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# Reflections of Destination Quality on Destination Image: A Case of Kuşadası

Janet Oluwakemi Abiodun<sup>A</sup>, Gökçe Özdemir<sup>B</sup>

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## Abstract

*The image of a tourism destination is assembled on various resources including past encounters and marketing communications. However, the utmost important factor in increasing tourist arrivals is creating a high quality of service at a destination in a sustainable manner. The main purpose of this study is to analyze both what image the tourists have about Kuşadası as exemplified in the 15,047 reviews on TripAdvisor through content analysis, and what image the stakeholders have in their minds through interviews. The importance of this study is that it sheds light on the destination image that is stimulated through tourists' user-generated content based on the destination quality attributes.*

**Keywords:** Destination image, destination quality, TripAdvisor

## Introduction

The destination is referred to as the combination of a distinctive experience and commodity possibilities (Kuo, 2003). Heath and Wall (1991) note that the term 'tourism product' in a destination is an affair accomplished through various clusters of products and services. Thus, diverse divisions of the tourism enterprises are playing out their specific responsibilities in adding to the success of a destination (Ortigueira, Gómez-Selemeneva, 2011). In this sense, destinations all around the globe try to give tourists high quality of services with different components keeping in mind the end goal to fulfill their necessities (Hernandez-Mogollon et al., 2014). Kandampully et al. (2001) also state that the last evaluation of quality service of tourism does not depend entirely on the result of service, but likewise on the service procedure. Besides, to comprehend the multifaceted nature of services, there is a different approach that defines services as deeds, processes, and performances given or co-created by one element or individual (Van et al., 2009).

Today, tourism destinations that are an amalgam of tourism products are attempting to be more competitive (Zainuddin et al., 2016) and in recent years competitiveness has progressively been viewed as a basic instrument on the performance of tourism destinations (Meng,

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2006). Ritchie and Crouch (2003) posit that a tourism destination must grasp an incorporated approach towards the many elements of tourism products if to succeed. Service quality is perhaps the most imperative standard for competition in a tourism enterprise (Poon, 1993) and destination is conceivably a blend of every operation/business, commodities and eventually, local adventures supplied (Cooper et al., 1998). In this regard, destinations are striving hard to establish a superior service quality and to create a distinctive image. This research intends to identify the quality attributes of a destination for favorable image creation and sustainable tourism development focused on Kuşadası as a case study through two significant types of research that complement each other. In the next section, the literature review for destination quality and the image is given. This is followed by an account of the methodology used to conduct interviews and make the content analysis of TripAdvisor reviews posted by international tourists. Then the findings are presented, and the final discussion section gathers insights drawn from the various findings.

## Literature Review

Success depends on the value of products and services that tourists have at a destination (Dwyer, Kim, 2003), and the challenge in managing a destination is the presence of many providers and service makers. In this vein, Wang (2011) notes that managing a destination can be characterized as a proactive, guest-focused way that coordinates the interests of tourists, service suppliers, and the community. The tourism value chain operations inside destinations perform visitors' experience at the destination where the quality of the product is very significant and closely connected to the destination's performance (Weiermair, Fuchs, 1999). Go and Govers (2000) also posits that destination quality merits a far-reaching approach and a complete reconciliation among its key stakeholders. According to Woods and Deegan (2003), the service quality shows the significance of reflecting the desires of buyers and offering a guarantee of service, making sure that the commodities produced, match that of the organizational standards. In other words, service quality is observed to be 'the result of an assessment procedure, where the buyer compares his desires and the services rendered to the consumer' (Tosun et al., 2015). In this sense, tourism administrators endeavor to enhance the quality and satisfaction of guests with the conviction that will make guests not to regret choosing a particular destination and will also enable them to return to the destination or even be willing to tell their acquaintances (Tian-Cole, Crompton, 2003).

Destination quality incorporates physical products and services also involving the natural and unadulterated magnificence of a destination (Tosun et al., 2015). A destination's universal quality framework involves pathway systems, air terminals, railway networks, transportation methods, telecom, garbage, distribution of water, social insurance offices, cleanliness, electricity, pecuniary administrations, and internet operations (Dwyer, Kim, 2003). Therefore destination quality is fundamentally assessed considering those, and also the cultural attributes of a tourism destination such as gastronomy, fine arts, music, folklore and dance (Murphy et al., 2000). The atmosphere, greenery, physical geography, landscape and many more valuable resources of a tourism destination (Dwyer, Kim, 2003) in addition to the superstructure of the tourism industry at the destination also reflects the quality attributes of a destination. Therefore, destination providers need to create images to achieve an increase in the number of tourists by continually maintaining and raising the quality of their places, and at last shape a positive image of their destination in general (Onder, Marchiori, 2016).

New advancements and fast changes in the business conditions, tourism markets, and structures, and customer needs continuously challenge tourism destination managers in several ways (Gretzel et al., 2000). The most significant change originates from the advent of the internet which transformed the position of travel enterprises as information suppliers (Standing et al., 2014). Today, an ever-increasing number of travelers are using the website and on-line assets for their information requirements (Gursoy, McCleary, 2004). However, Govers et al. (2007) state that the internet can cause disarray and worry in purchasers, driving them to build up a more terrible image of the destination they are assessing. Thus, different online networking sites challenge the brand image depicted by the official destination websites (Kim, Fesenmaier, 2008). The brand image of a destination influences travelers' intended purpose of visiting a destination (Echtner, Ritchie, 1993). Therefore, the positive the image of a destination that a tourist has, the more noteworthy the probability that he or she would tell other potential tourists (Zhang et al., 2014). In this regard, social media networks allow tourists to do reviews, to assemble user-generated content, and transmit reviews to potential tourists (Taecharungroj, Mathayomchan, 2019).

For tourists, online reviews are not only a way of securing information but also the essence of making tourism decisions (Hou et al., 2019). Tourists or consumers often gather destination information before making a trip to a particular destination. The major source of information for tourists is the internet, which helps many tourists to look into a particular destination before embarking on a journey and to know the safety and dangers that lie ahead at the destination. Thereby, useful and credible information that is generated either by tourists or by marketers may play a crucial role in the tourist's decision-making process. Furthermore, with the expectation of getting a holistic destination experience, the tourists invest so much money and time (Vatter, 2014). In this sense, the destination image is perceived as a standout amongst the most critical factors in destination marketing (Kotler, Gartner, 2002). Since travelers are broadly pulled in to destinations by the mix of attractions, events, and experiences that they offer (Baloglu, McCleary, 1999), strategies are applied to convey a positive image in the minds of the tourists by focusing on the attributes that both distinguish and characterize the destination. Besides, understanding the image of a destination influencing potential tourists' motivation and attitude is consequently essential (Yuksel, Akgul, 2007).

## Methodology

In recent decades, Turkey has encountered a noteworthy development in tourist numbers. Equivalent to the quick advancement of Turkish tourism, the city of Kuşadası has turned out to be one of the top destinations in Turkey (Yuksel, 2004). Kuşadası, situated on the Western Turkish drift, is one of Turkey's shoreline resort towns. It has especially various assets to pull in travelers, and the two main ones are its atmosphere and famously notable spots in its vicinity. The beginning of booming tourism in Kuşadası has started when a holiday camp was built in the town by a French company in 1967, followed by cruise tours. Kuşadası is the most important cruise destination in Turkey with the port of Kuşadası with an annual capacity of 2,400 cruises. According to the official statistics of 2019 declared by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Kuşadası's accommodation capacity has reached over 367 lodging facilities with 16,876 rooms and 37,735 beds.

## Sources of data

In terms of qualitative methodology, primary data for this research was collected through the content analysis of Kuşadası reviews on TripAdvisor that is the commonly used social network site by tourists to gather accurate information. 463 million travelers use TripAdvisor each month, browsing more than 859 million reviews and opinions of 8.6 million accommodations, restaurants, experiences, airlines, and cruises. It is evident that TripAdvisor is the most popular and important website that connects intended tourists through online reviews on tourism matters. In the case of Kuşadası, tourists who left reviews with or without pictures taken by them after their visit to the destination was evaluated in terms of destination quality.

The subsequent qualitative methodology used in this particular study is semi-structured interviews that are conducted by the researchers with several tourism stakeholders of Kuşadası. The reason to choose that method was to reach and collect detailed opinions of selected participants and understand the concept of destination image of Kuşadası more deeply. The interview form that is prepared by the researchers was based on the literature review (Baloglu, McCleary, 1999; Echtner, Ritchie, 1993; Zhang et al., 2014), and contained 10 open-ended questions about destination quality and destination image of Kuşadası in particular. Face-to-face individual interviews were conducted among twenty stakeholders in Kuşadası destination which includes travel agencies (3), restaurants (3), beach clubs (2), residents (3), and both domestic and international tourists (9).

## Data Collection and analysis

In the primary research, reviews about Kuşadası are contents analyzed to reach a quality ranking of the destination which facilitates the creation of destination image. According to Krippendorff (2004), content analysis in qualitative research includes close perusing of moderately little measures of information; communication data, interpretation of verbal, symbolic and pictorial; and the inclusion of the researcher with the study of information translation. Therefore, content analysis of TripAdvisor, a social networking site that allows users to generate content, was performed after a search through Trip Advisor about Kuşadası and then Google translation was used to reach broader reviews in different languages. The analysis through user-generated content that reflects the destination image is conducted between the 6/10/2017 to 24/10/2017 and reviews on the section “Things to do in Kuşadası” were analyzed. There were 15,047 reviews (including all the languages) in the respective category of TripAdvisor. The findings reveal the assessment of reviews of each attraction as positive (P), average (A) and negative (N) with the statements that are most frequently emphasized.

To overcome the one-sided approach, additional interviews were conducted about Kuşadası to produce an elaborate insight as the information on TripAdvisor reflects only the tourist's point of view. An open-ended question form with ten questions was used during the semi-structured interview conducted in Kuşadası, and detailed analysis was derived from the answers of the participants. Both the snowball sampling and convenience sampling methods were used to identify the potential participants for the interviews, with twenty participants agreeing to participate in the study whereas others had refused or were unavailable. The interviews were conducted with the tourism stakeholders of the destination Kuşadası, such as domestic and international tourists, residents, travel agents, restaurant owners, and beach club managers. The purpose of the study was to find out about the destination image of Kuşadası.



Therefore, it aimed to measure the perceptions stakeholders are holding about Kuşadası and covered relevant interview questions primarily based on destination image and quality attributes such as infrastructure, facilities, and attractions. Through the interviews undertaken by the researchers, ways to improve services delivered and to enhance the satisfaction of tourists are identified. Only important responses were picked and featured in the research findings since almost similar responses were gathered from the whole group of participants.

## Research Findings

### Research 1: Content analysis of tourist reviews on TripAdvisor

The findings involve the comments and opinions of tourists (both international and national) that have visited Kuşadası. Table 1 below reveals the frequency of positive, negative and average reviews for attractions in Kuşadası.

**Table 1.** Frequency of attractions in Kuşadası

Attractions of Kuşadası	Frequency		
	P	A	N
<b>Dilek National Park (Güzelçamlı)</b>			
Amazing park/clean water with lots of events to explore	461		
Lovely natural park/beautiful beach/nice boat cruise	169		
An average tourism destination		36	
Bad and disappointed			20
<b>Adaland Aquapark</b>			
	P	A	N
Excellent and amazing waterpark and water slides	623		
Very nice and clean aquapark	353		
Average and normal park		124	
Bad and disappointed			69
<b>Kuşadası Castle</b>			
	P	A	N
Wonderful and beautiful scenery	166		
Very good piece of architecture	154		
Normal castle (not so special)		101	
Disappointed			36
<b>Ladies Beach</b>			
	P	A	N
Great and beautiful beach/friendly staff	563		
Lovely restaurants and food	493		
Average beach and overpriced		326	
Overrated, disappointed & very dirty and polluted water			226
<b>Uzun Beach</b>			
	P	A	N
Excellent, quiet and calm beach/ Richness of beach amenities	221		
Clean & clear water/best home cooked meal	139		
Average and overrated beach		73	
Dirty and filthy beach			34

Attractions of Kuşadası	Frequency		
	P	A	N
<b>Tortuga Waterpark</b>			
Nice and clean park/Friendly staff/Fantastic and amazing place to be	39		
Lovely place for all ages	15		
Average waterpark		2	
<b>Kuşadası Market</b>			
Best bazaar/Quality market products	222		
Lovely brand counterfeit	221		
Only enjoyable for sightseeing and not to purchase		171	
Dubious market sellers, overpriced for international tourists, overcrowded and too much hassle			146
<b>Silver Sand Beach</b>			
Best Kuşadası beach/Clean waters	45		
Availability of beach amenities/Good and cheap food	14		
Average beach		7	
Poor beach, services and rude staff			4
<b>Kuşadası Shopping Center</b>			
Nice and quiet mall	22		
Quality products/ Pricy but nice bargain	15		
Average		6	
Awful and unfriendly storekeepers, bad shopping place			3
<b>Downtown Beach</b>			
Best and lovelybeach/nice cruise ship	9		
Very good and clean beach	11		
Average beach		9	
Disappointed			4
<b>.Gazi Begendi Park</b>			
Amazing view	14		
Best restaurant/good food	12		
Average/just ok restaurant		2	
Disappointed			6
<b>Sevgi Beach (Davutlar)</b>			
Amazing and exciting	11		
Very good beach with beach amenities	11		
Average beach		9	
Dirty beach/ disappointed			8
<b>Kadıkalesi Anaia Excavations</b>			
Wonderful historical site	4		
Very good castle	2		
Average site		2	
Poor historical site			1
<b>Panionion (Güzelçamlı)</b>			
Fantastic historical place	2		
Very lovely history	1		

Attractions of Kuşadası	Frequency		
Just an average historical space		5	
Disappointed			1
Kaleiçi Mosque	P	A	N
Very good and beautiful mosque	5		
Average mosque		1	
Old Town Tanneries	P	A	N
Amazing scenery	1		
Kafkas Spice Bazaar and Home Wine Spice Market	P	A	N
Best ice cream in town	1		
Aqua Atlantis	P	A	N
Best and excellent waterpark	1		
An average waterpark		3	
Bad and terrible place to be			13

The results of this research reveal the assessments of different reviews and opinions of tourists through the comments that were left on TripAdvisor. According to Dilek National Park (Güzelçamlı) reviews, the result shows that 461 tourists think that the attraction is of great quality which is commonly referred to as an “Amazing park” with clean water and lots of events to explore for both adults and children. On the other hand, 20 reviews involved tourists’ disappointment due to water pollution and bad experience with the staff and so on. It is observed from the reviews that Gazi Beğendi Park, a mini-park situated on the hill alongside a restaurant, although not as popular as Dilek National Park, the comments are mostly positive. Another attraction, Tortuga Water Park is a unique park that has only positive reviews. 39 tourists find the attraction amazingly beautiful, nice and clean, with friendly staff and a fantastic place to be. Adaland seems to be an exciting aquapark for tourists, as 623 tourists declare through positive reviews and 69 negative reviews are mostly about the provision of services by the staff and bad environment as a whole. Another tourism attraction Aqua Atlantis has an excellent and amazing waterpark and slides with 353 tourists considering it to be a very nice and clean aquapark whereas 13 tourists regard it as a bad and terrible place to be.

