viewers towards K-dramas brought tremendous positive impact on the image of South Korea (Kim et al., 2012). The demand for Korean popular culture led South Korean government to export cultural products (such as Korean films). The global expansion of Korean cultural products contributed to the enhanced image of South Korea as a nation (Lee, 2011). From these extant related studies, Korean films are influential in the enhancement of the image of South Korea, which, in turn, leads to intention to visit among viewers. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H4a. *Country image mediates the relationship between film-induced visual effect and intention to visit South Korea.*

H4b. *Country image mediates the relationship between film-induced vocal effect and intention to visit South Korea.*

H4c. *Country image mediates the relationship between film-induced celebrity effect and intention to visit South Korea.*

From the established hypothesized relationships, the conceptual framework was formulated (see Figure 1). The conceptual framework shows how SOR model was integrated in the present study. It is postulated that film-induced effects (visual, vocal, and celebrity) significantly influence intention to visit South Korea (H1a, H1b, and H1c), and country image (H2a, H2b, and H2c). Moreover, it was hypothesized that country image significantly influences intention to visit South Korea (H3). And the last part of the research framework shows how country image indirectly influences the connection between film-induced effects and intention to visit South Korea (H4a, H4b, and H4c).

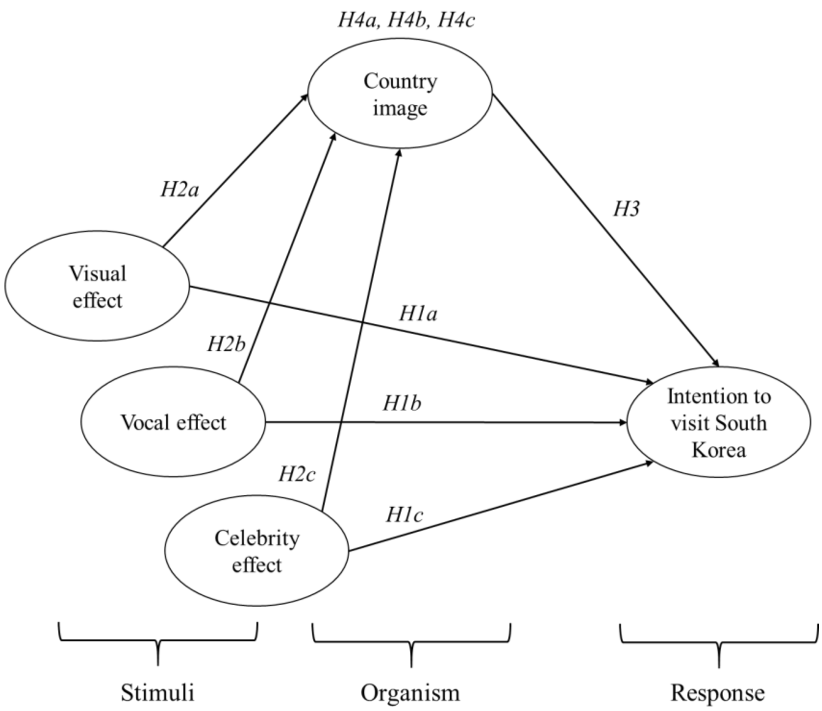

Figure 1. *Conceptual Framework of the Study*

METHODOLOGY

The current undertaking applied predictive-causal research design to gauge the direct and indirect (mediating) effects in the structural model. For the direct effects, the measurement includes the significant influence of film-induced effects on intention to visit and country image of South Korea; and of country image of South Korea on intention to visit. Contrary, the indirect effect was gauged based on the intervening role of country image on the relationship between film-induced effects and intention to visit South Korea. Predictive-causal research design is applicable in measuring these types of hypothesized relationships (Sarstedt et al., 2017).

Participants of the Study

The respondents of the present study covered Filipino viewers of Korean films. As for the inclusion and exclusion criteria, the following were required:

- A respondent must be of legal age (at least 18 years old) since the present study measures intention to visit South Korea. Therefore, the capacity to pay is considered for the age requirement.
- A respondent must have watched at least one K-drama or Korean movie in the last 12 months.

Purposive sampling technique using river sampling was utilized as a sampling approach. A purposive sampling approach is done when the participants are identified on the basis of population's characteristics and the study's purpose (Etikan et al., 2016). And because of restrictions in mobility, river sampling, a type of online sampling strategy was employed where participants are identified through invitation via an online survey link placed on online platforms such as social media and emails (Lehdonvirta et al., 2021).

The sample size was determined through a priori power analysis (Hair et al., 2019; Memon et al., 2020; Ringle et al., 2020; Uttley, 2019) using G*Power. Power analysis computes the minimum size of the sample by evaluating the research model with the biggest number of predictors (Hair et al., 2014). Using a medium effect size of 0.15, alpha level of 0.05, power level of 0.80, and four (4) predictors, the calculated minimum sample size of the G*Power is 85. The present study was able to obtain 380 valid responses, more than what is the computed sample size.

Because of current situation where mobility is restricted, online data gathering was employed (via Google Form) and was disseminated via social media platforms (mostly through Facebook). Other participants were recruited by sending the survey link to their social media messenger (or equivalent) and through emails. An informed consent was included in the online form. Each participant was asked to signify their voluntary participation in the survey. The collection of data started on September 2, 2021 and ended on September 30, 2021.

The online survey included items where participants needed to express their agreement to participate in the study as respondents. To assure that only valid responses were tabulated and analyzed, only those who ticked that they have watched at least one Korean drama/series/movie in the last 12 months and are of legal age were considered. Approximately seven to ten minutes was required to finish the questionnaire. Out of 415 received responses, only 380 were valid, drawing a response rate of 91.57%

Table 1 presents the characteristics of the respondents. Out of 380 sample, 82.4% were female. In terms of age, 55.8% were in the age group of 18 to 20 years old, while 37.9% were in 21 to 25 cohort. Only 24 out of 380 indicated their age as more than 25. With regard to type of employment, 79.2% were senior high school and college students, while 13.9% were employed. Out of 380, only 10 mentioned they were self-employed, and six answered others.

Half of the participants or 52.4% have watched more than nine (9) Korean films in the last 12 months, while 23.9% viewed one (1) to three (3) Korean films. Those who watched four (4) to six (6) Korean dramas/movies were 13.9% of the respondents, whereas those who answered seven (7) to nine (9) were at 9.7%. And in terms of frequently used platform in watching Korean films, 60.8% paid streaming applications. On the other hand, 12.6% watched through video-sharing platform, 10.8% via social media sites, 9.2% through local TV channels, and 6.6% using online sites/blogs.

Table 1. *Participants of the Study*

Demographics	***n***	**%**
Sex		
Male	67	17.6
Female	313	82.4
Age		
18-20	212	55.8
21-25	144	37.9
>25	24	6.3
Employment type		
Employed	53	13.9
Self-employed	10	2.6
SHS/College Students	301	79.2
Unemployed	10	2.6
Others	6	1.6
Number of Korean films (dramas/movies) watched		
1-3	91	23.9
4-6	53	13.9
7-9	37	9.7
>9	199	52.4
Frequently platform used in watching Korean films		
Video-sharing platform (e.g., YouTube, Dailymotion)	48	12.6
Paid Streaming Apps (e.g., Netflix, Viu)	231	60.8
Online sites / blogs	25	6.6
Social media sites (e.g., Facebook pages, groups)	41	10.8
Local TV Channels	35	9.2

Research Instrument

The self-administered survey instrument was composed of demographic characteristics – sex, age, employment type, number of Korean films watched, frequently used media platform – and a question whether they have been to South Korea or not.

The second part entails the latent constructs of the study – film-induced effects (visual, vocal, and celebrity), country image, and intention to visit South Korea. The items of each construct were adopted from different studies (see Table 2) and were measured using 5-point Likert scale where 5 means strongly agree and 1 means strongly disagree.

Table 2. *Constructs, Items, and Sources*

Constructs and Items	Sources
Visual Effect	Kim (2012) and Rajaguru (2014)
VE1. I like the beautiful suburban of Korea placed in Korean movies and dramas.	
VE2. I like the bright city of Korea placed in Korean movies and dramas.	
VE3. I feel that Korea is more attractive place to visit.	
VE4. I am excited to colorful Korean night life places in movies and dramas.	
Vocal Effect	Kim (2012) and Rajaguru (2014)
VC1. I admire the rhythm in Korean language.	
VC2. I am impressed with the Korean pop music.	
VC3. I always want to hear Korean music.	
Celebrity Effect	Kim (2012), Lee et al. (2008), Rajaguru (2014)
CE1. Korean stars attract me.	
CE2. I perceive Korean stars as Korean's nation image representative.	
CE3. I feel that Korean movies are more interesting because of Korean actors.	
CE4. I am impressed with the Korean actors and actresses performing cultural activities in movies or dramas.	
Intention to Visit South Korea	Rajaguru (2014)
IV1. After watching Korean movies or dramas, I searched for more information about Korea.	
IV2. Since watching Korean movies or dramas, I have thought of visiting Korea.	
Country Image of South Korea	Phillips et al. (2013)
CI1. South Korea is an industrialized country.	
CI2. South Korea is a technologically developed country.	
CI3. South Korea is economically stable country.	
CI4. South Korea is a socially developed country.	
CI5. South Korea is a well-known country.	
CI6. South Korea is a country with a good reputation.	

Statistical Test

To analyze the data gathered, path modelling via partial least squares (PLS) was employed to gauge the structural model's parameters. This type of statistical approach is appropriate since the present study involves development of a model, and the research design is predictive-causal. As a variance-based approach, PLS path modelling starts with the assessment of the outer model where internal consistency (reliability) and validity (convergent and discriminant) tests are performed. Moreover, the evaluation of the inner model involves measurement of the relationships between latent constructs (Hair et al., 2016; Samani, 2016).

To measure the indirect effects in the model, how country image mediates the relationship between film-induced effects and intention to visit South Korea is examined. The measurement of the outer and inner model, and the mediation analysis were done through WarpPLS 7.0 (Kock, 2020).

RESULTS

Measurement Model Assessment

The evaluation of the outer model (measurement model) includes testing the validity and reliability of the latent constructs (Hair et al., 2019). The reliability of the reflective constructs is measured using composite reliability (CR). To say that a reflective construct exhibits internal consistency, the value of CR must be equal to or higher than 0.70 (Dillon & Goldstein, 1984; Peterson & Yeolib, 2013). Based on the results in Table 3, visual effect (CR = 0.922), vocal effect (CR = 0.908), celebrity effect (CR = 0.909), intention to visit South Korea (CR = 0.859), and country image (CR = 0.934) reflect CA greater than 0.70; hence, all latent variables passed the reliability test.

Table 3. *Factor Loadings, Average Variance Extracted, and Reliability Measures*

Construct / Item	Factor Loading
Visual effect: *AVE = 0.747; CR = 0.922*	
VE1	0.810
VE2	0.895
VE3	0.832
VE4	0.916
Vocal effect: *AVE = 0.768; CR = 0.908*	
VC1	0.790
VC2	0.918
VC3	0.915
Celebrity effect: *AVE = 0.715; CR = 0.909*	
CE1	0.847
CE2	0.861
CE3	0.834
CE4	0.838
Intention to visit South Korea: *AVE = 0.753; CR = 0.859*	
IV1	0.868
IV2	0.868

Country image: *AVE = 0.701; CR = 0.934*	
CI1	0.835
CI2	0.850
CI3	0.873
CI4	0.861
CI5	0.810
CI6	0.791

CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted. All loadings are significant ($p < 0.001$).

In terms of validity, both convergent and discriminant validity were established. Convergent validity includes the assessment of the factor loadings and average variance extracted (AVE) of the latent constructs. The value of each factor loading must be equal to or greater than 0.50 and must be significant ($p < .05$). Moreover, the AVE must be at least 0.50 to conclude that a construct shows convergent validity (Amora, 2021; Hair et al., 2009; Kock, 2014; Kock & Lynn, 2012). As seen in Table 3, the factor loadings of each latent constructs and their corresponding AVE values are within the acceptable coefficients. Therefore, all reflective constructs have convergent validity.

Furthermore, discriminant validity was measured using Fornell-Larcker criterion. Using this criterion, the correlations table (see Table 4) among latent reflective constructs with the square roots of AVEs (diagonal values) must be examined. To attain discriminant validity, the diagonal values (coefficients in bold) in the correlation table must be higher than any of the off-diagonal coefficients (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Kock, 2015). Based on the results in Table 4, all variables met the discriminant validity requirement.

Table 4. *Discriminant Validity Using Fornell-Larcker Criterion*

	VE	VC	CE	IV	CI
VE	**0.864**				
VC	0.511	**0.876**			
CE	0.691	0.682	**0.845**		
IV	0.660	0.642	0.735	**0.868**	
CI	0.767	0.484	0.629	0.609	**0.837**

VE = visual effect; VC = vocal effect; CE = celebrity effect; IV = intention to visit South Korea; CI = country image.

Table 5. *Discriminant Validity Using HTMT Ratios*

	VE	VC	CE	IV	CI
VE					
VC	0.604				
CE	0.792	0.802			
IV	0.857	0.859	0.864		
CI	0.854	0.559	0.708	0.776	

VE = visual effect; VC = vocal effect; CE = celebrity effect; IV = intention to visit South Korea; CI = country image.

Another discriminant validity test was performed, but this time, using heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT). Voorhees et al. (2016) suggested a threshold of 0.90 for HTMT ratios. Based on the findings in Table 5, all latent constructs passed the requirement for discriminant validity.

Structural Model Evaluation

The second stage of the path modelling via PLS is the evaluation of the structural model (Hair et al., 2019). In this stage, path coefficients, their corresponding p-values, and effect sizes are evaluated. The findings regarding path coefficients, p-values, standard error, and effect sizes are reflected in Figure 2 and Table 6.

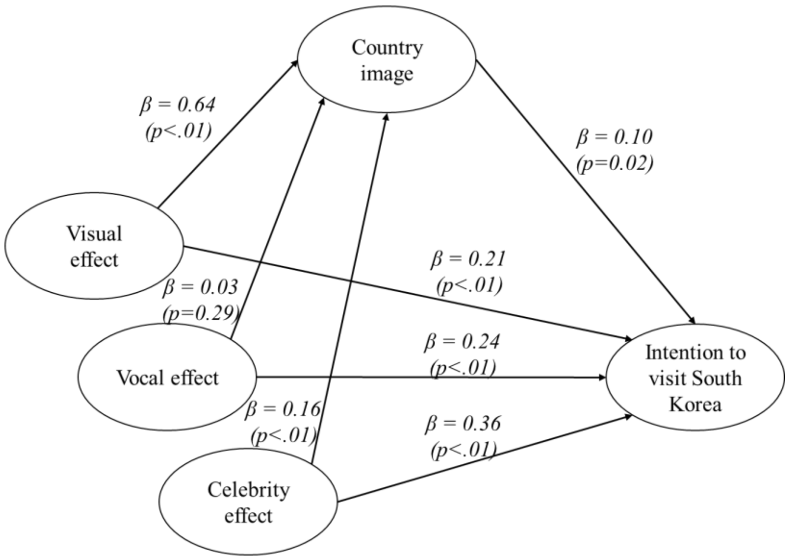

Figure 2. *The Structural Model with Beta Coefficients*

The bootstrapping results showed that film-induced effects – visual effect (β = 0.213, p < 0.001), vocal effect (β = 0.236; p < 0.001), and celebrity effect (β = 0.362, p < 0.001) – significantly and positively influence intention to visit South Korea. The magnitude of the effect (or influence) between exogenous and endogenous variables was also measured using Cohen's (1988) effect sizes. The findings showed that visual effect (f^2 = 0.144), vocal effect (f^2 = 0.154), and celebrity effect (f^2 = 0.268) exhibited medium effect sizes (Cohen, 1988). Therefore, H1a, H1b, and H1c are supported.

Moreover, the findings showed that among the film-induced factors, visual effect (β = 0.643, p < 0.001) and celebrity effect (β = 0.159, p < 0.001) affect country image of South Korea significantly and positively. The results indicate that visual effect largely influences country image of South Korea (f^2 = 0.499), while celebrity effect exhibits small effect size (f^2 = 0.104).

Contrary, vocal effect was found to be insignificantly related to country image of South Korea (β = 0.028, p = .292). Thus, H2a and H2c are supported, while H2b is not supported.

Hypothesis testing also revealed that country image significantly and positively influences intention to visit South Korea (β = 0.100, p < 0.024) with small effect size (f^2 = 0.061). Hence, H3 is supported.

The present study also employed mediation analysis to measure the indirect effects of the identified mediators. The results showed that country image mediates the relationship between visual effect and intention to visit South Korea (β = 0.064, p = 0.037) with a weak effect size (f^2 = 0.044). On the other hand, country image was found to have no indirect effect on the relationship between vocal effect and intention to visit South Korea (β = 0.003, p = 0.469) and between celebrity effect and intention to visit South Korea (β = 0.016, p = 0.331). Therefore, H4a is supported while H4b and H4c are not supported.

Table 6. *Direct and Mediating Effects*

Hypothesis	***β***	***p***	***SE***	***f²***
Direct effects				
H1a. VE → IV	0.213	<0.001	0.050	0.144
H1b. VC → IV	0.236	<0.001	0.050	0.154
H1c. CE → IV	0.362	<0.001	0.049	0.268
H2a. VE → CI	0.643	<0.001	0.047	0.499
H2b. VC → CI	0.028	0.292	0.051	0.014
H2c. CE → CI	0.159	<0.001	0.050	0.104
H3. CI → IV	0.100	0.024	0.051	0.061
Mediating effects				
H4a. VE → CI → IV	0.064	0.037	0.036	0.044
H4b. VC → CI → IV	0.003	0.469	0.036	0.002
H4c. CE → CI → IV	0.016	0.331	0.036	0.012

VE = visual effect; VC = vocal effect; CE = celebrity effect; IV = intention to visit South Korea; CI = country image; β = coefficient of the path; p = p-value; SE = standard error; f^2 = effect size.

Table 7 presents the additional assessments for the structural measurement of the present study. The common method bias test was performed to identify whether vertical and lateral collinearities exist among latent constructs. Using full collinearity VIF approach, Kock (2015) suggested that the full collinearity VIF coefficient must be at most 3.3. Based on the results, all latent constructs magnified full collinearity VIF of less than 3.3; hence, vertical and lateral collinearities do not exist among variables.

Additionally, coefficients of determination (or R^2) were also measured to describe the endogenous constructs variance. According to

Chin (1998), the R^2 coefficients of endogenous constructs are evaluated as: 0.19 = weak; 0.33 = moderate; and 0.67 = substantial. Based on the findings, the R^2 values of 0.627 and 0.616 reflect moderate variance.

And lastly, predictive relevance using Stone-Geisser (Q^2) test was conducted. The Q^2 test is an assessment tool to measure the capability of the structural model to predict (Geisser, 1974; Stone, 1974). To conclude that the latent constructs show predictive relevance, the value of Q^2 must be greater than zero (Chin, 2010). Using a blindfolding procedure, the findings showed that the structural model exhibits predictive relevance.

Table 7. *Full Collinearity VIF, R^2, and Q^2*

Construct	Full collinearity VIF	R^2	Q^2
Visual effect	3.055		
Vocal effect	2.034		
Celebrity effect	3.071		
Intention to visit South Korea	2.636	0.627	0.629
Country image	2.585	0.616	0.616

DISCUSSION

The present study investigates how film-induced effects (visual, vocal, and celebrity) affect intention to visit South Korea. Furthermore, it investigates the indirect role of country image of South Korea on the relationship between film-induced effects and intention to visit.

The results showed that all film-induced effects (visual, vocal, and celebrity) were found to significantly and positively influence intention to visit South Korea. The findings indicate that film-induced effects play a huge role in the formation of the intention of K-drama viewers to visit South Korea. The influence of visual, vocal, and celebrity effects suggests that visual images shown in K-dramas, the language, sound, and music in Korean films, and the presence of Korean celebrities and idols activate the interest and curiosity of viewers, thus augmenting their intent to visit South Korea.

Prior studies also noted that film imagery attracts viewers to visit a destination (Riley & Van Doren, 1992); thus, watching a K-drama induces intention to visit film locations (Hudson, 2011; Kim et al., 2009; Rajaguru, 2014). Furthermore, language and music used in a film arouse interests among viewers (Sunaga, 2018), which then pulls them to visit a destination (Oh et al., 2015). The presence of Korean celebrities and idols in K-dramas is also a vital pull factor to visit South Korea because of the bond and emotions that are formed between the actors/actresses and the viewers (Lee et al., 2008; Reader, 2007).

Moreover, visual and celebrity effects were found to have significant influence on country image of South Korea. The results revealed that visual effect considerably influences the image of South Korea as reflected by large effect size. These findings suggest that the images depicted in K-dramas, such suburban areas, bright city of South Korea, the colorful night life, and the other attractions, substantially add to the country image of South Korea. These results are in consonance with the studies of Croy (2004), Jones and Smith (2005), and Sung (2010). Moreover, celebrity effect, despite magnifying small effect size, also adds in the formation of image and impression of viewers towards South Korea as a country. The popularity of Korean culture has tremendously shaped the perceptions and impressions of non-Koreans towards South Korea (Sung, 2010).

On the other hand, the results showed that vocal effect does not influence country image of South Korea. In short, the language and music used in K-dramas do not add in the formation of image of South Korea as a country. This finding can be attributed that non-Korean viewers oftentimes rely on English subtitles and dubbing of K-dramas, similar to the case of Filipino viewers. The growth of K-dramas in leading streaming platforms gives rise also to demand for dubbing and subtitles among non-Korean viewers. Dubbing and subtitles are expected to add in the viewing experience (Halprin, 2018), but in the present study, these film-induced vocal effects do not influence the country image of South Korea.

The results also revealed that country image significantly affects intention to visit South Korea. The significant and positive influence of country image on intention to visit South Korea signifies that the perceptions of viewers towards South Korea as a nation is a pull factor in the formation of intention to visit South Korea. Even though the effect size is small, the finding suggests that the country image of South Korea adds to the establishment of Korean film viewers' intent to visit the country. Alvarez and Campo (2014) and Zhang et al. (2015) emphasized that developments in a country, its character as a nation, and the people lead to intention of an individual to visit a country.

Among the three (3) hypotheses on mediation, only the country image showed significant influence on the relationship between film-induced visual effect and intention to visit South Korea. This result indicates that visual effect significantly affects country image, which then affects intention to visit South Korea. The intervening role of country image suggests that the image of South Korea as a nation links the relationship between visual effect and intention to visit. This link is supported by precedent studies which revealed that K-dramas are contributing a lot in shaping the image of South Korea as a country (Bae et al., 2017; Chan, 2007; Chen, 2018; Donohoo, 2021). Furthermore, country image is an integral component that augments the propensity of viewers to visit South Korea (Yoo et al., 2014). The rising demand for Korean popular products such as Korean films plays an enormous role in the enrichment of the image of South Korea as a country (Lee, 2011).

Conclusions and Implications of the Study

The present study confirms that film-induced effects (visual, vocal, and celebrity) predict intention to visit South Korea. The *Hallyu* phenomenon led to better accessibility of Korean pop cultural products such as Korean films among fans and viewers. The findings imply that Korean films effectively combine pop cultural elements such as visual images (e.g., beautiful suburban and bright city of Korea, its colorful night life, and tourist attractions), language, music, and people or Korean "idols." All these film-induced effects form part in the propensity of viewers to visit South Korea. Hence, films are effective tools not only in promoting pop cultural products but also in inducing individuals to visit a country or destination.

Furthermore, film-induced visual effect largely contributes to the image of a country. Country image is generally affected by the perceptions of people, and when these impressions are favorable, they activate positive behaviors (Chaulagain et al., 2019) such as intention to visit a particular nation. Film products have a powerful capacity in the formation of perceptions towards the image of a country. The visual images in dramas or movies greatly help in this perception formation. Moreover, film actors and actresses are also integral components that shape the image of a country. Hence, when visual images and celebrity effect are combined and utilized effectively in a film, they aid in the creation of positive perceptions and beliefs towards the image of a country.

Country image has a role in the establishment of intention to visit, and has an intervening role on the link between film-induced visual effect and intention to visit. The intervening effect of country image on the relationship between visual effect and intention to visit clearly illustrates how an image of a country adds value in inducing viewers to visit a specific country or destination. Thus, when film-induced visual effect is activated, it creates favorable image for a country, which, in turn, leads to amplified intention to visit a nation or a destination.

The current research contributes both at the practical and theoretical levels. The utilization of SOR model in the present study proves that the theoretical underpinning can elucidate how film-induced effects can affect country image and intention to visit. Film-induced effects (visual, vocal, and celebrity effects) as stimuli better explain the formation of intention to visit South Korea (response). And country image (organism) is the mediating factor on the relationship between visual effect and intention to visit.

Furthermore, at the practical level, the study demonstrates that when films are properly utilized in attracting tourists or visitors, film products such as movies and dramas can really add value in this case. The use of cultural pop products through films can help in the development of intention to visit a country or a destination among viewers. This is evident with the results of the present study and the success of K-dramas around the world. The combination of effective elements (visual, vocal, and celebrity) and a favorable country image results to greater intention to visit among viewers. Hence, if a country aims to promote its destination, it needs to produce quality films that combine cultural pop elements and film-induced factors to attract tourists and visitors. It is also important to shape the image of the country in a way that it will yield favorable impressions from different people in different nations.

Like any research, the present study has also limitations. First, the respondents were viewers from Pampanga, Philippines. Other viewers from other parts of the Philippines were not included. Second, the study focused on film-induced effects (visual, vocal, and celebrity) in the context of K-dramas. It did not include other films originated in and produced by other countries. Third, it covers only film-induced effects as exogenous variables and country image as mediating variable. And fourth, the dominance of female respondents and college students as participants is also a limitation. To address these, future researchers may conduct a similar study by covering a wider scope, such as K-drama viewers in different parts of the Philippines. Moreover, other researchers may consider doing similar study but in other film context such as Thai, Taiwanese, or Japanese films since dramas and movies from Thailand, Taiwan, and Japan are getting attention now among Asian viewers. And finally, other researchers may opt to include other intervening variables such as destination image, and cultural proximity to expound the intention to visit model.

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ANALYSIS OF TOURISTS' LENGTH OF STAY IN POKHARA, NEPAL

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ABSTRACT

Tourists' length of stay (LOS) is desired by researchers and tourism business managers because it contributes to tourism earnings. Although Pokhara is a popular tourist destination in Nepal, no previous study has empirically investigated tourists' LOS. Thus, this study investigates tourists' LOS in Pokhara, Nepal. The data for this study were collected through a survey of 275 visitors who stayed at least one night in Pokhara. Zero-truncated negative binomial and ordinary least squares regressions were used to model tourists' LOS and determinants. In general, both methods produce similar estimates. The results suggest that visit frequency, nationality, age, education level, and expenditure are major determinants of tourists' LOS. Contrary to expectations, gender and satisfaction are not statistically significant indicators. These findings have important implications for tourism managers and policymakers.

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INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry is one of the largest and fastest-growing industries worldwide (World Tourism Organization, 2017), with a significant contribution to poverty alleviation (Spenceley & Meyer, 2012) and economic development (Lee & Chang, 2008; Sinclair, 1998; Seetanah, 2011). The Nepalese economy is still based on migrant remittances (Bam et al., 2016), and it struggles to reduce poverty. Therefore, the growth of the tourism industry is beneficial (Gautam, 2011). Since the number of visitors and their length of stay (LOS) are key contributors to the income of tourism destinations (Thrane, 2012), knowledge of the driving forces behind LOS

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allows tourism destination managers to plan and implement strategies to augment tourism earnings by increasing inflow and promoting extended stays (Nicolau et al., 2018). Therefore, considering the importance of tourists' LOS to tourism destination earnings, this is an important area of interest for researchers and the tourism industry (Alegre & Pou, 2006; Barros et al., 2010; García-Sánchez et al., 2013).

Notably, studies on LOS have been conducted in a variety of tourist destinations and countries such as Spain (García-Sánchez et al., 2013), the southern coast of Portugal (Barros et al., 2010), the Atlantic Coast of the United States (Nicolau et al., 2018), Norway (Thrane & Farstad, 2012), and a mountainous destination in Italy (Brida et al., 2013). Although Pokhara, Nepal, is a popular tourist destination for sports tourism, mountaineering, hiking, and sightseeing, no previous studies have empirically investigated tourists' LOS in Pokhara. Studies conducted in different parts of the world do not represent tourists' LOS in Pokhara, as LOS and its determinants vary by tourist destination (Alén et al., 2014). In addition, earlier findings from global research on tourists' LOS may lack external validity due to cultural differences. Therefore, this study investigated tourists' LOS and its determinants in Pokhara, Nepal.

The survival model (Aguilar & Díaz, 2019; García-Sánchez et al., 2013; Gokovali et al., 2007; Peypoch et al., 2012) and zero-truncated negative binomial (ZTNB) regression (Alén et al., 2014; Nicolau et al., 2018) are two common methods that researchers have adopted to model tourists' LOS. However, Thrane (2012, 2015) criticized the survival and count regression models and proposed ordinary least squares (OLS) regression, which produces similar results to the ZTNB regression and survival models. Critics of the OLS regression argue that LOS is a strictly positive variable; a negative fitted LOS value does not have a valid meaning, and the OLS regression can produce negative fitted LOS values for shorter durations (Hateftabar & Chapuis, 2020). However, log transformation converts LOS into strictly positive values by eliminating the risk of negative fitted values (Thrane, 2015). The survival and zero-truncated count regression models do not offer any additional salient information compared with the OLS model (Thrane, 2015). In addition, the data-generating process of tourists' LOS satisfies the properties of neither the count nor the survival model (Thrane, 2012, 2015). Thus, this study estimates parameters of regressors of tourists' LOS using OLS regression and compares it with the ZTNB regression. This study provides a reference to destination managers, governments, and policymakers seeking to develop and implement policies to prolong tourists' LOS. In addition, the findings will aid future researchers in selecting a suitable model for tourists' LOS.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourists' Length of Stay

Although tourists' LOS is not a new concept, it has increased attention since 2006 (Rodriguez et al., 2018). Knowledge of tourists' LOS allows destination managers to decide on service types and product demands (Gokovali et al., 2007) so that tourist planners can motivate tourists to stay longer. Although the findings are mixed, tourists' longer stays generally increase their spending on tourist destinations (García-Sánchez et al., 2013). Longer tourist stays improve tourists' familiarity with the products and services of the destination, which increases the likelihood of spending and expands the multiplier effect of tourism income (Gokovali et al., 2007). Longer tourist stays also generate more business and job opportunities at tourist destinations (Alen et al., 2014). Wang et al. (2018) argued that tourist expenditure increases with LOS up to a certain time point (21 days) and declines as LOS rises. Nevertheless, these studies suggest the importance of the LOS variable in tourism earnings. Thus, it is important to investigate the determinants of tourists' LOS.

Furthermore, LOS studies differ in terms of geographical location, influencing variables, and methodologies (Hateftabar & Chapuis, 2020). Previous studies have covered several geographical locations, as discussed in the introduction section; they include Spain, the southern coast of Portugal, the Atlantic coast of the United States, Norway, and the mountains of Italy. In addition, various methodological approaches, such as survival analysis (Aguilar & Díaz, 2019; Hateftabar & Chapuis, 2020), count regression (Nicolau et al., 2018), OLS regression (Thrane, 2015), and logit regression (Alegre & Pou, 2006) have been adopted to model LOS. Studies have divided the influencing variables of tourists' LOS into three broad categories: tourist profiles, trip characteristics, and destination attributes (Hateftabar & Chapuis, 2020). Nationality (Barros & Machado, 2010; Gokovali et al., 2007; Thrane & Farstad, 2012), age (Barros & Machado, 2010; Hateftabar & Chapuis, 2020), gender (Hateftabar & Chapuis, 2020; Mortazavi & Cialani, 2017), and education level (Barros & Machado, 2010; Hateftabar & Chapuis, 2020) are some personal profile variables that are salient LOS determinants. Visit frequency (Gokovali et al., 2007; Hateftabar & Chapuis, 2020; Thrane & Farstad, 2012) and expenditure (Alegre & Pou, 2006) are other salient influencing factors of LOS, categorised as trip characteristics. Destination attributes such as hospitality services (Barros et al., 2010; Hateftabar & Chapuis, 2020) and visual attraction (Rodriguez et al., 2018) have influenced LOS. In addition, tourist satisfaction is a salient determinant of tourists' LOS (see De Menezes et al., 2008; Thrane, 2012). While there is no specific theory behind the selection covariates of LOS variables (Hateftabar & Chapuis, 2020), based on the findings of the above discussion, nationality, visit frequency, age, gender, education level, expenditure, and satisfaction are considered as relevant regressors of LOS in this study.

Studies have consistently found that nationality is one of the strongest predictors of tourists' LOS (Gokovali et al., 2007; Thrane, 2012). However, since visitors' nationality influences their choice of destination (Jönsson & Devonish, 2008), the group of tourists may vary from one destination to another (Hateftabar & Chapuis, 2020). Tourists' age is another important determinant of LOS. Most studies have found that older adults stay longer than younger individuals (Chen et al., 2015; Thrane, 2012). They have presented various reasons for the longer stays of older adults, including that they have fewer family responsibilities, less stress, and less work (Wells & Gubar, 1966). As retirement brings more freedom (Wells & Gubar, 1966), they are more likely to stay longer than younger people (Chen et al., 2015). Although some studies, as discussed above, have found a positive relationship between age and LOS, Adongo et al. (2017) and Jacobsen et al. (2018) reported a negative relationship.

Studies also consider gender to be a significant predictor of LOS, although the relationship between gender and LOS varies across studies. For example, Adongo et al. (2017), Barros et al. (2010), and Salmasi et al. (2012) argued that female visitors stay longer than male visitors, whereas Hateftabar and Chapuis (2020), Santos et al. (2015), and Thrane (2015) found the opposite, whereas Wang et al. (2012) reported no gender effect. There are also mixed findings regarding the relationship between educational level and LOS. Barros and Machado (2010) and Wang et al. (2012) stated that better-educated visitors stay longer; however, Adongo et al. (2017), Martinez-Garcia and Raya (2008), and Gokovali et al. (2007) did the opposite.

Regarding visit frequency, research has reported mixed findings. De Menezes et al. (2008), Adongo et al. (2017), and Hateftabar and Chapuis (2020) found that re-visitors have a shorter LOS than first-time visitors; however, Bavik et al. (2021), Gokovali et al. (2007), Jacobsen et al. (2018), Thrane and Farstad (2012), and Wang et al. (2012) found the opposite.

Concerning satisfaction, most studies report a positive relationship between satisfaction and LOS (see De Menezes et al., 2008; Machado, 2010; Thrane, 2012), whereas Soler et al. (2018) found no significant satisfaction effect on LOS.

This discussion establishes that LOS and the direction of the relationship between predictors vary depending on the tourist destination type and attributes. For example, a study conducted at a tourist destination may not necessarily apply to others. Thus, studies conducted globally may not apply to Pokhara, Nepal. Therefore, it is important to study the determinants of tourist LOS in Pokhara.

Methodological Review

Generalised linear models, such as the Poisson regression, negative binomial regression, logit regression, logistic regression, survival models, and general linear models, including the OLS regression, are major tools adopted to model tourists' LOS and its determinants in many studies. The use of survival models to model tourists' LOS has been criticised by Thrane (2012) because of the complexity and data-generating process. According to Thrane (2012), the LOS of a tourist is pre-fixed and not right censored; thus, survival analysis is not a valid approach for modeling tourists' LOS. Similarly, Thrane (2015) criticised count regression models because the data-generating process of LOS does not follow the properties of a Poisson distribution. Thrane (2015) further highlights that count variables measure the number of times an event occurs within a certain time interval; therefore, tourists' LOS does not fulfill the properties of a count variable.

Thrane (2012, 2015) proposed the OLS regression, which produces similar results in survival analysis and count regression models. The researcher further argued that using a simpler model instead of a complex one is a wise decision when both models produce similar results because a simple model is easy to understand by non-statistically minded readers. Hateftabar and Chapuis (2020) averred that the LOS variable is not normally distributed; thus, normality assumptions may be violated if the OLS regression is applied. In addition, Hateftabar and Chapuis (2020) criticised the transformation technique of fixing normality issues because of interpretation-related challenges after log transformation. However, Thrane (2012, 2015) presented a strong justification for using the OLS regression to model LOS through log transformation. Thus, this study compares the OLS regression with ZTNB regression and selects the best model to analyse tourists' LOS. The selected model is applied to answer the following research questions:

Research Question 1: Does the visitor's profile (i.e., nationality, age, gender, and education level) explain LOS?

Research Question 2: Do the visitor's visit frequency and expenditure explain LOS?

Research Question 3: Does the visitor's overall satisfaction explain LOS in a tourist destination?

METHODOLOGY

Variables and Instrument

The data for this study were obtained from a mini-research project titled 'Factors affecting tourist satisfaction and revisit intention to Pokhara', supported by the Pokhara University Research Council. The participant visitors were required to indicate their agreement level with each indicator item using a 5-point scale (1 = 'strongly disagree' to 5 = 'strongly agree') to measure overall satisfaction (Cronbach's α = 0.81). The sample items for satisfaction were, 'It was a wise decision to visit Pokhara', 'I had an enjoyable time at Pokhara', and 'I am attracted by the beautiful scenery of Pokhara'. The sum of the scores of satisfaction items was a predictor of LOS. Visit frequency (first, second, and third or more times) measured the number of times tourists visited Pokhara. Expenditure (below $48 and $48 and above) measured the daily expenses of tourists. The average expenditure of tourists in Nepal in 2017 and 2018 was $48 (Nepal Tourism Statistics, 2017, 2018). Thus, two expenditure levels were created based on the national average expenditure of tourists in Nepal. Tourists with expenditures below $48 were considered in the low-expenditure group, whereas tourists with $48 or higher expenditures were in the high-expenditure group. Gender (male and female), education level (high school and below, undergraduate, and graduate), age (below 25, 25–64, and 64 and above), and nationality (Chinese, Indian, and other) were the other regressor variables of tourists' LOS. LOS was measured as the number of days tourists stayed overnight in Pokhara during their current trip.

Data Collection

Pokhara is a famous tourist destination for sightseeing, hiking, sports tourism, and mountaineering. The city is surrounded by the beautiful

Himalayan range of Mount Annapurna and several lakes (Bam & Kunwar, 2020). Pokhara covers approximately 35% of the tourists who have visited Nepal in the last ten years (Bam & Kunwar, 2020). The data for this study were collected from tourists who visited Pokhara and stayed there for at least one night. The target population for this study was tourists who arrived in Pokhara. Random sampling was adopted to select the samples. Approximately 400 questionnaires were distributed to tourists visiting Pokhara who stayed at least one night. Only 280 respondents completed and returned the questionnaires. Participants whose LOS exceeded six months were excluded. Therefore, the sample size of this study was 275. Based on the G-power, for the OLS regression with seven regressors, at least 264 samples are required to achieve a power of 90% and a small effect size (0.05) at the 1% significance level. Thus, the sample size of 275 was sufficiently large to represent the population. Among them, 50% were male, and 50% were female. Furthermore, 43% of the participants were Chinese, followed by Indians (38%) and visitors from other locations (19%). Additionally, 78% of the visitors were first-time visitors, followed by 13% representing second-time visitors, and the rest were visiting for the third time or more. In addition, 32% of the participants were below 25 years old, 67% were between 25 and 64 years old, and the rest were above 64 years old. Approximately half of the travellers had undergraduate degrees, 23.5% had high school certificates and below, and the rest had graduate degrees. Approximately 63% of the visitors belonged to the low-expenditure group and the rest to the high-expenditure group.

Regression Models

Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) Regression

Let $\widehat{\log(Y_i)}$ denote the estimated log number of night tourists, i staying overnight in a tourist destination, and x_{ij} be the value of the j^{th} regressor variable for the i^{th} observation. The regression model used to estimate the regression parameters is as follows:

$$\widehat{\log(Y_i)} = \beta_0 + \sum_{j=1}^{k} \beta_j x_{ij}\ , \text{i}= 1,2 \ldots \text{n} \tag{1}$$

where β_j is the estimated regression coefficient of the j^{th} regressor variable and β_0 is the estimated intercept of the regression model.

