

Women SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE in tourism

lessons learned or lessons forgotten?

PROCEEDINGS BOOK

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Impressum

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- Izidora Marković Vukadin, PhD (Institute for Tourism, Zagreb, Croatia)
- Damir Krešić, PhD (Institute for Tourism, Zagreb, Croatia)
- Sanela Grujo Vrkljan, PhD (Institute for Tourism, Zagreb, Croatia)

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Conference Organizers:

Preface

It is our pleasure to present the Proceedings of the international scientific conference titled "Women in Tourism – Lessons Learned, or Lessons Forgotten?". This event was organized by a collaboration of several esteemed institutions: the Institute for Tourism (Croatia), the University of Westminster (UK), Equality in Tourism International (UK), the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, and the Faculty of Economics and Business at the University of Zagreb (Croatia). Held in Split from April 19th to 21st, 2023, the conference gathered academics and industry practitioners to engage in meaningful dialogue focusing on the role of women in tourism industry, academia and generally in tourism sector. The primary aim of the conference was to create a vibrant platform for exchanging knowledge, ideas, and best practices focused on advancing women's leadership and entrepreneurship within the tourism industry. We aspired to shift the narrative from traditional towards more positive and empowering perspectives on the roles of women in tourism. By spotlighting and celebrating the significant contributions of women in this dynamic industry, our goal was to move beyond traditional discussions of challenges and obstacles. Instead, we were focused on the successes and advancements women have achieved, with the hope of inspiring and motivating further progress of women within the sector.

During the conference, a diverse group of speakers and researchers highlighted how women have been pivotal in driving innovation, fostering inclusive growth, and promoting sustainable development within the tourism sector. Their presentations showcased remarkable stories of resilience, creativity, and leadership, underscoring the crucial role women play in shaping the future of tourism. By bringing these inspiring narratives to light, our goal was to foster a more balanced and optimistic perspective on women's participation in tourism. This conference marked a significant step towards acknowledging and valuing the multifaceted contributions of women, ultimately striving for a more equitable and empowered industry for everyone. The global tourism industry has long been recognized not only for its significant economic impact but also for its unique capacity to bridge cultural divides. Beyond its economic and cultural significance, tourism serves as a crucial arena for examining and addressing gender dynamics within the workforce. The "Women in Tourism" conference delved into these dynamics, shedding light on the roles, challenges, and significant contributions of women in the tourism sector.

The first part of the Proceedings focuses on papers examining entrepreneurship and employee experiences of women in the tourism industry. Entrepreneurship plays a pivotal role in driving economic and social advancement and empowerment of women, thus contributing to the more equal role of women in society. The conference featured research that delves into the motivations and challenges faced by female entrepreneurs in tourism. These papers highlighted the critical need for visibility, education, and tailored funding opportunities, demonstrating how supporting female entrepreneurship can foster innovation and gender empowerment in the sector. Additionally, understanding job satisfaction among female employees in the hospitality industry emerged as essential for improving retention and productivity. A survey-based study encompassing women from 10 different countries revealed that job security and stability are highly valued, while issues like long working hours and variable pay contribute to dissatisfaction. Despite the gender empowerment in the tourism industry, the conference papers revealed that gender pay gaps between male and female workforce still exists. One notable paper scrutinized employment issues faced by women in tourism, particularly in the South European or Mediterranean region. It criticized the predominant focus of existing literature on economic impacts over employment equality, highlighting the need to address this gap to ensure fair and equitable workplaces. Balancing professional and personal responsibilities continues to be a significant challenge, especially for women in leadership roles. Research on female managers in Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) in Croatia underscored the difficulties faced by mothers in the tourism sector. The findings advocate for more flexible work arrangements to allow women to excel in leader-

ship positions without compromising family commitments. Another paper presented a cross-cultural perspective by exploring the dynamics of Asian women migrating to Europe for employment in the tourism industry. This case study examined whether their expectations matched their actual experiences and highlighted the mutual benefits for both the employees and the industry arising from this trend.

Several papers presented at the conference highlighted creativity, trust, and empowerment as key strengths of women in the tourism industry. One area where these strengths shine is in peer-to-peer accommodation (short term rentals), which has opened new income opportunities, particularly for women. A qualitative study focused on Split, Croatia, illustrates how trust is the foundation of informal employment in the local accommodation sector, showing how it fosters both economic and social empowerment for women. Women's roles in the labour market, particularly in high-ranking positions within global value chains, are essential for driving economic and social progress. Research integrating the gender equality dimension into the global value chain framework proposed new indicators to measure women's participation in tourism. This approach emphasizes the need for gender-inclusive development strategies to ensure that women can fully contribute to and benefit from the industry. Empowering women is also crucial for the sustainable development of rural tourism and for nurturing young professionals in the sector. Case studies presented at the conference underscore the significance of women's involvement in rural entrepreneurship, highlighting how their participation is vital for achieving broader development goals in these communities.