Ladies Beach, one of the most popular tourist attractions in Kuşadası, is a great and beautiful beach with much friendly staff according to the comments of 569 tourists. 493 tourists think that the beach is very lovely and it is surrounded by good restaurants that make good food, while 326 tourists think that, the Ladies beach is an average quality of attraction with overpriced products. Additionally, 226 tourists seem to be disappointed and think that the beach is overrated, very dirty and has polluted water. Also, 221 consumers review Uzun Beach, known to be bigger and better than Ladies beach, as an excellent, quiet and calm beach, with the availability of various beach amenities. 139 tourists rate the beach as very good, having clean & clear water with restaurants by the side that provide the best meal. Although Silver Sand Beach and Downtown Beach are among the least reviewed beaches on TripAdvisor, 45 reviews reveal that Silver Sand Beach is the best beach in Kuşadası with clean water, and Downtown Beach is a lovely beach according to the positive reviews of 20 tourists.

Kuşadası Market is a must-visit for everyone touring Kuşadası as the visitors have declared. 222 tourist reviews emphasize that it is the best bazaar with high-quality products and 221 tourists state that, it has the best counterfeited branded products that look like the original ones. 171 reviews show that Kuşadası Market is only good for sightseeing and not to purchase

goods and products. Lastly, 146 tourists happened to be very disappointed with the dubious act that is common among the sellers, doubling the price of products for the international tourists, and it is also an overcrowded place with too much hassle which is not kids friendly. Kuşadası Shopping Center is another shopping attraction for tourists as 22 tourists state that it is a nice and quiet mall, while, 3 reviews show that the shopping center offers a bad shopping experience.

Kuşadası Castle is a wonderful place to be with beautiful scenery based on the 166 tourists that visited the relevant attraction. 154 reviews show that Kuşadası Castle is a very good piece of architecture and 101 tourists think that, it is an average or normal attraction with no important image to hold on to. Additionally, 36 tourists are disappointed and think visiting the attraction is a total waste of time and money. On the other hand, only 9 tourists reviewed Kadikalesi Anaia Excavations and 6 tourists consider it is as an important historical site. Meanwhile, 2 tourists think that it is an average site with no important history and 1 claims that it is a poor historical site. Panionion (Güzelçamlı) was one of the least reviewed attractions on TripAdvisor, with only 9 reviews, of which 8 of them were positive stating that, the attraction is of high and moderate quality. Another least reviewed attraction on TripAdvisor is Kaleici Mosque with 6 reviews and having no negative comment. In Old Town Tanneries, there is only 1 review by a tourist and the tourist feels it has amazing scenery. One of the tourist attractions of Kuşadası specified in TripAdvisor is Kafkas Spice Bazaar and Home Wine Spice Market and it has only 1 review.

## Research 2: Interviews with stakeholders

The first research involved the assessments of semi-structured interviews with some stakeholders that contribute to the quality of tourism experience in Kuşadası. The research findings and the results were interpreted and the most valuable answers were picked accordingly. The stakeholders of Kuşadası have given various answers to the questions about the quality of the destination. Some participants had emphasized that Kuşadası is rich in terms of infrastructure, history, and entertainment but others declared that recent tourism in Kuşadası has been drastically declining due to water pollution, over-construction and unsophisticated sewage system. It has been observed that some participants highlighted the destination as of good quality, while others mostly underlined a negative point of view. In addition, both international and domestic tourists think that there is a unique predicament befalling the tourism destination concerning the issue of the destruction of some natural beauty which is supposed to serve as tourist attractions. The participants of the interview also stated that some major places in the destination need a lot of renovation. The participants set a high value in reading about the history of the region and experiencing it with guided tours in ancient cities that leave a lasting memory in the hearts of the guests.

*“Kuşadası is of high quality as a whole, there is nothing like sea pollution, the roads, landscape and all are well managed and organized, everything here is neat and properly shaped.”*

International Tourist from Ireland.

On the other hand, research findings reveal that accommodation in Kuşadası is of great quality in terms of neatness in the surroundings and facilities. It was gathered that hotels in Turkey as a whole take hospitality seriously as to make the guests more comfortable and



to also create positive word-of-mouth. As the findings indicate, the tourism environment, in general, is mainly well managed and of high quality being aware that there are some exceptional places in Kuşadası which are not neat and well taken care of. The quality of a destination also depends on the residents' attitudes towards tourists. The findings reveal that the residents are quite friendly and willing to help others. The results show that the residents make it their duty to look after the guests which make the city a pleasant place for tourists to visit. The locals, being a major factor of tourism represents a meaningful subject in destination development and Kuşadası, as a tourism destination has greatly been formed and affected by this factor positively.

*"Locals are good for tourists because we need them to sell our products and services, so, we need to try our best to make them feel comfortable.."*

Resident 2

One of the questions in the interview involved if the quality was well-reflected to the tourists through communication channels. Promotion of a destination is a major way of creating awareness about a tourism destination to get people to visit and by visiting a destination, tourists directly or indirectly contribute to the growth of the destination. The interviews with the stakeholders were mainly focused on the lack of effective promotion on an international basis. As the participants implied, word of mouth and also promotions of tour operators or travel agencies were playing a significant role in the tourists' decision-making process.

*"I would recommend that they promote and advertise Kuşadası more because people are now scared to come for tourism this year and seriously, no terrorism whatsoever in this city, it is all fun, history, and enjoyment here"*

Restaurant Manager 2

## Discussion and Conclusion

According to the two types of research carried out, it was gathered that many tourists, especially the international tourists visit Kuşadası mainly because of its richness in history and the amenities provided for sea, sun and sand tourism. Based on the findings, it is clear that the destination quality of Kuşadası leaves many tourists impressed with the tourism services rendered at the destination. The findings of the study reveal that tourists in Kuşadası favor the authenticity of historical places, natural attractions, tourism services and unending care of the local community. The historical attractions that surround the destination make the city valuable for tourists to visit, and interaction with locals enables the exchange of culture that exposes tourists to Turkish socio-economic background, religion, traditions, cuisine and so forth. The study also shows that the tourism superstructure of Kuşadası is of high quality with its holiday resort hotels. On the other hand, common unfavorable issues that are identified in both research 1 and 2 are mainly about infrastructural problems of the destination which leads to environmental pollution. Those problems holding a potential threat for the future of the tourism industry are not only recognized by the tourists but also the stakeholders of the destination which requires taking a considerable amount of effective measures, to prevent the degradation of the environment. To sum up, the results of the researches indicate that Kuşadası achieved an overall positive destination image in the minds of the tourists, but it's not with-

out its problems. Therefore, the findings point out that despite the strengths of the destination Kuşadası, many weaknesses have to be dealt with to create sustainable tourism at the destination. The findings of this study are in parallel with Lee & Xue (2020)'s research, which analyzes attributes of a destination, such as tourist attractions, environmental conditions, and infrastructures in terms of sustainability.

From a scholarly point of view, this study investigates how the quality of the destination affects destination image through user-generated content on social media sites. Social media networks like TripAdvisor allows the widespread distribution of tourism experiences and creates a word-of-mouth effect. Consistent with Qi & Chen (2019), the study highlights that user-generated content on TripAdvisor stimulates other tourists as an information source and has a major role in the image formation of destinations. From a managerial point of view, the findings are useful for the destination marketers as Kuşadası's image has a strong association with sea, sun, and sand tourism supported by cultural attributes. Dependence of Kuşadası on 3S tourism makes environmental issues of top priority, thus destination managers have to take necessary actions to prevent the pollution which may lead to the loss of Kuşadası's attractiveness in the future. To ensure sustainable tourism in the resort town, those reviews can be used in favor of tourism development by the public and private tourism authorities. To enhance the tourist experience, destination management organizations should thoroughly understand the challenges and threats the destinations are facing. In light of the findings, if destination quality is properly managed and improved, it may lead to favorable user-generated content reflecting a positive destination image. Although the reviews on TripAdvisor are uncontrollable, social media sites should be closely tracked and responded to instantly to minimize the negative impacts of bad reviews on prospective tourists. The study has many limitations; one limitation of the research is that, the star ratings of Kuşadası attractions on TripAdvisor were not covered as it was not clear on the website how the reviews of the attractions were calculated and concluded at the star ratings. Another limitation was the dependence of the research on only one social media network, and excluding the others.

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# Hospitality and Tourism Entrepreneurship: Administrative Barriers in Imo State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

*Impeding factors to the operational efficiency of hospitality and tourism enterprises in Imo State, Southeast Nigeria, were examined in this study. The conceptual model considered if access to funds, government policies and infrastructure determine the efficiency of hospitality and tourism enterprises through the impact on sales volume, cost of operation and productivity. A 21-point questionnaire was administered to 384 respondents of 63 hospitality and tourism enterprises across the state, in which 311 valid instruments were used for analysis. Means and standard deviation were measured in relation to the consequent variables. Hypotheses were tested in Pearson Chi-square to determine significant relationships between the variables and to justify the research model. The result revealed that poor access to funds, inconsistent government policies (like multiple taxation) and poor infrastructure affect sales volume, operating cost and productivity of hospitality and tourism enterprises. The study equally exposed policy weaknesses of the government in providing enabling environment for sustainable hospitality and tourism entrepreneurship, thus leading to poor sectoral development and job loss. Recommendations include the expansion of road networks in the state and prioritization of waste management processes in order to enhance access to hospitality and tourism locations, as well as lessen the overwhelming burden of waste disposal which increases the operating cost of hospitality enterprises.*

**Keywords:** access, administrative barriers, cost, entrepreneurship government; hospitality and tourism enterprises.

## Introduction

The prevailing economic circumstances in Nigeria and other developing countries have made the citizens see the benefits of looking inwards in terms of setting up businesses that will create jobs and increase revenue generation. Currently, entrepreneurship development and inno-

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vation through small and medium scale enterprises in hospitality and tourism are important drivers of economic success in developing nations (Obiora, Nwokorie, 2018). It is a viable tool for job creation, foreign exchange generation, poverty alleviation and worldwide dynamism. This rapid evolution calls for new entrepreneurial approach to factors that affect entrepreneurial performance in new enterprise development and management of existing businesses.

Ebiringa (2011) opined that entrepreneurship is basically concerned with creating wealth and livelihood through production of goods and services. The generation of business opportunities in any country is a direct function of entrepreneurial activities (Anderson, Jack, 2002). This emanates from idea generation leading to wise and profitable combination of human, material and financial resources towards the actualization of pre-determined goals. Entrepreneurship is a process of identifying gaps in one's immediate environment, community and society at large and bringing together resources in innovative way to fill these gaps. Khanka (1999) stated that a "tourism entrepreneur" is a person or a group of persons producing and managing tourism products. Hospitality and tourism entrepreneurship has been recognized as the basic way of providing strategic support for maintaining business development especially in rural areas (Obiora, Nwokorie, 2018).

Entrepreneurship in hospitality and tourism covers a wide spectrum of organization, ranging from ownership of a souvenir or gift item shop and coffee bar, right up to multi-national corporations like hotels, airlines and leisure parks. While extolling the importance of hospitality and tourism entrepreneurship, Elliot (1997, p.4) observed that "in the periods of economic decline, world recession, massive unemployment and a growing gap between the rich and the poor, tourism and hospitality is one of growth industries which has the capability to provide economic sustainability through job creation, redistribution of wealth, generation of foreign exchange and provision of revenue desperately needed by those countries in dire financial strait."

The relevance of entrepreneurial development in Nigeria cannot be underemphasized especially in a period where the prices of oil in the international market keep falling considering Nigeria's over dependence on oil as a major source of foreign exchange. Development of entrepreneurship creates more industries especially in rural areas through income generation and redistribution of wealth (Oteh, 2009; Onwuka et al., 2015; Obiora, Okwuise, 2016; Obiora, Nwokorie, 2018). As Henry, Hill and Leitch (2003) stated: "It is now widely recognized that the promotion of entrepreneurship is not only necessary for a healthy economy, but also critical for sustaining prosperity and creating new jobs". Initiatives related to entrepreneurship in various settings abound. The heightened interest in entrepreneurship has been as a consequence of a diverse range of contributory factors including the belief that it can reduce unemployment and act as recipe for economic prosperity (Gladwin et al., 1989; Klein et al., 2010; Mansi, Achla, 2013; Kushalakshi, Raghurama, 2014; Obiora, Nwokorie, 2018).

The role entrepreneurship plays in African economies particularly in the hospitality, tourism, sport and leisure industries, is enormous and cannot be taken for granted in the provision of employment, wealth creation and innovation. The primary goal of entrepreneurship is profitability and growth (Babagbale, 2005). Nigeria is rich in human resources with abundant tapped and untapped natural resources. The enormous natural and human resources notwithstanding, Anyadike, Emeh, and Ukah (2012) wrote that Nigeria is still one of the poorest countries in the world and has one of the highest rate of youth unemployment in sub-Saharan Africa despite its alleged economic growth. This may not be unconnected to neglected factors that affect the output and performance of entrepreneurs.

However, Entrepreneurs in other parts of Africa and Europe face challenges and issues to remain in business (Abi, 2007; Klein, et al., 2010; Wioleta, 2011). Eriobunah and Nosakhare (2013) opined that entrepreneurs, especially in Africa, lack access to credit facility and basic entrepreneurship infrastructure such as electricity good road networks requisite for entrepreneurial growth.

## Research Problem

Access to finance, which is the fundamental support of a business, is essential in acquiring the service of skilled labour, modern technology, and machinery for creation of value to meet perceived needs for profit is very essential. Lack of capital for project execution and expansion can be perceived as a factor affecting entrepreneurs mostly in the hospitality sector, and the inability of hospitality establishments to secure credit facilities overtime, affects their growth and survival propensities (Adejumo, 2001).