The least-squares estimation method is commonly used to estimate the unknown parameters of the regressors. Since the OLS regression model violates the normality assumption without log transformation, log transformation was used to stabilise it. Critics of log transformation

(Hateftabar & Chapuis, 2020) believe that this complicates the interpretation of the coefficient. Simplifying the following simple regression model helps understand the interpretation of the estimated model parameters:

Let

$$\widehat{log(Y)} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X \qquad (2)$$

be a simple linear regression of the log-transformed dependent variable with only one independent variable X with the estimated regression coefficient β_1. Let $\log(Y_{new})$ be the value of Y after a one-unit positive change in X. Now

$$\log(Y_{new}) = \beta_0 + \beta_1(X+1)$$

$$\log(Y_{new}) = \beta_0 + \beta_1(X) + \beta_1$$

$$\log(Y_{new}) = \log(Y) + \beta_1$$

$$\log(Y_{new}) - \log(Y) = \beta_1$$

$$\frac{Y_{new}}{Y} = exp(\beta_1)$$

$$100 \times \left(\frac{Y_{new}}{Y} - 1\right) = 100 \times (ex\,p(\beta_1) - 1)$$

$$100 \times \left(\frac{Y_{new} - Y}{Y}\right) = 100 \times (ex\,p(\beta_1) - 1)$$

Thus, $100 \times (ex\,p(\beta_j) - 1)$ is the percentage change (factor change %) in Y for a one-unit change in X_j for the j^{th} continuous independent variable. For the categorical independent variables, the percentage difference (factor change %) between the baseline and other categories. This proves that interpreting the estimated parameters of the OLS regression after log transformation of the response variables is straightforward.

ZTNB Regression

The data-generating process of LOS only considers visitors who stayed at least one night in Pokhara. Table 1 shows that the variance in LOS was more than fourfold higher than the mean LOS. Although count data regression was criticised by Thrane (2015), a ZTNB regression was presented for comparison purposes. According to Grogger and Carson (1991), the ZTNB probability mass function is expressed as follows:

$$\Pr(Y_i = y_i | y_i > 0) = \frac{\left(\Gamma(y_i+\alpha^{-1}) / y_i!\Gamma(\alpha^{-1})\right)\left(\alpha^{-1} / (\alpha^{-1}+\mu_i)\right)^{\alpha^{-1}}\left(\mu_i / (\alpha^{-1}+\mu_i)\right)^{y_i}}{1-(1+\alpha\mu_i)^{-\frac{1}{\alpha}}}, \text{ i= 1,2,3… } (3)$$

where

$$\log(\mu_i) = \beta_0 + \sum_{j=1}^{k} \beta_j x_{ij} \text{ , i= 1,2 …. n, j = 1,2 …k} \quad (4)$$

is the ZTNB regression model; where μ_i is the estimated number of overnight stays of the ith tourist, y_i is the observed number of overnight stays of the i^{th} tourist, β_0 is the parameter estimation of the intercept, β_j is the estimated regression coefficient of the j^{th} regressor, and x_{ij} is the value of the jth regressor variable for the ith observation. α is the overdispersion parameter. The likelihood estimation method is a common approach for estimating the model parameters of a ZTNB regression.

Data Analysis

Data entry was completed using the SPSS software. Frequency was used to check for errors and inconsistencies in the data. Once data entry was performed and confirmed to be error-free, the percentage of missing values and a matrix plot were created to check the pattern of missing values and whether the percentage of missing values exceeded 10%. Descriptive statistics (i.e., mean, median, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum) were then calculated. The OLS regression was used to investigate the strength and direction of the relationship between LOS and the regressors: visit frequency, gender, nationality, age, education level, expenditure, and satisfaction. The results of the OLS regression were compared to those of the ZTNB regression. Robust standard errors and p-values for each model were obtained. Outliers were detected using standardised residuals, Cook's distance, and leverage values. Residual plots were examined to check for normality and equal variance assumptions. The mean absolute deviation (MAD), mean absolute percentage error (MAPE), root mean square error (RMSE), Akaike information criterion (AIC), and Bayesian information criterion (BIC) were used to compare the models. The model with the smallest MAD, MAPE, RMSE, AIC, and BIC values was selected as the best model. In addition, the model specifications were examined using Ramsey's test of misspecification. Data analysis was conducted using R 4.0.1, whereas, for the ZTNB regression, robust standard errors were obtained using STATA 16.

RESULTS

The total missing percentage is 0.17%, with the most missing values for the expenditure variable. Thus, median imputation was applied to replace the missing values. As shown in Table 1, the average LOS of tourists in Pokhara was approximately 9 days, with a standard deviation of 13.4 days. The average LOS of Chinese tourists was higher than that of Indian and other tourists. Females have longer LOS than males. Younger tourists have a longer average LOS than older tourists. The average LOS for first-time visitors was less than that for frequent visitors. Graduates have longer LOS than non-graduates. On average, the low-expenditure group of tourists stays longer than the high-expenditure group. For further details, see Table 1.

Table 1. *Descriptive statistics of the study's variables*

Variables	***M***	***SD***	***Median***	***Min***	***Max***
Length of stay	9	13.4	4	1	90
Length of stay across nationality					
Indian	4	3.83	3	1	30
Chinese	14.25	17.81	7	1	90
Others	7.82	9.96	5	2	60
Length of stay across gender					
Male	8.1	11.77	3.5	1	90
Female	9.98	14.81	5	2	90
Length of stay across education level					
High school and below	7.5	13.33	3	1	90
Undergraduate	9.4	11.28	4	2	60
Graduate	9.7	16.68	4	1	90
Length of stay across age groups					
Below 25	9.4	12	5	1	80
25–64	9	14.2	4	1	90
Above 64	2.8	1	2	2	4
Length of stay across frequency of visit					
First time	7.1	9.51	4	1	90
Second time	17.13	21.32	7	2	80
Third time and more	15.09	21.62	7	2	90
Expenditure					
Low expenditure group (Below $48)	10		4	1	90
High expenditure group ($55 and above)	8		5	2	60
Satisfaction	12.85	2.11	13	3	15

Table 2 presents the results of the OLS and ZTNB regressions. While fitting the regression models, seven outliers (observation numbers 2, 3, 5, 11, 31, 183, and 275) were dropped based on the leverage values, Cook's distance, and standardised residuals. Both models were updated after removing the outliers. The model assumptions of the updated OLS and ZTNB regressions were examined. The Pearson-type residual was used for the residual analysis of the ZTNB regression. Both models satisfied all the assumptions.

Table 2. *Estimation results of the ZTNB and OLS regressions*

	ZTNB			OLS		
Variable	**B**	**R.SE**	**Factor Change (%)**	**β**	**R.SE**	**Factor Change (%)**
First time	Visit frequency reference group					
Second time	0.381**	0.177	46.37	0.321**	0.157	37.85
Third time and more	1.042***	0.217	183.48	0.819***	0.127	126.82
Female	Gender reference group					
Male	0.013	0.119	1.30	0.034	0.094	3.45
Chinese	Nationality reference group					
Indian	-1.412***	0.123	-75.63	-1.046***	0.107	-64.86
Others	-0.637***	0.198	-47.11	-0.580***	0.149	-44.01
Below 25	Age reference group					
25–64	-0.432***	0.129	-35.07	-0.329**	0.104	-28.03
Above 64	-1.040***	0.205	-64.65	-0.559***	0.163	-42.82
High school and below	Education reference group					
Undergraduate	0.403***	0.131	49.63	0.218**	0.095	24.35
Graduate	0.638***	0.166	89.27	0.351***	0.129	42.04
Low expenditure	Expenditure reference group					
High Expenditure	-0.385	0.143	-31.95	-0.32***	0.118	-27.38
Satisfaction	-0.001	0.023	-0.099	-0.009	0.021	-0.895
Constant	2.35***	0.324		2.25***	0.295	
Ln(α)	-0.570***	.1181				
Log-likelihood	-737.99					
F-statistic				F (11, 256) =13.57***		
Wald Chi Square	$\chi^2(11) = 243.21$***					
RMSE	9.04			12.85		
MAD	3.72			3.88		
MAPE	88.44			62.47		
AIC	1501.99			596.74		
BIC	1548.68			643.42		

Note. **p<0.05; ***p<0.01; R.SE = Robust standard error

Considering MAPE, AIC, and BIC, the OLS regression performs better than the ZTNB regression, whereas considering RMSE and MAD, the ZTNB regression is better than the OLS regression. The coefficient of determination of the OLS regression model was 36.82%, and the adjusted R-square was 34.11%. Based on Ramsey's test of misspecification, there was no issue with the model specification of the OLS regression model, F (1, 255) = 0.0526, p = 0.8187, or the ZTNB regression model, F (1, 255) = 0.6844, p = 0.4089. While both models produce similar estimated coefficients, the OLS regression is simpler; thus, it was used to answer the research questions.

Regarding Research Question 1, visitors' nationality, age, and education level, but not gender, were important determinants of tourists' LOS. Regarding Research Question 2, visit frequency and expenditure were salient determinants of tourists' LOS. Regarding Research Question 3, tourists' overall satisfaction was not a significant determinant of LOS.

DISCUSSION

Based on this study's results, visit frequency is a salient determinant of tourists' LOS in Pokhara. The expected LOS of more frequent visitors is longer than that of first-time visitors. Visit frequency familiarises tourists with the tourist destination, activities, and cultures (Gokovali et al., 2007), broadening their variety of planned activities (Soler et al., 2018). Thus, repeated visitors can extend their LOS. Contrary to this study's findings and those of Gokovali et al. (2007) and Soler et al. (2018), some studies (e.g., Jacobsen et al., 2018; Nicolau et al., 2018; Thrane & Farsted, 2012) found a negative visit frequency effect on LOS. The latter group of studies believes that tourists seeking new experiences might be willing to stay longer to enjoy the new destination. Both justifications have valid logic; however, in the Pokhara context, only the logic of the former group is reasonable. Pokhara boasts several activities such as sightseeing, sports tourism, hiking, and mountaineering. The first visit familiarises tourists with various attributes; thus, they plan longer trips after the first visit to explore all amenities. However, not all tourist destinations worldwide have similar attributes. Some destinations may have several tourism activities, whereas others may not. Thus, tourists who visit places such as Pokhara (where there are many tourism-related activities) may stay longer after their first visit. However, future studies are needed to test the interaction effect between the destination and visit frequency.

This study also reveals significant differences in LOS among people of different nationalities visiting Pokhara. The Chinese stay longer than the Indians and other tourists. This finding concurs with Rosyidi (2018), who found that Chinese tourists stay longer in Indonesia than tourists from other Asian countries. The findings of this study are also consistent with those that report a significant nationality effect (e.g., Gokovali et al., 2007; Thrane, 2012) on LOS. Tourists' age is another determinant of LOS. The findings show that younger tourists stay in Pokhara for a longer duration than older tourists. This study's findings are similar to those of Jacobsen et al. (2018), despite the differences in age group classification, and contradict those of Chen et al. (2015), and Thrane (2012). Pokhara is a famous tourist destination for mountaineering, hiking, and sports tourism (e.g., zip flying and paragliding). These activities may not be major attractions for older adults, and even if they are attracted, they are less likely to spend more time than younger people.

According to this study's findings, tourists with higher educational levels stay longer than those with lower qualifications, consistent with Barros and Machado (2010) and Wang et al. (2012). However, Adongo et al. (2017), Martinez-Garcia and Raya (2008), and Gokovali et al. (2007) reported contradictory findings. Based on this study's findings, the high-expenditure group of tourists stays for a shorter duration than the low-expenditure group, consistent with Barros and Machado (2010), Mortazavi and Cialani (2017), and Thrane (2012). Although several previous studies have established a significant effect of gender (Hateftabar & Chapuis, 2020) and satisfaction (Thrane, 2012) on LOS, this study did not find such a significant effect. Considering gender; the current study's findings are similar to Wang et al. (2012). Most visitors to Pokhara were groups and couples, which may explain the insignificant gender effect on LOS. Regarding satisfaction, this study's findings align with Soler et al. (2018). Based on the descriptive statistics of satisfaction, over 75% of the tourists' satisfaction scores were 12 or higher, indicating that tourists were consistently satisfied in Pokhara. Thus, satisfaction had no significant effect on LOS because of the low variability in satisfaction scores.

This study provides a salient reference for tourism planners in launching new business strategies. Nationality, visit frequency, age, expenditure, and educational level are important determinants of tourists' LOS in Pokhara. Tourism managers might attract a group of tourists who have significantly longer overnight stays and try to motivate them to extend the stays of those with a significantly shorter LOS. Additionally, tourism business managers, local people, the government, and planners should preserve the natural beauty of Pokhara, plan a better nightlife for tourists, and enhance the cultural environment to increase their LOS, as these factors also play a positive role in increasing tourists' LOS (Gokovali et al., 2007). Along with planning to increase the population of tourists in Pokhara, tourism planners should properly evaluate their capacity to accommodate the extra volume of incoming tourists. Future studies are necessary to identify the current capacity to accommodate incoming visitors and the possibilities for expansion without undermining the natural beauty of Pokhara.

According to Thrane (2012), most count models are built based on modelling counts within a specified time interval; however, LOS is not necessarily measured as a count within specified time intervals. The survival model is suitable when researchers are interested in the probability of tourists changing their LOS or the time, they spend at a tourist destination because most tourist visits are attraction-inclined, with no specific timeline in mind (King, 2021). Thus, neither the count model nor the survival model is statistically valid for modelling the LOS of tourists. Moreover, the count and survival models are more complex than the OLS regression model. The findings show that the OLS regression presents results similar to the ZTNB regression, strengthening Thrane's (2012) and Mortazavi and Cialani's (2017) arguments. Thus, there is no reason to abandon the OLS regression model favouring complex survival or count models. However, this finding does not discourage identifying new and innovative modelling approaches to model tourists' LOS.

CONCLUSIONS

Modelling tourists' LOS and its determinants have important implications for tourism business planners to know which group of tourists stays longer and who needs the motivation to extend their stay. This study employed the OLS and ZTNB regression models to investigate tourists' LOS and its determinants. The findings showed that visit frequency, nationality, age, education level, and expenditure are important determinants of LOS. This study shows that Chinese tourists, more frequent tourists, those 25 years old and under, more educated visitors, and the low-expenditure group of tourists stay longer in Pokhara. The OLS regression produced results similar to the ZTNB regression; thus, there is no reason to abandon the former. This conclusion fully agrees with Thrane (2012, 2015), who advocated using OLS instead of the more complex survival and count models.

Limitations

Although these findings offer important insights into tourists' LOS in Pokhara and its determinants, there are some limitations. First, tourists' LOS may be influenced by seasonal effects. This study did not consider seasonal effects due to the cross-sectional nature of the data. Thus, further studies are needed to consider the seasonal effects by collecting data over time. Second, this study is based on a frequentist parameter estimation approach. Bayesian approaches to parameter estimation and model identification are more robust than frequentist approaches (Assaf et al., 2018); thus, future studies can use Bayesian approaches to model tourists' LOS. Several other regressors exist, such as motive for travel reasons, travel party, and visual attraction, which could be salient LOS determinants. Future researchers are called upon to include these variables as regressors of LOS.

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ANTECEDENTS OF GASTRONOMY DESTINATION BRAND EQUITY: AN EXAMINATION OF GASTRONOMY EXPERIENCE, MOTIVATION, AND DESTINATION SATISFACTION

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to test the relationships among gastronomic experience, motivation, destination satisfaction, and gastronomy destination brand equity. Data (n:600) was gathered from domestic visitors visiting Gaziantep in March, April to May 2018. Scale development to measure gastronomy experiences and scale adaptation process of destination brand equity were carried out. The relationships among the variables were examined with structural equation modeling. According to the findings, except H5 and H8, all hypotheses are significant in the research model. At the end of the study, significant theoretical and managerial implications were provided for the tourism providers and destination marketers, and managers.

Keywords
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INTRODUCTION

Destination branding is an influential tool, and it has an important role in building image positively and increasing an emotional connection between travelers and destination (Morgan et al., 2007). Destination brand equity studies are notable research field to understand the tourist's perceptions about destination visited. These studies have some important contributions to destination marketers and managers in terms of building effective marketing and managerial strategies by exploring tourist perception of destinations. Furthermore, not only the core elements of destination brand

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equity suggested by Aaker (1991) but also the different components including experience, motivations, and satisfaction which are considered antecedents of brand equity are widely investigated in the relevant literature.

Richards (2002) stressed the importance of the tourist experience by arguing that the focus should be on experiencing tourism activities beyond physically seeing the touristic places. Visitors are searching for new and different experiences which have the potential to enhance destination images and loyalty. With the rise of gastronomy tourism, a destination tries to distinguish itself from other destinations by providing local food/cuisine to their visitors (Björk & Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2016). Local food and experiencing different tastes are a good way to explore a different culture (Kivela & Crotts, 2006). Gastronomic products, which are shown as an important source of destination attractiveness in the destination branding studies, are one of the main components that destinations should focus on. Therefore, the strengthening of destination brands with local culinary resources and increasing brand values offer significant advantages to destination stakeholders (Horng et al., 2012). In terms of exploring different cultures or understanding the local culture, gastronomy experience and motivations could give valuable information to destination stakeholders by also examining relationship destination brand equity.

Previous studies show that tourist motivations are closely related to brand equity dimensions in destination branding research (San Martin & Bosque, 2008; Lee, 2009; Liu, 2020). In addition, the link between tourist satisfaction and customer loyalty, also the relation between tourist motivation and tourist experience are frequently examined in tourism and hospitality literature (Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Barnes et al., 2014; Berbel-Pineda et al., 2019). Even though there are numerous studies focusing on examining the relationship between the constructs in the hypothetical model of the current study, there is a research gap examining the relationship between the constructs in the gastronomy destinations context. Additionally, due to limited studies identifying the effects of gastronomy experience and gastronomy motivations on gastronomy destination brand equity, this study addresses this gap and provides an original and valuable contribution to gastronomy experience and destination branding literature by testing the hypothetical model proposed. Thereby the main objective of the present study is to examine the research model. Although previous research has examined dimensions of gastronomy experience in various aspects (Sthapit et al, 2019, 2020; Atsız et al., 2022), limited studies have been employed from social and marketing perspectives as suggested by Quan and Wang (2004). Thus, developing a scale of gastronomy experience based on this perspective is the other objective of the current study.

The current work contributes to the existing body of literature by examining the effects of gastronomy experiences and motivations, and destination satisfaction on destination brand equity. Moreover, this work tests the mediating impact of gastronomy motivation and destination satisfaction on relations between gastronomy experience and destination brand equity. Therefore, empirical results of the current study provide greater knowledge that the gastronomy experience and motivations are important elements contributing to developing a competitive advantage based on destination brand equity and building effective branding strategies.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

In this section, the gastronomy experience was discussed within the scope of the model suggested by Quan and Wang (2004) who handled the topic with the context of social science and marketing approach. Subsequently, gastronomy motivations, destination satisfaction, and consumer-based destination brand equity were widely discussed. Finally, hypotheses were developed in line with the literature, i.e. quantitative and qualitative studies.

Gastronomy experience

Today, factors such as changing economic conditions, differentiation of competition, and changed consumption habits have reduced the dominance of traditional marketing approaches (Yetiş, 2016, p. 117). In the scope of experience economy suggested by Pine and Gilmore (1999), a large of number of studies have been conducted to examine the experience and reveal dimensions of it in various contexts. When definitions of experience by different authors are evaluated, it can be said that there is no common definition. For example, according to Mossberg (2007, p. 70), “experience is a concept that affects the consumer emotionally, physically, intellectually, and spiritually as a result of the combination of many elements”. Furthermore, the concept of experience differs according to the discipline in which it is discussed. For example, in the fields of sociology and psychology, experience is considered a subjective and cognitive activity that ensures the development of the individual, while in the anthropological perspective, experience refers to the way individuals live their own culture (Uşaklı, 2016).

There is a large body of literature examining experiences related to tourism experience in the different types of tourism. Gastronomy/food experience is one of the important kinds of experience in total tourism experience and is broadly investigated in the gastronomy and tourism literature. Kivela and Crotts (2006) emphasize that the food experience within the touristic experience is an experience that appeals to the senses and gives pleasure, and state that this is an experiential element (dimension) of the tourism experience. Similarly, Mak et al. (2013) stress that eating is an experiential part of tourist experiences, expressing eating as a pleasurable tourist activity that appeals to our five senses. Gastronomy experience focuses on individual tasting, experience, research, discovery, and knowledge about food or wine (Kivela & Crotts, 2006).

Tourists are pursuing new and different food experiences. With a post-Fordist consumption approach, the need for searching for more special, different, and novel food experiences increases the significance of food tourism for the destination and tourism firms (Everett & Aitchison, 2008). In the food experience literature, theoretical and empirical studies (Quan & Wang, 2004; Mkono et al., 2013; Son & Xu, 2013; Ding & Lee, 2017; Aksoy & Kodaş, 2021; Cifci et al., 2021; Atsız et al., 2022) were conducted intensively. But in the few studies pursued within the scope of the interpretative (qualitative) approach, it is seen that the food experience is investigated within the framework of social science and marketing approach (Mkono et al., 2013; Son & Xu, 2013). According to the purpose of the current study, gastronomy experience was explained based on these approaches. Within the scope of social science philosophy, the experience is tried to be conceptualized as a peak experience in the literature. Quan and Wang (2004) stated that peak experience is the opposite of daily routine experience. Motivation, involvement, meanings, and attitudes attributed to the experience, search for authenticity (Volo, 2009). Quan and Wang (2004) tried to conceptualize experiences from two different perspectives: a social, phenomenological vantage point (Cohen, 1979) and a market-driven, consumerist perspective (Mossberg, 2007). The model by Quan and Wang (2004) reveals that food experiences can be peak or supportive according to their relationship with daily experiences under the dimensions of contrast, extension, and intensification. A peak experience is in sharp contrast to the daily experience, while a supportive experience is seen as an extension or intensity of daily experience (Quan and Wang, 2004).

A limited number of studies have empirically tested the theoretical model of the food experience suggested by Quan and Wang (2004). As an illustration, in the qualitative study of Mkono et al. (2013) aimed to validate the conceptual model of Quan and Wang (2004). In the study, tourists' views on 285 restaurants in Zimbabwe, a tourist destination in Africa, were interpreted. The findings indicated that foods are the primary source of destination attraction for some tourists, while for some tourists, the food experience is an extension of the routine at home. It is allegeable to say that this research conducted by Mkono et al. (2013) largely supports the theoretical model of Quan and Wang (2004). Similarly, the study conducted by Son and Xu (2013) aimed to investigate the Buddhist food experience of western tourists. As a result of the thematic analysis of the comments made on travel blogs, six food experience dimensions were determined. One of these experience dimensions is the peak touristic experience.

Gastronomy motivation

When the studies related to travel motivations are reviewed, it is clearly seen that research is performed based on the push and pull theory (Dann, 1977), socio-psychological motives (Crompton, 1979), escape and seeking motives (Iso-Ahola, 1983), and travel career approach (Pearce & Caltabiano, 1983); which are considered as dominant theories. Research conducted within the framework of these theories provides foundations for several other studies on understanding tourist motivations and behaviors. Gastronomy motivations which are widely investigated based on these theories are considered the driving force behind the food consumption behavior of tourists. The relevant literature points out that food consumption studies have been examined the motivation of travelers toward local or non-local food (Kim and Eves, 2012; Berbel-Pineda et al., 2019). Prior studies examined the psychological factors, social, demographic, cultural, and physiological dimensions (Kim & Eves, 2012; Mak et al., 2013) with the aim to explain tourist food consumption motivations. As one of the first conceptual studies on local food consumption motivations, Fields' (2002) categorization of local food consumption motivations has been a pioneer for many studies, and then studies that aim to examine underlying dimensions of local food consumption motivation have been started. Fields (2002), who approached local food motivations theoretically, argues that travel motivations, suggested by McIntosh and Goeldner (1990), could be adapted to the field as physical, cultural, interpersonal, status, and prestige motivators. Following this theoretical proposition, Kim et al., (2009) conducted qualitative research using grounded theory and revealed motivational factors for local food consumption, such as escape from routine, health concerns, learning knowledge, authentic experience, togetherness, prestige, sensory appeal, and physical environment. In another study, Kim and Eves (2012) developed a scale of tourist local food consumption motivation and identified 5 dimensions: "cultural experience, sensory appeal, interpersonal relations, excitement, and health concerns". Considering these studies, gastronomy motivation draws attention as an important factor affecting the local food consumption behavior or i.e. tourists' intention to consume local food.

Destination satisfaction

Studies to determine the satisfaction levels of customers are carried out based on the basic theories in the literature such as expectancy disconfirmation (Oliver, 1977), cognitive or cognitive dissonance, assimilation-contrast, equality, attribution (Folkes, 1984), affective models (Westbrook, 1987), and performance-only theories (Churchill & Suprenant, 1982). The theories of expectancy disconfirmation and performance only are frequently used in the field of tourism and destination marketing. Tourist satisfaction is considered as a degree of meeting the expectations of the tourists from the destination and emerges as the result of the tourists' assessment of the quality of the products offered by the destinations. Oliver (1999) defines satisfaction as the degree to which a customer's needs and expectations are met at the end of a purchase. Tourist satisfaction is defined as a function of the expectation of the tourist before the trip and the experiences after the trip (Chen & Chen, 2010). Tourist satisfaction of destination which is substantial in the destination choices of potential tourists (Huh et al., 2006) is stated as a significant variable in destination performance measurement (Korzay & Alvarez, 2005).

Consumer-based destination brand equity

Brand equity is defined in customer-based contexts (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 2003). Aaker (1991, p.15) defines brand equity as "*a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firms' customers*." Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) have identified brand equity dimensions theoretically. Aaker (1991) classified brand equity under five dimensions which include: brand awareness, brand associations, brand loyalty, perceived quality, and other proprietary brand assets. According to Keller (1993), brand equity model has two components: brand awareness and brand image. Consumer-based brand equity has been one of the outstanding issues in marketing and management discipline since 1990, and it has been an essential factor in gaining competitiveness for destinations (Horng et al., 2012). In destination branding studies, many scholars have tried to measure customer-based brand equity by Aaker's (1991) and Keller's (1993) brand equity dimensions (e.g. Boo et al., 2009; Horng et al., 2012; Gomez et al., 2015; Fathabadi et al., 2017; Liu, 2020). In addition to these studies, some other dimensions were suggested (Das & Mukherjee, 2016; Chekalina et al., 2018). However, brand equity, which generally consists of brand image, brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand loyalty dimensions, is used in destination branding research.

Awareness is considered as the first step of brand equity (Gartner & Konecnik Ruzzier, 2011). According to Aaker (1991), having a high level of awareness for a brand will most likely lead consumers to buy that brand. Destination awareness plays a pivotal role in tourists' destination preferences in the tourism industry (Dedeoğlu et al., 2020). Brand awareness is regarded as one of the main components of brand equity in the tourism industry that affects consumers' purchasing decision process and travel intentions (Boo et al., 2009, p. 221). Similarly, perceived quality provides value to consumers by affecting their purchasing intentions and differentiating the brand from competing brands (Pappu et al., 2005, p. 145). The perceived quality of the destination is stated as the comparison between consumers' perceptions of destination performance and service expectations for the destination (Chen, 2011, p. 85). Furthermore, brand image, which is one of destination brand equity dimensions, is defined as the set of associations that connect the consumer to the brand name in the consumer mind and is regarded as the consumer's perceptions about the brand (Keller, 1993). Brand image is an important dimension in the formation of destination branding models (Dedeoğlu et al; 2019). Lastly, brand loyalty is considered as the most important dimension of brand equity (Aaker, 1991). Brand loyalty is designated as the consumer's positive attitude towards a brand and also a determinant of the consumer's intention to purchase a particular brand regularly in the future (Pappu et al., 2005).

Relationships between variables and hypothesis

It can be inferred from the literature that there are positive relationships between experience and brand equity in regard to the relevant experience. For example, Shamim and Butt (2013) determined that brand experience effects customer loyalty and brand equity dimensions. Shen and Liu (2015) revealed a strong relationship between experience and brand equity. In a tourism destination, tourists' satisfaction is of great importance for the sustainable development of tourism businesses. The results of previous studies show that tourist satisfaction is an important antecedent of customer loyalty (Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Chi & Qu, 2008), and consequence of tourist motivation (Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Devesa et al., 2010) and of tourism experiences (Tsaur et al., 2007; Da Costa Mendes et al., 2010).

Earlier research provided evidence for the strong relations between motivation and experience (Prebensen et al., 2013; Lee, 2015). Mak et al. (2012) state that past experience which is one of significant constructs in food consumption, positively effects the tourist behavior of food consuming. The study by Tsaur et al. (2007) concluded that consumer satisfaction affects consumer loyalty, and that consumer satisfaction mediates the relationship between theme park experience and loyalty. In other words, theme park experiences affect consumer loyalty through satisfaction. In the food experience context, Björk and Kauppinen-Räisänen (2016), similarly, revealed that food experience positively affects travel satisfaction. Wu and Liang (2009) also showed that experiential value increases customer satisfaction positively. In the study conducted by Erbaş (2010) with the sample of Starbucks customers, it was determined that experiential marketing increases customer satisfaction and loyalty positively. In another study, Hosany and Gilbert (2010) revealed that destination experiences affect recommend intentions of tourists, and that consumer satisfaction affects consumer loyalty. Also, they designated that the satisfaction variable has a mediating role in the relationship between destination experience and recommend intentions. Jin et al. (2012) examined the relationships among restaurant experience, brand image, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty, and they concluded that brand image and customer satisfaction positively affect brand loyalty. Babolian Hendijani (2016) found that food experience positively increases the level of tourist satisfaction. Besides a number of prior studies (Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Huang & Hsu, 2009; Chen & Chen, 2010) have suggested that tourist motivations have positive effects on destination loyalty. In addition, touristic experience can positively affect customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. For instance, Brakus et al. (2009) tried to determine the effect of brand experience dimensions on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty and concluded that brand experience has a direct effect on brand loyalty. Therefore, based on the literature above, the research model and following hypotheses are developed.

H1: The gastronomy experience has a positive and significant influence on gastronomy motivation.

H2: The gastronomy experience has a positive and significant influence on destination brand equity.

H3: The gastronomy motivation has a positive and significant influence on destination brand equity.

H4: Destination satisfaction has a positive and significant influence on destination brand equity.

H5: The gastronomy experience has a positive and significant influence on destination satisfaction.

H6: The gastronomy motivation has a positive and significant influence on destination satisfaction.

H7: The gastronomy motivation positively mediates the relationships between gastronomy experiences and destination brand equity.

H8: The destination satisfaction positively mediates the relationships between gastronomy experiences and destination brand equity.

METHODOLOGY

Sample and data collection

The fieldwork of this study was carried out in the city of Gaziantep located in southeast Anatolia in Turkey. Since it has been included in UNESCO Creative Cities Network, has approximately 500 traditional and local foods, attracts a large number of visitors, and is considered an important gastronomy/culinary destination in Turkey, this location was chosen. The research sample for qualitative research was selected from domestic travelers who visited Gaziantep and experienced the local food of the city and business owners. For the quantitative method, purposive (judgmental) sampling and convenience sampling were utilized to select the respondents. Visitors who experienced local foods of Gaziantep were selected during their trip to have valid and correct data. Data were collected from those who were willing to participate in the research through convenience sampling from March to May 2018. A total of 624 questionnaires were gathered. Of that, 24 questionnaires were omitted owing to incomplete data. The final data set comprises a total of 600 for analysis and the respondent profile is presented in Table 1.

Instruments

Gastronomy motivation was measured with a 21-item scale from Kodaş and Özel (2016). In this study, local food consumption motivations were identified with four factors (cultural motives, physical motives, interpersonal relations, and psychological relaxation). Destination satisfaction with three items was adapted from Ladhari et al. (2008), Yuksel et al. (2010), Žabkar et al., (2010), and Westbrook and Oliver (1981). A scale development process for the gastronomic experience scale and a scale adaptation study for the destination brand equity were carried out.

Table 1. *Respondent Profile*

Variables		n: (600)	%
Gender	Female	251	41,8
	Male	349	58,2
Age	15-19	30	5
	20-24	42	7
	25-29	91	15,2
	30-34	114	19
	35-39	96	16
	40-44	79	13,2
	45-49	48	8
	50- 54	33	5,5
	55-59	25	4,2
	Over 59	42	7
Monthly Income (TL)	Up to 1299	100	16,7
	1300-2000	70	11,7
	2001-3000	173	28,8
	3001-4000	125	20,8
	Over 4000	132	22
Frequency of visit	1	188	31,3
	2	181	30,2
	Over 2	231	38,5
Type of Organization	Individual	400	66,7
	Package Tour	200	33,3

Gastronomy experience scale

The scale development process suggested by Devellis (2003) was followed for the development of the gastronomic experience scale. To create an initial pool of items for the gastronomy experience scale, extensive literature review was carried out. In addition, since limited empirical studies were performed to measure gastronomy experience from the marketing perspective, the interview technique was also used in the study to get in-depth information about tourists' gastronomy experience and to enrich the initial item pool in October 2017. Semi-structured interviews were ranged in duration between 7 and 46 min. The interview questions which were developed based on gastronomy experience literature (Quan & Wang, 2004; Kivela & Crotts, 2006; Mak et al., 2013; Mkono et al., 2013) were classified into two categories. The first category is for restaurant business owners who have offered local food to their visitors (n:5) in Gaziantep. Snowball sampling method was used to determine these enterprises. Snowball sampling is considered a good way to reach convenient interviewees for truthful data. In this process, questions of interviews are related to; visitors' food experience and are as follows; *What are the points that your guests focus on while eating local foods?, How important is it for your guests to experience local food?, What are your observations about the feelings of your guests after experiencing local foods?*. In the second category, questions were asked to reveal the feelings and thoughts of the visitors who experienced local foods to obtain comprehensive information about the gastronomic experience of the visitors through purposeful sampling (n:12). The interview questions are as follows; *Why did you visit Gaziantep? What kind of experiences do you focus on in your Gaziantep trip?, What are your feelings while experiencing local food during your Gaziantep trip?, How do you identify your feelings when you tasted local food in Gaziantep?, How would you identify your gastronomy experience in Gaziantep in general?*. The qualitative data acquired from the interviews were interpreted through descriptive analysis in the context of gastronomy experience as suggested by Quan and Wang (2004) and Mak et al. (2013).

The items in the pool were selected from previous studies and qualitative research findings of this study (Hegarty & O'Mahony, 2001; Richards, 2002; Heldke, 2003; Quan & Wang, 2004; Kivela & Crotts, 2005, 2006; Oh et al., 2007; Beer, 2008; Smith & Costello, 2009; Kim et al., 2009, 2010; Chang et al., 2010; Mak et al., 2013; Mkono et al., 2013; Wijaya et al.,2013; Björk and Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2014, 2016; Adongo et al., 2015; Ingerson & Kim, 2016; Ding & Lee, 2017). Finally, an item pool consisting of 45 items related to gastronomy experience, including peak and supportive experience dimensions, was obtained in the framework of studies by Quan and Wang (2004) and Mak et al. (2013). To enable to have the content validity of initial items, the scale was submitted to the opinions of nine faculty members who are experts in the field for expert judgment. The number of items in the pool, which consists of 45 items total, was determined as 24 items as a result of the content validity ratio (Lawshe, 1975).

Consumer-based destination brand equity scale

To measure the destination brand equity of Gaziantep, which is regarded as a gastronomy destination, a scale adaptation process was carried out. First, the literature was reviewed comprehensively to generate an item pool (33 items) and determine the constructs of destination brand equity in previous research (Yoo & Donthu, 2001; Netemeyer et al., 2004; Pappu et al., 2006; Boo et al., 2009; Ferns & Walls, 2012; Horng et al., 2012; Im et al., 2012; Bianchi et al., 2014; Kladou & Kehagias, 2014). After expert judgment (ten faculty academicians), four dimensions and 23 items have been determined as a result of the content validity ratio. Destination awareness (5 items), destination brand image (6 items), perceived quality (6 items), and destination brand loyalty (6 items) dimensions were distinguished based on expert reviews.

RESULTS

Pilot study and exploratory factor analysis

The pilot study and exploratory factor analysis (EFA) were conducted with 120 participants who had previously traveled to Gaziantep. Before ensuring reliability and construct validity, some items have reverse coded in the gastronomy experience scale such as *"The food experience is just one that fulfills my hunger", "Eating meals that I am familiar with while on vacation is important to me", "My food experience is ordinary", "It is important to me that the dishes I experience while on vacation are prepared with the cooking technique I am familiar with.", "I consume dishes that I have experienced before when travelling".* After reliability analyses, Cronbach Alpha coefficiencies of gastronomy experience (0.799), gastronomy motivation scale (0.907), destination satisfaction (0.859), and destination brand equity (0.925) were satisfactory. Since a bias can occur for research in social sciences, common method variance was controlled before exploratory factor analysis. Thus, Harman's one-factor test was utilized to evaluate. The results indicate that the common factor explains 26% of the total variance for the gastronomy experience scale and 34% for the destination brand equity scale. These results show that there was no problem of common method bias in the current research since the values are under the recommended threshold of 50% (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Then, EFA was performed for each construct except for the gastronomy motivation scale. A maximum Likelihood analysis with varimax rotation was used to extract the main factors. Only items with factor loadings higher than 0.30 were taken into account.

The 24 items used to measure domestic visitors' gastronomy experience were subjected to EFA. One item (*My local food experience is new for me*) which is below 0.50 factor loadings is removed and one item (*It is important for me to experience food in local restaurants that appeal to historical textures*) was eliminated from the data set because it is associated with cross-loadings on more than one factor. EFA analysis was re-run with the remaining items. Bartlett's test of Sphericity (1012,183; df:231) was significant and KMO value of 0.796 was calculated. A three-factor (*peak, supporting and attractionised experience*) with 22 items were extracted with a cumulative explained variance of %42.028.

The EFA was conducted with 3 items of the destination satisfaction scale. A single factor with three items extracted with a cumulative explained variance of %71.960. Bartlett's test of Sphericity (200,565; df:3) was significant and a KMO value of 0.707 was calculated. The 24 items used to measure destination brand equity were subjected to EFA. Four items (*'Gaziantep is a very famous destination', 'My food experience in Gaziantep is consistent with my impression of Gaziantep cuisine', 'This gastronomy tourism destination fits my personality', 'I enjoy visiting Gaziantep for gastronomy tourism'*) were eliminated from the data set because they are associated with cross-loadings on more than one factor. EFA analysis was re-run with the remaining items and out of 23 items, 19 were retained to generate a four-factor solution, explaining 58.621% of the total variance. Bartlett's test of Sphericity (1329,838; df:171) was significant and a KMO value of 0.888 was found. The four factors were named based on the theoretical framework of destination brand equity: destination brand awareness, destination brand image, perceived quality, and destination brand loyalty.

Confirmatory factor analysis

A covariance based Structural Equations Model (CB-SEM) approach was applied to test the validity of the research model and hypothesis using the LISREL 8.80 software program since CB-SEM is especially suited to test and confirm the well-founded theoretical models (Hair et al., 2011). Moreover, as the data is >200, CB-SEM was performed to analyze the data obtained. For the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and testing of the structural model firstly, a multivariate normality test of the data was performed. Lisrel and Mardia Captcha value is calculated (1235 and $p<0.001$). To avoid problems of non-normality of the data, CFA with the robust maximum-likelihood method of estimation (ACM) was performed as the data did not meet the condition of multivariate normality. Next, the reliability and validity of each construct were evaluated using CFA before testing the measurement model and structural model.

