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Beyond Collapse: The Message of COVID–19 to the Sri Lankan Tourism Industry

Sivanandamoorthy Sivesan¹

Abstract

The coronavirus (COVID – 19) is a grave and rapidly growing health concern, which not only affects Chinese economic growth but which also has a serious impact on the global economy. The tourism industry has made, and continues to make, a valuable contribution to Sri Lankan economic and socio cultural development. This research study describes how far Sri Lanka tourism industry has collapsed due to the COVID – 19? how can Sri Lanka possibly reshape of as a leading tourist destination in the world market? This study suggests two phases of different strategies to reshape the Sri Lankan tourism market. Phase 01 deals with short terms remedies to the current problem which has arisen due to the health crisis. SLTDA should begin to work with the Ministry of Health and Indigenous Medical Services in the following ways: Issuing certificates to hotels to ensure the health and safety management of the hotels' staff, tourists and host community as well as security and hygiene arrangements at airports. Preparing detailed guidelines to establish quarantine hotels with employee safety and ensuring health safety of tourist guides and tourism related business. Phase 02 deals with with long–term strategies to rebuild the tourism industry in Sri Lanka.

Keywords

Tourism, Covid – 19, Socio cultural development, Economic, Contribution

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Introduction

In the contemporary world, the term coronavirus has become a significant catchphrase since the diagnosis of the first COVID-19 patient in December 2019 in Wuhan, the capital of Hubei province in China. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to spread without any discrimination among countries with strong economies, emerging market countries, and developing countries, resulting in the continuous suffering of people all over the world. It is this to which we turn the focus of our attention in this paper. In addition, the World Health Organization (WHO), declared COVID-19 to be a global public health emergency on 28th of January. Indeed, it should be noted that COVID-19 not only has affected on the world economy but also which has created many sociocultural issues throughout the world. In the globalized world, we have to think of the impacts of this pandemic which go beyond the mortality rate.

In different eras the world has faced various crises including terrorist attacks, civil wars, tsunamis, economic crises and and the Ebola virus. These crises have had divergent effects on the economic and social progress in the world. The impact of COVID-19, however, is not possible to compare with other global crises and their consequences. COVID-19 has given rise to many new challenges for socioeconomic development in the world (Hall, Scott & Gössling, 2020). Many countries around the globe have been locked down and all activities except for essential services have shut down. From a medical perspective, this was a necessary action to control the spread of the pandemic, but from a socio-economic perspective, this approach has created complicated scenarios with many changes in the pattern of demand and supply worldwide. The global supply chains' activities have been interrupted, impacting all business activities around the world. People reduce their consumption and make changes in consumer behavior, resulting in international shortages of many commodities in business organizations (Cetin, 2020).

The International Monterey Fund (IMF) projected international economic growth at -3.0 percent in 2020, and the result is predicted to be worse than that of the 2009 global financial crisis. 4.5 – 5 percent economic growth, however, had been expected due to the political stability subsequent to the Presidential election. But now it is difficult to meet this expectation (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2020). The tourism industry has played a significant role in Sri Lankan economy, Without considering the Sri Lankan tourism industry, it is not possible to discuss about the impact of COVID – 19 on the Sri Lankan economy because before the 1960s, the Sri Lankan economy was heavily reliant on three major plantation products – tea, rubber, and coconut. The collapse in the market for these three export products forced the establishment of other strategies, particularly tourism development. As a result, Sri Lanka became one of the most well-known tourist destinations within Asia with tourism being one of

the country's faster-growing industries and the third largest foreign exchange earner. But COVID-19 has crippled the tourism industry. Sri Lanka's Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) has a target of getting 3.5 – 4 million tourists and of earning \$5 billion in 2020. Presently, this is not possible. Sri Lanka tourism pays more attention to the targetting of the international market than that of the domestic market. The main reason for this is that , through the development of the international tourism market, foreign currency can be earned. This study describes the collapse of the Sri Lankan tourism industry and its aftermath. It also asks the question of how the tourism industry should reshape itself in the world market.

Methodology

For this analysis, historical information is necessary. So document analysis was employed in this study, and data collection techniques were used in qualitative research (Merriam, 2002). According to Bowen (2009), document analysis is a systematic process for examining both written documents and images. The data for this study were derived from annual reports of SLTDA, Sri Lanka Tourism Vision and Sri Lanka Tourism Strategic Plan of 2017–2018. Data were analyzed using content analysis.

Results

Covid -19 and Sri Lanka Tourism Industry

In the aftermath of the civil war, Sri Lanka had been receiving increasingly higher numbers of tourists year by year until the Easter Sunday attacks in 2019. For example, the numbers of tourists arriving in the country increased steadily from 447,890 in 2009 to 1913702 in 2019. With the improvement of domestic security arrangements from 2009, international tourist arrivals showed a positive growth rate of 46 percent in 2010. Yet in the succeeding years, most notably 2010 – 2013, tourist traffic to Sri Lanka decreased due to the unstable political environment, namely an international war crime inquiry in the aftermath of the Sri Lankan war and the ongoing global economic recession and climate events. However, between 2014 and 2019 international tourist traffic increased once again. This increase made a valuable contribution to all stakeholders. The Covid-19 virus has severely affected the tourism and hospitality industry which is more interconnected with other industries. In Sri Lanka the tourism industry has recruited many people as direct and indirect employees. For instance, in 2018 and 2019, 169,003 and 219,484 people were recorded as being direct and indirect employees respectively. As of now, large numbers of employees have temporally lost their work due to the closure of much tourism-related business including

restaurants, hotels and tourist airline services and travel agents. It has led to the damage of livelihoods of many small and medium entrepreneurs. Normally, tourism can generate economic advantages with a comparatively small amount of investment when compared to other business investment options (Sharpley & Ussi, 2014). With the improvement of domestic security arrangements from 2009, following the end of the civil war, the Sri Lankan government took action to encourage international and national investments in the tourism and hospitality industry. As the result, many international chain hotels are located throughout the nation with larger accommodation capacity. Indeed, SLTDA failed to promote small and medium scale hotel industry. The government is currently adopting various strategies including a nationwide curfew, a lockdown, travel bans and a social distancing system to control the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. It has led to a collapse in the industry. Practically, these measures are having a huge impact on people's day to day activities and on whole communities whilst having a devastating effect on national economies as well as on tourism activities. This is in line with very recent research done by Gossling and his colleagues who point out that "international, regional and local travel restrictions immediately affected national economies, including tourism systems, i.e. international travel, domestic tourism, day visits and segments as diverse as air transport, cruises, public transport, accommodation, cafes and restaurants, conventions, festivals, meetings, or sports events" (Gossling, Scott, and Hall 2020, p.2). Sri Lanka tourism used to pay more attention to positioning itself as an important winter resort particularly for middle-class foreigners and Europeans due to inexpensive costs, climate and the built environment, a legacy of 450 years of colonialism by different European countries (Reeves & Sivesan, 2018). Over the last two centuries, Sri Lanka was heavily dependent on Western European markets, especially the United Kingdom and Germany, who alternated between the first and second most important trading partners in the early years (Samaranayake, 2012). Presently, when we look at the current health crisis situation in Sri Lanka, most of the top 10 source markets, have been critically hit by Covid-19. The following table shows the total numbers of people affected by Covid-19, how many have died from the virus, how many have recovered and also what the death ratio is of the top ten tourist generating country to Sri Lanka.

Table 1

Total people affected by COVID-19, in terms of those who have died & recovered, and the total death ratio of top ten tourist generating country to Sri Lanka

Country	Total affected	Total death	Total recovered	Death ratio %	Tourist Arrivals 2017	Percentage Share 2017	Tourist Arrivals 2018	Percentage Share 2018
India	42,836	1,395	11,782	3.25	384,628	18.17	424,887	18.2
China	82,880	4,633	77,766	5.6	268,952	12.7	265,965	11.3
UK	190,584	28,734	N/A	15	201,879	9.53	254,176	10.9
Germany	165,745	6,866	132,700	4.1	130,227	6.15	156,888	6.7
France	168,693	24,895	N/A	14.8	97,282	4.59	106,449	4.6
Australia	6,825	95	5,859	1.4	81,281	3.84	110,928	4.7
Maldives	527	01	18	0.19	79,371	3.75	76,108	3.3
Russia	145,268	1,356	18,095	0.9	59,191	2.80	64,497	2.8
USA	1,197,907	69,011	1,170,390	5.8	57,479	2.72	75,308	3.2
Netherlands	40,770	5,082	N/A	12.46	51,148	2.42	57,160	2.4

Source: <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/> and <https://sltlda.gov.lk/storage/documents/0cb228cd03762f638bd515fe83edd453.pdf>, calculated ratios

Tourists from India, China and Maldives dominate the contemporary Sri Lankan tourism market. Globally, China has retained its position as the largest international tourism source market. Meanwhile, China has successfully controlled the present pandemic within its own borders. If China removes the travel bans, Chinese people will start to travel again throughout the world. Because some external environmental factors, including air pollution and overcrowding force to the people to travel. This can be rooted in Sri Lanka's competitive advantage. China's top ten outbound tourism source markets (Thailand, Japan, Singapore, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, America, South Korea and Maldives) have been crippled by Covid-19. From a medical perspective, when compared with most of the above countries, Sri Lanka is successful to control the spread of COVID-19 with its lower death ratio and high recovery ratio. It shows that its strength of health care services which will create a positive image to Chinese tourists who will see Sri Lanka as a safe destination to travel.

COVID – 19's Message to the Sri Lankan Tourism Industry

It is the right time to reshape the Sri Lanka tourism industry, and this can happen in two different phases. Phase 01 has to be considered as a short-term recovery mechanism. Prior to Covid-19, Sri Lanka tourism targetted the higher spending capacity tourists throughout the world, but this current climate has taught us apart from income earning, the tourism industry should pay for more attention to adopt some significant health prequestions when repositioning the tourism industry in the world market. SLTDA should begin to work with the Ministry of Health and Indigenous Medical Services in the following ways :

1. Issuing certificates to hotels to ensure the health and safety management of hotel staff, tourists and the host community, as well as safety and cleanliness at airports

2. Preparing detailed guidelines to establish quarantine hotels with employee safety
3. Ensuring health safety of tourist guides and tourism related businesses

Phase – II should focus on long – term recovery approaches. Both international and domestic tourism should be encouraged. After Covid - 19, international tourism will take place within the region. As a tourist destination, Sri Lanka has much potential since the highest source of tourist arrivals, those from Asian countries like India, China and the Maldives, claim 32.8 percent of the total traffic to the country. Generally, after crises, the demand for tourism would arise from neighbouring countries. In the post tsunami era and after the war, many tourists from neighbouring countries visited Sri Lanka (Robison & Jarvie, 2008; Fernando, Bandara, & Smith, 2013). So Sri Lankan tourism can target Asian countries.

Sri Lanka offers Ayurveda and Siddha medical spas . These places should be inspected and should conform the health and safety requirements of staff and tourists. In this way, new categories of tourists could be targeted. Ayurveda and Siddha are very traditional therapies which provide wellness application to all.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that Sri Lanka tourism has been severely disrupted by Covid–19, however, it can be seen that this is an opportunity to evaluate Sri Lanka’s tourism’ strategies and also reshape Sri Lanka’s tourism. Finally, this research study emphasises that in the post–pandemic era, Sri Lanka tourism should pay more attention to attracting regional tourists such as Asians. It would be useful to recover the industry from this unfortunate situation.

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Factors Influencing Tourism Space Commodification in the Mahmoudabad County, Northern Iran

Dickson Adom¹ , Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli² , Jilla Sajjadi³ , Saber Sedighi⁴ 

Abstract

This study examined the impacts of land-use changes as well as factors that influence tourism space commodification in Mahmoudabad County, Northern Iran. Satellite images were used to identify agricultural land-use changes while empirical data were collected from 379 local people who were randomly sampled with their views, gathered via a reliable, structured questionnaire. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics as well as the practical application of the Irridex, Tourism Area Life Cycle, and Weizenegger theoretical models. The satellite images showed massive land-use changes in agricultural lands to tourism facilities. Internal factors such as economic, environmental, and socio-cultural factors as well as external factors such as the influence of the political economy in the areas of the banking system, tax system, and government policies were noted to exacerbate tourism space commodification in the Mahmoudabad County, Northern Iran. To mitigate the increasing tourism space commodification in the study area, policymakers in government, as well as all concerned stakeholders in the tourism sector, must factor the local people into all tourism-related decision-making processes while adopting proactive ways such as tactfully using the tax system, policies for improving agricultural production, and clear-cut tourism directives that prioritize cultural and environmental consciousness.

Keywords

Environmental factors, Political economy, Socio-cultural factors, Space commodification, Tourism, Mahmoudabad County

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Introduction

The tourism sector has been one of the fastest-growing industries globally and directly contributed 2.9 trillion US dollars to GDP in 2019 (Lock, 2020). Tourism creates one out of every eleven jobs and accounts for a 10 percent share of all global GDP (UNWTO, 2015). The growth of international tourism that flows to developing economies is expected to be increased up to 4.4 percent annually (World Bank, 2016). Tourism's phenomenal growth continues to attract the attention of national as well as local governments since they see this sector as an avenue through which to meet their aims of enhancing public funds and creating stronger fiscal systems (Cárdenas-García, Sánchez-Rivero, & Pulido-Fernández, 2015). More physical investments, such as highways, airports, and convention centers, as well as investment incentives, such as land allocation and tax returns, have appeared in government master plans to facilitate tourism development in recent years (Okumus et al., 2012). Thus, the tourism space is commodified (Prodnik, 2012) or continuously produced and reproduced to maximize economic profits. In this process, the socio-cultural and ecological dimensions of space are often neglected. Central governments and lobbyists of rentier groups commonly tend to overemphasize tourism's potential economic benefits while underestimating the environmental and socio-cultural impacts (Cetin et al., 2017). Indeed, controls relating to agricultural land-use changes, forests degradation, the increased number of second homes, the increase in property prices, local inflation, and socio-cultural dualism are imposed only when these are understood as the crisis that has emerged in tourism spaces (Ghazoul, & Chazdon, 2017; Gallent, & Tewdwr-Jones, 2018; Roberts, Hall, & Morag, 2017; Shalaby, & Tateishi, 2007). This situation means it is extremely difficult to implement solutions for the spacecommodification process in many destinations, especially in developing countries. Mouhamadou (2018) noted a similar condition in his study at the Saly small coast in Senegal, that tourism is at its stagnation phase, and thus recommended the re-qualification of the typology of the tourism space in the region. Both internal and external factors affect the commodification of the tourism space. The internal factors of the space commodification process in the capitalist system are related to the essence and internal mechanism of the capitalist mode of production. These include the quantification and abstraction of time and space, the commodification of social relations, the commercialization of the natural environment resources, the capitalist ontology, and epistemology in relation to space, and the requirements of capital spatial flows (Harvey, 2016; Martineau, 2012; Marx, 1973). The external factors of space commodification are affected by state policies, banking, and tax systems. This process methodologically can vary from region to region and from country to country (Harvey, 2012). Political economy conditions as an external factor can prevent the space commodification process or conversely intensify it (Smith, 2008). Furthermore, the tourism space in an unequal political economy can be a means of

production and a commodity (Harvey, 2010). The unlimited capital growth cycle and capital accumulation, the lack of state constraints in non-productive sectors, and the inefficiencies and weaknesses of the banking and tax system will ultimately lead to dramatic changes in tourism spaces (Adom, 2019; Bianchi, 2018; Piketty, 2014, 2015; Thanvisitthpon, 2015). These factors will be dominated in tourism destinations where states do not apply spatial limitations and restrictions regarding the capital cycle in tourism spaces. Local spaces are a connected part of the locals' identity and existence and belong to them. With the commodification of space, locals feel like they are living in "nowhere" and many issues are expected to emerge in the future and the long term.

The villages of Mahmoudabad have many attractions for tourists due to its appropriate climatic characteristics, vegetation, the variety of animal life, flora species, adequate water and soil resources, special cultural characteristics, and beautiful landscapes, such as seas, mountains, and jungles. There is growing frustration with local inhabitants concerning tourism's negative effects on local resources. Uncoordinated tourism growth leads to several adverse impacts that reduce the quality of life. These effects include increased population, inflation, air and water pollution, congestion, crime, cultural conflicts, and social change (Mihalič, 2000). The growth and expansion of tourism and spatial ramifications have been striking in the rural areas of Mahmoudabad and have been a cause of concern for the locals, especially in recent years. Thus, this study sought to investigate the tourism commodification of space in the region. Previous studies have highlighted one or two factors that affect tourism space commodification either positively or negatively. This study investigated all the potential internal and external factors that affect the tourism space commodification in Mahmoudabad County in Iran. This is the first study that attempts to study the tourism space commodification in the study area by considering the extent to which the various internal and external factors affect the tourism space commodification in the Mahmoudabad County in Iran. The research questions that were pivotal in the study were:

1. What are the land-use changes in Mahmoudabad County, Iran, and their impacts on tourism space commodification?
2. What are the internal and external factors that affect tourism space commodification in Mahmoudabad County in Iran?

The Concept of Tourism Development

Everything unlimited is therefore meaningless (Hegel, 2015). Human spatiality is a limitation for creating a meaningful place to live. We don't just exist in space, but we exist spatially and our existence is spatial. In other words, our existence depends

on our spatiality. When we are talking about humans, indeed, we are talking about human spatiality as well (Malpas, 2000; 2007; 2008). Space provides the best opportunity to form a sustainable and deep social relationship over time (Norberg-Schulz, 1971; Relph, 1976). The temporality and sociality of human beings depend on space. Spaces and places find their meaning with human social activities during concrete times, activities, accidents, and events, and human beings conversely find their meaning by place and space (Heidegger, 2001). However, in the capitalist mode of production, space is continuously produced and reproduced to gain more profits in the market. In other words, such spaces are produced through abstract amounts of time, such as a week, a month, or a year and they are not only caused by social relations but also by the social relations that have already been abstracted. This process can lead to disruption from history, culture, linearization of human nature, individual mechanical relationships, feelings of absurdity, emptiness, individual and social alienation, and many social, psychological, and cultural issues (Karakaya, 2014; Lefebvre, 1991; Yilmaz-Saygin, 2006). This mere economic rationality is the starting point of space commodification (Peck, 2005). The nature and requirements of the unlimited capital growth cycle and the ontology and epistemology of the capitalist mode of production in relation to space ultimately lead to the commodification of place and space (Wilson, 2013). In the capitalist ontology, space is reduced to constructions or places to attract the overflow of metropolitan populations (Sabatini, 2003). Moreover, the lack of historical culture and collective memories in commoditized places followed by the priority of financial issues and economic justifications have been caused by the issues of identity and epistemological dualism (Fitchett, 1997). The reduction of the space as a hollow container (Newtonian space) can neglect the social, cultural, and environmental dimensions of space (Devine, 2017; Harvey, 1982, 1990; Lefebvre, 2004; McDowell, 2018). Devine (2017) contends that rising social ills are a result of the degradation of local cultures and social relationships fuelled by tourists.

The tourism industry has witnessed dramatic growth in many parts of the world, even though there is a growing understanding that it often causes adverse environmental and social impacts on destinations (Su & Swanson, 2017). Too often, the emphasis continues to be on expanding visitor volume rather than adding value for its stakeholders. Even in Iceland, which is an advanced country that embraces many concepts of green living, there has been a dramatic growth of visitor arrivals in recent years (Cetin et al, 2017). In 2016, there were a reported 1.7 million international tourists although the country's total population was only 330,000 (BBC, 2017). Thus, the industry's ability and motivation to attain sustainability principles are questionable. Tourism makes heavy use of free-shared resources such as nature and the sustainable management of these resources costs money. In fact, in the absence of financial support, it is hard to achieve sustainability (Hughes, 1995). According to Burns and Holden (1995), both tourists and the industry that serves them should

bear the costs to maintain the environment. The authors argued that just like foreign companies being charged for extracting oil, foreign tourists should also be charged for the benefits they derive from the use of common goods and public services at a destination (Cetin et al, 2017).

Several tourism scholars have studied the interactions between tourists and the local people (Adom, 2019; Boniface, Cooper, & Cooper, 2016; Freire, 2009; Hviding & Bayliss-Smith, 2018; Nam, Kim, & Hwang, 2016). However, a majority of studies examined their relationships from the residents' perspective (Eusébio, Vieira, & Lima, 2018; Mason, 2015; Rivera, Croes, & Lee 2016). Despite the great relevance of these studies, there is still the need to fill the research gap on how to prevent destination tourism space commodification in the often unequal political economies of developing countries. Mapping up strategies to avert the unbridled tourism space commodification should be a moral right for all stakeholders in the tourism industry (Prince, 2017).

Tourism Commodification of Space

The socio-cultural, economic, and environmental costs brought by the exponential growth of tourism have elevated the debate on tourism space commodification, especially in coastal areas (Cavallaro, Galati, & Nocera, 2017). Tourism space commodification is understood as the extreme use of natural resources in such a way that threatens the well-being of both the current generation and future generations (Sedighi, 2016). The economic aspect of tourism space commodification conversely refers to an overemphasizing in relation to increasing investment, income, and jobs created in a short time in destination areas (Mowforth & Munt, 2015; Roudi, Arasli, & Akadiri, 2018). There is a decline in total welfare functions such as tourist property and real estate demands that cause land values and house prices to go up, increase rent, reduce local youth purchase power, increase local product prices, increase living costs, and increase building material costs (Diedrich & Aswani, 2016; Isik, Dogru, & Turk, 2018). The resources that tourists use are the most common resources, which are also consumed by the locals. The tragedy of the commons, according to Hardin (1968), is that these resources will inevitably be destroyed, because no one is assigned to monitor and control their usages, such as culture, scenery, and air, even though they are used by many in a manner that exceeds their limits to regenerate and be restored. It can be argued that if tourism is to merit being labelled as part of the hospitality industry, it must look beyond its customers and carefully consider the environmental, social, and cultural impacts it is creating on the host community at large. There is a saturation level for tourism in any given locality or region. If that level exceeds the costs of tourism, it begins to outweigh the benefits (Young, 1973). For example, Doxey (1975) explains how irritated locals can become if their tolerance levels are exceeded. After a certain level of tourism activity, the locals start to compete with tourists for

resources, such as space, water, parking, litter, sewage, transportation, visiting and shopping lines, or even for a favorite spot to view the scenery (Young, 1973). In his popular Doxey Index (Figure 1), he posits that local people are enthusiastic about tourism development in their region (level of euphoria). However, when the tourism industry expands and becomes an all-profit making venture, apathy towards tourists by the residents' sets in (Level of Apathy). Thus, it reaches a saturation point where local people are incensed at tourists for compromising their environment, culture, etc. due to the expansions of tourism facilities (Level of Irritation). This is aggravated to the point where animosity toward tourists reaches the level of antagonism where, for instance, tourists are blamed for the high taxes, etc. This situation is worse when the destination landmass is not large enough to cater for the expansions of tourism facilities (Szromek et al., 2020). One way that destinations seek to combat the socio-cultural and environmental costs arising from tourism development is through the imposition of direct local corrective taxes. This includes empty properties tax, capital gains taxes on the real estate tax, lodging tax, car rental tax, entrance fees, and visa fees, or indirect local corrective taxes, such as sales tax and VAT (Cetin et al., 2017). In many destinations, tourists already pay some general direct and indirect taxes, such as sales tax/VAT, and the tourism industry contributes to the government fiscal budget through income tax. General sales taxes collected from tourism represent more than 10 percent of tax receipts for most developing countries. For example, Cetin (2014) found that 35 percent of tourist spending in Turkey goes to the central government in the form of tax revenues. This figure is even more striking for smaller tourist economies, such as Hawaii (Shareef & McAleer, 2005). This correlates with Weizenegger's model that suggested the imposition of high taxes to tourism operators if limits of tourism traffic exceed the region's capacity (Weizenegger, 2006). Another strategy is suggested in the Szromek et al. (2020) study of the attitudes of tourist destination residents toward the effect of overtourism in Krakow in Poland. Their findings showed that the introduction of limits on tourist numbers could avert the negative effects of tourism (overtourism). These approaches when implemented in tourism destinations would lead to sustainable tourism Butler illustrates in the first three stages of his popular Tourism Area Life Cycle of Evolution (TALC), which are levels of exploration, involvement, and development (Butler, 1980). In these three phases, sustainable tourism is judged by the development and maintenance of a tourism destination in efficient ways such that though it might be profitable, it does not result in land-use changes and erosion of the rich cultural and place identities of the local communities (Adom, 2019; Szromek et al., 2020).

Epistemological dualism and monetarily relationships between tourists and local people can be a key element in the commodification of the social aspect of a destination space that can also influence local people's inner relationships. In particular, a commoditized relationship between these two parties is a crucial factor for

the development of tourism space commodification. The foregoing discussion shows the need for a study that would adopt a comprehensive approach to tourism activities in relation to space commodification. The majority of the research emphasized one aspect of space, but in this paper, we tried to consider all aspects of local space to understand how tourism activities and infrastructures in the lack of an appropriate political-economic system can lead to local tourism space commodification. One of the other limitations of existing research concerns neglecting the political economy concept and the importance of banking, tax, and insurance systems to prevent tourism space commodification or intensifying the commodification process, land-use change, and space privatization. In this paper, we investigated both internal and external factors that influence space commodification in tourism development in Mahmoudabad County in Iran. A key theme for tourism space commodification which is an external factor is the political economy of tourism space. As such, there is a clear distinction between an unbalanced and an unequal political economy and a balanced political economy, because the former situates the locals in a different spatial context from the latter. External factors such as an unlimited capital growth cycle, also determines space commodification. We conceptualize that tourism space commodification is the result of both internal and external factors in tourism spaces and the inherent relationships between the political economy and tourism activities within the spatial system in totality (Figure 2).

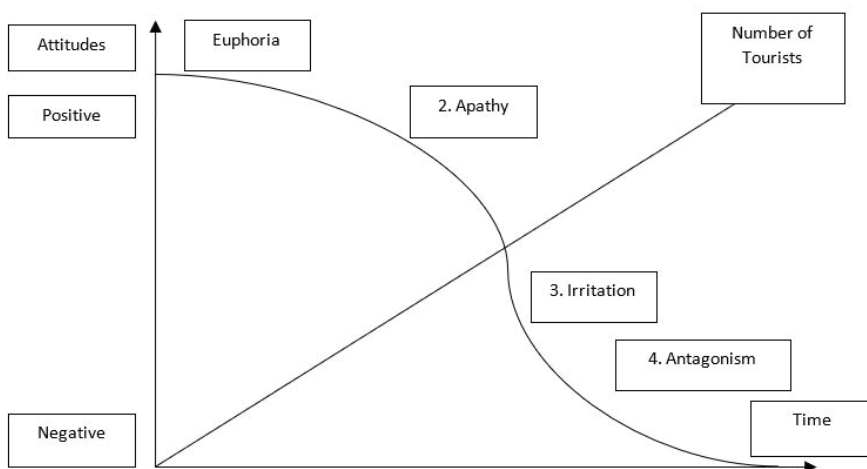


Figure 1. Irridex Model (Source: Doxey, 1975)

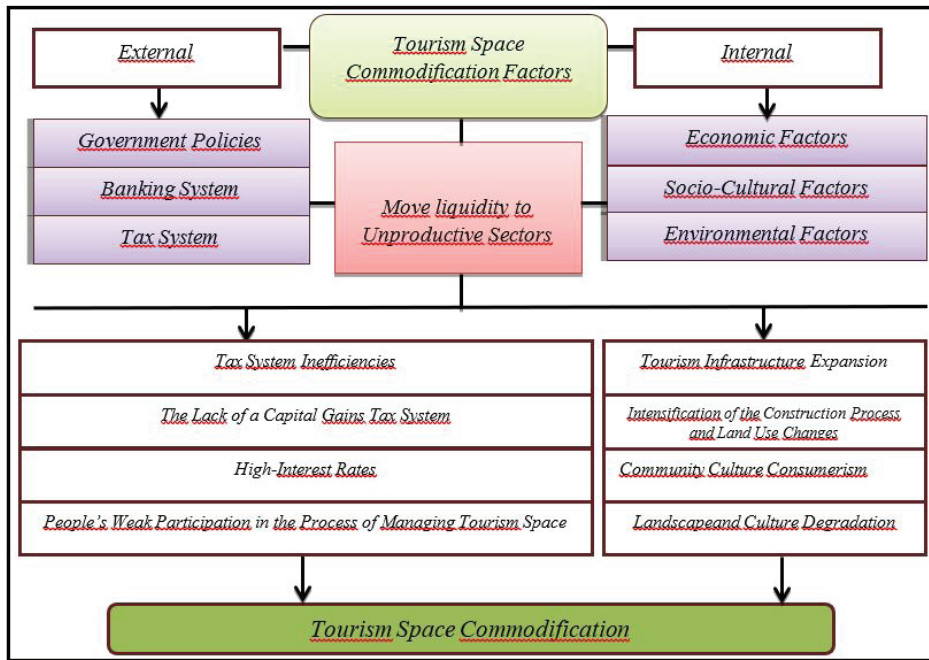


Figure 2. The Conceptual Framework of Tourism Space Commodification
 (Source: Authors' Construct, 2019)

Methodology

Study Area

Mazandaran Province is one of the most densely populated provinces in Iran, and it has diverse natural resources, such as large reservoirs of oil and natural gas. The diverse nature within the province features plains, prairies, forests, and rainforests that stretch from the sandy beaches of the Caspian Sea to the rugged and snowcapped Alborzsierra, which includes Mount Damavand. It is one of the highest peaks and largest volcanos in Asia. Mazandaran is a major producer of farmed fish, and aquaculture provides an important economic addition to the traditional dominance of agriculture. The province covers an area of 23,842 km². Sari is the capital city of the province. Mazandaran is divided into 15 counties (Shahrestan in Persian). All the Shahrestans are named after their administrative center except for the Savadkooch (MASJED, 2014). The Mazandaran province is geographically divided into two parts - coastal plains and mountainous areas. The Alborz Mountain Range surrounds the coastal strip and the plains of the Caspian Sea. Due to a permanent sea breeze and the local winds of the southern and eastern coasts of the Caspian Sea, sandy hills were formed, which caused the appearance of a low natural barrier between the sea and

the plain. There are often snowfalls in the Alborz regions, which run parallel to the Caspian Sea's southern coast, and it divides the province into many isolated valleys. Mahmoudabad County is a county in the Mazandaran Province in Iran. The capital of the county is Mahmoudabad city. In the 2016 census, the county's population was 90,054 with 24,135 families (Census of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 2016). The county is subdivided into two districts - the Central District and the Sorkhrud District. The county has two cities, Mahmoudabad and Sorkhrud (Figure3).