While the conference primarily celebrated women's roles in tourism, it also provided a platform to explore the intricate and often concealed aspects of sex workers, predominantly females, within the industry. Paper presented delved into this complex issue through the analysis of statistical data, media reports, and existing research. This study highlighted the demographics and working conditions of female sex workers, underscoring the urgent need for more nuanced and supportive policies and interventions in this area. Additionally, the conference examined how historical narratives of women with tragic fates have been woven into local folklore and tourism attractions. One study focused on how stories of witch persecution, tragic romances, and local legends are commercialized. This not only preserves cultural heritage but also draws visitors, blending history with tourism appeal. Research on storytelling as a marketing strategy further illustrated how personal narratives can forge emotional connections between visitors and destinations. By sharing compelling stories, tourism marketers can enhance the visitor experience and create deeper, more meaningful engagement with a place.

The Proceedings of the Women in Tourism Conference underscore the diverse roles and significant contributions of women within the tourism sector. By presenting a range of empirical research, insightful case studies, and comprehensive policy discussions, the conference aimed to deepen the understanding of the unique challenges women face. It also sought to highlight and promote strategies that support their empowerment and career advancement. The insights and recommendations gathered from this event are poised to contribute significantly to the development of more inclusive and sustainable tourism practices worldwide.

Editors:

Izidora Marković Vukadin, Damir Krešić and Sanela Grujo Vrklijan

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Women in Entrepreneurship: Empirical Insights from Germany and Israel and Their Potential for the Tourism Industry

Madlen Schwing, Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Germany; e-mail: madlen.schwing@ku.de

Lea Rauch, Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Germany; e-mail: lea-rauch@gmx.de

Hannah Zehren, Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Germany; e-mail: hannah.zehren@gmail.com

Abstract

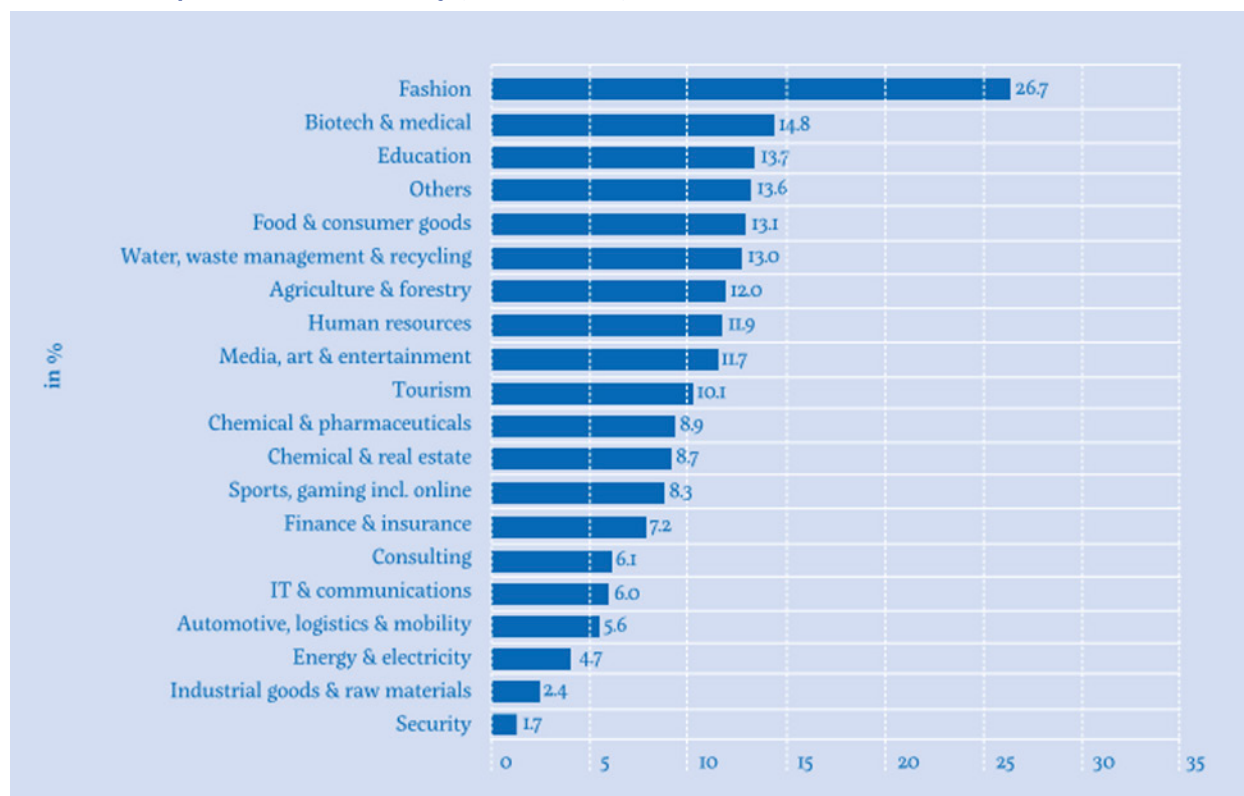
Entrepreneurship is an important asset both for the economy and for the society. There is an untapped potential across various industries due to a lack of diversity and inclusion within the start-up scene and entrepreneurial ecosystems. Germany and Israel have been ranked among the world's top 10 countries fostering female entrepreneurs in the last few years. The tourism industry serves as a positive example of gender diversity since a significant number of women is involved in the business formation process of start-ups. Hence, the objective of this paper is to shed light on the distinctive characteristics of female entrepreneurs in Germany and Israel and the respective entrepreneurial landscape in both countries, and its implications for the tourism industry. Qualitative semi-structured interviews with female entrepreneurs in Germany and Israel add to the existing theoretical findings. Many similarities have been observed between female entrepreneurs from Germany and Israel, notably their shared motivation to establish purpose-driven start-ups. Key differences arise from country-specific contexts, particularly the taxation system in Germany, and mandatory military service in Israel. To foster female entrepreneurship, enhancing the visibility of women, ideally from an early age, is imperative. In Germany, it is essential to create additional opportunities for women over 30 and those without academic backgrounds, while also promoting IT education among young girls. In Israel, a broader range of funding options is necessary for small non-technological, and non-profit ventures that focus on social concerns. Fostering small non-technological business ideas generally has significant importance within the tourism sector, primarily due to the substantial representation of women in its workforce. Tourism start-ups frequently emphasize sustainability due to industry-wide pressures. Ultimately, supporting female entrepreneurs could offer substantial opportunities for tourism managers.