After CFA, five items of gastronomy experiences, four items of gastronomy motivation, and five items of destination brand equity constructs were removed due to the increasing chi-square value of each construct. The goodness-of-fit statistics, standardized factor loading of items (> 0.50), composite reliability (>70) t-statistics (> 2.58) and AVE (> 0.50) values were satisfactory for each construct. For internal consistency, CR and AVE for the other construct met recommended values before measurement model testing (Hair et al., 2010). Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5 depict the summary of these results.

Table 2. *Gastronomy Experiences Scale (CFA)*

Constructs and items	S. Factor Loadings	Cronbach Alpha	CR	AVE
Peak Experiences		0.951	0.95	0.74
My local food experience is unique for me	0.81			
My local food experience is an opportunity to learn different cooking techniques.	0.88			
Trying to learn the history of the local food is important to me.	0.91			
Visiting places that represent the food culture is important to me.	0.91			
Using traditional cooking techniques in local dishes important to me.	0.87			
To participate in local cooking practices is important to me	0.83			
I purchase the contains used in local dishes to relive that experience at home.	0.79			
Attractionised Experiences		0.904	0.91	0.71
The traditional presentation of local dishes is important to me.	0.84			
It is important to me that local dishes are delicious.	0.92			
The atmosphere of the place where local food is eaten attracts me.	0.87			
The quality of local food is important to me.	0.72			
Supportive experiences		0.910	0.91	0.63
The food experience is just one that fulfill my hunger	0.68			
Eating dishes that I am familiar with while on vacation is important to me.	0.73			
It is important to me that food and beverage businesses are easily accessible.	0.81			
It is important to me that the portions of the dishes I experience while on vacation are filling.	0.86			
It is important to me that the prices of dishes I experience while on vacation are reasonable.	0.88			
It is important to me that the dishes I experience while on vacation are prepared with the cooking technique I am familiar with.	0.80			

Notes: RMSEA: 0.071; NFI: 0.98; NNFI: 0.98; CFI: 0.99; RMR: 0.038; SRMR: 0.041; GFI: 0.90; AGFI: 0.86; Chi-Square (x2) /df: 4.009, p <.01 (t> 2.58).

Table 3. *Gastronomy Motivation Scale (CFA)*

Constructs and items	S. Factor Loadings	Cronbach Alpha	CR	AVE
Cultural		0.938	0.94	0.72
C_Mot1	0.79			
C_Mot2	0.85			
C_Mot3	0.89			
C_Mot4	0.88			
C_Mot5	0.86			
C_Mot6	0.81			

Physical		0.925	0.93	0.76
P_Mot1	0.84			
P_Mot2	0.90			
P_Mot3	0.87			
P_Mot4	0.86			
Interpersonal relations		0.962	0.96	0.86
IR_Mot1	0.87			
IR_Mot2	0.93			
IR_Mot3	0.96			
IR_Mot4	0.94			
Psychological Relaxation		0.977	0.99	0.96
PR_Mot1	0.97			
PR_Mot2	0.99			
PR_Mot3	0,98			

Notes: RMSEA: 0.071; NFI: 0.99; NNFI: 0.99; CFI: 0.99; RMR: 0.034; SRMR: 0.039; GFI: 0.88; AGFI: 0.81; Chi-Square (x2) /df: 4.03, p <.01 (t> 2.58).

Table 4. *Destination Brand Equity Scale (CFA)*

Constructs and items	S. Factor Loadings	Cronbach Alpha	CR	AVE
Destination Brand Awareness		0.894	0.89	0.74
I can easily name famous Gaziantep dishes.	0.78			
I am aware of Gaziantep as a gastronomy destination.	0.90			
I can recognize Gaziantep among other similar gastronomy destinations.	0.89			
Destination Brand Image		0.945	0.95	0.86
Visiting Gaziantep is a wonderful opportunity for sampling cuisine.	0.95			
Gaziantep has a rich cuisine culture.	0.97			
Gaziantep's cuisine is diverse.	0.86			
Perceived Quality		0.918	0.92	0.75
Gaziantep's cuisine is better than that of similar destinations.	0.88			
Gaziantep offers excellent quality in gastronomy experiences.	0.94			
Gaziantep offers delicious cuisine.	0.91			
Gaziantep's gastronomy tourism is offered at reasonable prices.	0.72			
Destination Brand Loyalty		0.942	0.94	0.81
Overall, I am loyal to Gaziantep.	0.85			
I would recommend others to visit Gaziantep for gastronomy tourism.	0.92			
Overall, I have confidence in Gaziantep's cuisine.	0.92			
Gaziantep would be my preferred choice for a gastronomy tourism vacation	0.90			

Notes: RMSEA: 0.060; NFI: 0.99; NNFI: 0.99; CFI: 0.99; RMR: 0.037; SRMR: 0.034; GFI: 0.92; AGFI: 0.88; Chi-Square (x2) /df: 3.18, p <.01 (t> 2.58)

Table 5. *Destination Satisfaction Scale (CFA)*

Constructs and items	S. Factor Loadings	Cronbach Alpha	CR	AVE
Destination Satisfaction		0.876	0.88	0.71
I am happy about my decision to visit Gaziantep	0.79			
I am pleased that I decided to visit the Gaziantep	0.87			
Visit to the Gaziantep exceeded my expectations	0.86			

Notes: All fit indices have perfect values.

Measurement model testing

Anderson and Gerbing (1988) advised a two-step approach for data analysis. After confirming each construct, this approach was followed in this study. To estimate the reliability and convergent validity of the measurement model, Cronbach's alphas, composite reliabilities (CR), and the average variance extracted (AVE) were calculated. Table 6 depicts the summary of the measurement model results.

Table 6. *Result of Measurement Model*

Dimension and Items	S. Factor Loadings	R^2	Cronbach Alpha (α)	(CR)	(AVE)
Gastronomy Experiences			0.949	0.82	0.60
Peak	0.89	0.79			
Attractionised	0.65	0.42			
Supportive	0.77	0.59			
Gastronomy Motivation			0,963	0.88	0.65
Cultural	0.84	0.70			
Physical	0.77	0.60			
Interpersonal relations	0.81	0.66			
Psychological Relief	0.81	0.66			
Destination Brand Equity			0.962	0.88	0.72
Destination Brand Awareness	0.83	0.69			
Destination Brand Image	0.88	0.77			
Perceived Quality	0.85	0.72			
Destination Brand Loyalty	0.84	0.71			
Destination Satisfaction			0.876	0.91	0.70
Sat _1	0.80	0.63			
Sat _2	0.87	0.76			
Sat _3	0.85	0.72			

Notes: RMSEA: 0.067; NFI: 0.98; NNFI: 0.98; CFI: 0.99; RMR: 0.029; SRMR: 0.040; GFI: 0.990; AGFI: 0.93; Chi-Square (x2) /df: 3.67, p <.01 (t> 2.58).

For discriminant validity of the measurement model, if square root values of AVE are greater than correlation coefficients ($\sqrt{AVE}$> correlations between factors), discriminative validity is achieved (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). In the present study, intercorrelation of the constructs and square root values of the AVE which are shown in Table 7 provides adequate evidence of discriminant validity.

Table 7. *Discriminant Validity for the Measurement Model*

Constructs	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
1. Gastronomy Experiences	**0.77**			
2. Gastronomy Motivations	0.76	**0.80**		
3. Destination Brand Equity	0.69	0.71	**0.84**	
4. Destination Satisfaction	0.43	0.54	0.51	**0.83**

Note: The diagonal elements (in bold) denote the square root of AVE

Structural model testing

The structural model was conducted to test relations among proposed variables. The results revealed that gastronomy experience positively influenced gastronomy motivation, destination satisfaction, and destination brand equity. No significant relation was found between gastronomy experience and destination satisfaction. Therefore, H5 and H8 are not supported. Figure 1 illustrates path analysis with their associated statistics and the results of structural model are presented in Table 8.

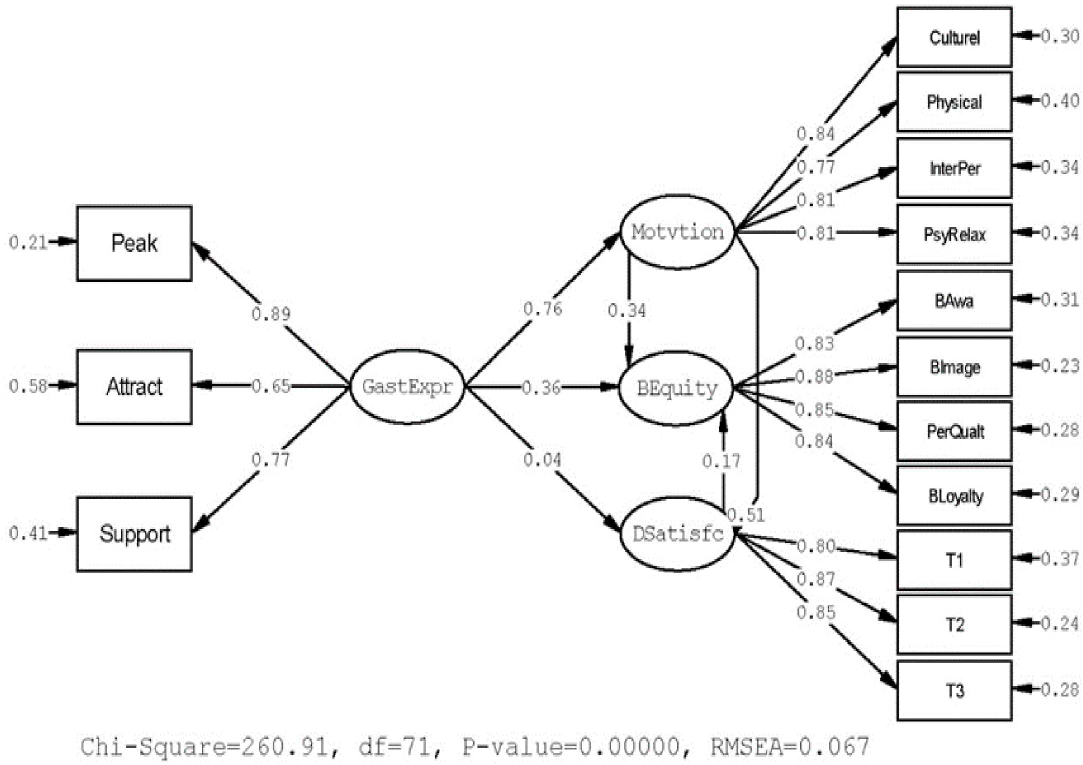

Figure 1. *Results of path analysis*

For determining the mediating role of gastronomy motivation on the relationship between gastronomy experience and destination brand equity, firstly, relationship between gastronomy experience and destination brand equity was investigated (SEs: 0,69; RMSEA: 0.052; (x2) /df: 2.64; GFI: 0.98; CFI: 0.99; NFI:0.99) are positive and significant. Then gastronomy motivation construct was added in the mediated model (SEs: 0.37; RMSEA: 0.080; (x2) /df: 4.79; GFI: 0.93; CFI: 0.98; NFI:0.98). Therefore, it is alleged that gastronomy motivation has a partial mediation effect between gastronomy experiences and destination brand equity. Thus, H7 was supported.

Table 8. *Result of Structural Model Testing*

Hypothesized Paths	Standardized Estimates (SEs) Direct Effect	Standardized Estimates (SEs) Indirect Effect	Total Effect	t-statistics	Relations
H1: *Gastronomy Experience → Gastronomy Motivation*	0.76	-		11.74*	Supported
H2: *Gastronomy Experience → Destination Brand Equity*	0.36	-		3.67*	Supported
H3: *Gastronomy Motivation → Destination Brand Equity*	0.34	-		3.50*	Supported
H4: *Destination Satisfaction → Destination Brand Equity*	0.17	-		3.60*	Supported
H5: *Gastronomy Experience → Destination Satisfaction*	0.04	-		0.38NS	Not Supported
H6: *Gastronomy Motivation → Destination Satisfaction*	0.51	-		4.16*	Supported
H7: *Gastronomy Experience → Gastronomy Motivation → Destination Brand Equity*	0.32	0.37	0.69	10.24*	Supported (Partial)
H8: *Gastronomy Experience → Destination Satisfaction → Destination Brand Equity*	0.04	-		0.38NS	Not Supported

*p<0.001, NS Not significant

DISCUSSION

Findings of this work indicated that the SEM analysis supported the relationship between variables except for two hypotheses (H5, H8). A significant and positive relationship (0,76) was found between gastronomy experience and gastronomy motivation. According to this finding, as visitors' perceptions of positive gastronomic experiences increase, their gastronomy motivations will also increase. Similarly, a significant and positive relationship (0.36) was found between the gastronomy experience and destination brand equity. This result points out that the positive gastronomic experiences of visitors are important to affect the destination brand equity. As with visitors' positive gastronomy experiences, their brand perceptions towards the destination will increase. These findings of present study are parallel to the results of previous research (Biedenbach & Marell, 2010; Shen & Liu, 2015; Ding & Tseng, 2015). Furthermore, the results indicated that there is a significant and positive relationship (0,34) between gastronomy motivation and destination brand equity. It can be concluded that as the gastronomic motivation of visitors increase, their perceptions of destination brand also increase. This result is consistent with the results of previous studies in the literature (Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Huang & Hsu, 2009; Chen & Chen 2010). A significant and positive relationship (0.17) was found between destination satisfaction and destination brand equity. This result is also similar to findings of prior studies (Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Da Costa

Mendes et al., 2010). No statistically significant relationship was found between gastronomy experience and destination satisfaction. Therefore, the H5 was rejected. In the current study, it can be claimed that satisfaction with the destination is effective in the emergence of this finding. Therefore, it seems likely that there may be other factors related to destination qualities that affect destination satisfaction. It can be thought that the reasons such as the fact that Gaziantep is perceived as a gastronomy destination by the visitors may influence this result. Another reason is that focusing gastronomy experience is more important for visitors who traveled to Gaziantep for gastronomy purposes.

A significant and positive relationship (0.51) was found between gastronomy motivation and destination satisfaction. Research results explaining the relationship between travel motivation and customer satisfaction (Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Meng et al., 2008) support this finding. Yoon and Uysal (2005) concluded in their research that there is a close relationship between travel motivations and tourist satisfaction. In the model in which the mediating effect of gastronomy motivation in the relationship between gastronomy experience and destination brand equity was evaluated; it was concluded that gastronomy motivation had a partial mediation effect between these variables. In other words, it was determined that it would not be enough to concentrate only on gastronomy experiences to create a high level of destination brand image, perceived quality, brand awareness, and brand loyalty perceptions of the visitors, but also gastronomy motivation need to be considered to enhance tourists' level of destination brand equity perceptions.

CONCLUSION

A field study was applied to analyze the theoretical model proposed in this research. Before analyzing the structural relationships between variables, to measure domestic visitors' gastronomy experience, a scale development process was followed in the scope of a market-driven perspective as proposed by Quan and Wang (2004). EFA and CFA findings from this research demonstrated that gastronomy experience compromises three dimensions, namely "peak experience", "attractionised experience" and "supportive experience". After EFA and CFA, four dimensions of destination brand equity have been found and this finding is in line with earlier research (Fern & Walls, 2012; Horng et al., 2012; Kladou & Khegasis, 2014). The reliability and validity of the gastronomy motivation and destination satisfaction scales were also tested and confirmed. The SEM results show that except for the fifth and eighth hypotheses, all paths are supported.

Theoretical Contributions

To augment the literature, the current study makes contributions to a better understanding of the relationship among destination satisfaction, experiences and motivations of gastronomy, and destination brand equity in the gastronomy destination context. Thus, the present research has some theoretical implications. First, the current study has examined the impact of gastronomy experiences, motivations, and destination satisfaction on gastronomy destination brand equity. A limited number of previous studies have been performed to examine the associative relationship between variables in the theoretical model of this study (Mora et al., 2021) but have not fully explained in the context of gastronomy destinations. Furthermore, examining the mediating effect of gastronomy motivation on the relationship between gastronomy experience and destination brand equity contribute to the existing body of knowledge.

Second, studies on adapting brand equity scales for gastronomy/culinary destinations are limited. The current research contributes to the destination branding literature because limited studies have been conducted to reveal the dimensions of gastronomy/culinary destination brand equity (Horng et al., 2012; Liu, 2020; Manimont et al., 2021). Third, contrary to the previous studies (Mak et al., 2012, 2017) emphasizing that the concepts of experience and motivation may be closely related, it was revealed that experience and motivation are distinct concepts in this paper. The discriminant validity of the measurement model supports this finding.

Fourth, the present study makes an important contribution to the relevant literature by addressing the lack of a measurement tool for gastronomy experience dimensions consisting of peak experience, supportive experience, and attractionised experiences in terms of both social science and marketing perspectives (Quan & Wang, 2004). Although numerous studies were devoted to explore or comprehend the gastronomy/food/ cuisine experiences in the gastronomy literature in the different contexts (Adongo et al., 2015; Berbel-Pineda et al., 2019; Sthapit et al., 2019; Cifci et al., 2021; Atsız et al., 2022), limited studies were performed to reveal gastronomy experiences in the context of social science and marketing approaches together. The results of the present work show that it is a reliable and valid scale for gastronomy experience.

Practical Implications

Based on the results of the current study, practical implications could be suggested for destination marketers and managers in the gastronomy tourism setting by examining the interrelationship among brand equity, gastronomy motivation, gastronomy experience, and destination satisfaction. The findings of this study can be used as a strategic tool for a destination focusing on gastronomy experience and motivations that enhance components of destination brand equity. First, within the framework of the relationship between gastronomy experience and brand equity, it is necessary to focus on the distinction between peak and supportive experience, and attractive experience should also be considered by destination marketers or managers and restaurant businesses. Restaurants at the destination need to design their menus considering the components that make up the gastronomic experience. As a matter of fact, according to research findings, visitors' food experiences do not only consist of peak experience. It was revealed that the supportive food experience and attractionised food experiences are also included in the food experiences of the visitors. Therefore, all dimensions that consist of the gastronomic experience should be paid attention to by the practitioners. To enrich the experiences offered to visitors in restaurants reflecting the destination’s food culture, culturally informative objects or booklets describing the history of the food and places to eat can be presented to the visitors. In addition, destination-specific food culture can be used in marketing and promotion strategies to improve destination loyalty of tourists.

Second, gastronomy motivations are crucial to understand the tourist preferences, needs, and behavior for the destination marketers. In the current study, gastronomy motivations were found as a significant element in developing destination brand equity. For instance, when considering the positive relationship between gastronomy motivation and destination brand equity, motivational factors consisting of cultural, physical, interpersonal relations, and psychological relaxation should be taken into account by destinations. It can be inferred that visitors who consume the local food with cultural motives have a high level of destination loyalty and high revisit intentions. In addition, destinations should pay attention to the other dimension of motivations to consume food for strengthening tourist loyalty and destination images. In conclusion, to improve destination brand equity with gastronomy experience, push motivations of gastronomy which are related internal and found as a mediating construct must be considered by destination marketers.

Third, a positive relationship between destination satisfaction and destination brand equity was found. This result shows that satisfaction is a significant antecedent of brand equity. Therefore, the effect of destination satisfaction on destination brand components should be taken into account for both destination and businesses such as hotel and restaurant businesses to attract more visitors. For example, satisfied visitors can make positive comments about their experience and recommend the destination to other potential tourists, especially through digital media. Moreover, if visitors have a good memory of the destination and have perceived the high quality of the destination, they will be willing to revisit the destination.

Lastly, since data was gathered before the COVID-19 pandemic, the results do not reflect its effects. However, destination marketers and managers should take precautions to prevent the perceived risks of visitors such as destination risk, health, and psychological risk when building a strong destination brand equity focusing on gastronomy experience and gastronomy motivations. Because potential risk factors related to the destination and tourism business can lead to travel anxiety and affect negatively travel intentions (Wachyuni & Kusumaningrum, 2020; Shahabi Sorman Abadi et al., 2021).

Limitations and future research directions

Considering the limitations of this study, some suggestions for future research are presented. First, since the current research was carried out in Gaziantep, similar studies can be conducted in other destinations. Differences and similarities can be revealed by comparing the results obtained from future research results. Similar studies can be applied to the sample of international visitors. Because people with different cultures and nationalities do not have exactly the same preferences, experiences, and perceptions of destination brands. Also, it could be required to develop marketing strategies for different segments or nationalities. Since the gastronomy experience scale used in the research was developed for the first time, it is likely to have limitations such as a lack of items for measuring dimensions. Therefore, additional items could be added to improve the scale of the gastronomy experience. Moreover, other factors such as food involvement and food personality traits could be investigated in the hypothetical model in future studies. In addition, apart part from the dimensions of the destination brand equity scale used in this research, future research can be conducted with different dimensions such as perceived brand value and destination brand trust.

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EXAMINING THE EFFECT OF AIRPORT ENVIRONMENT ON PERCEIVED IMAGE, MEMORABLE EXPERIENCES AND PASSENGER RELATIONAL BEHAVIOURS

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore air passengers' relational behaviours in terms of advocacy and openness by considering the overall airport environment, perceived image, and memorable experience in the context of international airports. The data was gathered from 879 respondents who are experienced airport users. This study employs partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) to verify the validity and accuracy of the research model. The overall airport environment was established with the second-order formative construct of six dimensions, namely, information and layout, terminal ambience, security, passenger facilities, gate area, and leisure and entertainment. Findings enhance knowledge of the formation process of airport image and memorable travel experience and provide insights into tourism and airport literature, particularly from the perspectives of air passengers. This study also discusses practical implications.

Keywords
airport environment
airport image
memorable experience
advocacy
openness
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INTRODUCTION

With the growing competition in the tourism and air transport industry, an increasing significance exists wherein airports must form and provide memorable travel experiences to air passengers to boost their competitiveness in the market (Wattanacharoensil et al., 2022). When selecting an airport to transfer from/to a destination, travellers typically use internal information from their travel experiences as the first referencing point in the information search process (Kim, 2014; Wattanacharoensil et al., 2017). In airport studies, similar to other tourism contexts (Kim, 2014; Zhang et al., 2018), memorable experience is regarded as a benchmark that determines passengers' satisfaction and attitudes towards an airport. As

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stated by Zhang et al. (2018), memorable experience is among the underlying variables that best represents perceptions and predicts future behaviours of tourists.

Prior tourism literature primarily emphasised the core elements and structure of memorable experience and established memorable travel experience dimensional scales (Kim, 2014; Tung & Ritchie, 2011a). Memorable experience components in current research also largely depend on a specific context, like destination (Zhang et al., 2018). Researchers request further examination that expands the knowledge of memorable experience in an uninvestigated context to explore the causes and nomological validity of the construct (Kim, 2014; Zhang et al., 2018). In the airport literature, studies on memorable experience are found to be limited in scope (Wattanacharoensil et al., 2017). Prior works showed an incomprehensive relationship of how airport environment dimensions influence memorable experience, although it would contribute to the airport literature.

In prior research, the importance of passenger experience, perceived image, and behaviour intention has been focused (Park & Park, 2019). However, no study has yet empirically explored the effects of service environment and image on memorable airport experience (MAE) (Wattanacharoensil et al., 2022). Since the emergence of COVID-19 pandemic, there exists to be various airport operational issues, particularly those related to performance, new technology adoption, and health and safety of passengers. Recently, the continued surge of oil prices has also affected the airport and airline operations in many countries (Samanta, 2022). More evidence demonstrates that passengers have often been disappointed with unorganized airport layout and not-useful information provided by airports (Fakfare et al., 2021a). As a result, airport users have required a better airport experience with a more agreeable airport environment (e.g., updated flight information, modern technology and more control of the processes) when they visit the airport for an air transfer. Therefore, this study attempts to address the gap by developing an integrated framework to investigate the relationship amongst service environment, airport image, MAE, and passenger relational behaviours.

Considering the causal links amongst the aforementioned concepts in extant tourism and air transport literature (Park & Park, 2019; Wattanacharoensil et al., 2022), this research proposes that airport environment dimensions and perceived image are important predictors of MAE, and MAE is a mediator in the relationships between these two constructs and passengers' future behaviours. This study employs relational behaviour constructs, including advocacy and openness to evaluate the power of construct validity. As argued by Melancon et al. (2011), relational behaviour is a vital concept that reflects the in-depth intention of consumers. If air passengers have satisfactory experiences with the airport environment (e.g. safety environment, departure gate, airport amenities), they are likely to gain favourable image and memorable experience, which subsequently contribute to positive relational behaviours towards an airport.

According to Wattanacharoensil et al. (2022), improving a better airport experience is amongst the primary objectives that airport managers must consider, particularly since an agreeable service environment could contribute to favourable airport image, MAE and passenger relational behaviours (Prentice & Kadan, 2019), and generate the potential for non-aeronautical revenues. Currently, there has been a scant discussion as to how the airport environment dimensions affect image, MAE, and subsequently advocacy and openness of tourists. This study intends to fill this gap by examining the structural relationship among these variables. The primary objectives of this study, therefore, are to empirically examine the air passengers' relational behaviours by considering airport environment, perceived image, and MAE in the context of the Thai international airport. This study develops a causal relationship model to investigate whether the perceived performance of airport environment influence airport image and MAE and whether the perceived image and MAE develop passenger relational behaviours. This research enhances knowledge of airport image and the MAE formation process and provides insights into MAE's antecedents and consequences and its critical roles in enhancing airport attractiveness and competitive positions in the marketplace.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Multi-attributes of Airport environment

Airport environment, in an operational term, refers to the primary functions and attributes of airports that affect air passengers' overall perceptions and experiences (Wattanacharoensil et al., 2022). Previous studies mostly incorporated service quality dimensions in addressing the key components of the airport environment. For example, Fakfare et al. (2021a) identified the quality of service at airports by considering dimensions, such as departure lounge, security checkpoint, circulation areas, and airport layout. Bezerra and Gomes (2016) addressed the importance of the airport service environment by classifying quality factors into ambience, mobility, security, check-in, price, convenience, and basic facilities. Wattanacharoensil et al. (2022) argued that the environmental components of an international airport comprise ambient factor, security areas, aesthetic and social factors, facilities and functional areas. Bogicevic et al. (2016) further proposed design, aroma, functional organisation, temperature, seating, and cleanliness as imperative domains in an airport environment model. As airport environment is exposed to air passengers and can be assessed by them, each area thus must be well-managed to provide experience quality to air passengers (Wattanacharoensil et al., 2022).

Existing studies have attempted to identify and aggregate airport environment domains into broad service perspectives, but vary amongst studies (Trischler & Lohmann, 2018). No common agreement has been reached regarding a firm scale to evaluate an airport environment. Therefore, this study attempts to perform an analysis of the potential domains of the airport environment and formulate them on the basis of the notion discussed in the extant airport literature. These domains comprise interrelated dimensions, namely, airport amenities, layout, terminal ambience, check-in, security, gate area, and entertainment (Fakfare et al., 2021a; Park & Park, 2019; Trischler & Lohmann, 2018; Wattanacharoensil et al., 2022), which represent the holistic idea of airport operational performance.

Memorable Airport Experiences

Memorable travel experience refers to the experience that a tourist selectively formulates and can be recalled after a journey (Zhang et al., 2018). Arguably, all travel experiences may not be transformed into memorable experiences given that tourists may memorise only notable experiences of a trip. According to Hosany et al. (2022), the experiences that tourists remember are vitally important because tourists typically rely on their vivid memories when making decisions to travel. By this means, memorable experiences possibly will influence tourists' future behaviours.

In hospitality and tourism, qualitative and quantitative studies have been advanced to examine the structure and formation process of the memorable experience (Ali et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2018). However, domains of the memorable travel experience are diverse among studies. For example, Tung and Ritchie (2011a, 2011b) utilised qualitative approach and found four underlying characteristics of memorable experience (i.e.

expectations, affect, consequentiality, and recollection) and five memorable experience dimensions (i.e. family milestones, identify formation, relationship development, freedom pursuits, and nostalgia re-enactment). Ali et al. (2016) identified travel experience domains, such as escape, peace of mind, involvement, and learning in quantitative research and explored the effect of travel experience on tourist memory, satisfaction, and behavioural intentions. The findings suggest that the five experience dimensions significantly affect tourist memory and subsequently become a memorable travel experience. Zhang et al. (2018) investigated the formation process and antecedents and consequences of memorable experience. The results revealed that memorable experience, which comprised of local culture, hedonism, refreshment, meaningfulness, involvement, knowledge, and novelty has a vital mediating role between tourists' image perceptions and revisit intentions.

In air transport studies, the understanding of functionality and airport environment affect passenger experience and thus the attractiveness of an airport is fundamental to airport research (Bogicevic et al., 2016). For instance, Bogicevic et al. (2016) explored the effects of the airport environment on air traveller's enjoyment and anxiety. The findings indicated that airport environmental attributes, such as design and aroma are important predictors of passengers' enjoyment, whilst inadequate functions and poor lighting facilities are the cause of travellers' anxiety. The impacts of airport environment on passenger satisfaction are further explored by Moon et al. (2016), considering the mediating role of two emotional elements (arousal and pleasure). The results suggested that airport environmental factors, such as layout, aesthetic features and cleanliness significantly affect pleasure, leading to passenger satisfaction. Given that the functionality and overall environment of the airports could influence passengers' experiences and overall satisfaction (Fakfare et al., 2021a), they could therefore contribute to MAE. Hu and Xu (2021) also indicated that memorable travel experience can be associated with various service attributes because the service attributes have a critical role in triggering a favourable tourist experience. Arguably, when the quality of airport environment is realised, air passengers possibly possess favourable experiences of the airport they visit, thereby leading to MAE. In line with the previous academic works, this research postulates that those air passengers who experience airport environment favourably tend to end up with MAE.

H1: *Airport environment positively influences MAE.*

Airport Image

In hospitality and tourism studies, scholars have investigated the concept of experience from various perspectives, from the core elements of experience, through quality experience to memorable experience (Zhang et al., 2018). In the quality and satisfactory experience studies, satisfaction is regarded as a key experiential factor. The level of satisfaction is generally assessed by traveller's perception of the performance attributes of tourism products or services. In the context of destination, Chen and Tsai (2007) examined the relationship amongst perceived image, value, satisfaction, and experience quality. The findings indicated that tourists' image perception of a destination positively influences value and experiential quality, and experiential quality in turn affects satisfaction. Wattanacharoensil et al. (2022) further explored the impacts of destination image on experiential satisfaction and found the significant relationship between them.

Similar to a destination (Lee et al., 2020), attribute performance of airport products and environment reflects its quality, contributing to passengers' experience and holistic impression of an airport or image (Nghiem-Phu & Suter, 2018). Similar to destination image, airport image consists of two elements (i.e. cognitive and affective images). Cognitive image involves physical and psychological attributes of the airport environment, whereas affective image concerns with feelings or emotions of air passengers when visiting the airport (Nghiem-Phu & Suter, 2018). Airport image has also become a vital component of airport branding**.** Instead of emphasising only an infrastructure that enables connectivity and passenger movement, many airports have increasingly attempted to improve their image by focusing more on emotional connections with customers (Wattanacharoensil et al., 2022). Park and Park (2019) found the effects that airport environment dimensions (i.e. cleanliness, convenience, amusement, attractiveness, pleasantness, and functionality) had on perceived servicescape (i.e. quality of airport experience) and perceived servicescape or experience, in turn, influenced airport satisfaction, image and passenger support intentions. Bogicevic et al. (2016) also discovered that airport environment is an element that affects image perception and satisfaction. Moreover, Wattanacharoensil et al. (2017) proposed the model of the airport experience in a way that airport environment is associated with perceived airport experience, image, and memory. Their study indicated that airport environment, representing the holistic idea of airport operational performance can form positive image and MAE**.** When attribute performance of airport product and environment is favourably perceived, tourists tend to have a positive airport image, which in turn affects MAE (Wattanacharoensil et al., 2017). Given the association amongst airport service environment, airport image and MAE, the current study examines the impacts of airport environment on airport image and MAE in the context of airports**.** These hypotheses are thus postulated:

H2: *Airport environment positively influences airport image.*

H3: *Airport image positively influences MAE.*

Passenger Relational Behaviours

In the competitive environment, many airports have attempted to establish long-term relationships with their passengers. The purpose of building a good relationship with air passengers is to gain favourable support, which helps sustain benefits for the airport in the long run (Bogicevic et al., 2016). In hospitality and tourism, repurchase or revisit is considered a critical part of the recency-frequency-monetary model (Fakfare et al., 2020b). For example, a frequent flyer program is generally offered by an airline to create loyalty amongst its customers; a frequent guest program is developed by a hotel to create customer loyalty (Oppermann, 2000). However, repurchase or revisit alone does not reflect tourists' loyalty behaviour. Tourists may not repurchase a tourism product, although they are happy with it because they have not yet explored other products from different service providers. Instead, they showed alternative supportive actions, such as recommendations to friends (Chen & Gursoy, 2001) and suggestions for improvements (Melancon et al., 2011).

Melancon et al. (2011, p. 345) proposed a relational value (i.e., relational behaviour) concept and conceptualised it as the nonfinancial, social behaviours toward the organisation that result from relational exchanges with consumers. When customers play supporting roles, service organisations gain long-term benefits from the relational behaviours (Lee et al., 2015). Melancon et al. (2011) established five underlying domains of relational behaviours, namely, advocacy, openness, acquiescence, immunity, and honesty. Advocacy refers to customers' willingness to defend an organisation, although negative publicity exists**.** Openness reflects the intention of consumers to provide useful comments and suggestions for improvement with a service firm. Acquiescence describes the degree to which consumers are willing to establish a good relationship with a service provider (e.g. accepting changes or complying with a new policy) (Bendapudi & Berry, 1997). Honesty refers to the degree of being honest towards an organisation in any form**.** Immunity indicates resistance to consuming competitors' products or services, although the competitors offer an appealing package (Bolton et al., 2000). The abovementioned domains have been conceptualised as underlying relational behaviours of consumers towards a service firm (Melancon et al., 2011).

In the context of an airport, if air passengers demonstrate unsupportive relational behaviours, then the airport will experience a significant loss of financial benefits from defecting passenger groups (Park & Park, 2019). Developing a relational strength contributes to significant economic and relational values (Fakfare et al., 2020b), particularly in terms of advocacy and openness; therefore, many airports attempt to maintain long-term relationships with air passengers by developing their experiential quality through high-quality airport attributes and environment (Fakfare et al., 2021a; Park & Park, 2019).

Previous research has examined the association of an airport environment to experience (i.e. satisfaction), airport image and behavioural intentions (Park & Park, 2019), and thus this study also verifies the influence of airport environment on MAE, airport image and passenger relational behaviours, including advocacy and openness. Nghiem-Phu and Suter (2018) found that airports have a critical part in forming tourists' impressions or images of a place. Wattanacharoensil et al. (2017) claimed that perceived airport environment contributes to passengers' experience of an airport and subsequently becomes MAE, and MAE is likely to influence future behaviours of air passengers. Park and Park (2019) also found the relationship amongst airport environment, experiential satisfaction, airport image and supportive behaviours and verified that airport environment is a critical part in forming airport experience, image and passengers' future behavioural response. In a destination context, tourists' relational behaviours, in terms of advocacy, openness and immunity were found to be influenced by quality dimensions and the imaginative representation of travel activity (Fakfare et al., 2020b). Based on the aforementioned airport studies, it implies that passenger relational behaviours with an airport rely on perceived airport image and MAE. The more favourable image perception and MAE that passengers have based on their experiences of the airport environment, the more favourable relational behaviours (e.g. advocacy and openness) they may demonstrate. Therefore, this study explores the effects of the holistic airport image and MAE on passenger relational behaviours. The two relational behaviour domains (i.e. advocacy and openness) are interwoven to embody the rich details of air passengers' supportive behaviours. The acquiescence immunity and honesty domains are not employed because the nature of their measurements does not fit into the airport context. The characteristics identified in the dimensions of acquiescence, immunity, and honesty, such as resistance to switch to competitors and exhibiting opportunistic behaviours, are considered irrelevant. As such, the following hypotheses are proposed in the airport context. Figure 1 displays the proposed conceptual model.

H4a: *Airport image positively influences advocacy*.

H4b: *Airport image positively influences openness*.

H5a: *MAE positively influences advocacy*.

H5b: *MAE positively influences openness*.

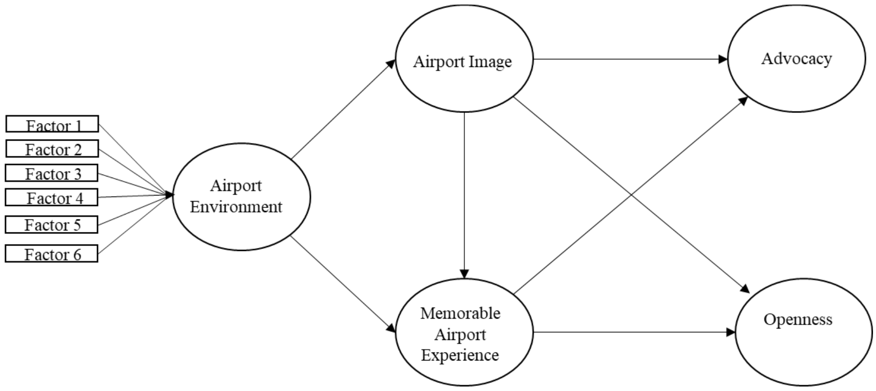

Figure 1**.** *Proposed research model*

METHODOLOGY

Study 1: Measurement development and scale validation

This research requires the measurement of four constructs, namely, airport environment, airport image, MAE, and relational behaviours. The partial aspects of airport environment were presented in the extant airport literature, and therefore qualitative study should be first performed to identify airport environment domains and attributes that are important to air passengers. This study followed a scale development procedure as recommended by Churchill (1979), applying qualitative techniques, including (1) an in-depth analysis of airport literature, (2) an expert panel review to purify the salient attributes relevant to the airport environment, and (3) scale refinement and validation. The initial analysis of the literature revealed 37 items from the seven airport environment domains, namely, airport information and layout, check-in, terminal ambience, security, airport amenities, gate area, and entertainment (Bogicevic et al., 2016; Fakfare et al., 2021a; Jeon & Kim, 2012; Park & Park, 2019; Trischler &

Lohmann, 2018). These domains are intertwined to represent the holistic idea of airport environment.

Considering the outlined environment dimensions from the abovementioned air transport literature, this study first operationalised airport environment as a second-order formative construct of seven domains (i.e. airport information and layout, check-in, terminal ambience, security, airport amenities, gate area, and entertainment). The researcher measured the airport image using five items modified from Park and Park (2019). and Wattanacharoensil et al. (2017). This study assessed MAE using a scale adopted from Stokburger-Sauer et al. (2012). This study measured relational behaviour using two dimensions (advocacy and openness) with seven items. This study adopted the scales of the items from Melancon et al. (2011). The researcher operationalised all items using a seven-point Likert scale.

Study location and data gathering

The data gathering process required experienced airport users to respond to an online survey. The researcher filtered potential respondents through a dichotomous question**.** Due to the negative impact of COVID-19 crisis, only Thai experienced airport users who visited an international airport within Thailand in the past year were targeted for the survey. In Thailand, there are 11 international airports, including Hat Yai International Airport, Suvarnabhumi Airport, Don Mueang International Airport, Phuket International Airport, Chiang Mai International Airport, Mae Fah Luang-Chiang Rai International Airport, Samui International Airport, Krabi International Airport, Surat Thani International Airport, Udon Thani International Airport and U-Tapao International Airport (Fakfare et al., 2021a). To trigger memory cues of the respondents about their past airport experiences, the researcher has inquired the respondents to indicate one international airport from the aforementioned list that they have recently used for air transfer within 12 months.

A self-completion survey was conducted from January 2020-February 2020. Considering that COVID-19 pandemic is a concern since the beginning of 2020, an onsite survey was thus not advisable. Therefore, the researcher sent the online questionnaires via a link using convenience and snowball sampling to friends and relatives of the researcher. As a result, this study obtained 879 completed data from the respondents**.**

The majority of the respondents were female (61%). The age group between 18 and 30 years old accounted for over 75% of the respondents.