Hospitality and tourism enterprises in the state are faced with lots of infrastructural problems, bad road network, flood, poor waste disposal, epileptic power supply and insecurity (Nwokorie, Igbojekwe, 2019). Given the general perception that entrepreneurship development is the key to poverty eradication, employment generation and rapid economic development, various governments in Nigeria have, over the past three decades, evolved policies and programmes, aimed at developing entrepreneurship through the development of small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs). This study is necessitated due to lack of, or inadequate empirical studies to assess how these factors affect entrepreneurial performance of hospitality and tourism enterprises in Imo State, Southeast Nigeria, in order to achieve the full potential of the hospitality and tourism industry.

## Objectives of the Study

The major objective of this study is to ascertain the factors affecting entrepreneurial performance in hospitality and tourism enterprises in Imo State. Specific objectives are to:

- a) Determine the relationship between access to funds and sales volume of hospitality and tourism enterprises.
- b) Determine the relationship between access to funds and cost of operation of hospitality and tourism enterprises.
- c) Determine the effect of access to funds on productivity of hospitality and tourism enterprises.
- d) Examine the impact of government policies on sales volume of hospitality and tourism enterprises.
- e) Examine the impact of government policies on the cost of operation of hospitality and tourism enterprises.
- f) Examine the impact of government policies on the productivity of hospitality and tourism enterprises.
- g) Determine the relationship between poor infrastructure and sales volume of hospitality and tourism enterprises.
- h) Examine the impact of poor infrastructure on cost of operation of hospitality and tourism enterprises.
- i) Determine the relationship between poor infrastructure and productivity of hospitality and tourism enterprises.

## Statement of hypothesis

The following null hypotheses ( $H_0$ ) were tested:

- $H_1$ : There is no relationship between access to funds and sales volume of hospitality and tourism enterprises.
- $H_2$ : There is no relationship between access to funds and cost of operation in hospitality and tourism enterprises.
- $H_3$ : Access to funds has no positive effect on productivity of hospitality and tourism enterprises.
- $H_4$ : Government policies have no significant impact on the sales volume of hospitality and tourism enterprises.
- $H_5$ : Government policies have no significant impact on the cost of operation of hospitality and tourism enterprises.
- $H_6$ : Government policies have no significant impact on the productivity of hospitality and tourism enterprises.
- $H_7$ : There is no significant relationship between poor infrastructure and sales volume of hospitality and tourism enterprises.
- $H_8$ : Poor infrastructure has no significant impact on the cost of operation of hospitality and tourism enterprises.
- $H_9$ : There is no significant relationship between poor infrastructure and productivity of hospitality and tourism enterprises.

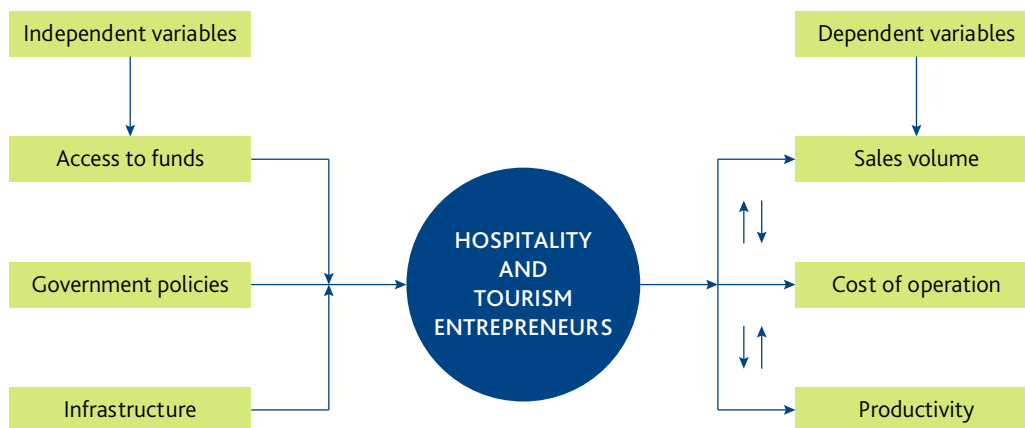


Figure 1. Conceptual model

## Literature survey

### Conceptual Assessment

Entrepreneurship indicates an act in which an individual attempts a rational undertaking of some sort. Pickle and Abrahamson (1990) saw an entrepreneur as someone who organizes and manages a business, undertakes and assumes the risks for the sake of profit making. Bagby (1988) wrote that an entrepreneur is an individual who utilizes the opportunity of instability



or turbulence to produce something new, or modifies an existing one for profit motive (Ayogu, Agu, 2015). Envick and Langford (2000) defined an entrepreneur as someone who owns and operates his own business. Murphy (2010) and Wongmuek (2018) considered an entrepreneur as a dynamic individual who would continue to seek opportunities and different methods of operation and will put extra efforts to achieve business success. For Castro and Ferreira (2019, p. 51), ...”entrepreneurs are involved in tasks like identifying market gaps and exploiting them, setting goals and defining strategies to attain them, formulating business strategies, negotiating, constructing effective relationships, dealing with problems and taking responsibility to solve them...” An entrepreneur can, however, be a male or a female (Low, Macmillan, 1988; Obiora, Nwokorie, 2018).

## Theoretical Assessment

Two relevant theories are significant to the success of the study and are explored accordingly.

- i) ***Social Embeddedness Theory:*** The social embeddedness theory is employed to serve as the theoretical foundation upon which the discourse on entrepreneurial performance is erected. The theory, as developed by Mark Granovetter (1985, cited in Greenwood, Meyer, 2008), suggests that economic activities take place in a social context. This context is a shaping mould. The social context is a mélange of the political, economic, technological and cultural influences.

In general, it consists of the influences that shape the cognition or world view of the entrepreneur. The cultural context sets the social and behavioural norms, gives legitimacy and recognition to business entrepreneurship, and permits or encourages the entrepreneur to take to entrepreneurship (Garsombke, Garsombke, 2000; Kikooma, 2010). It structures inter-actor ties, which make possible the formation of meaningful relationships and social networks for acquiring social capital; structures governance institutions for regulation of entrepreneurship and related services such as the approval, registration, issuance and revocation of business permits or operating licenses (Yang, 2004).

- ii) ***Resource-based Entrepreneurship Theories:*** The Resource-based theory of entrepreneurship argues that access to resources by founder/originator is an important predictor of opportunity based entrepreneurship and new venture growth. The theory stresses the importance of financial, social and human resources to entrepreneurship. Thus, access to resources enhances the individual’s ability to detect and act upon discovered opportunities. Financial, social and human capital represents three classes of theories under the resource-based entrepreneurship theories.

- a) ***Financial capital/liquidity theory***

This theory suggests that “people with financial capital are more able to acquire resources to effectively exploit their entrepreneurial opportunities” (Yadav, 2015, pp.46), and set up a firm (Clausen, 2006). Researchers believe that the theory tends to view entrepreneurs as having individual specific resources that support the recognition of new opportunities and the accumulation of new resources for the developing enterprise (Alvareza, Busenitz, 2001; Simpeh, 2011). Setting up of new firms is more common when people have access to financial capital.

- b) ***Social capital or social network theory***

Entrepreneurs are embedded in a larger social network structure that constitutes a significant proportion of their opportunity structure (Clausen, 2006). An indi-

vidual may have the ability to recognize that a given entrepreneurial opportunity exist, but might lack the social connections to transform the opportunity into a business start-up (Eckhard, Shane 2003; Forbes, et al., 2006). The theory further explains that stronger social ties to resource providers facilitate the acquisition of resources and enhance the probability of opportunity exploitation. Social network was equally identified while highlighting the four stages in the sociological theory by Reynolds (1991).

c) *Human capital entrepreneurship theory*

The human capital entrepreneurship theory are two factors, education and experience, which helps entrepreneurial exploits (Becker, 1993). As Simpeh (2011, pp.5) wrote: “The knowledge gained from education and experience represents a resource that is heterogeneously distributed across individuals and in effect central to understanding differences in opportunity identification and exploitation.”

## Empirical Assessment

Evidences abound how economic and social forces could determine the success of entrepreneurial undertakings. Mohd Shariff, Peou and Ali (2010) examined the moderating effect of government policy on entrepreneurship and growth performance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Cambodia. The study used entrepreneurial value, firm financing, management, market practices, and government policy as factors that influenced the growth performance of SMEs. The finding of the study indicates a positive relationship between the variables mentioned and growth performance of SMEs. The result also confirms that government policy has an essential role as a full moderator in such relationships. Chittithawan, Islam, Keawchana and Yusuf (2011) determined the factors affecting business success of SMEs in Thailand. The result of the study revealed that variables such as management and know-how, customer and market, SMEs characteristic, the way of doing business and cooperation, product and services, resources and finance, strategy and external environment have positive and significant effect on the business success of SMEs.

Okpara (2011) investigated the factors constraining the growth and survival of SMEs in Nigeria and the implication for poverty. Findings show that financial constraints, lack of management, corruption, and infrastructure constraints are negatively correlated with small business performance. Also the result of the study indicated that the greatest impediments to small business growth and survival in Nigeria include lack of financial support, corruption, poor management, poor experience and training, insufficient profits, poor infrastructure and low demand for product and services. Similarly, Philip (2011) carried out a research to investigate the factors affecting business success of SMEs in Bangladesh. It was found out that management know-how, products and services, and external environment, as factors that have significant relationship with business success of SMEs. But resources and finance, and SMEs characteristics do not have a significant relationship with the business success of SMEs in the study.

In the recent study by Obiora and Nwokorie (2018) on impediments to rural youth entrepreneurship towards the hospitality sector in Ihitte-Uboma, Imo State Nigeria, trade union support, compliance to information and communication technology (ICT), availability of credit and access to market were indicated as performance conditions for successful rural entrepreneurship, which have negatively affected the fortunes of rural entrepreneurship in the study area. The study equally indicated poor energy supply as an impediment to youth entrepreneur-

ship in the rural area. Also, Castro and Ferreira (2019) saw lack of available financial support from the government to small businesses as a barrier to successful rural tourism entrepreneurship in Portugal, citing bureaucracy and lack of information as other forms of restrictions. However, the gap in literature shows that studies have not broadly focused on hospitality and tourism enterprises to a reasonable extent as it concerns the evaluation of government policies, infrastructure and access to funds and their consequences on productivity, cost of operation and sales volume of hospitality and tourism business, which is the driving force for this study. The outcome will bridge the gap in literature on the issues and challenges faced by entrepreneurs in the tourism sector from a broader perspective.

## Methodology

The model developed for the study was premised on the need to tackle the challenges of entrepreneurial performance based on the consequent variables investigated. The research design for the study was survey based using structured questionnaire to elicit responses from samples and other secondary sources including previous studies. A 21-point questionnaire was prepared in a four-point Likert scale of strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, and strongly disagreed. Due to the convenience of studying both large and small populations, the non-probability sampling technique was adopted (Osuala, 2002) to select 63 hospitality and tourism related enterprises from the three geo-political zones of Imo State and to also give all the samples equal chance of being selected.

### Population and Sample

The target population includes managers and owners of the selected hospitality and tourism enterprises in the study area. As the population is infinite, Cochran's formula for sample size determination (Cochran, 1963) was employed to estimate the minimum sample size for the study. The sample size is 384 given the value of the formula which is thus stated:

$$n_0 = \frac{z^2 \cdot p(1-p)}{e^2}$$

Where,

- $n_0$  - Estimated sample size
- $z^2$  - Selected critical value of desired level of confidence
- $p$  - Estimated proportion of an attribute that is present in the population or maximum variability of the population
- $e$  - Desired level of precision or margin of error

### Validity and Reliability of Instrument

The validity of the instrument was confirmed in two ways via a pilot study and content validity approach. First, a pilot study question was posed to 22 respondents, and their responses were in conformity with prior expectations of the study, hence, the instrument was considered valid for the study.

In the content validity, the emphasis is to ensure that the study's core variables are present in the questionnaire. Hence, the factors that guaranteed the content validity of the research instrument used in this study are that: (a) the questions presented in the questionnaire are in conformity with the objectives of the study and the formulated hypotheses, and (b) all relevant dimensions (conceptual assessment) of the topic have been reasonably explored.

The study applied stability reliability to obtain similar scores with repeated testing, using the same group of respondents. This was done through a test-retest procedure that involved administering the same instrument to the same individuals under comparable conditions over a period of time (Maars, 2009). Operationally, the results of the test obtained were recorded using Pearson's correlation ( $r$ ) as the test-statistics for reliability and the coefficient ( $r$ ) obtained indicated the reliability of the instrument at 0.98 (Table 1).

**Table 1.** *Validity and reliability statistics*

Cronbach's $\alpha$	Population	Result
.98187	22	Reliable

Source: Data output

### Method of Data Analysis

The study applied the use of inferential statistics in analyzing data to determine means and standard deviation of the responses with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23 (2015). Hypotheses were tested in Pearson Chi-square to determine significant relationships between variables. While assuming a 95% confidence interval and 5% level of significance at  $\alpha = 0.05$ , decision rule is: accept ( $H_0$ ) if  $p\text{-value} \geq 0.05$ , otherwise reject  $H_0$ . Level of significance for hypotheses test at 5%, means that the probability of rejecting the hypothesis or if it is true (type 1 error), is fixed at 0.05. Rejecting  $H_0$  means that there is significant relationship between two variables, while acceptance means that there is no significant relationship (Schawnms, 1994; Egbulonu, 2007; Nwokorie, 2017).

The formula for Pearson Chi-square is thus given:

$$x^2 = \sum_{i=1}^m \left( \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i} \right)$$

where;

$x^2$  = Pearson Chi-square

$O_i$  = Observed frequency

$E_i$  = Expected frequency

$\Sigma$  = Summation sign (Bladock, 1998).

The degree of freedom (df) is calculated thus;

$$df = (r - 1) (c - 1)$$

where:

$r$  = number of rows

$c$  = number of columns

while the expression for determining population standard deviation is given as:

$$s = \frac{(X - \bar{X})^2}{\sqrt{n-1}}$$

Where;

$X$  = standard random variable

$\bar{X}$  = sample mean

$n$  = total number of items or variable

$s$  = population standard deviation (Egbulun, 2007).

## Results

A total of 384 copies of questionnaire were distributed to respondents made up of 63 owner-entrepreneurs of the selected hospitality and tourism related enterprises and 321 manager-entrepreneurs in the establishments while 311 copies of the total questionnaire were appropriately completed and returned, showing a return rate of 80.99% with a usable rate of 96.46% (300) from the questionnaires returned (Table 2). While 61.54% of the respondents are males and 38.46% are females, their age bracket is between 20 and 55 years.