Keywords: female entrepreneurship; women in tourism; Germany; Israel

Introduction

It is estimated that there are 274 million women worldwide involved in entrepreneurship, significantly contributing to international society and the economy (Dheer *et al.*, 2019; Elam *et al.*, 2021; Minniti, 2010). Women make up a large portion of the tourism workforce and very often found their start-ups in the tourism industry (Aziz *et al.*, 2021; Gousiou and Lagos, 2021). Since Israel is a major tourism destination, many tourists were visiting Israel prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, with German tourists being one of the most important groups (Strack, 2021; Tourist Israel, 2023). Many tourists start their trip in Israel's entrepreneurial capital Tel Aviv (Tourist Israel, 2023), famous for its entrepreneurial mindset – similar to Germany's capital Berlin (Fuerlinger *et al.*, 2015; Kollmann *et al.*, 2022; Statista, 2023). Germany and Israel provide important entrepreneurial ecosystems including the aforementioned start-up hubs of Berlin and Tel Aviv (Fuerlinger *et al.*, 2015; StartupBlink, 2023), while actively fostering female entrepreneurship, and both countries are among the world's top ten countries supporting female entrepreneurs according to the Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs 2021 global ranking (Mastercard, 2022). However, there still is an underrepresentation of female entrepreneurs, and this missing gender diversity may lead to disadvantages in both economies due to the untapped potential of women (Berger and Kuckertz, 2016; Hirschfeld *et al.*, 2020; Kollmann *et al.*, 2021). In sectors such as fashion, health, education, and also tourism, there is a higher number of female entrepreneurs in comparison to other sectors, when it comes to the example of Germany (see Figure 1), in contrast to technology-related industries, which leads to industry-related gender discrimination (hospitality vs. technology) (Münster *et al.*, 2021).

Figure 1.
Female start-up industries in Germany (numbers in %)



Source: Schwing and Zehren, 2022:133 according to Münster *et al.*, 2021:17

There is a research gap regarding cultural and country-specific contexts and success factors of female entrepreneurs in Germany and Israel. This contribution, therefore, investigates the characteristics of female entrepreneurs, both in Germany and in Israel, and the circumstances of the respective entrepreneurial landscapes. The underlying research question, therefore, is:

What are the idiosyncratic characteristics of German and Israeli female entrepreneurs as well as of the entrepreneurial landscape, and how do the country-specific structures influence them?

This article aims to provide a comparison of individual characteristics of female entrepreneurs and country-specific aspects facilitating an understanding of differences, common grounds, and potential synergies for female entrepreneurs in both countries and acts as a reference for future entrepreneurs, tourism and destination managers, and policymakers in general to foster previously untapped potential of female entrepreneurs.