This statistical data is consistent with the data provided by Kunst (2019) considering that the age group between 18 and 29 years old is the majority of online travel users. 48.1% of the respondents visited an international airport as a passenger 1-2 times annually, followed by 3-6 (34%) and 7 times and above (17.8%). A majority of respondents (47.4%) had recollected their memories of experiences at Survanabhumi Airport, followed by Don Mueang International Airport (42%), Phuket International Airport (4.3%), Chiang Mai International Airport (3.2%), and others (e.g., Samui, Krabi) (3.1%).

Nonresponse bias was verified by comparing the responses of the first 10% of the questionnaires completed with those of the survey data in the last 10% to check for statistical differences in the mean values for each item. The results show a nonsignificant difference within the examined data ($p = 0.05$), suggesting that nonresponse bias is not the main concern. To verify the data normality, this study examined the skewness and kurtosis of each item (Appendix 1). The skewness ad kurtosis values were found to range between -0.93 and 0.54, thus indicating that data is normally distributed (George & Mallery, 2010).

This research further performed a series of analyses of variance (ANOVA) to detect the differences among the various demographic segments. According to Appendix 2, the F-test results of airport environmental components revealed nonsignificant gender differences among components. For the age group, we found that air travellers who are 60 years old and above showed more favourable perceptions of security and gate areas. For travel experience, groups based on less frequent travel per year (1-6 times) tend to have more favourable perceptions of entertainment and gate area. Other than these clusters, F-tests, in general, did not show statistical differences amongst airport environment components.

FINDINGS

Principal component analysis for airport environment

To refine the scale, the survey data ($n = 879$) was split into two subsets: Sample 1 and Sample 2. This practice is an important process in the previous scale development research (Fakfare et al., 2020a). Sample 1 ($n = 500$) was analysed to identify underlying components by conducting principal component analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy (0.972) and Bartlett's test of sphericity ($p < 0.001$) were verified. Airport environment items with component loadings and communalities below 0.4 were deleted (Hair et al., 2010). Consequently, the airport environment attributes were found to consist of seven components with 37 items. The seven components are airport information and layout, check-in, terminal ambience, security, airport amenities, gate area, and entertainment (Appendix 3). These components account for 72.02% of the total variance. All components have acceptable reliability (i.e., > 0.7) (Nunnally, 1978).

Measurement model

This study employed PLS-SEM to assess the measurement and the structural frameworks. PLS-SEM provides several benefits, such as an ability to; manage the non-normal distribution of data; and manipulate formative and reflective constructs simultaneously (Henseler et al., 2009). According to do Valle and Assaker (2016), the association for reflective model develops from the factor to the indicators, indicating that all items are relevant, whilst association for formative constructs flows from the items to the factor, indicating that each item is unrelated. A formative construct assumes that the items used for measurement are dissimilar and not interchangeable with one another. The formative measures are likely to affect the latent variable rather than being influenced by it. Therefore, the presence of an indicator affects the meaning and content validity of the model. By contrast, the reflective model assumes that the indicators used for measurement share a similar meaning. Previous tourism studies (e.g., Meeprom & Fakfare, 2021; Fakfare et al., 2021b) also incorporated both reflective and formative constructs in a research model. As PLS-SEM can handle formative and reflective constructs simultaneously (Hair et al., 2017), this research implements two reflective models (advocacy and openness), one second-order formative model (airport environment) and two formative constructs (airport image and MAE) to verify a structural model.

The validity measurement model was assessed through several procedures. First, the researcher evaluated the measurement of the formative constructs (i.e. airport environment, airport image and MAE) by collinearity and construct validity (Halpenny et al., 2018). The second-order formative construct of airport environment was established on the basis of the procedures recommended by van Riel et al. (2017) considering that the airport environment represents the holistic notion of airport operational performance (Bezerra & Gomes, 2016; Meeprom & Fakfare, 2021; Park & Park, 2019; Trischler & Lohmann, 2018). This study performed a statistical analysis to assess whether formative modelling is an appropriate measure for this construct. According to Hair et al. (2016), when the weights for the formative constructs are positive and significant, they should be retained. This study found the significance of the first-order factors to second-order formative construct to be positive and significant ($p < 0.05$), thereby verifying six important facets (i.e. airport information and layout, terminal ambience, security, airport amenities, gate area, and entertainment). Due to the insignificant path coefficient, check-in was not verified as an important airport environment dimension. This result may be associated with the increased usage of information communication technologies (ICTs) to improve air traveller movements during COVID-19 (Wattanacharoensil et al., 2022). For instance, technology that tracks passenger authentication has increasingly been used at several major international airports to facilitate passengers processing through check-in and immigration. This development may have affected the relevance and importance of the traditional check-in dimension on passengers' perceptions of the airport environment attributes during COVID-19.

The collinearity was also evaluated by the variance inflation factor (VIF). All VIFs in this research fluctuated between 2.66-4.33 (lower than the threshold of 5), thereby indicating the lack of collinearity issues (Table 1). Similar to airport environment, this study assessed the measurement quality of airport image and MAE by VIF and the significance of path coefficients. As exhibited in Table 1, all VIFs of airport image and MAE were found below 5, and all hypothesized paths were significant ($p < 0.05$), thereby verifying the validity of the formative models.

The researcher assessed the two reflective models based on their construct reliability (CR) and model validities. Table 1 shows that advocacy and openness exhibited acceptable convergent validity by the AVE greater than minimum threshold of 0.5 (Fakfare & Lee, 2019). All CR values were found to be above 0.70 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988), thus indicating the constructs are reliable (Table 1). This study also evaluated the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) to prove the discriminant validity. As the HTMT value was discovered as 0.79 (lower than the preliminary recommended value of 0.9), the discriminant validity of the model was verified (Benitez et al., 2020). The SRMR was also found as 0.04 (lower than 0.08), thus suggesting an acceptable model fit (Henseler et al., 2014).

Study 2: Structural model and hypothesis testing

In line with the two-step approach in PLS-SEM, this study first obtained the factor scores for the first-order constructs (i.e. airport environment) (van

Riel et al., 2017). Next, the first-order constructs were reduced to single indicators, and their factor scores served as items of the second-order factor. Thereafter, this study examined the structural model, including airport environment, airport image, MAE, and passenger relational behaviours to verify the causal relationships amongst the variables. The structural model was evaluated on the basis of two primary results, namely, the path coefficients and r-square values. Figure 2 shows that all structural paths were significant.

Table 1. *Measurement model with validity and reliability of formative and reflective constructs*

Factor	Weight	Loading	AVE	CR	VIF
Airport Environment[1] (AE)		N/A	N/A	N/A	
Airport Information and Layout (AI)	**0.10**				2.66
Terminal Ambience (TA)	**0.15**				3.22
Security (SC)	**0.13**				3.16
Airport Amenities (AA)	**0.13**				4.21
Gate Area (GA)	**0.11**				4.33
Entertainment (EN)	**0.50**				3.23
Airport Image[1] (IMG)		N/A	N/A	N/A	
1. I have a favourable image of the airport.	**0.19**				3.58
2. The atmosphere of the airport is excellent.	**0.28**				3.88
3. The airport provides its passengers with a sense of	**0.19**				3.77
friendliness.					4.41
4. The airport provides its passengers with a sense of confidence.	**0.23**				4.15
5. The overall image of the airport is satisfactory.	**0.21**				
Memorable Airport Experience[1] (MAE)		N/A	N/A	N/A	
1. I have many memorable experiences with this airport.	**0.09**				3.02
2. Thinking of visiting this airport brings back good memories.	**0.39**				3.42
3. I really enjoyed the experience encountered in this airport.	**0.24**				3.62
4. I experienced something new (e.g. environment, airport management, and so on) during this airport visitation.	**0.37**				2.98
Advocacy[2] (ADV)			0.82	0.93	N/A
1. I would try to get my friends and family to visit this airport.		**0.91**			
2. I would seldom miss an opportunity to tell others good things about this airport.		**0.91**			
3. I would defend this airport to others if I heard someone speaking poorly about it.		**0.89**			
4. I would bring friends/family with me to this airport because I think they would like it here.		**0.92**			
Openness[2] (OPN)			0.77	0.85	N/A
1. I would feel comfortable telling the airport staff when I think something needs improvement.		**0.88**			
2. I would suggest changes to this airport if there was any problem with their services.		**0.90**			
3. I would be willing to provide useful information to help this airport out.		**0.86**			

Note: 1 = Formative; 2 = Reflective; **Bold** values were significant at $p < 0.05$

The resulting structural model (Table 2) reported the coefficient values between airport environment and MAE, and airport image to be 0.41 ($t = 9.83$) and 0.85 ($t = 70.95$), respectively. The higher air passengers assess the overall operational performance of airport in terms of airport information and layout, terminal ambience, security, airport amenities, gate area and entertainment, the more probability they form high level MAE and perceived favourable airport image. Therefore, H1 and H2 are supported. Similarly, airport image directly affects MAE and relational behaviours (advocacy and openness) with path coefficient values 0.43 (t = 9.26), 0.47 (t = 11.95), and 0.36 (t = 6.75), respectively. The findings indicated that the greater air passengers perceived favourable image of an airport, the more probability they remain MAE, and exhibit relational behaviours in terms of advocacy and openness. Therefore, H3 and H4 are supported. In addition, MAE theoretically predicted passenger relational behaviours in terms of advocacy (b = 0.45, t = 11.13) and openness (b = 0.36, t = 7.25), thereby supporting H5.

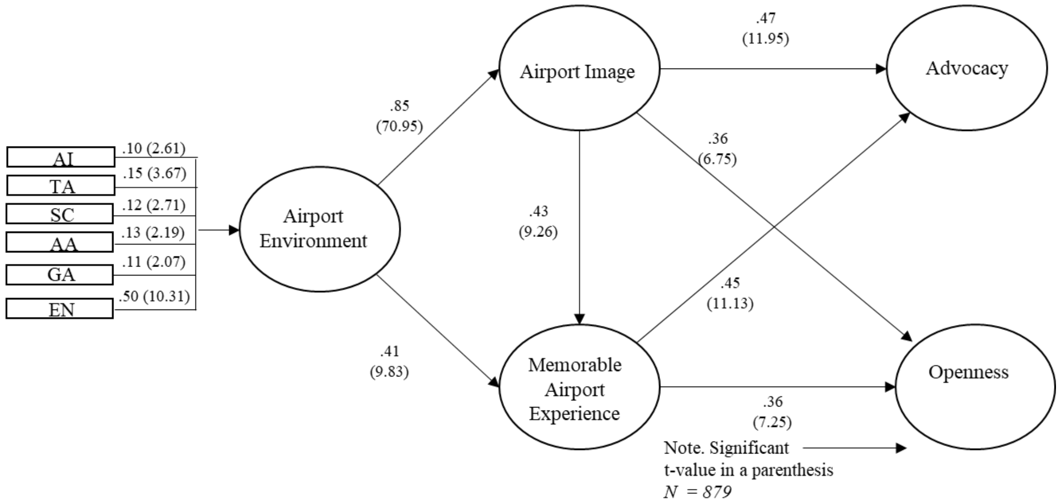

Figure 2. *Structural model*

Table 2. *Hypothesis results*

	Hypotheses	Path coefficients	t-value	Result
H1	AE => MAE	0.41	9.83	Supported
H2	AE => IMG	0.85	70.95	Supported
H3	IMG => MAE	0.43	9.26	Supported
H4a	IMG => AVC	0.47	11.95	Supported
H4b	IMG => OPN	0.36	6.75	Supported
H5a	MAE => AVC	0.45	1.113	Supported
H5b	MAE => OPN	0.36	7.25	Supported

R^2 represents the proportion of the variance for every construct that is explained by an independent variable. In this study, the airport image construct explained 73% of the variance in airport environment. R^2 value of MAE was 0.66, suggesting that the influence of the two predictor variables (i.e. airport environment and airport image) explains 66% of MAE. Airport image and MAE altogether explained 76% in advocacy and 47% in openness. All R^2 scores were found to be superior to the minimum edge of 25% (Hair et al., 2016).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This paper develops several points of discussion in the airport context. First, the airport environment, which was developed as a formative second-order model of six factors (i.e. airport information and layout, terminal ambience, security, airport amenities, gate area, and entertainment) was verified as significant antecedents of airport image and MAE. In line with previous studies (Bogicevic et al., 2016; Park & Park, 2019; Wattanacharoensil et al., 2017), air passengers' holistic impressions, beliefs and experiences about an airport are formed according to their judgements of quality attributes of airport environment. The attractiveness/quality of an airport is also determined by travellers' perceptions about the performance of that airport to match their anticipations.

Second, this study found that MAE and airport image reflect a strong connection between the quality of airport environment and passenger desires, given that they represent the benefits that travellers receive from an airport. The findings support the work by Park and Ryu (2019) and Wattanacharoensil et al. (2017) who discovered that airport's physical servicescape, such as terminal ambience, layout and seating comfort affect experiential satisfaction, image perception, and memorable experience of travellers. The higher air passengers assess the overall airport environment, the stronger they are confident with the airport to meet their expectations, then the greater tendency of air passengers to realise a favourable airport image and received MAE. The outcome that airport environment and perceived image altogether show 66% variance of MAE also verifies that these concepts are vital antecedents of MAE.

Third, when examining the impact of the airport image on MAE and passenger relational behaviours, airport image comprising such formative indicators as a sense of friendliness, atmosphere and confidence, exerts a significant and considerable effect on MAE and relational behaviours (advocacy and openness). The results of this research support the previous study by Zhang et al. (2018) that image perception could form memorable experiences and future behaviours of tourists. The stronger the airport promotes its image (through various environmental components added to the holistic impressions of passengers), the more probability of passengers to receive MAE and exhibit relational value with airports regarding advocacy and openness.

Finally, in tourism and airport studies, behaviour intention is often employed as a consequence of primary service-oriented constructs (i.e. satisfaction, quality and value) (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Jeon & Kim, 2012), although other outcome variables that fit particular tourism fields may be available. Melancon et al. (2011) proposed that relational behaviour is an important domain that represents the richer intention of consumers compared with traditional concepts, such as behaviour intentions. This research employed the concept of relational behaviours, particularly in terms of advocacy and openness to scrutinise issues in the airport field and verified the validity and accuracy of the prediction of the proposed research model. This study found MAE to influence relational value for advocacy and openness considerably, and this result supports prior findings that memorable experience is likely to influence tourists' future behavioural intentions (Tsai, 2016). The findings suggest that air passengers who receive MAE are likely to express their relational behaviours with an airport in terms of advocacy and openness. Thus, MAE has been deemed a critical driver of passenger relational behaviours.

Theoretical implications

This research sought to examine whether the realised quality of overall airport environment contributes to the formation of airport image and MAE, and the perceived image and MAE subsequently develop passenger relational behaviours. Previous air transport literature addressed the causal relationships amongst service environment, image and behavioural response in understanding tourist behaviours (Bogicevic et al., 2016; Park & Park, 2019). When visiting an airport, travellers expect to experience high-quality services and stay in an agreeable environment (Fakfare et al., 2021a), therefore understanding what environmental components of an airport added to the holistic perceptions of passengers, and how they affect airport image, MAE and passenger relational value with an airport are essential. However, no study has empirically examined passenger behaviours using the structural relationships of airport environment, airport image, MAE and relational behaviours. Through the empirical investigation of these essential airport concepts, this study delivers a stretched view of airport studies, addressing the research gap to advance the air transport literature.

In addition, this research supported the adoption of PLS-SEM in the airport literature. Three of the study's five main variables (i.e. airport environment, airport image, and MAE) were presented as formative constructs, not previously investigated in this means. For instance, airport environment includes a variety of attributes that had been previously identified as distinct domains (e.g. airport information and layout, terminal ambience, security, airport amenities, gate area, and entertainment). Integrating these varied domains into a single construct, on the basis of their conceptualisation, develops efforts to include distinct, but relevant phenomena in the same construct, thus leading to greater understanding and representation of the construct in a study model (Halpenny et al., 2018). The reflective-formative specifications in PLS were also verified on the basis of the suggestion of van Riel et al. (2017).

Managerial implications

The findings of this study offer some implications for airport operations and management. First, although many airports have increasingly exercised service-oriented marketing and business philosophy (Wattanacharoensil et al., 2017), they often fail to provide passenger experiences from the travellers' perspective. Passengers' desires and experiences have been neglected, as airports mostly promote their facilities and physical products supplied within the terminals, thereby making it difficult to maintain competitive positions in the market. The study about airport experience and MAE can guide concerned authorities about the vital role of MAE.

Second, a causal connection exists amongst the overall airport environment, airport image, MAE, and passenger relational behaviours. Particularly, the relationship between airport environment and perceived image and MAE is strong. Airport management and authority should not devote efforts only to creating passenger satisfaction but rather pay attention to building airport image and forming MAE. The quality of the overall airport environment, particularly in terms of airport information and layout, terminal ambience, security, airport amenities, gate area, and entertainment should be irresistibly projected because air passengers who realised the quality of the airport environment are likely to experience a boost to favourable airport image and MAE.

Although air passengers may not often visit an airport they like, airport managers must maintain favourable image and MAE every time a passenger visits, because fulfilled passengers have more probability to exhibit supportive behaviours with airports in terms of advocacy and openness. For example, at an airport, besides showcasing an array of high-quality service functions and modern facilities, airport managers can manage to provide leisure activities and exhibitions, such as themed gardens, art galleries, and other unusual pastimes for passengers. The specially arranged activities not only induce a positive image of an airport and passengers' memorable experience but also helps develop passenger relational behaviours and increase the attractiveness of an airport.

In addition, the recent COVID-19 impact also makes the overall airport environment to be important more than ever, given that passengers would highly expect an airport to restore and maintain confidence, particularly in terms of safety and hygiene. Therefore, common areas and facilities should be sanitised on a regular schedule. Airport managers are suggested to initiate and implement protective precautionary measures to ensure that all areas in the terminals are disinfected. This management effort is helpful to develop a good airport image in air passengers' eyes as well as enhance their MAE.

Limitations and Future Research

This research has some limitations. First, given that all respondents recollect airport experiences from their recent visits at airports located within one country (i.e. Thailand), the established theoretical framework may exhibit distinctive characteristics in explaining passenger behaviours in a specific context. Second, this study analysed the effect of airport environment on image, MAE, and relational behaviours on the basis of the second-order formative model of six dimensions (i.e. airport information and layout, terminal ambience, security, airport amenities, gate area, and entertainment). Certain additional domains of the airport environment, such as immigration, airport lounge, and baggage facilities (Han et al., 2012; Trischler & Lohmann, 2018) are not captured in this study. Integrating those potential domains in a second-order formative construct would be interesting to verify its validity. Third, the respondents were mainly young travellers, and the airports they selected fall into one national setting. Therefore, the ability of a hypothesis or theory to explain the subject matter may be biased toward this geographical context. In addition, this research did not consider the moderating roles of potential variables, such as demographics (age, gender, income), airport satisfaction level (high and low) and airport type (domestic and international). Future studies are encouraged to adopt these moderating variables together with the theoretical model developed in this study.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. *Data normality test*

Airport environment attributes	Mean	SD	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Airport Information and Layout (AI)						
AI1: The airport's signage and wayfinding clearly direct passengers to airport's services/facilities.	5.37	1.24	-0.49	0.08	-0.04	0.17
AI2: Size of signage is appropriate.	5.32	1.21	-0.42	0.08	-0.23	0.17
AI3: Quantity of signage is sufficient.	5.20	1.29	-0.52	0.08	0.08	0.17
AI4: The airport's layout is properly designed to cater for	4.90	1.40	-0.41	0.08	-0.14	0.17
passenger's special needs (e.g. elderly passengers or family with kids).	4.89	1.41	-0.50	0.08	0.08	0.17
AI5: The airport's physical layout avoids crowding and enabled easy movement of passengers.	4.96	1.41	-0.43	0.08	-0.17	0.17
Terminal Ambience (TA)						
TA1: The lighting at this airport gives a pleasant feeling.	5.10	1.37	-0.39	0.08	-0.24	0.17
TA2: The temperature at this airport is comfortable.	5.08	1.34	-0.48	0.08	-0.08	0.17
TA3: The announcement levels at this airport are appropriate.	4.91	1.39	-0.38	0.08	-0.18	0.17
TA4: The aroma at this airport is fitting and desirable.	5.15	1.40	-0.59	0.08	0.03	0.17
TA5: The airport maintains clean facilities.	5.37	1.28	-0.56	0.08	-0.02	0.17
Check-in (CI)						
CI1: Check-in Staff are friendly, courteous and helpful.	5.49	1.22	-0.58	0.08	-0.06	0.17
CI2: Check-in Staff communicate clear and appropriate message.	5.27	1.27	-0.50	0.08	0.07	0.17
CI3: The Check-in process is efficient.	5.44	1.27	-0.71	0.08	0.35	0.17
CI4: Luggage carts are available for passengers.	5.07	1.33	-0.54	0.08	0.13	0.17
CI5: Wait-time at check-in is appropriate.	5.14	1.36	-0.58	0.08	0.13	0.17
CI6: The self-check-in kiosks are appropriately designed and easy to use.	5.08	1.39	-0.51	0.08	-0.06	0.17
Security (SC)						
SC1: I felt safe and secure during the security screening processes.	5.24	1.30	-0.53	0.08	0.10	0.17
SC2: Security staff were friendly, courteous and helpful.	5.20	1.28	-0.36	0.08	-0.18	0.17
SC3: Security Staff communicate clear and appropriate message.	5.25	1.29	-0.58	0.08	0.17	0.17
SC4: Security screening on passengers and personal belongings was thorough.	5.15	1.28	-0.48	0.08	0.12	0.17
SC5: Wait-time at security checkpoints is appropriate.	5.18	1.45	-0.68	0.08	0.08	0.17
Airport Amenities (AA)						
AA1: Washroom/toilets are clean.	5.05	1.45	-0.63	0.08	0.05	0.17
AA2: Washroom/toilets are widely available for passengers.	4.73	1.59	-0.44	0.08	-0.37	0.17
AA3: WIFI and PC are available for passengers.	5.01	1.41	-0.48	0.08	-0.05	0.17
AA4: Restaurants offer a wide range of products.	4.23	1.84	-0.23	0.08	-0.93	0.17
AA5: Restaurants offer products with reasonable price.	5.17	1.32	-0.47	0.08	-0.08	0.17
AA6: Banks/ATM/Exchange are available to cater for passenger's needs.	5.10	1.33	-0.51	0.08	0.14	0.17
AA7: Retail stores are available to cater for passenger's needs.	4.97	1.36	-0.51	0.08	0.18	0.17
Gate Area (GA)						
GA1: Departure hall is not crowding.	5.19	1.30	-0.56	0.08	0.10	0.17
GA2: The airport provided aero-bridges with good condition	5.12	1.32	-0.53	0.08	0.11	0.17
that eased access from the terminal to the aircraft.	5.02	1.44	-0.57	0.08	0.01	0.17
GA3: The airport provided comfortable and spacious seating in the waiting gate.	4.83	1.53	-0.55	0.08	-0.07	0.17
GA4: The airport provided enough seating in the gate area.	5.13	1.29	-0.47	0.08	0.02	0.17
GA5: The airport provided enough bed-seating for transfer passengers.	5.15	1.32	-0.54	0.08	0.08	0.17
Entertainment (EN)						
EN1: The interior decoration of the airport is attractive.	5.26	1.25	-0.57	0.08	0.34	0.17
EN2: The interior and exterior of the airport are up-to-date.	5.01	1.43	-0.52	0.08	-0.05	0.17
EN3: Use of airport amenities is enjoyable.	5.05	1.42	-0.64	0.08	0.27	0.17

EN4: Events and exhibitions provided by the airport are interesting.	4.65	1.56	-0.35	0.08	-0.33	0.17
Airport Image (IMG)						
IMG1	4.65	1.59	-0.42	0.08	-0.29	0.17
IMG2	5.22	1.37	-0.63	0.08	0.19	0.17
IMG3	5.09	1.35	-0.52	0.08	0.07	0.17
IMG4	5.11	1.33	-0.54	0.08	0.23	0.17
IMG5	5.13	1.34	-0.50	0.08	0.06	0.17
Memorable Airport Experience (MAE)						
MAE1	5.25	1.30	-0.56	0.08	0.12	0.17
MAE2	5.11	1.38	-0.51	0.08	-0.01	0.17
MAE3	4.97	1.42	-0.54	0.08	0.00	0.17
MAE4	4.96	1.37	-0.50	0.08	0.11	0.17
MAE5	4.95	1.39	-0.53	0.08	0.15	0.17
Advocacy (ADV)						
ADV1	5.14	1.33	-0.56	0.08	0.24	0.17
ADV2	4.98	1.36	-0.47	0.08	0.04	0.17
ADV3	4.82	1.42	-0.49	0.08	0.14	0.17
ADV4	4.97	1.34	-0.51	0.08	0.28	0.17
Openness (OPN)						
OPN1	5.01	1.33	-0.47	0.08	0.17	0.17
OPN2	5.23	1.25	-0.52	0.08	0.35	0.17
OPN3	5.42	1.24	-0.65	0.08	0.54	0.17

Appendix 2. *Analysis of variance of demographic segments*

Gender	**AI**	**TA**	**CI**	**SC**	**AA**	**GA**	**EN**
Male (Mean)	5.05	4.88	5.29	5.11	4.79	4.91	4.69
Female (Mean)	5.10	4.98	5.27	5.08	4.80	4.89	4.62
F-ratio	.24	.74	.02	.43	.01	.01	.36
P-value	.62	.39	.90	.84	.93	.92	.55
Age (years)	**AI**	**TA**	**CI**	**SC**	**AA**	**GA**	**EN**
20 or below	5.10	5.19	5.39	5.28	4.97	4.99	4.94
21-30	5.16	4.99	5.34	5.21	4.97	5.08	4.84
31-40	4.66	4.33	4.97	4.62	4.11	4.33	3.77
41-50	4.92	4.72	5.17	4.71	4.34	4.33	4.09
51-60	5.11	5.11	5.21	4.92	4.57	4.68	4.75
61 and above	5.43	5.38	5.45	5.39	4.93	5.25	4.69
F-ratio	2.42	4.67	1.53	4.03	6.99	6.15	7.73
P-value	.35	**.00**	.17	**.001**	**.001**	**.001**	**.001**
Travel experience (times)	**AI**	**TA**	**CI**	**SC**	**AA**	**GA**	**EN**
1-2	5.07	4.94	5.30	5.15	4.92	5.04	4.86
3-4	5.12	4.97	5.42	5.16	4.79	4.92	4.53
5-6	5.20	5.11	5.21	5.22	4.91	4.93	4.82
7-8	5.13	4.91	5.44	5.22	4.97	4.94	4.51
9-10	5.35	4.90	5.29	4.81	4.55	4.72	4.56
11 and above	4.74	4.65	4.91	4.64	4.12	4.28	3.97
F-ratio	1.47	.94	1.96	2.22	4.24	3.22	3.93
P-value	.20	.46	.08	.051	**.01**	**.007**	**.002**

Appendix 3. *PCA Results*

Airport environment attributes	Factor loading	Cronbach's alpha
Airport Information and Layout (AI)		0.88
AI1	0.76	
AI2	0.74	
AI3	0.74	
AI4	0.54	
AI5	0.46	
Terminal Ambience (TA)		0.87
TA1	0.53	
TA2	0.60	
TA3	0.47	
TA4	0.71	
TA5	0.64	
Check-in (CI)		0.88
CI1	0.78	
CI2	0.71	
CI3	0.68	
CI4	0.60	
CI5	0.53	
CI6	0.51	
Security (SC)		0.92
SC1	0.51	
SC2	0.62	
SC3	0.67	
SC4	0.60	
SC5	0.50	
Airport Amenities (AA)		0.89
AA1	0.61	
AA2	0.58	
AA3	0.62	
AA4	0.57	
AA5	0.70	
AA6	0.76	
AA7	0.63	
Gate Area (GA)		0.90
GA1	0.46	
GA2	0.43	
GA3	0.55	
GA4	0.55	
GA5	0.55	
Entertainment (EN)		0.91
EN1	0.76	
EN2	0.72	
EN3:	0.68	
EN4	0.65	

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FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE ATTENDANCE, SATISFACTION, AND LOYALTY FOR VIRTUAL EVENTS

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed motivational factors that influence participants to attend to a virtual event and additionally together with these factors, the effect of online content engagement and perceived usefulness through overall satisfaction and future intention which specifically loyalty. Data was collected from attendees of different types of virtual events. Findings revealed that online content engagement, content of the event, being in a global community, meeting like-minded people and professionals, reputation of the event, keynote speakers, and usage of mobile apps are some of the significant factors for attendees` preferences for virtual events. Additionally, it was indicated that overall satisfaction affects future intention (loyalty) while the satisfaction also has a partial mediating effect between relationships of networking, and program and loyalty. It is further revealed, satisfaction acts as a full mediator between online content engagement, as well as perceived usefulness and loyalty. Relying on this outcome, the conclusion of this paper offers valuable recommendations for the event industry which makes this research one of the first studies about virtual events during pandemic period.

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INTRODUCTION

The Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) industry creates revenues indirectly and directly with its multiple effects for diverse industries for instance food & beverage, lodging, attractions, shopping, transportation, and entertainment with addition for employment. Further, the MICE industry produces important revenue per consumer for the hospitality industry (Rittichainuwat et al., 2001). Therefore, this industry is one of the prerequisites in the international market (Hanly, 2012). In this study MICE industry will be referred to *events*.

New technologies, applications and platforms enhance the planning process of the events and describe the needs of them again (Rose & Steinbrink, 2011). For the past 10 years, new technological advancements entered this industry and new management opportunities arised (Sox et al., 2017). These information and communication technologies supported events to transform into online exhibitions (Kharouf et al., 2020). This led to hybrid and virtual events to become new phenomenon in the ecosystem of events (Dolasinski et al., 2020). Sox et al. (2014) have stated the definition of virtual meetings given by the (PCMA) Professional Convention Management Association as, "*digital events, meetings, and learning technologies that include: (streaming media); virtual environments (2D and 3D) such as virtual events, virtual trade shows, conferences, campuses, learning environments; and perpetual (365 days per year) business environments*". Additionally, Doyle (2013: 1) has made a definition of hybrid events as "*involving a mixture of physical events with elements of a virtual event usually running simultaneously and with overlapping content and interactive elements*". Technological opportunities can propose different alternatives for event planners and attendees through hybrid and virtual meetings (Sox et al., 2017).

There is a need of research on how online experiences are formed and previous studies have stated that online content engagement, effective communications, and consumer interactions are important attributes when analyzing online experiences and the success of organization (Kharouf et al., 2020: 735-736). To understand the effectiveness and impact of the virtual events over attendees, more research are needed to establish relevant knowledge on the subject (Dolasinski et al., 2020). Studies mainly focus on online experiences that are organized by event companies however to understand about hybrid events, the attendee`s interactions should be included in the studies (Simons, 2019).

During the pandemic, according to the report of Event Industry Survey 2021, there are some important results that show the future of event industry (Event Managers Blog, 2021). For prior, there is a loss of business in operation with 76.2%. Second, when companies go back to function in their business environment, 69.3% of managers said events will continue hybrid. Third, 78.1% of managers said their events will shapeshift into the virtual events. Fourth, the biggest challenges for turning into virtual events are engagement (29.1%), lack of tech knowledge (13.0%), and networking (12.4%). Another report from the industry has indicated that adding technical expertise in virtual and hybrid events is one of the important evaluations after pandemic (SITE, 2020).

This study aims to identify attendees' motivational factors to participate a virtual event and the factors that affect their satisfaction level. In addition to evaluate these factors for attendees' loyalty as future intention in particular event, current research tries to find out if satisfaction is a mediating factor for future intention (loyalty).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Factors Influencing Virtual Event Attendance

In the literature on decision making factors for conventions, Oppermann and Chon (1997) have first proposed a model composed of four factors: location, personal & business, intervening opportunities, and association/conference factors. In their model, personal & business factors include finances, schedule, and individual's health. Climate, proximity, destination image, and travel costs are the components of location. Association/conference factors involve peer recognition, professional contacts, and personal interactions. Subsequent studies supported and improved by other researchers. For example, Rittichainuwat et al. (2001) have studied the dimensions of motivational factors for conferences and explained the five leading motivations for conferences such as: (1) interesting conference programs, (2) education, (3) career enhancement, (4) networking and traveling to desirable place. They have also pointed that money, time, and distance are the top three main conference inhibitors.

The referred model of Oppermann and Chon has been studied by Zhang et al. (2007) and they have suggested that 'location factors' should be divided into two subcategories as "attractiveness" and "accessibility". They have also said that the original "intervening opportunities" were replaced by "total cost factor" which include time costs and monetary. On the other hand, Severt et al. (2007) have studied the factors under five categories according to their importance in attending the conference: (1) networking & fun, (2) convenience of conference, (3) program quality, (4) conference products, and (5) educational benefits. For example, program quality involves such as: (a) business activities, (b) association-related activities, (c) travel opportunities, (d) spouse/family/guest programs, (e) self-esteem enhancement, (f) visiting friends and relatives. Yoo and Chon (2008) have stated another five dimensions for decision making factors for participating to the events: (1) professional & social networking opportunities, (2) destination stimuli, (3) educational opportunities, (4) travelability, finally (5) and safety & health situation. Another supportive study was done by Mair and Thompson (2009) that cost, location, personal & professional development, networking, time & convenience, and health & security were found as the results of dimensions of attendance motivations for events. As a conclusion after an extensive examination of the literature in events, it can be said that motivational factors for attendance can be almost same for different types of events. Besides these motivational factors, attracting attendees has become more difficult in recent years and increasing attendance and forecasting attendance are crucial for the profitability (Tanford et al., 2012). There is a crucial connection between these motivations and satisfaction with these factors during the events so performance of these events is crucial as this could be a key determinant of repeating attendance (Tanford et al., 2012). That`s why significant predictors of future attendances should be studied for the satisfaction of the events.

As technological opportunities become more available, number of virtual and hybrid meeting are increasing. Organizations should provide online content that engage consumers, and this is important to improve the total experience (Calder et al., 2009). This online content gives comprehensive information and provides relation between the consumers anytime (Rose et al., 2011). However few studies have been done in the tourism literature concentrate on hybrid and virtual events (Pearlman & Gates, 2010).

Because of restrictions and lock downs which introduced life of humanity with Covid-19 pandemic, all events have been organized virtually and people started to attend lots of events in a day for business and also for leisure. The increase on the numbers of relatively new way of the events creates importance for understanding and investigating the reasons why people join in different types of events, if they are satisfied or not and also how future participation of attendees can be increased. For example, Meeting Professional International (MPI) 2020 report, "How to guide virtual events", has stated the guidance for virtual events. These are: (1) virtual events should start with a strategy, (2) services offered by organizations should be given, (3) type of virtual formats should be decided, (4) the success of the program should be measured, (5) and resources that are used or needed for the event (Fryatt et al., 2020). The success of hybrid event depends on the balance between connecting practices, planning, co-creative and leaving space for the attendees to do their own connecting, relating, recruiting and creative practices (Simons, 2019: 157). Findings show that virtual events are innovative and practical methods to effectively meet the needs of organizations (Pearlman & Gates, 2010).

This paper focuses on factors that influence to attend in virtual events so according to literature program content, personal/ professional development, networking, and activities are studied in this paper.

Virtual Event Satisfaction

Satisfaction evaluation is fundamental for the future participation of the attendees to a particular event. Severt et al., (2007) have stated that satisfaction is critical for loyalty and recommendation of the event to the other. They have also said that attendees who are happy with educational benefits are more satisfied and willing to share their event experience with others. In addition to that Jung and Tanford (2017) have found education and networking is the most important drivers for the attendees' satisfaction. They have also stated that convention environment which includes location, venue image, and accessibility are significant predictors of loyalty. However, convention environment attributes are not included in this study since the research is about virtual event satisfaction. Event locations could be replaced by virtual reality and the event experience could be simulated (Wreford et al., 2019). As the conclusion, experiences of attendees play a key role for creating loyalty and satisfaction is a significant determinant of loyalty (Kim & Malek, 2017).

Studies have indicated that online content engagement and interactions of attendees are effective attributes while analyzing their online experiences and organizations` success which leads better overall evaluation of the interaction with the organization. According to the study of Kharouf et al. (2020), one of the important factors for the future behavioral intentions of participating events is online content engagement and they also proposed that a good experience gained from virtual event effects behavioral intentions positively. Online engagement has been explained as *"a psychological state which occurs by virtue of interactive [consumer] experiences with a focal agent/object within a specific service relationship"* (Brodie et al., 2011: 259). Online engagement is important not only create value but also improve attendee's engagement. There are different ways to achieve the virtual experience of attendees including customization, website design, and interactivity (Kharouf et al., 2020), and these features play critical role two-way interaction in events. Furthermore, having attendees engage with the online content is critical to improve the overall experience (Calder et al., 2009). The pandemic has significantly changed the way attendees engage with content and one thing is for certain that changed the possibilities for content and event delivery (Copans, 2021). For example, live polling allows attendees to share their opinions, questions, thoughts with speakers and organizers, they can interact with them that they may not have a chance in the past (Event Managers Blog, 2019). Also, the goals of engagement strategies can be different, for example, association attendees' goals can be collecting continuing education credits for certification, idea-sharing, industry networking, and shopping for new vendors while conference attendees want to gain education and networking contacts (Event Managers Blog, 2019). According to Copans (2020), there are four important tips to improve design elements when creating an event: (1) use backdrops to support cohesion, (2) to support your narrative, use a powerful visual theme, (3) embed speakers within dynamic presentation, and lastly (4) create 3D booth visualization.

According to Talantis et al. (2020), event planners are using cutting edge technologies to keep the attendees engaged and informed which are the gadgets for new technological improvements, mobile devices via mobile apps. After the pandemic, mobile apps have been used in many parts of hospitality industry such as restaurants, hotel reservations etc. In the report of Event Managers Blog (2019), technology should be accessible to all attendees and simplicity and effectiveness are keys to make sure everybody accesses the event by using the technology. In order to be effective and competitive, event technologies such as artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and augmented reality should be used. Luxford and Dickinson (2015) analyze mobile apps` role about the experiential needs of attendees and they have stated that there is a need for user-friendly apps focused on the experience of the events' expectation. With the growing usage of technology within events, the technology acceptance model which has been introduced by Ajzen and Fishbein, (1975) and its variables (e.g. perceived usefulness, attitude toward using technology, perceived ease of use, and behavioral intention) have been studied widely to assess relationships within the literature (Sox & Campbell, 2018). In the study of Talantis et al. (2020), it has been found that perceived usefulness influences attitude significantly and attitude influences overall conference satisfaction, therefore, event managers should take into consideration the mobile event apps usage while giving the decisions of event technologies. Developing update is a must to make apps valuable tools during the events that increase a satisfactory level of service throughout the whole event experience (Luxford & Dickinson, 2015). The report from Event Managers Blog (2021) has specified that the biggest frustration in the virtual event tech is the inability to match live engagement. So, usage of event technology and engagement are crucial for events success. There should be a reason for the attendees to be in virtual environment.

In this paper, predictors for overall satisfaction of virtual events are divided into three parts: first, the factors for attending an event, second is online content engagement and final one is perceived usefulness. Additionally, overall satisfaction has been held as a mediating factor for future intention (loyalty).

Future Intention (Loyalty) for Virtual Events

Positive relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty has been studied in several research (Severt et al., 2007; Jung & Tanford, 2017). Satisfied attendees are awaited to take part in word-of-mouth communication and establish their loyalties (Antanassopoulos et al., 2001). This led to idea that word-of-mouth (WOM) should be one of two primary loyalty indicators (Tanford et al., 2012). In addition to this in the study of Wan and Chan (2011), revisit and recommendation to others are included under the loyalty. In another study for loyalty, Kim et al. (2012) have explained that functional value (price/value for money) has an effect in explaining satisfaction and behavioral intentions. These functional value criteria are also used for this study. Lee and Black (2009) have said that an important forecaster of loyalty was satisfaction. Hahm et al. (2016) pointed out, satisfaction was a mediating factor between future intentions and sense of community. Kim and Malek (2017) have found an important relationship between satisfaction and loyalty of attendees. Tanford et al. (2012) have examined the loyalty drivers and their findings revealed that the emotional commitment, types of switching costs, switching intention, negative word of mouth, behavioral loyalty, and willingness to pay more are the predictors of loyalty. Some of the questions from their studies were borrowed for the usage for the current research's scope. Most of the events turn into virtual and hybrid after pandemic which means satisfaction and loyalty will be the top concerns for the future of events. As Franceschini (2021) has cited from the report of Future of the Event Industry, the professionals from the industry will still focus on the attendee experience and try to be attendee-centric for the event success. Therefore, it is critical to examine the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty in virtual events.