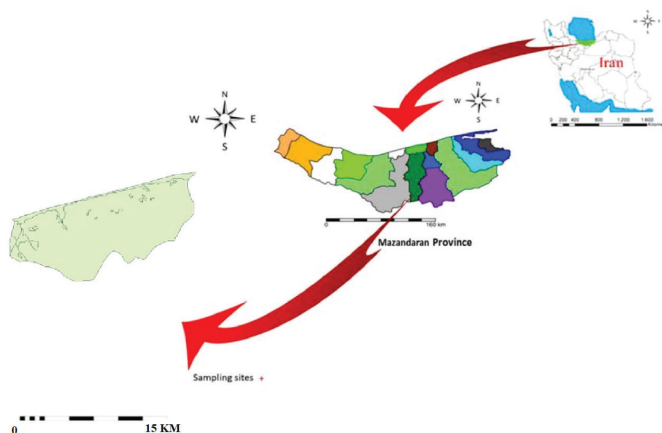


Figure 3. Study Area in Mazandaran Province, Northern Iran

Recently, many tourists have visited Mahmoudabad County. More than 10 million local and international tourists came to Mazandaran province in just 13 days of Iranian national days in 2019 (Executive Secretary of Mazandaran Travel Services Staff, 2020). This is about four times the Mazandaran province population. This may be as a result of the strategic and central location of the Mahmoudabad County, as well as the low rates of rent, land, and housing in the region.¹

Several traditional events attract tourists to the region. For instance, in mid-summer, the Tirgan festival, as well as the Varf Chal traditional ceremony, are commemorated, where traditional food is served and traditional rituals associated with water, such as the tying of rainbow-colored bands on the wrists, recitations, etc. are performed (Iran Tourism and Touring Organization, 2020). There are more than 800 historical and cultural sites with several interesting natural landscapes such as mountains, caves, and water bodies as well as religious monuments (Mirzaei, 2013). Meanwhile, there is no kind of tax system in this area, and this problem makes Mahmoudabad a haven for second homes and speculative activities. Also, the region is affected by Iran's banking system has the highest interest rates in Asia. Productive sectors, especially

1 Iranian Rial officially is the lowest currency in the world

farmers, are suppressed by Iran's banking system for two reasons. First, the large of money created in Iran's banks has led to superfluous liquidity. The second is the high inflation there, which has reduced the people's purchasing power and increased the cost of living. Finally, farmers will be inclined to sell their land and get the money they need in this situation (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Land-Use Changes and Coastal Privatization in the Study Area
(Source: Photographed by the Authors)

Materials and Methods

The research method applied in this study was descriptive-analytical in analyzing the economic and social variables affecting land-use changes and how these factors affect tourism space commodification. This research method was appropriate because of the study's aim of describing the causal relationship (Loeb et al., 2017) between the internal and external factors affecting tourism space commodification in the study area while analyzing them closely to shed light on how the variables contribute to tourism development in Mahmoudabad County, Iran. The people that were selected and their rationale were completely random to give an equal chance to all Mahmoudabad citizens (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010; Fraenkel et al., 2012). For the appropriate and fair distribution of the 405 respondents, the population of each settlement was first identified. Second, each settlement's share of the total population was calculated. A quantitative questionnaire was designed to garner the data for the study. The questionnaire was initially checked by an experienced researcher in tourism studies, after which it was pilot tested on a small section of the sample before the final administration for the full-scale study. This was to enhance the validity of the data collection instrument. Though 405 copies of the questionnaire were administered, 379 copies were finally received and used for the analysis of the data. SPSS software was employed in analyzing the data from the questionnaire administered based on a 5-point Likert scale.

Also, to assist in describing the land-use changes in Mahmoudabad County, Iran from 1978-2015, and their impacts on tourism space commodification, satellite images from Landsat 8, 7, TM, and MSS were used. Finally, ENVI software and a supervised classification method of maximum likelihood were used to provide the classification map (GIS) for each use. Geometric corrections and geo-referencing of the images were conducted using vector maps of the aerial photos. Re-sampling was conducted using the nearest neighbor interpolation method. Radiometric correction of the images was performed on the images to reconstruct the phenomena and to enhance the quality of the images as well as to remove the unfavorable effects of light and the atmosphere. Evaluation of the histogram of the spectral bands was based on different features, such as color, tone, texture, shape, and size of the image. Then, using different algorithms of image processing, the classes were separated from each other in different steps using a support vector machine or the supervised classification method. Finally, five classes of lands that included residential and industrial lands, agriculture lands, arid and desert lands, playa, saline soils, and mountainous areas were recognized. An informed consent form was given and/or explained to participants that explained the voluntary nature of the study and their right to quit as a participant as and when they wanted. It explained the rationale of the study and the confidentiality of their personal information and views expressed in the study (Bailey, 1996).

Results and Discussion

To investigate the effective factors that influence the tourism space commodification process, the descriptive characteristics of the respondents were examined. Second, the role of internal factors, such as economic, socio-cultural, and environmental aspects of tourism, and external factors, such as state policies, banking, and the tax system were determined using descriptive means and standard deviation tests.

Descriptive Profile of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of the respondents indicated that 95 percent were male with the remaining 5 percent being female. Also, 36.9 percent of the respondents had less than a high school diploma, 45.8 percent obtained an associate’s degree, 14 percent had a bachelor’s degree, and 3.3 percent had a graduate degree. In terms of employment, about 90 percent of the respondents work as farmers in rice cultivation, and the remaining 10 percent were shopkeepers, housewives, taxi drivers, and teachers. The mean age of the respondents was approximately 46 years old.

Table 1
Descriptive Profile of Respondents

Variable	n	Percentage
Gender		
Male	350	95
Female	19	5
Monthly household income		
US\$801 and over	30	8
US\$701-US\$800	55	15
US\$601-US\$700	70	19
US\$501-US\$600	74	20
US\$401-US\$500	77	21
US\$301-US\$400	59	16
Under US\$300	4	1
Maritalstatus		
Single	12	3.2
Married	357	96.8
Education level		
Less than a High school diploma	136	36.9
Associate’s degree	169	45.8
Bachelor’s degree	52	14
Graduate degree	12	3.3
Mean age = 46.6years old		

Land-Use Changes in the Study Area

Based on the satellite data from Landsat 8, 7, TM, and MSS at Mahmoudabad County, we noticed that the forestlands decreased from 38 percent in 1978 to 3 percent in 2015, and the residential land-use increased from 6 percent to 18 percent

(Figure 5). The findings revealed that the process of Mahmoudabad land-use changes began in recent years, and the big changes occurred after 1988 (Figure 6). This implies that gradually, the tourism space in Mahmoudabad County is being commoditized. Similar to the findings of Mouhamadou (2018) who noted that the massive land-use changes in the Saly small coast in Senegal had resulted in the stagnation of tourism, the same can be said of the state of tourism in the Mahmoudabad County. Our land-use changes align with other land-use change studies in the different provinces in Iran. For instance, Alizadeh Fard et al. (2013) analyzed Mazandaran land-use changes using the Land Change Modeler from 1998 to 2011. The results showed a rich array of changes in the forests, residential land, and agricultural land. The forests have decreased by 33,487 hectares, and the residential and agricultural lands have increased by 21,367 hectares and 13,155 hectares, respectively. With Northern Iran, the general patterns of land-use changes are scattered with an emphasis on Western Mazandaran (Gholamali Fard et al., 2012). In Northern Iran, tourism construction, such as second home tourism, has increased and the natural environment has decreased. Between the period from 1984 to 2010, the number of residential spots (25.46 percent) and roads (15.63 percent) also increased with a sharp decrease in forest area (33.53 percent) and water resources surfaces (23.93 percent) have been observed (Mirzayi et al., 2013). Mehrabi et al. (2013) showed that the most important factor in the Mazandaran agriculture land-use change was the people’s economic problems, such as low-incomes and the lack of banking financial access.

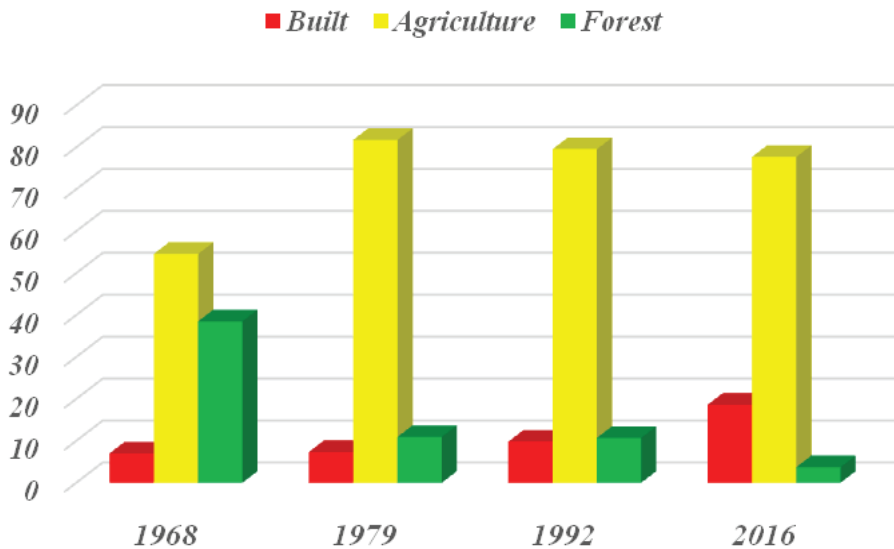


Figure 5. Percentage of land Use Changes in Mahmoudabad County from 1968 to 2016

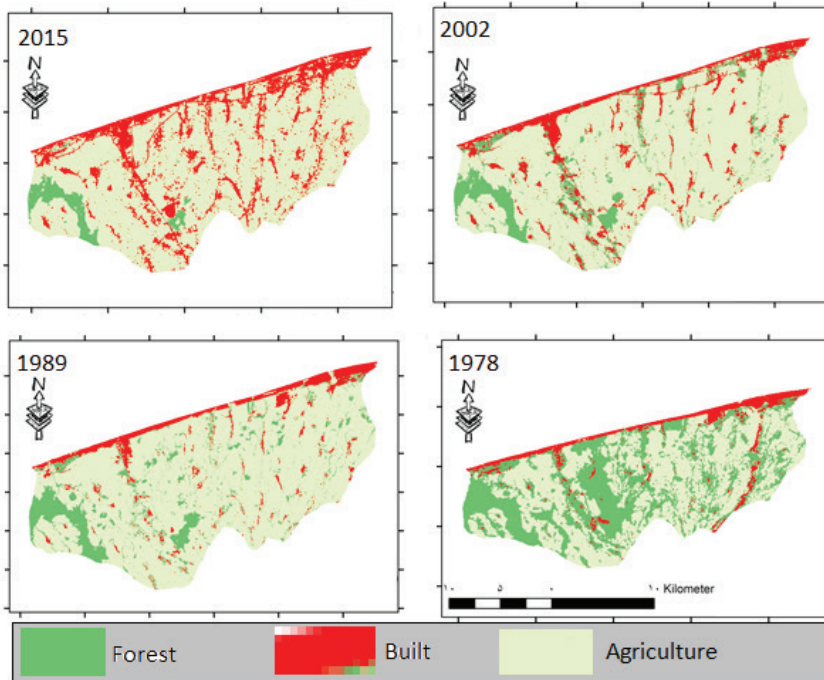


Figure 6. Land Use Changes in Study Area from 1978 to 2015

The governance system in Mahmoudabad County must create constraints and limitations to control the capital accumulation and the space commodification process at tourist destinations. One of the measures that can prevent tourism space commodification is the limitation of agricultural land-use changes, forest degradation, air, water, soil, and architectural pollution. Indeed, state policies, the banking system, and the tax system should direct the liquidity to the productive sectors and strengthen the manufacturing sector. We concur with the view of Sklenicka et al. (2014) that farmers should not be inclined to implement extreme land changes. This is because these extreme land changes often result in many socioeconomic and environmental-ecological challenges in space over a long period. Based on Weizenegger's theoretical model (Weizenegger, 2006), we assert that the Iranian government must introduce limits to the tourist traffic such that high taxes are imposed on tourism industries in the Mahmoudabad County and other tourist destinations in Iran. This will minimize the high level of the commodification of the tourism space that has been the main driver for the unprecedented land-use changes in Iran. This suggestion is not misplaced because the findings of Szromek et al. (2020) at the Krakow region in Poland called for a similar introduction of strategies in controlling the high tourist traffic in the region. These firm measures must be taken by the governance system in the Mahmoudabad County and the Republic of Iran to mitigate the aggravated

land-use changes to prevent the loss of individual and social identity (Light, 2016) as well as local values and norms (Adom, 2019; Hsu & Huang, 2016). It would also aid to reduce significantly, the high crime rate (Seaton, Graham, & Dann, 2018), local inflation (Tribe, 2015), extreme agricultural land-use changes (Mirzai et al., 2013), and the elimination of plant coverings, the extinction of animals (Astaneh, Rezvani, & Sedighi, 2016) while increasing the security protocols in the country (Ghaderi, Saboori, & Khoshkam, 2017).

Internal and External Factors Influencing Tourism Space Commodification in the Mahmoudabad County, Iran

In this section, we present the findings on the factors that affect tourism activities in space commodification in Mahmoudabad County, Iran. The descriptive mean test and the SD's were used to evaluate the impact of each internal and external factor affecting the space commodification process, and the results are included in Table 2.

Table 2

Internal and External Factors Influencing the Mazandaran Space Commodification

Factors	Index	N	Mean	SD
Internal Factors (Tourism)	Economic	369	4.195	0.559
	Social-Cultural	369	3.976	0.462
	Environmental	369	4.374	0.511
External Factors (Political Economy)	Government Policies	369	4.520	0.479
	Tax System	369	3.960	0.496
	Banking System	369	4.350	0.521

Internal Factors Influencing the Mazandaran Space Commodification

Economic Factors

The economic dimension of tourism activities in Northern Iran have had positive impacts, such as increased public revenue ($\bar{x}=4.25$, $SD=1.264$), increased investment ($\bar{x}=3.90$, $SD=1.216$), raising income ($\bar{x}=3.89$, $SD=1.264$), an improved employment status ($\bar{x}=3.72$, $SD=1.224$), and increased production rates ($\bar{x}=3.67$, $SD=1.276$), but the negative impacts of tourism must also be considered. From the respondents' point of view, tourism activities in Northern Iran have serious challenges, such as land values and house prices rising ($\bar{x}=4.73$, $SD=0.921$), rising rents ($\bar{x}=4.64$, $SD=0.895$), reduced youth purchasing power ($\bar{x}=4.56$, $SD=1.096$), an increase in local product prices ($\bar{x}=4.15$, $SD=1.147$), rising living costs ($\bar{x}=4.04$, $SD=1.218$), and building material costs increasing ($\bar{x}=4.04$, $SD=1.111$). All of which can push tourism spaces into the path of commodification.

Table 3
Economic Factors Influencing the Mazandaran Space Commodification

No.	Items	Mean	SD
1	Land value and house prices rising	4.73	0.921
2	Rising rent	4.64	0.895
3	Reducing youth purchase power	4.56	1.096
4	Increase public revenue	4.25	1.264
5	Increase in local product prices	4.15	1.147
6	Rising living costs	4.04	1.218
7	Building material costs increase	4.04	1.111
8	Increase Local Products Sale	4.01	1.053
9	Increases investment	3.90	1.216
10	Raising Income	3.89	1.264
11	Improve employment status	3.72	1.224
12	Increase production Rates	3.67	1.276

Socio-cultural Factors

According to the data in Table 2, tourism socio-cultural factors are considered as the third internal factor that affects the commercialization of the Mahmoudabad tourism space. 14 items were used to evaluate this index, and the results are listed in Table 4.

Table 4
Socio-Cultural Factors Influencing the Mazandaran Space Commodification

No.	Items	Mean	SD
1	Sense of community privatization	4.36	1.175
2	Increase and improve infrastructure, facilities, and services	4.27	1.082
3	The prevalence of luxury goods and extreme consumerism	4.14	1.072
4	Increasing satisfaction with public facilities and services	4.04	1.086
5	Sense of less security	3.86	1.115
6	The reluctance of tourists to converge and interact with indigenous residents	3.81	1.258
7	Sense of less self-identity among youth	3.80	1.239
8	Tourists do not respect local traditions, beliefs, and customs	3.67	1.212
9	Dissatisfaction with cultural and social changes due to tourist arrivals	3.59	1.201
10	Increase resident-tourist conflicts	3.59	1.340
11	Negative impacts on youth behaviors	3.59	1.135
12	The feeling of being less quiet	3.42	1.168

From the perspective of the locals, the sense of community privatization ($\bar{x}=4.36$, $SD=1.17$) created from tourist commoditizing activities can play a key role indeveloping the epistemological dualism between the locals and the tourists and consequently strengthen the tourist space commodification process. Accordingtothe data in Table4, although tourism has improved the infrastructure, facilities, and services ($\bar{x}=4.27$, $SD=1.082$), it has the prevalence of luxury goods and extreme consumerism ($\bar{x}=4.14$, $SD=1.072$), a sense of less security ($\bar{x}=3.86$, $SD=1.115$), a reluctance of tourists to converge and interact with indigenous residents ($\bar{x}=3.81$, $SD=1.258$), and a sense of less self-identity among the youth ($\bar{x}=3.80$, $SD=1.239$). Also, the tourists do not respect the local traditions, beliefs, and customs ($\bar{x}=3.67$,

SD=1.212), there is a dissatisfaction with cultural and social changes due to tourist arrivals (\bar{x} =3.59, SD=1.201), an increase in resident-tourist conflicts (\bar{x} =3.59, SD=1.340), negative impacts on youth behaviors (\bar{x} =3.59, SD=1.135) and a feeling of being less quiet (\bar{x} =3.42, SD=1.168) can eventually aggravate the process of tourist space commodification.

Environmental Factors

Mahmoudabad has many tourism villages, rustic scenery, and it hosts numerous Tehranian people in all four seasons of the year, including autumn. Nice weather, beautiful nature, customs and traditions, handicrafts as well as local games and dialects are among the main attractions of the county. Thatched houses, flagstone sidewalks, and the jujube trees create charming scenery in the villages of Mahmoudabad in the autumn. In recent years, the demand for land and housing has increased annually due to the arrival of a large number of tourists. From the respondents' point of view, tourism activities have had a great impact on the destruction of forests (\bar{x} =4.74, SD=1.027) and the exacerbation of land-use changes (\bar{x} =4.70, SD=1.030). Also, due to the economic pressures, farmers are trying to meet their needs by implementing land-use changes, such as plotting and selling agricultural lands. This trend has led to a decrease in the amount of agricultural land (\bar{x} =4.66, SD=1.069) and has reduced the agricultural land area (\bar{x} =4.61, SD=0.914). Construction increases (\bar{x} =4.56, SD=0.997) in rural areas have led to the architectural dualism between the local and tourists houses (\bar{x} =4.58, SD=1.029), an increase in architectural pollution (\bar{x} =3.56, SD=1.172), destruction of beautiful rural areas (\bar{x} =4.43, SD=1.127), rural settlements expansion (\bar{x} =4.25, SD=1.123), reduced sanitation in the coastal areas (\bar{x} =3.90, SD=1.430), increasing waste and rubbish (\bar{x} =4.70, SD=1.030), an increase in the number of coastal settlements (\bar{x} =4.70, SD=1.030), an increase in noise pollution (\bar{x} =4.74, SD=1.027), an increase in air pollution (\bar{x} =4.74, SD=1.027), and an increase in water and soil resources pollution (\bar{x} =3.76, SD=1.316).

Table 5

Environmental Factors Influencing the Mazandaran Space Commodification

No.	Items	Mean	SD
1	Destruction of forests	4.74	1.027
2	Exacerbation of land use changes	4.70	1.030
3	The decrease in the amount of agricultural land	4.66	1.069
4	Rural house renovation	4.65	0.833
5	Reduction of agricultural land area	4.61	0.914
6	Privatization of coastal areas	4.58	0.941
7	Architectural dualism between locals' and tourists' houses	4.58	1.029
8	Increase in construction	4.56	0.997
9	Increase in the number of coastal settlements	4.53	0.972
10	Destruction of beautiful rural areas	4.43	1.127
11	Rural settlements Expansion	4.25	1.123

12	Increase in waste and rubbish	4.10	1.380
13	Noise pollution Increase	3.90	1.291
14	Reduction in sanitation in the coastal area	3.90	1.430
15	Increase in water and soil resources pollution	3.76	1.316
16	Increase in air pollution	3.58	1.215
17	Increase in architectural pollution	3.56	1.172

The findings on the internal factors influencing tourism activities in the study area in terms of the economy have revealed that tourism has led to an increase in production rates, the sale of local products, investment, income, employment status, public revenue, rural house renovation, infrastructure, facilities, and services. However, these economic benefits of tourism in the region, if not properly managed, will just be in the short term as Su and Swanson (2017) as well as Cetin et al. (2017) theorized. If the economic drivers of tourism are prioritized with a compromise on the other internal factors such as the environmental and socio-cultural costs, labeled now as ‘overtourism’, then in the long term, the tourism activities in the region would lead to very disastrous impacts as noted by Szromek et al. (2020). It would lead to unsustainable tourism as posited by Butler (1980) in the TALC model where he illustrated that the failure to balance tourism activities may eventually lead to stagnation and an eventual decline. The findings from the study have shown that environmental factors in the tourism activities in the Mazandaran province have been ignored, leading to an exacerbation of land-use changes which have resulted in less security, the prevalence of luxury goods, and extreme consumerism, a sense of community privatization, a sense of less self-identity among youth, the destruction of forests, the reduction of sanitation in the coastal areas, noise pollution, water, and soil resources pollution, air pollution, architectural pollution, increased waste and rubbish, and epistemological dualism (host-tourist), negative consequences well documented in the tourism literature (Eusébio, Vieira, & Lima, 2018; Rivera, Croes, & Lee 2016; Mason, 2015; Hughes, 1995).

Also, the initial euphoria (enthusiasm for the tourism development) on the part of the local people has now developed into the levels of apathy, irritation, and antagonism as noted in the Irridex model (Doxey, 1975). This situation was found to be a result of negative socio-cultural factors such as the tourists’ lack of respect for local culture, values, and traditional beliefs, community privatization and consumerism, and the other equally crucial variables cited in Table 4. These same negative socio-cultural variables that affect tourism space commodification have been mentioned in the comprehensive list of socio-cultural impacts by Pizam and Milman (1986) and Burdge (1994). In both studies, the authors indicated that if tourists, referred to as ‘second homeowners’ are not involved in community life, demonstrable by their disrespect of the traditional value system, local habits, and traditions as well as their unconsciousness of the cultural environment of the tourist destination, this exacerbates tourism space commodification.

Similar findings of the impacts of socio-cultural factors have been noted in the studies of Ratz (2000) among the residents in the Balaton Lake in Hungary as well as Soper (2007) in Mauritania. Ratz noted that changes in the community structure and characteristics such as an increase in inflation caused by community privatization and consumerism as well as the loss of cultural identity fuelled by tourists' inconsiderate attitudes toward the place identities of their tourist destinations increases tourism space commodification. The same situation exists in the Mazandaran province where socio-cultural and environmental insensitivity on the part of tourists has increased in resident-tourist conflicts ($\bar{x}=3.59$, $SD=1.340$). To avert the likely ignorance of the socio-cultural and environmental factors by tourists in the Mazandaran province, we suggest that tourists must be instructed in the accepted cultural and environmental ethics when they arrive in the Mazandaran province (Ratz, 2000).

External Factors Influencing the Mazandaran Space Commodification

The Banking System

Officially, Iranian banks paid 200,000 billion Toman in interest (4,761,904,762 USD) in 2016. However, the total profit of all non-governmental companies in the same year was about 100,000 billion Toman. This amount of interest paid was equivalent to the wage of 11 million workers during the same year, which was equivalent to 14 percent of Iran's GDP, and it was more than the sum of the industry and agriculture sectors share of the gross domestic product (GDP). It was equal to 19 percent of Iran's liquidity (CBI report, 2017). From 2001 to 2010, the number of official banks in Iran tripled. During the same period, the number of branches of the existing banks increased by 8 times. This process occurred when the agriculture sector, factories, and manufacturing companies faced fundamental monetary challenges (Shakeri, 2016). As Table 6 shows, the share of the agriculture sector loans paid on the Iran banking system decreased from 19 percent in 1993 to 7.7 percent in 2016.

Table 6
Share of Various Economic Sectors in the Total Balance of Credit Facilities in Iran

No.	Economic sectors	1993 (year)	2005	2016
1	Agriculture	19	14.3	7.7
2	Industry and Mining	36	27	28.2
3	Building and housing	30	23.1	9.1
4	Commerce and services	7	34.2	54.9
5	Export	8	1.4	0.1
6	Sum	100	100	100

About 70 percent of respondents ($N=260$) emphasized that the banks' insufficient support to producers and farmers ($\bar{x}=4.10$, $SD=0.987$), high facilities' interest rates ($\bar{x}=4.56$, $SD=0.823$), and high deposits interest rates ($\bar{x}=4.40$, $SD=1.045$) would

be influencing factors on the intensification of the tourism space commodification process. According to the World Bank Report, Iran had the highest interest rate among Asian countries in 2018 with at least 20 percent, but Iran's GDP from June 2015 to June 2016 and the years that followed were negative.

Table 7
Banking affecting Items of Mazandaran Space Commodification

No.	Items	Mean	SD
1	The weakness of banks' support to producers and farmers	4.10	0.987
2	High facilities interest rates	4.56	0.823
3	High deposits interest rates	4.40	1.045

Tax System

States can use the tax system for direct liquidity to the manufacturing sectors and strengthen this sector. States with tax hurdles impede the massive amount of liquidity towards non-productive sectors. They seek to support productive sectors with tax breaks and incentives. However, tax is considered as a source of income in Iran. Table 8 shows that according to the respondents' point of view, the tax system in Northern Iran not only failed to support the production sectors (especially agriculture), but it also advocates speculation and rentier groups' activities.

Table 8
Tax System affecting Items of Mazandaran Space Commodification

No.	Items	Mean	SD
1	The lack of empty properties tax	4.20	1.110
2	The lack of Luxury car tax	4.15	1.215
3	The lack of luxury house tax	4.04	1.120
4	The lack of capital gains taxes on real estate	3.87	1.080
5	The lack of Land Value tax	3.65	1.242

About 17.7 percent of respondents selected very low, 41.9 percent selected high, and 42.4 percent selected very high regarding believing that the lack of second home tourism tax ($x=4.22$, $SD=1.12$) could be intensifying tourism space commodification in the study area. Also, 5 percent selected moderate, 37.4 percent selected high, and 53.4 percent selected very high regarding the lack of a luxury house tax ($x=4.04$, $SD=1.12$) leading to extreme tourism construction and agricultural land-use changes. In the study area, the state does not receive any tax on properties and real estate. In other words, the capital gains tax mechanism does not exist in Northern Iran yet. From Table 8, the lack of capital gains taxes on real estate ($x=3.87$, $SD=1.08$), and the lack of land value tax ($x=3.65$, $SD=1.24$) show that these items are important to encourage tourism activities to space commodification.

Government Policies

One of the most important factors in tourism space commodification in the study area has been excluding people from decision-making and the decision-making process. 25.4 percent of respondents responded very high, 52.2 percent responded high, and 17.1 percent modestly believing that the exclusion of locals from the decision-making process ($x=4.71$, $SD=1.203$) can lead to tourism space commodification. The other items are shown in Table 9.

Table 9

Government Policies affecting Items of Mazandaran Space Commodification

No.	Items	Mean	SD
1	Exclusion of Locals from the decision-making process	4.71	1.203
2	Inflation and economic pressures	4.70	0.980
3	Lack of adequate income and increased living costs	4.79	0.990
4	High risk for Farming activities	4.74	0.840
5	Agricultural activity Low income	4.70	1.029
6	Market volatility	4.65	0.997
7	Insufficient government support to agricultural development	4.61	0.987
8	High labor costs	4.58	0.979
9	High inputs cost (fertilizer, seed, etc.)	4.58	1.567
10	Brokers and Speculative operations	4.56	1.321
11	The lack of government control over land and housing prices	4.51	1.302
12	The weakness of government monitoring over land-use changes	4.51	1.691

The public inflation in Iran was 234 percent from 2005 to 2013, while inflation in the housing sector was 511 percent. Also, the general price index for goods and services increased eight times, while the housing and land sectors increased eighteen times and twenty-seven times respectively from 2003 to 2013 (Iran Majlis Research Center report, 2018). In Iran, the state determines agricultural product prices (rice, wheat, etc.) lower than the inflation rate and suppresses it. As a result, land prices increase faster than agricultural product prices (Table 10). As table 10 shows, in the case study area, the rice price per kilogram has 16.6 Multi-fold growth while agricultural land has 50 Multi-fold growth. In this situation, farmers prefer to sell their agricultural land and land-use change rather than face the production process problems and tolerate economic pressures.

Table 10

Comparison of Inflation in Rice and Land Value

Year	2006	2020	Multi-fold growth
Rice (kilogram/rial)	1200	20000	16.6
Agricultural land (each square meter/rial)	80000	4000000	50

Source: Iran Central Bank Website, 2020.

The study's findings on the external factors influencing the commodification of the tourism space in the Mazandaran province (the banking system, tax system, and some government policies), are linked with the governance system or the political economy of the country, similar to the findings in previous studies (Harvey, 2016; Harvey, 2010; Bianchi, 2018; Piketty, 2014, 2015; Thanvisitthpon, 2015). These external variables are exacerbating the tourism space in the entire country. For example, the findings revealed that the banking system in Iran transfers liquidity to the real estate market, home tourism constructions, and commercial activities, especially in Northern Iran. Farmers who sell their agricultural land and transfer their money and capital to the banks gain much more profits there than in the productive sectors. In the study area, farmers (agricultural land area mean = 1 hectare) prefer to sell their agricultural lands and deposit their money in the bank and gain guaranteed interest without any risk, but productive sectors must pay taxes, insurance, labor expenses, water expenses, electricity expenses, gas expenses, telephone expenses, investment risk, marketing, transportation, and sale risks. The tax system can reduce the speed of the tourism space commodification process or even de-commoditized it with empty property taxes, luxury car taxes, luxury house taxes, capital gains taxes on real estate, and land value taxes, or it can conversely intensify it through neglecting the tax system potential. Revenue generated from tourism taxes constitutes an important financial resource for local governments and tourism authorities to both ensure tourism sustainability and enhance the quality of tourist experiences. State policies with an emphasis on taxation should maximize the speculative activities risk, especially in tourism spaces. This agrees with the ideals in the Doxey Index (Doxey, 1975) and the modified TALC model by Weizenegger (2006). These popular models for tourism studies have posited the imposition of high taxes as a means of minimizing the accelerated rate of tourism space commodification, especially when tourism activities are exceeding their limits. This would slow the fast pace of land-use changes such as the massive conversion of agricultural lands into developmental projects for tourism activities in the study area. The government must put up strategies to boost agricultural production while increasing the prices for agricultural produce. This would assist the farmers not to sell their agricultural lands for developmental projects that would eventually lead to the commodification of those spaces for tourism developmental activities. Also, government policies must factor the inclusion of local people in the decision-making process at all levels of governance. Government strategies and policies must consider the locals as the owners of the local space and allow them to participate in spatial decision-making and the decision-making process. Local space is like a home for the locals, and everyone has the right to partake in the decisions regarding tourism in their home regions (Norberg-Schulz, 1971; Relph, 1976; Heidegger, 2001). When the local people are not considered in the decision-making process, they feel that their culture is been taken away from them and commodified without any benefits to them,

as also noted by Kirtsoglou and Theodossopoulos (2004) in the Garifuna Community of Roatan, Honduras. Soper (2007: 96) observes in a culture-heritage tourism study in Mauritius that residents must never be viewed as passive actors in tourism development but just as important as or more important than tourists. The truth is that sustainable tourism cannot be achieved if residents' support in the decision-making processes in tourism development is not solicited (Ratz, 2000). The adoption of a bottom-up approach is a key ingredient in winning the support of the people toward the implementation processes of government policies, especially those related to the halting of the commodification of the tourism spaces in the country. This approach of governance that factors local people in all decision making processes is helpful in tourism management with shreds of evidence in Ghana, Jordan, Thailand, and Honduras (Adom et al., 2020; Adom, 2019; Jamhawi & Hajahjah, 2017; Kubickova & Campbell, 2020).