**Table 2.** Return rate of questionnaire

Option	Distributed	Nº Returned	% Returned	Unusable	Usable
Owner-entrepreneurs	63	59	15.36	3	56
Manager-entrepreneurs	321	252	65.63	8	244
Total	384	311	80.99	11	300

Source: Data output

**Table 3.** Analyses of responses

Statement	Responses					
	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	$\sigma_{\bar{X}}$
1. Entrepreneurs' awareness of high prospect of hospitality business in the state	92 30.7	115 38.3	69 23.0	24 8.0	2.53	0.56
2. Hospitality entrepreneurs have increased over the last 10 years in the state	69 23.0	138 46.0	55 18.3	38 12.7	2.79	0.58
3. Government policies have not improved the productivity of hospitality enterprises	120 40.0	111 37.0	54 18.0	15 5.0	3.12	0.64
4. Government policies have not improved the sales volume of hospitality enterprises	92 30.7	115 38.3	69 23.0	24 8.0	2.53	0.56
5. Government policies have not improved the cost of operation in hospitality business	84 28.0	126 42.0	66 22.0	24 8.0	2.90	0.59
6. The right policies would stimulate enterprise expansion	115 38.3	96 32.0	50 16.7	39 13.0	2.96	0.60
7. Access to funds does not enhance the productivity of hospitality enterprises	36 12.0	51 17.0	111 37.0	102 34.0	2.07	0.60
8. Access to funds does not enhance the sales volume of hospitality enterprises	39 13.0	30 10.0	126 42.0	105 35.0	2.01	0.61



Statement	Responses					
	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	$\sigma_{\bar{x}}$
9. Access to funds has no impact on cost of operation in hospitality businesses	45 15.0	84 28.0	96 32.0	75 25.0	2.33	0.57
10. Available infrastructure enhances the sales volume of hospitality enterprises	27 9.0	63 21.0	114 38.0	96 32.0	2.07	0.61
11. Poor infrastructure has no effect on the productivity of hospitality enterprises	39 13.0	30 10.0	126 42.0	105 35.0	2.01	0.61
12. Poor infrastructure has no impact on cost of operation in hospitality business	33 49.0	54 35.5	114 9.0	99 6.5	2.07	0.60

$n=300$

Source: Data output

Scale & Symbol Codes: SA = Strongly Agreed; A = Agreed; D = Disagreed; SD = Strongly Disagreed;  $\bar{X}$  = Mean;  $\sigma_{\bar{x}}$  = Standard Deviation.

Decision Rule: Response is negative if  $\bar{X} \leq 2.49$ , otherwise response is positive. Decision is based on effective sample size ( $\geq 100$ ) for multiple sub-scale and nature of data, as  $X$  is expected to increase significantly from a lesser degree; hence, the Mean-Value Theorem applies (Egbulonu, 2007; Nwokorie, Obiora, 2018).

**Table 4. Responses on independent and dependent variables**

13.	Access to funds variables affecting sales volume functions				
	Access to Funds	Guest Turnover	Guest Loyalty	Sub-total (%)	Total (%)
	High interest rate	120 (40.0%)	100 (33.33%)	220 (73.3)	300 (100)
	Excessive procedure	20 (6.67%)	40 (13.33%)	60 (20.0)	
Others	10 (3.33%)	10 (3.33%)	20 (6.7)		
14.	Access to funds variables affecting cost of operation functions				
	Access to Funds	Operating Expenses	Equipment Maintenance		
	High interest rate	165 (55.0%)	54 (18.0%)	219 (73.0)	300 (100)
	Excessive procedure	25 (8.33%)	45 (15.0%)	70 (23.3)	
Others	-	11 (3.33%)	11 (3.7)		
15.	Access to funds variables affecting productivity functions				
	Access to Funds	Upgrade of Facilities	New Product Creation		
	High interest rate	50 (16.67%)	10 (3.33%)	60 (20.0)	300 (100)
	Excessive procedure	130 (43.33%)	70 (23.33%)	200 (66.7)	
Others	30 (10.0%)	10 (3.33%)	40 (13.3)		
16.	Government policy variables affecting cost of operation functions				
	Government Policies	Operating Expenses	Equipment Maintenance		
	High tax	100 (33.33)	95 (31.67%)	195 (65.0)	300 (100)
	Poor policy implementation	10 (3.33%)	20 (6.67%)	30 (10.0)	
Excessive levies & charges	30 (10.0%)	25 (8.33%)	55 (18.3)		
	Others	10 (3.33%)	10 (3.33%)	20 (6.7)	
17.	Government policy variables affecting sales volume functions				
	Government Policies	Guest Turnover	Guest Loyalty		
	High tax	60 (20.0%)	90 (30.0%)	150 (50.0)	300 (100)
	Poor policy implementation	25 (8.33%)	30 (10.0%)	55 (18.3)	
Excessive levies & charges	40 (13.33%)	20 (6.67%)	60 (20.0)		
	Others	25 (8.33%)	10 (3.33%)	35 (11.7)	

18.	Government policy variables affecting productivity functions				
	Government Policies	Upgrade of Facilities	New Product Creation		
	High tax	96 (32.0%)	97 (32.33%)	193 (64.3)	300 (100)
	Poor policy implementation	20 (6.67%)	23 (7.67%)	43 (14.3)	
Excessive levies & charges	24 (8.0%)	20 (6.67%)	44 (14.7)		
Others	10 (3.33%)	10 (3.33%)	20 (6.7)		
19.	Infrastructure variables affecting productivity functions				
	Infrastructure	Upgrade of Facilities	New Product Creation		
	Good roads	30 (10.0%)	30 (10.0%)	60 (20.0)	300 (100)
	Constant energy supply	106 (35.33%)	69 (23.0%)	175 (58.3)	
Adequate waste management	23 (7.67%)	20 (6.67%)	43 (14.3)		
Others	17 (5.67%)	5 (1.67%)	22 (7.4)		
20.	Infrastructure variables affecting cost of operation functions				
	Infrastructure	Operating Expenses	Equipment Maintenance		
	Good roads	20 (6.67%)	27 (9.0%)	47 (15.7)	300 (100)
	Constant energy supply	75 (25.0%)	73 (24.33%)	148 (49.3)	
Adequate waste management	60 (20.0%)	30 (10.0%)	90 (30.0)		
Others	5 (1.67%)	10 (3.33%)	15 (5.0)		
21	Infrastructure variables affecting sales volume functions				
	Infrastructure	Guest Turnover	Guest Loyalty		
	Good roads	74 (24.67%)	96 (32.0%)	170 (56.7)	300 (100)
	Constant energy supply	80 (26.67%)	5 (1.67%)	85 (28.3)	
Adequate waste management	12 (4.0%)	12 (4.0%)	24 (8.0)		
Others	7 (2.33%)	14 (4.67%)	21 (7.0)		

n = 300

Source: Data output

**Table 5. Result of chi-square tests**

H <sub>0</sub>	Statistical Approach	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	MEC	Table Data	Decision
H <sub>1</sub>	Pearson Chi-square	8.485 <sup>a</sup>	2	.014	10.0	4.13	Rejected
	Likelihood Ratio	8.617	2	.013			
	n	300					
H <sub>2</sub>	Pearson Chi-square	8.485 <sup>a</sup>	2	.010	10.0	4.14	Rejected
	Likelihood Ratio	8.327	2	.011			
	n	300					
H <sub>3</sub>	Pearson Chi-square	8.485 <sup>a</sup>	2	.014	10.0	4.15	Rejected
	Likelihood Ratio	8.617	2	.013			
	n	300					
H <sub>4</sub>	Pearson Chi-square	19.550 <sup>a</sup>	3	.000	17.5	4.17	Rejected
	Likelihood Ratio	19.933	3	.000			
	n	300					
H <sub>5</sub>	Pearson Chi-square	19.550 <sup>a</sup>	3	.017	17.5	4.16	Rejected
	Likelihood Ratio	19.933	3	.016			
	n	300					
H <sub>6</sub>	Pearson Chi-square	19.550 <sup>a</sup>	3	.000	17.5	4.18	Rejected
	Likelihood Ratio	19.933	3	.000			
	n	300					

H <sub>0</sub>	Statistical Approach	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	MEC	Table Data	Decision
H <sub>7</sub>	Pearson Chi-square	41.563 <sup>a</sup>	3	.010	16.53	4.21	Rejected
	Likelihood Ratio	42.909	3	.010			
	n	300					
H <sub>8</sub>	Pearson Chi-square	41.563 <sup>a</sup>	3	.000	16.53	4.20	Rejected
	Likelihood Ratio	42.909	3	.000			
	n	300					
H <sub>9</sub>	Pearson Chi-square	41.563 <sup>a</sup>	3	.000	16.53	4.19	Rejected
	Likelihood Ratio	42.909	3	.000			
	n	300					

*n* = 300

Source: Data output

*a* = 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count (MEC) is 10.0 – 18.0

## Discussion of Findings

From the result of analyses (Table 3), responses from sample indicate that the statement both-ering on entrepreneurial awareness of the high prospect of hospitality business in the state has as much as 207 agreement responses and 93 disagreement responses, with mean and standard deviation of 2.53 and 0.56. Increase in the number of hospitality entrepreneurs over the last 10 years also has combined agreement responses of 207, 93 contrary responses and means and standard deviation of 2.79 and 0.58. Recent studies indicate a high level of entrepreneurship in major cities of Nigeria including those with linkages to hospitality and tourism that could benefit the sector (Onwuka, et al., 2015; Obiora, Okwuise, 2016; Obiora, Nwokorie, 2018). However, up to 231 respondents agreed that government policies have not improved the productivity of hospitality enterprises, while 69 respondents had a contrary view. Also, government policies have not improved the sales volume of hospitality enterprises according to 207 of the total respondents; the policies have equally not improved the cost of operation in the hospitality businesses studied as indicated by 210 respondents. Yet, 211 respondents attested that the right policies would stimulate enterprise expansion in the state against 89 contrary responses. Nwokorie and Obiora (2018) advocated adequate collaboration between local authorities and hospitality organizations to enable hotels and related establishments function optimally within their area of operation. Businesses are not expected to thrive where government authorities fail to formulate viable policies that would improve the operation of business enterprises (Martins, et al., 2004; Wioleta, 2011; Owodolu, et al., 2013).

Poor access to funds was indicated as an impediment to entrepreneurship in the study. Up to 87 respondents agreed that access to funds does not enhance the productivity of hospitality enterprises, while 213 disagreed, with a mean and standard deviation of 2.07 and 0.06. Similarly, 69 respondents made agreement responses to indicate that access to funds does not enhance the sales volume of hospitality enterprises studied contrary to the rest of 210 respondents. Means and standard deviation scores for the statement were 2.01 and 0.61. On the statement that access to funds has no impact on cost of operation in hospitality businesses, 129 respondents made agreement responses, and 171 respondents disagreed (Table 3). These show that there is little or no opportunity to access funds for business development from financial institutions for entrepreneurs in the state. Martins, et al., (2004) viewed that lack of funds could be the greatest barrier to entrepreneurship development, while Nwokorie, Ojo, Everest,

Ekhaton (2014) supported the provision of credit from financial institutions to encourage sustainable entrepreneurship especially when there is availability of human capital to manage the business idea. Nevertheless, access to fund remains a facilitator with positive impact of most entrepreneurial engagements (Ebiringa, 2011; Wioleta, 2011; Obiora, Nwokorie, 2018; Castro, Ferreira (2019)

The study observed inadequate infrastructure as a barrier to hospitality and tourism entrepreneurship as attested to in the response. As much as 210 respondents disagreed that available infrastructure enhances the sales volume of hospitality entrepreneurs, while only 90 affirmative responses were recorded. Similarly on the statement about poor infrastructure having no effect on the productivity of hospitality enterprises, 69 respondents attested in the affirmative while 231 disagreed with the statement. A total of 87 responses were in the affirmative that poor infrastructure has no impact on cost of operation in hospitality businesses in the study area, while 213 respondents disagreed (Table 3). Whereas Petrin (1994) viewed that infrastructure is a catalyst for entrepreneurship and community development for developing societies, Obiora and Nwokorie (2018) agreed that available infrastructure hastens entrepreneurial development to quickly achieve economic emancipation for the younger generation in developing nations.

Table 4 shows responses for the dependent and independent variables in relation to the objectives and the conceptual model for the study. The independent variables (access to funds, government policies, and infrastructure) were tied against the dependent variables (sales volume, cost of production, and productivity) in the research instrument. This is done to elicit responses from samples and further determine the relationship between the variables and their impact on hospitality and tourism enterprises in the study area. Out of the 300 respondents, 40, 20 and 10 respondents attested that high interest rate, excessive credit procedures and other access to funds bottlenecks determine guest turnover, while 100, 40, and 10 respondents agreed that similar access to funds variables determine guest loyalty which are sales volume functions. Similar access to funds variables affected cost of operation functions including operating expenses and equipment maintenance. While 165 and 25 respondents affirmed that operating expenses of hospitality and tourism enterprises are affected by high interest rate and excessive credit procedures, 55, 45 and 10 respondents indicated that high interest rate, excessive procedures and some other difficulties determine the routine of equipment maintenance. On the relationship of access to funds with productivity, upgrade of new facilities and new product creation were indicated to be affected by high interest rate, excessive procedure and other restrictions, as indicated in the table. Poor access to credit has been indicated in previous studies to impact negatively on entrepreneurship in developing societies. Kerr and Nanda (2009, p. 1) observed that “there are important frictions in the credit markets precluding high-quality entrepreneurs with good ideas (that is, positive net present value projects) from entering product markets because they are unable to access adequate capital to start a new business.” Ekpe, Mat and Razak (2010) also found out that lack of opportunity for micro-credit is a constraint to women entrepreneurs’ performance. The present study proves that hospitality and tourism enterprises in the study area still grapple with the reality of lack of access to credit which hampers business efficiency.

Government policies were tallied with the dependent variables of the study. As a result, respondents affirmed that government policies and decisions leading to high tax (multiple taxation), poor implementation of policies, excess levies and charges, and other policy bottlenecks affect the cost of hospitality and tourism business operation in their operating expenses and equipment maintenance. Sales volume is also affected by government policy elements

which determine guest turnover and the level of guest loyalty for the establishments investigated as pointed out by respondents. Productivity components such as upgrade of enterprise facilities and new product creation were also indicated to be affected by government policy components. Ibrahim and Muritala (2015, p. 156) observed that “consistent and increasing government presence in an economy can hinder economic growth, especially in developing countries.” Evidence from their study indicates relationship between monetary policies and return on assets in business organizations, in which value added tax was also reported to have significant impact on return on investment. The undue presence of government results in excessive bureaucracies that cause growth restrictions in tourism entrepreneurship (Castro, Ferreira, 2019).