After the conduction and assessment of the existed literature, the proposed conceptual model has shown in Figure 1 which explains the factors influencing the virtual event attendees' decision and their satisfaction level that effect future intension and loyalty.

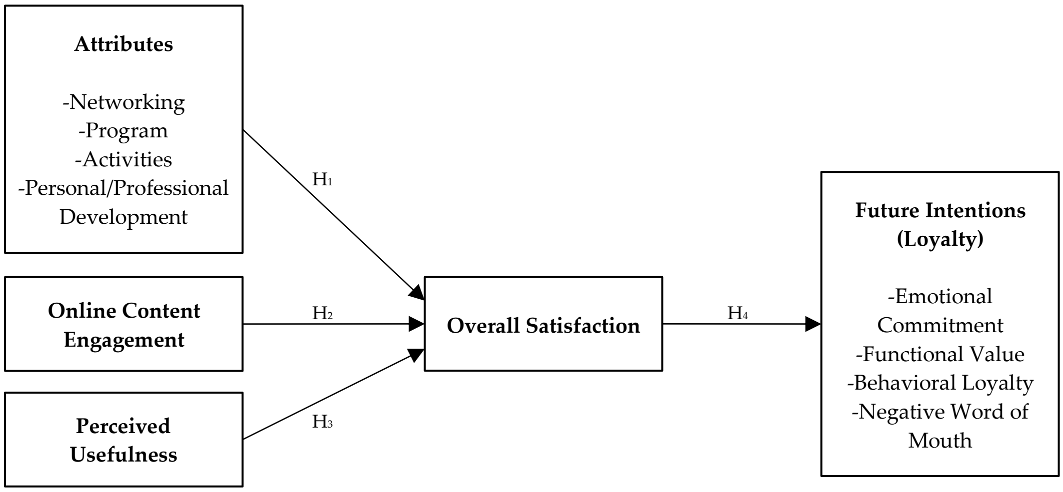

Figure 1. *The Study's Conceptual Model*

The hypotheses are stated below:

H_1: Attributes (networking, program, activities, and personal & professional development) have an effect on the overall satisfaction.

$H1_a$: Networking has an effect on the overall satisfaction.

$H1_b$: Program has an effect on the overall satisfaction.

$H1_c$: Activities has an effect on the overall satisfaction.

$H1_d$: Personal and professional development have an effect on the overall satisfaction.

H_2: Online content engagement has an effect on the overall satisfaction.

H_3: Perceived usefulness has an effect on the overall satisfaction.

H_4: Overall satisfaction is a mediating factor between attributes, online content engagement, perceived usefulness, and future intention (loyalty).

METHODOLOGY

The questionnaire was created with inclusion of scales from previous research from the literature review by taking into consideration of virtual event experiences. It composed of the statements such as: (1) factors for overall satisfaction of virtual events (attributes, online content engagement and perceived usefulness), (2) the future intention (loyalty) for the particular event, (3) overall satisfaction with the event, (4) demographics of attendees.

The appropriateness of the statements in the questionnaire was discussed with six sector professionals in virtual event industry. Three of them are founders and have an expertise in virtual/hybrid events. Two of them are founders of a destination management company and organize meetings, incentives, and special events. The other one is the founder and specially organizes congresses and conferences. All professionals work for MICE industry over 20 years.

In the first part of the questionnaire, motivational factors for attending an event (attributes) were measured by 20 items that had been selected from the previous literature (Mair and Thompson, 2009; Tanford et al., 2012; Mair et al., 2018). Respondents were asked to answer each question on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (extremely low) to 7 (extremely high). In the second part perceived usefulness were measured by 4 items (Talantis et al., 2020) and online content engagement were measured by 3 items (Kharouf et al., 2020) using a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (very strongly disagree) to 7 (very strongly agree). In the third part of the questionnaire, the future intention and loyalty for the particular event were measured by 11 items (Kim et al. 2012; Tanford et al. 2012) using a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (very strongly disagree) to 7 (very strongly agree). In the fourth part of the questionnaire, overall satisfaction with the event were measured by 3 items (Talantis et al. 2020) using a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (very strongly disagree) to 7 (very strongly agree).

Research Group and Data Collection Procedure

There is a difficulty in determining the size of the population. For this reason, to determine the research group of the study, the agencies that organize virtual events in Turkey were examined. Only two of them agreed to apply the survey to the participants of their virtual events. The research group of the study was formed from the volunteers in these virtual events. The size of the research group was determined by the general rule that the sample size should be five times the number of items or the number of observed variables, which is recommended for validity and reliability analyses (Büyüköztürk, 2002; Child, 2006; Doğan & Başokçu, 2010). In the questionnaire, there were 41 statements which means the number of 205 participants would be sufficient. At the end of the data collection process, 229 completed responses were used after the erasing of inaccurate questionnaires.

The collection of questionnaires started at the beginning of March 2021 and accomplished until the end of May 2021. During the data collection dates, the questionnaire was sent to participants following the end of their virtual events. Types and number of included events consist of events like one international medical conference, hotel linkage summit (international), international tourism conference; one national medical conference and a special event world coffee day. Most of the participants were Turkish, while some participants were from Germany, USA, Portugal, UK, and Cyprus.

Data Analysis

In the study, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and reliability analysis were performed with the SPSS 23.0 program. Cronbach's alpha internal consistency ecoefficiency was calculated for reliability analysis. Exploratory factor analysis was applied to estimate the construct validity of the scale with items that have factor loads above .50 were evaluated. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Sample Adequacy Test and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were applied to determine the suitability of the data for EFA. In EFA, a correlation matrix was used to determine the relationships between variables. As recommended in the literature the correlation matrix for correlation coefficients over .30 were inspected (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001).

Within the scope of construct validity, discriminant validity and convergent validity measures were examined. The discriminant validity of constructs was evaluated using Fornell and Larcker's (1981) method. Statistically significant large factor loads were examined for convergent validity (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Marriott & Williams, 2018).

To analyze the mediating role of satisfaction in the relationship between the independent variables and future intention and loyalty dimensions the SPSS program and the bootstrap method of Preacher and Hayes (2004) (PROCESS, Model 4) were used. Moreover, one-way ANOVA and independent sample T test were used to analyze the differences between the responses according to demographic attributes. In order to assess the suitability of parametric statistical analyses to the data, Shapiro-Wilk's test of normality and Levene's test of homogeneity of variance were conducted.

RESULTS

Demographic Profile Analysis

Analyzing respondents` demographic profile (N=229), descriptive statistics were used, and their gender, age, education, and occupation states were collected. The participants were composed of 112 (48.9%) males and 114 (49.8%) females, major part of female respondents ages were between 35 and 44 (27.5%). Categorization of other ages were 18-24 (10.9%), 25-34 (22.3%), 45-54 (26.2%), and 55 and above (13.1%). The analysis revealed that 33.2% of the respondents work in tourism, 27.9% were in academy and education, 14.4% were in engineering, 4.4% were in marketing, 13.1% were in health and medicine, and 7% were in event management. In terms of education, which is another demographic feature, 41% of the respondents have a bachelor's degree, 29.3% a doctorate degree, 21% a master's degree, 4.8% an associate degree and 3.9% a high school degree.

Validity and Reliability of the Scale

EFA was conducted to examine the construct validity and to find out whether the items measure the same construct or concept (Büyüköztürk, 2002). The principal component method and varimax rotation were applied for the factors which influence to attend in virtual events that consisted of 20 items. The result of this analysis showed that four fundamental dimensions (sub-factors) explain the variance at 65.05% (Table 1). Items which had factor loadings lower than 0.50 and items load to more than one factor with a loading score of equal to or greater than 0.50 on each factor were removed from the analysis. By omitting 3 items, the cleanest rotated solution was received. 0.860 was obtained from sampling measuring of The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin, and Sphericity Test of Bartlett's was significant ($p<0.000$). Reliability coefficients range from 0.72 to 0.88 that is sufficient for the standards of this type of research (Nunnally, 1967).

Table 1. *Exploratory factor analysis for the factors influence to attend in virtual events*

Factors	**Factor Loadings**	**Mean**	**Eigenvalue**	**Explained variance (%)**	**Cronbach's alpha**	**Composite Reliability**
Networking			6.685	39.324	.880	.874
Attending workshops and gaining information	.517	5.2222				
Self-esteem enhancement	.656	5.0829				
Creating professional contacts	.804	5.2315				
Being in global community	.770	5.4491				
Making new friends	.716	3.9116				
Meeting new professionals	.770	5.1806				
Meeting like-minded people	.687	5.3410				
Program			2.003	11.782	.811	.903
Interesting topic	.795	6.1136				
Content of the event	.791	6.3122				
Learning about new subjects	.708	6.2442				
Learning about new research	.723	6.1000				
Activities			1.283	7.547	740	.973
Reputation of the event	.585	5.6455			.	
Keynote speakers	.771	4.8073				
Quality of virtual exhibitions during break times	.769	3.5972				
Social programs	.677	4.0913				
Personal /professional development			1.088	6.398	.720	.803
Fulfilling job description	.864	6.1697				
Professional advancement	.605	6.0880				
Total variance explained				**65.050**		

11 items were analyzed by factor analysis related to 'future intention and loyalty for the particular event' showed that four fundamental dimensions (sub-factors) explain the variance at 76.513%. By omitting one item, the cleanest rotated solution was received. Sampling measuring of The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin was 0.812, and Sphericity Test of Bartlett's was significant ($p<0.000$). The reliability coefficient ranges from 0.79 to 0.87 that is sufficient for the standards for such research as presented in Table 2.

In the study, construct validity measures (discriminant validity and convergent validity) were examined in Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3. To ensure convergent validity of constructs, individual item loadings must be above 0.50 while 0.70 indicates perfect validity (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Marriott & Williams, 2018). In addition, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) scores must be above 0.50 to ensure construct validity. The discriminant validity of constructs was analyzed according to the Fornell and Larcker's (1981) method. According to this method, the AVE of each construct was compared with the squared correlation coefficients for the corresponding constructs. If the AVE for each construct is greater than the square of the corresponding inter-construct correlation coefficients, discriminant validity is supported. The results showed that all constructs had discriminant validity.

Table 2. *Exploratory factor analysis for the future intention and loyalty for the particular event*

Factors	Factor Loadings	Mean	Eigenvalue	Explained variance (%)	Cronbach's alpha	Composite Reliability
Emotional commitment			4.164	41.638	.868	.883
I would continue to attend this event, even if it raised its registration fee OR even if it will have a registration fee	.631	4.2028				
My participation in this event has a great deal of personal meaning to me.	.823	4.5869				
I feel emotionally attached to this event	.895	3.8585				
I consider myself to be a loyal customer of this event.	.870	3.8962				
Functional value			1.324	13.237	.872	.944
The event offered value for the money. (Please answer if you paid a registration fee for the event	.911	4.3368				
It was a good event for the money. (Please answer if you paid a registration fee for the event	.894	4.4494				
Behavioral loyalty			1.154	11.542	.816	.972
How likely are you to recommend this event to others?	.853	5.7196				
How likely are you to attend this event next time?	.798	5.8710				
Negative word of mouth			1.010	10.097	792	.811
I will tell other people not to attend this event next time.	.820	3.8519				
I have complained to other people about this event.	.665	1.5472				
Total variance explained				**76.513**		

Table 3. *Correlation and AVE*

Factors	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
1. Networking	1							
2. Program	.493**	1						
3. Activities	.659**	.357**	1					
4. Personal/ Professional development	.387**	.454**	.259**	1				
5. Negative word of mouth	.145*	.080	.099	.102	1			
6. Emotional commitment	.459**	.311**	.354**	.069	.053	1		
7. Behavioral loyalty	.489**	.548**	.347**	.221**	.034	.518**	1	
8. Functional value	.309**	.311**	.215**	.027	.034	.411**	.385**	1
AVE	**.50**	**.57**	**.50**	**.56**	**.56**	**.66**	**.68**	**.81**

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Hypothesis Results

In order to analyze the hypothesis of the study, the regression analysis was conducted with the stepwise technique. The direct effects of motivational factors to attend an event over dependent variables (*'As a whole, I am happy with the event.', 'Overall, I am satisfied with the event', 'I believe I did the right thing by attending this event'*) were examined. Four factors were included into the regression model: networking, program, personal & professional development, and activities. The result of the regression analysis is shown in Table 4. Two factors (networking and program) explain the overall satisfaction with the event at about the 23% level while the regression model is applied. The standardized estimates (beta coefficients) of each variable indicate its relative importance in explaining the overall satisfaction of the participants. In this model, the standardized estimate of 'program' suggests that this variable is positively related to the 'overall satisfaction with the event' and is the most important factor in explaining the dependent variable (β=.305). Additionally, 'networking' is positively related to the dependent variable (β=.262).

Table 4. *Direct effect verification*

Hypothesis	Decision	β	t	Sig.	VIF	F	Adjusted R^2
H1$_a$: Networking → Overall satisfaction	Supported	.262	3.925	.000	1.321		
H1$_b$: Program → Overall satisfaction	Supported	.305	4.572	.000	1.321		
H1$_c$: Activities → Overall satisfaction.	Not Supported	.020	.263	.793	1.772	35.677	.233
H1$_d$: Personal and professional development → Overall satisfaction.	Not Supported	-.088	-1.329	.185	1.318		
H2: Online Content Engagement → Overall satisfaction	Supported	.796	19.834	.000	1.000	393.406	.632
H3: Perceived Usefulness → Overall satisfaction	Supported	.562	10.233	.000	1.000	104.705	.313

The results of regression analysis to examine the direct effects of online content engagement and perceived usefulness on 'overall satisfaction' are presented in Table 4. The standardized estimate of 'online content engagement' suggests that this variable is positively related to the 'overall satisfaction with the event' (β=.796). Similarly, 'perceived usefulness' is positively related to the dependent variable (β=.562).

According to H4, to understand the mediating role of satisfaction in the relationship between the independent variables (factors affecting participation in virtual events, online content engagement, and perceived usefulness) and future intention and loyalty dimensions, SPSS program and the bootstrap method of Preacher and Hayes (2004) (PROCESS, Model 4) were used. According to Baron and Kenny (1986), three criteria should be met in order to explain mediating effect: (1) the independent variable must have an effect on the mediating variable, (2) the independent variable must have an effect on the dependent variable, (3) when both the mediator variable and the independent variable enter the regression analysis simultaneously, significant relationship that existed between the dependent and independent variable should lose its significance or the previous level of significance should decrease. If the relationship between the independent and dependent variables ceases to be significant when the mediating variable enters the model, a complete mediator model can be mentioned. If there is a decrease in the level of significance of the relationship between independent and dependent variables, a partial mediator model can be mentioned (Baron & Kenny, 1986: 116).

In the study, the direct effects of the independent variables and the mediating variable (overall satisfaction) on the dependent variable (future intention and loyalty) were analyzed. After that, the mediating effect was analyzed with the reference of the conceptual model. As a result of regression analysis, only networking and program dimensions had a significant effect on overall satisfaction and loyalty. In addition to this, online content engagement and perceived usefulness factors also had significant effects on overall satisfaction and loyalty, so all these variables were included in the mediation analysis.

To test the mediation effect, 5000 resampling option was preferred with the bootstrap technique in the analysis. Total, direct, and indirect effect values and bootstrap confidence intervals of the mediation effect are given in Table 5.

First the mediating role of ‘overall satisfaction’ between the independent variable (networking) and the dependent variable (loyalty) was analyzed. The total effect value was found to be .4586, the direct effect value was .1873, the indirect effect value was .2803, and the bootstrap confidence intervals (BootLLCI and BootULCI) were .1825 to .3732. After the mediating variable was included in the analysis, the significance level (β=.4586, p=.000) regarding the effect of the independent variable (networking) on the dependent variable changed slightly (β=.1873, p=.001) that showed the partial mediation effect in the analysis. As a conclusion, the mediation effect was significant because the confidence intervals did not contain zero (shown in Table 5).

Table 5. *Mediating analysis*

Hypothesis		(β)	SE	F	t	p	R^2	LLCI	ULCI	Decision
H4a: NET → OS→ LO	NET → OS	.4225	.0633	44.5846	6.6772	.0000	.1758	.2978	.5472	Supported
	NET → LO	.4586	.0590	60.4901	7.7775	.0000	.2245	.3424	.5749	
	NET → LO	.1873	.0472	151.4223	3.9694	.0001	.5928	.0943	.2803	
	OS → LO	.6423	.0468		13.7179	.0000		.5500	.7346	
H4b: PRG → OS→ LO	PRG → OS	.4745	.0642	54.5535	7.3860	.0000	2070	.3478	.6011	Supported
	PRG → LO	.4223	.0628	45.1524	6.7196	.0000	.1777	.2984	.5462	
	PRG → LO	.1016	.0511	137.9423	1.9867	.0483	.5701	.0008	.2025	
	OS → LO	.6759	.0490		13.7811	.0000		.5792	.7726	
H4c: OCE → OS→ LO	OCE → OS	.8012	.0418	366.6174	19.1473	.0000	.6369	.7187	.8837	Supported
	OCE → LO	.5907	.0527	125.4549	11.2007	.0000	.3751	.4868	.6947	
	OCE → LO	.0377	.0734	133.7370	.5131	.6085	.5625	-.1071	.1824	
	OS → LO	.6903	.0731		9.4405	.0000		.5461	.8344	
H4d: PU → OS→ LO	PU → OS	.5724	.0575	99.0615	9.9530	.0000	.3216	.4590	.6858	Supported
	PU → LO	.4358	.0599	52.8913	7.2726	.0000	.2020	.3177	.5539	
	PU → LO	.0347	.0540	133.9089	.6433	.5207	.5629	-.0717	.1411	
	OS → LO	.7007	.0535		13.1043	.0000		.5953	.8061	

Bootstrapping Results for Indirect Effects

	Effect	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
H4a: NET → OS→ LO	.2803	.0480	.1825	.3732
H4b: PRG → OS→ LO	.3201	.0586	.2027	.4350
H4c: OCE → OS→ LO	.5734	.0638	.4564	.7093
H4d: PU → OS→ LO	.4136	.0527	.3153	.5187

Note: networking (NET); program (PRG); online content engagement (OCE); perceived usefulness (PU); loyalty (LO); overall satisfaction (OS)

Second, the mediating role of 'overall satisfaction' between "program" and "loyalty" was analyzed (Table 5). The total effect value was found to be .4223, the direct effect value was .1016, the indirect effect value was .3201, and the bootstrap confidence intervals (BootLLCI and BootULCI) were .2027 to .4350. After the mediating variable was included in the analysis, the significance level (β=.4223, p=.000) regarding the effect of the independent variable (program) on the dependent variable changed slightly (β=.1016, p=.0483) that showed a partial mediation effect in the analysis. It was concluded that the mediation effect was significant because the confidence intervals did not contain zero.

Third, mediating role of 'overall satisfaction' between the "online content engagement" and "loyalty" was analyzed (Table 5). The total effect value was found to be .5907, the direct effect value was .0377, the indirect effect value was .5734, and the bootstrap confidence intervals (BootLLCI and BootULCI) were .4564 to .7093. Since the significance level (β=.8012, p=.000) regarding the effect of the independent variable (Online content engagement) on the dependent was completely disappeared (β=.0377, p=.6085) when the mediating variable was included in the analysis, it was determined that there was a full mediation effect. In conclusion, the mediation effect was significant because the confidence intervals did not contain zero.

Fourth, the mediating role of 'overall satisfaction' between "perceived usefulness" and "loyalty" was analyzed (Table 5). The total effect value was found to be .4358, the direct effect value was .0347, the indirect effect value was .4136, and the bootstrap confidence intervals (BootLLCI and BootULCI) were .0527 to .3153. Since the significance level (β=.5724, p=.000) regarding the effect of the independent variable (perceived usefulness) on the dependent was completely disappeared (β=.0347, p=.5207) when the mediating variable was included in the analysis, that showed full mediation effect in the analysis. It was concluded that the mediation effect was significant because confidence intervals did not contain zero.

One-way ANOVA was used for analyzing generational comparison. ANOVA test results show that there is a difference between the responses given to the "networking and functional value dimensions" according to age groups. Tukey test results reveal that there is a statistically significant difference between the age group of 18-24 (mean=5.5806) and age group of 45-54 (mean= 4.7616) in the responses to the networking dimension. Age group of 35-44 (mean=4.8302) and age group of 45-54 (mean= 4.0343) differentiates in the responses to the functional value dimension.

ANOVA test results show that there is a difference between the responses given to the "networking and activities dimensions" according to education. Tukey test results reveals that there is a statistically significant difference between bachelors' degree (mean= 5.2909) and doctorate (mean= 4.7569) education groups in the responses to the networking dimension, and bachelors' degree (mean= 4.7866) and doctorate (mean= 4.1470) education groups in the responses to the activities dimension.

Independent sample T test results are presented in Table 6 and reveal that there are differences between the responses given to the networking, activities, and negative word of mouth dimensions according to gender.

Table 6. *Results of Independent Sample T test*

	F	**t**	**df**	**Sig.**	**Mean Difference**
Networking	1.377	2.519	224	.012	.40320
Activities	1.517	2.371	224	.019	.40245
Negative word of mouth	.078	-3.025	224	.003	-.53003

While the average of women's responses to the networking dimension is 5.2636, it is 4.8604 for men; the average of women's responses to the activities dimension is 4.7364, it is 4.3339 for men; the average of the answers given by the women to the negative word of mouth dimension is 2.4329 while it is 2.9629 for the men.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study has provided important insights for the factors affect attendees' decisions to participate in virtual event and also factors that influence their satisfaction and future intention such as loyalty. Four factors that influence attendance to the events have been studied for the first part of the research: networking, program, activities, and personal/professional development. These factors have been supported by different researchers such as Oppermann and Chon (1997), Rittichainuwat et al. (2001), Severt et al. (2007), Yoo and Chon (2008), and Mair and Thompson (2009). However, the current study has been done with a new perspective by taking into consideration of virtual events. Studying virtual events is a new topic in the event industry so the results of this study have key outcomes for both tourism literature and industry.

In the first part of the study, cruciality of networking for attendees' decisions were studied and two attributes, "being in global community" and "meeting like –minded people", were found as the most important factors that affect their preferences. Making new friends was not an effective factor for them which is an interesting result when considering virtual events. In the study, content of the event had the highest score in the evaluation of the event program. Additionally, attendees stated learning new subjects are important when they joined in virtual event. While analyzing the activities of virtual event, reputation was the most important motivator for attendees besides keynote speakers were still attracts attendees' choice. Therefore, it would have been appropriate to say attendees do not only want to learn new subjects but also they take into consideration the reputation and the keynote speakers of the events. This could be interpreted that it is undesired to waste time with unnecessary topics as lots of virtual events were organized during pandemic period. It was clearly understood that they cared about their professional advancement and also enforced their job description.

In the second part of the study for the future attention and loyalty of the attendees: emotional commitment, functional value, behavioral loyalty, and negative word of mouth were analyzed as supported by the study of

Tanford et al. (2012). According to the results, attendees had stated that participating a virtual event had a great deal of personal meaning to them and besides although most of the events were organized free of charge they had specified that they could pay a registration fee under any circumstances. Consistent with the answers of attendees, money paid for the event was also an important issue for their preferences. Attendees had stated that they were not complaining about the event which means negative word of mouth ratio was very low and this effects positively to their behavioral loyalty that led them to attend the event again in the future and recommend to others.

In the study, regression analysis was used to evaluate which factors affect the overall satisfaction and loyalty of the event. Results were shown that the specific motivational factors like networking and program of the event, online content engagement, and perceived usefulness had significant effect on overall satisfaction and loyalty. In the literature part it was supported that an online content improves the overall experience (Calder et al., 2009). In addition, Event Managers Blog (2019) report confirmed the importance of the online content in the future of event industry. Furthermore, Kharouf et al., (2020) stated the significant effect of online content engagement for the loyalty. In consistent of the conceptual model, the research's regression analysis explained the mediating role of satisfaction in the relationship between the factors affecting participation in virtual events and behavioral loyalty. The results of the regression analysis to determine the mediating role of overall satisfaction between independent variables (networking, program, online content engagement, and perceived usefulness) and dependent variables (future intention and loyalty) were significant.

According to the results of ANOVA tests, there was an important difference between the age groups` responses to the networking and functional value dimensions. For example, the mean of the age group of 18-24 was 5.58 however the mean of the age group of 45-54 was 4.76. This shows the youngest group gave more importance to networking dimension. In addition to this, responses of the age group of 35-44 (mean: 4,83) gave more attention to the functional value than the age group of 45-54 (mean: 4.03).

There was also a difference between the responses given to the "networking and activities dimensions" according to education. The participants who had bachelors' degree gave more importance both networking (mean: 5.2909) and activities dimensions (mean: 4.7866) than doctorate degree participants (networking dimension's mean: 4.7569; activities dimension's mean: 4.1470).

Practical Implications

It is important to specify that this research has valuable suggestions through event industry professionals as the reports have stated that after pandemic virtual and hybrid events will continue. Especially event planners should be aware of the importance of online content engagement and the program for the satisfaction of the attendees. If a content of the program and the topic is interesting and consists of new subjects, then attendees will be content and satisfied. Event planners should also take into consideration of the reputation and keynote speakers.

In the research results it is found that in virtual events, quality of virtual exhibitions during break times is not as important as it is in face-to-face events. According to the results, attendees have stated that they enjoy following the event online and find mobile apps useful at virtual events. They also say that mobile apps enhance the quality of virtual events and increase productivity. That`s why it can be recommended that instead of spending money for virtual shows and exhibitions during break time of the event, planners should make investment to technological part.

Networking is always an important motivator for the attendance of the face-to-face events. It is also the same in virtual events especially being in a global environment is the top driver in networking. Attendees do not care that much about making new friends in virtual world but they care about meeting like- minded people, new professionals and creating professional contacts. Business events can continue virtual and hybrid however, future of being social in virtual events can be a question for the event planners.

Another important issue should be inferred from the study that attendees could pay registration fee if they are satisfied with the event content. Also, if their future intention and loyalty is high, they will attend and recommend the event for the next time. Among the various event topics, it is grueling to catch the attention of attendees and create loyalty. This is an important finding for the event planners.

As a conclusion, this research is one of the first studies that has been done during the pandemic period about the virtual events. During this period, most of the people have attended lots of events and it seemed needed to make an evaluation of attendees' satisfaction level and their intention to future events and loyalty.

Future Research and Limitations

The study had limitations that should be taken into consideration for future research in event industry. The sample size could include more participants as the survey was distributed in lots of different types of events. Especially the researchers tried to reach the attendees during the event or right after the event. The survey sent to them via email after the event many times, but some of the attendees did not fill out the survey. Another important limitation was researchers tried to investigate specific national and international events to evaluate the satisfaction level, however they could not get the permission from the owner of the event. It was clearly understood that for the future research, qualitative methods should be assigned to create an extensive understanding about virtual and hybrid events, for example, making interviews with industry professionals.

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INFLUENCE OF MANAGERIAL COACHING ON SERVICE-ORIENTED CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOURS: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF SERVICE QUALITY COMMITMENT IN THE MALAYSIAN HOTEL INDUSTRY DURING THE PANDEMIC OUTBREAK

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ABSTRACT

Tourism industry has been recognised as one of the important industries which contributed to the country's economic growth. Thus, it has become essential to investigate the aspects which could strengthen the service provision in the hotel industry in Malaysia. The motive of this paper is to investigate the effects of managerial coaching (MC) on the willingness of frontline service employees to practise service-oriented citizenship behaviours (SOCB) using employees' commitment to service quality (ECSQ) as mediator. A total of 398 questionnaires have been completed and were applied for data analysis. Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was employed to test the hypotheses. Results indicated MC and ECSQ significantly affect frontline service employees' SOCB. Moreover, the results show that ECSQ has partially mediated the relationship between MC and SOCB.

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INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 outbreak has a destructive implication on every nation, inclusive of Malaysia. The travel and tourism industries in Malaysia have been badly hit because of closing the border to foreign tourists and travel restrictions through the implementation of the movement control order (MCO) in 2020. Under enforcement of MCO, the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Cultures (MOTAC) has withdrawn the Visit Malaysia 2020 campaign, while the cancellation of tour packages and the reduction in inbound

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international tourists has affected the hotel and airline sectors. Malaysia Tourism data shows that hotel average occupancy rates (AOR) declined from 56.6% in 2019 to 27.8% in 2020. A survey by the Malaysian Association of Hotels (MAH) indicated that around 50% of hotel operators might have to cease their operations or remain closed until year-end as a result of the pandemic (Teoh, 2020). The unfortunate circumstances have also put economic pressure on hotel operators, resulting in 2,041 employees being laid off, 9,773 forced to take unpaid leaves, and 5,054 suffering a pay cut (Kaur, 2020).

It has become a great challenge for the human resource management of the hospitality industries to identify new strategies to motivate frontline service employees to practise positive attitudes and behaviours during the time of the Covid-19 outbreak. This situation required employees with a higher level of organizational citizenship behaviours (OCB) to handle the challenges and maintain their job performance and job satisfaction, to reduce their job anxiety and turnover intention (Organ et al., 2006; Ozduran & Tanova, 2017; Organ, 2018; Kloutsiniotis & Mihail, 2020). For instance, researchers are interested to explore certain forms of leadership which able to foster the employees' OCB (Ribeiro et al., 2018). Therefore, it's time for the service practitioners to re-examine their human resources management practice by incorporating specific forms of OCB which are suitable in the service industry context during this outbreak.

In service organizations, frontline employees deal with the customers and represent their organization to outsiders (Bettencourt et al., 2001; Nasurdin et al., 2015; Chen et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2020; Kloutsiniotis & Mihail, 2020). Therefore, the authors believe that hotel performance and effectiveness can be significantly influenced by these employees' citizenship behaviours. Service-oriented citizenship behaviours (SOCB) are defined as frontline service employees' discretionary actions, such as voluntarily working beyond their job descriptions regardless of formal rewards or compensation, in order to deliver superior service to customers (Bettencourt et al., 2001). Thus, when frontline employees are willing to make an extra effort in serving the customers, the organizations can win back the customers' trust and confidence (Nasurdin et al., 2015; Chen et al., 2018; Gigauri, 2020; Gössling et al., 2021).

However, the challenging part is to convince frontline employees to perform outstanding service in the current climate of uncertainty of employment (Bajrami et al., 2020). Recognizing this phenomenon, employees' willingness to comply with SOCB requires serious investigation by researchers (Filimonau et al., 2020; Guzzo et al., 2020). All the challenges now facing the hospitality industry are associated with devolving human resource development (HRD). How managers react and communicate with the frontline service employees during the Covid-19 crisis will have a significant impact on their hotel's performance.

Empirical research indicates that managerial coaching (MC) has contributed significantly to employees' job outcomes and organizational performance in various industries, such as insurance (Kim, 2014), banking (Pousa & Mathieu, 2015), and logistics (Ellinger et al., 2003). MC emphasizes effective communication between managers and subordinates to mitigate the negative feelings of employees by giving them more guidance and support (Zhang et al., 2020). Thus, researchers believe that the application of MC in the hospitality sector will buffer employees' anxiety and stress. However, the potential benefits of MC as perceived by frontline employees, and how this practice may influence their SOCB during the Covid-19 pandemic, have not yet been fully explored.

Researchers have called for more evidence on how MC will influence the organizational commitments of frontline employees in providing high-quality service during the period of recovery from the pandemic (Park et al., 2020; Carvalho et al., 2021). Past research has determined the relationship between MC and employees' commitment to service quality (ECSQ) (Elmadag et al., 2008; Sun et al., 2012). ECSQ is identified as an attitudinal commitment which encourages the enthusiasm of individual employees to provide high-quality service to the organization's customers, especially in the service sector (Ahmed & Parasuraman, 1994; Peccei & Rosenthal, 1997; Kumar & Krishnaraj, 2018). The authors believe that frontline service employees with a strong feeling of affection, belongingness as well as attachment towards the organization will be committed to providing this quality to customers. Thus, they will be more willing to perform their OCB by helping their co-workers to fulfil the expectations of the organization (Gursoy & Chi, 2020; Jones & Comfort, 2020; Rabiul et al., 2021). However, empirical research linking frontline service employees' job-related outcomes with ECSQ and SOCB, influenced by MC, is yet to be undertaken.

Significance of Study and Research Objectives

This research is expected to provide a body of knowledge on Social Exchange Theory (SET) and create a comprehensive framework to determine the relationships between managers, employees, and organizations through the norms of the reciprocity concept. The authors aim to fill the research gaps by examining the possibility of MC influencing frontline service employees' SOCB. In addition, the authors investigate whether ECSQ acts as an intervening variable in the relationship between MC and SOCB. The issues will be addressed theoretically and tested empirically, based on the perspectives of frontline employees within the hospitality industry in Malaysia. The findings will be valuable to hoteliers and service operators by offering more insights into applying managerial coaching (MC) to foster the ECSQ and enhance the employees' SOCB in the long run.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study employs aspects of social exchange theory (SET) to discover and structure the relationship between MC and SOCB with the mediating variable of ECSQ. SET is identified as one of the fundamental frameworks which describe human relationships based on reciprocity (Blau, 1964). By using the concept of reciprocity in SET, the relationships in the hospitality context among managers and subordinates can be revealed, through the obligation of frontline service employees to reciprocate with positive attitudes and behaviours (Ellinger et al., 2007; Elmadag et al., 2008; Kim et al., 2014). Kim and Kuo (2015) denote that employees who obtained perceived favours from MC in the workplace would feel obliged to reciprocate the manager's goodwill by performing extra-role behaviours.

SET is also used to indicate that employees' commitment to the organization is generated from the organization's human resources practices, which ultimately affect the organizational citizenship behaviours (OCB) (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Thus, the effect of ECSQ in the hotel industry is determined by the support and guidance received from supervisors (Clark et al., 2009; Kumar & Krishnaraj, 2018; Rabiul et al., 2021). When employees feel appreciated and supported by the managers, they will support the organization's performance through their commitment to providing exceptional levels of service to customers and their colleagues when in need. Hence, in the light of SET, this research suggests that ECSQ will mediate the relationship between MC and SOCB among frontline service employees in the hospitality context.

Service-Oriented Citizenship Behaviours (SOCB)

Bettencourt and Brown (1997) introduced the concept of service-oriented citizenship behaviours (SOCB) of customer-contact employees in his thesis by applying the original OCB to the service industry. SOCB was defined as employees' discretionary actions in voluntarily working beyond their job description, regardless of formal rewards or compensation, in order to deliver high-quality service to customers (Bettencourt et al., 2001). The three-dimensional SOCB comprises of loyalty, participation, and service delivery. Firstly, the term *loyalty* means personnel who represent the organization's image and reputation, acting as advocates of the organization by promoting their products or services to outsiders. Secondly, *participation* indicates that employees take initiatives to improve their service quality to achieve better customer satisfaction. Lastly, *service delivery* emphasizes employees' conscientious action to provide superior service, performing in a reliable, responsive, and polite manner when dealing with customers (Bettencourt et al., 2001).

SOCB constructs become an important indicator for service organizations to discover the employees' customer-oriented behaviours in order to gain distinctive competitive advantages (Schneider et al., 2005; Sun et al., 2007; Nasurdin et al., 2015; Chen et al., 2018). Apart from providing service to customers, frontline service employees also represent the company's image to the public. They should proactively provide consumers with relevant details and make suggestions to management for improving the service. Frontline service providers must show their dependability, honesty, and courtesy toward customers since their attitudes and behaviours during the service delivery will directly influence customers' satisfaction and their intention to repeat purchases (Chen et al., 2018; Kloutsiniotis & Mihail, 2020).

Indeed, SOCB has become an important determinant of a service organization's performance, although there is still limited knowledge on how organizations create an environment which encourages managers and employees to perform SOCB properly (Ariffin et al., 2018; Chen et al., 2018; Kloutsiniotis & Mihail, 2020). Past researchers have suggested that managers should proactively communicate with their employees about the organizational systems by providing managerial coaching to illustrate how to deliver high-quality service to customers (Chou & Lopez- Rodriguez, 2013; Nasurdin et al., 2015; Chen et al., 2018; Kloutsiniotis & Mihail, 2020).

Managerial Coaching (MC) and Service-Oriented Citizenship Behaviours (SOCB)

Managerial coaching (MC) involves new and emerging leadership skills which enable employees to learn, participate in and improve their work performance effectively (Park et al., 2007; Ellinger et al., 2010). According to Ellinger et al. (2003), managers in the logistics industry acted as coaches to nurture and encourage their employees to learn, discover and understand the array of tasks through empowerment and facilitation rather than being controlled and commanded what to do. MC means practising active listening, helping, supporting, and providing opinions and constructive feedback to the employees (Guzzo et al., 2020; Wong et al., 2021). In strategic human capital planning and development of talent, researchers have widely deliberated MC as a useful technique to improve manager's performance, management, and leadership style, in various service industries such as logistics, insurance, and banking (McLean et al., 2005; Agarwal et al., 2009; Hamlin et al., 2009; Gilley et al., 2010; Hagen, 2012).

McLean et al. (2005) proposed four dimensions of managerial coaching skills: open communications, team approach, valuing people over tasks, and accepting ambiguity. Open communication involves openness and an information-exchange culture within an organization, whereby both employers and employees should have an open mind on sharing information, values, and feelings. The team approach means that employers should see themselves in partnership with their employees; they should create a supportive atmosphere whereby everyone works together for common goals and assures the quality of the working environment. Managers should value their employees above their tasks by considering their ideas and feedback during decision-making rather than giving instructions or directing them to complete a task. Accepting ambiguity is seen from the perspective of managers' viewpoint and requires effective collaborative skills with employees, as far as accepting uncertainty and conflicts generated by different cultures and other unknown outcomes when solving work-related problems. Park et al. (2008) extended the work of McLean et al. (2005) by adding facilitating employees' development, which requires managers to assist employees in understanding their work role and helping them to remove barriers to success. The authors follow the study of Kim and Kuo (2015) by combining the dimensions of managerial coaching skills (open communications (OC), team approach (TA), valuing people over task (VP), accepting ambiguity (AA), and facilitating employees' development (FD) as they share a common value which leads to the improvement of job-related outcomes among the employees.

In the service sector, managers who coach their own subordinates tend to have advantages over external trainers because they recognize the organization's issues and internal dynamics more intensely (He et al., 2012). Furthermore, frontline managers who perform as coaches do not require extra time and effort to understand the service organization's culture and customers, as they are already familiar with them and can provide instant feedback for frontline employees to improve their performance (Ellinger et al., 2010; He et al., 2012; Ali et al., 2020). Through the notion of reciprocity, frontline service employees will treat the customers in a friendly manner, voluntarily show their enthusiasm in helping them and be willing to work beyond the job description (Yoon & Suh, 2003; He et al., 2012; Tang & Tang, 2012; Nasurdin et al., 2015). For instance, this study proposes that frontline hotel managers should create and maintain a high-quality social exchange relationship with their frontline employees. Since there is a scarcity of research linking MC with employees' SOCB, this study proposes that managers who can practise the characteristics of MC will ensure that frontline is given generous, supportive, and encouragement to enhance their performance. Hence, they will be more willing to reciprocate by engaging in SOCB towards customers and co-workers, in response to the managers' goodwill. Hence, the following hypothesis is suggested:

H1: *Managerial coaching (MC) will have a significant influence on the service-oriented citizenship behaviours (SOCB) of frontline service employees.*

Managerial Coaching (MC) and Employees' Commitment to Service Quality (ECSQ)

Peccei and Rosenthal (1997, p. 69) described ECSQ as "the relative propensity of a service employee to engage in continuous improvement and exert effort on the job for the benefit of customers". ECSQ is a form of attitudinal commitment delineated by the dedication of individual employees to provide high-quality service to the customers (Peccei & Rosenthal, 1997; Kumar & Krishnaraj, 2018). If frontline employees are to be committed to service quality, managers must demonstrate how to deliver high-quality service to customers. Researchers found out that MC will influence the employees to exert a positive attitude and behaviour toward the clients because supervisors who act as coaches will show their gratitude to their subordinates by listening to their suggestions and providing valuable feedback to them (Elmadag et al., 2008; Clark et al., 2009; Ribeiro et al., 2020).