Conclusion

This study has examined the impacts of land-use changes as well as factors that influence tourism space commodification in Mahmoudabad County, Northern Iran. The findings of the study have shown the extensive land-use changes of the agricultural lands of the residents which are fuelled by farmers' desire to sell their lands because of the relatively low-income generation from the agricultural production in the country. These lands are often transformed into the construction of tourism facilities that exacerbate the tourism space commodification in the region. Both the internal and external factors that contribute to the tourism space commodification investigated also point to the truism that if the negative impacts associated with them are not curtailed through strategic government policies, the general tourism development in the area will likely stagnate in the long term. For instance, the findings of the study have shown that there is a compromise on the environmental and socio-cultural factors in tourism development in the area with an overemphasis on the economic values of the tourism business. Policymakers in government must formulate green and culturally sensitive policies in the area of tourism such that huge taxes are imposed on tourism industries whenever set limits in terms of tourism traffic are exceeded and eco-friendly as well as culturally conscious practices are not meticulously observed by tourists, who are their clients. Tourism operators must always ensure that they instruct tourists who visit their tourist destination centers in the region to be conscious of the natural and cultural environments to improve the tourist-host relationships, an essential ingredient for sustainable tourism (Ratz, 2000; Butler, 1980), which is currently lacking in the Mazandaran province. Also, the government must ensure that economic policies are favorable for traditional businesses, especially in agriculture, so that farmers will not sell their lands to tourism developers to aggravate tourism space commodification. Interest rates for loans meant for agricultural production and

local factories and manufacturing industries must be low to enable local operators, especially those in the private sector to earn appreciable income. There is an urgent need for the government and tourism operators to actively involve the local people in the decision-making processes to offer them a voice in their decisions relating to tourism (Adom, 2019; Adom & Boamah, 2020). Granted, tourism activities can have both positive and negative ramifications (Ghazoul, & Chazdon, 2017; Gallent, & Tewdwr-Jones, 2018; Roberts, Hall, & Morag, 2017; Shalaby, & Tateishi, 2007). Yet, if sound and practical policies and strategies are not formulated, implemented, and enforced, the negative effects of tourism would have very dire and lasting consequences on the general development of the region. Corrective actions must be taken by the government and tourism operators to reduce the negative impacts of tourism while increasing the positive impacts to ensure a fair, balanced, and sustainable tourism operation (Mouhamadou, 2018) that prioritizes the voice of residents in tourism-related decision-making processes, the culture, and natural environments and favors local or traditional enterprises, especially in agricultural production in the Mahmoudabad County in Northern Iran.

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Assessment of Luxury Trains in India: A Case Study of Maharajas' Express

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Abstract

With Indian luxury trains recording a low rate of occupancy, it has become imperative to understand the perceptions of its service providers and consumers. The present study identifies the key concerns of service providers (n=83), which, according to them, are hampering the running of luxury trains in India. Service providers consulted for the study included employees and travel agents who were directly or indirectly associated with the functioning of luxury trains. Based on the identified themes of concerns, a total of 157 tourists from 20 countries were surveyed. To analyze the data, this study initially made use of the Structural Topic Model (STM), a general framework for topic modelling. Following this, the survey results along with the reviews on Tripadvisor, evince the radical validity of the identified themes that the employees and travel agents were primarily concerned with, i.e. *pricing and policies*, *product marketing* and *amenities* of the luxury train. The study, therefore, contributes by presenting the perspectives of service providers and tourists on India's most luxurious train, the Maharajas' Express.

Keywords

Luxury trains, Structural Topic Model, Maharajas' Express, Luxury tourism, Luxury travel

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Introduction

According to D'Arpizio et al. (2016), within the luxury industry, segments like luxury cars, luxury hospitality and personal luxury goods account for about 80% of the total luxury market. The global luxury industry reported a steady growth of 4% with an estimated retail sales value of €1.08 trillion in 2016. Their study further noted a shift of consumption from luxury goods to luxury travel, which supposedly benefitted luxury hospitality (up 4%), luxury cruises (up 5%) and fine restaurants. With an increasing rate of millennials in the luxury market, 2017 witnessed a 'brisk' growth in luxury travel. The sales of luxury cruises further increased by 14% (D'Arpizio et al., 2017). In spite of the luxury travel market showing a steady growth, India's luxury trains have been recording a low rate of occupancy (Dhawan, 2016; Janaki, 2016). A K Manocha, the then chairman and managing director of Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC), in an interview shared his understanding on the running of luxury trains in India (Shekhar, 2016). During the interview, he raised his concerns towards the lower rate of occupancy in luxury trains. Mr Manocha propounded that domestic tourists preferred travelling in express trains over luxury trains and that the idea of luxury trains was confined to only a few states in India. He sensed a low rate of awareness among domestic tourists while reflecting upon the occupancy ratio of luxury trains in India. He further asserted that 60% occupancy in luxury trains is considered inimitable on a global front by throwing light upon the conundrum between pricing and exclusivity (Shekhar, 2016). Conversely, Indians took part in around 2 billion trips in the year 2018, and spent approximately \$94 billion on transportation and lodging (Sheth et al., 2019).

Therefore, this study first attempts to identify the major concerns of service providers (employees and travel agents) who are directly or indirectly associated with the functioning of Maharajas' Express, one of the most luxurious trains in India. Based on the identified concern areas of employees and travel agents, the study assesses the satisfaction levels of tourists travelling in Maharajas' Express. Along with the tourist survey, reviews from Tripadvisor were used as supporting data to authenticate the radical validity of concerns identified by the service providers.

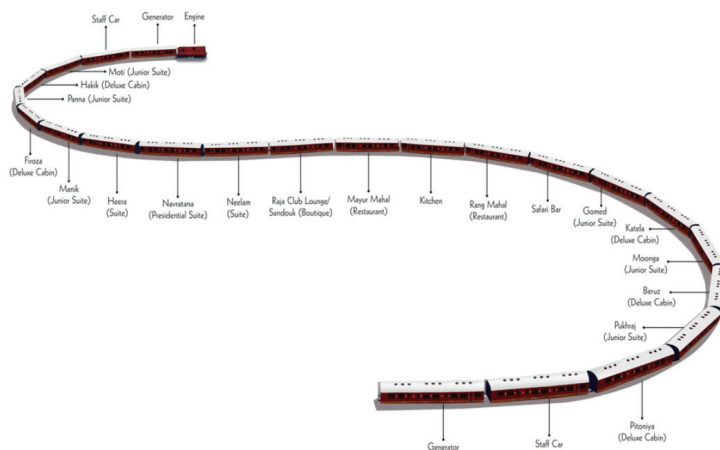


Figure 1. Maharajas' Express train layout (Train layout, n.d.)

The Maharajas' Express, with a maximum carrying capacity of 84 passengers in 23 compartments, is renowned as one of the most luxurious trains, not only in India but across the world. The types of accommodation offered in the Maharajas' Express include deluxe cabin, junior suite, suite and presidential suite. Each of the 23 cars includes ultra-modern avant-garde facilities such as a digital climate room, and full en-suite bathrooms with sink, shower and toilets. The train's presidential suite is globally acclaimed as the world's largest train suite.

Literature Review

Concept of Luxury

Though luxury has a variety of meanings (Yozcu, 2017), its consumption has been concurrent to that of human existence (Berry, 1994). There has been a general agreement among researchers regarding the lack of any considerable definition for luxury (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2012; Godey et al, 2013; Hennigs et al., 2013; Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2006; Yeoman, 2011). This is primarily because of the change in the dynamics of luxury consumption and consumers (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2012). Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie (2006, p. 320), assert that "the concept of luxury is incredibly fluid, and changes dramatically across time and culture". While investigating the luxury value scales of Kapferer (1998), Vigneron & Johnson (1999) and Dubois et al. (2001), Chevalier & Mazzalovo (2012) concede four elements that customers look for while classifying anything as luxury, i.e. elitism (distinction), product quality & high price, personal emotion (hedonism)

and brand (reputation). In the same vein, Godey et al. (2013) identify beauty, quality, price, rarity and inspirational brand endorsement of products as common characteristics of luxury. Though Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie (2006) admit the continuance of classical luxury consumption and elitism, they believe that “luxury today is neither a necessity nor necessarily expensive. It can be mass market, not traditional, but personal, authentic and experiential” (p. 321). In addition to this, while referring to the two extremes of a continuum i.e. luxury goods and ordinary goods, Tynan et al. (2010) propound that “where the ordinary ends and luxury starts is a matter of degree as judged by consumers” (p. 1157). Despite the homogeneous nature of basic human needs, Kemp (1998) explains that the perception of goods as either luxury or necessity entirely depends upon the society in context. Illustrating this, Christodoulides et al. (2009, p. 3) affirm that “what is regarded a basic car in a developed country may be considered luxury in a developing country”. However, one of the most suitable conceptualizations for this study was that of Hagtvedt & Patrick (2009), where they define “a luxury brand as one that has premium products, provides pleasure as a central benefit, and connects with consumers on an emotional level” (p. 609).

Acknowledging the repercussions of mass production and the rise of competitors in the luxury market, Chevalier & Mazzalovo (2012), based on economic affordability, propose the segmentation of luxury into *true luxury* and *intermediate luxury*. The former involves authentic representation of luxurious lifestyles and therefore only few people can afford it. The latter, however, involves the ‘democratization of luxury’ whereby the middle class is allowed to be a part of the imaginary world offered by the intermediate luxury brands. While *intermediate luxury* pursues affordability, *true luxury*, without positioning itself as unaffordable, remains foreign to the topic. *Intermediate luxury* and *true luxury*, both, promise the consumers of escaping the masses through the consumption of much better (in the case of *true luxury*) or a bit better (in the case of *intermediate luxury*) than their compeers. Similarly, Vickers & Renand (2003) differentiate luxury goods and non-luxury goods based on three distinct dimensions: *functionalism* (ability to satisfy consumption needs), *experientialism* (ability to provide pleasure) and *symbolic interactionism* (ability to affirm a social status). Reflecting upon the luxury continuum suggested by De Barnier et al. (2012) and Vickers & Renand (2003), Chang et al. (2016) describe *inaccessible luxury* and *accessible luxury* on the basis of different socioeconomic classes. “Inaccessible luxury represents extreme levels of authenticity, prestige, exclusivity, quality and innovativeness” (Chang et al., 2016, p. 660), which the affluent class consumes. Conversely, “accessible luxury describes non-essential, prestigious and authentic products that are publicly well-known and reasonably priced” (Chang et al., 2016, p. 660). These are consumed by the middle or working class of people.

Luxury Consumers

Concerning the luxury clientele, Chevalier & Mazzalovo (2012) posit that “luxury clients are in fact the very rich, and, also... everybody” (p. 117). Given the segmentation of luxury, there is always something that a common man can consume to make himself distinct from his peers (Vickers & Renand, 2003). According to Amatulli & Guido (2011), luxury consumption is a result of external and internal motives of the consumer. While external motivations may include ostentation, status accumulation and assertion (Truong et al., 2008) to be a part of the desired society (Ivanic, 2015), internal motivations represent self-esteem, materialism (Chan et al., 2014), self-reward, self-enrichment, self-fulfilment (Correia et al., 2020) and self-pleasure (De Barnier & Valette-Florence, 2013; Vickers & Renand, 2003). To better understand the motivation behind tourists’ luxury driven trips, Correia et al. (2020) developed a conceptual model entailing the antecedents and consequences of their behaviour.

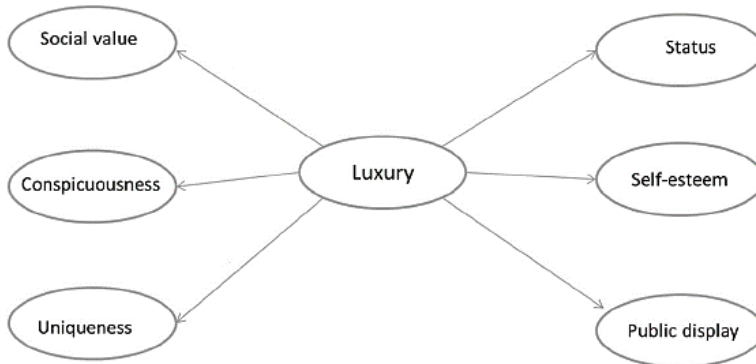


Figure 2. Antecedents and consequents of tourist behaviour (Correia et al., 2020)

Concerning luxury tourism, antecedents refer to the individual and social perceptions of luxury associated with the destination or experience. These include social value (sense of belonging to a group), conspicuousness (status differentiator) and uniqueness (sense of rarity). On the other hand, “consequences refer to the perceived value of tourists attitudes towards luxurious experiences” (Correia et al., 2020, p. 7). Consequents include public display, self-esteem and status.

Luxury Tourism and Luxury Travel

Irrespective of the global situation, luxury tourism and luxury travel has seen a rise in volume (D’Arpizio et al., 2016; Cetin & Walls, 2016; Demir & Saribaş, 2014; Novotná & Kunc, 2019; Popescu & Olteanu, 2014) and value (Popescu & Olteanu,

2014). Luxury has been associated with tourism since the time it was restricted to a small affluent and elite class of people (Demir & Saribaş, 2014). Today, luxury tourism is classified as a distinct segment of the tourism industry in terms of its supply and demand (Popescu & Olteanu, 2014). It usually involves a demand for luxury travel products that require premium service and expertise (Armoni et al., 2018). According to Popescu & Olteanu (2014), luxury tourism involves wealthy clientele willing to pay huge amounts of money for trips that would not only offer them pleasure, but would also distinguish them from their social circles.

However, in the postmodern era, with the changing dynamics of the luxury market, it is imperative to reframe the concept of luxury tourism. According to Eckhardt et al. (2015, p. 3), “new luxury involves affordability, mass-market proliferation, the divorce of status and class, and the availability in the mass market, ideally without undermining a brand’s luxury status”. In addition to this, today’s consumers have started consuming luxury for inconspicuous reasons as well (Eckhardt et al., 2015; Shao et al., 2019). While referring to the conspicuousness dimension of luxury (Truong et al., 2008) in tourism, Riley (1995) and Correia et al. (2016) assert that conspicuousness is more about the manner of travel rather than the destination. According to Hallott (2013), tourists taking part in luxury tourism activities look to explore a new or developing destination or experiencing an already visited destination in a new way. Therefore, in the contemporary world, luxury tourism involves tourists who are willing to pay for trips which are other than usual, entailing the essence of luxury and thereby satisfying their extrinsic and intrinsic needs.

Though there has been a considerable amount of literature on luxury tourism (Armoni et al., 2018; Brenner & Aguilar, 2002; Correia et al., 2020; Demir & Saribaş, 2014; Novotná & Kunc, 2019; Popescu & Olteanu, 2014; Yozcu, 2017), studies have failed to address the discrepancy between luxury tourism and luxury travel. Medlik (2003) describes travel as “any journey from one place to another, over short or long distances; to, from and as part of one’s work, during leisure and for any purpose; using any mode of transport by air, land or sea” (p. 170). As travel may include short or long stays in between successive destinations for various purposes, the World Tourism Organization (2008) declares tourism as a subset of travel. Therefore, luxury travel refers to a traveller’s journey through any means or class of transport, which is a destination in itself and entails the main components of luxury such as distinction, quality, rarity, reputation etc.

Luxury Trains

According to Blancheton & Marchi (2013), the concept of luxury trains dates back to the 1980s when they emanated as a blend of rail tourism incorporating discovery, history and nostalgia. They argue that “trips on luxury trains are special experiences

limited to a wealthy clientele or to visitors splurging on a major event” (p. 36). In the same vein, Kovačić & Milošević (2016) contend that luxury transport is a type of transport which surpasses the usual standards of travelling in terms of quality, pricing, uniqueness and that which can only be afforded by a small number of people. Although the ‘experiences’ and ‘standards’ suggested by Blancheton & Marchi (2013) and Kovačić & Milošević (2016) may be pertinent in today’s luxury trains, new luxury involves affordability without compromising upon its quality component (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2012; Eckhardt et al., 2015; Vickers & Renand, 2003). “Democratization doesn’t change the elements that define luxury, or even necessarily lower the bar—it simply reflects a deeper, more pervasive desire among increasingly sophisticated consumers for more frequent luxury experiences” (Taylor et al., 2009, p. 94). Luxury trains are not intended to be used as usual transportation but as “museum-style attraction”, “an activity to do”, “to employ historic dining” or “somewhere to eat and sleep as part of novelty, nostalgia and entertainment purposes”. These trains usually incorporate historic rolling stocks, onboard entertainment, itineraries, slower journeys, luxurious rides etc (Wikivoyage, 2019). A luxury train is not just a means to reach a destination, but a destination in itself.

Impact of Marketing Mix on Tourists

Marketing Mix refers to a set of activities undertaken by an organization to carry out business and meet the needs of the customers (Goi, 2009). The original concept of marketing mix proposed by Borden (1964) comprised 12 elements, which, if implemented properly, would lead to a ‘profitable business operation’. McCarthy (1964) simplified these 12 elements into a four-element framework i.e. 4 Ps. While investigating the impact of tourism marketing mix on tourists’ satisfaction, the four fundamental elements considered for the study by Magatef (2015) were product, price, place and promotion. Morley (1994), while assessing the impact of price on tourists’ choices, found airfares, hotel tariffs and exchange rates to have a significant impact on tourist demand. However, the factor having the greatest impact on tourist demand was airfare. As part of his study, Morley (1994) found that a 10% decrease in the airfare from Kuala Lumpur to Sydney increased the number of tourists from Kuala Lumpur choosing Sydney as a destination by nearly 12% while a 5% increase in hotel tariffs due to taxes decreased the demand for Sydney by 2%. Similarly, in the context of medical tourism, Han and Hyun (2015) found perceived quality, satisfaction and trust to have a significant impact on the tourists’ intention to revisit the country.

Methodology

In line with the objectives of this study, 83 employees and travel agents associated with the functioning of Maharajas’ Express were initially interviewed. Travel agents

dealing with luxury train bookings in New Delhi (the train's origin) and Udaipur (en-route destination) were selected for the interview along with the employees of the Maharajas' Express governing body i.e. Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC). As part of the interviews, respondents were asked to reflect upon the running of luxury trains through a set of open-ended questions. One of the major benefits of "open-ended responses is that they provide a direct view into a respondent's own thinking" (Roberts et al., 2014a, p. 1065). The latent theme underlying these questions were the train's performance, complaints, and issues. The interviews were conducted in September 2019 and each interview lasted for approximately 25 minutes. All the interviews were tape-recorded and a verbatim transcription was prepared for transcript-based analysis (Alrawadieh et al., 2020; Beyea & Nicoll, 2000; Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech & Zoran, 2009). The verbatim transcription of interviews included responses like:

Employment of better equipment, some other tracks and more luxurious cabins is necessary as this equipment is old (Maharajas' Express employee)

Railways have to provide special halting point away from the busy railway station. So that the passengers can sleep good without hearing the unnecessary announcements by railways (Maharajas' Express employee)

There should be promotion on huge level so that people are aware of the luxury trains... (Travel agent in Udaipur)

Tariff should be low so domestic tourist will increase [...] people do not want to spend on travel by train (Travel agent in New Delhi)

Use of probabilistic topic modelling method was ideal given the nature of this study (Stamolampros et al., 2019a; Stamolampros et al., 2019b). "In principle, topic modelling is a set of unsupervised machine learning techniques which self-organize textual corpora in groups of topics evaluating how specific groups of words appear together using both volume and context as inputs" (Stamolampros et al., 2019b, p. 18). Similar to studies of comparable nature (Roberts et al., 2014a; Stamolampros et al., 2019a), this study made use of the Structural Topic Model (STM), a generative model of word counts (Roberts et al., 2014b) that allows the inclusion of document metadata. To estimate the data using Structural Topic Model (STM), the following preprocessing steps were undertaken (a) word text tokenization (splitting of text into a list of tokens) (b) standardization (conversion of characters into lower case) (c) removal of numbers and punctuation marks (d) removal of stop words and context-specific words and (e) stemming (reducing inflected words to their root forms). Infrequent terms that appeared less than 3 times in the corpus were removed as part of the preparation process (Roberts et al., 2014b). The number of topics ($K = 3$) were determined based on (a) held-out likelihood (b) exclusivity of topic words to the topic and (c) semantic coherence of the topic structure (Stamolampros et al., 2019a;

Stamolampros et al., 2019b). The topics were then labelled with the help of a luxury train supervisor, who accompanied the authors throughout the interviews.

Based on the identified topics and concern areas of employees and travel agents, a structured tourist questionnaire was developed. 157 tourists travelling on the Maharajas' Express were surveyed. The survey included tourists from countries like the United States of America (39), the United Kingdom (35), Japan (18), United Arab Emirates (10), Canada (9), China (7), Germany (7), Australia (6), India (6), Saudi Arabia (5), Russia (4), France (3), Austria (1), Czech Republic (1), Indonesia (1), Iran (1), Italy (1), Nepal (1), Oman (1) and Sri Lanka (1). Countries with the most number of onboard tourists were the USA, the UK and Japan. The tourist survey was conducted in October and November 2019. The tourist questionnaire included 17 questions based on the concern areas identified as part of the employee and travel agent interviews. All the responses were measured on a five-point semantic-type differential scale. While the data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) – Version 25, the statistical techniques applied for analysis included 'Descriptive statistics' (Frequencies and Crosstabs) and 'Tables' (Custom Tables). In addition to this, reviews from Tripadvisor were used as supporting data (Thirumaran & Raghav, 2017) to examine the validity of the identified concerns.

Table 1
Demographic profile of tourists on-board Maharajas' express

Demographics	Frequency	Percentage*
Gender		
Male	104	66.2%
Female	53	33.8%
Age		
<20 Years	4	2.5%
20-40 Years	33	21%
>40 Years	120	76.4%
Educational Qualification		
Undergraduate	22	14%
Graduate	50	31.8%
Post Graduate	83	52.9%
Other	2	1.2%
Occupation		
Employed	93	59.2%
Unemployed	19	12.1%
Other	45	28.6%
Monthly Income		
<1000 USD	3	1.9%
1000–1500 USD	16	10.2%
>1500 USD	138	87.9%
Marital Status		
Married	108	68.8%
Unmarried	49	31.2%

Findings and Discussion

To explore the topics in question, the authors investigated the collection of words associated with the topics (Roberts et al., 2014b). Table 2 represents the top FREX words associated with each topic along with the percentage of topic prevalence. FREX words are words that are both frequent and exclusive, and help in distinguishing topics. The most frequently discussed topic of concern (42.4%) in most of the employee and travel agent interviews was *pricing and policies*. The second most commonly discussed topic that accounted for 32.8% of the interviews, was *Product Marketing*. Each of the three topics of concern identified from the interviews were related to the elements of marketing mix except place, i.e. *pricing and policies* (price), *product marketing* (promotion) and *amenities* (product).

Table 2
Words associated with Topics

Topic	Topic Label	Prop. (%)	Top FREX Words
1	Pricing and Policies	42.4	price, cancel, high, domest, polici, peopl
2	Product Marketing	32.8	chang, market, itinerari, promot, year, tourist
3	Amenities	24.8	group, tour, cabin, servic, wifi, time

Since the data was collected over a period of two months and two trips, demographic analysis (age, monthly income and marital status) of the surveyed participants explained the type of tourists frequently travelling in Maharajas’ Express. The majority of tourists (112) onboard the Maharajas’ Express were above the age of 40 with a monthly income of more than 1500 US dollars. From these, 80.3% (90) of the tourists were married. Apart from that, the survey included 25 tourists (20 to 40 years old) of different marital statuses with a monthly income of more than 1500 US dollars. The questionnaire included questions regarding tourists’ satisfaction with price, policies, marketing and services of the Maharajas’ Express. In terms of pricing, while 28% (44) of the tourists were ‘very satisfied’, 41.4% (65) of the tourists were ‘moderately satisfied’ with the ticket’s pricing. Similarly, an analysis of the responses regarding the policies of luxury trains revealed that while the current cancellation and schedule policies were ‘acceptable’ to 31.8% (50) of the tourists, they were only ‘somewhat acceptable’ to 51% (80) of the tourists. Questions regarding product awareness and onboard services were also asked. Out of the 157 tourists surveyed, 53.5% (84) of the tourists were only ‘moderately aware’ of the products being offered by the Maharajas’ Express. While 57.3% (90) of the tourists considered the onboard services of Maharajas’ Express to be ‘very good’, only 38.2% (60) tourists considered the services to be ‘excellent’. Tourists showed a moderate level of satisfaction with the pricing of Maharajas’ Express as well as the cancellation and rescheduling policies of the train. In addition to that, there was a neutral level of awareness among the tourists of Maharajas’ Express regarding its products. However, the results suggest that 95.5% of the tourists were satisfied with the train’s onboard services.

To better understand the experiences and issues of tourists with the Maharajas' Express, reviews from Tripadvisor were used as supporting data (Thirumaran & Raghav, 2017). An excerpt of a review by Elly (pseudonym) from the United Kingdom, who travelled on the Maharajas' Express in November 2019 is given below

Almost anyone who has paid \$12,000 for a week on a train will tell you it's fantastic. I was stupid enough to pay and it wasn't. The train is so noisy and shaky, it's like trying to sleep in a washing machine and the Indian food on the train is bland and poor by UK standards. (Tripadvisor, 2020)

Similar reviews were given by Daniel (pseudonym) and Angelina (pseudonym) from the United States of America, who travelled in the Maharajas' express in February 2020

The first impression of our deluxe room was that it was tired, dated and badly in need of renovation. The beds were extremely hard, and there was no carpet on the floor. Sadly, I don't feel that the Maharajas' Express is value for money... (Tripadvisor, 2020)

Try and find the best quality earplugs you can, and maybe bring some sleeping tablets – it is really quite difficult to sleep at night as the train tracks are mainly laid on sand, and the train toots at least every other minute (if not more!) through the night. (Tripadvisor, 2020)

Clearly, these reviews reveal the current condition of the compartments in Maharajas' Express. Similar to the concerns of employees and travel agents, tourists consider the refurbishment of cabins and railway tracks to be urgent and necessary. Congruent to the data collected, though the following reviews reflect upon the fine onboard services of Maharajas' Express, they encapsulate its pretentious celebrations and poor value for money aspect.

The train itself was lovely, especially the dining cars, and we thought the staff on board were just fabulous. Unfortunately, the off-board program and tours were average at best. So disappointing that you would be subjected to wasting time being taken on touristic shopping stops, or charged for additional add on tours. We also felt uncomfortable with all the excessive Maharajas branding and fake celebrations. We loved our authentic experiences post Maharajas Express much better than the train. (Tripadvisor, 2020)

Staff was wonderful and amazing. Food was super delicious. But these things should not be priced for \$10k tag. They rip off people basically. People of this country are very poor, you even feel bad taking luxury [...] train is well decorated from inside but ride is awful. You cannot sleep, environment outside is extremely polluted and dirty. Extremely unsafe. The train does not worth more than \$1k. (Tripadvisor, 2020)

Similar to the results of Thirumaran & Raghav (2017), the above reviews suggest the incipient phase of luxury tourism in countries like India. Their study reflects upon the relation between the infrastructure in developing countries and the existence of luxury tourism in such emerging destinations.

Conclusion

The study tried to assess the concerns of employees and travel agents associated with the functioning of Maharajas' Express, a premier luxury train in India through the application of Structural Topic Model (STM). Keeping in mind the limitations of closed-ended questions (Roberts et al., 2014a), the interviewers employed the use of open-ended questions regarding the trains' performance, complaints and issues. This helped in providing a direct view of the respondents' thinking. The analysis led to the identification of 3 major themes. 42.4% of the total concerns were about the pricing and policies of Maharajas' Express, and 32.8% of the concerns were about the train's marketing. This included concerns about the itinerary and marketing efforts of the luxury train. The third topic included concerns about the amenities of Maharajas' Express, such as cabins and other services. Based on the identified themes, 157 tourists from 20 countries were surveyed with the help of a structured questionnaire. In addition to the tourist survey, reviews from Tripadvisor were used as secondary data to strengthen the findings of this study. 41.4% (65) and 51% (80) of the tourists showed moderate levels of satisfaction towards pricing and policies of Maharajas' Express respectively. In addition to this, reviews of recent travellers on Tripadvisor further evince the pervasive discontent among tourists with the current pricing of the Maharajas' Express. However, 53.5% (83) of the tourists were only moderately aware of all the products offered by Maharajas' Express. Demographic analysis of the respondents helped in identifying the prevalent consumer base of Maharajas' Express. The analysis showed that 71.3% (112) of the tourists were married and above the age of 40 years, with a monthly income of more than 1500 US dollars. The relatively smaller number of Indian tourists (6) travelling on the Maharajas' Express further evince the lack of interest and awareness among domestic travellers. The results, therefore, reflect upon the need for large scale promotions, not only among the pervasive customer base but also among people of different age groups, nationalities and socioeconomic classes. While the survey and reviews both concede the ravishing onboard services of Maharajas' Express, the latter sheds light upon the poor state of cabins, tracks and beds which contribute in excessive rattling, thereby affecting the luxury experiences of tourists.

Based on the literature review and the findings of this study, it would be in the wise interests of the authorities to introduce intermediate luxury products, which is not only affordable, but also captures the essence of luxury (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2012; Eckhardt et al., 2015; Taylor et al., 2009). Such products, along with large scale promotion amongst people of different age groups and socioeconomic classes may help in mitigating the lower rate of occupancy in Indian luxury trains. However, the challenges of organizing luxury tourism in developing countries can hardly be overlooked. As suggested by Thirumaran & Raghav (2017, p. 148), "developing countries have difficulties delivering the perfect luxury feel". In this case, the required infrastructure

for the conduct of luxury tourism (for example, railway tracks) is not at the desired level. Therefore, this study, to some extent, confirms the findings of Thirumaran & Raghav (2017) as infrastructure is important for organizing luxury tourism.