On infrastructure, respondents affirmed that variables such as road, energy supply and adequate waste management affect productivity, operation and sales volume variables. Obokoh and Goldman (2016, pp.1) observed “...the negative impact of infrastructure deficiency in the profitability and performance of SMEs, due to the high cost incurred by SMEs in the self-provision of infrastructure and distribution of finished goods.” Infrastructure quality also impacts on investment climate which equally determines the confidence of entrepreneurs to invest in an economy. Bbaale (2018, pp.1) suggested that: “More attention needs to be put to the elimination of power outages so as to improve the productivity of all firms particularly those that cannot afford to use generators in the place of electricity from the public grid.” The researcher argued that the electricity outages experienced by small and medium enterprises negatively impact on their productivity and also increase cost of operation. Inadequate transport and utility infrastructures were also found to impact negatively on the distributions of goods and services for manufacturing industries, thus affecting the sales volume of retail outlets of the products (Corong, Dacuycuy, Reyes, Taningco, 2013) which include hospitality and tourism enterprises, judging from the linkage with manufacturing industries.

## Test of Hypotheses

Pearson Chi-square was adopted in testing the nine null hypotheses for the study. As shown in Table 5,  $H_1$  was tested at 2 df (degree of freedom) with a likelihood ratio of 8.617. The p-value of 0.014 for  $H_1$  showed that there is a relationship between access to funds and sales volume of hospitality and tourism enterprises in the study. Access to funds plays a vital role in the sales volume of the enterprises because fund is needed for business expansion and sales enhancement (Abereijo, Fayomi, 2005). The rate of guest turnover could also be influenced by the inability of an establishment to meet guest expectation as a result of inadequate capital to generate new products (Kerr, Nanda, 2009), which subsequently impacts on guest loyalty.  $H_2$  was rejected to show there is a relationship between access to funds and cost of operation in hospitality and tourism enterprises, after testing at a likelihood ratio of 8.327 with 2 df and p-value of 0.010. Access to funds avail entrepreneurs the opportunity to develop their enterprises and acquire better technologies for production, thus enhancing competitiveness and maintenance of standard (Nwokorie, Obiora, 2018). Poor capital base has been indicated as a setback for cost of operation and service recovery for hotel businesses (Nwokorie, 2016) and has also hindered young entrepreneurs from reaching their potentials (Ekpe, et al., 2010). Test for  $H_3$  was carried out at a likelihood ratio of 8.617 and 2 df for a p-value of 0.014 to conclude that access to funds has positive effect on productivity of hospitality and tourism enterprises. Chittithawan, et al. (2011) adopted the use of ordinary least square to discover that access to finance affects enterprise productivity. This could be as a result of the inability to create new product due to poor



equipment maintenance which would result in high guest turnover (Ekpe, et al., 2010; Nwokorie, Obiora, 2019).

With a likelihood ratio of 19.933 at 3 df and p-value of 0.000,  $H_4$  was rejected to indicate that government policies have significant impact on the sales volume of hospitality and tourism enterprises. Whereas  $H_5$  was tested at 3 df, a likelihood ratio of 19.933 and p-value of 0.017 to reveal that government policies have significant impact on the cost of operation of hospitality and tourism enterprises,  $H_6$  was tested for relationship using a likelihood ratio of 19.933 and 3 df with a p-value of 0.000 to assert that government policies have significant impact on the productivity of hospitality and tourism enterprises (Table 5). While estimating the moderating effect of government policy on entrepreneurship and growth performance of small medium enterprises, MohdShariff, et al. (2010) used regression analysis to discover that government policies have essential roles to play as moderator between entrepreneurship and profitability in terms of sales volume through implementation of viable policies that will provide fertile environment for the growth of businesses. Consequently, when government policies fail to meet business expectations, business enterprises are at the receiving end of the negative impact. Obasi (2006) examined the unfavourable policies to include high tariffs chargeable by government that weigh down new enterprises, tax burdens, and excessive charges from local governments and environmental protection agencies, which increase cost of operation.

Table 5 further reveals that  $H_7$  was tested with a likelihood ratio of 42.909, 3 df and p-value of 0.010 to assert that there is significant relationship between poor infrastructure and sales volume of hospitality and tourism enterprises.  $H_8$  was also rejected after testing with a likelihood ratio of 42.909, 3 df and p-value of 0.000 to show that poor infrastructure has significant impact on the cost of operation of hospitality and tourism enterprises, while  $H_9$  was also rejected with a likelihood ratio of 42.909, 3 df and p-value of 0.000 to uphold that there is significant relationship between poor infrastructure and productivity of hospitality and tourism enterprises. Oseni and Pollit (2013) opined that poor electricity generation affects cost of operation of business enterprises as entrepreneurs have to source for alternative sources of energy which is expensive and leads to increased cost of operation, thus affecting productivity.

### Implication of Findings

The independent variables are essential for hospitality and tourism entrepreneurs to make meaningful inputs to their business success which will manifest in their cost of production, productivity and sales volume to enable the business prosper. Business success for hospitality and tourism enterprises in the study area, which is also tied to the independent variables is reliant on access to funds for entrepreneurs to drive their innovation, government policies to foster enabling business environment, and available infrastructure that improve entrepreneurship. Access to funds include loans, overdrafts and trade credits. Entrepreneurs in the study area have had difficulties accessing funds due to high interest rates, administrative bottlenecks and high collateral demand. Government policies include tax related matters and barriers to entry which may influence commencement and sustainability of the business, while infrastructure relates to availability of energy supply, good road network and waste management facilities that could stimulate business confidence on the part of investors. This suggests that hospitality and tourism entrepreneurship is less successful in the study area in recent times and could imply loss of invested capital for the entrepreneur and loss of jobs as a result of apparent employee turnover. Thus, businesses that have linkages with the tourism sector of the economy would suffer cost-effective distress that could result in gradual rise in the poverty level of the local population.

## Conclusion

This research has proven that poor access to finance is a barrier to hospitality and tourism entrepreneurship. In Imo State particularly, financial institutions find it difficult to offer credit facilities to hospitality and tourism entrepreneurs. Where the facilities are available, they are laden with high interest rates and could lead to inability to upgrade existing facilities and other productivity functions for the industry.

Policies set by government play a vital role in hospitality and tourism business survival in emerging economies. From the outcome of the study, the existing policies of government in the study area have not improved hospitality and tourism entrepreneurship in terms of cost of production, productivity and sales volume. Existing taxes are unfavorable as they affect operating expenses and other cost of operation constructs.

The state lacks quality infrastructure in terms of good road network, efficient power supply, improved water facilities, and adequate waste management, thus creating an unfavourable hospitality and tourism business environment by the reduction in sales volume, increase in cost of operation and reduced productivity.

In all, entrepreneurs are aware that the prospects of hospitality and tourism business is high in the state given the right policies of government, access to finance and provision of adequate infrastructure. This could be evidenced in the increased number of hospitality entrepreneurship over the period of ten years in the state.

## Recommendation

Government should outline favourable policies for hospitality and tourism businesses. This should particularly be addressed towards reduction in excessive taxation and other levies simultaneously charged by different government agencies. These excessive charges could have adverse effect on productivity and may cause hospitality and tourism enterprises to introduce high tariffs to cushion the adverse effect. This strategy may create unexpected guest turnover due to the consequent gradual withdrawal of patronage (eating out habit) that would set in as a result of high cost of products and services.

Financial institutions should assist in creating a favourable business climate for local economic prosperity by minimizing bottlenecks in granting credit facilities to hospitality and tourism entrepreneurship. Funds are required by hospitality enterprises, especially for take-off. The economic value of magnificent edifices would quickly be diminished when entrepreneurs lack adequate finance to start off, maintain or upgrade facilities as may be necessitated. Moreover, the relationship between financial institutions and the hospitality industry should be strengthened in the state bearing in mind the existing linkage between the tourism and banking sectors that would be beneficial to the local economy.

Road access to hospitality and tourism locations as well as efficient waste disposal are essential for success in the sector. While good road network enhances regular patronage, the amount of waste generated by hospitality and tourism enterprises has always been a responsibility hotels cannot manage without assistance from appropriate authorities. Therefore, government should upgrade infrastructure to meet current business demand. Expansion of road networks in the state should be prioritized alongside waste management processes. This will enhance access to hospitality and tourism locations, as well as lessen the overwhelming burden of waste disposal which increases the operating cost of hospitality enterprises.

Hospitality and tourism entrepreneurs should register with relevant national professional associations where they can avail themselves of the opportunity of research and networking. This will provide a platform for idea generation, knowledge and information sharing on global best practices in the industry which the association could translate to policy decisions and inform government on new policy direction for the industry.

Government should devise empowerment and enlightenment programmes targeted at hospitality and tourism entrepreneurs, to train and educate them on government's policy formulation plan as may be necessitated. This would create an environment for dialogue where entrepreneurs and government representatives could take a discourse in driving the economy to prosperity through hospitality and tourism entrepreneurship. Government can also provide financial assistance for new hospitality and tourism entrepreneurs on a continuous basis like other sectors delivered through the bank of industry. This would foster sustainable development for the sector to ensure that hospitality and tourism entrepreneurship thrives in the state for the benefit of the local people.

In the event of regular power failure in the state and the huge cost incurred through power generation using fuel generators, hospitality and tourism enterprises should embrace the usage of renewable energy. The services of solar energy corporations should be enlisted for provision and constant supply of energy. This will help improve cost of operation which has been worsened by usage of power generators, occasioned by the noise pollution and adverse effect in the immediate environment against sustainable development practices for the hospitality and tourism industry.

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# The Effect of Green Practices on Emotional Attachment and Green Loyalty of Coffee Shop Consumers (Turkey)\*

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## Abstract

*As individuals have recently become more sensitive towards environmental issues, green marketing has emerged as an important strategic tool in order to gain competitive advantage for hospitality and food and beverage enterprises. This study is aimed at determining the effect of green marketing practices on coffee shop customers' loyalty and emotional attachment. For this aim, the customers of 3 Starbucks (coffee shop) operating in Mugla province (Turkey) and having Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Certificate (n=404) were included in the scope of this study. The hypotheses determined for this aim were tested via path analysis with latent variables which was one of the structural equation modellings. According to test results, it was concluded that green practices had a positive significant effect on attachment to green businesses; customer attachment to green businesses had a positive significant effect on green loyalty to both green businesses and green products and also loyalty towards green businesses had a negative impact on loyalty towards green products. These results show that it is important for food and beverage businesses to adopt green practices both for raising awareness towards environmental protection and also for creating customer loyalty and emotional attachment. In this way, environmentally friendly practices provide competitive advantage as well as an increase in the number of environmentally friendly customers for businesses.*

**Keywords:** Green practices, LEED, emotional attachment to green business, green loyalty

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## Introduction

As transportation of coffee to international companies has become easier and consumers are offered various coffee types almost everywhere, the interest and curiosity of consumers towards coffee as well as coffee consumption have increased recently (Balduke, Süren, 2007). According to the statistics updated by International Coffee Organization, while coffee consumption in Turkey was 595 gr per person in 2012-2013, in 2014 this number rose to 929 gr (ico.com, 2015). The increase in coffee consumption has caused many companies producing and serving coffee to penetrate into food and beverage market and accordingly an intense competitive environment has emerged around the world. Businesses wish to create customer loyalty and emotional attachment by applying different kinds of strategies for turning out to be profitable in this competitive market.

One of the significant methods of creating customer loyalty and attachment is environmentally friendly practices. Gunes (2011) suggests that today many consumers demand eco-friendly products, eco-friendly packaging and green management and prefer environmentally friendly businesses. Customers' being more aware of and sensitive towards ecological issues have an impact upon their purchase decisions and buying behaviors and accordingly their purchase decision process may differ by their level of awareness and concern towards environment (Han et al., 2010; Laroche, et al., 2001; Paco, Rapose, 2009; Ham, Han, 2013).

In parallel with the increase in consumers' awareness towards environmental issues, eco-friendly goods and services have become more preferable in coffee market as in other sectors (Jang et al., 2015). Jang et al. (2015) confirm that the number of Urth Caffè's customers has shown a considerable increase since the business was focused on organic coffee and local food. Green practices provide competitive edge for businesses and can be the reason of preference for eco-friendly customers. Even though there have been a lot of studies on customer loyalty and attachment in various disciplines and fields, it is observed that there is not much discussion about the relationships and effects of these concepts in terms of green marketing (Martinez, 2015).

Many businesses like Marriott which are aware of the increase in the number of eco-friendly consumers utilize LEED certification in order to gain a competitive advantage in the market and contribute to the environmental protection. LEED certification system is a green building rating system used for marking healthier, more environmentally-friendly and more energy-efficient buildings such as hospitals, historical buildings, schools and homes. Many cafes and restaurants also use LEED certification system so as to meet the environmental demands of customers and to authenticate their sensitivity towards environment. Starbucks is one of those companies using this certification system for creating environmentally-friendly shops (Leed certificate, 2019). Therefore, this study is conducted with customers of Starbucks and aimed at determining the impacts of green practices on loyalty and attachment of coffee shops' customers.

## Conceptual framework

### Green Practices and LEED Certificate

In the face of environmental problems spreading over the Earth like a plague (e.g. global warming, environmental degradation, air pollution, water contamination and lack of resources etc.), consumers have begun adapting green alternatives which are better for the planet into their purchase behaviors (Hsieh, 2012; Jones et al., 2014). As a result of this attitude change, busi-

nesses have also started to take environmental responsibilities and promote their green practices (Chan, 2013). They adopt new strategies guaranteeing customer satisfaction with green options such as green marketing (Chen, 2010; Kang, Hur, 2012) so that they can respond to environmental demands (Martinez, 2015). The relevant studies within the literature confirm that businesses and companies adopt green marketing practices in order to examine their customers' green attitudes and green behavior; to specify green product market, to divide green market into different segments in accordance with customers' needs, to develop green positioning strategies and to produce a mixed green marketing policy (Chen, 2010; Jain, Kaur, 2004).

Chan (2013) states that green marketing has become one of the most significant marketing concepts. By developing green marketing strategies, businesses can operate with eliminating their customers' environmental concerns (Polonsky, 1994). Promoting the application of environmental/ green practices and regulating them on behalf of consumers can give competitive advantage to businesses (Russo, Fouts 1997; D'Souza, et al., 2006). In this study, green practices are defined as customer perceptions towards coffee shops' applying eco-friendly practices (Jeong, Jang, 2010; Jang et al., 2015).