In return, frontline service employees will reflect their consideration, acceptance, and concern for the needs and feelings of customers once they have received the same treatment from managers (Peccei & Rosenthal., 1997; Burdett, 1998; Elmadag et al., 2008; Ellinger et al., 2012; Ellinger et al., 2013). Therefore, their motivation to commit to service quality is influenced by the managerial efforts and the organization's support (Berry et al., 2002; Ellinger et al., 2013). MC tends to be associated with employees' job satisfaction and their performance in the service industry (Ellinger et al., 2013; Kumar & Krishnaraj, 2018; Ma'amoor et al., 2018; Rabiul et al., 2021). Furthermore, MC is viewed as a favourable leadership approach which enables the communication between supervisors and their subordinates in an open and collaborative environment, generating greater commitment, empowerment, and tolerance in the workplace (Huang & Hsieh, 2015; Pousa & Mathieu, 2015; Ozduran & Tanova, 2017; Raza et al., 2017; Park et al., 2020).

Qiu et al. (2019) mentioned that there is limited study on the causal relationships between leadership styles and importance to commit on the service in hospitality industry. Instead, researchers have found that when service-oriented organizations dedicated to implementing MC, employees will commit to providing service quality to enhance the customer experience (Berry et al., 2002; Ma'amor et al., 2018). Perhaps, MC could be an important factor to influence ECSQ in the hotel industry. However, fewer studies have been carried out to test this relationship. Hence, this research focus on the impact of MC towards frontline service employees' commitment to providing high-quality service to customers (ECSQ).

H2: *Managerial coaching (MC) will have a significant influence on frontline service employees' commitment to providing high-quality service to customers (ECSQ).*

Employees' Commitment to Service Quality (ECSQ) and Service-Oriented Citizenship Behaviours (SOCB)

Based on social exchange theory, employees' OCB is motivated by a positive job attitude, such as affective commitment or employees' positive emotional attachment to the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Konovsky et al., 1994; Meyer et al., 2002). Moorman et al. (1993) concluded that when organizations exhibit clearer roles and expectations toward building positive attitudes among service employees, they have less role ambiguity, driving an assortment of positive work outcomes such as higher job satisfaction, commitment, and OCB. In the service sector, employees who are treated well by the organization tend to be more committed to offering themselves as good citizens by performing beyond their required duties (Hagen, 2012).

In the hotel industry, frontline employees who are committed to giving high-quality services to customers tend to provide assistance and support to both co-workers and customers, beyond their job descriptions

(Organ, 1997; LePine et al., 2002; Bienstock et al., 2003). Researchers are urged to prioritize investigations into how high-quality services can be delivered through the attitudes of service personnel (Raza et al., 2017; Kumar & Krishnaraj, 2018; Ma'amoor et al., 2018). Employees' commitment to service quality (ECSQ) has a direct impact on OCB (Elmadag et al., 2008; Chen et al., 2018).

At the same time, employees who revealed higher SOCB tend to generate greater customer satisfaction through their propensity to provide better service to customers, beyond their job description (Elmadag et al., 2008; Raza et al., 2017; Chen et al., 2018). Thus, when employees are committed to service quality, they are more likely to exert extra effort to perform better in their jobs, as explained above (Raza et al., 2017; Chen et al., 2018).

However, the relationship between ECSQ and SOCB still needs further investigation, even though the dimensions of SOCB (loyalty, participation, and service delivery) are similar to the characteristics of ECSQ (Bettencourt et al., 2001; Chang & Chang, 2017; Chen et al., 2018). Thus, this study investigates whether there is a correlation between SOCB and ECSQ. Hence:

H3: *Employees' commitment to service quality (ECSQ) will have a significant influence on the service-oriented citizenship behaviours (SOCB) of frontline service employees.*

ECSQ as mediator between MC and SOCB of frontline employees

The presence of OCB is considered as a method of retaining the balance of exchange between employees and managers (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Moorman et al.,1993). From the perspective of social exchange theory, managers' leadership tends to influence the willingness of employees to perform OCB (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Managers who always give full support and resources to their employees will inspire them to complete the work with passion, not only accomplishing their required tasks but also performing with discretionary effort and working extra miles to get the job done (Cook & Rice, 2003; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Such reaction is to repay their managers' support by performing extra-role behaviours, helpful for business development.

This study proposes that if hotel managers perform MC, frontline employees will make extra effort to achieve the organization's success, consistent with the concept of reciprocity in SET which implies that when employees receive coaching from managers, they tend to repay their managers' goodwill. They will be committed to providing high-quality service and helping both co-workers and customers. However, the feasibility of this relationship still needs further discussion since there is no empirical study to prove the existence of intervening variables between MC and employees' SOCB to date, especially from the perspective of frontline employees in the hotel industry.

According to Ribeiro et al. (2020), managers with coaching skills are able to stimulate the employees' affective commitment, thereby, improve their work performance. Their study has proven that affective commitment mediates the relationship between MC and employees' work performance (Ribeiro et al., 2020). Simultaneously, this study examines the effects of MC on frontline employees' SOCB through ECSQ as an important driver to improve their work performance in the hospitality context. The reason for selecting ECSQ as mediator between MC and SOCB is that ECSQ is a type of attitudinal commitment which will enhance the dedication of individual employees to achieve organization's objectives (Kumar & Krishnaraj, 2018; Ma'amoor et al., 2018; Park et al., 2020). This study aims to confirm that ECSQ of frontline employees will mediate the relationship between managerial coaching and employees' SOCB. It proposes that:

H4: *ECSQ mediates the relationship between MC and SOCB of frontline service employees.*

Research Model

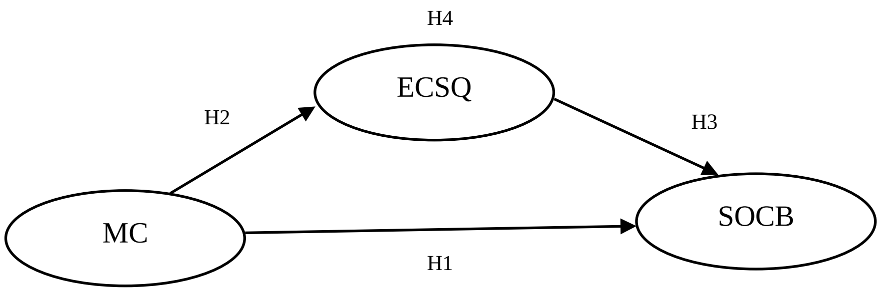

Figure 1. *Research Framework*
Notes: MC= Managerial Coaching; SOCB= Service-Oriented Citizenship Behaviours; ECSQ= Employees' Commitment Service Quality

METHODOLOGY

Sample

This study is focused on 4-star and 5-star hotels located in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, Malaysia. The target respondents are frontline employees: front-desk agents, reservations agents, waiters and waitresses, guest relations representatives, bartenders, door attendants, bell attendants, and concierges. Since the population of frontline service employees is unknown, the sample size is based on Cochran's Formula which uses the finite population correction factor. By choosing a 95% confidence level, 0.5 standard deviation, and margin error with confidence interval of 5%, this study required approximately 385 respondents.

Data Collection

Data were collected between 12 June and 1 August 2020. Three research assistants were recruited and briefed about the procedure for the data collection. Convenience sampling was used as it was impossible to obtain all the respondents' consent to participate during the pandemic. To protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents, they were inquired to leave their completed survey forms in an envelope. In order to encourage participation in the survey, each respondent was eligible to receive an RM10 shopping voucher as a token of appreciation. Out of 500 questionnaires distributed to hotel employees in the two states, 398 completed ones were returned, a 79.6% response rate.

Based on their demographic profiles, 81.4% of respondents hold non-supervisory positions, with the remaining 18.6% at the supervisory level. A majority of respondents (59.8%) had around 1-3 years of working experience in the hospitality industry, and over 70% worked in front-office departments. 78.1% of respondents had been working for more than 8 hours a day. 65.6% earned around RM2,001- RM3,000 per month. The larger proportion (59%) were female, and a majority of respondents (62.3%) were under the age of 26. As for education level, 68.3% had at least an STPM/ A-Level/ Diploma/ Advanced Diploma.

Measurement

The measurement items for the key variables in the current study can be found in Appendix A.

Service-Oriented Citizenship Behaviours (SOCB). SOCB is a 3-dimensional scale that consists of loyalty, service delivery, and participation, developed by Bettencourt et al. (2001), together accounted for 16 items, with responses measured on a scale from "1= strongly disagree" to "5= strongly agree". All the items reflect the discretionary roles of frontline employees during their interactions with customers and co-workers (Chen, 2016; Chen et al., 2018).

Managerial Coaching (MC). MC was measured with the Measurement Model of Coaching Skills developed by Park et al. (2008) and included both behavioural and skill-based managerial coaching. There were 20 items in five dimensions, namely open communication, team approach, valuing people, accepting ambiguity, and facilitating development, all measured on the same scale, from “1= strongly disagree” to “5= strongly agree”.

Employees’ Commitment to Service Quality (ECSQ). ECSQ was operationalized as the strength of an individual’s affective and non-calculative attachment, related to employees’ willingness and their capacity to engage in proactive forms of customer service (Elmadag et al., 2008; Ellinger et al., 2013). It was assessed with the 9-item scale proposed by Peccei and Rosenthal (1997). The reliability and validity of these items had been tested and confirmed in previous studies (Peccei & Rosenthal, 1997; Elmadag et al., 2008; Ellinger et al., 2013).

Control Variable. Past studies indicated that demographic variables such as age, gender, and organization tenure had a significant influence on SOCB (Nasurdin et al., 2015; Jain et al., 2016), so these variables were included as control variables in this study.

RESULTS

Data Analysis

The data entry, data screening, and descriptive statistics as well as descriptive analysis were performed using IBM’s SPSS ver. 23 statistical software. In addition, Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) which is available through SMART PLS 3.0 software was used for hypothesis testing. This is because PLS-SEM has been widely used to predict the results of hypothesis testing in hospitality and tourism research (Henseler et al., 2018; Hair et al., 2019). PLS-SEM also makes it possible to examine complex data with multiple indicators and relationships (Hair et al., 2014). In PLS-SEM, the measurement model is first assessed to examine reliability, convergent validity, and internal consistency, followed by the structural model to test the hypotheses.

Assessment of measurement model

The measurement model is constructed using the PLS-Algorithm in Smart-PLS. It is necessary to ascertain the internal reliability and validity measures in PLS-SEM. According to Hair et al. (2019), constructs’ indicator loadings should exceed the threshold value of 0.70. CFA in the measurement model is used to measure the reliability ascertained by Cronbach’s α (value should be more than 0.60) and composite reliability (value should be above 0.70). As mentioned by Hair et al. (2019), validity is established as convergent validity (AVE) should be at least 0.5. In addition, the authors stated that multicollinearity can be detected by using the variance inflation factor (VIF). Rule of thumb states that VIF above 5 (tolerance value below 0.2) shows the presence of multicollinearity.

Table 1. *Convergent Validity Result*

Higher Order Construct	Lower Order Components	Items	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's α	Composite Reliability (CR)	AVE	VIF
Employees' Commitment to Service Quality (ECSQ)		EC1	0.805	0.935	0.947	0.721	2.248
		EC4	0.882				3.430
		EC5	0.740				1.971
		EC6	0.858				3.071
		EC7	0.899				3.828
		EC8	0.878				3.554
		EC9	0.869				3.426
Managerial Coaching (MC)	**Open Communication**	OC1	0.736	0.893	0.927	0.761	1.587
		OC2	0.926				3.916
		OC3	0.902				3.184
		OC4	0.911				3.700
	Team Approach	TA1	0.792	0.901	0.931	0.773	1.839
		TA2	0.910				3.172
		TA3	0.904				3.359
		TA4	0.905				3.419
	Value People over Task	VP1	0.849	0.909	0.936	0.786	2.269
		VP2	0.920				3.600
		VP3	0.896				3.113
		VP4	0.880				2.666
	Accept Ambiguity	AA1	0.896	0.914	0.939	0.795	3.076
		AA2	0.903				3.360
		AA3	0.877				2.698
		AA4	0.891				2.994
	Facilitate development	FD1	0.898	0.901	0.938	0.836	2.473
		FD3	0.917				3.050
		FD4	0.927				3.283
Service-Oriented Citizenship Behaviours (SOCB)	**Loyalty**	LO1	0.761	0.890	0.925	0.755	1.667
		LO3	0.901				3.198
		LO4	0.923				4.544
		LO5	0.882				3.137
	Service Delivery	SD1	0.883	0.936	0.950	0.759	3.494
		SD2	0.907				4.111
		SD3	0.908				4.181
		SD4	0.801				2.128
		SD5	0.851				2.747
		SD6	0.873				3.181
	Participation	PA1	0.845	0.923	0.943	0.768	2.678
		PA2	0.913				4.102
		PA3	0.902				3.852
		PA4	0.927				4.642
		PA5	0.786				1.925

Notes: AVE= average variance extracted; CR= composite reliability; CA= Cronbach's alfa; EC= Employees' Commitment to Service Quality; OC= Open Communication; TA= Team Approach; VP= Value People over Task; AA= Accept Ambiguity; FD= Facilitate development; LO= Loyalty; SD= Service Delivery; PA= Participation. EC2, FD2 & LO2 were removed due to loading <0.700.

The Fornell-Larker criterion was used to determine discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) and cross-loadings (Hair et al., 2019). Table 2 shows that all the items' loadings for each construct were higher than the other constructs in cross-loadings. Thus, the results demonstrated that the measurement model met the criteria for satisfactory discriminant validity. Moreover, Table 3 shows that the discriminant validity results also met the criteria for discriminant validity because the square root of AVE (diagonal) for higher-order constructs as well as lower-order components was greater than all the correlations (off-diagonal) for all the reflective constructs**.**

Table 2. *Cross Loadings*

	ECSQ	OC	TA	VP	AA	FD	LO	SD	PA
EC1	**0.805**	0.636	0.620	0.621	0.645	0.717	0.598	0.553	0.528
EC4	**0.882**	0.551	0.543	0.522	0.586	0.649	0.650	0.636	0.587
EC5	**0.740**	0.456	0.509	0.444	0.539	0.453	0.475	0.474	0.517
EC6	**0.858**	0.546	0.550	0.482	0.553	0.593	0.555	0.563	0.528
EC7	**0.899**	0.557	0.551	0.543	0.547	0.599	0.599	0.621	0.573
EC8	**0.878**	0.546	0.599	0.549	0.565	0.577	0.590	0.584	0.535
EC9	**0.869**	0.550	0.529	0.548	0.567	0.605	0.532	0.571	0.531
OC1	0.536	**0.785**	0.620	0.569	0.610	0.550	0.572	0.557	0.553
OC2	0.611	**0.926**	0.746	0.740	0.720	0.764	0.615	0.597	0.539
OC3	0.509	**0.902**	0.758	0.771	0.747	0.743	0.525	0.501	0.523
OC4	0.611	**0.911**	0.754	0.777	0.760	0.775	0.554	0.554	0.556
TA1	0.499	0.628	**0.792**	0.681	0.638	0.529	0.525	0.469	0.496
TA2	0.622	0.737	**0.910**	0.756	0.757	0.704	0.608	0.583	0.579
TA3	0.599	0.780	**0.904**	0.787	0.778	0.735	0.584	0.569	0.601
TA4	0.586	0.706	**0.905**	0.764	0.723	0.650	0.533	0.573	0.609
VP1	0.519	0.717	0.766	**0.849**	0.737	0.680	0.486	0.461	0.501
VP2	0.557	0.751	0.790	**0.920**	0.776	0.725	0.551	0.529	0.532
VP3	0.562	0.732	0.730	**0.896**	0.717	0.666	0.577	0.563	0.530
VP4	0.585	0.724	0.732	**0.880**	0.801	0.703	0.555	0.536	0.560
AA1	0.613	0.766	0.725	0.795	**0.896**	0.721	0.537	0.547	0.570
AA2	0.576	0.717	0.751	0.748	**0.903**	0.720	0.545	0.512	0.568
AA3	0.619	0.724	0.713	0.726	**0.877**	0.673	0.553	0.604	0.616
AA4	0.600	0.702	0.756	0.778	**0.891**	0.742	0.581	0.532	0.535
FD1	0.651	0.753	0.699	0.722	0.734	**0.898**	0.599	0.552	0.542
FD3	0.642	0.750	0.650	0.722	0.714	**0.917**	0.550	0.517	0.518
FD4	0.656	0.740	0.705	0.703	0.748	**0.927**	0.569	0.548	0.557
LO1	0.565	0.548	0.497	0.487	0.494	0.544	**0.761**	0.593	0.537
LO3	0.663	0.640	0.640	0.608	0.609	0.631	**0.901**	0.781	0.716
LO4	0.582	0.559	0.558	0.537	0.545	0.531	**0.923**	0.753	0.697
LO5	0.540	0.499	0.525	0.490	0.506	0.474	**0.882**	0.748	0.712
SD1	0.591	0.532	0.566	0.534	0.561	0.520	0.805	**0.883**	0.705
SD2	0.630	0.586	0.572	0.546	0.568	0.537	0.777	**0.907**	0.724
SD3	0.620	0.555	0.558	0.483	0.532	0.497	0.737	**0.908**	0.725
SD4	0.487	0.458	0.481	0.418	0.472	0.417	0.641	**0.801**	0.740
SD5	0.604	0.599	0.551	0.583	0.550	0.592	0.701	**0.851**	0.691
SD6	0.596	0.560	0.540	0.510	0.527	0.516	0.673	**0.873**	0.762
PA1	0.489	0.480	0.492	0.444	0.475	0.439	0.639	0.765	**0.845**
PA2	0.525	0.516	0.543	0.509	0.519	0.457	0.680	0.727	**0.913**
PA3	0.571	0.602	0.609	0.569	0.625	0.563	0.682	0.714	**0.902**
PA4	0.552	0.567	0.596	0.577	0.601	0.555	0.687	0.716	**0.927**
PA5	0.665	0.541	0.611	0.518	0.586	0.566	0.683	0.715	**0.786**

Notes: EC= Employees' Commitment to Service Quality; OC= Open Communication; TA= Team Approach; VP= Value People over Task; AA= Accept Ambiguity; FD= Facilitate development; LO= Loyalty; SD= Service Delivery; PA= Participation.

Table 3. *Fornell-Larcker Criterion*

No.	Higher Order Constructs	1	2	3
1	Employees' Commitment to Service Quality (ECSQ)	**0.849**		
2	Managerial Coaching (MC)	0.719	**0.820**	
3	Service-Oriented Citizenship Behaviours (SOCB)	0.713	0.722	**0.817**

Lower Order Components	AA	FD	LO	OC	PA	SD	TA	VP
AA	**0.892**							
FD	0.801	**0.914**						
LO	0.621	0.627	**0.869**					
OC	0.816	0.818	0.646	**0.872**				
PA	0.641	0.590	0.770	0.619	**0.876**			
SD	0.615	0.590	0.831	0.630	0.831	**0.871**		
TA	0.826	0.749	0.640	0.827	0.652	0.626	**0.879**	
VP	0.855	0.783	0.612	0.824	0.599	0.589	0.851	**0.887**

Notes: EC=Employees' Commitment to Service Quality; OC= Open Communication; TA= Team Approach; VP= Value People over Task; AA= Accept Ambiguity; FD= Facilitate development; LO= Loyalty; SD= Service Delivery; PA= Participation.

Assessment of structural model

The results of the control variables age, gender, and organization tenure are presented in Table 4. The coefficient of determination (R^2 value) of 0.047 showed that only 4.7 percent of the variance in SOCB was explained by these three variables. The results indicated that only age has a minimally significant impact, whereas gender and organizational tenure have no significant impact on SOCB.

Table 4. *Control Variables*

Control Variables	Path Coefficient	T-values	P-values	R^2
Age	0.175	2.63	0.009	0.047
Gender	0.081	1.54	0.124	
Organizational Tenure	0.073	0.81	0.148	

Next, bootstrapping technique was run with 5,000 subsamples used to measure the structural model. The statistics of each proposed hypothesis were supported by Table 5. The results of the total effect of MC on SOCB were significant (H1: 0.438, T-value=8.088, p-value < 0.000). Hence, H1 is supported. This result also supports H2 as MC has a significant impact on ECSQ (H2: β= 0.719, T-value=27.970, p-value < 0.000). Similarly, the hypothesis H3 is supported, with ECSQ having a significant impact on SOCB (H3: β= 0.386, T-value= 7.213, p-value < 0.000).

ECSQ as mediator between the relationship between MC and SOCB was then examined. With the inclusion of the mediating variable (ECSQ), MC also have significant impact on SOCB (H4: β= 0.277, T-value= 6.952, p-value < 0.000). In addition, to conclude the mediation, the researchers applied the VAF (Variance Accounted For) approach, to calculate the ratio of the indirect-to-total effect (Hair et al., 2017, 2019). The VAF value is represented by the indirect effect of 0.277 divided by the total effect of 0.716, i.e., 0.387 (38.7 percent) which falls between 20 percent and 80 percent. Thus, the results showed that ECSQ partially mediated the relationship between MC and SOCB, supporting H4. Figure 1 illustrates the final model and the results of hypothesis testing.

Furthermore, the predictive accuracy of the structural model was used for explanatory power of endogenous constructs, as suggested by Hair et al. (2017). The coefficient of determination (R^2 value) had predictive accuracy value, the amount of variance in the endogenous constructs explained by all the exogenous constructs linked to it. R^2 ranges between 0 and 1 indicating higher values of predictive accuracy. According to Hair et al. (2017), the rule of thumb for acceptable R^2 predictive accuracy is 0.25, 0.50, and 0.75 defined as weak, moderate, and substantial respectively. Thus, the results showed that predictive accuracy for SOCB ($R^2 = 0.608$) and ECSQ ($R^2 = 0.517$) were considered moderate.

The effect size (f^2) was assessed; according to Cohen's guidelines in 1998, values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 represent small, medium, and large effect sizes respectively. In Table 5, the results indicate that MC (1.069) has a large effect on producing R^2 for ECSQ. Moreover, it can be observed that MC (0.231) and ECSQ (0.182) have medium effect size on producing R^2 for SOCB. In addition, cross-validated redundancy measure Q^2 values were calculated using the blindfolding procedure to evaluate the predictive relevance of exogenous constructs towards endogenous constructs. According to Hair et al. (2017), if Q^2 is larger than 0, the model has predictive relevance for a certain endogenous construct. According to Hair et al. (2019), the rule of thumb for Q^2 indicates the values of 0, 0.25 and 0.50 which respectively represent small, medium, and large predictive relevance in the PLS-path model. Since the predictive relevance Q^2 of ECSQ has a value of 0.344 and SOCB a value of 0.372, the model has achieved medium predictive relevance based on two endogenous constructs.

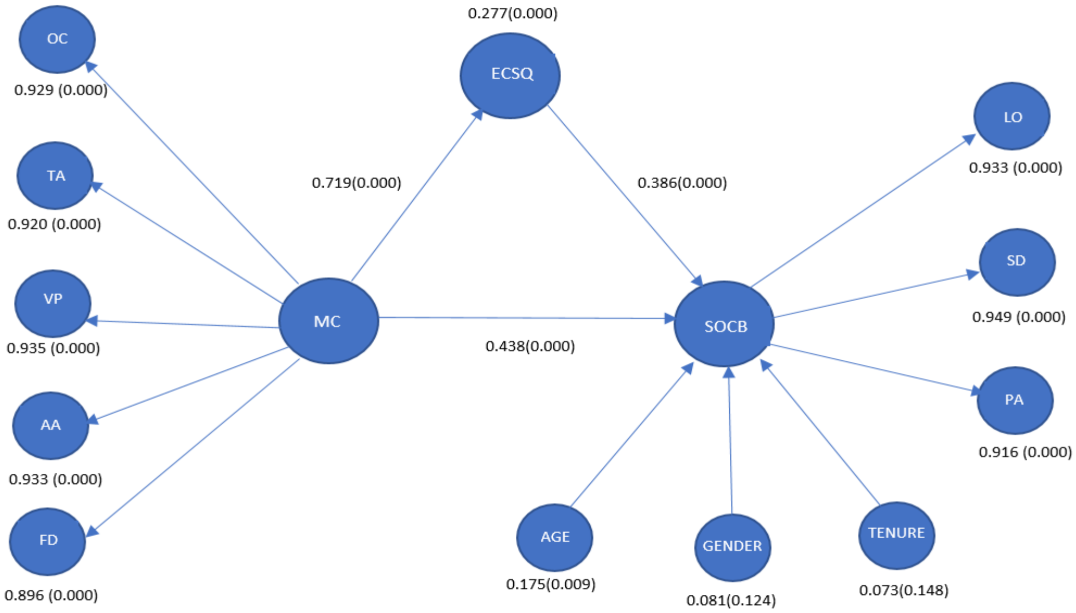

Figure 2. *Results of Structural Model*

Notes: MC= Managerial Coaching; OC= Open Communication; TA= Team Approach; VP= Value People over Task; AA= Accept Ambiguity; FD= Facilitate development; SOCB= Service-Oriented Citizenship Behaviours; LO= Loyalty; SD= Service Delivery; PA= Participation; ECSQ= Employees' Commitment Service Quality . Research Model showed the value of path coefficient and p-values. All path coefficient significant at *p < 0.001* level.

Table 5. *Structural Model Results*

Path	Path Coefficient		Standard Deviation	Total Effect	VAF	T-values	P-values	Decision	R^2	f^2	Q^2
	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect									
MC -> SOCB (H1)	0.438		0.054			8.088	0.00	Supported	0.608	0.231	0.372
MC-> ECSQ (H2)	0.719		0.026			27.970	0.00	Supported	0.517	1.069	0.344
ECSQ-> SOCB (H3)	0.386		0.054			7.213	0.00	Supported		0.182	
MC-> ECSQ -> SOCB (H4)		0.277	0.040	0.716	38.769	6.952	0.00	Supported			

Notes: MC= Managerial Coaching; SOCB= Service-Oriented Citizenship Behaviours; ECSQ= Employees' Commitment to Service Quality; VAF= Variance accounted for; Q2= predictive relevance; f2= effect size; R2= explanatory power.

DISCUSSION

The current study has evaluated the direct and indirect effects of MC on frontline service employees' SOCB, the direct influence of MC on SOCB, and the indirect influence of MC and SOCB through ECSQ. To test the study's hypotheses, data from 398 frontline service employees from 4- and 5-star hotels in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor were analysed. As expected, the PLS-SEM analysis showed that all the hypotheses, H1, H2, H3, and H4, are supported. That is, MC has a significant positive influence on employees' SOCB (H1), a new discovery filling the gap in research into managerial coaching and frontline employees' SOCB. The results also revealed a strong association between MC and ECSQ (H2), in line with the predictions of past research (Kumar & Krishnaraj, 2018; Ma'amoor et al., 2018; Ali et al., 2020; Rabiul et al., 2021). ESCQ also has a significant relationship with SOCB (H3), confirming the previous proposition that employees committed to providing high-quality service will exhibit a SOCB to fulfill customers' satisfaction (Chen et al., 2018; Ma'amoor et al., 2018).

Finally, the findings of the present study suggest that the relationship between MC and frontline employees' SOCB is partially mediated by ECSQ, revealing an indirect effect between MC and SOCB (H4). According to these results, ECSQ acts as an important "stabilizer" between MC and SOCB. Specifically, MC will have a greater influence on frontline employees' SOCB once the managers are able to nurture employees' attitudinal commitment to service quality. MC tends to promote ECSQ which, in turn, will increase the likelihood of frontline service employees performing SOCB during their daily routine. This outcome is in-line with SET assumptions, that managers who provide coaching tend to listen to their subordinates and give them constructive feedback, as well as being supportive and caring of their well-being (Guzzo et al., 2020; Wong et al., 2021). In return, the employees will have emotional attachment to the organization and will offer high-quality service to customers, at the same time adhering to their obligation to display SOCB during their customer duties (Ariffin et al., 2018; Chen et al., 2018; Kloutsiniotis & Mihail, 2020). The results showed that neither gender nor tenure was related to SOCB, although age was found to significantly relate to it, consistent with past studies (Bettencourt et al., 2001; Nasurdin et al., 2015).

Theoretical Implications

Due to the economic lockdown during Covid-19, many hotel operators in Malaysia are facing extreme stress and anxiety because they have yet to find effective strategies to increase their frontline employees' performance and review their service offerings. Furthermore, management and scholars of hospitality industries are being urged to find new knowledge and insights to cope with the scarce resources during the Covid-19 outbreak (Gigauri, 2020; Gösssling et al., 2020; Hu et al., 2020). As previous studies have yet to examine the possibility of engaging frontline employees in performing SOCB in their daily routine, this study shed new light on the role of MC in dealing with employees' SOCB and ECSQ, especially during Covid-19. The results reveal that perceived MC among frontline service employees significantly influences their SOCB performance. In addition, without sacrificing service quality for the time being, this study has developed a holistic conceptual framework to explore the impact of ECSQ in the association between MC and frontline employees' SOCB in the hotel industry.

The research agenda nowadays focuses on how to spawn new knowledge and provide insights into the management of the hospitality sector. Several important implications for future researchers and business practitioners are highlighted here. From the theoretical perspective, the study developed a conceptual model associated with positive workplace attitudes and behaviours in manager-employee reciprocal relationships. The current study has discovered the motivation behind social exchange in choosing MC as an important determinant to encourage the frontline employees to fulfil their responsibilities in delivering high-quality service to customers as well as the willingness to take extra efforts to help the hotel survive the hardships during the pandemic. By selecting SOCB as an outcome variable in this study, the results show that SOCB is suitable to be applied in service organizations as it is able to enhance the service performance of the hotel industry as well as representing the positive behaviours required of frontline service employees today.

Furthermore, this study recommends ECSQ as a mediator between MC and employees' SOCB since attitudinal commitment was found to improve employees' dedication in delivering customer service (Kumar & Krishnaraj, 2018; Ma'amor et al., 2018). In this study, the researchers argue that MC is an appropriate leadership style which will promote employees' tendency to commitment to service quality; performing SOCB with this attitudinal component (ECSQ) in turn has enhanced the proposed theoretical framework because it reinforces the social exchange relationship between MC and SOCB (Elmadag et al., 2008; Sun et al., 2012; Ellinger et al., 2013; Siva & Unas, 2016; Kumar & Krishnaraj, 2018; Ma'amor, et al., 2018).

Practical Implications

This study has also made several contributions to business management by evaluating the roles of managers and employees in providing high-quality service to customers. In the service context, frontline employees' discretionary behaviours have been found to be an important factor in delivering service quality which is rarely mentioned in the formal job description (Kumar & Krishnaraj, 2018; Ma'amoor et al., 2018; Park et al., 2020). However, suitable organizational practice for frontline employees remained unexplored in Malaysia's hotel industry during the Covid-19 outbreak. This study has provided valid reasons for hotel practitioners to focus on frontline employees' SOCB so that they will have a more appropriate direction to capitalize on service behaviours, which is apparently the best way to provide more benefit for both organizations and customers.

This study provides further rationale and motivation for hotel practitioners to initiate MC as a new leadership style, to foster and support the employees' willingness to perform SOCB during the service delivery in the hotel industry. Since the service organizations have yet to resolve the work-related issues of frontline employees during the Covid-19 crisis, the empirical impact of this study has reinforced the need for the hotel practitioners to support MC as an effective strategy to overcome the current issues. From the perspectives of Human Resource Development (HRD), this study gives service organizations an insight to develop their managers' interpersonal skills by offering their managers to attend the coaching and mentoring workshops or courses such as Train the Trainer Program (TTT). This study suggests incorporating MC subconstructs such as OC, TA, VP, AA, and FD into the TTT training program's structure to improve the managers' communication skills, enhance their emotional intelligence and practice transformational leadership. The management of service organizations should offer their employees to join team-building workshops so that managers are able to apply the MC skills as well as create bonding with their subordinates during the session.

Finally, some doubts have been expressed as to whether the leadership of a manager will influence the corresponding behaviours of frontline employees directly or indirectly (Ribeiro et al., 2020). From the results, we discovered that MC will indirectly influence the SOCB of employees through the presence of ECSQ. Substantively, our findings indicate that MC skills should be imposed so that managers are ready to take on the role as a coach to improve the ECSQ and SOCB of the employees.

The fundamental implication of this study is that managers who provide coaching will set targets for their employees, provide helpful comments, and ask questions instead of offering them solutions to improve their job-related attitudes and behaviours. Therefore, the findings offer compelling support to the scholar that MC should be initiated to cultivate ECSQ so that frontline service employees are ready to serve customers better by helping their co-workers and volunteering to perform SOCB during the service delivery process.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Further research is required to resolve certain limitations in this study. First, since the total population was unknown, the convenience sampling technique was used, leading to potential bias. Future studies should use more appropriate sampling techniques to avoid bias in the results. This study focused on 4- and 5-star hotels located in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur, which may not represent the whole population of frontline service employees in Malaysia. Future research should therefore cover all the hotels in Malaysia, including low-budget ones and a wider geographic area. Next, as the study depended on a self-administered survey to measure the MC, ECSQ, and SOCB, the respondents might have given their answers based on their own subjective views which they thought applicable to the current situation. This method may create doubts as respondents might not really have understood the questions properly. Future researchers should apply mixed-method surveys which cover both quantitative and qualitative perspectives to provide further explanations from the target respondents.

The current study examined the perception of frontline service employees regarding the implementation of MC, ECSQ, and SOCB without measuring when and how their perceptions might change over time. Moreover, the partial mediating effect suggests that the mediating variable of ECSQ accounts for some but not all the relationship between MC and SOCB. Thus, future studies should consider other variables that might influence the findings, such as organizational culture (Ali et al., 2020), organizational climate (Chen et al., 2018), or perceived organizational support (Kloutsiniotis & Mihail, 2020); this might moderate the impact of MC on the employee-SOCB relationship. From the perspective of human resource management, the current study did not consider a favourable organizational culture which encourages hotel managers to practise coaching. Managers might feel reluctant to learn and use MC skills since they are not rewarded for developing their subordinates. Hence, future studies need to focus on how to strengthen the managers' willingness to practise MC; empirical research is needed to compare the performance of frontline employees before and after the implementation of MC. In conclusion, future researchers should focus on other factors or variables which lead to successful implementation of MC in service organizations.

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IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON TOURISM: EVIDENCE FROM SAM ASSESMENTS OF HUNGARY AND TURKEY

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ABSTRACT

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, international mobility was largely restricted, which led to severe declines in tourism activities. This paper estimates the economic impacts of this decline in Turkey and Hungary, using social accounting matrix modeling. The authors constructed social accounting matrices separately and estimated the macroeconomic impact of the decline. The results reveal that the decline in international tourism revenues reduced GDP by 2.6% in Turkey and 5.9% in Hungary, with 0.9% and 2.0% loss of employment in Turkey and Hungary, respectively. These figures are much larger compared to the economic gains from the fiscal rescue packages.

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INTRODUCTION

The recent coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak, which started in Wuhan, China in December 2019, rapidly reached the pandemic size. It was initially thought to be a health crisis, but it soon became a social and economic crisis. As a result of measures taken by governments across the world, both domestic and international travel was soon restricted to prevent the further spread of the pandemic. In addition, due to social distancing restrictions, many stores and firms were closed, effectively putting a considerable number of workers at risk of unemployment. As a result of the losses in workers' incomes, aggregate demand was reduced largely, and economic activity slowed down. Such adverse effects turned the pandemic into a global economic crisis, with consequences much more significant than that

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of the 2008-2009 Global Financial Crisis. According to the World Economic Outlook Database of the IMF, global GDP shrank by 4.4% in 2020. The degree of decline in GDP was much more significant in advanced economies (-5.8%) compared to the emerging and developing economies (-3.3%).

The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in substantial economic costs, most notably in the advanced countries. Elgin et al. (2020) provide an overview of the economic policy measures adopted by 166 countries and regions during the pandemic. The pandemic resulted in a supply shock that eventually triggered a larger aggregate demand shock (Guerrieri et al., 2020). Covid-19 has also increased economic uncertainty about inflation as well as output. Baker et al. (2020), Binder (2020), Coibion et al. (2020), and Dietrich et al. (2020) argue that the decline in output in the US economy is reflected in this uncertainty. Governments provided large rescue packages as part of fiscal stimuli to cope with the pandemic and its vast potential economic losses. These packages targeted households that have lost income, and firms affected by the pandemic due to the decline in aggregate demand and the collapse of domestic and global supply chains.

The pandemic resulted in a considerable loss on the supply side, especially in contact-intensive sectors. Most governments have ordered restaurants, bars, cafes, and entertainment-related stores to close in an attempt to maintain social distancing. In addition, both domestic and international travel and transport services were halted, causing a significant decline in tourism demand. United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) published estimates on the impact of the pandemic on individual countries' economies as well as the global economy (UNWTO Covid-19 and Tourism Dashboard).[1] UNWTO reports that total international tourist arrivals in the world shrank by 73% in 2020. UNWTO also reports updated statistics about the change in international tourist arrivals and international tourism receipts.[2] In the first month of 2021, the decline in tourist arrivals compared to the same month in the previous year was 87%. These are large declines compared to the estimates at the beginning of the pandemic. For instance, Fotiadis et al. (2021) had estimated that total international tourist arrivals in the world would decline between 30.8-76.3% from July 2020 to June 2021. Therefore, the negative effect of the pandemic on international tourism seems to have been prolonged. Tourism

[1] https://www.unwto.org/international-tourism-and-covid-19 (accessed April 24, 2021).

[2] For instance, the loss in international tourism receipts in real terms in 2020 were 77%, 76%, 61%, 61%, 60%, 56%, 50% for Spain, Greece, Italy, USA, UK, China, and France, respectively. Tourism income loss was estimated between 22.8-29.1 billion US dollars in Hong Kong (Zhang et al., 2021).

has generally been sensitive to global crises as travelers can easily change or cancel their travel plans when uncertainties arise (Uğur & Akbıyık, 2020). UNWTO predicted in March 2021 that even with the major lifting of travel restrictions and significant improvement in traveler confidence, international tourist arrivals would not recover by the end of 2021, but stay 30% below the pre-pandemic level.

Quantitative assessment of the macroeconomic impacts (on GDP, employment, etc.) of the decline in international tourism is yet a relatively understudied area. While existing studies find a significant decline in tourism demand on a global scale, the estimated impacts on tourism are diverse. For instance, a rapid assessment by Gössling et al. (2020) listed the projected losses in international tourism revenues by international organizations ranging from 450 billion to 2.1 trillion US dollars. In April 2020, the Asian Development Bank predicted the loss in global GDP in 2020 to be 2.0 trillion US dollars (decline by 2.3%) in the shorter containment and small demand shock scenario, and 4.1 trillion US dollars (decline by 4.8%) in the longer containment and large demand shock scenario (ADB, 2020). Škare et al. (2021) estimated using data from 185 countries losses in global employment between 164-514 million jobs and global tourism revenues between 0.6-1.9 trillion US dollars in 2000 prices, based on different scenarios. Studies estimating the economic impact of the decline in tourism revenues in individual countries also point to large declines in GDP and employment in countries strongly dependent on tourism. Using input-output techniques, Mariolis et al. (2021) found that Greek GDP would decline between 2-6% and employment between 2.1-6.4%.