Limitations and Future Research

There has been little research about the functioning of luxury trains, especially in countries like India. Since the study was exploratory in nature, it tried to explore more about luxury trains in order to develop some hypotheses and predictions which could be tested in future research (Trochim, 2001). Researchers may try to investigate the expectations and perceptions of luxury train tourists, to better understand the market of luxury trains. Moreover, future researchers may also work upon the consumption patterns of luxury train tourists.

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New Developments in Promoting Tourism in Uzbekistan

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Abstract

In the Republic of Uzbekistan, reforms are presently underway to develop the tourism sector as one of the strategic sectors of the national economy. It is hoped that in the long term this will help to solve many of the important social and economic issues such as job creation, diversification of the economy and accelerated development of regions, as well as increasing incomes and quality of life of the country's population. When developing measures to ensure accelerated development of the tourism industry of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the main tasks and priorities of the state government policy in the sphere of tourism includes giving tourism the status of a strategic sector of the economy and is making this industry a powerful tool for sustainable development. Presently, most visitors who decide to travel to Uzbekistan are only interested in visiting the cultural and historical attractions and they stay for only a short amount of time. However, if the government wants tourists to come for a longer time period and to encourage repeat visitations, they must promote other niche tourism markets as well as cultural tourism such as adventure tourism, gastronomic and wine tourism and religious tourism.

Keywords

Tourism industry; silk road; government policy; Uzbekistan; niche tourism; cultural tourism

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Introduction

Tourism is becoming one of the largest and fastest growing industries in the global economy (UNWTO, 2019), and is seen as an important driving force for economic development (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2012). Recent trends have shown clear evidence of tourism's continued growth and importance in Asian countries, which continue to exceed the global average (Mc.A Baker, 2013). One such country is Uzbekistan, which is now beginning to show clear evidence that it has the future potential to become a 'major player' in the tourism market of Central Asia. Because of Uzbekistan's unique history, which is based on its strong cultural, archeological and natural attractions, it is now providing greater opportunities to open up the country to become a major tourist destination. This is because of its ancient history, especially in the Southern region of the State, which was the site for the most direct trade route between China and Europe. This trade route was named the 'Silk Route,' which was first established in early Roman times (Kantarci, Uysal & Magini, 2014).

However it was not until 1992 that the government of the Republic of Uzbekistan (as it had seceded from the Soviet Union in 1991) began to seriously promote tourism by establishing the first national tourism company 'Uzbektourism,' which for the first time provided tourist information that related to advertising, information services, licensing, statistics, as well as the compilation of economic data. Further developments occurred in December 2016, when a Decree from the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan formally announced the need for, "measures to ensure the accelerated development of the tourism sector of the Republic of Uzbekistan" (Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2016). As a result, the new State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan was established as the main authorized state body for the tourism industry, with the main objectives of developing tourism infrastructure and a more efficient transportation system; to establish a number of new touristic routes; to simplify visa procedures; and to promote Uzbekistan as a national tourist product to the global marketplace.

The State Committee's main priority is to encourage the 'dynamic' promotion of the tourism sector, which is based on Uzbekistan's ancient civilizations and different cultures. Cultural tourism became the major focus as there are more than 4,000 rare historical monuments in the country, housed with many other unique architectural mausoleums, minarets and mosques in the ancient cities of Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva. In addition, a total of 140 historical and architectural sites have now been included in the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Based on these archaeological discoveries, Uzbekistan is now ranked ninth in the world for the total number of historical and architectural monuments. Hasanovich (2017) concluded that Uzbekistan has great potential for the development of tourism because of its rich cultural and historical traditions.

The aim of this paper is to educate interested readers about the current developments to promote tourism in Uzbekistan, and to encourage increased numbers of foreign tourists to visit. In addition, the authors will discuss several niche tourism initiatives that have been introduced in countries that have been successful in attracting increased numbers of tourists. Finally, we will discuss these new initiatives to determine if they can be successfully implemented in Uzbekistan to promote future tourism development.

A literature review was undertaken through an intensive review of secondary sources using an iterative search of multiple literature databases such as the Web of Science, Scopus and Google Scholar. Several journal articles that focused on tourism and economic development in Uzbekistan were retrieved, and a number of research studies that focused on niche tourism were identified and analyzed. The articles were published between 1997 and 2018. Each of these papers used secondary sources, as well as qualitative and quantitative methodologies, and each of the key words for this study were used to expand the literature search.

The significance of this paper is that we are able to examine how Uzbekistan, as a neonate destination, could be seen as a representative case study that is able to provide a model of tourism development for other emerging countries that are in a similar economic, political and social state of affairs. That is, to use tourism as a major tool for the development of the economy, and as a major creator of jobs for the tourism industry.

New Developments in Promoting Tourism in Uzbekistan

Among its many initiatives, the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Tourism Development is providing assistance to tourism companies to establish direct business contacts with foreign travel companies through the holding of the International Uzbek Tourist Exhibition and the Tashkent International Tourism Fair. In 2017, the State Committee supported a total of 118 new businesses that began to operate in Uzbekistan, of which 60 focused on hotel services, while 58 provided tourist services.

Furthermore, the growth of tourism revenue had increased substantially by 2018. That is, in 1996 tourist revenue only amounted to \$15 million USD, which was approximately 0.11% of gross national product (GDP), with the number of tourists totaling 173,000 visitors. By 2018, the country's growth in tourism has increased substantially, with revenue amounting to \$1.31 billion USD, or 2.6% of GDP (World Data.info, 2018). In addition, the total number of tourists had also increased exponentially to 5.35 million. However, this is still quite small compared to other countries such as France (7% of GDP); Turkey (4.5% of GDP); and India (6% of GNP) (Hasanovich, 2017).

Much of this increased growth in numbers of tourists and tourism revenue has been attributed to many of the initiatives that were initiated by the State Committee for Tourism Development. This has included several marketing initiatives, such as study visits to Uzbekistan by journalists from the foreign media. Based on the results of these trips, many photographs, videos and articles on tourism opportunities were produced and/or written to promote 'Uztourism'.

Furthermore, data was collected in the border regions from visitors through communication technologies. Registration procedures for foreign citizens were also envisaged in the future through the filing of on-line travel route/s. It is expected that this will help contribute to support the development of active tourism, eco-tourism and agro-tourism. Proposals were also advocated to help simplify visa and registration procedures for foreigner visitors. This will decrease the requirements for entry into the country, as well as to diversify tourist flows based on the requirements of the market and the specific interests of foreign visitors.

Independent travelers have not been overlooked, as taxi orders for traveling to restaurants, as well as an 'alarm button app' for mobile phones that helps the safety of tourists, particularly those traveling to natural outdoor areas with special interest in ecotourism, have been introduced. The «Uzbekistan Pass» has also been developed as a mobile app. that provides detailed information about cultural and historical places to visit. The tourism industry itself is actively encouraging the introduction of information communication technologies (ICT) to improve services especially for hotels and transport companies that want to use online booking systems and mobile applications. In another positive initiative before COVID-19 when the airlines stopped flying, Uzbekistan Airlines announced discounted fares for group travel, as well as providing additional flights to fly to further historical areas of Uzbekistan.

Other proposals included the encouragement of foreign investment and the granting of tax incentives to hotel and tourist services. In particular, they provided assistance by exempting them from corporate income, and property tax, as well as other types of taxation relief, such as hotels only needing to pay a single social payment from their payroll fund if they employed qualified foreign specialists as management personnel; and that the income of qualified foreign specialists who were invited as hotel management personnel was also exempt from personal income tax.

These initiatives from the State Committee of Tourism have proved to be useful in the short term because they were seen as a means of attracting tourists through a range of positive business strategies and tax incentives. However, one area that the State Committee overlooked was the need to develop a range of marketing strategies that would encourage the development of other niche or special interest tourist markets, which will be further discussed in the next section.

Niche Tourism as an Alternative to Mass Tourism

With the growing maturity of the global tourism market, a new trend has emerged in recent years, which is the movement away from what has been termed ‘mass tourism’, or the more traditional form of *tourism* development, or as it is known today as ‘overpopulation’. According to a report by the UNWTO (2018, p. 6) overpopulation has been defined as, “*The impact of tourism on a destination, or parts thereof, that excessively influences perceived quality of life of citizens and/or quality of visitors’ experiences in a negative way*”. The trend is now away from overpopulation toward what has been termed ‘special interest’ or ‘niche tourism’ which has been described as the need for travelers to seek out new and exotic tourism markets, especially the more experienced and highly engaged consumer. Huh and Singh (2007) stated that because of the maturity of the tourism marketplace, coupled with its fierce competition and a more engaged consumer, a desire to seek out new niche tourism markets has resulted.

The definition of niche tourism has been used interchangeably in the tourism literature with the term *special interest tourism* (Douglas, Douglas, & Derrett, 2001), which Douglas has defined as, “The provision of customised leisure and recreational experiences driven by the specific expressed interests of individuals and groups” (p. 3) and is considered to be the complete antithesis of mass tourism. Special interest tourism is described as being more sustainable than mass tourism because the group size is smaller (typically from between 10 and 15 tourists); visitors are generally better educated and experienced and the main focus of the trip is to experience authentic, environmental and/or cultural experiences (Douglas, et al, 2001). The concept of niche tourism has evolved from the term niche marketing. Niche marketing became accepted as a term in the 1990s and is now regarded as an alternative to the traditional mass tourist market. Dalgic and Leeuw (1994) described a ‘niche’ as compact with specialized appeal to a fairly small and well-defined group whose members are distinguished by common needs and interests. Dalgic et al. (1994) further defined a niche market as, “a small, profitable, homogeneous market segment which had been ignored or neglected in the past” (p. 42). Many small to medium-sized enterprises have focused on niche marketing in order to survive in a highly competitive environment so that they can maximize their marketing advantages.

Niche tourism as distinct from niche marketing has been defined by Beech and Chadwick (2006) as...“a small specialised sector of tourism which appeals to a correspondingly tightly defined market segment” (p. 557). Novelli (2005) described in greater detail the characteristics of niche tourism as: (1) part of a wider structural process of diversification, (2) based on a growing need for products which are non-standardized and unusual, and (3) relying on new destinations or activities to meet the demands of changing markets. Novelli (2005) also described how niche tourism

can be broken into a number of different macro-niches (e.g., cultural, environmental, rural, urban tourism, etc.) and into further sub-sets or micro-niches (e.g., cultural tourism might be broken into the following micro-niches - heritage, tribal, religious and educational tourism).

In Uzbekistan, Hasanovich (2017) advocated for the necessity of providing greater scientific studies of the underutilized opportunities for niche markets such as medical tourism, rural tourism, pilgrimage and religious tourism, eco-tourism and gastronomy and wine tourism. Baxtishodovich, Suyunovich and Kholiqulov (2017) also discussed the importance of promoting religious, adventure and gastronomic tourism as promising niche markets for Uzbekistan. This was in response to the changing tastes of consumers who have been described as travelling more frequently, and because many are more experienced and discerning travelers.

Based on these initial observations, what can we learn from an analysis of the following niche tourist markets: cultural and heritage tourism, gastronomy and wine tourism, adventure tourism, and religious tourism? The next section will provide an analysis of each specific niche market including a definition/s, some of the main characteristics of the niche market, and a discussion of some of the niche tourism markets that have recently proven popular. It is hoped that this will enable us to learn more from other countries and their development of their niche tourism markets to determine whether they are realistic alternative tourism options for Uzbekistan in the future.

Cultural and Heritage Tourism

Conceptual definitions have mainly concentrated on what motivates tourists to visit cultural attractions and are related to learning about the history and heritage of others, or contemporary ways of life or thought. Cultural tourism has been defined by the World Tourism Organization (Report *WTO, 2012*) as, “Trips, whose main or concomitant goal is visiting the sites and events whose cultural and historical value has turned them into being a part of the cultural heritage of a community”.

Cultural tourism is now recognized as one of the largest and fastest growing global tourism markets because, “The cultural and creative industries are increasingly being used to promote [cultural] destinations” (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2009, p. 10). More recently a UNWTO (2018) report emphasized that the field of cultural tourism has moved away from the previous emphasis on classic western tangible heritage, toward a much broader and inclusive field of diverse cultural practices throughout the world (Richards, 2018).

In the 1990’s cultural tourism became a major force for economic and urban revitalization. Governments around the world were increasingly turning to museums,

performing arts centers, arts districts, and other cultural activities to promote and revitalize their cities (Grodach & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2007). This is because of the growing awareness of the need to preserve cultural heritage before it disappears. Because of this belief, there is a general perception that cultural tourism is 'good' tourism, that it attracts wealthier tourists than average visitors, and does little damage to the environment or the local culture while contributing a great deal to the economy as well as supporting a diversity of cultural activities.

The cultural and heritage tourism literature has been dominated in the late 20th century by research that has centered on Europe (Balcar & Pearce, 1996). According to the European Commission, there are approximately 200,000 protected monuments in the European Union (EU), and 2.5 million buildings of historical interest (European Commission, 1998, in Richards, 2001). Although heritage is a universal phenomenon, to date the developed countries of Europe have made the most use of heritage tourism and devoted their greatest efforts to an understanding of its history and traditions (Ashworth & Larkham, 1994; Nuryanti, 1996). More recently we have seen the rising popularity of a number of Middle East countries as emerging tourism destinations because of such factors as their traditional food and ancient traditions that are also likely to boost the cultural tourism market growth in this region.

Gastronomy Tourism

Wolf (2006) defined gastronomy tourism as "...travel in order to search for, and enjoy prepared food and drink and unique and memorable gastronomic experiences" (p. 20). Gastronomy tourism also refers to the originality of a dish, and whether it is indigenous to a place, a region or a country (Hall & Mitchell, 2000; Green & Dogherty, 2008; Sormaz, Akmese, Gunes, et al. 2016).

The World Tourism Organization concluded that gastronomy tourism has recently emerged as an important area of growth, not only because food and drink are central to the tourist experience, but because the concept of gastronomy tourism has evolved to include a wide range of cultural practices.

"Gastronomy tourism represents an opportunity to constantly revitalize and diversify tourism, promote local economic development, involve many different professional sectors and bring new uses to the primary sector. Hence, gastronomy tourism contributes to promoting and branding destinations, maintaining and preserving local traditions and diversities, and harnessing and rewarding authenticity." (World Tourism Organization, 2017, p. 14).

The type of food often represents the actual cultural traditions and has generally been seen as an essential element of the cultural experience for gastronomy tourists (Everett & Slocum 2013). Gastronomy has an enormous capacity to single out a

specific destination as being unique (Antón, Camarero, Laguna, et al. 2019) and is increasingly recognized as a means of encouraging people to come together, and to relate to each other's different social, cultural and political perspectives (Oosterveer 2006). Local food can play an important role in the sustainable tourism experience because it appeals to the visitor's desire for authenticity within the holiday experience (Sims, 2009).

Some of the key trends observed that have redefined gastronomy tourism in recent years are an increase in street food and food markets, cooking lessons for local community members, and gastronomy tours with locals or experts. (GlobalData, 2018). Rand, Heath, and Alberts (2003) noted that gastronomy tourism had the following benefits that include, "The ... potential to enhance sustainability in tourism; contributes to the authenticity of the destination; strengthens the local economy; and provides for the environmentally friendly infrastructure" (p. 97).

Richards (2003) noted the strong links that gastronomy plays in cultural tourism because it, "...has become a significant source of identity formation in postmodern society" (p. 3). Gastronomic tourism is now seen as one of the most important ways of strengthening and consolidating certain tourist destinations, by eating at a specific restaurant, or simply becoming familiar with the local cuisine of a specific geographic area and is seen as the primary motivation for the trip (Galvez, Lopez-Guzman, Buiza, et al. 2017).

Over the last few years, Turkey has become one of the best gastronomic tourism destinations in the world to visit. According to the findings from several academic studies, tourists who travel to Turkey want to know and experience the Turkish cuisine culture (Pekyaman, 2008). It has become famous for its dishes such as kebabs. Recent studies have shown that the taste and diversity of Turkish cuisine is a major factor in attracting foreign tourists who regard Turkish cuisine as rich, attractive and delicious (Sahin, 2015).

Turkish cuisine is regarded as one of the oldest and best cuisines (Akgöl, 2012). This is because of the geographic location of Turkey and its historical foundations that has strongly contributed to form a Turkish cuisine culture, which has created a great diversity in its cuisine (Sahin, 2015).

Wine Tourism

Eno-tourism (or wine tourism) is regarded as a sub-type of gastronomy tourism, and refers to tourists whose main purpose is to visit vineyards and wineries, to enjoy tasting, consuming and/or purchasing wine, often at or near the source (Committee on Tourism and Competitiveness (CTC) of UNWTO) (2019). The most popular

definition of wine tourism is by Hall, Johnson, Cramborne, et al. (2000); “Visitation to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals and wine shows for which grape wine tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of a grape wine region are the prime motivating factors for visitors” (p. 3).

The wine tourist is rarely interested in simply wine tasting, rather it is the ‘total experience’ which is of the utmost importance (Roberts and Sparks, 2006). The wine tourism experience not only consists of the provision of good wine but also requires, “...quality dining opportunities and other attributes to create a unique experience and ambience” (Dowling & Getz, 2000, p. 57), or a “bundle of benefits” (Getz & Brown, 2006). Dowling et al. (2000) further described the main characteristics of the wine tourism experience. This includes the scenery surrounding the winery; the location and entrance to the winery itself; staff at the winery - their manner of greeting and welcoming visitors; value for money, and trade-off decisions such as whether I dine at the winery or buy wine to take home. Good service is also a determining factor for future visits, highlighting the importance of personal interaction (O’Neill & Charters, 2000). However, it is the memories that the visitors take away with them of unique aspects of their visit, as well as the familiarity developed with the people of the region that helps to bring them back for return visits.

Regarding the main markets for wine tourism, the ‘The Old World’ producers within Europe have a long, uninterrupted history of wine production and consumption. Although Europe is the second smallest continent, it produced 73% of all wine in 2001. The four largest European producers, France, Italy, Spain and Germany account for 73% of European wine production and 54% of global production. In contrast, the ‘New World’ wine producing countries are defined as those outside of Europe. Five of the largest and most established New World producers are the United States, Argentina, Australia, South Africa and Chile. These five countries comprise 82% of non-European volume and 23% of global production in 2001 (Cholette, Castaldi and Frederick, 2005).

Italy is the prime destination for tourists whose holidays focus on wine tasting and cuisine. English speaking tourists might prefer to visit Tuscany for wine tourism experiences.

Tuscany offers wine tourists the four things that they regard as most important: a spectacular landscape, high culture, excellent food, and great wines. The network of hotels, country inns, and restaurants supports the industry throughout the province, in its cities, towns, and villages. In addition, the large number of antique fairs, art festivals, concerts and other cultural events also add to the attraction of Tuscany as a premiere wine tourism location (Colombini, 2015).

Adventure and Nature Based Tourism

Adventure tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors of the tourist industry (UNWTO, 2014). This is because numerous travelers want to experience the outdoors, to participate in programs that require action and excitement, to be physically challenged rather than passive sightseers. Many are seeking unique and special experiences often in remote locations. This type of travel experience generally involves travelling in smaller groups and often experiencing different types of risks (Patterson, 2018).

Adventure often denotes action; it is not a passive experience and is generally found to be engaging and absorbing (Swarbooke, Beard, Leckie, et al. (2003). Ewert (2000) defined adventure tourism as:

“A self-initiated recreational activity typically involving a travel and overnight stay component that usually involves a close interaction with the natural environment, structurally contains elements of perceived or real risk and danger, and has an uncertain outcome that can be influenced by the participant and/or circumstance” (p. 23).

Thus, an adventure can by its very nature be a risky undertaking. Sung (2004) concluded that, “An *individual would be engaged in adventure travel for the purpose of gaining pleasure and personal meaning through participation in leisure pursuits in a specific setting*” (p. 345).

In recent years, many emerging economies have exhibited faster growth than ‘First World’ countries in adventure tourism, especially in Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Africa. Destinations are now recognizing that travelers are seeking more authentic products and are attempting to appeal to adventure travelers: e.g., Norway capitalizes on its towering fjords and glaciers with the slogan, “Powered by Nature”. Greenland emphasizes its ruggedness with, “Greenland, Be a Pioneer”, New Zealand emphasizes its culture, mountains, wildlife and hiking with “100% Pure New Zealand”; while Slovenia promotes hiking, mountains and caves in its, “I Feel Slovenia” campaign (UNWTO, 2014).

Hiking and cycling in particular are providing important market opportunities in many countries with different terrain and landscapes. Projects such as the extension of the New Zealand Cycle Trail or Nga Haerenga (The Journeys); the promotion of an award-winning walks network in Luxemburg; the development of cycle trails in Israel; and the continued development of the European cycle route network called ‘Euorvelo’ which is a network of 16 long distance cycling routes that crisscross Europe are in various stages of completion (OECD, 2018).

There is a constant need for the development of greater opportunities that focus on nature-based tourism, wilderness areas and outdoor activities (Winter, Selin, Cerveny,

et al. 2019). A number of countries such as Canada and Chile have active programs to strengthen their destination image through links to their national parks (OECD, 2018). Nature based tourism has also proven to be successful as a sustainable development tool in rural parts of Romania (Vaetisi, 2006), and several other countries in Central and Eastern Europe.

Religious Tourism

Religious tourism is considered to be one of the oldest forms of travel dating back to ancient times (Jackowski & Smith 1992). Every year millions of people travel to major pilgrimage destinations around the world, both ancient and modern in origin. Jackowski (2000) estimated that between 220 and 240 million people a year go on pilgrimages, with the majority being Christian (150 million), Muslim (40 million), and Hindu (30 million). Timothy and Dalton (2006) attributed religious travel to the search for truth, enlightenment, or an authentic experience with the divine or holy.

The World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) definition of religious tourism refers to, "...all travel outside the usual environment for religious purposes". This is one of the oldest forms of tourism and that has also been referred to as 'faith tourism' or 'spiritual tourism'. Some examples of religious tourism activities include religious tourist attractions, pilgrimages, monastery visits and guest stays; retreats and faith-based camps, and religious conventions and rallies. In recent years there has been a rediscovery of places and routes of a religious nature (Digance 2003).

It is estimated that between 300 and 330 million people travel for religious reasons annually, generating an economic impact of about 18,000 million dollars (Durán-Sánchez, Álvarez-García, de la Cruz del Río-Rama et al. 2018). There are two main types of religious tourism: (1) sightseeing tours to visit monuments, temples, museums; and (2) organized pilgrimage tours providing a visit to the world centers of religions, as well as travel to places having great significance in the genesis and dissemination of a particular religion. In the first case, people seek to become closer to their spiritual beliefs, to broaden their horizons and to gain new and more in-depth knowledge about the history of religion. The second type of tours are more likely to suit people travelling for spiritual motives, and their dream of worshipping in ancient shrines.

Spiritual tourism is becoming a major growth area of the Indian travel market with more Indians opting to go on a pilgrimage to popular religious cities such as Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh and Puri in Odisha. These include Puri (60% growth), which is famed for its Jagannatha Temple, Varanasi (48%), Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh (34%) and Shirdi in Maharashtra (19%). Travel Trends Today (2018) reported that, "Spiritual tourism is on the rise. Cities like Puri and Varanasi not only

offer travellers a traditional experience, but also enable them to rejuvenate at yoga retreats and Ayurveda spas”. The Ixigo study also looked at outbound train searches to these religious cities and found Lucknow topped the list with about 13%, followed by Mumbai (7%), Hyderabad (6%) and Delhi (5%).

Spiritual tourism is one of the biggest untapped markets for domestic travel of which nearly 60% of domestic tourism in India is religion based. To support this upcoming trend, the government has allocated special budgets for creating infrastructure around religious places. In Europe, the most visited religious tourist attraction is Notre-Dame de Paris, with 13 million visitors a year, and there are six other churches - Mont Saint-Michel, the Sacré-Coeur Basilica, and the cathedrals of Rheims, Chartres, Vézelay and Sainte-Chapelle which are among the 20 most visited places in France. In Europe today there are some half a million religious buildings (churches, temples, mosques, synagogues), most of which have a long history, a high-value heritage, and a rich artistic content (Future for Religious Heritage, 2014). Some of the most popular contemporary pilgrimage destinations are the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and the Santiago de Compostela in Spain.

Does Tourism Have a Future in Uzbekistan?

Several research studies have suggested that tourism in Uzbekistan has a bright future (Maidanovich, Abduvoisovna, Burxonovna, et al. 2019). This is partly because of recent initiatives by the State Committee for Tourism Development in Uzbekistan to initiate ambitious reforms to attract foreign tourists by relaxing visa restrictions; attracting private foreign investment, and to grant tax incentives for hotel and tourist services. In the writer’s opinion this is only the first stage in the development of tourism services in Uzbekistan. The second stage is to promote and to support the growth of several niche or special interest markets as a means of encouraging tourists to stay for a longer period of time, to spend more money, and to encourage repeat visitation.

Cultural Tourism

One of the regions that has been ignored by many for its tourism potential until recently is Central Asia. Increased interest and historical studies by researchers from a variety of academic study areas of the direct trade route between China and Europe, termed the Silk Road (Airey & Shackley, 1997) has renewed its significance in global e-commerce and travel. Dating back to ancient civilizations, this region has been described as rich, interesting, and having a meaningful heritage, as well as offering a wide variety of rich cultural and heritage attractions (Kantarci, Uysal, and Magnini, 2014).

With its unique culture and natural attractions, Uzbekistan has gone to great efforts to preserve and promote its cultural legacy with many of their ancient architectural

monuments and mosques being preserved and restored. Twice the size of the UK, it has a rich cultural heritage and has a long history steeped in tradition.

Religious Tourism

In Uzbekistan there are located many unique sacred places to worship for people whose religions are Islam, Christianity and Buddhism. These resources provide opportunities for further development of religious tourism in this area (Faranda & Nolle, 2011; Kantarci, 2007; UNWTO, 2012). This country has strong Islamic roots, with more than 160 historically important Muslim sites and many related to Sutism. These include the Mausoleum of Zangiata in Tashkent and the Bakhauddin Ensemble in Bukhara.

Adventure Tourism

Ecological and adventure tourism in Uzbekistan is becoming more popular and distinct. There are eight state reserves (201.7 thousand hectares), three national parks (598.7 thousand acres), a biosphere reserve (68.7 thousand hectares), a natural wildlife breeding center (158.9 thousand hectares) and 10 natural monuments (3.7 thousand hectares). As a result, an increasing number of tour operators are now including sport, business and recreational tourism packages to diversify their tourism offerings, but it is still in the early stages of development (Baxtishodovich, et al., 2017). Airey and Shackley (1997) discussed the importance of special interest tours as far back as 1997. They mentioned that there is immense potential in developing formal trekking tourism based on the Himalayan model. In addition, they noted that some whitewater rafting and kayaking is popular on the Chatkal river, as well as bike tourism in the Tashkent area and Ferghana Valley, and rock climbing in the Fan mountains and caving in the karst areas of Boi-Bulok.

Gastronomy Tourism

Gastronomy tourism is regarded as an emerging area of academic study and as a result, very few articles have been published in the databases that pertain to Uzbekistan. Most researchers have focused on the cultural and heritage attractions of Uzbekistan (Hasanovich, 2017). However, Xidirova and Turakulov (2019) have suggested the need to promote other types of tourism such as gastronomy tourism, because they felt that tourists limit themselves with visits to only historical and architectural monuments and that they need to experience gastronomic, natural and agri-tourism.

Abdovakhidova and Yunusova (2019) stated that gastronomy is an important element of Uzbekistan's local culture and identity, which has for past centuries

absorbed local traditions and different cultures, as well as its own culinary traditions. It is also regarded as one of the most savory and tasty cuisines in Central Asia. Abdurvakhidova et al. (2019) concluded that, “Food reveals the secret of the spirit of the people and helps to understand their mentality” (p. 150). Uzbek cuisine is regarded as one of the richest in the East, and shares the culinary traditions of Turkic people across Central Asia. Their major cities are located on the trade caravan routes of the Great Silk Road, and for many centuries Uzbekistan absorbed the most interesting and unusual dishes of different countries because of the fact that these Uzbek cities attracted a large number of merchants who arrived from Asia. Dishes from other nations have infiltrated into Uzbek cuisine, and many have evolved over the years into national dishes (Patterson & Tureav, 2020 (In Press)).

The different preparation of dishes which are identical in name, dates back to the ancient times of the Great Silk Road, when the mixture of traditions, new national dishes and spices turned each of the ancient cities into separate culinary regions. Every region in the Republic of Uzbekistan has its own specialties for the cooking of national dishes. The most famous dishes are plov, manti, dolma, hasip, lamb kebebs, somsa and famous bread from the tandoor. Overall, plov (or pilaf) is considered to be the most famous dish of Uzbekistan (Xidirova et. al (2019)).

Wine Tourism

Vineyards in Uzbekistan account for approximately 127,000 hectares (wine and table grapes combined). Several varieties of grape have been introduced over the past years, which include European varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir and Riesling. The best-known winery is Khamkor vineyard located about 100 km from Tashkent and encompassing 250 hectares which grows European varieties of grapes and exports to countries such as Japan, Russia, China, and Kazakhstan (Sommeliers International, 2015). Amonovna (2019) discussed several recommendations to encourage further development of wine tourism 1) Better roads and signage which would provide better direction for visitors travelling by car to wineries; and 2) To invest in the design and additional activities at the wineries such as hot air balloons, train tours, hiking, biking, participation in the cooking workshops and exhibitions, golfing, horseback riding, photo shoots in national costumes, wedding events, conferences, and open air events.

Conclusion

It is becoming widely recognized that tourism, when built on broad stakeholder engagement and sustainable development principles, can substantially contribute to more inclusive growth through the provision of employment and economic development opportunities in both urban and rural areas. Cultural tourism accounts

for 37% of global tourism, is one of the largest and fastest growing global tourism markets, and has been used to increasingly market and promote a wide range of iconic destinations around the world. In the 21st century, cultural tourism has become a major force in the economic and urban revitalization of major cities. This is because there is a growing awareness of the public's demand to preserve culture and heritage before it disappears.

The government of the Republic of Uzbekistan is attempting to raise global awareness about their cultural and heritage attractions through their recent tourism policies, to help protect and manage and protect outdoor natural areas, and to preserve their unique architectural monuments and mosques. The location of the area in the corridors on the Great Silk Road, with cities that were the main points of trade, make their destinations attractive for foreign tourists. The fact that UNESCO has included many of the unique architectural monuments and mosques in Uzbekistan on the list of World Heritage Sites makes the region a 'must visit' for tourists who have travelled widely, and are looking for new and exotic tourism experiences.

Thus, there is no doubt that visitors who have decided to travel to Uzbekistan in recent times are mainly interested in the cultural and historical attractions and generally undertake the most popular tours provided by the local travel agencies, i.e., Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara and Kiva. However, the most recent tourism statistics show that the majority of foreign tourists only come once to Uzbekistan, and generally for only one or two tours and stay for only a short amount of time. This should be a major concern for government and local tourism providers. Kapiki and Tarikulov (2014) warned that there was no guarantee that this small tourism flow that is arriving in Uzbekistan would not exhaust itself in a short amount of time.