LEED certification system created by United States Green Building Council (USGBC) is the most commonly used certification system all over the world. The principal purpose of LEED certification system which marks buildings that are sensitive to nature and human health, is to ensure the environment to be healthier and more habitable. LEED certification system is applied in many areas such as urban transformation, school buildings, storehouses and distribution centers, hospitality facilities, hospitals, banks, company headquarters, factories, shops and stores. With LEED certification system's different rating methods, LEED certificate can be received by all kinds of buildings. According to the facilities and qualities a building has, the building can receive a LEED certification among 4 certification levels such as certified, silver, gold and platinum as a result of rating made by LEED AP (Accredited Professional). Since 2016, there has been 9 LEED system criteria under this certification system named as "*sustainable sites, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, integrative process, location and transportation, materials and resources, indoor environmental quality, innovation and regional priority*" (Leed certificate, 2019). LEED certification system began to be used in Turkey in 2009.

Applied in many fields in accordance with the increasing number of conscious consumers, LEED certification system is also implemented in food and beverage sector. There is an exemplary statement regarding LEED certification system on the webpage of Starbucks coffee company which is known worldwide and operating also in Turkey. On this page, Starbucks claims that they are working for creating green shops by using environmentally friendly materials and systems that decrease carbon emission; they use eco-friendly construction materials and furniture in their stores and apply green practices that can provide energy and water saving. For the purpose of leading their efforts, they have adopted LEED® certification system by U.S. Green Building Council as benchmark for their success (Starbucks Coffee Company, 2019).

## Green Practices and Emotional Attachment

Attachment is a push factor of loyalty and commitment (Fedorikhin et al., 2008). Previous studies show that the customers who are emotionally attached to a brand or a business are more committed to that brand or business with which they also develop a more sustainable relationship (Carroll, Ahuvia, 2006; Thomson et al., 2005). An individual who is becoming more attached to a specific object is tend and willing to keep interacting with that object

(Fedorikhin et al., 2008). Emotional attachment, on the other hand, is an attachment standard based solely on emotions (Sajjad et al., 2015).

A lot of studies prove that customer perceptions towards green practices of a food and beverage enterprise are related to their perceptions towards green brand image and their green behavior (Hu et al., 2010; Jeong, Jang, 2010; Namkung, Jang, 2013). However, the effect of green practices of food and beverage facilities on customers' emotional responses (e.g. emotional attachment) has not been studied in detail.

The studies on green practices of businesses and their attitudes towards social responsibility confirm that these practices and attitudes improve customers' emotional attachment to the businesses. McEwen (2010) admits that customers meet their needs by being committed to businesses that take social responsibility and reflect their own values and image and accordingly, they become more emotionally attached to those businesses by strengthening their bonds. Bhattacharya et al. (2009) claim that as customers support green businesses and brands, they experience personal satisfaction by contributing to the green efforts of those businesses and brands. Vlachos (2012) reveals that customers' positive perceptions towards social activities of a business lead to a stronger emotional attachment. Tumanan, Lansangan (2012) add an environmental variable among factors affecting customers' emotional attachment to a place and find a significant difference between these factors in their study.

Attachment to a business can cause customers to establish intimacy with that place and hence positive emotional bonds between customers and that place influence customer loyalty towards that business (Alexandris, et al., 2006; Lopez-Mosquera, Sanchez, 2013; Yuksel et al., 2010). Yuksel et al. (2010) state that emotional bonds with a place developed through experiences have a positive impact upon an individual's evaluation regarding that place and his/her behavioral intentions. Kim et al. (2013) put an emphasis on the importance of emotions to the understanding of customers' environmental behaviors. They also claim that emotions affect customers' revisit intentions and emotions are among the important factors influencing customer loyalty in eco-friendly food and beverage enterprises.

The current study specifies emotional attachment to a green business as emotional bonds established with a business (Yuksel et al., 2010; Jang et al., 2015). Therefore, it is reasonable to estimate that green practices of a business increase customers' emotional attachment. Based on this, the hypothesis below is developed:

H<sub>1</sub>: Green practices of coffee stores significantly affect customers' emotional attachment.

## Green Loyalty

Loyalty is a notion presenting the level of consistent commitment to repurchase a preferred product in future (Oliver, 1996). Dick, Basu (1994) define loyalty as the strength of the relationship between customers' attitude and their repeated purchases. Based on these definitions, Chen (2013) describes green loyalty as the level of repurchase intentions emerged with sustainable attachment and a strong environmental attitude towards a product, a service or a similar object and also he clearly states that green satisfaction of customers positively affect green loyalty.

Environmental protection is an important management function for every business because it is considered as one of the most significant tools for a positive image and the success of the business (D'Souza et al., 2006). Environmental responsibility helps businesses increase consumer loyalty (D'Souza et al., 2006) as well as their competitive capacity and market share (Chan, 2001; Fitzgerald, 1993; Porter, Van der Linde, 1995). Based on Dick, Bassu (1994), Martin-



ez (2015) defines green loyalty as customer commitment to sustain repurchasing a green brand or using the product. Customer satisfaction is recognized as a requirement for developing customer loyalty by many researchers (Oliver, 1996; Martinez, 2015). Indeed, customer satisfaction which is the antecedent of loyalty is redefined on the basis of Mai, Ness (1999) with regard to green marketing (Martinez, 2015; Chen 2010). Green satisfaction is defined as the level of satisfaction related to consumption for meeting green needs, sustainable expectations and environmental demands of customers. Also, Martinez (2015) states that green satisfaction affects green loyalty in a positive way.

Admitting that there is a positive relationship between green satisfaction and green loyalty, Chang, Fong (2010) also claim that green product quality and green business image have a positive relationship with green satisfaction and green loyalty. Jang et al. (2015) assert that emotional attachment increases loyalty towards green businesses and products because customers feel a strong connection with green businesses (Ailawadi et al., 2001; Ehrenberg, 1988). Whenever customers feel emotional attachment to a green business, they will be loyal to that green brand. And accordingly the business continues to produce and sell its green products with the same brand (Ailawadi et al., 2001; Yi, Jeon, 2003; Yim et al., 2008).

According to Bowen, Shoemaker (1998), customers' emotional attachment causes not only to repurchase but also to encourage others to buy from that business. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to think that strong attachment to a business creates product loyalty and increases repurchase intentions. Customers who are loyal to a business tend to repeat purchases or buy different new products (Sui, Baloglu, 2003). Strong attachment to a business enables positive consumer evaluations of products and increases the potential of loyalty level in future.

In this study, customer loyalty towards green businesses is defined as having brand commitment enough to be a patron of a green coffee shop (Ailawadi et al., 2001; Yi, Jeon, 2003; Jang et al., 2015); loyalty towards green product is defined as commitment to repurchase a preferred green product consistently (Michaelidou, Hassan, 2008; Namkung, Jang, 2013; Jang et al., 2015) and these hypotheses are developed:

- H<sub>2</sub>: Customers' attachment to a green coffee store significantly affects their loyalty towards green store.
- H<sub>3</sub>: Customers' attachment to a green coffee store significantly affects their loyalty towards green product.
- H<sub>4</sub>: Customers' loyalty towards green coffee store significantly affects their loyalty towards green product.

## Methodology

Conducted for determining the effect of green practices on coffee shop customers' emotional attachment and loyalty, this study is a positivist one in terms of selected methodology and a survey research in terms of data collection technique. The population of the study consists of the customers of three Starbucks coffee shops operating in Marmaris and Bodrum. The reason why the study is limited to Starbucks customers is that only Starbucks coffee shops have applied LEED certification system in Mugla. The sample of the study is comprised of 404 Starbucks customers who have voluntarily accepted to participate in this survey study.

After an extensive literature review for the required survey (Jang et al., 2015; Çatı, Koçoğlu, 2008; Jones, Sasser, 1995), research model is set as on Figure 1.

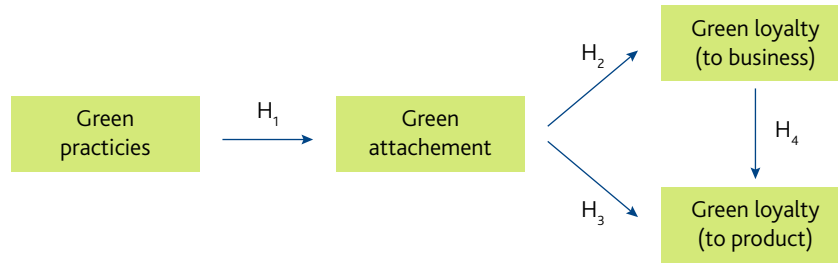


Figure 1. Research Model

For the measurement of these variables in the model, an adopted scale was used after a comprehensive literature review (Jang et al., 2015; Çatı, Koçoğlu, 2008; Jones, Sasser, 1995). The survey had 5 sections. In the first part, there were 3 items regarding green practices implemented in the shop; in the second part, there were 7 items related to emotional attachment to green coffee shop; in the third part there were 4 items for measuring loyalty towards green coffee shop; in the fourth part, there were 2 items regarding loyalty towards green product. These items were measured with 5-likert-scale (1= absolutely disagree and 5= absolutely agree). In the last section of the form, there were questions about the demographics of the participants and their motivations for visiting that coffee shop (reasons for preference). Before conducting face-to-face survey research, three academics were consulted for content validity of the scale and according to recommendations, it was revised. A confirmatory factor analysis was applied in order to test construct validity of the scale. The consistence within measurement model was examined via chi square test ( $\chi^2/sd$ ); goodness of fit index (GFI) and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). In the first analysis, goodness of fit index values was not found to be between the determined criteria, therefore the analysis was remade after some minor modifications. As a result of the second analysis, it was found that  $\chi^2/sd=4$ ; GFI=0,90; RMSEA=0,08. As the number of the variables was few in confirmatory factor analysis, the lowest level for factor load was determined as 0,30 (Büyüköztürk, 2011). These results proved that the model was consistent with the data and it could be acceptable. The reliability of the scale was determined via Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) coefficient (See Table 1). The data were collected face-to-face with customers at the coffee shops during November- December in 2017.

**Table.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

	Factor load	Goodness of fit index
Green Practices ( $\alpha = 0,702$ )		$\chi^2/sd=4$ GFI=0,90 RMSEA=0,08
This coffee shop offers responsibly eco-friendly products.	,892	
This coffee shop offers recycling bins for plastic and paper cups in the store.	,720	
This coffee shop uses eco-friendly materials.	,425	
Emotional Attachment ( $\alpha = 0,877$ )		
I frequently visit this coffee shop.	,719	
I trust the products served in this coffee shop.	,722	
I feel safe in this coffee shop.	,743	
I feel peaceful in this coffee shop.	,754	
I feel this coffee shop is a part of me.	,624	
This coffee shop says a lot about who I am.	,682	
I enjoy drinking coffee in this coffee shop a lot.	,671	
Green Loyalty (to business/store/shop) ( $\alpha = 0,771$ )		
When I want to drink coffee outside, my first choice is this coffee shop because it is environmentally friendly.	,699	
I positively advertise and promote this coffee shop to my friends and family because it is environmentally friendly.	,874	
I recommend this coffee shop to my friends and family because it is environmentally friendly.	,903	
I consent to pay more for a cup of coffee to this coffee shop because it is environmentally friendly.	,361	
Green Loyalty (to product) ( $\alpha = 0,846$ )		
I would like to repurchase the eco-friendly products in this shop.	,866	
I would recommend the eco-friendly products of this shop to my friends or others.	,846	

Before further data analysis, normality was tested. With Skewness and Kurtosis, it was determined by using  $\pm 2.0$  equating value that all of the sub-variables were within this range (Gravetter, Wallnau, 2014). According to this result, the data fulfilled the normality assumption for Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). For testing hypotheses, path analysis with latent variables and absolute and percentage values were applied. Test results were analyzed with AMOS 21.0 and SPSS software.

## Findings and discussion

### Findings related to Demographics of the Participants

Almost half of the participants were male (51,7%) and three out of four were single (75,5%) in terms of their marital status. As for age distribution of the participants, almost half of them were 24 or under the age of 24 (51,7%), 25,5% of them were between the ages of 25-34, 14% of them were between the ages of 35-44; 5% were between 45-54 and the rest were 55 or above. In terms of educational status of the participants, 3% were elementary school graduate, 19,1% were high school graduate, 33,7% had an associate degree; 35% had bachelor's degree and the rest were postgraduates. Considering their occupations, 4,5% were unemployed; 53% were stu-

dent; 21,5% had jobs in private sector and 12,6% were public employees and 8% were retired or self-employed. The ratio of the participants who had an average income under 1600 TL (Turkish Lira) was 50%; almost 20% had an income between 1601-2800 TL; 18% had an average income between 2801-4000 TL; 7,2% had an income of 4001-5200 TL and the rest had an average income more than 5200 TL. That more than half of the participants were at the age of 24 or under and had an income of 1600 TL or under showed the fact that significant number of Starbucks customers was students, hence young people. These demographic data show similarities with sociodemographic information revealed by market research on Starbucks. Moon, Quelch (2003) claim that Starbucks customers are now younger and have lower incomes than old customers.

### Findings related to The Effect of Green Practices on Emotional Attachment and Green Loyalty

The participant customers were also asked what the most important factor affecting their preference to visit this coffee shop was. According to the results, the most important factor affecting the customers' preference of these coffee shops was found as coffee quality (46,2%). The second important factor was atmosphere of the store (28,4%); it was followed by location (18,3%) and service quality (3,9%). However, green practices implemented in the stores were found important by only 3,2% of the participants. Revealing similar results in their study on green hotels with this current study, Lee et al. (2010) claim that especially value and quality which are among the components of cognitive image have a positive impact upon emotional and overall image of a green hotel and quality attributes are stronger than value attributes.