International organizations such as UNWTO, ILO, IATA, UNCTAD, etc. publish various statistics related to the economic changes after the breakout of the pandemic. These studies ignore complex linkages across economic sectors and the interactions between actors in the economy (households, government, firms, and the rest of the world) in a general equilibrium framework. The social accounting matrix (SAM) and computable general equilibrium (CGE) model are powerful in capturing such effects and estimating the economic impact of shocks such as Covid-19. Maliszewska et al. (2020) used a world CGE model to estimate the impact of Covid-19 on GDP and trade. Their preliminary results for the decline in world GDP were 2.1% for the short containment scenario and 3.9% for the long containment scenario. The authors of this paper choose to work with SAM, which allows for a wide-ranging quantitative assessment of a tourism sector shock on other sectors' output and employment levels and the overall economy.[3] Only a handful of studies employ SAM modeling to estimate the economic impact of Covid-19. Diao et al. (2020), Pradesha et al. (2020), Andam et al. (2020), Amewu et al. (2020), and Zhang et al. (2020) studied the impact of Covid-19 on the economies of Myanmar, Indonesia, Nigeria, Ghana, and China, respectively, using SAM multipliers and various scenarios related to agri-food systems.[4]

This study aims to examine the macroeconomic impact of the observed large decline in international tourism demand due to the Covid-19 outbreak in tourism-dependent economies using SAM modeling. Before the pandemic, international tourism revenues in 2019 amounted to 10.2 and 42.4 billion dollars in Hungary and Turkey, respectively. On average, for the period 2015-2020, Hungary recorded a current account surplus of 1.96 billion US dollars, whereas Turkey had a large current account deficit of 24.57 billion US dollars. Therefore, international tourism revenues, which are part of the current account, are important for both countries. In addition, as discussed in the following section, tourism's share in total employment in both countries is as high as 9%. For this purpose, this paper takes the cases of Hungary and Turkey, two economies in Europe with a strong dependence on international tourism revenues. The research specifically interested in the impacts on tourism-related sectors. Authors constructed two SAMs for Hungary and Turkey and examine the impact of the declining international tourism revenues and the effect of the government's rescue packages on the economy and, in particular, on tourism-related sectors.

Most of the existing studies about the pandemic and tourism use econometric techniques. Demir et al. (2021) brought together a number of such studies evaluating the impact of the pandemic on the tourism industry in Turkey and various other countries. These studies point to significant income and employment losses in tourism industries. For instance, Çetin and Erdil (2021) and Dibo (2021) found that tourism revenues have declined between 60%-65% and estimated employment losses in tourism-related industries as high as 39%.

Econometric techniques present a partial equilibrium approach to analyze the impact of the pandemic on tourism and do not take into

[3] Other CGE studies have assessed the impacts of the pandemic with respect to wide range of issues such as the transport sector in China (Cui et al., 2021), global economy (McKibbin & Fernando, 2021), Brazilian economy (Porsse et al., 2020), American agriculture (Beckman & Countryman, 2021), tax policy in China (Xu & Wei, 2021), food prices and food security (Beckman et al., 2021), global supply chains (Guan et al., 2020), and tourism in Australia (Pham et al., 2021), and changes in labor productivity across regions (He et al., 2021), among others.

[4] There are also studies examining the economic impact of the pandemic using input-output techniques such as Eppinger et al. (2020), which estimated the impact on global value chains.

consideration the nature of the resource use, linkages across sectors, and the complex interactions among various actors in the economy. Input-output, SAM, and related techniques (e.g., applied general equilibrium models) fill in this gap and offer an opportunity to examine the effects of a shock, such as the pandemic, and the accompanying policy responses on the economy and individual sectors. There are few studies on the impact of the pandemic on tourism using such techniques. In an early study using input-output analysis, Taymaz (2020) found based on some assumptions[5] that GDP would decline by 10%, and value-added would decrease largely in accommodation and restaurants (-60%), air transport (-59%), cultural services (-51%), and recreation services (-38%) in Turkey. He also found that the loss in employment would be 717 thousand in the accommodation and restaurants sector and 595 thousand in retail trade. Another study using the CGE model by Voyvoda and Yeldan (2020) estimated the declines in GDP, total employment, and household income as 26.7%, 22.8%, and 46%, respectively.[6] In addition, Çakmaklı et al. (2020) employed an open-economy, multi-sector epidemiological macro model and estimated the economic cost of the pandemic between 4.5-11% of GDP based on different scenarios about the duration of the lockdown. Studies on the economic impact of Covid-19 on tourism in Hungary point to significant economic losses due to the adversely affected budget and spending patterns of the tourists during the pandemic, with a possible lower consumption in the future (Raffay, 2021). Raffay (2021) also compares the impact of the pandemic on tourism with that of the 2008-2009 financial crisis, where 46% of the EU-27 region households had to cut back tourism expenditures (Eugenio-Martina & Campos-Soria, 2014). Finally, Korinth (2021) showed that while there was a sharp decline in accommodation occupation rates during the pandemic in the Central European countries, Switzerland and Austria successfully restarted tourism activities.

The current paper contributes to the literature about the impact of Covid-19 on tourism in several aspects. First, authors utilize the SAM modeling technique, which has not been used in the literature about the impact of Covid-19 on tourism. Second, many of the existing studies were conducted amid the pandemic, and the scenario analyses were based on assumptions about projections about the decline in tourist arrivals or

[5] He assumed that consumption and exports would decline by 60% in highly-affected sectors, and 30% in others while increasing by 20% in pharma and telecom services sectors and by 5% in the food sector.
[6] They also showed that a policy package should contain permanent income support to workers (50% of wages), income support to SMEs, and an increase in government spending by 20%. Such a package would cost about 2.9% of GDP but offset 85% of the loss in labor income.

revenues. This paper uses official statistics for the decline in international tourism revenues.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows: Section 2 overviews the tourism sectors in both countries; the data and method of analysis are explained in Section 3; the simulations and the results are presented in Section 4; and finally, Section 5 wraps up and concludes the study.

INTERNATIONAL TOURISM AND THE PANDEMIC

International tourism is an important economic activity in both Hungary and Turkey. To measure the importance of tourism in the national economy, it is a logical criterion look at the ratio of internal tourism spending (i.e., the sum of inbound and domestic tourism spending) to total domestic supply, i.e., tourism ratio, which is available from the tourism satellite accounts in the Eurostat database (Eurostat 2013; 2019). The latest editions of the tourism satellite accounts for Europe were published in 2013 for year 2010 and in 2019 for year 2016. Hungary is included only in the 2019 edition and Turkey only in the 2013 edition. The tourism ratio was 4.6% for Turkey in 2010 and 2.0% for Hungary in 2016. To put these figures in perspective, the EU average was 3.9% in 2010 and 3.4% in 2016. While these ratios seem moderate, tourism's share in employment is much larger. According to the Eurostat data above, tourism accounted for 442.5 thousand jobs in Hungary in 2016, equivalent to 10.2% of total employment, whereas no data were available for Turkey. World Travel and Tourism Council estimated the share of tourism in total employment in 2020 as 9.2% in Hungary and 9.3% in Turkey.[7]

International tourism activities suffered a severe setback with the outbreak of the pandemic and a rapid decline in tourism demand. Due to the high importance of international tourism in Hungary and Turkey, these economies were adversely affected. According to the official statistics provided by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism and Hungarian Central Statistical Office, international tourism revenues declined largely by 42% in Hungary (from 10.2 to 4.3 billion US dollars)[8] and by 60% in Turkey (from 42.4 to 12.1 billion US dollars)[9] in 2020 compared to the previous year. The decline in international tourist arrivals in Hungary and Turkey was 77% and 69%, respectively. In the case of Hungary, due to the

[7] See https://wttc.org/Research/Economic-Impact (accessed, December 14, 2021).
[8] https://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xstadat/xstadat_evkozi/e_ogt005b.html (accessed, April 7, 2021).
[9] https://www.e-unwto.org/toc/unwtotfb/current (accessed April 7, 2021).

difficulty in data collection during the pandemic, the actual decline in revenues is estimated to be around 48%.[10] Another estimate based on the EU's accommodation survey shows an overall drop of approximately 58% of guest nights spent in Hungary (EU average: 52%).[11]

In what follows, this study estimates the impact of this negative shock in the two countries using SAMs.

METHOD OF ANALYSIS

For the purpose of the analysis, current study constructed two SAMs for Hungary and Turkey. The structure of the SAM is provided in Table 1. A SAM is a square matrix in the form of an extended input-output table that portrays the transactions and interactions in an economy among production sectors (activities, a, and commodities, c), production factors (capital, k, and labor, l), institutions (households, h, and government, g), a savings-investment account (s), and the rest of the world (w). Columns represent payments, and rows represent receipts. Due to the assumption of the equality of payments and receipts, the column sum and the row sum are equal for each respective account. Payments made to the factors of production (rent and wages) accrue to households.

This paper adopts the conventional SAM modeling method for economic impact analysis.[12] At the outset, it is important to note the underlying assumptions of the SAM model. The SAM approach to modeling is based on a linearly homogeneous production function as in input-output modeling, and the assumption of constant returns to scale, i.e., any change in the inputs, results in a proportional change in the output level. It is assumed that there is no substitution among inputs used in production, i.e., the shares of inputs in output are fixed. There is no constraint on the available labor and capital. In addition, the SAM model is demand-driven, i.e., the exogenous shocks are specified in the form of changes in demand, implying no inherent unemployment of resources. With these characteristics, the value of output is specified as the sum of the weighted costs of inputs inclusive of taxes, and the weights are fixed. When t there is a change in demand, supply responds through an immediate change in resources.

[10] https://g7.hu/adat/20210309/ezermilliard-forinttal-kevesebbet-koltottek-magyarorszagon-a-kulfoldiek-tavaly/
[11] https://24.hu/fn/gazdasag/2021/03/15/koronavirus-turizmus-europa-magyarorszag-2020/
[12] For a detailed account of SAM and its use in policy analysis, see Thorbecke (2000). For an application to the tourism sector, see West and Gamage (2001) and Akkemik (2012), among others.

Table 1. *The structure of the SAM*

		a	*c*	*l*	*k*	*h*	*g*	*s*	*w*	TOTAL
a	Activities		Domestic sales T_{ac}						Exports T_{aw}	Total output Y_a
c	Commodities	Intermediate input demand T_{ca}				Private consumption T_{ch}	Government spending T_{cg}	Gross capital formation T_{cs}		Domestic demand Y_c
l	Labor	Payment to labor T_{la}								Value added Y_l, Y_k
k	Capital	Operating surplus T_{ka}								
h	Households			Labor income T_{hl}	Retained profits T_{hk}		Government transfers T_{hg}		Transfers T_{hw}	Household income Y_h
g	Government	Indirect taxes T_{ga}	Tariffs T_{gc}			Taxes T_{gh}				Government income Y_g
s	Saving - investment					Private savings T_{sh}	Public savings T_{sg}		Capital transfers T_{sw}	Total savings Y_s
w	Rest of the world		Imports T_{wc}				Transfers T_{ac}	Foreign savings T_{ac}		Foreign earnings Y_w
	TOTAL	Total supply Y_a	Domestic supply Y_c	Labor expenditure Y_l	Capital expenditure Y_k	Household expenditure Y_h	Government expenditure Y_g	Investments Y_s	Foreign flows Y_w	

Impact analysis in SAM modeling works through a shock given to an exogenous account in the SAM, which is carried to the endogenous accounts, as shown in Table 2. In this research, authors set government, saving-investment, and the external (rest of the world) accounts as exogenous and the remaining accounts as endogenous. It is useful to describe how the shock in tourism demand is transmitted to the endogenous accounts. When tourism demand decreases, as in the Covid-19 pandemic, various tourism-related sectors will halt operations, and production and employment will be reduced. The decline in production in these sectors will be transferred to other sectors providing inputs to these sectors. In the current pandemic, non-paid leaves and layoffs of workers are very frequent, with direct effects on employment and production. Subsequently, incomes of the households will decline, which will lead to a decline in consumption, and a further decline in production across the board, thereby resulting in indirect effects. The total impact is the sum of the direct and indirect effects.

Table 2. *SAM with endogenous and exogenous accounts*

				Spending		
				Endogenous (a, c, k, l, h)	Exogenous (g, s, w)	Total
Income	Endogenous	a, c	Production (activities, commodities)	T_{nn}	T_{nx} (Injections)	Y_n
		k, l	Factors (capital, labor)			
		h	Households			
	Exogenous	g	Government	T_{xn} (Leakages)	T_{xx}	Y_x
		s	Saving-investment			
		w	Rest of the world			
	Total			Y_n	Y_x	

To put the impact analysis in matrix notation, authors denote the transactions across SAM accounts as T. These are shown in Table 1. For instance, the transaction matrix T_{ca} shows the transaction running from the commodities row to the activities column, i.e., intermediate input demand. All other matrix notations in the table are denoted in a similar fashion, where the first item in the subscripts represents the row and the second item represents the column account in the SAM. Then, the endogenous section of the SAM can be shown as follows:

$$\begin{bmatrix} Y_a \\ Y_c \\ Y_l \\ Y_k \\ Y_h \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & T_{ac} & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ T_{ac} & 0 & 0 & 0 & T_{ch} \\ T_{la} & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ T_{ka} & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & T_{hl} & T_{hk} & 0 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} Y_a \\ Y_c \\ Y_l \\ Y_k \\ Y_h \end{bmatrix} + \begin{bmatrix} T_{ax} \\ T_{cx} \\ T_{lx} \\ T_{kx} \\ T_{hx} \end{bmatrix} \quad (1)$$

Here, the transactions matrices for endogenous accounts are written in the form of expenditure coefficients, i.e., the elements of each T matrix are obtained by dividing the elements of the matrix T by the elements of the respective column sum Y_n. In the case of exogenous accounts, authors add up the relevant expenditures and create the vector of exogenous demand, which is the second item on the right-hand side of equation (1)

For analytical purposes, authors denote endogenous accounts with the subscript n ($n = \{a, c, l, k, h\}$), exogenous accounts with the subscript x ($x = \{g, s, w\}$), the row or column sum of a given SAM account as Y, and the transactions across the elements of the SAM as T. Denoting the matrix of the transactions among endogenous accounts as T_{nn} and the respective transactions for the aggregated exogenous accounts as T_{nx}, equation (1) can be rewritten as follows:

$$Y_n = T_{nn} + T_{nx} \quad (2)$$

Equation (2) can be further rewritten as follows:

$$Y_n = A_{nn}Y_n + T_{nx} \quad (3)$$

where A_{nn} is the matrix of technical (expenditure) coefficients; Equation (3) is solved as follows:

$$Y_n = (I - A_{nn})^{-1}T_{nx} \quad (4)$$

where I is the identity matrix. The inverse matrix (multiplier matrix) $(I - A_{nn})^{-1}$ shows the total impact. The exogenous changes arising from the changes in T_{nx} (i.e., injections) lead to a change in endogenous accounts Y_n through the technical coefficients of the inverse matrix $(I - A_{nn})^{-1}$. The elements of the inverse matrix are the well-known SAM multipliers.

Data: Construction and Sources

The data has established from World Input-Output Database (WIOD) and various other sources in constructing the SAM. Details about WIOD are available in Timmer et al. (2015). The data for final demand (consumption spending of households and government, investments, exports, imports), intermediate input demand, value-added (factor payments), and indirect taxes are obtained from WIOD. The data about government transfers, transfers from the rest of the world, and savings (household savings, public budget surplus, and foreign savings) are obtained from national accounts statistics, the flow of funds accounts, and public finance statistics of the national statistical offices of Hungary and Turkey. The main data source is WIOD, and the latest data available in WIOD dates 2014. Hence, data has collected for 2014 and this led to constructing two SAMs for Hungary and Turkey for 2014 in national currencies. Original SAMs were not balanced as data were collected from different sources, but this research balanced them using the RAS method, a widely used iterative method to adjust an unbalanced SAM.[1]

WIOD data are available for 56 sectors., SAM in this paper emphasizes tourism and related activities, and aggregated these sectors into 23 broad sectors, which are shown in Table 3. Input-output tables do not provide information about domestic and international tourism. Since most of the tourism demand is directed to transport, accommodation, and food services, this paper's sectoral classification emphasizes tourism-related service sectors.

Table 3. *List of sectors in the SAM*

Industry description	*Sector codes in WIOD*
Agriculture	1-3
Mining	4
Food	5
Textiles	6
Wood and paper	7-9
Refined oil and chemical	10-13
Metal and minerals	14-16
Machinery	17-19
Motor vehicles	20-21
Other manufacturing	22-23
Energy	24-26
Construction	27
Wholesale trade	28-29
Retail trade	30
Land transport	31
Water transport	32
Air transport	33
Other transport services	34
Accommodation and food services	36
Communication services	35, 37-40
Finance and insurance	41-43
Real estate	44-46
Other services	47-56

[1] For details about RAS, see Cardenete et al. (2017: 131-137).

It is noteworthy that the tourism-related services sectors, namely, land transport, water transport, air transport, other transport, accommodation and food services sectors account for a significant portion of total value-added and total employment in both Hungary and Turkey. According to the SAMs in the current study, the total share of these sectors in Hungary and Turkey in the benchmark year is 17.6% and 29.8%, respectively, for value-added and 23.1% and 23.9%, respectively, for employment.

Policy Simulations

Economic Policy Responses and the Decline in Tourism Demand

Based on the economic policy responses of the Hungarian and Turkish governments and the negative demand shock due to the considerable reduction in tourism demand, authors designed a set of simulations which are listed in Table 4.

Table 4. *List of simulations*

	Hungary	*Turkey*
Demand shocks	Reduction in international tourism revenues by 58.2%	Reduction in foreign tourism receipts by 73.6%
Fiscal policy response	245 billion HUF provided to the healthcare sector, and 150 billion HUF bond purchases by the Government to enhance bank lending	173 billion TRY support extended to households and firms

For the demand side, the reported declines in international tourism revenues in 2020 and the composition of the expenditures of foreign tourists in the previous year (particularly 2019) for both countries were taken. To put these figures in perspective, the macroeconomic impact of the government's rescue packages in both countries were estimated.

The results for the rescue packages indicate the difference in the governments' will and capacity to stabilize the economic downturn. According to the official statistics of 2020, Hungarian GDP shrank largely by 5.3% (grew by 4.6% in 2019) while Turkish GDP increased slightly by 1.8% (0.9% in 2019). Information on the governments' fiscal and monetary responses to the pandemic is available from the IMF.[2] The Hungarian government's measures to ease the financial burden of businesses included a support for the healthcare sector received in the amount of 245 billion

[2] https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19

Hungarian Forint (around 785 million US dollars), roughly 0.6% of GDP, and support for the tourism industry in the form of development grants (OECD, 2020). 150 billion Hungarian Forint (around 480 million US dollars) was allocated for construction and renovation of hotels, small accommodations and campsites. In September, an additional 100 billion Hungarian Forint (around 320 million US dollars) was made available for SMEs as zero interest rate loans. The demand side of tourism was supported by a preferential tax rate program.

In the case of Turkey, the initial response to the declining economic activity was a rescue package of 75 billion Turkish liras (around 12 billion US dollars) along with raising the credit guarantee limit for failing businesses in the amount of 25 billion Turkish liras (around 4 billion US dollars). There was harsh criticism since measures that amount to only 2% of GDP were inadequate. Given the weak fiscal stance of the government, it was deemed almost impossible to launch a large-scale rescue package. The IMF reports that these packages amounted to 646 billion Turkish liras in January 2021, equivalent to 12.8% of GDP, while only 173 billion Turkish liras (3.4% of GDP) were provided directly from the central government budget.

Next, it is examined how adversely international tourism demand was affected in both countries. According to the official statistics of Hungary, in 2020, guest nights at accommodations were reduced by 77.2% for foreign guests and by 38.9% for domestic guests compared to the previous year. The overall number of guests at accommodations declined by 57.8%. Before the Covid-19 outbreak, the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (CSO) forecasted a 7.6% growth in total guest nights by foreign tourists in March 2020. The substantial decline in international tourism demand in Hungary was both unanticipated and destructive for the economy as inbound tourism amounted to around 24% of service exports and 4.5% of GDP.[3] The reduction in international tourists resulted in a large loss. According to CSO, compared to the respective quarter of the previous period, international tourism revenues declined by 7.9% in the first quarter, 54.1% in the second quarter, and 49.0% in the fourth quarter. Due to the pandemic, no data were collected in the second quarter. Given these figures and considering the fact that the borders were closed and international tourists amounted to negligible amounts (between 1.3% - 6.8%) in the

[3] https://www.portfolio.hu/gazdasag/20200515/sosem-latott-zuhanas-kulfoldiek-nelkul-egyszeruen-osszeroppan-a-magyar-turizmus-431826

second quarter of 2020 (compared to the same period in 2019), it is concluded that international revenues declined by 58.2% in 2020.

Covid-19 hit international tourism demand in Turkey adversely as well. According to the statistics published by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, foreign tourist arrivals and revenues declined largely in 2020, more significantly after the first case was reported in March. Total foreign tourist arrivals instantly declined to 718 thousand in March 2020 (from 2.232 million in March 2019), and by the end of the year, it declined by 71.7%. The decline was more severe during the April-June period (98% compared to the same period of the previous year). Tourism receipts declined sharply by 73.6%, from 42.4 billion US dollars in 2019 to 11.2 billion US dollars in 2020.

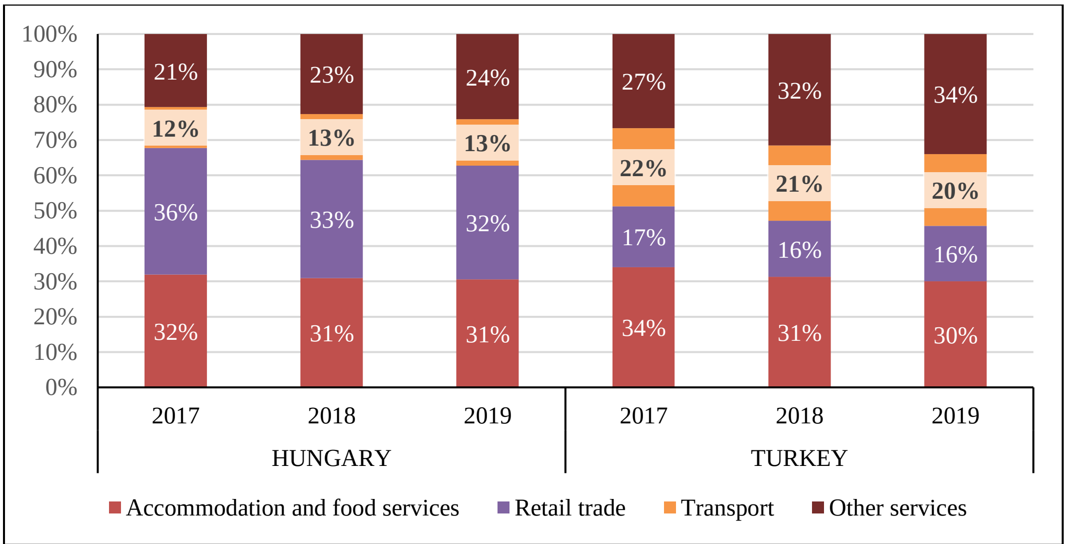

Figure 1. *Sectoral composition of foreign tourist expenditures in Hungary and Turkey (2019)*
[Source: Turkish Statistical Institute (Turkstat), Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH)]

Assuming that the percentage composition of the tourist expenditures prevails, authors reduced the final demand (consumption expenditures) of the relevant sectors in the simulation. The sectoral composition of foreign tourist expenditures in both countries during 2017-2019, adjusted to the sectoral classification adopted in this study, is presented in Figure 1. While the share of accommodation and food services has been around three-tenths, the share of retail trade (including souvenir shops, cloth stores, and retail stores) has been relatively higher in Hungary (30%) than in Turkey (16%). On the other hand, the share of transport services was higher in Turkey (20%, compared to 13% in Hungary), mainly because of its geographical location. The "other services" in the figure include health services (spa, wellness, and medical treatment), sports, education, culture, and amusement services. Based on these figures, authors give shocks to the following sectors: (i) accommodation and food services, (ii) retail trade, (iii) transport services (land, air, and water), and (iv) other services. In doing so, this research assumes that the percentage composition of foreign tourist expenditures in 2019 prevails, based on the observation that the shares of expenditure items in Figure 1 have not changed significantly from 2018 to 2019.

Simulation Design

As stated above, authors give two shocks to the respective SAMs of Hungary and Turkey, a demand shock in the form of a reduction of tourism revenues and a fiscal policy shock in the form of increased government spending and transfers. This paper specifically interested in the changes in output and employment at the sectoral as well as the macro level. It is straightforward to calculate the change in output in a given sector i (Y_i) from equation (4) as follows:

$$\Delta Y_i = (I - A_{nn})^{-1} \Delta T_{xi} \quad (5)$$

where Δ is the change operator and the term T_{xi} refers to the respective exogenous demand (e.g., government spending) for industry i to which the shock has given. The change in output works through the SAM multipliers, i.e., the inverse matrix. Using equation (5), the change in output by sector has calculated. The change in final demand results in changes in payments to capital (T_{hk}) and labor (T_{hl}), and indirect taxes on production, the sum of which is equal to total value-added. Since total value-added in the economy is equal to the GDP, the changes in total factor payments is equal to the change in GDP. The percentage change in output and GDP has computed this way.

To calculate the impact of a given shock (ΔT_{xi}) on employment, a bit more elaboration is needed. It is the first to calculate that the ratio of employment (i.e., number of employees) per output, e_i, for each sector i. Then a diagonal matrix E whose diagonal elements are the ratios e_i has created. The employment multipliers are found by multiplying the diagonal matrix E by the SAM inverse matrix, i.e., $E(I - A_{nn})^{-1}$. Change in employment in a given industry i (E_i) after a shock in exogenous demand is then found as follows:

$$\Delta E_i = E(I - A_{nn})^{-1} \Delta T_{xi} \quad (6)$$

Using equation (6), the percentage change in employment by sector and the aggregate level has calculated.

Estimation Results

Simulation results for output, GDP, and household income are presented in Figure 2 for Hungary and Figure 3 for Turkey. The structure of the losses is similar in both countries, while the magnitude is much more prominent in Hungary. Here, authors suffice to discuss the main macroeconomic results. Detailed sectoral results of the simulation analysis are available in Annex A.

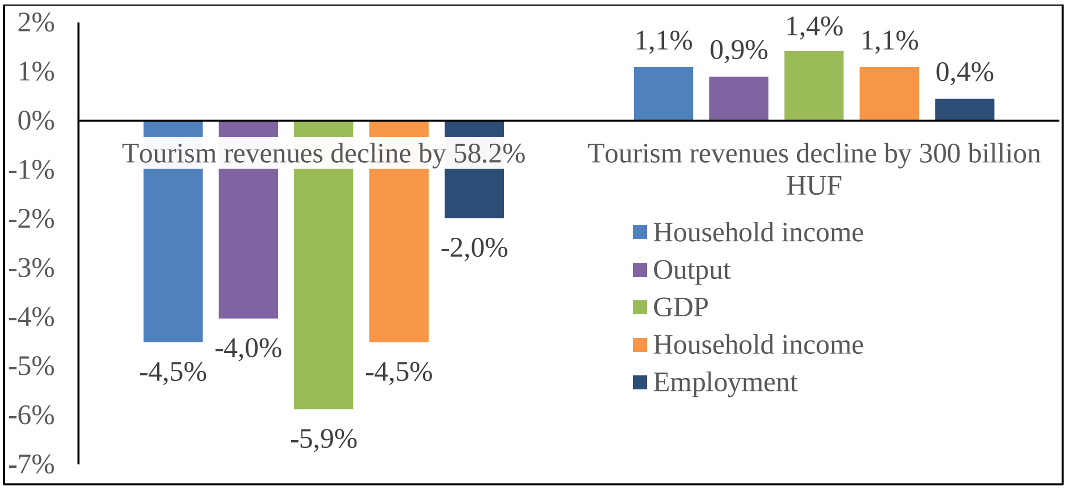

Figure 2. *Simulation results for Hungary*

In Hungary, the simulation of declining tourism revenues shows a 4.5% loss in household income, with a 5.9% loss in GDP, along with a 4.0% and 2.0% loss in output and employment, respectively. Compared to the decline in tourism revenues, the economic effects of the government's rescue packages are smaller, with a rise of 1.4% and 1.1% in GDP and household income, respectively, coupled with 0.9% and 0.4% increase in output and employment.

Similar simulations for Turkey (Figure 3) yield slightly different results. The decline in international tourism revenues results in a loss in output of 2.2%. The decline in GDP is 2.6%, while employment loss is 0.9%. Household income decreases by 2.1%. The government's rescue package in Turkey has a more or less similar impact to that of Hungarian, with a 0.9%, 1.0% and 0.4% increase in output, GDP and employment, respectively, with a formidable 2% rise in household income. The losses in household incomes and employment due to the pandemic are related. Lockdowns and closing down of certain businesses immediately reduced employment and household incomes, albeit temporary.

Next, it is important to turn to the sectoral results presented in Annex A. The sectoral interlinkages in both countries influence the degree of losses and gains discussed above. In the case of the decline in tourism revenues scenario, the sectors affected the most are the tourism-related services sectors, as expected. The decline in output is the largest in land transport (-21%) and to a lesser degree in the other services, accommodation and food services, other services, and other transport services sectors. The decrease in employment is the largest in the other services (-18.7 thousand) and to a smaller extent in the services sectors in general. In the case of Turkey, the largest decline in output is observed in the air transport (-12.5%), other transport services (-10.6), land transport (-6.6%), and retail trade (-5.9%) sectors. The decline in output in the remaining sectors is modest, albeit higher in the services sectors. The largest decline in employment is observed in agriculture (-64.9 thousand), other services (-51.7 thousand), and wholesale trade (-45.2 thousand), and to a smaller extent in land transport, water transport, other transport services, and accommodation and food services sectors. The percentage change in employment in the case of the decline in tourism revenues scenario is generally larger in tourism-related sectors than in other sectors in both countries. Especially, the decline in employment in the other transport services sector is 8.1% in Hungary and 4.7% in Turkey. The percentage decline in employment in Turkey is relatively smaller than in Hungary.

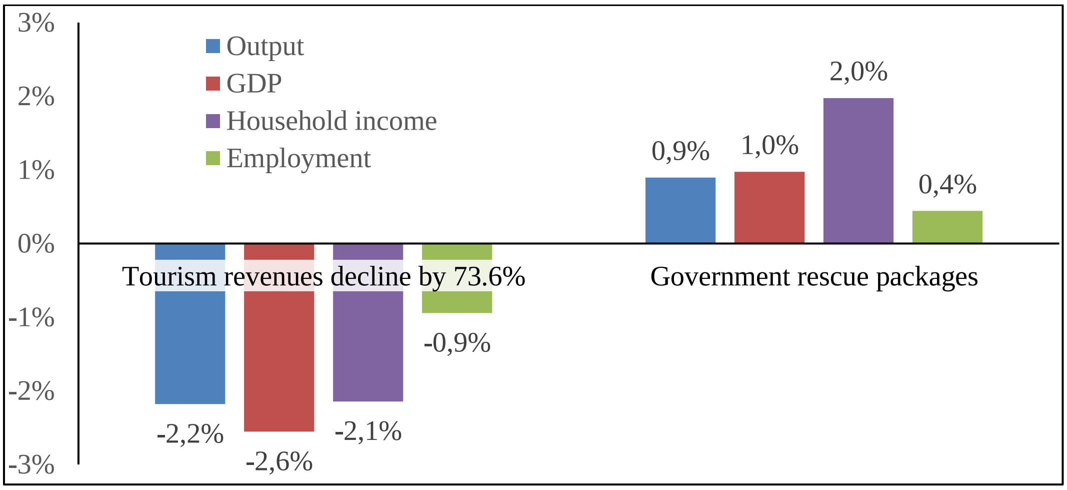

Figure 3. *Simulation Results for Turkey*

The sectoral impacts of the governments' fiscal rescue packages are generally smaller than that of the previous scenario of decline in tourism revenues. Fiscal rescue packages lead to very modest sectoral output increases in both countries. In the case of Hungary, the largest increase in output is in the finance and insurance sector (10%), followed by the other services sector (2.5%). These are the targeted sectors in the government's fiscal rescue packages. Employment increases are also the largest in these two sectors. In the case of Turkey, output increases by less than 2%. Employment increases the most in agriculture (51.5 thousand), wholesale trade (18.8 thousand), other services (18.1 thousand), land transport (9.2 thousand, and water transport (5.9 thousand) sectors. The percentage increase in employment is larger in other services (5.9%) and finance and insurance (2.4%) in Hungary, whereas the increase in employment is less than 1% in all sectors in Turkey. The small increase in employment in Turkey is related to the small amount of fiscal support by the government. The fiscal package in Hungary was larger, and hence, the employment creation effect was stronger.

It is important to consider the unit multiplier effects in evaluating the sectoral results. Annex B presents the unit multipliers for the scenario of declining tourism revenues by sector in both countries. The multipliers effects of both output and GDP are larger in Turkey than in Hungary. The multipliers also show that a reduction in tourism revenues by one unit in Hungary has a higher impact than the government transfers as the output and GDP multipliers are larger. In the case of Turkey, since the government transfer shock is given to the households account, which is also exogenous, the multipliers could have not been computed.

Finally, an interesting case would be a hypothetical total collapse of international tourism revenues. While the results are not reported here, authors deem it interesting to compare the results with this hypothetical case. The total collapse of international tourism would result in much more substantial losses in GDP (7.5% in Hungary and 7.3% in Turkey), output (5.4% in Hungary and 6.4% in Turkey), household income (5.8% in both countries), and employment (126.5 thousand in Hungary and 961.2 thousand in Turkey, equivalent to 3.0% of the total employment in both countries). These simulations also reveal the importance of the international tourism sector, as evident from the potential severe losses in all analyzed indicators.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this paper, it is estimated that the potential impacts of the declining demand in international tourism by examining the cases of Hungary and

Turkey. The main findings are as follows: The observed decline in international tourism revenues and arrivals potentially result in a decline in GDP by 2.6% in Turkey and 3.0% in Hungary. The relevant losses in employment in Turkey and Hungary are 305.1 thousand and 59.8 thousand, respectively. These figures are much larger than the positive gains from the respective governments' fiscal rescue packages. Therefore, it is crucial for the governments to turn a hand towards international tourism as part of the normalization efforts after the destructive effects of the pandemic fade away. One option to counter the impact of the negative demand shock on tourism-related service sectors is purchasing such services by the government as the purchaser of last resort, as argued by Özatay and Sak (2020). They argue that the government can help avoid the break-up of the value chain arising from input-output linkages in the economy. In other words, the government can save suffering firms by buying their services and simultaneously maintaining the continuation of the operations of other firms through forward and backward linkages.

The pandemic changed the tourism industry, and the proposals to revive international tourism activities emphasize the need for institutional changes, which imply a significant departure in the way of doing business. Sharma et al. (2021) point out that the new normal in the tourism industry will be established with a new global economic order after the pandemic. In this new order, local communities are expected to play a much more significant role because the effects of the pandemic may be prolonged. Polyzos et al. (2021) estimated that the recovery of tourist arrivals after the pandemic might take more than six months, which would exacerbate the negative impact on tourism. In addition, environmental concerns are also expected to play a central role in the reshaping of tourism, particularly in Hungary (Várhelyi & Árva, 2020).

An important lesson from Covid-19 is that countries were caught unprepared. However, there are also valuable lessons to be learned from this bitter experience. The pandemic caused a multi-faceted economic crisis, i.e., the current crisis is both a supply and demand crisis. The pandemic has shown that those who are most vulnerable to such large shocks are wage-earners. Therefore, proactive government intervention is needed to remedy the structural problems in the economy, including those responsible for income inequality. Poverty levels in both countries may also have increased during the pandemic despite the governments' rescue packages because the positive impact of the fiscal response on employment and household incomes is smaller than the destructive effects of the pandemic. The results of this study show that sectoral impacts are diverse, and government measures to respond to the pandemic should incorporate a sectoral perspective as well.