If the government wants tourists to come for a longer time period and to encourage repeat visitations, it must also encourage and promote other niche tourism markets such as: adventure tourism, gastronomic and wine tourism and religious tourism which seem to be among Uzbekistan's best chances along with cultural tourism to achieve some long term economic and tourism stability and growth.

Uzbekistan still has a long way to go in its promotion of the tourism industry in an attempt to improve the national economy and to create new jobs. Previously, Uzbekistan was part of the Soviet Union and was largely dependent on its agricultural sector including the growing of cotton for its survival, and as a result, the standard of living was quite low for most people. However, since Uzbekistan seceded from the Soviet Union and became a Republic in 1991, one of the first major decisions of the government (in 1992) was to establish the first national tourism company, 'Uzbektourism'. This formed the basis for the establishment of the tourism industry as a major focus to assist in improving the economy.

Since 2016, the President has been a strong supporter of tourism as a means of economic revival through a number of ambitious reforms to encourage the growth of the tourism industry. Only time will tell how successful these measures will be in opening up the Republic to become a major tourist destination for Central Asia. It is hoped that this approach will provide a model for other countries to emulate so as to help raise the standard of living and quality of life of the citizens of Uzbekistan.

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Tourism Development and Air Pollution in Caribbean SIDs: A Bootstrap Panel Granger Causality Analysis

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Abstract

This paper investigates the possibility of Granger causality between tourism development and air pollution in twelve Caribbean small island developing states (SIDs) over the period 1995-2017 in a panel-based model that both allows for the assessment of causality in countries with cross-sectional dependency and heterogeneity and avoids the problem of incorrect specification associated with conventional panel unit root and cointegration tests. The empirical results indicate bidirectional causality between tourism and air pollution for Barbados, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, St. Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago; unidirectional causality running from tourism to air pollution in Antigua and Barbuda, Cuba, and Guyana; reverse causality from air pollution to tourism in The Bahamas, British Virgin Islands and Haiti, while no causality is found for St. Kitts and Nevis. Our empirical findings provide important policy implications for the Caribbean countries being studied.

Keywords

Tourism Development, Air Pollution, Bootstrap Panel Data Granger Causality, Caribbean SIDs

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Introduction

Numerous studies point out that environmental quality is one of the most important factors influencing customers' choice of holiday destination . It also affects their travel experiences as well as their aesthetic judgement of destinations (Mutinda and Mayaka; 2012; Zhang et al., 2015; Becken et al. 2017; Hoogendoorn and Fitchett, 2018). Located between the Equator and the Tropic of Cancer, the Caribbean, with its scenic terrestrial and marine assets and favorable climate, is one of the most sought-after tourist destinations in the world . International tourist arrivals to Caribbean destinations increased from 11.4 million in 1990 to 17.1 million in 2000, and from 23.9 million in 2015 to 36.6 in 2017 (UNWTO 2018). According to statistical data from the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2018), the Caribbean has the most tourism-intensive economy (i.e. tourism represents the greatest proportion of the regional economy) among the 12 regions ranked by the WTTC. In 2017, tourism in the Caribbean represented 14% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 13% of employment (2.2 million jobs), 12% of investment and 17% of exports.

In addition to its remarkable contribution to the economy, tourism in the Caribbean also has collateral effects, especially from an environmental point of view, that are seriously compromising the quality and sustainability of the tourism product and overall economic development. Specifically, the massive influx of tourists every year, often to a relatively small area, and the associated services (facilities, attractions, transportation and accommodation) that are provided and utilized to aid in their movement, frequently cause significant environmental degradation through emitting greenhouse gases, mainly carbon dioxide (CO₂), into the environment¹. These are emissions that may reduce the future attractiveness of the tourism product in the environmental hotspots.

Although, substantial work has been done on the impacts of tourism on the environment (Scott et al., 2012), studies that have attempted to empirically analyze the impacts of air pollution on tourism, and of the causal relationship between these variables, still remain very scarce, particularly for small island developing states (SIDs). The skewed emphasis has amplified the incomplete understanding of the tourism-environmental pollution relationship. The aim of this paper is to contribute to the literature by identifying the Granger-causality between tourism development and air pollution in the Caribbean, using country specific analysis.

Arguably, the Caribbean SIDs constitute an ideal case study for the issue at hand, being the most tourism dependent and the most sought-after destination in the world. Given the economic importance of the tourism sector on the Caribbean economy,

¹ The world's tourism industry is estimated to create about 5% of total GHG emissions (1302 Mt CO₂), primarily from tourist transport (75%), accommodation (21%, mainly from air-conditioning and heating systems of all emissions) and tourist activities (3%), as these involve energy consumption mainly from burning fossil fuels (UNWTO, 2007).

a better understanding of the tourism-environmental quality nexus is vital to design sustainable tourism policies, considering that the tourism product is negatively affected by global warming and climate change.

Contrary to widely held perceptions, the Caribbean is not a homogenous group of countries. The nations within the Caribbean archipelago vary greatly in their social, political, cultural and economic performance, in the number of international tourist arrivals, in their respective tourism and environmental conservation policies, and in their resilience to shocks. This suggests that the tourism-air pollution relationships may be country-specific. Dependence among the Caribbean nations is inevitable due to current prevalence towards globalization and its accompanying trade liberalization between nations and within economic blocks. Even though there is strong dependence between the countries of the region, it is well known that each one controls its own growth trajectory. This makes it imperative to control for cross-country heterogeneity when initiating an empirical modeling strategy, in order to avoid the problem of cross-sectional dependence. With this in mind, we used, as an investigative technique, the country-specific bootstrap panel Granger causality approach proposed by Konya (2006) to untangle the dynamic and causal nexus between tourism development and air pollution in a panel of twelve Caribbean SIDs. Unlike traditional panel causality techniques, this methodology allows for simultaneous examination of cross-sectional dependence and cross-country heterogeneity, issues which have been shown to induce bias estimates².

Our study makes three unique contributions to the existing tourism literature. First, the analysis focuses on the Caribbean SIDs. Most of them have not been analyzed from this perspective before. They are all small island developing economies with very fragile ecosystems who are net importers of food, petroleum products and raw materials, and who are very open to international trade. The economies rely heavily on one or two industries: tourism in the services sector, energy-related products in the manufacturing sector, and bananas or sugar in the agricultural sector. Their growth is very susceptible to external forces including weather, changes in global commodity prices and the performance of their trade partners. Due these similarities, the data used were characterized by cross-sectional dependence, and the application of the methodology suggested by Konya (2006) made correct inference on causalities in these countries possible. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study to apply a bootstrap panel Granger causality testing approach to the relationship between tourism development and air pollution or environmental quality in the Caribbean SIDs.

2 Recent experience in economic dynamics show that shocks in a country may spillover to other countries through international trade and economic and financial integration. This situation is called cross-section dependence, and it is a basic feature among the Caribbean countries. Pesaran (2006) proved that ignoring cross-section dependency in panel analysis of countries with high degree of integration leads to substantial bias and size distortions which results in misleading inferences.

Second, and in contrast to much of the literature which ignores cross-sectional dependence and cross-country heterogeneity dynamics in their analysis, this study follows a systematic modeling strategy in untangling causal linkages between the variables under concern. We separately test for both cross-section dependence and cross-country heterogeneity using new and more robust econometric techniques which can account for these situations instead of assuming the existence of these dynamics in our panel data set. We contribute to the existing literature by jointly addressing the two concerns.

Third, this research gains additional significance in light of the growing concern about climate change and global warming and can also be seen as adding another dimension to the empirical research on the tourism-environmental quality nexus. The findings from this analysis, though representing just the tip of an iceberg, could be useful in formulating tourism policies specifically tailored to the Caribbean, thereby addressing environmental issues that are indigenous to countries in the region.

The balance of the paper is organized as follows: Section 2 provides a review of the relevant literature on the nexus of tourism development and air pollution. Section 3 discusses the methodology and data used in the analysis, while Section 4 presents the empirical results and policy implications from the empirical findings. Section 5 provides concluding remarks.

Review of the Literature

As the travel and tourism industry has grown and attained higher levels of importance over the last several decades, its engagement with economic, socio-cultural, and environmental issues has garnered more attention in public and academic circles. Accordingly, the number of theoretical and empirical studies that look into this relationship has increased. The bulk of the theoretical analyses implicate CO₂ emissions as a function of tourism activities (Pigram, 1980; Becken and Simmons, 2002; Gossling, 2002; Becken et al., 2003; Nepal, 2008; Tovar and Lockwood, 2008; Lee and Brahmašreene, 2013). Specifically, these studies argue that as the tourism sector develops it will rely increasingly on energy, mainly fossil fuels, which emits a significant amount of CO₂ emissions into the atmosphere, and thus causes climate change. However, one of the problems with these studies is that they consider the relationship between tourism and air pollution as a one-sided relationship running from tourism to air pollution, and either simply assume or refer to secondary evidence that tourism development and air pollution may in reality have a bidirectional causal relationship.

With regard to the empirical studies, it is of note that the impact of tourism on air pollution has been extensively researched for various regions and/or countries, while the impact of air pollution on tourism has been examined less extensively.

For instance, Al-Mulali et al. (2015) assessed the impact of tourist arrivals on CO₂ emissions from the transportation sector in 48 top international tourism destinations and found that tourist arrivals have a significantly positive impact on CO₂ emissions released from transportation in all regions except Europe. Similarly, Zaman et al. (2016), in a panel study of 34 developed and developing countries, confirmed the negative environmental impact associated with increase in tourism. Their finding is consistent with that of Leon et al. (2014), who examined the tourism-air pollution nexus in a panel of developed and developing countries and found a substantial positive impact of tourism on CO₂ emissions for both panels. However, the impact is more significant for the developed countries.

There have been some contradictory findings suggesting that the development of tourism may enhance environmental quality (reduce air pollution). For example, Rasekhi et al. (2016) used the panel data method to examine the environmental impacts of tourism in 55 developing and developed countries and found that the impact of tourism on environmental quality is positive for developed countries, while the effect is negative in developing countries. In contrast, Lee and Brahmašre (2013) investigated the impact of tourism expansion on CO₂ emission and economic growth in a panel of 27 European Union (EU) countries and found that expansion of tourism in the EU reduces per capita CO₂ emissions.

One shortcoming of these studies is the failure to explicitly account for cross-sectional dependency and heterogeneity that may exist in the series. As discussed earlier, inability to account for cross-sectional dependence and heterogeneity in panel data analysis can lead to spurious results and unreliable deductions and policy prescriptions. Consequently, Paramati et al. (2017), in a comparative study of 28 European Union (EU) countries, utilized a panel data analysis framework that explicitly accounts for cross-sectional dependency and heterogeneity across the countries and found that tourism growth had an adverse impact on the environment in Eastern Europe, while economic growth and CO₂ emissions stimulate tourism in Western Europe .

Following the same methods used by Paramati et. al (2017), Dogan et al. (2017) investigated the impacts of energy consumption, real GDP, tourism and trade on CO₂ emissions in OECD countries during the period 1995-2016. The results of the analysis show that tourism developments have an increasing effect on carbon emissions. Similarly, Kocak et al. (2020) examined the impact of tourism developments on CO₂ emissions in the most visited countries of the globe for the period 1995-2014 using a panel data analysis method which takes into account cross-sectional dependence. The results of the analysis show that tourism arrivals increase CO₂ emissions, while tourism receipts have a reducing effect on carbon emissions.

In addition to the aforementioned regional panel studies, examples of country specific studies include: Katircioglu (2014), who investigated the effects of tourism growth on environment pollution in Turkey and found that the former is positively correlated with energy use, which also adversely affects the climate of the country; Raza et al. (2017), who using the wavelet transform framework confirmed that tourism adversely affects the environment in the United States; Amzath and Zhao (2014), who examined the relationship between carbon emission and tourism development in the Maldives and found a significantly positive correlation between tourism development indicators and carbon emission; and Sharif et al. (2017) who found a positive long-run relationship between tourist arrivals and CO₂ emissions for Pakistan and unidirectional causality running from tourist arrivals to CO₂ emissions. Their finding is like that of Solarin (2014), who used cointegration and causality tests to examine the relationship among tourist arrivals and macroeconomic determinants of CO₂ emissions in Malaysia, and found unidirectional causality running from tourism to environmental pollution in the long run.

In their study, Ahmad et al. (2019) explored the nexus between tourism development and environmental quality for Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines and found a negative impact of tourism on environmental quality for Indonesia and the Philippines, while for Vietnam the opposite was the case with tourism improving environment quality. The authors took these findings to be an indication that the effect of tourism on the environment can differ among countries within the same region. Ahmad et al. (2018) further indicated that the impact of tourism on the environment varies across different provinces. In their work on the five western provinces of China, the authors found that tourism development has a negative effect on the environment in Ningxia, Gansu, Sanxi and Qinghai, whereas it enhances the environmental quality in Xinjiang. Likewise, investigating the link between tourism development and environment pollution, Zhang and Gao (2016) found significant differences among various regions of China. Meanwhile, Jebli et al. (2015) examined the causal relationship between real income, CO₂ emissions, and tourism in Tunisia and found that tourism increases CO₂ emissions; moreover, there exists a bidirectional causality between tourism and CO₂ emissions in the long run. This result mirrors the finding of Zaman et al. (2011) of a bidirectional causal relationship between tourism and carbon emission in Pakistan.

There is another cluster of studies which has implicitly hinted at the possibility that a bidirectional causal relationship exists between tourism development and environmental degradation. These studies show that while environmental pollution influences tourism, there are multiple segments of the tourism industry (transportation, accommodation, food services and other tourist activities) which could also have impacts on the environment (Holden, 2007; Brida and Pereyra, 2009;

Sompholkrang 2014; Fernandez et al., 2019). More recently, a number of scholars have provided empirical evidence of the double causality between tourism and environmental pollution. Ouatra and Perez-Barahona (2019), using a panel-based error-correction model, confirmed bidirectional causality running between tourist arrivals and environmental degradation for a sample of 22 Caribbean countries. Azam et al. (2018) found mixed evidence regarding impact of tourism on air pollution in Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore; the impact is positive for Malaysia but negative for the other two Southeast Asian economies. Similarly, the study by Tugcu and Topcu (2018) for a panel of ten major tourist destinations showed mixed evidence of the impact of various emissions on tourism receipts.

Overall, most of the previous studies arrived at the conclusion that, in one way or another, tourism development had an impact on environmental pollution. In addition, there is both implicit and explicit evidence that environmental pollution could impact tourism development. The lack of consensus reached by extant studies may be attributed to the differing time period examined for different countries and/or for the same country and region. It may also be attributed to variable selection, the availability, or lack of availability, of data for a specific variable or country, and statistical or econometric techniques used. Such wide-ranging results make it difficult for researchers and policymakers to generalize these results beyond the specific study area.

Methodology and Data

Empirical Methodology

Consider the standard panel data model:

$$y_{it} = \alpha_i + \varphi_i t + \beta_i' X_{it} + u_{it} \quad (1)$$

where $i = 1, 2, \dots, N$ represents the cross-section dimension, $t = 1, 2, \dots, T$ refers to the time period, X_{it} is a $(K \times 1)$ vector of explanatory variables. Parameters α_i and $\varphi_i t$ allow for country specific fixed effects and deterministic trends. β_i represents the slope coefficients which are allowed to vary across countries, and u_{it} represents the estimated residual which indicate deviations from the long-run relationship.

The choice of a statistically appropriate method for the analysis of causality for panel data requires the assessment of cross-sectional dependence, because a shock that occurs in one of the Caribbean states may affect other countries even though they differ in their socio-economic background, environmental pollution and level of international visitor arrivals. Therefore, before considering causality, we investigated the characteristics of the panel data.

The second important issue before carrying out causality tests is to find out whether the slope coefficients are treated as homogenous or heterogeneous to impose causality restrictions on the estimated parameters. If the slope homogeneity is assumed without any empirical evidences, differences of the countries included in the analysis are ignored and the estimations become inconsistent (Breitung, 2000). Moreover, Granger (2003) points out that the causality from one variable to another variable by imposing the joint restriction for whole panel is a strong null hypothesis.

Accordingly, before we conduct tests for causality, we start with testing for cross-sectional dependence, followed by slope homogeneity across countries. Then, we decide which panel causality method would be most suitable for detecting the direction of causality between tourism development and air pollution in the Caribbean. The essentials of the econometric methods employed in this study are outlined below.

Testing Cross-Sectional Dependence

We test for cross-sectional dependence using the Lagrange Multiplier (LM) test of Breusch and Pagan (1980); the Cross Dependence Lagrange Multiplier (CD_{LM}) and Cross-sectional Dependence (CD) tests of Pesaran (2004); and the bias-adjusted LM (LM_{adj}) test of Pesaran et al. (2008). For each of these tests, the null hypothesis states that “there is no cross-dependence among countries”, while the alternative hypothesis states otherwise.

Testing Slope Homogeneity

The second issue before carrying out panel causality tests is to find out whether the slope coefficients are treated as homogenous or heterogeneous. The most common approach to testing the null hypothesis of slope homogeneity ($H_0 : \beta_i = \beta_j$ for all i -against the hypothesis of heterogeneity- $H_1 : \beta_i \neq \beta_j$ for a non-zero fraction of pair-wise slopes for $i \neq j$) is to apply the \hat{S} statistics developed by Swamy (1970). Swamy’s (1970) test, however, is not applicable for all panel models data because of size restrictions. Pesaran and Yamagata (2008) improved the Swamy test and implemented the delta ($\hat{\Delta}$) homogeneity test, which is valid for large samples, and delta-adj ($\hat{\Delta}_{adj}$) homogeneity test valid for small samples.

Bootstrap Panel Granger Causality Analysis

The existence of both cross-sectional dependence and heterogeneity across country groups requires a method of analysis which would be able to accommodate both these dynamics. Konya (2006) proposed a panel Granger causality method which is based on Seemingly Unrelated Regressions (SUR) and Wald tests with county-specific bootstrap critical values. The method takes into account the characteristics of cross-

section dependence and heterogeneity across countries, and does not require pretesting for panel unit-roots and cointegration; though it still requires the specification of the lag structure. Given its superiority³, we will implement this approach in this paper.

Konya's (2006) panel causality approach by can be studied using a system which includes two sets of equations. This system can be formulated as follows:

$$\begin{cases} TA_{1,t} = \alpha_{1,1} + \sum_{i=1}^{ITA_1} \beta_{1,1,i} TA_{1,t-i} + \sum_{i=1}^{IEQ_1} \delta_{1,1,i} EQ_{1,t-i} + \varepsilon_{1,1,t} \\ TA_{2,t} = \alpha_{1,2} + \sum_{i=1}^{ITA_1} \beta_{1,2,i} TA_{2,t-i} + \sum_{i=1}^{IEQ_1} \delta_{1,2,i} EQ_{2,t-i} + \varepsilon_{1,2,t} \\ \vdots \\ TA_{N,t} = \alpha_{1,N} + \sum_{i=1}^{ITA_1} \beta_{1,N,i} TA_{N,t-i} + \sum_{i=1}^{IEQ_1} \delta_{1,N,i} EQ_{N,t-i} + \varepsilon_{1,N,t} \end{cases} \quad (2)$$

and

$$\begin{cases} EQ_{1,t} = \alpha_{2,1} + \sum_{i=1}^{ITA_2} \beta_{2,1,i} TA_{1,t-i} + \sum_{i=1}^{IEQ_2} \delta_{2,1,i} EQ_{1,t-i} + \varepsilon_{2,1,t} \\ EQ_{2,t} = \alpha_{2,2} + \sum_{i=1}^{ITA_2} \beta_{2,2,i} TA_{2,t-i} + \sum_{i=1}^{IEQ_2} \delta_{2,2,i} EQ_{2,t-i} + \varepsilon_{2,2,t} \\ \vdots \\ EQ_{N,t} = \alpha_{2,N} + \sum_{i=1}^{ITA_2} \beta_{2,N,i} TA_{N,t-i} + \sum_{i=1}^{IEQ_2} \delta_{2,N,i} EQ_{N,t-i} + \varepsilon_{2,N,t} \end{cases} \quad (3)$$

where TA_{it} denotes tourism development; EQ_{it} denotes air pollution; α represents constant terms and β and δ are coefficients; N denotes the number of countries in the panel ($i=1,2,\dots,N$); t is t time period($t=1,\dots,T$); and ITA_{1i} , IEQ_{1i} , ITA_{2i} , and IEQ_{2i} indicate the lag lengths. The error terms $\varepsilon_{1,i,t}$ and $\varepsilon_{2,i,t}$ are supposed to be white-noises and may be correlated with each other for a given country, but not across countries.

The system (Equations 2 and 3) is estimated by the (SUR) seemingly unrelated regressions procedure, since possible links may exist among individual regressions via contemporaneous correlation within the system of equations. Wald tests for Granger causality are performed with country specific bootstrap critical values generated by

3 There are several advantages of Konya's (2006) proposal. First, in this approach, the panel is assumed heterogeneous. Therefore, the Granger causality test can be performed for each country separately and as such allows the determination of how many and for which countries in the panel there exists one-way Granger-causality, two-way Granger-causality, or no Granger-causality. Second, because contemporaneous correlation is allowed across countries, it is possible to leverage the extra information provided by the panel data and generate country-specific bootstrap critical values. Third, the procedure does not require pretesting for panel unit-roots or cointegration; therefore, the pretest biases and size distortion problems are avoided. This is an important feature since it has been widely acknowledged that standard unit root and cointegration tests can have low power against stationary alternatives, and different tests often lead to contradictory outcomes.

simulations⁴. In this framework, for country i : (1) unidirectional Granger causality would run from EQ to TA if not all $\hat{\partial}_{1,j,i}S$ are zero, but all $\hat{\beta}_{2,j,i}S$ are zero; (2) unidirectional Granger causality would run from TA to EQ if all $\hat{\partial}_{1,j,i}S$ are zero, but not all $\hat{\beta}_{2,j,i}S$ are zero; (3) two-way Granger causality would exist between EQ and TA if neither $\hat{\partial}_{1,j,i}S$ nor $\hat{\beta}_{2,j,i}S$ are zero; and (4) no causality would exist between TA and EQ if all $\hat{\partial}_{1,j,i}S$ and $\hat{\beta}_{2,j,i}S$ are zero.

Since results from the causality test may be sensitive to the lag structure, determining optimal lag length(s) before proceeding with the estimation is crucial for robustness of findings. Following Konya (2006), we allow the optimal lag length to be the same across equations but to vary across variables. Assuming that the number of lags ranges from 1 to 4, we estimated all equations and used the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) and Schwartz Criterion (SC) to determine the optimal lag structure.

Data

The analysis of causal relationship between tourism development and air pollution based on annual panel data was carried out over the period 1995-2017 for twelve Caribbean countries: Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, and British Virgin Islands. The choice of the period and of the countries for the analysis was governed by data availability to ensure a balanced panel structure.

In the literature, there are essentially two measures of tourism developments: tourism receipts or expenditures and tourist arrivals and overnight stays (Gricar and Bojnec, 2019). The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) also focuses on these two indicators to measure tourism developments. An inherent problem with using tourism receipts or expenditures as a measure of tourism developments is the lack of reliable data on tourist receipts/expenditures. In addition, the data on tourism receipts/expenditures may not be reliable because they are generated from bank records of foreign exchange transactions, and/or sporadic survey of tourists and tourism establishments. These data generating processes are prone to sampling, non-response, and measurement errors. In contrast, data on tourist arrivals are well documented through the compulsory completion of disembarkation cards. Given these facts, in order to avoid erroneous inferences, we represent tourism developments (TA) through international tourist arrivals (international visitors that stay overnight) because such data are available with long, consistent series for the Caribbean countries under study.

As we discussed earlier, the use of energy in tourism-related activities (transportation, accommodation, facilities, shopping activities and attractions) leads

4 For details and explanation of the estimation and testing procedures, see Konya (2006) and Tekin (2012).

to a significant amount of greenhouse gases emissions into the environment, mainly carbon dioxide (CO₂) (Lenzen et al., 2018). Consequently, following the literature, CO₂ emissions (per capita in metric tons) are used as a proxy variable for air pollution (EQ). The CO₂ includes carbon emissions stemming from the burning of fossil fuels and the manufacture of cement. They also include carbon emissions produced during consumption of solid, liquid and gas fuels and gas flaring.

Data on international tourist arrivals are from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2018) and the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) website at www.onecaribbean.org. Data on CO₂ emissions come from the World Development Indicators database of the World Bank (2017). However, the World Bank contains data for CO₂ emissions only until 2013. Therefore, this variable has been supplemented by data from the EDGAR- Emissions Database for Global Atmospheric Research website: <https://edgar.jrc.ec.europa.eu/overview.php?v=booklet2019> for the years 2014-2017.

Empirical Results

Cross-sectional dependence and Slope homogeneity

As outlined earlier, before implementing the Granger causality procedure, we conducted cross-sectional dependence and slope homogeneity tests. Table 1 shows the results of these tests. According to the statistics of the LM_{BP}, CD_{LM}, CD and LM_{adj} tests, there is cross-section dependence among the countries at the 1% significance level. This means that any tourism or air pollution shock in one of the Caribbean countries affects the other countries too.

Table 1
Cross-sectional Dependence and Slope Homogeneity Tests.

Variables	Cross-sectional Dependency tests				Slope Homogeneity tests	
	LM _{BP}	CD _{LM}	CD	LM _{adj}	$\hat{\Delta}$	$\hat{\Delta}_{adj}$
<i>TA</i>	406.584*** (0.000)	29.644*** (0.000)	3.289*** (0.000)	29.371*** (0.000)	12.865*** (0.000)	17.292*** (0.000)
<i>EQ</i>	470.398*** (0.000)	35.198*** (0.000)	7.467*** (0.000)	34.925*** (0.000)	13.871*** (0.000)	19.425*** (0.000)

Note: The probability values are in parentheses. *** indicates significance at the 1% level.

The statistics of the $\hat{\Delta}$ and $\hat{\Delta}_{adj}$ tests show that there is heterogeneity at a 1% significance level. This suggests that each of these countries retains their own unique characteristics, therefore the direction of causality between tourism development and environmental quality may differ across the twelve countries.

Causality

Both the cross-sectional dependence and the slope heterogeneity tests provide evidence for the suitability of the Konya (2006) bootstrap panel Granger causality approach for examining the relationship between tourism development and air pollution in the Caribbean countries.

Table 2 shows the Granger causality relationships between tourism development and air pollution. The TSP routine written by Laszlo Konya was used to obtain these causality results. We are grateful to Laszlo Konya for sharing his codes.

Table 2
Results of Konya Bootstrap Panel Granger Causality Test

Countries	Ho: TA does not Granger cause EQ (H ₁ : TA causes EQ)					Ho: EQ does not Granger cause TA (H ₁ : EQ causes TA)				
	Coefficient	Wald Statistic	Bootstrap critical value			Coefficient	Wald Statistic	Bootstrap critical value		
			10%	5%	1%			10%	5%	1%
Antigua & Barbuda	0.035	12.915*	10.761	15.835	32.879	-0.029	3.865	9.873	14.264	29.873
The Bahamas	0.077	7.917	10.715	15.900	33.672	-0.085	12.001*	10.002	15.332	33.977
Barbados	0.081	24.267**	9.084	15.686	29.053	-0.062	17.004**	10.101	16.708	31.233
Cuba	0.072	15.667**	10.908	15.319	34.590	-0.058	4.003	10.077	16.118	31.267
Dominican Republic	0.114	14.514*	10.640	16.751	34.339	-0.078	11.410*	10.483	16.552	32.213
Guyana	0.101	14.011**	8.086	11.302	24.979	-0.049	3.002	9.837	11.677	25.295
Haiti	0.102	2.966	8.187	11.702	28.835	-0.044	11.967**	7.805	11.895	27.114
Jamaica	0.102	31.277**	15.887	23.977	47.529	-0.068	19.809*	16.010	24.969	45.295
St. Kitts & Nevis	0.052	3.928	8.856	13.331	24.626	0.049	4.745	9.414	16.839	28.127
St. Lucia	0.206	17.944*	13.744	20.957	39.197	-0.121	18.401**	10.942	17.450	36.196
Trinidad & Tobago	0.342	59.732***	9.728	15.266	38.378	-0.176	27.636**	12.716	22.654	41.971
British Virgin Island	0.198	13.622*	9.715	15.977	29.115	-0.040	3.399	12.044	16.076	37.720

Note: ***, **, and * indicate significance at 1, 5, and 10% significance levels, respectively. Bootstrap critical values are based on 10,000 replications.

According to Table 2, there is a bidirectional Granger-causality between TA and EQ in Barbados, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, St. Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago; a one-way Granger causality running from TA to EQ in Antigua and Barbuda, British Virgin Islands, Cuba, and Guyana; a reverse relationship running from EQ to TA was found for The Bahamas and Haiti. For St. Kitts and Nevis, no causal relationship running between TA and EQ was found to exist.

The presence of Granger causality between TA and EQ should not be interpreted off-hand as EQ contributes positively to TA, and vice versa (Konya 2006, p. 991). Hence, determining the signs of the regression coefficients involved in the causality tests is also critical since the null hypothesis [Ho: EQ does not Granger cause TA]

implies positive effects where increases in **EQ** lead to increases in **TA**, and [Ho: **TA** does not Granger cause **EQ**] increases in **TA** lead to increases in **EQ**. Hence, in Equation (2) the sign on the $\hat{\partial}_{1,i,i}$ parameters is expected to be negative ($i=1, 2, \dots, N$), and in Equation (3) the sign on $\beta_{2,j,i}$ is expected to be positive. As can be seen from Table 2, the coefficient of the **EQ** variable is negative for all countries with the exception of St. Kitts and Nevis suggesting that for all the countries except St. Kitts/Nevis, increased environmental degradation (carbon emissions) negatively affects tourism⁵. The coefficient on the **TA** variable is positive for all the countries suggesting that increased tourist arrivals increase the level air pollution (CO₂ emissions) in these countries.

Policy Implications

The interrelationships between tourism development, the underlying economy and the natural environment have been important interest areas for researchers during the last two decades. In this context, this study examines the causal nexus of tourism development and air pollution (environmental quality) in a panel of twelve Caribbean SIDs in the period 1995-2017 using Konya's (2006) bootstrap panel Granger causality test technique which accounts for dependency and heterogeneity across countries. The results of the causality analysis show that the existence and direction of Granger causality differ among the different countries under study. In order to have a clear picture, the different causality results for **TA** and **EQ** are shown in Table 3. Each of these results has important policy implications and recommendations.