The results of path analysis conducted for testing the hypotheses are presented at Figure 2. The goodness of fit index values obtained as a result of path analysis were found as  $\chi^2/sd$  3,71 and RMSEA was found as 0,80; GFI as 0,89; CFI as 0,91. These results showed that the model

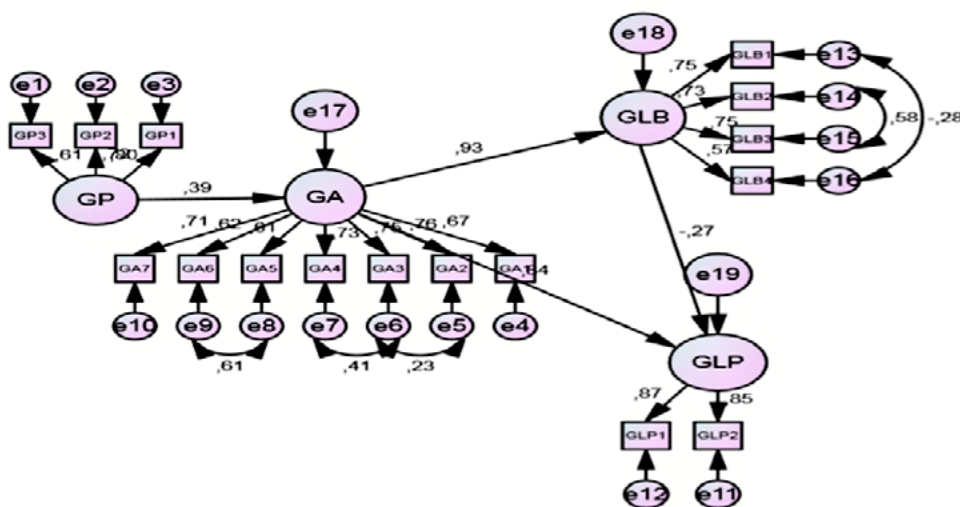


Figure 2. Path Analysis Results

GP: Green Practices; GA: Green Attachment; GLB: Green loyalty (towards business); GLP: Green loyalty (towards product)

was consistent with the data and accordingly claimed as admissible (Kline, 2011). Considering the results in the figure below, it was determined that green practices' effect on green attachment ( $H_1: \beta=0,39$ ,  $p<0,001$ ) was positively significant; green attachment's effect on green loyalty to the store ( $H_2: \beta=0,93$ ,  $p<0,001$ ) was positively significant; green attachment's effect on green loyalty to the product ( $H_3: \beta=0,84$ ,  $p<0,01$ ) was positively significant. On the other hand, the effect of green loyalty to the store on green loyalty to the product was found negative and insignificant ( $H_4: \beta=-0,27$ ,  $p>0,05$ ).

The results of path analysis presented at Figure 2 were summarized at Table 2. Considering the hypotheses,  $H_1$  (Green practices of stores significantly affect customers' emotional attachment),  $H_2$  (Customers' attachment to a green store significantly affects their loyalty towards green store) and  $H_3$  (Customers' attachment to a green store significantly affects their loyalty towards green product) were accepted. However,  $H_4$  (Customers' loyalty towards green store significantly affects their loyalty towards green product) was rejected.

**Table 2.** *The Results of Path Analysis*

Hypotheses	Effects	t value	Result
$H_1$	Green practices → Green Attachment (F1→F2)	6,68***	Accepted
$H_2$	Green Attachment → Green loyalty (to business) (F2→F4)	22,02***	Accepted
$H_3$	Green Attachment → Green loyalty (to product) (F2→F3)	3,04**	Accepted
$H_4$	Green loyalty (to business) → Green loyalty (to product) (F4→F3)	-0,96*	Rejected

\* $p>0,05$  \*\* $p<0,01$  \*\*\* $p<0,001$

Jang et al. (2015) also assert that green practices implemented in a cafe have a substantial influence upon consumer attachment. This result is consistent with the claim of Vlachos (2012) who state that green or social responsibility attitudes of businesses are correlated with customers' relationships with those businesses. Also, businesses, which communicate with consumers in a better way than their competitors, can hold their competitive advantage by offering their green products and practices with socially responsible attitudes (Çelik et al., 2016). The results of the current study support the results of previous similar studies. Today as environmental awareness is increasing, a business' implementation of green practices can be a preference reason for many consumers.

## Conclusion and suggestions

For businesses, which offer coffee and coffee-related products to gain a sustainable competitive advantage, it is important to create customer loyalty and customer attachment. On the other hand, with the increase in environmental consciousness, many customers seek the criterion of being eco-friendly in various businesses. In this regard, LEED certification system is one of those eco-friendly markings for rating healthier, more environmentally responsible and energy saver buildings. Starbucks Company is one of the businesses guaranteeing its environmental responsibility with LEED certification system applied for its coffee stores. This study aims to determine the effect of green practices on loyalty and emotional attachment of coffee shop customers. The data is collected with survey form from the customers of 3 Starbucks store located in Mugla province, Turkey.

Considering the demographics of the participants, more than half of them are male, single, at the age of 24 or under and have an average income level of 1600 TL or below. This suggests that they are mostly students and hence, Starbucks is now a company that appeals to mostly young students. The most important factors affecting the customer preference of Starbucks are found as coffee quality, atmosphere, location; service quality and green practices respectively.

After extensive literature review, research hypotheses are specified and these hypotheses are tested with path analysis with latent variables, which was one of the structural equation modeling. As a result of this analysis, it is determined that green practices implemented in Starbucks stores have a positive impact upon customers' emotional attachment which has a positive impact on their green loyalty to the stores and products. However, it is also deduced that customers' green loyalty towards the coffee shops does not have an influence on their green loyalty towards the products.

Based on these results, it can be suggested that the businesses, shops or stores adopting green practices can appeal to consumers who have a higher level of environmental awareness. As Chen (2013) claims, if these companies want to increase their customers' green loyalty, they need to invest in resources addressing customers' green perceptions, green satisfaction and green loyalty.

Under the light of the findings of this study, some suggestions can be made for future research and service industry:

- The importance of green practices in supporting sustainable consumption is undeniable. In the presence of conscious consumers, businesses' support for green practices both gain a competitive advantage to these businesses and play a role in environmental protection.
- Green practices can be a significant step towards decreasing business expenses in a long term. For example, usage of faucets and light bulbs that provide water and energy saving might be useful in decreasing expenditure.
- This study is conducted with the customers of Starbucks, which has LEED certificate and offers coffee and coffee products. A similar study can be done in different cafes and restaurants operating in food and beverage industry and the evaluation and comparison of results can contribute to the body of knowledge.
- In this study, green practices implemented in stores are measured with a 3-item scale. However, there are various green practices such as offering coffee grounds to customers for using them as fertilizers for plant nutrition, using systems that provide water and energy saving, using furniture that is made of eco-friendly materials. In future research, these kinds of applications should be taken into account because they can present more different results.

It is deduced during data collection process that some of the customers have no information regarding green practices. It is very important to inform consumers about environmental protection and green practices for increasing their awareness level. Companies and businesses may take responsibility in informing their customers. For example, they can specify green products on a menu card, put info cards on their tables or have recycling boxes.



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# Attitudes of Local Population on the Importance of Events Nourishing Culture and Tradition of Croats in Vojvodina

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## Abstract

*AP Vojvodina is a highly multi-ethnic community, with 29 nations and national or ethnic groups living on its territory. Croats make only 2.43% of the population of Vojvodina, but with their rich culture and tradition, they represent a significant potential for the development of Vojvodina's cultural tourism. The richness of customs is best represented through numerous events that take place in areas with the majority of Croatian population. The paper presents the results of a survey conducted to determine how informed the population of Vojvodina is about the maintenance and significance of events of Croats in Vojvodina. A sample of 158 respondents was obtained. Descriptive statistical analysis, t-test of independent samples and analysis of variance ANOVA were used to analyse the obtained data.*

**Keywords:** Croats of Vojvodina, events, attitudes, local population, Vojvodina

## Introduction

Vojvodina is defined as an autonomous province of citizens living in it, within the Republic of Serbia. AP Vojvodina covers 24.4% of the territory of the Republic of Serbia or 21.588 km<sup>2</sup>. According to the last census from 2011, AP Vojvodina has a population 1.931.809, which makes 21.6% of the total population of the Republic of Serbia. The diversity of Vojvodina is contributed by 29 ethnic groups, the most numerous being Serbs, Hungarians, Romanians, Bunjevci, Slovaks, Croats and Ruthenians. Serbs are the majority population (66.8%), followed by Hungarians (13%), Slovaks (2.6%), Croats (2.4%), Romani (2.2%), Romanians (1.3%), Montenegrins (1.2%), Yugoslavs (0.6%), and Macedonians (0.5%), as well other minor ethnic groups that include: Ukrainians, Muslims, Germans, Albanians, Slovenes, Bulgarians and others (<http://popis2011.stat.rs/>; <http://www.srbija.gov.rs/pages/article.php?id=45629>).

It can be observed from the above mentioned that one of the main features of Vojvodina is multiculturalism, that is, a high degree of joint residence of different ethnic groups in the same

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area. It is difficult to imagine the existence of Vojvodina, its autonomy without the existence of multiple ethnicities, languages, religions, different cultural patterns (Affirmation of Multiculturalism and Tolerance in Vojvodina, 2008).

In addition to the majority nation, in Vojvodina there are many ethnic groups that are highly differentiated in terms of demographic development, socio-economic, historical and cultural-civilization characteristics, national emancipation and political organization.

The multiculturalism in Vojvodina can be proven by a range of compelling data. Classes in public primary schools in Vojvodina are taught in 6 languages (Serbian, Hungarian, Slovak, Romanian, Croatian and Ruthenian), and in secondary schools in 5 languages (Serbian, Hungarian, Slovak, Romanian and Ruthenian). Public information in media is broadcasted in eight languages (Hungarian, Slovak, Romanian, Croatian, Romani, Ukrainian and Ruthenian). The official use of languages of ethnic groups is present in 39 of 45 municipalities in Vojvodina. The non-governmental sector was also developed; members of national and ethnic groups in Vojvodina formed hundreds of active associations and organizations for the cultivation of customs, folklore, development of national culture and language, development of education, etc. (Affirmation of Multiculturalism and Tolerance in Vojvodina, 2008).

Respect for groups and indigenous culture is vital to the general well-being of those communities and the people belonging to them. Ethnicity is a notable and significant element of cultural communication. Cultural programmes are also a powerful way to engage with other groups and counter harmful stereotypes. And in those countries where groups and indigenous peoples are able to practice their cultures freely, the benefits not only for their own communities but society as a whole can be seen easily (Grant, 2016). Where different cultures are recognized and respected, life is richer for all.

## Croats as an Ethnic Group in Vojvodina

According to the 2011 census report, there were 47.033 Croats living in Vojvodina, representing 2.4% of the population in province. Croatian is one of the six official languages of Vojvodina. Croats live in Backa, in the municipalities of Subotica, Sombor, Novi Sad (Petrovaradin), Sonta, Apatin, Monostor, and in towns of Ruma, Sremska Mitrovica, and settlements Hrtkovići and Nikinci in Srem. Smaller numbers of Croats live in Banat, Opovo and Starcevo. Croats came to these areas in a dozen migratory waves, in different historical periods and for different reasons from the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia (<http://www.zkvh.org.rs/index.php/vijesti/vijesti-iz-zajednice/5777-hkd-vladimir-nazor-iz-stanistica>). The oldest Croatian community in Vojvodina are the Croats in Srem, who have been living there since the settlement of Slavic tribes in the Danube region. More intensive migrations started 230 years ago to strengthen the border with the Turkish Empire, about 4000 Croats came, mainly from central Slavonia. They began to be mentioned from the second half of the 17th century, during the Habsburgs, at a time when the Ottoman Empire lost Buda and then other territories in central Europe. In Backa live Croats who immigrated at the behest of the authorities during the colonization of Vojvodina, as well as Croats who came to Vojvodina by internal migration during Austro-Hungary and, later, Yugoslavia. During the colonization from 1945 to 1948 about 4000 Croats from Dalmatia, from the area of Metković, Sinje, Vrlika, Drnis, Benkovac, Split, Šibenik, Trogir and Zadar immigrated to Vojvodina. Also, people from other parts of Croatia migrated, mainly from Gorski Kotar and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Dalmatian Croats were mostly settled in Stanisić and Ridjica, to a smaller extent in Sivac, Gudurica and in bigger towns in Vojvodina.



na (<http://www.cink.rs/index.php/h/73-hrvati-u-vojvodini>; Popović, Arđelan, 2019; Kovačević et al., 2010). “Although there are no official numbers, according to the estimates of the human right NGOs approximately 30,000 ethnic Croats left Vojvodina during the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia” (Ristić, 2012). When we talk about teaching in Croatian language in secondary schools, since 2002 about 400 students attend classes in Croatian language in five primary and two secondary schools in Subotica every year, and since 2017 also in one primary school in Backi Monostor. There are about fifty Croatian cultural associations in Vojvodina, and more than half of them have been created in the last twenty years. They represent the most visible and massive segment of the Croatian cultural scene. Over the years, the cultural space of Croats in Vojvodina recorded a large production of events, about four hundred, and cultural practices show a high representation of folklore-traditional content in the association’s programs (Čelikovic, 2019). Associations differ in their institutional development and in richness of the content they produce, but they still work together to preserve mostly folklore content from cultural heritage. This especially applies on rural cultural and artistic societies, which exist in almost every settlement where a significant number of Croats live (Tavankut, Djurdjin, Mala Bosna, Stari Zednik, Bajmok, Svetozar Miletic, Sonta, Backi Monostor, Backi Breg, Bac, Plavna, Vajska, Slankamen, Golubinci, Petrovaradin, Stanisic). In the city centres it is a little more pluralistic (Ruma, Sremska Mitrovica, Sombor, Subotica) – there are contents that are not related to folklore or traditional culture, which is especially true of cultural associations in Subotica, which in the field of their work have publishing books, magazines, organizing literary evenings and even scientific meetings (Žigmanov, 2011).

One of the most important cultural institutions is Matica hrvatska, founded in 1998 with headquarters in Subotica. Matica hrvatska gathers members of the Croatian community in order to preserve their tradition and cultural identity in the territory of Vojvodina (<http://www.cink.rs/index.php/h/73-hrvati-u-vojvodini>). The Croatian ethnic group in Vojvodina conducts cultural activities through the Institute of Culture of Croats in Vojvodina, which was established in 2009.

The National Community of Croats in Vojvodina holds a large number of events, which significantly contributes to the preservation of the intangible cultural heritage of Croats living in Vojvodina. Events of Croats in Vojvodina can be divided according to content into traditional, literary, artistic, musical, religious, cultural and other events. In Table 1 there is an overview of the events. The support of the local community is of great importance for the success of the events, as they contribute to bonding within community, as well as to mutual bonding of communities, and are important opportunities for the society, family, and individuals to express their identities, way of life, social relationships and feelings of belonging (Besermenji, Pivac, 2019).