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Annex A. *Detailed estimation results*

Sectors	*HUNGARY*						*TURKEY*					
	Decline in tourism revenues			Fiscal rescue packages			Decline in tourism revenues			Fiscal rescue packages		
	Output (%)	Emp (000)	Emp (%)	Output (%)	Emp (000)	Emp (%)	Output (%)	Emp (000)	Emp (%)	Output (%)	Emp (000)	Emp (%)
Agriculture	-1.9%	-4.7	-1.7%	0.4%	0.9	0.3%	-1.3%	-60.7	-0.8%	1.2%	51.5	0.7%
Mining	-2.1%	-0.2	-3.1%	0.3%	0.0	0.5%	-1.0%	-2.2	-1.3%	0.5%	1.1	0.7%
Food	-2.0%	-1.7	-1.4%	0.4%	0.3	0.2%	-1.4%	-3.5	-0.5%	1.3%	2.6	0.4%
Textiles	-0.6%	-0.5	-0.9%	0.1%	0.1	0.2%	-0.7%	-6.6	-0.4%	0.6%	4.7	0.3%
Wood and paper	-2.1%	-1.3	-2.5%	0.6%	0.4	0.6%	-1.1%	-4.2	-1.1%	0.6%	1.8	0.5%
Refined oil and chemical	-2.1%	-2.2	-2.5%	0.3%	0.3	0.3%	-1.7%	-8.1	-1.7%	0.8%	3.6	0.8%
Metal and minerals	-0.9%	-1.5	-1.3%	0.2%	0.3	0.2%	-0.7%	-7.6	-0.7%	0.3%	4.8	0.5%
Machinery	-0.5%	-1.3	-0.7%	0.1%	0.2	0.1%	-0.6%	-4.3	-0.6%	0.3%	2.0	0.3%
Motor Vehicles	-0.2%	-0.3	-0.3%	0.0%	0.0	0.0%	-0.5%	-1.9	-0.5%	1.3%	1.0	0.3%
Other manufacturing	-1.9%	-1.6	-2.2%	0.3%	0.2	0.3%	-0.2%	-0.9	-0.2%	0.1%	0.4	0.1%
Energy	-3.9%	-2.7	-3.4%	0.8%	0.5	0.8%	-1.5%	-4.4	-1.5%	1.0%	2.4	0.8%
Construction	-1.0%	-3.0	-1.1%	0.2%	0.6	0.2%	-0.1%	-3.0	-0.1%	0.1%	1.6	0.1%
Wholesale trade	-2.8%	-6.2	-2.7%	0.5%	1.0	0.5%	-1.8%	-42.7	-1.5%	1.0%	18.8	0.7%

Retail trade	-3.8%	-4.9	-1.3%	1.0%	0.9	0.2%	-5.6%	-15.8	-0.8%	1.1%	9.2	0.4%
Land transport	-27.9%	-3.6	-2.5%	0.4%	0.6	0.4%	-6.2%	-18.8	-1.7%	1.2%	5.9	0.5%
Water transport	-4.4%	-0.1	-5.2%	0.7%	0.0	0.8%	-2.3%	-2.9	-2.5%	0.7%	0.9	0.8%
Air transport	-2.4%	-0.1	-2.7%	0.4%	0.0	0.5%	-11.8%	-1.0	-2.0%	1.2%	0.2	0.4%
Other transport services	-7.3%	-4.6	-8.1%	0.5%	0.3	0.5%	-10.1%	-11.0	-4.7%	1.1%	2.0	0.8%
Accommodation and food services	-8.5%	-2.4	-1.6%	1.0%	0.5	0.3%	-2.6%	-16.7	-1.0%	1.8%	3.2	0.2%
Communication services	-3.8%	-5.5	-3.4%	1.1%	1.7	1.0%	-2.5%	-4.9	-1.7%	1.4%	1.6	0.5%
Finance and insurance	-5.2%	-3.9	-4.2%	10.0%	2.4	2.6%	-2.6%	-8.3	-2.2%	1.1%	2.7	0.7%
Real estate	-4.7%	-7.1	-3.6%	1.2%	1.8	0.9%	-2.3%	-9.2	-0.7%	1.8%	2.8	0.2%
Other services	-11.2%	-24.8	-1.8%	2.5%	5.9	0.4%	-2.0%	-48.9	-0.8%	0.6%	18.1	0.3%
TOTAL	-4.0%	-84.2	-2.0%	0.9%	18.8	0.4%	-2.3%	-287.7	-0.9%	0.9%	142.8	0.4%

Note: Emp refers employment

Annex B. *The multiplier effects of declining tourism revenues by one unit of domestic currency*

	HUNGARY					*TURKEY*				
	Change in tourism demand by sector				Fiscal rescue package	Change in tourism demand by sector				Fiscal rescue package
	Retail trade	Land Transport	Accomm. and food services	Other services		Retail trade	Land Transport	Accomm. and food services	Other services	
Agriculture	0.033	0.027	0.130	0.029	0.029	0.093	0.086	0.204	0.097	
Mining	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.001	0.001	0.017	0.014	0.018	0.016	
Food	0.032	0.025	0.230	0.031	0.031	0.109	0.101	0.253	0.114	
Textiles	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.069	0.065	0.071	0.074	
Wood and paper	0.024	0.009	0.012	0.011	0.011	0.023	0.018	0.022	0.031	
Refined oil and chemical	0.052	0.116	0.047	0.041	0.041	0.069	0.100	0.082	0.078	
Metal and minerals	0.014	0.015	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.028	0.025	0.028	0.034	
Machinery	0.019	0.020	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.024	0.020	0.02	0.029	
Motor vehicles	0.007	0.016	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.028	0.029	0.026	0.029	
Other manufacturing	0.005	0.013	0.004	0.007	0.007	0.004	0.004	0.005	0.003	
Energy	0.072	0.045	0.058	0.045	0.045	0.076	0.051	0.106	0.084	
Construction	0.017	0.016	0.013	0.019	0.019	0.011	0.007	0.009	0.012	
Wholesale trade	0.063	0.075	0.078	0.048	0.048	0.116	0.140	0.127	0.116	
Retail trade	1.062	0.055	0.067	0.055	0.055	1.048	0.067	0.103	0.079	
Land transport	0.059	0.947	0.036	0.025	0.025	0.194	1.252	0.203	0.171	
Water transport	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.037	0.012	0.011	0.01	
Air transport	0.003	0.006	0.003	0.005	0.005	0.017	0.022	0.015	0.023	
Other transport services	0.027	0.116	0.018	0.019	0.019	0.055	0.123	0.057	0.055	
Accomm. and food services	0.030	0.024	0.989	0.033	0.033	0.08	0.080	1.067	0.078	
Communication services	0.068	0.049	0.047	0.061	0.061	0.07	0.042	0.045	0.056	
Finance and insures	0.087	0.061	0.062	0.057	0.057	0.063	0.062	0.069	0.069	
Real estate	0.204	0.105	0.124	0.133	0.133	0.221	0.150	0.170	0.159	
Other services	0.181	0.147	0.144	1.043	1.043	0.173	0.140	0.163	1.205	
Total output multiplier	*2.061*	*1.889*	*2.100*	*1.697*	*1.697*	*2.623*	*2.610*	*2.874*	*2.623*	
Government	0.550	0.442	0.480	0.510	0.510	0.444	0.467	0.435	0.441	
GDP	1.027	0.832	0.856	0.940	0.940	1.45	1.354	1.379	1.448	

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IMAGINED FUTURES OF POST-COVID-19 TOURISM IN ANTALYA

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ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic has led to a deep crisis in all tourism destinations in the world, and so did the sun-sea-sand tourism city of Antalya. Will it go 'back to normal' after the crisis or will the crisis trigger a significant change? Will it show an engineering or ecological resilience in the future on the one hand or an adaptive resilience on the other? Because the future is open, actors in the tourism industry face, like all actors, a radical uncertainty about it. Under these conditions, they can only ground their decisions on so-called fictional expectations. In this paper, we connect the 'theory' of resilience with fictional expectations and explore the expectations of tourism entrepreneurs, managers of tourism associations, and government officials in the tourism city of Antalya with a qualitative research approach based on in-depth interviews with leading hoteliers and discourses of tourism leaders in Antalya's tourism. Some expect a return to business as usual, some expect a continuation of changes set in before the crisis as engineering resilience, and others changes triggered by Covid-19 as adaptive resilience. In addition, Covid-19 has intensified collaboration between key actors to strengthen the city's tourism industry in the future.

Keywords
fictional expectations
post-covid-19 tourism
imagined futures
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INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic with its travel bans and restrictions, lock-downs, quarantine periods, and infection anxiety has given an enormous blow to the tourism industry in all tourism places in the world. All tourism firms

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(airline carriers and other transportation companies, tour operators, hotels and holiday homes, booking websites, restaurants and cafés, and cruise-ships, tour guides, tourist shops among many others), wherever they are located, have made tremendous losses, and many of them have gone bankrupt, despite state support. The decline of the industry (being very labour intensive) has led to a loss of millions of jobs and deep crises of tourism places.

Over the last decades, the global tourism industry quickly bounced back without any significant structural change after shocks such as the 9/11 terrorist attack, the outbreak of SARS (2002), the global economic crisis (2008), the bird flu (2009), and MERS (2012) (see World Tourism Organization and International Labour Organization, 2013; Gössling et al., 2021). The same applies to the tourism industry in many tourism places such as, for instance, Sri Lanka after the Tsunami in 2004 (Buultjens et al., 2015), Antalya after the Turkish geopolitical crisis in 2015 (Terhorst & Erkuş-Öztürk, 2019), and Bali after the terrorist bomb attack in 2002 (Gurtner, 2007). Thus, in the past, the industry has shown strong resilience to shocks that do not seem to have triggered any significant structural change. The resilience of tourism places in the past seems to conform to so-called 'engineering' resilience (self-restorative bounce-back from shocks) or 'ecological' resilience (ability to absorb shocks without structural change).

The Covid-19 pandemic, by contrast, has caused such a deep, unprecedented global crisis in the tourism industry that, according to many critical tourism researchers, it offers opportunities for structural change. They advocate and expect more 'global consciousness to address global problems', more sustainable tourism, de-globalization, more domestic tourism, de-growth, less over-tourism, less exploitation of tourism workers, and the end of neoliberal globalization (see Lew et al., 2020 and Deep Sharma et al., 2021).

Although major crises and shocks often triggered structural change in the past (think of Schumpeter's (1939) theory of long-term busts and booms, World War II, and the crisis of Fordism and the Keynesian welfare state), it remains to be seen whether or not the Covid-19 pandemic will be a potential catalyst to 'adaptive' resilience of tourism places (adaptive development in response to or anticipation of shocks). We have to "be careful what you wish for" (Hall et al., 2020) and the 'forgetfulness' of tourists and tourism entrepreneurs is high (Formaki, 2021). More importantly, the tourism industry has a strong interest in boosting up its pro-growth strategy of the pre-Covid-19 era if only because tourism firms that did not go bankrupt suffer from large debts with banks and tax authorities; and so have local and national states that are structurally dependent on the unlimited growth of the tourism industry. Thus, structural change in tourism will be strongly opposed by the vested interests of pro-tourism industry boosters. This potential conflict is already visible in academia where recently a truly ideological struggle has started between pro-industry boosters and pro-limits critics who advocate environmental limits, ecological concerns, human rights and more equality, and worker rights among others (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2021).

This paper is about the expected recovery from the Covid-19 crisis of the tourism industry in Antalya, a sea-sand-sun tourism city that welcomed around 10 million foreign visitors just before the Corona outbreak. Because the Covid-19 pandemic is not over yet, we obviously cannot analyse Antalya's resilience in retrospect. But what we can do is to explore the fictional expectations (a concept coined by Beckert, 2016) and anticipations of tourism firms and policy makers to the city's post-Covid-19 (if it will ever be) tourism development. Tourism entrepreneurs and policy makers have to look ahead to anticipate to the future and to ground their decisions on future expectations. Because the future is open, they cannot form rational expectations based on a probability calculus but can only rely on so-called fictional expectations and narratives of the future. In this paper, we aim to answer the following research question.

Do tourism entrepreneurs and policy makers in Antalya expect that the city's tourism industry will go 'back to normal' or show significant changes in the post-Covid-19 era, and, if so, what are those changes? And do they already act accordingly? In other words, do they expect Antalya's tourism industry will bounce back to the same development path as before or bounce forward to a new development path that significantly differs from the pre-Covid-19? In case of bouncing back they implicitly expect an 'engineering' or 'ecological' resilience of the city's tourism industry and in case of bouncing forward an 'adaptive' resilience.

This paper is organized as follows. In the first section, we shortly discuss some main points in the debate on regional economic resilience (but do not intend to review the voluminous literature) and argue, following Pike et al. (2010, p. 66-67) and Bristow and Healy (2014a, 2014b, 2015) for an agency perspective on it. From that perspective, we can connect the 'theory' of regional economic resilience with that of fictional expectations discussed in the following section. Although we rely on the Beckert's work on fictional expectations (Beckert, 2013, 2016; Beckert & Bronk, 2018), he is certainly not alone in pointing out the role fictional expectations, imaginaries, and narratives play in economic life. A long time ago, the economist Shackle (1979) did, and Nobel Prize winners Akerlof and Shiller have recently analysed how animal spirits and narratives drive major economic events (Akerlof & Shiller, 2009; Shiller, 2019). In the subsequent sections, we present our research methodology and empirical results.

LITERATURE REVIEW: MAIN POINTS IN THE DEBATE ON REGIONAL ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

Regional economic resilience literature focuses on how countries and regions are resistant to economic shocks and how they recover after such a shock. Resilience is often interpreted in terms of economic growth rate but it can, in principle, be broader interpreted, such as, for instance, in terms of environmentally sustainable development or level of living. Martin (2012) discussed the concept of resilience under three different meanings of it. Firstly, '*Engineering*' resilience refers to the economy returns to its pre-shock equilibrium growth path without any change of its structure. Secondly, '*Ecological*' resilience is defined as "the magnitude of a shock that can be absorbed before the system changes its form, function or position". Thirdly, '*Adaptive*' resilience, reflecting more an evolutionary view, refers to the capacity of an economy to adapt and to renew its economic structure. Evolutionary economic geographers tend to distinguish between adaptation and adaptability but interpret them differently. According to Pike et al. (2010), adaptation concerns changes with preconceived paths in the short run, whereas adaptability is about developing new pathways. Evenhuis (2017, p. 3), on the other hand, argues for another view. According to him, adaptation refers to the actual process occurring in a regional economy to deal with unforeseen changes whereas resilience refers to the underlying capacity: the unobservable, hypothesized potential of a regional economy to cope with disturbances more generally. Adaptability depends on the diversity of the region's economic structure, and it depends on the capacity of a region to reorient its extra-regional connections (Evenhuis, 2017, p.3). Thus, regional economic resilience is not a static property of a regional economy that is only present when a shock occurs. It is a feature that is continuously, i.e. in both shock- and non-shock periods, produced and reproduced, be it more intense in shock periods (Martin, 2018). The latter are periods of stronger 'creative destruction' than non-shock periods, that is more old economic activities die off and more 'new combinations' are created. Nevertheless, also in 'normal' (non-shock) periods regional economies adapt themselves to changing circumstances and innovate. The higher the adaptability and innovativeness of a regional economy in 'normal' times is, the less vulnerable it is to shocks and the more successfully it recovers from shocks.

The evolutionary approach to regional economic resilience has been criticized for ignoring politics. Regional economic restructuring (in a broad sense) is hardly possible without state intervention. This criticism is only partly right, however, because it is aimed at one version of evolutionary economic geography. In more recent discussions among evolutionary economists and evolutionary economic geographers (Martin & Sunley, 2015), as well as in empirical research on regional economic resilience, much attention has been paid to the role of institutional arrangements and policy making in regional economic resilience (see, for instance, Bristow & Healy, 2014a, 2014b, 2015; Eraydin, 2016; Evans & Karecha, 2014; Kakderi & Tasopoulou, 2017).

Fictional Expectations

Expectations of the future have almost completely ignored in discussions on regional economic resilience, and researchers on regional economic resilience will, at first look, be inclined to believe that they have nothing to do with each other. This is not surprising because, first, the different conceptualizations of resilience share a common emphasis on defining resilience in terms of the functioning of the regional economy as a system or complex adaptive system in which the role of agency is largely ignored (Pike et al., 2010, p. 66-67; Bristow & Healy, 2014a, 2014b, 2015). Second, and related to it, almost all empirical research is oriented to the past, not to the future. Most resilience literature is about comparative research on how countries and regions are resistant to and recover from shocks on the basis of their previous spatial characteristics and production structures (Brakman et al., 2015; Capello et al., 2015; Eraydin, 2016; Giannakis & Bruggeman, 2017). But regions are not actors, entrepreneurs and policy makers among others are. They interpret shocks, analyse whether or not and, to what extent, they are part of a long-run tendency, and form expectations of the future according to which they may or may not proactively change their strategic behaviour. People are active agents in resilience, and resilience is a set of capacities that can be intentionally developed and acquired. When economic and political actors take a decision, they have to form expectations of the effects and consequences of their decisions in the future.

Lucas' (1972) theory of rational expectations is the most sophisticated formulation of the idea of rationality of expectations. To neoclassical economists, expectations of the future are about a future that is, in principle, knowable, although its knowability may be limited by the learning capacity of actors. Thus, they believe that, in principle, the future can be predicted on the basis of sufficient knowledge of the past and the present. It is a deterministic view on the future in which there is no place for uncertainty in the sense of Frank Knight (1921) who defined uncertainty as situations in which actors cannot form rational expectations of the future on the basis of a probability calculus. If one rejects a deterministic view on the future and accepts that the future is open, then all actors face radical uncertainty about the future. But how then do economic and political actors anticipate the future and take their decisions under conditions of radical uncertainty? According to Keynes, decisions under conditions of uncertainty can only be taken as a result of 'animal spirits' that refer to the emotions and instincts that guide the behaviour of investors and consumers in a market economy. For instance, a self-fulfilling prophesy (an expectation or prediction comes true simply because individual or collective actors behave accordingly) is an important mechanism in getting out a crisis or shock. This idea has been further elaborated by economists like Nobel Prize winners Akerlof and Shiller (2009). They distinguish, in addition to the well-known consumption-, investment-, and government expenditure multiplier, a confidence multiplier that represents the change in income that results from a one-unit change in confidence, however, it might be conceived or measured. Changes in confidence will result in changes in income and confidence in the next round, and each of these changes will in turn affect income and confidence in yet further rounds. Thus, positive expectations of the future may have a positive effect on bouncing back or bouncing forward (in case of adaptive resilience) from a shock. In the same vein, Shackle (1979) and Köhn (2017, p. 177-192) claim that economic actors base their actions on imaginations, fictions, and narratives under conditions of uncertainty. Likewise, the leading economic sociologist Beckert (2016) argues that "they imagine how the future will look like and base their decisions on what he calls 'imaginaries' or 'fictional expectations'". They refer to "*images actors form as they consider future states of the world, the way they visualize causal relations, and the ways they perceive their actions in influencing outcomes*" (Beckert, 2016, p. 9).

Fictional expectations are the opposite of the neoclassical concept of rational expectations, and are not only individually but also socially constructed by a variety of social factors, and take the form of narratives, discourses, and theories that are historically and geographically specific. The social construction of fictional expectations is part of a power struggle among interest groups. Dominating fictional expectations of the future gives power to interest groups because they steer individual and collective decisions.

Some of these ideas, be it in different form and without referring to above-mentioned literature, have recently been penetrated a little bit in resilience literature. Evenhuis (2017, p. 8) hints, very shortly, at the role of narratives and anticipation of changes in the future, and Martin (2018, p. 860), who has been leading discussions on regional economic resilience, points out the importance of business confidence in resilience. Business confidence is one form of fictional expectations of businesses. A confidence in the underlying strength of a region's economy encourages investment and innovation, which reinforces that strength and further boosts confidence. In case of a lack of confidence, a converse circular process will operate. Although fictional expectations of the future are, to a large extent, collective, not all entrepreneurs behave accordingly. Real entrepreneurs in the Schumpeterian sense sail against the wind and innovate, irrespectively what others expect of the future, and other business leaders don't have the resources to behave according to dominant fictional expectations and don't survive or have to accept lower profit rates. In the past, for instance, many tourism entrepreneurs, tourism researchers, and policy makers believed that the future of successful post-mass tourism is in upgrading tourism services to middle- and higher classes. Nevertheless, a lot of tourism entrepreneurs did not share that belief and did not enter those sub-markets.

METHODOLOGICAL REMARKS

Our research strategy raises a few questions that have to be clarified. First, it is ambiguous what post-Covid-19 tourism means. Almost all epidemiologists and virologists argue (it is their collective fictional expectation!) that Covid-19 will never completely disappear but could pose less danger over time (Telenti et al., 2021). Thus, strictly spoken there is no post-Covid-19 era. However, we could speak of a post-Covid-19 era when all or the majority of Turkish citizens and all foreign tourists visiting Turkey are vaccinated and able to proof it. However, this demanding definition is somewhat problematical because the vaccination coverage varies among inhabitants of outbound countries that would like to visit Turkey. It would imply that Antalya would miss out a significant number of potential foreign tourists and would slow down the city's economic resilience. A lighter criterion of the end of the post-Covid-19 period is that Turkey allows all foreign tourists to visit the country that are either vaccinated or tested in 48 hours before entering the country. Turkey has chosen this lighter criterion for visiting the country in 2021.

Secondly, it is important to stress that our research is limited to the supply side of Antalya's tourism economy. If both tourism firms and policy makers in Antalya and foreign tourists would believe that tourism has to take a new development path, then structural change is most likely. If, by contrast, it is believed both on the supply side and demand side that business as usual is the best of all worlds, then Antalya's tourism economy would bounce back to normal. But other combinations are also possible in which Antalya's tourism firms and policymakers believe a new development path is necessary whereas foreign tourists don't believe, as well as the other way around (Brouder, 2020). In this paper, we explore the fictional expectations of tourism entrepreneurs (who played a leading role as opinion leaders in Antalya's mass tourism growth) and leading policy makers in Antalya's tourism. Antalya is a mass tourism city of Turkey and has attracted yearly more than 10 million visitors till the recent years both (geo)political and Covid-19 crisis. Given its mass tourism character (consisting of mostly foreign tourists), it also attracts tourists for golf-, eco-, and heritage tourism. The growth of Antalya's tourism has lead the growth of related and unrelated sectors (Erkuş-Öztürk & Terhost, 2018). Given its foreign tourism-oriented structure, it is not surprising that the Covid-19 crisis affected the development of Antalya's tourism. Tourism entrepreneurs like all entrepreneurs have, under conditions of uncertainty, to form fictional expectations of future demand and act accordingly.

To analyse the fictional expectations of Antalya's future, we applied a qualitative research method to answer the following open ended questions. Do tourism entrepreneurs and policy makers in Antalya expect that the city's tourism industry will go 'back to normal' or show significant changes in the post-Covid-19 era, and, if so, what are those changes? And do they already act accordingly? Are there future expectations collectively shared or not, and if so to what extent? Do they expect less foreign tourism arrivals in the future by plane? Do they expect environmental awareness of tourists that reduces air traffic? Do they expect a growth of domestic tourism after the Covid-19 crisis? Do they expect more environmentally friendly tourism measures from the national government? Do they expect overtourism in the future? Do they expect cheaper tourism alternatives for domestic tourism? Do they expect a shortage of labour due to the Covid-19 crisis?

To answer the questions above, we used both primary and secondary data. We got primary data from in -depth interviews which started in

September 2020 with managers of leading hotels that played a key role in the development of Antalya's tourism (such as Champion hotels (the first mass-tourism hotel in Antalya), Crystal hotels (one of the biggest chain hotel in Antalya centre), Nirvana Cosmopolitan hotels (first luxury 7- star luxury city vegan hotel), Nirvana Chains Kilit Global Group leader (one of the biggest investor in the diversification of Antalya's tourism), Nashira Resorts, Olympos Lodge boutique hotel (one of the best and old boutique hotel investor), and other key actors such as the manager of Anex Tour and Coral Travel (one of the best tour operators in Antalya), BETUYAB (Belek Tourism Investors Union, First private tourism investors association), and the Free Zone Manager in Antalya.

Table 1. *Source of data and in-depth interviews*

Data Type	Stakeholders	Type of Stakeholder
Primary Data	Champion Hotels Manager	Visionary, 1st mass tourism hotel investor in Antalya
In-depth interviews	Crystal Hotels Manager	Important Hotel chain leader in Antalya
	Nirvana Hotels Manager	Big Hotel Chains in Antalya
	Nirvana Cosmopolitan Manager	Leading investor of the biggest City Vegan Sport Hotel in Covid-19 Crisis time
	Nashira Resorts	Leading hotel chain in Antalya
	Olympos Lodge Manager	Oldest leading boutique hotel in Antalya, Kemer
	Kilit Global	Investor, Diversified tourism companies
	Anex Tour Manager	Important tour operator in Antalya's tourism
	Coral Travel Manager	Important tour operator in Antalya's tourism
	Betuyab Manager	Belek Tourism Investors Union, First private tourism investors association)
	Antalya Free Zone Manager	Yacht construction companies information
	Cem Kınay's Talk	Starter of All-inclusive system in Turkey
Secondary Data	Club Marvy's Talk	Manager of Club Mary, differentiated concept hotel
Discourses of 12 speeches from Resort 2020 Congress speakers	Turofed Leaders Talk	Turkey's Hoteliers Federation
	Mehmet Ersoy, Responsible of the Ministry	Ministry of Culture and Tourism
	Denizbank Financial Services Manager	
	5 Tour leaders	
	2 Tourism bloggers	

We completed 10 in-depth interviews with opinion leaders in Antalya's tourism and when we got repetitive replies we stopped at May 2021. In the second stage, we used secondary data from the keynote speeches of the Resort Congress 2020's video records of future tourism strategies of the national government and private sector leaders. There were 12 speeches ranging from Cem Kınay (starter of All-inclusive system in Turkey), Club Mary hotel manager, Turofed (Turkish Hoteliers Federation) leader, 5 tour leaders, Manager of Ministry of Culture and Tourism, DenizBank Financial Services Manager, 2 Tourism bloggers. Research questions are analysed by using narratives of interviewees. We used codes for every interviewee, gave quotations of discourses and analysed them.

FICTIONAL EXPECTATIONS OF FUTURE TOURISM IN ANTALYA

Two preliminary remarks should be made before presenting our empirical research. First, in most resilience literature, including evolutionary economic-geographical one, the region as a whole but not the individual firm is the research object. However, one of the key concepts of evolutionary economic geography is variety, which implies that the adaptability and innovativeness of firms between and within industries vary in pre-shock- and shock periods. The same can be said of the future expectations of tourism entrepreneurs in Antalya. As shown below, they vary in many respects.

Second, the concepts of engineering and ecological resilience presuppose that regional economies are in a static equilibrium before a shock after which they return to a new static equilibrium. Evolutionary economic geographers, by contrast, who embrace the concept of adaptive resilience, stress that regional economies follow a dynamic development path, and the higher the adaptability and innovativeness of regions are in pre-shock periods, the less vulnerable to shocks they are and the more quickly recover from them. Thus we should not conceive of regional economic development in terms of a static period without change which is disturbed by a shock and followed by a new static period.

There are various indications that over the last twenty years the development path of Antalya's tourism economy has been very dynamic with a lot of adaptability and innovativeness. Antalya's tourism economy has been fairly resilient to crises like the bird flu in 2003, the global financial crisis of 2008, and the Turkish (geo)political crisis in the period 2014-2018 (Terhorst & Erkuş-Öztürk, 2019). This is in line with the region's adaptability and innovativeness. Its tourism economy has been strongly diversified over the last twenty years (Erkuş-Öztürk & Terhorst, 2018, and many hotels and restaurants have been fairly innovative (Erkuş-Öztürk & Terhorst, 2016, 2017). As shown below, the future expectations of some interviewees reflect a static view of both the pre- and post-Covid-19 period because they do not refer to the dynamics of Antalya's tourism economy at all. Their future expectations are labelled as 'business as usual'. Other interviewees, by contrast, expect that Antalya's tourism economy will be as adaptive and innovative in the post-Covid-19 era as before. Thus they implicitly refer to adaptive resilience. However, the expectations of some of them are explicitly related to the Covid-19 pandemic whereas those of others reflect tendencies that were set in earlier and have hardly or not been triggered by the Covid-19 crisis. The former expectations are labelled 'expectations triggered by Covid-19' and the latter 'expectations based on pre-Covid-19 tendencies'. Figure 1 presents the organization of the empirical analysis.

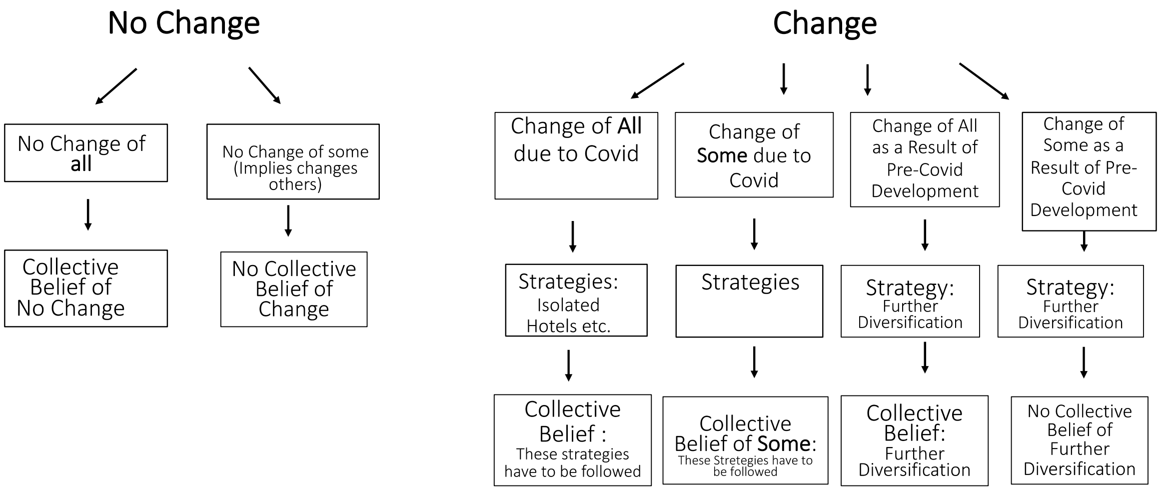

Figure 1. *Organization of the empirical analysis*

Post-Covid-19 expectations: business as usual

Some interviewees of the tourism industry in Antalya expect that, even in the long term, they do not need to change their business strategy because tourists will come anyway. They expect to return to normal times because the Covid-19 crisis is temporary. They argue that holiday culture is so firmly settled in the world that people will go again on holiday after Covid-19 and tourism demand will grow again in the future. Particularly Antalya's tourism economy will be successful because they expect that foreign tourists cannot find elsewhere along the Mediterranean coast such a high-quality place at low prices as Antalya.

All interviewees (including the ones who ground their expectations on more dynamic views) expect Antalya's competitive position will be strong again in the future on the basis of high value for money. In the words of a financial manager of a 5 star-hotel in Manavgat:

> *"our five-star mass-tourism all-inclusive concept is our asset and not comparable to other countries; we offer high-quality services for lower prices. So we will always be selected by foreign tourists. Many hotel investors will continue to ground their business model on the all-inclusive concept".*

The interviewees who expect business as usual do not believe that Antalya's tourism market will change after Covid-19. The European and Russian markets will remain the most important ones for Antalya (and Turkey) due to their proximity and high quality for low prices. Thus Covid-19 will not lead to a greater share of domestic tourists.

Notwithstanding EU-plans to levy a tax on kerosine and to oblige airline carriers to buy CO2-emission rights, and a growing environmental consciousness among European tourists as is reflected in the term 'flight shame', all interviewees do not expect that all these things will affect Antalya's tourism. According to the manager of a luxury boutique hotel:

> *"I don't expect big changes in the future of airline traffic. Maybe long-distance flights will decline somewhat. But it won't affect Turkey, because Europe is nearby and Turkey is accessible by other modes of transportation such as by car and cruise".*

Thus the environmental impact of airline tourism is downplayed by our interviewees. More generally, many interviewees do not expect that climate change nor Turkish climate policy will have any impact on Antalya's tourism. The manager of Coral Travel, for instance, says:

> *"Climate change won't have much impact on Antalya because it will not have much effect on Mediterranean countries. Of course, if summers will become hotter here, just as hot as in Thailand, tourists will visit us anyway, just as they will continue to visit Thailand".*

And no interviewee believes that the Turkish government can and will apply strict measures to stimulate more environmentally friendly tourism. It is too dependent on the existing tourism system.

In short, the interviewees who expect business as usual in the future have implicitly a static view of the tourism economy of Antalya. Covid-19 has disturbed the equilibrium of the city's tourism economy to which, they expect, it will return in the future. Their expectations of the future reflect an engineering or ecological view of regional economic resilience.

Expectations based on pre-Covid-19 tendencies

Some interviewees conceive Antalya's tourism economy in more dynamic terms and expect that Antalya will follow the same development path in the post-Covid-19 era as before. Tourism entrepreneurs, representatives of tourism business associations and public institutions, all say that Antalya's tourism has shown strong resilience to former crises. Although a lot of firms will go bankrupt during the current crisis, many will survive and will do their business in the same way as prior to the pandemic. In the words of one interviewee, who is the first hotel investor in Antalya:

> *"The current tourism system will remain the same in the post-Covid-19 era because Turkey and Antalya have adapted successfully to various crises during recent decades".*

Because of the high adaptability and innovativeness in the past, Antalya's post-Covid-19 development path will continue after the crisis. According to the manager of Champion hotels:

> *"We are Turkish tourism specialists who created Antalya's tourism industry from scratch. In the distant past, when there was no tourism here, we imagined a bright future for Antalya's tourism. Ever since then, we have been innovative and creative in shaping the future of the region's tourism. We were, for instance, forerunners in creating retirement hotels, forest hotels, and hot water hotels. We imagined what Antalya should look like in the future and created Antalya's Tourism Development Plan which has been applied. So we will again create a successful future for Antalya".*

And the manager of a big hotel chain believes in the continuity of the current system by creating more diversification:

> *"Besides focusing on luxury tourism in Antalya, fantastic theme parks, free-trade and shopping zones should be developed to balance seasonal differences. If we create shopping centres for big brands (like Prada and Versace), tourists will come here in winter and combine holidays with shopping. Such kinds of attractions should be developed to support winter tourism. I believe that the domestic market is also always a solution in Turkey's future tourism".*

There is a broadly shared belief among the interviewees that Antalya should focus on high-quality tourism in the future. This view is certainly not new because it has been advocated by many entrepreneurs and representatives of tourism business associations over the last two decades. To overcome the problem of overtourism other Mediterranean countries struggle with, they argue that high-quality tourism can prevent overtourism. But focussing on high-quality tourism implies less room for domestic tourism. The prices of most hotels are in Euros, and due to the gap between the Euro and the Lira (which has widened over the last years), domestic tourists, except for higher classes, cannot afford holidays in Antalya.

Cem Kınay, establisher of the all-inclusive system in Turkey, also stresses the need for more diversification:

> *"Innovative services must be developed, especially for people below 40 years old. New generation, Y and Z generation already know many things and criticize everything, so you need to develop the quality for not be criticized by the new generation who are critical about holidays. Influencers such as on Instagram and their followers are very important in defining new trends. I expect that Mardin, Hatay, Göbeklitepe, Egean and Mediterranian inner localities will become favourable destinations in Turkey".*

The manager of the Champion hotels point to another form of diversification, the rise of 'hybrid hotels':

> *"Staycations, hotel apartments with a lot of services where people can combine work (online) and holidays".*

But, if the current crisis would last long and these staycations would become more popular, Coral Travel manager says, then

> *"It would imply large-scale renovation of hotel buildings. Their costs would be so high that it can only be realized with help of the state".*

In short, these interviewees expect that Antalya's tourism economy will be as adaptive and innovative after the crisis as before. Thus they implicitly interpret resilience in terms of adaptive resilience. However, the changes they expect in the future are not triggered by the Covid-19 crisis but are a continuation of tendencies that started long before the current crisis, namely a focus on high-quality tourism and more diversification.

Expectations triggered by Covid-19

The current crisis has given an opportunity to big firms to take over other firms that have come into problems due to the pandemic (*"big firms invest themselves out of the crisis"*). For instance, some interviewees in Antalya said that when one hotel goes bankrupt, bigger hotels buy it at a low price. In other words, big hotels use the crisis as an opportunity to buy other hotels. As a result, hotel industry concentration will, *ceteris paribus*, increase. A good example is a big hotel chain in Antalya having their own vineyards, meat production farms, and cleaning firms among others. This group has bought other hotels that went bankrupt during the Corona crisis and has renewed them into environmentally friendly hotels with a lot of social distance possibilities and environmentally friendly products and services. They started to serve more ecological and vegan food and invited Michelin-starred chefs. In addition, they have their own large parks and sports complexes.

According to many interviewees who expect Covid-19 will trigger a change in the future, the pandemic has changed the demand and this will continue to be in the future. Although the European and Russian markets will remain the most important ones, the domestic market of higher-class Turks has grown during the crisis and is expected to grow further after Covid-19. In the words of a manager of a 5-star hotel:

"The pandemic has one advantage, namely that higher-class Turks started to visit good Turkish hotels".

During and after the pandemic, tourists have become very conscious of the danger of Corona and other viruses and about the environmental degradation and climate change due to tourism. Consumers are still afraid of viruses in general and new varieties of Corona in particular. They don't shake hands and embrace friends anymore and feel uncomfortable in dense concentrations of the population. Consequently, they visit big cities less than before, and prefer to make their holidays under extremely hygienic conditions, not in hotels but in private (luxurious) villas with private pools in isolated places or, less luxuriously, in caravans in isolated places. Thus most of the big hotel owners and tourism summit actors believe that the growth of Antalya's tourism in the future is found in less crowded places, and isolated holiday areas in nature, i.e. retirement and hot-water hotels, B-leisure, wo-cations, request based experiences, quality experiences, staycations, glamping (luxurious tents on spacious grounds with private pools), hybrid hotels, more new boutique hotels, luxurious caravans in isolated nature, more villa tourism, and more yacht tourism. All these have increased tremendously in 2021 summer according to tourism specialists. In the words of a free zone manager,

"Yacht companies made profit and order of Yacht construction has increased tremendously this summer which shows us a clue to future tourism".

Particularly new tourism firms will exploit the changed demand of those tourism services. They offer private villas, caravans and specialized luxury resorts with private pools in isolated places that offer more diversified services than before. According to some private investors:

"Due to Covid, small hotels in the luxurious niche market will show a high growth rate in the future (private room pools and services like in Kaş villas and Kemer boutique hotels such as Olympos Lounge)".

Many interviewees expect that Corona will lead to new, flexible reservation systems and, therefore, changing relations between local tourism firms and tour operators. In tourism production networks there is always the struggle of who pays and receives when. The risk of cancelled trips is lowest for tour operators when consumers have to pay in advance whereas hotels are paid afterward (and vice versa). After Corona tourists still remember their bad experience with tour operators and airline carriers that refused to return their advanced money although they were obliged by law in many countries and no longer want to pay in advance. Likewise, hotels in destinations want to be paid in advance to avoid the burden of risk being shifted on their shoulders. All this will lead to new systems of insurance backed by the state. Tourists will become not only more hesitant to book a long time in advance but will also prefer to compose and arrange their own package tours and make their reservations by themselves instead by tour operators and travel agencies. As one interviewee declares:

> *"In ten years, self-reservations systems will be of great importance. Booking via tour operators and travel agencies will decline. So the tourism value chain will change, because self-reservation systems, online bookings, and last-minute options will become more popular. Tour operators will lose market power unless they change their systems and provide new cancellation policies."*

Collaboration triggered by Covid-19

From the foregoing, it is clear that, during the Covid-19 crisis, all actors in Antalya's tourism industry have a very optimistic view of the future (and downplay the environmental impact of flight tourism). This confidence in the future business, being important in regional economic resilience, has provoked collaboration between local tourism entrepreneurs, tourism business associations, the national Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and banks; and, equally important, this collaboration is expected to be continued after the crisis. All those actors already closely worked together before the crisis (Erkuş-Öztürk, 2011; Erkuş-Öztürk & Terhorst, 2012), but have since then intensified their collaboration to mitigate the effects of the crisis and strengthen the region's tourism industry in the future.

The central state has, in collaboration with the Deniz Bank, supported hotels with credit guarantees for hygiene measures among others, and the payment of salaries so that workers could stay employed; and it gave a tax reduction to tourism firms. To mitigate the effects of the crisis, the national Ministry of Culture and Tourism created, in collaboration with TUROFED (Turkish Tourism Hoteliers Federation), AKTOB (Union of Mediterranean Touristic Hoteliers and Operators), TUROB (Turkish Hotel Association), and TUREB (Turkish Tourist Guide Organization) the so-called Tourism Safety Certificate that is intended to protect tourists against Covid-19. According to a manager of TUROFED (Turkish Tourism Hoteliers Federation):

> *"In the short term we successfully applied the health certificate successfully to protect our visitors. We created test centres by ourselves, and if one tourist is infected by Covid, we host him or her free of charge in hospitals and hotels. In addition, travel agencies arranged the flights of these covid tourists free of charge. This certificate will continue to be operative in the future."*

The national Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the above-mentioned tourism associations set up the Turkish Development Agency, an organization that has to promote the digitalization of tourism in the future and it created a new website (GoTurkey.com). The aim of this organization is to support flexible booking systems (it is opposed to early booking practiced by tour operators), customer relation management (CRM), digital and TV advertising, and to develop a digital experience platform. In addition, it collaborates with regional development agencies and with Cem Kinay, a big name in Turkish tourism, to support local tourism. In sum, the collaboration between government officials, managers of tourism associations, and tourism firms, intensified by Covid-19, has helped shape the future expectations of Antalya's tourism.

CONCLUSION

The kernel of our theoretical argument in this paper is that actors who face radical uncertainty about the future have no choice but to base their decisions on fictional expectations. These expectations play an important role in the economic resilience of regions. A sunny view of the future has a positive effect on regional economic resilience. All our interviewees believe that Antalya's tourism economy will prosper again in the post-Covid-19 era, particularly on the basis of high quality for low prices. This does not mean that all their other expectations of the future are the same. Some interviewees have a static view of Antalya's tourism economy and their expectations are implicitly based on an engineering conception of regional economic resilience. They expect business as usual in the future, i.e. the European and Russian markets will remain as dominant as before, and they are blind to the environmental impact of flight tourism and do not expect that environmental consciousness of foreign tourists will have any effect on the development of tourist arrivals. Most other interviewees, by contrast, have a dynamic view of Antalya's tourism economy. They have implicitly an adaptive conception of resilience in their minds but their expectations differ regarding the role the Covid-19 crisis plays. Some interviewees point to the adaptability of Antalya's tourism economy: it quickly bounced back from earlier crises and flexibly responded to new developments in the past. They expect and advocate more diversification of the city's tourism economy and believe that it can easily respond to environmental policy changes in the future (although they do not expect strict environmental policy measures). But their expectations of the future are not triggered by the Covid-19 crisis: they expect tendencies that have been started (long) before the crisis. Other interviewees expect a lot of changes that are triggered by the Covid-19 crisis and have made already decisions on the basis of their expectations. They expect (and some have already acted accordingly) a strong growth of Turkish higher-class tourists, more environmentally friendly hotels with a lot of social distance possibilities in isolated places, more luxurious villa and caravan tourism with private pools, more B-leisure, staycations, clamping, and hybrid hotels. In addition, they expect a growing importance of self-reservation systems that will undermine the market dominance of tour operators. Finally, Covid-19 has intensified collaboration between key actors regarding credit guarantees, payment of salaries, tax reductions, the health certificate, and the foundation of the Turkish Development Agency.

In the foregoing we have seen that some fictional expectations are collectively shared among our interviewees whereas others are not. It would be very interesting to explore whether or not the variety of their fictional expectations of tourism firms is related to the characteristics of firms.

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