Table 3

Summary for the directions of causality between TA and EQ

Country	$TA \rightleftharpoons EQ$	$TA \rightarrow EQ$	$EQ \rightarrow TA$	$TA \neq EQ$
Antigua and Barbuda		X		
The Bahamas			X	
Barbados	X			
Cuba		X		
Dominican Republic	X			
Guyana		X		
Haiti			X	
Jamaica	X			
St. Kitts and Nevis				X
St. Lucia	X			
Trinidad and Tobago	X			
British Virgin Island		X		

For Barbados, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, St. Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago, a bidirectional Granger causality was found to exist between **TA** and **EQ**. This suggests that tourism development and air pollution have predictive power over one

5 The sign of the causal effect is derived from the sum of the coefficients of the variable considered as independent in a specific equation. So, in our case, the sign is based on the sum of the coefficients of the maximum number of lags of the causal variable.

another in this group of five countries. Specifically, the enhancement of tourism appears to play a role in the environmental pollution of these countries, and vice versa. From a policy standpoint, policies directed at tourism enhancement in these countries increase CO₂ emissions which may, in turn, hamper tourism. Alternatively, policies that focus on utilizing resources efficiently and on improving the environment quality would also enhance tourism. This result underscores the importance of balancing tourism and environmental conservation policies in the tourism-dependent and environmentally sensitive tourist destinations. These findings of bidirectional causality relationship between tourism and CO₂ emissions are similar to the studies by Akadiri et al. (2018) for 16 small island developing countries, Ouattra and Perez-Barahona (2019) for selected Caribbean countries, and Kocak et al. (2020) for the most visited countries across the globe.

In the case of Antigua and Barbuda, British Virgin Islands, Cuba, and Guyana, we found one-way Granger causality running from TA to EQ with no feedback. This means that increases or decreases in international tourist arrivals have a major influence on the environmental quality, particularly in this group of three countries. The unidirectional causality may also imply that the level of per capita CO₂ emissions is not enough to deter tourists from coming to these countries. These findings are consistent with those of Katircioglu (2014) for Turkey, Solarin (2014) for Malaysia, and Paramati et al. (2016) for Western EU countries.

Regarding The Bahamas and Haiti, we found unidirectional causality running from EQ to TA, with no feedback. This means that developments in the tourism sector are influenced by environmental quality but the increase in tourist arrivals does not necessarily increase environmental degradation. This finding is similar to Bubb's (2017) who concludes "that while the natural environment may be an important factor in attracting tourists, there are other sources of environmental degradation that may be more significant than those caused by tourists. One of these may be degradation caused by natural disasters like hurricanes, storm surges and rising global temperatures, all of which are related to climate change."

The policy implication is that environmental conservation policies adopted by the policymakers may be feasible without compromising the number of tourists visiting these countries and hence, their economic growth. The local government and other tourism industry stakeholders therefore need to be very deliberate about using resources efficiently to improve the quality of the environment, because the positive effects of improved environmental quality will transmit to the tourism product. The UNWTO estimates that the transportation and accommodation sectors in tourism contribute 75% and 21% respectively to all tourism emissions. To alleviate environmental pollution throughout the tourism value chain, the

local government and tourism industry stakeholders could adopt a green tourism agenda that discourages consumption of fossil fuels, promotes socially aware and environmentally responsible practices in service and management, and encourages tourists to behave in environmentally friendly ways.

In St. Kitts and Nevis, no evidence of Granger causality running in any direction between **TA** and **EQ** was found to exist. This suggests that the two variables are independent of one another. Since there is no causal relationship between **TA** and **EQ**, increases in tourist arrivals may not affect environmental quality and environmental quality does not affect tourism development. The lack of a causal relationship between **TA** and **EQ** may reflect the fact that while there are steadily increasing levels of CO₂ emissions with tourist arrivals in St. Kitts and Nevi, the levels of emissions are still relatively low in per capita terms to have a significant impact on the tourism industry. However, while St. Kitts and Nevis does not seem to need to reduce tourism activities in order to improve environmental quality, or improve environmental quality in order to enhance tourism, lack of well-planned and executed environmentally-sensitive sustainable tourism policies could prove detrimental to the industry in the long-run.

Conclusion

In this paper we have studied the possibility of Granger causality between tourism and environmental quality in twelve Caribbean SIDs over the period 1995-2017 in a panel-based model that both allows for the assessment of causality in countries with cross-sectional dependency and heterogeneity, and avoids the problem of incorrect specification associated with conventional panel unit root and cointegration tests. Applying this model, we found strong evidence of dependency and heterogeneity across the countries, implying that each country sustains its environmental conservation and tourism policies, each Caribbean country is a special case, thus, an overall “umbrella” policy recommendation would not be appropriate.

The future of Caribbean tourism is inextricably linked to the quality of the natural environment, and the economic viability and competitiveness of the Caribbean tourism industry can only be sustained if the quality of these resources is maintained (Dixon et al., 2001). Consequently, the tourism industry stakeholders and policymakers in charge of environmental policies should make a concerted effort to harmonize tourism policies with national environmental conservation policies in the transition towards a sustainable tourism sector. This would maximize the potential of the tourism industry in creating green jobs that would contribute to preserving and enhancing the environment and maximizing economic growth and competitiveness.

Future researchers could focus on investigating the relationship between tourism and environmental pollution for other SIDs in the Caribbean region, and elsewhere

around the world, as the data becomes available. These studies could be particularly useful in keeping track of the varying impacts of environmental policies of any given country on the tourism industry. Furthermore, given heightened concerns about global environmental changes and about tourism and the carbon-footprint of global tourism, an active and ongoing research is crucial not only for furthering green tourism in the environmental hotspots, but also for striking the right balance between tourism development, environmental sustainability and economic sustainability.

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How Effective are the COVID-19 Fiscal-Support and Restarting-Tourism Policies Taken by the Top 3 European Destinations?

Jonathan Gomez Punzon¹ , Ricardo Pastor² 

Abstract

We are facing a most unexpected situation in the travel & tourism industry. In this research, we want to check from an empirical perspective, the suitability and perspectives of different policies implemented among different governments, private companies, and stakeholders, who are thinking about useful policies to strengthen destinations. Countries all over the world have adopted a wide range of economic and social measures to respond to the crisis, in many cases supported by international and regional institutions. A closer look at some concrete measures adopted across the top-3-European-destinations, Spain, Italy, and France, (World Tourism Organization, 2020), will demonstrate the achieved effectiveness, and the suitability to be implemented and replicated in more territories.

Keywords

Destination management, COVID-19, Resilience, DMOs, Tourism planning

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Crisis Recovery Strategies Taken in The Tourism Industry

Among the different measures taken to boost tourism recovery, based on economic growth or sustainability decisions (Hall, Scott and Gössling, 2020). The main policies followed the path of cross-cutting fiscal and monetary decisions to reduce the abrupt impact of this pandemic. Countries are gradually embracing tourism specific policies as well as measures to reopen and boost this sector. As an introductory issue, it is assumed worldwide that there are differences among the concepts of crises and disasters (Reddy, Boyd and Nica, 2020). There are many kinds of crises which happened in the past, hitting the tourism industry as a whole. Several researchers introduced strategies and theoretical assumptions to boost recovery from tourism crises, for example those related with terrorist attacks (Avraham, 2020; Yozcu and Cetin, 2019). Another significant driver of tourism crisis has always been financial issues. Taking into consideration that many European destinations depend on travel & tourism activities, the present financial crisis has deeply affected their economies. This consequence is heightened by the adoption of austerity policies to boost economic recovery (Pappas and Apostolakis, 2020). Unfortunately, in this research, the measures taken did not have the expected results.

It is clear that many different crises affected to the tourism industry in the last years, for example financial crisis, natural disaster crisis, terrorist attacks, etc. These crises usually affect more to those countries where tourism is a major contributor to their economies, as the three countries analyzed in this paper.

By far the most frequent measures approved by countries are post-crisis recovery policies, (Mair, Ritchie and Walters, 2014), including economy-wide incentive packages that focus on tourism, since it is probably the most clearly affected. The fiscal policies cover exemptions or postponements of VAT and corporate income tax, and economic assistance, seeking to relieve the current effects of the pandemic.

Furthermore, governments are moving forward with proposals to restart travel & tourism and encourage tourists to travel, (UNWTO, 2020). The creation of health and sanitary protocols, certifications and labels are a trend to try to deliver confidence within the sector. Some economic policies to support tourism are the exemption or rescheduling of taxes and tourism related fees, launching loan schemes, or financing programmes.

Empirical Policies Taken on Fiscal-Support and Restarting-Tourism in the Top 3 Tourism Destinations In Europe

In order to identify the measures taken by these countries, research was conducted using official tourism sources from both the public and private sector in the travel & tourism industry to identify the main measures included in this document.

These measures are included in tourism national recovery plans drafted by national governments in collaboration with the private sector between April and July 2020. Nearly 170 countries have registered specific procedures to alleviate the consequences of the crisis and speed up recovery.

Among these, almost 150 nations have implemented economic and financial strategies, followed by guidelines to support the tourism employment, proving that fiscal and monetary policies are frequently being adopted as measures for restarting tourism, (UNWTO, 2020). We will have a look at the top 3 tourism countries in Europe (Table 1). The consequences of the policy implementations are considered as positive, negative, and limited.

Concerning this last classification, it referred to the limited effects of some fiscal measures taken, due to time limitations, amount-fund limitation or similar, which can be combined with a positive or negative effect, but taking into consideration that limitations arise when applying these measures.

Regarding the mentioned fiscal policies, we will evaluate the policy responses implemented in three countries and examine their empirical results and the potential to apply these policies to other tourism destinations.

Postponement, exemption, and decrease (up to 50%) of tourism related taxes to enterprises in the travel, hospitality, and other tourism activities such as fees or charges.

France: From May 2020, the French government applied an exemption of tourism taxes to both tourists and tourism companies. The exemption will continue until December (Gouvernement de la République française, 2020)

Italy: The ‘Decreto Agosto’ is the third modification of the national budget (from March) including a guarantee fund to cover the exemption of VAT taxes to be paid by Italian tourism companies (Governo Italiano. Ministero dell’Economia e delle Finanze, 2020).

Spain: 271M€ was budgeted to cover the exemption of tourism companies, and 100.000M€ in financial guarantees to support the industry (Plan de Impulso del Sector Turístico, 2020).

Results: France exemptions contributed to thousands of tourism businesses remaining open, (Les Entreprises du Voyage, 2020) unlike Italy or Spain. Italy is facing the closing of thousands of tourism companies, (Federazione Italiana Associazioni Imprese Viaggi E Turismo, 2020) and in Spain one out of three travel agencies are still closed (CEAV - Confederación Española de Agencias de Viajes,

2020). They all argue that exemptions are extremely limited in time and amount. This leads us to comment that the application of these measures will not guarantee long-term protection in different destinations.

Reduction on services expenses for businesses.

France: Within the supporting plan for the tourism industry, a (25/50%) discount was established for utility expenses such as water service, gas, (Gouvernement de la République française, 2020). The Spanish, (Gobierno de España. Boletín Oficial del Estado, 2019; Gobierno de España, 2020), and Italian Government, (Governo Italiano, Ministero dell'Economia e delle Finanze, 2020) approved a reduction on payment fees the same as in France (from 10 to 30%).

Results: Tourism companies from these countries reported that these policies have been particularly useful during the confinement period of the past months, helping companies to reduce their fixed costs, which was their main issue. Thus, this is a measure that can be recommended with good results for replication in other countries.

Cash flow support and aid to travel agencies.

France: Travel agencies (SMEs) with defined aggregated annual turnover and employing workers, can receive cash flow funds, based on tax returns and turnover (Gouvernement de la République française, 2020).

Italy: Permanent assistance to travel agencies which remain opened offering services to national and international tourists (Governo Italiano, Ministero dell'Economia e delle Finanze, 2020).

Spain: Travel agencies that do not have a special dedicated paragraph within the Plan de Impulso del Sector Turístico, but are included in the recovery funds for Spanish national tourism operators, accommodation, and travel agencies (CEAV - Confederación Española de Agencias de Viajes, 2020).

Results: Travel agencies, lobbies, and associations from these countries reported that this was not effective, because although they had cash flow issues, they did not want to borrow public money by requesting cash-flow public loans, in order to face more debt. Thus, this measure is not a guarantee of success if applied in other countries.

Vouchers (instead of refunds) for journeys and travel packages cancelled due to COVID-19 lockdown.

France: Combined travel packages and air tickets departing from France must be refunded through travel vouchers when tourists request it (Gouvernement de la République française, 2020).

Italy: The government approved holiday and restaurant vouchers for tourists, and a partial-salary of 600€ voucher for travel & tourism unemployed professionals due to the COVID-19 lockdown. Travel packages that were suitable to be refunded according to the travel agency regulations (Ministerio dell'Economia e delle Finanze, 2020).

Spain: Vouchers allowed only by tour-operators from travel agencies for trips booked to travel during COVID-19 lockdown period (CEAV - Confederación Española de Agencias de Viajes, 2020).

Results: Tourist vouchers (to encourage tourists to travel again) and travel agency refund vouchers (to encourage tourists to change dates of booked trips) did not seem to be a guarantee of success, since tourists, no matter if they already booked their trip months ago or were being encouraged to travel now through free-money vouchers, still do not feel safe to travel due to the current regrowth of COVID-19 in some countries. Perspectives are not positive for this measure to be replicated since the problem is rooted in the traveler's confidence, no matter how many vouchers or discounts were used to motivate travel.

Health and security rules, accreditations, and labels in tourism businesses (accommodation, restaurants, spa, and wellness centres, etc.).

France: National protocols on health, safety, and hygiene have been developed (Gouvernement de la République Française, 2020), compiled, and managed by one institution.

Italy: Creation of a certificate and protocol 'Viaggiare Securi' to give response to all travelers in Italy (Governo Italiano. Ministero della salute, 2020).

Spain: Spain launched not only protocols, but also a national certification/label for tourism companies (accommodation, travel agencies, transports, etc.) (Plan de Impulso del Sector Turístico, 2020).

Results: France achieved unification of the different certifications/labels proposals received from all around the country, and even created a new department to manage the different national requests and protocols, becoming a complete success (Les Entreprises du Voyage, 2020). In the case of Italy, tourism companies did not report any positive nor negative impact on the implementation of certificates/labels, and in the case of Spain, it became a scandal since the institutional covid-safe certificate for tourism companies and destinations was issued to fake tourism companies without control (El Confidencial, 2020, July 14) and Spanish tourism companies rejected being granted the government label/certificate, developing their own protocols based on trusted safety and security companies, (Bureau Veritas, 2020). To guarantee positive results when implementing this kind of certification in other destinations,

would depend on the credibility and professionalism of the institutional teams in charge to manage these initiatives and the accurate management of the conditions requested to receive certifications.

Establishment of safety corridors between countries to reopen international tourism.

Ministers of nine European countries, including France, Italy, Greece, and Spain, created safe corridors within European regions to guarantee safety when travelling in these regions (European Union Commission, 2020).

Results: The implementation of this decision was a complete success within the three researched destinations. Spain received a group of 10,000 tourists from different German regions, (Hosteltur.com, 2020, June 12). Italy introduced travel corridor exemptions with the United Kingdom without isolation from/to travelers, (The Telegraph, 2020), and France avoided quarantine measures being accepted in the safe travel corridors, (Government of United Kingdom, 2020). Travel corridors became a success story because both destinations (where tourists came from, and where tourists traveled to) are aligned to control any COVID-19 positive infection brought by any tourist.

Conclusions

As analyzed in this research, there are different economical and restart-tourism policies already implemented by governments to try and alleviate the effects of COVID-19 within tourism destinations, but not all of them were successful in the mentioned countries as we showed in this document. The different solutions for tourism hitting crisis are as wide as the ideas that policy makers would be able to draft. Therefore, the perspectives of success when replicating these measures in other destinations are not guaranteed, since the economic scenarios are quite different depending on the economic characteristics of the destinations and their crisis response ratio. These measures represent an interesting starting point to develop more useful responses and measures, since it is quite feasible than these European tourism destinations will suffer a second virus wave, devastating the industry expectations from autumn 2020 to late spring 2021. There are lot of factors which are reducing the positive effects of these strategies, but most of them are rooted in the lack of coordination and knowledge of the tourism industry necessities from the public administrations side. The negative effects of the analyzed measures could have been avoided if the public-private coordination had been led by the private companies, tourism associations, and lobbies. This is a global issue affecting many different countries around the world, and public governments should prioritize the tourism industry as a whole showing more dedication to their issues, avoiding improvisation

since there is already a big amount of proven positive -direct and indirect- effects of this industry in the territories. Tourism recovery is a key factor for many countries success, and the measures and policies that are taken around the world. However, we cannot forget that executing this kind of action becomes just a starting point to face the current negative effects of this sanitary crisis, which are global, thus countries must adopt the most suitable tourism and coordinated policies which would help lead to a strong long-term recovery.

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Determinants of Eatery Choice

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Abstract

Improving and enhancing the overall health status of people through food and nutrition is the desire of stakeholders and practitioners in the health sector as health is very important in people's lives. Eateries or restaurants are an imperative part of the food industry; as such, what and where we eat have an impact on our health. This study investigated Psychological, Socio-economic, and Health-related factors as determinants of eatery choice among non-teaching workers in Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo state, Nigeria (AAUA). Descriptive research design was adopted for this research. Five hundred (500) non-teaching workers of AAUA were selected through multistage sampling procedures as respondents. A self structured and verified questionnaire was used to gather data and information. Furthermore, the analysis of data and information was done using multiple regressions at 0.05 alpha levels. Findings revealed that Psychological, Socio-economic and Health-related factors were independently significant to the choice of eatery at 0.00, which is less than 0.05 alpha level (<0.05), and the joint contribution of both Psychological, Socio-economic and Health-related factors were significant to the choice of eatery among the research population at 0.00, which is less than 0.05 alpha level (<0.05). It was concluded that Psychological, Socio-economic, and Health-related factors independently and jointly determined the choice of eatery among non-teaching staff of AAUA.

Keywords

Psychological, Socio-economic, Health-related, Eatery, Choice, Food

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Introduction

Eating away from the house is now becoming people's day-to-day activities due to the changes in the disposition of the mind towards food and the substantial increase in salaries, coupled with hectic lifestyles, job demands and so on. According to Rebecca (2015), an eatery or a restaurant is a specified location where the business of selling and buying of foods and drinks takes place. An eatery operates in different dimensions. Firstly, foods and drinks can be bought by customers and consumed at the eatery location, while the ordering of foods and drinks can also happen where they are delivered to customers in their respective homes. Importantly, over the past decades, there have been drastic changes in the way foods are consumed in Nigerian homes because the country is witnessing a dramatic increase in the number of food restaurants (Adebusola, 2014). Notably, a restaurant offers individuals the appropriate location to dine-in when eating outside (Walker, 2019). In service and production industry, numerous factors determine customer choices of particular goods or services. In the case of eatery or restaurant choice, these may include psychological, socio-economic, and health-related factors.

Psychological factors, such as perception, beliefs, and stress, are intrinsic factors that influences the choice of eatery. Perception is defined as a process through which individuals are exposed to information, attend to the information, and comprehend the information (Mowen, 2019). A belief is a descriptive thought that a person holds about something (Kotler, 1999). Furthermore, beliefs may be based on real knowledge, opinion, or faith. The influence of stress on food choice is complex because of the various types of stress one can experience during daily activities. Although, the level of stress that is exerted on food consumption is dependent on the person, stress factors, and situations because the level and quantity of food consumption by individuals varies when under stress (Oliver & Wardle 1999). The level of Social class, or Socio-economic status, is a multifaceted factor that has a big influence on customers' choices when going for particular services in developing countries; such factors include job, level of education, sources of money, money at hand, and so on (Reid, 2018; Kotler, 1999). Interestingly, socio-economic status is of great importance to marketers around the world because individuals in the same category of socio-economic status usually have similar characteristics when it comes to buying and purchasing behaviour in areas of travels, free time activities (leisure), and foods. Reference groups (primary and secondary), or peer influence, also have impacts on the behaviour of consumers when it comes to buying and purchasing of goods and services. For instance, a primary reference group is the category of people one has daily contact with; examples are close relatives, associates, colleagues, and workmates. On the other hand, a Secondary group constitutes the category of people one has only official activities with on an irregular basis; examples are faith groups, work organizations, and business groups.

Importantly, the aforementioned groups affect an individual's purchasing behaviour in one way or the other (Kotler, 1999). Health-related variables are different health factors put together that affect the health status of an individual when making choices of a restaurant to dine-in. Health factors are important in restaurant choice because people nowadays are very careful and cognisance of where they eat and what they eat. For example, People would want to eat food that is especially beneficial to their health. The majority of researches pertaining to eatery choice are identifications of specific factors by customers (Bojanic, 2007). For instance, a research in Turkey among university workers revealed that overall hygienic indices of the environment and staff are the major determinants of eatery choice (Ali & Nath, 2017; Aksoydan, 2007). Food quality is another factor influencing consumers' restaurant selection choices (Soriano, 2002). Although a lot of factors have been analyzed by researchers to ascertain why customers prefer a particular eatery to another, little effort has been made to group those factors; hence, this particular research investigated Psychological, Socio-economic, and Health-related factors as determinates of eatery choice among Non-teaching workers of AAUA.

Literature Review

Psychological Factors (Perception, Beliefs and Stress)

Perception and Eatery Choice

Perception could be explained as the identification, organization, and interpretation of sensory information to give coherent meanings to an individual's thoughts so as to arrive at a specific decision (Mowen, 2019; Rice, 2019). Perception is what consumers view an experience to be after the purchase of goods or after a service is rendered. After the purchase of goods and rendered services, customers view experiences differently although perception leads to the development of attitude, which could be negative or positive attitude. For instances, after dining in a restaurant, some consumers might see the meal is pleasing to taste and palatable, while others might not see it as delicious. In this sense, perception and attitude (positive or negative) have been developed towards the experiences from the restaurant (Reid, 2018). According to Kotler, Bowen and Makens (2019), an individual develops diverse perceptions to similar experiences received due to different mechanisms called selective distortion, selective retention, and selective exposure. On a daily basis, people have different experiences as regards services obtained; as such, it is not possible to have a valid retention of all the services experienced. Hence, service experiences must be worthy and worthwhile before an individual develops a strong perception and positive attitude.

Beliefs and Eatery Choice

Learning describes changes in a person's behaviour arising from experience. When consumers experience a product, they learn about it. Food service businesses should help consumers learn about the quality of their facilities, services, and products. Based on their experiences and what they have learned, customers will either be satisfied or dissatisfied with the food service establishment (Kotler, Bowen & Makens, 2019). Through learning, people acquire beliefs. A belief is a descriptive thought that a person holds about something (Kotler, Bowen & Makens, 2019). Furthermore, beliefs may be based on real knowledge, opinion, or faith; they may or may not carry an emotional charge. Also, beliefs reinforce product or brand images, and people act on beliefs. Unfounded beliefs deter purchases and can severely affect food service businesses. There have been limited studies and researches pertaining to customer's belief and attitudes towards safety of food and nutrition over the years. Having good knowledge of an individual's beliefs and perception towards nutrition and food would assist in giving informed decisions and advice on choices of healthy eating at larger settings. This would also help restaurant owners in the planning and management of their food business (Gibney, 2016).

Stress and Eatery Choice

With technological advancement globally, stress is inevitable in daily activities. Stress is a daily modifier of behaviours which have a great impact on health. Stress affects daily lifestyle choices such as exercises, psychoactive use (alcohol consumption and smoking), and, importantly, choices of food. The outcome of stress on choices of food and food consumption is dependent on situations, stressors, and individuals. For instance, the rate and quantity of food consumption differs among people when under stress (Oliver & Wardle, 1999). There are multifaceted mechanisms of (motivational differences, physiological indices and practical changes) the impact of stress on individuals in regards to the selection of restaurants and food. Findings from empirical researches have revealed that consistent and protracted working stress could lead to dietary variations, which are a major predisposing factor for obesity, heart diseases, and diabetes (Wardle, 2000).

Socio-Economic Factors (Price Of Food, Service Quality and Peer Influence)

Price of Food and Eatery Choice

Restaurant patrons put the prices of the services they get in high consideration when eating in a restaurant. For instance, if the services gotten are lower than the money paid, there might be a negative perception of the restaurant (Mill, 2017). Furthermore, restaurant consumers use price as a measure for the quality of the

restaurant, assuming that an expensive restaurant serves better food and offers better quality (Muller & Woods, 1994). Similarly, Sweeny, Johnson, and Armstrong (1992) commented that a low price may increase the probability of choosing a particular restaurant while a low price may also decrease consumer perceptions of restaurant quality. Marney (2001) argued that customer perceived value is sometimes a better predictor of a customer's behaviour or market outcomes than a customer's satisfaction. In a study on the influence of discounts in the mature market of American restaurants, Moschis, Curasi, and Bellenger (2003) found that discounts were highly ranked as an attribute in this market but advised against giving discounts to elderly customers because business enterprises that give discounts to a group of people, especially the elderly patrons, do not usually have an upper hand over other restaurants. Instead of reduction on prices, it was advised that value added gifts should be offered to customers (Moschis, Curasi & Bellenger, 2003).

Service Quality and Eatery Choice

The quality of services rendered to customers is one concept that has been massively researched into globally (Fisk, Brown & Bitner, 1993). For instance, service quality entails the tangible and intangible indices which give restaurant patrons the maximum satisfaction after visiting a restaurant (Stevens, Knutson & Patton, 1995; Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988). However, in fast food restaurants, service quality is seen by customers basically on the intangible indices. Hence, human indices, such as worker behaviour was significant to patrons when the restaurant environment was seen to be bad (Wall & Berry, 2007). The aforementioned statement affirms that human indices such as attractive and appealing worker behaviour could increase a patron's perception during and after a restaurant meal experience (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1999; Wall & Berry, 2007). Furthermore, worker behavioural characteristics, such as attentiveness, courteousness, and intelligence, are the qualities restaurant consumers and patrons want in a restaurant staff (Heung, Wong & Qu, 2000; Pratten, 2003; Sulek & Hensley, 2004). Importantly, culture affects customer's service quality in terms of complaining behaviour, services received, and services recovery expectations (Okumus, 2019). Also, customers exhibit different complaining behaviours. For instance, masculine patrons may visibly display their concerns about service failures while customers from collectivist cultures may be less likely to complain openly and directly to service providers compared to customers from individualistic cultures (Okumus & Cetin, 2018). In addition, there might be differences among customers' complaining behaviors and expectations coming from collectivist cultures. Customers from collectivist cultures tend to express their service quality expectations less than customers from individualistic cultures (Okumus, 2019). Also, Customers from long-term oriented cultures express lower service quality expectations than customers from short-term oriented cultures. Hence,

frontline food service employees from individualistic cultures can better understand complaints from customers from similar individualistic cultures, whereas the same frontline workers might experience problems in understanding complaints of patrons from other cultures (Okumus, 2019). It is imperative that to fully improve patrons service qualities, restaurant owners and workers should review their guidelines and mode of operation, implement novel business measures, and be trained so as to be aware on how to expertly handle complaints from other cultures (Okumus, 2019).

Peer Influence and Eatery Choice

The majority of dining-out happens amidst other people in a specific location. Studies show that an individual tends to consume little amount of food when eating alone compared to larger quantities when eating with known and close people, for instance family members and friends (Spence, Mancini & Huisman, 2019; De Castro, 1995). Researchers at the University of Illinois also found that peer pressure affects food choices at restaurants particularly when diners in groups are asked to state their order out loud. Hence, for a healthy meal in a restaurant, it is advised to surround oneself with people who make healthy food choices (Science daily, 2019). Specifically, when people eat together at a restaurant at which they must state their food choice aloud, they tend to select items from the same menu categories (Science daily, 2019). Reference groups are another influence on consumer's behaviour. Family, friends, and co-workers constitute primary groups - specifically those one regular interacts with. Secondary groups are more formal and have fewer interactions with an individual, such as religious groups, professional associations, and trade unions. People can also be influenced by other groups to which they do not belong but would like to. Also, family members have a strong influence on buyer's behaviour (Kotler, Bowen & Makens, 2019). Importantly, an individual's position in each group can be defined in terms of role and status, and each role impacts purchasing behaviour. For example, high school students exhibit different buying behaviour when they are with their parents or family members than when with friends (Kotler, Bowen & Makens, 2019).

Health-Related Factors (Hygienic Environment, Ambiance and Food Type)

Hygienic Environment and Eatery Choice

Hygienic environment is characterised by the neatness and cleanliness of restaurant workers, the environment, and the materials used as restaurant patrons are more bothered about them whenever they visit a restaurant (Foskett & Gillespie, 2019; Campbell-Smith, 2017; Barber & Scarcelli, 2009). Specifically, toilets are given a higher priority by customers during the appraisal and evaluation of restaurant hygienic conditions. Over the years, numerous studies have affirmed that restaurant cleanliness and the overall hygienic environment has been ranked

as major determinants of patrons' restaurant choices (Cadotte and Turgeon, 1988; Josiam, Sohail and Monteiro, 2007). Titz (2004) revealed that good sanitation was a component of hygiene, which was only significant when absent. As such, it is a quality expected by patrons but arguably not a major factor for choosing a restaurant. Importantly, the aspect of Cleanliness and Hygiene is a critical aspect to any business enterprise image as this has been affirmed in new studies (Harrington, Ottenbacher, Staggs & Allen-Powell, 2011).

Ambiance and Eatery Choice

In restaurant settings, ambiance entails the specific atmosphere of an environment, or the surrounding influence on restaurant patrons, which gives them joy, enjoyment, and pleasure (Kotler, 1973; Namkung & Yang, 2008). Ambiance is a very important aspect in restaurant service delivery, and restaurant owners have long accepted that it is as important as food and drinks in restaurant patrons' evaluation and assessments checklists (Finkelstein, 2018). Importantly, the physical environment of a restaurant is very important, and improvement in this area gives restaurant patrons a positive outlook and good perception of the restaurant (Babin, Lee, Eun & Griffin, 2005; Bae, Slevitch & Tomas, 2018; Harrington, Ottenbacher, Staggs & Allen-Powell, 2011; Karayilan & Cetin, 2016). In furtherance of this, according to a study on restaurant atmosphere experience of South Asians by Josiam, Sohail and Monteiro (2007), findings revealed that dining in Indian restaurants by South Asians brings similar cultural experiences as dining in their home countries. According to Aubert-Gamet and Cova (1999) tangible and intangible cues affect a patron's choice of a restaurant. For example, tangible cues are colours, background music, fragrance or smells, and so on. Importantly, Milliman (1986) revealed that a tangible cue such as background music was an important factor to alcoholic restaurant patrons as this affects their actions and restaurant choices. In addition, factors such as the ambiance and atmosphere of a restaurant are major determinants looked into by patrons especially when choosing between similar restaurants (Kivela, 1997).