**Table 1.** *The list of events of Croats in Vojvodina*

Type of events	Name of the event	The venue
Drama events	International review of amateur drama companies	Sombor
	Memorial of amateur drama groups “Antun Aladzic”	Svetozar Miletic
	Amateur theatre festival	Ljutovo
Musical event	Croatian Tamburitza Review	Ljutovo
	Annual concert of HKPD “Djurdjin”	Djurdjin
	Concert of Grand Tamburitza Orchestra HKPD “Gubec”	Ruma
	Evenings and nights of Ilija Zarkovic Zabar	Golubinci
	Bunjevac songs festival	Subotica
	Marian folk singing festival	Backi Monostor



Type of events	Name of the event	The venue
Musical event	Croatian Religious Song Festival HosanaFest	Subotica
	Mika's days	Backi Breg
Literary events	Ikavica-speech of Dalmatian, Lika, Herzegovina, Sokci and Bunjevci Croats	Stanisic
	Preprek's spring	Novi Sad
	Days of A.G. Matos and dr Josip Andric	Plavna
	Literary gathering	Subotica
	Days of Balint Vujkov	Subotica
	Provincial review of the reciters in Croatian language	Subotica
	Lira naive	Every year another place
	Art colony "Stipan Sabic"	Subotica
	Art colony "Panon"	Subotica
	Art colony "Ivan Gundic Ciso"	Stanisic
	Art colony "Kolorit"	Sombor
	International art colony "Sonta"	Sonta
	Art colony "Provala"	Lake Provala
	The first colony of naive straw technique	Tavankut
Traditional events	"Sremci Sremu"- a joint event of Srem associations	Sremska Mitrovica
	"Sokci and heritage"- a joint event of Sokci associations in Backa	Backi Monostor
	"Tyre"	Plavna
	"Masquerade"	Ruma
	Great feast	Subotica
	Feast of memories	Subotica
	Fisherman and bachelor meeting	Backi Monostor
	Sokci evening	Sonta
	Seminar of Bunjevac creativity	Tavankut
	Traditional women's combing and Croatian hairstyles in the region	Bac
	Golubinci masquerade	Golubinci
	Duzijanca (harvest feast)	Subotica
	Children's Folklore Festival "Children are a decoration of the world)	Tavankut
Religious events	Under Your protection	Plavna
	To Srem from the heart	Sid
	Testament day	Backi Monostor
Other events	Anniversary of the colonization of Croats from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina to Vojvodina	Stanisic
	Memorial Birthday of Croatian Ban Josip Jelacic	Petrovaradin
	Celebration of Croatian National Day	Zemun
	Hrcko's masquerade	Subotica

Source: <http://www.zkvh.org.rs/index.php/manifestacije/lista-svih-manifestacija>

## Methodology and Research Description

The questionnaire used in the survey consists of three parts. The first part includes 6 socio-demographic questions (gender, age, nationality, occupation, amount of monthly income and respondents' education). The second part consists of questions related to the information and attendance of the respondents of the four events of the Croatian ethnic group, selected on the basis of their representation in the media. This section also examined the impact of certain factors on the lack of affirmation of the events of the Croatian ethnic group, which were evaluated by the respondents using a five-point Likert scale (1- completely disagree, 2- disagree, 3- no opinion, 4- agree, 5- totally agree). The third part of the questionnaire focuses on the respondents' attitudes towards the events of the Croatian ethnic group. The questionnaire was taken from a model used to explore attitudes of visitors to cultural events in rural areas of Vojvodina (Pivac et al., 2014). A total of 21 questions were analysed for major components. A five-factor structure was obtained ("socio-economic impacts", "organization", "entertainment", "promotion" and "services") which explains a total of 66.5% of the variance. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test (KMO) of sampling adequacy was 0.817, which exceeds the recommended value of 0.6 (Kaiser, 1974). Barlett's test for sphericity reached statistical significance ( $p=0.000$ ). The reliability analysis confirmed that all factors are reliable, as Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) for each construct is greater than 0.7 (Kaiser, 1974), ranging from 0.700 to 0.802 (Table 5).

The survey was conducted between August the 15th and October the 15th, 2019. The survey was conducted in Novi Sad, Subotica, Sombor and Ruma using a combination of multiple survey methods. 42% of the sample was obtained using the method "face-to face", while 58% of the sample was obtained electronically. The electronic questionnaire in google form was sent to the e-mail addresses of employees of tourist organizations in Vojvodina, travel agencies, cultural institutions as well as students of Faculty of Sciences, Department of Geography, Tourism and Hotel Management. A sample of 158 subjects was obtained. The collected data were entered into the SPSS database and all further analyzes were carried out using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0.

The paper set out two starting hypotheses: H<sub>1</sub> – The population of Vojvodina is not sufficiently familiar with the events of Croatian ethnic group and H<sub>2</sub> – There is a statistically significant difference in the respondents' attitudes about the events in relation to the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents.

## Research Results

### Sample description

Female respondents were represented in the sample by 56.3% and male 43.7%. The majority of respondents (55.7%) belong to the age groups of 41-60 years old. In terms of national structure, Serbs were the most dominant respondents (58.2%), followed by Hungarian respondents (20.3%), Croatian and Slovak nationality. The most respondents are employed (67.1%), and in terms of monthly income, the largest group is those who earn from € 201 to € 400 (48.7%). According to the educational structure, the most numerous were respondents with completed secondary (56.3%) and faculty (21.5%) (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Results of descriptive statistical analysis

Variable	N	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	69	43.7
Female	89	56.3
<b>Age</b>		
21-30	17	10.8
31-40	29	18.4
41-50	45	28.5
51-60	43	27.2
>61	24	15.2
<b>Nacionality</b>		
Serbian	92	58.2
Hungarian	32	20.3
Slovaks	12	7.6
Croats	22	13.9
<b>Occupation</b>		
Student	22	13.9
Employed	106	67.1
Unempolyed	12	7.6
Retired	18	11.4
<b>Monthly income</b>		
below 200 €	22	13.9
201-400 €	77	48.7
401-600 €	43	27.2
601-1000 €	9	5.7
above 1000 €	7	4.4
<b>Education</b>		
Secondary school	89	56.3
College	13	8.2
Faculty	34	21.5
M.Sc. degree	22	13.9

Duzijanca (Harvest feast) in Subotica (Table 3) is the only event familiar to more than half of the respondents in the observed sample. The other three events are unknown for the majority of respondents (from 65.8% to 94.3%).

**Table 3.** Respondents' awareness of Croatian ethnic group events

Name of the events		Are you familiar with the event?			
		YES		NO	
		frequency	percentage	frequency	percentage
1	Duzijanca (Harvest feast) in Subotica	84	53.2	74	46.8
2	Sokci's evening in Sonta	9	5.7	149	94.3
3	Veliko prelo (Great feast) in Subotica	27	17.1	131	82.9
4	Masquerade in Ruma	54	34.2	104	65.8

The decisive factors for the lack of affirmation of the events of the Croatian ethnic group are the lack of information on the events (3.950) and the lack of leisure time (2.918). Other factors had arithmetic values below 2.5 and were not recognized as limiting factors for the subjects (Table 4).

**Table 4.** *The influence of certain factors for insufficient affirmation of the Croatian ethnic group events*

Questions	Aritmetic value	Standard deviation
Lack of funding	1.551	0.826
Lack of company	2.177	1.309
Lack of leisure time	2.918	1.441
Lack of will	2.361	1.540
Lack of information on the event	3.950	1.232
Poor organization of the event	1.462	1.115

Based on the results presented in Table 5, it can be concluded that ‘Promotion’ is the most important factor related to the maintenance of events. Respondents gave the greatest importance to the statement that events are of great importance for the promotion of the local milieu. The questions of “entertainment” and “services” are of the least importance for the respondents.

**Table 5.** *Descriptive statistics (according to factors and questions) and analysis of the questionnaire reliability*

Factors and questions	Arithmetic value	Standard deviation	Cronbach's $\alpha$ coefficient
<b>F1- Socio-economic impacts</b>	<b>4.453</b>	<b>0.398</b>	<b>0.802</b>
The event should be in a convenient location with parking space provided.	4.418	0.697	
The events allow the exchange of ideas among ethnic groups in the community.	4.652	0.478	
The events contribute to a sense of community.	4.646	0.608	
Events increase the number of tourists.	4.551	0.603	
Events have the effect of increasing cooperation between people.	4.494	0.738	
Events allow local population to earn extra income.	4.475	0.605	
Events have a positive cultural impact.	4.519	0.636	
Events help improve the quality of life in the community.	3.867	0.938	
<b>F2- Organization</b>	<b>3.986</b>	<b>0.538</b>	<b>0.701</b>
The event should include accompanying programs (education, competitions, and workshops).	4.538	0.500	
The event should be organized by the local government (venue).	3.905	0.788	
The event should be organized by professional associations.	4.183	0.902	
The event should be organized by a stakeholder group interested in making a profit.	3.316	0.945	
<b>F3- entertainment</b>	<b>3.568</b>	<b>0.539</b>	<b>0.759</b>
The event should be entertaining.	4.298	0.810	
Performance of musicians is necessary.	2.304	0.615	
Events have a rich and meaningful program.	4.101	0.733	

Factors and questions	Arithmetic value	Standard deviation	Cronbach's $\alpha$ coefficient
F4-Promotion	4.478	0.479	0.700
The event should be promoted in neighbouring countries.	4.348	0.789	
Brochures should be distributed at the event to promote exhibitors.	4.430	0.769	
Events are of great importance for the promotion of the local community.	4.658	0.476	
F5- Services	3.795	0.715	0.734
Safety of visitors during the events is high.	4.012	0.896	
The price of products and services are affordable (food, drink, souvenirs).	3.722	0.789	
The quality of products and services is exceptional (food, drink, souvenirs).	3.652	0.881	

The analysis of the general attitude towards (Table 6) indicates that the respondents are aware of the importance of the rich Croatian culture for tourism development ( $M=3.9937$ ;  $SD=1.1030$ ). They are also of the opinion that Croatian culture is insufficiently presented through the media ( $M=2.6835$ ;  $SD=0.5540$ ).

**Table 6.** General attitude of the respondents towards Croats as ethnic group in Vojvodina

Items	Mean	Std. Dev.
I am interested in learning more about the culture of Croats.	4.5127	0.7292
I consider the culture of Croats in Vojvodina to be a good potential for tourism development.	3.9937	1.1030
I think that the culture of Croats is well represented through the media.	2.6835	0.5540
I think that the culture of Croats is represented in the educational program.	2.7785	0.6447
Croatian culture is well represented in the tourist offer of Vojvodina.	3.0190	0.8992

### T-test results by gender of respondents

T-test of independent samples was applied with the aim of comparing arithmetic value of responses between male and female respondents (Table 7). The analysis of the obtained data concludes that there are statistically significant differences in the respondents' answers with respect to gender in two factors: 'socio-economic influences' and 'entertainment' at significance level  $p < 0.01$ , and in two factors 'promotion of' and 'services' at a significance level of  $p < 0.05$ . The result of this difference may be the greater interest of women in handicraft products as well as in the preparation and purchase of authentic gastronomic specialities.

**Table 7.** T-test results by gender

Factor	Arithmetic mean		t-test
	Male (n=69)	Female (n=89)	
F1	4.361	4.524	-2.603*
F2	3.946	4.017	-0.823
F3	3.416	3.685	-3.211*
F4	4.391	4.547	-2.042**
F5	3.652	3.906	-2.246**

\* $p < 0,01$ ; \*\* $p < 0,05$

## Results of analysis of variance ANOVA with respect to age structure of respondents

Using the analysis of variance ANOVA, it was examined whether there was a statistically significant relationship between the dependent variables (separate factors) and the independent variables (socio-demographic characteristics of respondents – age, occupation, education, income and nationality). The results of one-way analysis of one-factor variance indicate that at a significance level of  $p < 0.01$ , there are statistically significant differences with respect to the age of the subjects (Table 8). The differences are that older respondents give more importance to the attribute “entertainment”. The explanation for the obtained results can be found in the assumption that older respondents are very much in the mood to visit different cultural contents, to participate in entertainment and all additional offers to get out of their daily routine. They have more knowledge about the culture and customs of ethnic groups as well as the importance of manifestations for their preservation, but also their economic importance for the local environment.

Based on the results of the T-test and analysis of variance ANOVA, it is concluded that there is a statistically significant difference in the respondents’ attitudes about events in relation to the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents (age). H 2 is confirmed only for Entertainment (F3).

**Table 8.** Analysis of the variance ANOVA with respect to the age structure of the respondents

Factor	Middle value					F	LSD post hoc test
	group 1 (21-30)	group 2 (31-40)	group 3 (41-50)	group 4 (51-60)	group 5 (61+)		
F1	4.3162	4.3879	4.5278	4.4622	4.4688	1.109	-
F2	3.8971	3.8621	3.9611	4.0581	4.1146	1.061	-
F3	3.4368	3.6275	3.7984	3.9028	4.0296	3.634*	1,2<3,4,5
F4	4.4314	4.3908	4.5556	4.5039	4.4306	0.658	-
F5	3.3725	3.3793	3.6889	3.6047	3.9389	2.232	-

\* $p < 0,01$

## Conclusion

Tourists’ interest in becoming familiar with different cultures is increasingly dominant in contemporary tourist trends. Considering the world tourist trends, tourist workers are becoming aware of the importance of cultural tourism development, in accordance with the very rich cultural offer of ethnic groups living in the territory of AP Vojvodina.

In Vojvodina there is a prevailing sense of the values of multiculturalism and ethnic tolerance as enduring commitments, however, the results of the survey indicate that the population is insufficiently informed about the historical and cultural aspects of the centuries-old common life of nations in the territory of Vojvodina.

The most visited and well-known event of the Croats in Vojvodina, of the four elected, is Duzijanica (the harvest feast), which takes place every year in Subotica. Respondents believe that the decisive factor for the lack of affirmation of events is the lack of information on their maintenance. Based on the results, hypothesis H1 was confirmed – the population of Vojvodi-



na is not sufficiently familiar with the events of the Croatian ethnic group. This confirms that in addition to the Hungarian ethnic group (Pivac, 2017), the population of Vojvodina is no more familiar with the events of another ethnic group – Croats. This hypothesis was confirmed in the analysis of the variance of the ANOVA with respect to the age of the respondents. There was a significant difference in the answers related to the importance of events, so the second hypothesis H2 was partially accepted – there is a statistically significant difference in the respondents' attitudes about events in relation to the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents.

In our society today there is a low level of knowledge about the past and culture of Vojvodina, in general, and ignorance about other national communities is especially present. The reasons for this situation are, first and foremost, the lack or low level of education of the population or the lack of direct experience in this field. Culture is essential to ethnic groups and indigenous communities – it forms part of their essence. Language, songs, traditional crafts and dance are often used as markers of belonging to a group. In many cases, distinct traditions handed down can provide a unique character that allows minority and indigenous communities to create and sell their products, and thereby gain valuable income from their culture.

Introducing youth and adults to folk customs, folk dances and folk music of the people and nationalities should contribute to the preservation of identity, spread culture and make social solidarity stronger, respect the diversity and promote ethnic relations in this region.

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