Food Type and Eatery Choice

Presently there is an upsurge in the demand for healthy diets as restaurant patrons are more bothered about their wellbeing and health, especially elderly customers (Sulek & Hensley, 2004). Furthermore, there is a substantial association in healthy diet choices and the behavioural actions of an individual (Namkung & Jang, 2007). Due to the rise in the demands of healthy foods by restaurant patrons, restaurant owners are reciprocating through the constant changes and additions of healthy food options in their lists of available foods (Mill, 2017). For instance, Indian patrons believe and see their ethnic foods as healthier and more nutritious than any other foods (White &

Kokotsaki, 2004). A healthy diet can significantly lead to better overall performance of the mind and body. Foods high in antioxidants can help promote regeneration of neurons into old age while improving the ability of existing brain cells to communicate with each other, resulting in improved cognitive functioning. Importantly, a healthy diet helps maintain an ideal body weight and prevent obesity. Furthermore, when eaten frequently, foods high in saturated fat, trans fat, and sugar can lead to excess weight gain and obesity. While calories are needed for energy, empty calories, those derived from foods with little nutritional value, can lead to weight gain, but eating foods with a balance of calories and nutrients can help provide the body with the fuel it needs to function well while avoiding weight gain. Also, poor diet choices have been strongly associated with certain non-communicable diseases and health conditions, such as cardiovascular diseases, obesity, overweight, atherosclerosis, high blood sugar, cancer, hypertension, strokes, and so on.

Methods of Research

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this research, and the study population comprised of one thousand and thirty-two (1,032) non-teaching workers of AAUA.

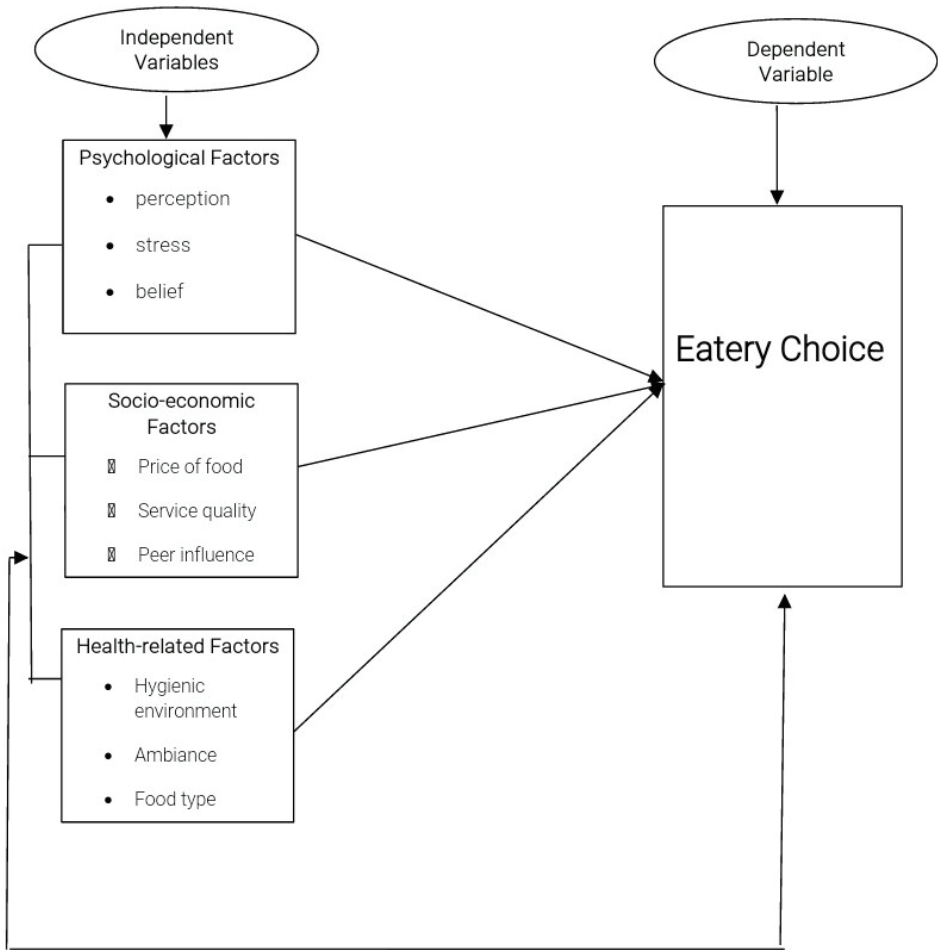


Figure 1. The conceptual framework for the research

The conceptual framework for the study was developed by the researchers around the independent variables of Psychological, Socio-economic, and Health-related factors as determinants to the Dependent variable of Eatery choice among Non-teaching workers of AAUA. Hence, the following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha levels;

1. Psychological factors (Perception, Stress, and Beliefs) will not significantly determine the choice of eatery among Non-teaching workers of AAUA.
2. Socio-economic factors (Price of food, Service quality, and Peer influence) will not significantly determine the choice of eatery among Non-teaching workers of AAUA.

3. Health-related factors (Hygienic Environment, Ambiance, and Food type) will not significantly determine the choice of eatery among Non-teaching workers of AAUA.
4. Psychological, Socio-economic, and Health-related factors will not significantly jointly determine the choice of eatery among Non-teaching workers of AAUA.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The Research sample size comprised of five hundred (500) respondents drawn from the non-teaching workers of AAUA. Multistage sampling procedure was used;

Stage I: Purposive sampling technique was used to select respondents for this study. It was considered more appropriate to select those who were non-teaching workers from the teaching workers.

Stage II: Total enumeration sampling technique was used to select all the non-teaching worker's units and departments. This was done so as to have a better generalization of result and also to give every unit and department a good representation.

Stage III: Proportionate sampling technique was used to select the number of respondents from each unit and department. This was done to give each unit and department equal opportunity of been picked with regards to their population. The formula $A \times B/C$ was used to calculate the proportion of respondents in each unit, where;

A = Number of Non-teaching staff in each unit

B = Sample size and

C = Total number of the population of Non-teaching workers in AAUA

E.g. For Library unit

A = 61

B = 500

C = 1032

= 61×500

1032

= 29.6

= 30 Respondents from the Library unit

* The same process was used for other units

Table 2

The List of the Non-Teaching Workers of AAUA, as at August, 2019

S/N	Name of units/Departments	Number of non-teaching workers (2019)	Population proportionate to size
1	Library	61	30
2	Health Clinic	48	23
3	Security	140	68
4	Store	45	22
5	Faculties/Departments	74	36
6	Internet Center	66	32
7	Student Affairs	44	21
8	Bursary/Accounting	35	17
9	Fire Service	26	13
10	Senate Building	314	152
11	Post graduate School	33	16
12	Works	87	42
13	Laboratories	59	29
Total		1032	501

Stage IV: Finally, accidental sampling technique was used to administer the questionnaire to the respondents who are available in each of the units and departments at the time of administration of the instrument by the researchers.

Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was subjected to construct and content validity by presentation to experts and professionals in the department of human kinetics and health education and other relevant experts in Educational measurement and evaluation. Their suggestions served as basis to ensure a thorough validation of the instrument. After this, the questionnaire was subjected to exploratory factorial analysis, setting the retention criteria at 0.65. After the factorial analysis, all items that did not meet the 0.65 retention criteria were removed, leaving the items of the questionnaire with sizeable number. To ascertain the reliability of the questionnaire, fifty (50) copies of the corrected questionnaire were administered to fifty (50) non-teaching workers that were not part of the main research population. The information/data gotten was subjected to Cronbach Alpha reliability statistics to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaire. The questionnaire used to seek and get information/data for this research was a self developed, structured, and validated questionnaire named Psychological, Socio-economic and Health-related factors as determinants of Eatery Choice

among non-teaching staff of AAUA. The questionnaire was designed to ensure the relevancy of the information/data obtained to the set objectives and hypotheses of the study. The questionnaire had three major sections. Section A, which is the Demographic information, was designed to get the demographic information of the respondents. Five (5) items were generated in this section which covered the gender, age, cadre, religion, and marital status. Section B, Psychological, Socio-economic and Health-related factors scale, was used to elicit information from respondents on the perceived reasons of Psychological factors (Perception, Stress, and Beliefs), Socio-economic factors (Price of food, Service quality, and Peer influence), and Health-related factors (Hygienic Environment, Ambiance, and Food types) as determinants of eatery choice among non-teaching staff of AAUA. Five (5) items were set under each factor, making it a total of fifteen (15) items for each variable. Each response was scored on a 4-point modified Likert format of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agree (A), Disagreed (D), and Strongly Disagreed (SD). Section C, Eatery Choice scale, was used to get information on perceived reasons which made the respondents choose one eatery to another. Fifteen (15) items were set in this section. Each response was scored on a 4-point modified Likert format of SA (Strongly Agreed), A (Agree), D (Disagreed), and SD (Strongly Disagreed).

Procedure for Analysis of Data

After collation and coding, the completed questionnaires were analysed with descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics of frequency count and percentages score were used for the analysis of demographic data, while inferential statistic of multiple regressions was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha levels.

Research Findings and Interpretations

Table 3
Demographic Information of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	255	51.0
Female	245	49.0
Cadre		
Junior	257	51.4
Senior	243	48.6
Age		
Below 20 years	41	8.2
21-30 years	119	23.8
31-40 years	182	36.4
41-50 years	106	21.2
51-60 years	38	7.6

Table 3*Continue*

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
61 years and above	14	2.8
Religion		
Christianity	396	79.2
Islam	97	19.4
Traditional	5	1.0
Others	2	0.4
Marital Status		
Single	146	29.2
Married	334	66.8
Separated	7	1.4
Widower	13	2.6

The findings from the demographic table of the respondents showed that male (51%) have the larger number of respondents compared to females (49%). Furthermore, junior carder (51.4%) has the larger number of respondents compared to senior carder (48.6%). Also, the table showed that respondents within the age range of 31- 40 years accounted for the largest number of respondents with 36.4% while those within the age range of 61 years and above accounted for the lowest number of respondents with 2.8%. The table also revealed that Christianity religion with 79.2% accounted for the highest number of respondents, while other religion had the lowest respondents with 0.4%. Furthermore, from the table, it was revealed that Married people were the highest number of respondents with 66.8% while separated people are the lowest number of respondents with 1.4%.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One

Psychological factors (Perception, Stress and Beliefs) will not significantly determine the choice of eatery among Non-teaching workers of AAUA.

Table 4

Multiple regression analysis of the Joint Influence of Psychological factors (Perception, Stress and Beliefs) as determinants of choice of eatery among Non-teaching workers of AAUA

Model summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.560 ^a	.313	.309	6.35986	
ANOVA					
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	9160.625	3	3053.542	75.493	.000 ^b
Residual	20062.133	496	40.448		
Total	29222.758	499			

a. Dependent Variable: Choice of Eatery; b. Predictors: (Constant) Perception, Stress and Beliefs

Table 4 above revealed that the linear combination of the effect of Psychological factors (Perception, Stress and Beliefs) as determinants of choice of eatery among Non-teaching workers of AAUA was significant ($F(3,496) = 75.493, p < 0.05$). The independent variable also yielded a coefficient of multiple regression (R) of 0.560 and a multiple regression square (R²) of 0.313. Therefore, the null hypothesis that stated that Psychological factors (Perception, Stress and Beliefs) will not significantly determine the choice of eatery among Non-teaching workers of AAUA is consequently rejected.

Hypothesis Two

Socio-economic factors (Price of Food, Service Quality, and Peer Influence) will not significantly determine the choice of eatery among Non-teaching workers of AAUA.

Table 5

Multiple regression analysis of the Joint Influence of Socio-economic factors (Price of Food, Service Quality, and Peer Influence) as determinants of choice of eatery among Non-teaching workers of AAUA

Model summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.478 ^a	.229	.224	6.74156	
ANOVA					
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	6680.221	3	2226.740	48.995	.000 ^b
Residual	22542.537	496	45.449		
Total	29222.758	499			

a. Dependent Variable: Choice of Eatery; b. Predictors: (Constant) Price of food, Service quality and peer influence

Table 5 above revealed that the linear combination of the effect of Socio-economic factors (Price of Food, Service Quality, and Peer Influence) as determinants of choice of eatery among Non-teaching workers of AAUA was significant ($F(3,496) = 48.995, p < 0.05$). The independent variable also yielded a coefficient of multiple regression (R) of 0.478 and a multiple regression square (R²) of 0.229. Therefore, the null hypothesis that stated that Socio-economic factors (Price of food, service quality, and peer influence) will not significantly determine the choice of eatery among Non-teaching workers of AAUA is consequently rejected.

Hypothesis Three

Health-related factors (Hygienic Environment, Ambiance, and Food Type) will not significantly determine the choice of eatery among Non-teaching workers of AAUA.

Table 6

Multiple regression analysis of the Joint Influence of Health-related factors (Hygienic Environment, Ambiance, and Food Type) as determinants of choice of eatery among Non-teaching workers of AAUA

Model summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.438 ^a	.192	.187	6.89844	
ANOVA					
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	5618.886	3	1872.962	39.357	.000 ^b
Residual	23603.872	496	47.588		
Total	29222.758	499			

a. Dependent Variable: Choice of Eatery; b. Predictors: (Constant) Hygienic environment, Ambiance and Food type

Table 6 above revealed that the linear combination of the effect of Health-related factors (Hygienic Environment, Ambiance, and Food Type) as determinants of choice of eatery among Non-teaching workers of AAUA was significant ($F(3,496) = 39.357$, $p < 0.05$). The independent variable also yielded a coefficient of multiple regression (R) of 0.438 and a multiple regression square (R²) of 0.192. Therefore, the null hypothesis that stated that Health-related factors (Hygienic Environment, Ambiance, and food type) will not significantly determine the choice of eatery among Non-teaching workers of AAUA is consequently rejected.

Hypothesis four

Psychological, Socio-economic, and Health-related factors will not significantly jointly determine the choice of eatery among Non-teaching workers of AAUA.

Table 7

Multiple regression analysis of Psychological, Socio-economic, and Health-related factors as joint determinants of choice of eatery among Non-teaching workers of AAUA

Model summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.668 ^a	.446	.443	5.71263	
ANOVA					
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	13036.229	3	4345.410	133.155	.000 ^b
Residual	16186.529	496	32.634		
Total	29222.758	499			

a. Dependent Variable: Choice of Eatery; b. Predictors: (Constant) Psychological, Socio-economic and Health-related variables

Table 7 above revealed that the linear combination of the joint effects of Psychological, Socio-economic, and Health-related factors as determinants of choice of eatery among Non-teaching workers of AAUA was significant ($F(3,496)$

= 133.155, $p < 0.05$). The independent variables also yielded a coefficient of multiple regressions (R) of 0.668 and a multiple regression square (R²) of 0.446. Therefore, the null hypothesis that stated that Psychological, Socio-economic, and Health-related factors will not significantly jointly determine the choice of eatery among Non-teaching workers of AAUA is consequently rejected.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from table 4 revealed that Psychological factors (Perception, Stress, and Beliefs) significantly determined the choice of eatery among Non-teaching workers of AAUA. This agrees with Reid (2018) that patrons view restaurant experiences differently and what is perceived by individual's leads to attitudes. For instance, after dining in a restaurant, some consumers might see the meal has been pleasing to taste and palatable while others might not see it as delicious. In this sense, a perception and attitude (positive or negative) has been developed towards the experience gained from the restaurant. Also, the finding agrees with Gibney study of 2016 that beliefs strengthen and encourage commodity or brand images, and customers act on beliefs. Also, baseless and unproven beliefs deter buying and can have adverse affect on food service businesses. This finding also agrees with Wardle (2000) that consistent and protracted working stress could lead to dietary variations, which are a major predisposing risk factor for obesity, heart diseases, and diabetes.

Findings from table 5 revealed that Socio-economic factors (Price of Food, Service Quality, and Peer Influence) significantly determined the choice of eatery among Non-teaching workers of AAUA. This agrees with Muller and Woods (1994), whose study asserted that restaurant patrons uses price and cost quotation as a standard for the quality of a restaurant, supposing that a pricey and costly restaurant serves better food and offers better quality. This finding is also in agreement with Sweeny, Johnson and Armstrong (1992), who commented that a low price may increase the probability of choosing a particular restaurant while a low price may also decrease consumer perceptions of restaurant quality. This finding also corroborates Wall and Berry (2007), whose study indicated that human indices, such as workers behaviour, were significant to patrons when the restaurant environment was seen to be bad. Also, this finding is in agreement with Researchers at the University of Illinois findings, whose study found that peer pressure affects food choices at restaurants particularly when diners in groups are asked to state their order out loud (Science daily, 2019).

Findings from table 6 revealed that Health-related factors (Hygienic Environment, Ambiance, and Food Type) significantly determined the choice of eatery among Non-teaching workers of AAUA. This finding agrees with the study of Barber and Scarcelli (2009), whose research revealed that restaurant patrons are giving high priority to neatness and the hygienic conditions of the restaurant environments, specifically

the toilets, whenever they visit a restaurant. Furthermore, this finding agrees with Finkelstein (2018), who recommended that in restaurant settings, the importance of Ambiance is equitable to food and drink in restaurant patrons' assessments and appraisal checklists. Likewise, the present findings is also in tandem with Sulek and Hensley (2004), who opined that restaurant patrons are bothered with their health, hence the need for varieties of healthy food options to be included in the menu lists presented to customers. Finally, Findings from table 7 revealed that Psychological, Socio-economic, and Health-related factors jointly significantly determined the choice of eatery among Non-teaching workers of AAUA.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study investigated whether Psychological, Socio-economic, And Health-related factors would determine the choice of eatery among non-teaching workers of AAUA. It was concluded from the findings of this study that Psychological (Perception, Stress, and Beliefs), Socio-economic (Price of Food, Service Quality, and Peer Influence), and Health-related (Hygienic Environment, Ambiance, and Food type) factors significantly determined the choice of eatery among non-teaching workers of AAUA. Also, Psychological, Socio-economic, and Health-related factors jointly determined the choice of eatery among non-teaching workers of AAUA. Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, it was recommended that restaurant owners should treat customers well and with respect so as to give a positive notion to customers because Psychological variables are intrinsic factors that influence the choice of eatery. It is also recommended that restaurant owners should be considerate of their food prices as a reduced price increases the chances that a customer will choose a specific eatery to dine in. and Restaurants should be situated in a hygienic environment, and basic hygienic practices should be practiced at all times because customers are concerned with cleanliness and food safety whenever they visit a restaurant. Also, restaurant owners should pay more attention to the food that has been prepared as restaurant patrons are bothered with their health, hence the need for varieties of healthy food options to be included in the menus lists presented to customers. It is suggested that future researchers consider exploring other variables and factors as determinants of eatery choice. It is also recommended that future studies investigate whether Psychological, Socio-economic, and Health related factors will determine the choice of eatery among university undergraduates.

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Urban Development and Cosmetic Applications In Tourism: Proposals for Turkey*

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Abstract

Towards the end of the twentieth century, through the effect of globalization, cities experienced a great change. The distorted construction that emerged as a result of population growth has led to the disappearance of the aesthetic understanding and cities turning into concrete piles. City aesthetics emerge as a social need of our day that allows society to breathe, protect the values of the region, and make the complex structure of the city much more organized. This study is aimed to improve aesthetic practice recommendations that can be beneficial to Turkey. A conceptual perspective to city aesthetics has been developed. Examples in local and foreign literature on the subject of urban aesthetics have been examined. By analyzing the urban aesthetic perception in Turkey, it is observed that there are missing elements, and there are no certain standards, limitations, and regulations for it. When the constructions in other countries are analyzed, it is obvious that city aesthetics is an understanding that is improved within a certain plan. The city aesthetic phenomenon in Turkey can be improved with the proper planning and implementation, and it is understood that it can be audited with certain standards.

Keywords

Aesthetics, Planning, Tourism, Urban, Urban aesthetics

* "The Development of Urban Aesthetics and Turkey" that is contained the book of announcements and presented in the "20th National Tourism Congress" held in Eskişehir between the dates 16-19 October 2019.

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Introduction

City aesthetics contains many elements such as public spaces, architectural structures, green spaces, squares, and parks. It has a complex and dynamic structure with the shape, appearance, landscape layout, and socio-cultural aspects of the buildings that it encapsulates. (Garcia-Domenech, 2015, p. 54-55).

Cities that change and renew themselves over time can maintain their integrity and protect their values with the right planning and structuring. The best examples of this are cities such as Vienna and Prague, which stand out with the citys' structure, layout and aesthetic appearance (Sternberg, 1991, p. 77; Vlad, 2009, p. 73-74).

Cities exist with their historical structures, cultures, and values. The most important elements of the city's past, present, and future are the socio-cultural and historical values in that city. These values are important elements that add an aesthetic feature to the city. In order to protect the values, keep them alive, and hand them down to future generations, the stakeholders of the region should approach the issue with a participatory approach and should be willing to take risks. Thus, the future of the city can be secured, and its values can be preserved with an aesthetic element. In addition to this, people can be raised to possess awareness about society and the environment (Sözen, 2002, p. 57).

City aesthetics has become a necessity of social life in cities that have turned into piles of concrete. As a result of population increase experienced by modern cities, aesthetic values were ignored, and the priorities were focused on different topics. As cities move away from social structures that will allow the society to breathe, the importance of city aesthetics has become clearer day by day.

Considering the aesthetics in Turkey, there are differences in the perception and applications of urban aesthetics for each city concerned. It is seen that there is no specific standard in these applications, and the audits are insufficient. A conceptual perspective to city aesthetics has been developed in this study.

Examples in local and foreign literature on the subject of urban aesthetics were examined. Firstly, applications in Turkey and other countries with regards to the matter of urban aesthetics were discussed. In this context, the legal basis of the aesthetic, its different applications, and examples in Turkey were referred. Aesthetic elements in cities such as Istanbul, Ankara, Eskişehir, Çanakkale, and Kastamonu were included among these examples. Specific attention was paid to the selection of cities that were previously visited and experienced by the author. It was aimed to support the secondary data obtained from other studies with the visual thinking process. Then, the development of city aesthetics in other countries was examined. The aim was to borrow beneficial suggestions for Turkey by taking a look at countries

with successful city aesthetics, such as Finland, the Netherlands, Scotland, Spain, and the United States; A change of mentality in Turkey has to occur in order to protect our values in the city and attain good aesthetics.

There are different studies on city aesthetics.

Munasignhe (2001) focused on collaborative urban planning in his work. The results of the study suggest that city residents can strengthen their relations with urban areas through effective communication and collaborative planning. Matilla and Çalışkan (2005) discussed examples of urban planning in Finland. In the results of the study, it is seen that the design processes in Finland are implemented based on the views of the city's stakeholders and architects, and that there are different plans in the cities. In his study, Erdogan (2006) discussed the development process of environmental and urban aesthetics. The results of the study show that the more organized an urban environment, the better quality can be perceived. Details such as color, texture, and light express micro-aesthetic values. Urban image and city silhouettes reflect macro-aesthetic perception. Cities need to be protected and designed based on the city's values. Xiangzhan (2008) searched for the answer of how aesthetic perception should be created. The philosophical and cultural causes of the orientation of traditional Chinese cities were examined. In the study's results, he believes that the ancient Chinese are round and the earth is square. Square-shaped construction is considered the prerequisite of an ideal capital. The results show that metaphysical understanding is important in creating urban aesthetics. Vlad (2009) studied the necessity of urban aesthetics and their role in developing a city. The results of the study show that the urban development of Romania was carried out without considering the aesthetic elements. It is seen that vertical construction and ordinariness prevail. It is understood that the atmosphere of architectural chaos has occurred.

Yerli ve Kesim (2009) examined the urban corridors of Düzce province in terms of function and aesthetics. In the study results, a total of 14 corridors were identified under three headings: roads, streams, and pedestrians. The results of the study show that the corridors are generally irregular and the aesthetic elements are insufficient. In their studies, Özer, Aklibaşında, and Zengin (2010) examined the effect of the siege elements of the city of Erzurum on the image of the city. The results of the study show that despite the functionality of the siege elements, they do not have aesthetic quality and this situation negatively affects the image of Erzurum. Aksu (2012) focused on urban furniture designs in his study. In the study, the elements that can create differences in urban furniture are as follows: the color, functions, shapes, material, texture. and perceptibility level of furniture. The results of the study show that the original designs lead to a positive increase in visual and usage quality. Ergen (2013) handled the streets and streets where shopping is carried out as a public

space. The results of the study show that such places should be enriched visually and aesthetically so that city centers can be revitalized and become interesting places.

Bankole (2013) examined the concept of city aesthetics on urban and environmental graphics. The results of the study show that urban and environmental graphics can damage the image of a city when structured without standards. Garcia-Domenech (2015) analyzed public spaces on a aesthetic and social basis. In the study, it is stated that the acquisition of aesthetic and social dimensions will emerge with the combination of social, historical, political, economic, and cultural factors. Gjerde and Vale (2015) examined the effectiveness of the design management of Wellington, the capital of New Zealand. In the study, it is underlined that the factors affecting environmental aesthetics include building height, visibility, and facade appearance. Nia and Altun (2016) examined the construction of aesthetic meaning and its role in improving the quality of urban areas. It is understood that it is necessary to combine the formal and symbolic meanings of urban elements in order to increase the aesthetic quality of the environment.

Susuz and Eliri (2017) evaluated public space artistically and visually. The results of the study show that socio-cultural factors are important in maintaining the permanent form of public art. Visual images created in artistic form prepare the basis for visual culture. Haruna, Oppong, and Marful (2018) have developed a theoretical framework for the concept of eco-aesthetics. Three basic factors have been determined for the implementation of the eco-aesthetic understanding in urban planning strategies in Ghana. These are financial issues, lack of awareness, and barriers to land acquisition. Candan, Oktay, Erol, and Kaya (2018) examined the functions of city aesthetic boards and developed a model proposal for the province of Karaman. A participatory approach should be adopted in city aesthetic boards, and the aesthetic approach should be reflected from a more holistic perspective. Özgeriş (2018) evaluated the suitability of the urban reinforcement elements of the city of Erzurum to the structure of the city. The results of the study show that the province of Erzurum has a historical structure, but the reinforcement elements are not designed in accordance with this structure.

When studies related to the aesthetics of a city are analyzed, it is seen that there are available studies on different cities, but also that the number of studies that provide suggestions for Turkey are very limited. In line with this goal, the research sought answers to the following questions:

- What should be considered for success in city aesthetics applications?
- Through what type of changes to buildings can the perception of city aesthetics be achieved?
- How should the historical values in the city be evaluated considering the city's aesthetic perception?

Conceptual Framework

Aesthetics

Aesthetics is a combination of quality, size, and reality. It is a philosophical term that expresses the nature, art, taste, and appreciation of beauty. It cannot be reduced to theories, ideas, tastes, cultural preferences, disciplines, architectural practices, or religion. It includes a comprehensive and holistic understanding (Teymur, 1981, p. 78-81; Haruna, Oppong, & Marful, 2018, p. 6).

It is believed to originate from the Greek word *aisthanesthai*, which means perceiving the aesthetic term. The Oxford English dictionary defines aesthetics as “information derived from the senses.” Kant called it “the science of sensory perception conditions.” (Porteous, 1996, p. 19). The father of modern aesthetics is Baumgarten. Baumgarten defined aesthetics as the sense of beauty based on logic. Blackburn, on the other hand, described aesthetics as human emotions derived from our appreciation of art. (Blackburn, 1996, p. 9).

When analyzed historically, it is seen that aesthetics goes back thousands of years. The murals discovered in the cave age and the proportions in the Egyptian pyramid design have aesthetic features. Recognition of aesthetics as a science is based on Ancient Greece. Plato is the first western philosopher to consider the nature of art. According to Plato, aesthetics is the presence of beauty in the form and structure of physical objects or the capturing of the ideal version of it. (Danaci, 2012, p. 879). According to Aristo, who matured Plato’s theory, aesthetics is the harmony between balance and order that beautiful objects should have certain dimensions of. (Lothian, 1999, p. 7).

After the Second World War, modern aesthetic understanding came to the fore, and cities had a radical change. While concrete construction comes to the fore in cities with structures based on need and speed, aesthetic understanding faced the risk of disappearance (Nia & Atun, 2016, p. 195-197; Sternberg, 1991, p. 77).

Unplanned development of the cities and the effect of globalization and industrialization appear to have been a problem experienced by cities towards the end of the 20th century. (Ayataç, 2005, p. 97). Adoption of modern aesthetic understanding has influenced the entire European and Mediterranean culture. (Garcia-Domenech, 2015, p. 56). Individualism and privacy have come to the fore. This change has limited the areas in which society can socialize, and public spaces have appeared to have been privatized as entertainment and shopping centers. (Jameson, 1984, p. 80). These areas, which are designed for customers and whose main purpose is to attract customers, started to meet the socialization needs of society. Thus, aesthetic appearance was abandoned in public spaces and left its place to functional structures that were indifferent to artistic emotions and used for a specific purpose (Garcia-Domenech, 2015, p. 59-60; Karakurt, 2006, p. 8).

Urban Aesthetics

Adapting the aesthetic perception to the city and designing the city by considering the aesthetic elements is a situation required by the social phenomenon. Cities have a closed structure due to the fundamentals of bureaucracy and areas of the city that are suitable for life are drawn within certain limits. Especially towards the end of the 20th century, as a result of the population increase that emerged with the effect of globalization, this made it necessary to put the aesthetic perception into cities. It became a necessity to design cities that become stuck and transformed into concrete stack by thinking of social life and structuring with proper planning. Thus, the cities can gain the view that society can enjoy life and live its culture without turning into a modern prison (Tuna, 2018, p. 266; Garcia-Domenech, 2015, p. 54-55).

The complexity, diversity, environmental structuring, technology, innovations, color of the city, street view, house landscapes, structures, the city's landscape, and architecture should be planned in integrity (Nia & Atun, 2016, p. 198; Nasar, 1994, p. 379). Urban aesthetics, which is a part of city planning and social life, expresses the harmony resulting from the spatial interaction of its form and function. (Sternberg, 1991, p. 70). In order for harmony to be formed, the city should be designed as a whole with its identity, structure, and meaning (Xiangzhan, 2008, p. 63; from Lynch). While making this design, it should not be forgotten that the city has a complex structure including socio-cultural elements, and it should be designed aesthetically correct (Berleant, 2005, p. 117; Rezafar & Turk, 2018, p. 85).

The aesthetic design of urban spaces is interpreted as a result of people's emotions, thoughts, and perceptions. (Nia & Atun, 2016, p. 198). From this point of view, it may differ according to people, cultures, and time. (Balling & Falk, 1982, p. 7). Those who include an aesthetic understanding into their planning in cities that change over time can have visual appeal. Landscapes such as Park Boulevard in New York and Champs Eylees in Paris are examples of aesthetics that increase the attractiveness of the city (Berleant, 2005, p. 47).

The aesthetic dimension is important in people's preferences in daily life. Preferences such as where people live, what to buy, and which street to walk are shaped according to this dimension. (Gjerde & Vale, 2015, p. 70). Cities that are aesthetically deprived may bring many disadvantages. Visual pollution may occur in cities that do not set the aesthetic standard and may have a negative impact on the psychology of those living in that region. The city which turns into crooked housing and a concrete mass may experience population loss, cannot protect its historical and cultural values, and cannot benefit enough from its potential (Nia & Atun, 2016, p. 204).

There are different applications to give cities an aesthetic appearance. The aesthetic concept of the city can be created as a result of regulatory systems, restrictions, and

supervision. As examples of aesthetic restrictions, the following applications can be given: height of buildings, their external appearance, residential areas, and landscape arrangements. When the necessary inspections are provided, a certain order can be brought to the city. (Gjerde & Vale, 2015, p. 71).

Nicolas Whybrow, a Warwick University professor and author of the art and city book, emphasized that public art has a dominant, participatory aesthetic understanding in cities. This aesthetic understanding is a daily, social, cultural, relational, lively, and digital one (Whybrow, 2018, p. 109-110; Munasinghe, 2001, p. 43). The architecture of the public space, facades of buildings, number of floors, colors, and positioning are important factors in shaping the city landscape and aesthetic perception. The designs of other elements such as paving stones, trees, city furniture, and billboards also affect aesthetic perception. Design is the first variable that someone who goes to a city he/she doesn't know about will pay attention to (Garcia-Domenech, 2015, p. 61).

Urban graphic designs also affect the perception of aesthetics. Artistic billboards, posters, and illuminating electronic neon signs are part of a city, and they positively or negatively affect the perception of the city. A properly placed and harmonious visual contains positive aesthetic features. Exaggerated and improperly placed billboards can cause visual pollution. Urban graphic designs give beauty to a city, and beauty is a prerequisite for a healthy life. The understanding of aesthetics has a unity with the city's vegetation, land forms, landscape features, and the city's historical silhouette. Achieving harmony among all this brings aesthetic beauty (Bankole, 2013, p. 2-3; Bostancı & Oral, 2017, p. 50).

Sounds are also one of the important elements of a city that affect the aesthetic perception. With the increase in urbanization, environmental noise affects the image of the city negatively. Especially in recent years, there is the opinion that sounds and noise pollution negatively affect the image and perception of the city, but characteristic sounds can also be mentioned. For example, sounds such as bird sounds, the rustling of tree leaves, water sprinkler sounds, and songs sung by street musicians can positively affect the aesthetic perception (by Bailly, Garcia-Domenech, 2015, p. 62).

Cities that do not lose the spirit of their past can remain beautiful with their designs, texture, and architecture and hand their aesthetic structure down to the next generation. Japan is one of those examples. In Japan, it is believed that ancient objects bear the magic of time and the historical structures of the city are given importance. In this way, generations with aesthetic and natural awareness can be raised, and cities can look the future more safely. Another example outside of Japan is the Italian city of Rome. Rome is a city designed with proper planning by protecting its values. The idea that those who walk on the streets of Rome reach aesthetic pleasure is dominant. The city has been designed in unity with its old and new buildings and has

offered an environment those who come to the city can enjoy rather than a chaotic and complicated image. (Tuna, 2018, p. 263-266)

Natural beauties in cities are also perceived aesthetically. Natural beauties such as caves, lakes, bays, waterfalls, and dams are among the aesthetic factors that give air to a city. From this point of view, ensuring the protection and sustainability of nature means the protection of aesthetic elements. (Bobat, 2018, p. 165).

Method

A qualitative method was used in this study. Qualitative research methods are combined with different pieces of information to form the whole and theory. Primary or secondary resources are used. A whole is created based on the parts required for the induction method. An archive-document scanning technique was used in the study. All kinds of written and verbal references to the past are covered in the study. The data obtained within the scope of the study were interpreted by going through visual analysis, observation, and evaluation processes. The advantages of this method are: to examine the subject in depth in the past, to notice and analyze the changes that occur over time, and to reach more objective results by obtaining clues on the subject studied (Kozak, 2018, p. 78-88; Saldamlı & Can, 2019, p. 48-49).

First, urban aesthetic practices in Turkey and other countries were studied. In this context, the legal basis of the aesthetic in Turkey was referred by the different applications and examples. Within the scope of the sample, the cities of Istanbul, Ankara, Eskişehir, Çanakkale, and Kastamonu were evaluated. Attention was paid to the selection of cities that were visited and experienced by the author. It is aimed to support the secondary data obtained from other studies with the visual thinking process. Then, the development of city aesthetics in other countries was examined. Finland, the Netherlands, Scotland, Spain, the United States, and Germany have been evaluated in this context, and this evaluation serves the basis for recommendations for Turkey.

Considering applications in Turkey, it was observed that each province created its own standards and controls, which are inadequate. The mentality in Turkey must change in order to provide aesthetic in our cities and to protect our values. The data from this study can be useful for Turkey as it considers the proposal presented in this paper.

Findings

Findings from Turkey

Urban aesthetics in Turkey is legally supported by four laws. These are the Zoning Law, Municipality Law, Metropolitan Municipality Law, and National Parks Law.

The Zoning Law numbered 3194 and dated 03/05/1985 has been regulated in order to ensure the conformity of the construction in settlements in terms of plan, science, health, and environmental conditions. The Municipal Law No. 5393 dated 03/07/2005 concerns issues related to visual pollution, such as announcements, advertisements and signage regulations, and facade changes in buildings. The Metropolitan Municipality Law No. 5216 dated 10/07/2004 concerns issues such as suitability for urban design projects, the facade images of buildings, places to post advertisements and notices, and cultural and historical buildings. The National Parks Law numbered 2873 and dated 09/08/1983 deals with the protection and sustainability of national parks. (Akkaya, 2015, p. 25-32).

Aesthetic institutes in Turkey known as Architectural Aesthetic Commission or City Aesthetic Board are also other organizations that may have an influence on the urban aesthetic. By 2014 such boards were created for 12 cities, It is planned to open aesthetic boards in other cities after 2014 such as Tekirdağ, Bursa, İzmir, Rize, Artvin, Balıkesir, Aydın, İstanbul, and Mersin. It is seen that the boards, the majority of which are composed of municipal personnel, work mostly like a bureaucratic unit of the municipalities. In addition, these aesthetic commissions are generally authorized with the parts of land that are facing streets. Deficiencies resulting from the structuring and functioning of aesthetic commissions reduce the effects of aesthetic boards. Candan, Oktay, Erol, and Kaya proposed a commission of 13 people with a participatory approach in which city representatives, architects, academics, lawyers, and municipal representatives took part in the organization of the aesthetic committee. It was also underlined that the board's mandate should be expanded and the binding decisions need to be obligatory decisions to be followed. Boards should have a say not only in existing structures but also in planned structures. (Candan, Oktay, Erol, & Kaya, 2018, p. 40-47).

The concept of protecting historical and cultural values in Turkey has existed since the 1970s. Efforts that were first voluntary were improved with the participation of NGO's in the 1990s, and Turkey has become the 12th member of the Association of Historical Towns. The purpose of the association is to protect historical, urban, and cultural structures. For this purpose, it works in cooperation with member municipalities. The association organizes seminars, trainings, and academic studies and prepares road maps with the heads of the municipalities of association members in the management chart. This association, which is also engaged in activities such as museum promotion studies, is an important structure obliged with protecting aesthetic values in Turkey (Tarihi Kentler Birliği, 2019).

People want their places to be designed according to the aesthetic phenomenon. In these cities, which are designed as ecological and functional with aesthetic concerns

and are identified as livable cities, human life and social phenomena are the first priority. While planning, functionality and aesthetic values that will enable people to enjoy life and live peacefully in the city should be prioritized. (Yılmaz, 2018, p. 2). However, in some cases, the aesthetic phenomenon can be pushed into the background. Kent Park in Yozgat and its surrounding construction are examples of this situation. Although 13-18 story-high constructions are cramped high-rise concrete structures, they have been the choice of the people. The main reasons for these are the appreciation of interior architectural structures and their proximity to public institutions. The cramped reinforced concrete image and low green areas did not affect people's preferences (Çatalbaş, 2016, p. 43).

Cities have their own characteristics and structures. Cities, which are shaped by the physical, cultural, socio-economic, and historical features they contain, may have attractiveness according to the meaning and image they bear. There are certain elements of a city in the formation of this image. These elements are important aspects that have both an aesthetic appearance and the region's attractiveness. When considered in terms of Kastamonu, the prominent elements of the region are its religious structures, historical structures, clock tower, Kastamonu Castle, and Karaçomak Stream. These elements are the things that attract tourists to the city and form the image of the city. Symbolizing these and creating a city skyline will provide great convenience in the promotion and marketing of the city. Sakıcı proposed a city skyline for Kastamonu in his study (Sakıcı, 2017, p. 657).



Figure 1. Kastamonu city skyline proposal (Sakıcı, 2017, p. 657)

In the wake of flawed urbanization in Istanbul, the most important city of Turkey, it lost its aesthetical features. High-rise buildings can sometimes create visual pollution, and the city may lose its aesthetic appearance (Türkmen, 2018, p. 17).



Figure 2. Historic peninsula, Blue Mosque, Hagia Sophia and High-Rise Buildings that Ruin the Skyline (Türkmen, 2018, p. 17)

There are good examples for aesthetics in Turkey. Eskişehir is one of these examples. The Eskişehir and Odunpazarı streets, made by using real beach sand, are one of Turkey's first artificial aesthetically successful examples (Şentürk & Altınçekiç, 2018, p. 114-115).



Figure 3. Examples from Odunpazarı and Eskişehir Streets (Şentürk & Altınçekiç, 2018, p. 114)

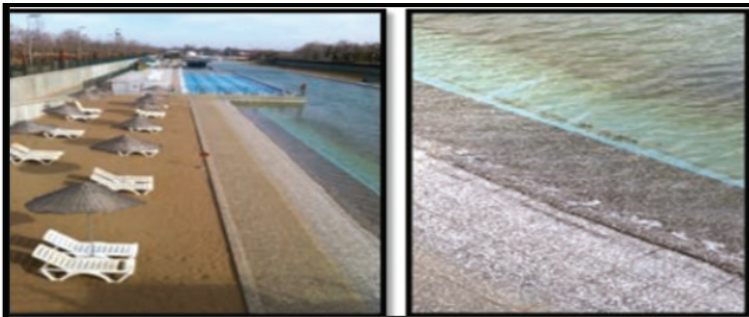


Figure 4. Turkey's first artificial beach (Şentürk & Altınçekiç, 2018, p. 115)

Facades that form the structures of a city also affect aesthetic perception. Irregular and non-standard facades can create visual pollution. The external facades in Kastamonu's Nasrullah Square and Bakırcılar Bazaar are also negative examples. Karaçomak Stream, which is one of the important image points of Kastamonu, attracts attention with its image that appears in the evening.



Figure 5. The view of Bakırcılar Bazaar and the irregular exterior of a building in Nasrullah square and the aesthetic view of Karaçomak Stream (The photo was taken by the author himself.)

Graffiti is also one of the factors used in cities that affect aesthetic perception. (Mercin, 2013, p. 4). When applied properly, it attracts attention from both local people and tourists. Moss Graffiti example in Bozcaada is one of the successful examples (Şentürk & Altınçekiç, 2018, p. 115).



Figure 6. Example of Wall with Moss Graffiti in Bozcaada (Şentürk & Altınçekiç, 2018, p. 115)

Some works made with the thought of having aesthetic value may not be considered aesthetic by the people of the region. The entrance gates to the cities of Ankara and Konya are examples of this. Tekel and Aslan examined the aesthetic perception of these gates in their study. In the study, a survey was made to a sample group of 50

people, and it was revealed that the city gates of Esenboğa and Konya roads were not perceived as aesthetical. (Tekel & Aslan, 2016, p. 33-37).



Figure 7. Esenboğa and Konya Road City Gates (Wikimapia, 2019; Onedio, 2019)

Findings from the World

Finland is a good example of urban planning. Planning in Finland was developed during the 20th century under the control of architects. While making these plans, architects did not only take into consideration the functionality but also preferred design, art, and aesthetics. The participatory method was used in the design phase of the three major cities of Finland, Helsinki, Vantaa, and Espoo. Aesthetic quality was prioritized in the planning of Arabianranta, a settlement in Helsinki's region. All public and semi-public spheres in the area are arranged from an artistic perspective. In order to ensure such a construction, 1-2% of the construction costs had to be directed to art projects. Opinions of the public were also received from the region, whose design was generally left to the professionals. Due to the fact that Helsinki Industrial Arts University and the world-famous Arabia porcelain factory are located in the region, the design is perceived as a part of Arabianranta. (Mattila & Çalışkan, 2005, p. 88-89).



Figure 8. Details from J. Vikberg's cast bronze figurines depicting 82 bird species found to live in the area and K. Kivivirta's "Talking Walls" study – Arabianranta. In the work titled "Talking Walls", the stories obtained by the joint ventures of architects and artists include bicycle stories. (Mattila & Çalışkan, 2005, p. 89)

The Kartononkoski region of the city of Vantaa has been designed in a new-traditional way with a populist approach in order to impress the people aesthetically, and this approach has given a cheerful and colorful appearance to the region. The investors did not have difficulty in selling flats in the region, designed according to the aesthetic taste of the people, and the city administration was satisfied with this project. (Mattila & Çalışkan, 2005, p. 89-90).



Figure 9. Kartononkoski Central Park and row houses with colorful facades
(Mattila & Çalışkan, 2005, p. 90)

Säterinmetsä in the South-Leppävaara region of the city of Espoo was designed by residents and professionals. The regional structures designed with a participatory approach provided local residents with many opportunities to design their own architectural styles. (Mattila & Çalışkan, 2005, p. 91).



Figure 10. District houses in the Säterinmetsä project (Mattila & Çalışkan, 2005, p. 91)

In his study, Jantzen and Vetner focused on how urban experiences, designs, and cultural planning can be meaningful. In this study, the Zuidas region of Amsterdam

was examined as a case study. Many years of planning have been made for the development of Zuidas, a square that unites the service sector, housing, and offices. Cooperation between the stakeholders of the region was made in order for the designed plan to be successful. When the social democratic party took power in the region in the early twentieth century, a different urban planning paradigm was implemented. Hendrik Berlage from the southern part of the city developed urban planning in the 1920s to provide housing for the working class. This aesthetic-based planning encompassed a radical change to create boulevards, green spaces, and landscapes that were not previously available in this region. While the stakeholders of the region act jointly for the development of the district, all phases of the process are audited and approved by the aesthetic commission appointed by the municipality and formed by leading architects. With these steps, new international standards were determined for residences, while architecturally striking results were obtained. With the addition of two more districts to the plan in 1921, it became possible to make a larger scale plan. After this plan, which ended in 1935, Amsterdam made a new 50-year plan. In this plan, the main goal was to give the environment a functional perspective. The basic idea was to plan the city according to certain functions of life. Thus, it was aimed to divide the city into regions by life, work, and relaxation. With the approval of this plan, districts in the west, north, and south of the city were built according to modernist ideals. The plan was restructured in 1985 with the decline in urban work since the 1960s, and it was aimed to strengthen the local, regional, and national position to prevent further job losses. Attempts were initiated to draw attention to the port and its old central points. Since 2003, Amsterdam has been seen as a multi-center structure. Successful examples were introduced in the city, which places a special emphasis on aesthetic elements. The water channels, which are perceived as one of the most aesthetic regions of the twenty-first century and increase the image of the city, are also at the top of these examples. (Jantzen & Vetner, 2008, p. 149-155).



Figure 11. Zuidas Region (Heyligers, 2019; Hellozuidas, 2019)

Among modern cities, cities with strong urban aesthetics and image that support their historical and cultural values and are supported by a holistic perspective with

their original architecture, green spaces, regions, and squares can be seen as a livable city. The figure below includes Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the south of the Malay Peninsula, Central Park in Manhattan, New York, USA, and Bryant Park, another park in Manhattan. These areas attract attention by the local people with their aesthetic designs and create an attraction element for the region. (Yılmaz, 2018, p. 7).



Figure 12. Mostar, Singapore, Central Park and Bryant Park (Yılmaz, 2018, p. 8)

The landscape elements of the city are among the elements that make up the aesthetic perception, and different countries stand out with their different designs. Cities can sometimes change the appearance of a street with little touches and increase interest in that area. The Better Block project in Dallas, Texas, below, is a good example of this. (Güleç, 2018, p. 435).



Figure 13. Better Block Foundation (Güleç, 2018, p. 435)

Urban environment graphics, designs, billboards, and signboards also affect the aesthetic perception positively when used correctly; If it is placed without a certain standard, inspection, or plan, it may create visual pollution. Nigeria is one of the negative examples (Bankole, 2013, p. 9-10).



Figure 14. Advertising Boards in Nigeria (Bankole, 2013, p. 7)

Barcelona's El Raval district is a historical and ancient district. Since the 19th century, there has been a serious migration wave with the increase in industrialization and textile factories, and the city has struggled with problems such as epidemics and crime. The city had to renew itself in order to cope with the problems and remain strong against globalization. The city council started to implement strategies to

transform the city with the support of private capital initiatives. As a result, structures such as traditional markets, houses, and entertainment venues were brought to the city, and the city was reshaped. It is also one of the most colorful areas of the city with examples of graffiti on the streets of El Raval. Since graffiti can be easily erased and renewed in a few days, it is possible to give a new look to the streets. In addition to being easily renewed, graffiti that is aesthetically enriching is also a reflection of daily life. (Escobar, 2009, p. 143-148).



Figure 15. El Raval Street Images (Yelp, 2019)

Edinburgh, the capital of Scotland since 1437, stands out as one of the most impressive cities in Europe. It presents an aesthetically successful example with its architecture, natural structure, and well-blended appearance, belonging to the Middle Ages and Georgian periods. Edinburgh is a city that consists of two main parts, the old and the new city, and in the old city, the section carrying the historical texture of the past with medieval buildings, new constructions and the smallest factors that will spoil the texture of the city are not allowed. The region, which was included in the World Heritage List by UNESCO, was insufficient in the face of population growth due to the Industrial Revolution between 1730 and 1790, and a new city was built in Edinburgh. Edinburgh, which meets the housing need with the separation of the old and the new city and preserves its structure with planned urbanization, has not only preserved its historical and cultural structures but also prevented crooked construction with planned urbanization. Attracting the attention of the world with its structure, Edinburgh is one of the most tourist-frequented regions of the country. (Parlett, Fletcher, & Cooper, 1995, p. 355-356).



Figure 16. Edinburgh Old Town (Depositphotos, 2016; The List, 2009)

Hamburg, which rose up after the demolition in the Second World War, is an aesthetically successful example, with the slogan of “Germany’s door to the world.” One of the last successful examples of a building in a city already equipped with striking examples of modern architecture is the Elbphilharmonie building. The place where the building is located previously had the largest warehouse in the city on the water in 1875. The building, which was destroyed in the Second World War, was repaired in 1990 and started to be used as a warehouse where cocoa, tobacco, and tea were stored. In 2017, it was built as a concert hall on a peninsula on the river Elbe by Swiss architects, and the Elbphilharmonie has since become one of the most striking works of modern architecture (Hurriyet, 2019). Another one of the most aesthetically important examples of Germany is Rothenburg ob der Tauber, a well-preserved medieval city in the state of Bavaria. Although its name means “Red Castle Above the Tauber River,” the old buildings of the city were renovated with great effort despite being damaged in the Second World War, and the area was preserved and took its current form (Yalniziygezdk, 2018).





Figure 17. Elbphilharmonie Building and Rothenburg ob der Tauber City
(Jochen Schweizer, 2019; Hurriyet1, 2019; Yalniziyigezdik, 2018)

Discussion

Globalization, which emerged towards the end of the twentieth century, removed the borders between countries, and the world has become limitless. The increased transportation opportunities and economic freedom have made it easier for people to travel and live in different cities. Industrial cities, especially those with high job opportunities, have entered into a huge migration wave, and cities have adopted a different structure to cope with this change. With this change in structure, called modern structuring, it restricted natural and social areas and turned cities into concrete piles. These problems brought about by modern construction enabled the aesthetic perception of the cities to be questioned again and cities to be restructured through considering aesthetic factors.

Warwick University professor Nicolas Whybrow emphasized that public art in cities has a dominant, participatory aesthetic understanding. This aesthetic view is a daily, social, cultural, relational, lively, and digital understanding (Whybrow, 2018, p. 109-110; Munasinghe, 2001, p. 43). Sometimes, this can move away from aesthetic perception. Adapting the aesthetic perception to the city is a situation required by the social phenomenon (Tuna, 2018, p. 266; Garcia-Domenech, 2015, p. 54-55).

Cities should be planned in unity with their complexity, diversity, environmental structure, technology, innovations, color of the city, street view, home landscapes, structures, landscape, and architecture (Nia & Atun, 2016, p. 198; Nasar, 1994, p. 379). Urban aesthetics, which is a part of city planning and social life, reflects the harmony created by the interaction of form and function (Sternberg, 1991, p. 70).

There are different applications to give the cities an aesthetic appearance. The aesthetic concept of the city can be created as a result of regulatory systems,

restrictions, and supervision. Examples of aesthetic restrictions are applications such as the heights, exterior views, residential areas, and landscapes of buildings (Gjerde & Vale, 2015, p. 71). These practices can create a positive or negative impression on people's perception. The aesthetic design of urban spaces is interpreted as a result of people's emotions, thoughts, and perceptions (Nia & Atun, 2016, p. 198). The aesthetic dimension is important in people's preferences in daily life. Preferences such as where people live, what to buy, and which street to walk are shaped according to this dimension (Gjerde & Vale, 2015, p. 70). At this point, the city needs a long-term and planned process.

Munasighne (2001) stated the importance of collaborative structuring. Matilla and Çalışkan (2005) stated how architects and different construction make Finland's cities stand out. City stakeholders are an important component in structuring. Erdoğan (2006) emphasized that the values of the city should be preserved and it should be designed based on macro- and micro-aesthetic values. Xiangzhan (2008) stated that metaphysics is also an important component in the planning of the city. Vlad (2009) mentioned that vertical construction can create a chaotic environment.

Özer, Aklıbaşında, and Zengin (2010) stated that the siege elements affect the image of the city. Therefore, functionality is not sufficient, and aesthetic structuring becomes important. Aksu (2012) emphasizes that as a result of the original design of urban furniture, interesting points can be created in cities. Ergen (2013) states that shopping streets can be interesting places by enriching them visually and aesthetically.

Bankole (2013) states that there should be a standard in urban graphics. Garcia-Domenech (2015) underlines that the aesthetic phenomenon can be formed by the combination of social, historical, political, economic, and cultural factors. Gjerde and Vale (2015) stated that the height of the buildings and the appearance of the facade may affect the aesthetic perception. Susuz and Eliri (2017) stated that it is possible to achieve sustainability in public art with socio-cultural factors. Oktay, Erol, and Kaya (2018) underlined that urban aesthetic institutions should be realized with the participation of regional stakeholders. Özgeriş (2018) emphasizes that the city's reinforcement elements should be compatible with its structure. While the results of the study show parallelism with the literature, it shows that the basic aesthetic values are the city's values, stakeholders, and beliefs.

Conclusion

This study examines the practices of urban aesthetics in Turkey as well as the world, and we make some suggestions that will be useful for Turkey. For this purpose, a literature review was made, and the data obtained were supported by visual analysis and observation technique. Aesthetic examples are given place in Turkish cities such

as Istanbul, Ankara, Eskişehir, Çanakkale, and Kastamonu. Specific attention was paid to the selection of cities that were previously visited and experienced by the author. Other countries have also benefited from countries that can be considered successful in urban aesthetics, such as Finland, the Netherlands, Scotland, Spain, the United States, and Germany. When the examples in other countries are analyzed, it is understood that aesthetic structures and appearance are not easily obtained and require a certain time and plan. It is observed that architects, planners, local people, and artists have a say in the decisions while planning and city designs are being made. It is not easy to achieve success in this understanding without a sustainable and comprehensive planning.

Aesthetic phenomenon is a comprehensive and dynamic process that must be carried out in cooperation with the stakeholders of the region and the public. At this point, a participatory management approach should be adopted in city aesthetic boards. It requires a planned process to protect and renew the city without destroying its cultural, social, and historical structure. It is necessary to recognize the city's values and areas that need to be protected. The dynamics of the city should not be ignored. Applications that will disrupt the city's symbol, perception, and visual characteristics should be avoided.

City aesthetics is one of the most important factors for a country or region in order to become attractive. The most important elements that constitute this attraction and which need to be protected are the values owned by the region. These values consist of socio-cultural, historical, and environmental elements. Values in Turkey seem to be quite a rich structure when examined. However, it is seen that neither the cities nor these structures are adequately protected and planned. While the cities are moving away from the aesthetic phenomenon on the way of attaining a modern appearance, the values in the city are also ignored, and the flawed structuring has caused the loss of aesthetic elements. In order to protect the values in Turkey and to give the elements of attractiveness the look of aesthetics, firstly the structure and environment in cities should be protected under the principal of sustainability, and this perception should be adopted by the public. It should not be forgotten that the elements that make up the attractiveness of the city are important building blocks for the region and country value, and the protect/use principle should be taken into account while planning the city.

Suggestions

When considering the structuring in other countries, the following recommendations can also be made for Turkey:

- Looking at the examples in Finland, it is seen that the local people are also involved in the aesthetic design processes. In the design process, aesthetic

elements could be placed in the appearances of buildings by including small details. The involvement of artists and local people in the design process emphasizes the importance of a participatory approach. It is seen that city aesthetics requires a comprehensive and holistic understanding. All stakeholders in the country should be involved in structuring processes. Therefore, country management, non-governmental organizations, architects, artists, people, universities, and planners should meet for the interests of the country on a common ground, and decisions should be taken with a participatory approach.

- When the urban aesthetic practices of countries such as Scotland and Germany are examined, it is seen that the historical and socio-cultural structures that constitute the values of the city are preserved and successfully carried to the present day. Specifically, Scotland's "Old Town" is completely closed to new settlement. Similarly, it was possible to regain the damaged structures after the Second World War in Germany with great effort and to reach the present day by being protected. This is an indication of how much attention is paid to the values in the country. Values of a region include socio-cultural structures, national and historical elements, and natural beauty all over the country. These values should be preserved and sustained, and community awareness should be created. Necessary legal arrangements should be made for this, and aesthetic elements should be at the forefront in planning. The aesthetic foundations in Turkey are formed by four laws, the Zoning Law, Municipality Law, Metropolitan Municipality Law, and National Parks Law No. 2873, and are also supported by aesthetic boards. It is observed that the practices in the law do not provide sufficient solutions, and the possibilities for auditing are limited. Aesthetic boards are also seen as bureaucratic structures where municipal staff are dominant. Architects, planners, universities, local people, and non-governmental organizations do not have a sufficient say, and decisions made by the aesthetic committees often appear to be non-binding. Considering all these factors, there is a need for an aesthetic committee to be established with a participatory structure with increased powers. These boards can be established at both local and national levels, and if communication between the boards can be provided in a healthy way, it can be seen as a dynamic and effective structure.
- Spain and the United States are among the countries that achieved success in urban reinforcements. A city can gain aesthetic and functional features with a small touch to the reinforcements located there. In our country, visual pollution can occur because many factors such as billboards, environmental structures, buildings, landscaping, and external equipment of the city do not have certain

standards and controls. Standards should be developed for these elements, which we can call city reinforcements, and variables such as exterior facades, heights, and colors of buildings should be within certain limits, and the skyline of the city should not be disturbed.

- Turkey is a unique structure with its natural and historical beauties that it houses. Unfortunately, we cannot use our values sufficiently and face the risk of losing them day by day. In order to raise awareness of our values, necessary training should be provided for the local people, and community awareness should be developed. We should be aware of our values, protect them, and announce them to the world with the right promotion and marketing activities. Thus, the aesthetic image of the country can be maximized, and a serious increase in tourism revenues can be experienced.

Upon examining the specific practices in Turkey, they display the dominance of local governments in the decision-making process. It is understood that the people of the region and other people in the region are not sufficiently involved, and their right to speak is limited. All stakeholders in the region must be involved in structuring processes in order to protect the important values of the city and to plan the city. Local government, non-governmental organizations, architects, artists, local people, universities, and planners should meet on a common ground and make decisions with a participatory understanding in order to protect regional interests and make them more valuable and attractive. Necessary legal arrangements should be made for the implementation of decisions, and the decisions should be put into practice with these regulations. As this structure can be made with local-scale boards or units, it should also be supported with national-scale boards, and communication between them should be carried out effectively.

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Mucchielli, A. (1991). *Zihniyetler* [Mindsets] (A. Kotil, Trans.). İstanbul, Turkey: İletişim Yayınları.

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Tonta, Y., Bitirim, Y., & Sever, H. (2002). *Türkçe arama motorlarında performans değerlendirme* [Performance evaluation in Turkish search engines]. Ankara, Turkey: Total Bilişim.

e) Book in English

Kamien R., & Kamien A. (2014). *Music: An appreciation*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education.

f) Chapter in an Edited Book

Bassett, C. (2006). Cultural studies and new media. In G. Hall & C. Birchall (Eds.), *New cultural studies: Adventures in theory* (pp. 220–237). Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press.

g) Chapter in an Edited Book in Turkish

Erkmen, T. (2012). Örgüt kültürü: Fonksiyonları, öğeleri, işletme yönetimi ve liderlikteki önemi [Organization culture: Its functions, elements and importance in leadership and business management]. In M. Zencirkıran (Ed.), *Örgüt sosyolojisi* [Organization sociology] (pp. 233–263). Bursa, Turkey: Dora Basım Yayın.

h) Book with the same organization as author and publisher

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American psychological association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

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Mutlu, B., & Savaşer, S. (2007). Çocuğu ameliyat sonrası yoğun bakımda olan ebeveynlerde stres nedenleri ve azaltma girişimleri [Source and intervention reduction of stress for parents whose children are in intensive care unit after surgery]. *Istanbul University Florence Nightingale Journal of Nursing*, 15(60), 179–182.

b) English Article

deCillia, R., Reissigl, M., & Wodak, R. (1999). The discursive construction of national identity. *Discourse and Society*, 10(2), 149–173. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0957926599010002002>

c) Journal Article with DOI and More Than Seven Authors

Lal, H., Cunningham, A. L., Godeaux, O., Chlibek, R., Diez-Domingo, J., Hwang, S.-J. ... Heineman, T. C. (2015). Efficacy of an adjuvanted herpes zoster subunit vaccine in older adults. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 372, 2087–2096. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1056/NEJMoa1501184>

d) Journal Article from Web, without DOI

Sidani, S. (2003). Enhancing the evaluation of nursing care effectiveness. *Canadian Journal of Nursing Research*, 35(3), 26–38. Retrieved from <http://cjr.mcgill.ca>

e) Journal Article with DOI

Turner, S. J. (2010). Website statistics 2.0: Using Google Analytics to measure library website effectiveness. *Technical Services Quarterly*, 27, 261–278. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07317131003765910>

f) Advance Online Publication

Smith, J. A. (2010). Citing advance online publication: A review. *Journal of Psychology*. Advance online publication. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a45d7867>

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Doctoral Dissertation, Master's Thesis, Presentation, Proceeding**a) Dissertation/Thesis from a Commercial Database**

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b) Dissertation/Thesis from an Institutional Database

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