Theoretical Background

Entrepreneurship is the "process of generating, developing and exploiting an idea in a new or existing business in order to implement innovative products or production methods and therefore change the business environment" (Schwing and Zehren, 2022:131) and is very important to the economic development of countries (Malecki, 2018). Entrepreneurs are embedded in social constructs and networks fostering entrepreneurial activities and access to resources through different processes and elements which are known as entrepreneurial ecosystems (Berger and Kuckertz, 2016; Stam and Spigel, 2017; Wurth *et al.*, 2022).

A female entrepreneur can be defined as "a confident, innovative and creative woman capable of achieving economic independence individually or in collaboration [who] generates employment opportunities for others through initiating establishing and running an enterprise by keeping pace with her personal, family and social life" (Jakhar and Krishna, 2020, p. 38).

Women's motivations for founding a start-up are manifold and, in many cases, different from those of male entrepreneurs (OECD, 2021), as lots of women prioritize social and economic objectives (Jennings

and Brush, 2013). They are purpose-driven, as demonstrated by their entrepreneurial activities in the environmental sustainability and social realm (Hirschfeld *et al.*, 2020), leading to positive impacts on diverse economies (Verheul *et al.*, 2006) and entrepreneurial ecosystems (Berger and Kuckertz, 2016; Hanson, 2009) since female entrepreneurs are to some extent considered to be more sustainable and resilient (Schwing and Zehren, 2022). Progressive gender attitudes, e.g., due to the support of the family, are pull factors for female entrepreneurship (Patrick *et al.*, 2016). In addition, personal networks, such as the immediate family, foster the growth of female ventures (Mitra and Basit, 2021).

According to academic and practical literature women have greater challenges due to gender stereotypes and biases in the male-dominated field of entrepreneurship (Ughetto *et al.*, 2020), discrimination in the online and offline realms (Martinez Dy *et al.*, 2018), and when founding their businesses, especially in terms of access to venture capital, dominated by men (Malecki, 2018). They have a strong fear of failure, too little attention from the media, less important business contacts, and smaller networks, resulting in missing out on start-up pitches and network events (Münster *et al.*, 2021). Moreover, there is a lack of role models in female entrepreneurship (Finanz-heldinnen, 2021). Accordingly, there is a need to study and overcome these barriers to foster gender diversity and resilience in entrepreneurial ecosystems.

In addition to the impact of their specific entrepreneurial ecosystem, female entrepreneurs are also influenced by their countries' frameworks (OECD, 2021; Ofek and Eiran, 2018; Polin and Ehrman, 2020; Welter, 2011). For example, there is an interdependence of country-specific gender policies and entrepreneurship, e.g., the government's impact through taxation, i.e. tax splitting for married couples in Germany (OECD, 2021) and women drafted into the military in Israel (Ofek and Eiran, 2018; Polin and Ehrman, 2020). In comparison to Germany, the state of Israel requires every Israeli regardless of gender to serve in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) (Israel Defense Forces [IDF], n. D.). In Germany, military service was replaced by voluntary military service in 2011, and women were never drafted (Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, 2023; Deutscher Bundestag, 2011). In Israel, especially the Israeli Innovation Authority supports female founders with monetary grants (Deloitte Israel and Co., 2023).

Because of the distinct characteristics of women entrepreneurs displayed in recent literature and the impact of entrepreneurial ecosystems and country-specific frameworks, this article contributes to an in-depth qualitative assessment of these factors for female entrepreneurs in Germany and Israel and similarities in personal circumstances for women across both countries. The aim is to replicate success factors and work on impediments to improve the overall situation and sustainably increase the number of female entrepreneurs.

Methodology

To answer the research question, qualitative expert interviews with female entrepreneurs both in Germany and in Israel have been conducted online via the video conference tool Zoom within the timeframe of several months, between August and November 2022. The objective was to understand the interviewees' situations and experiences in their respective countries in detail. This detailed view would not have been possible by following a quantitative approach due to the exploratory nature of the topic and since expert interviews trigger implicit knowledge and build on advanced knowledge (Döringer, 2021).

Female entrepreneurs participating in the interviews were predominantly identified through the professional network LinkedIn. In total, eleven interviews were conducted – six with German, and five with Israeli female entrepreneurs – following a semi-structured approach and interview guidelines. The use of semi-structured interviews enables a natural conversational flow and potentially uncovers insights that might remain hidden in a fully structured interview and still delivers comparable interview results (Magaldi and Berler, 2020).

All interviews were transcribed, coded, and analyzed for patterns by using the software MAXQDA to answer the research question of this study. The analysis adheres to Mayring's guidelines for qualitative content analysis that provide a systematic approach to assessing qualitative materials (Mayring, 2020).

Results and Discussion

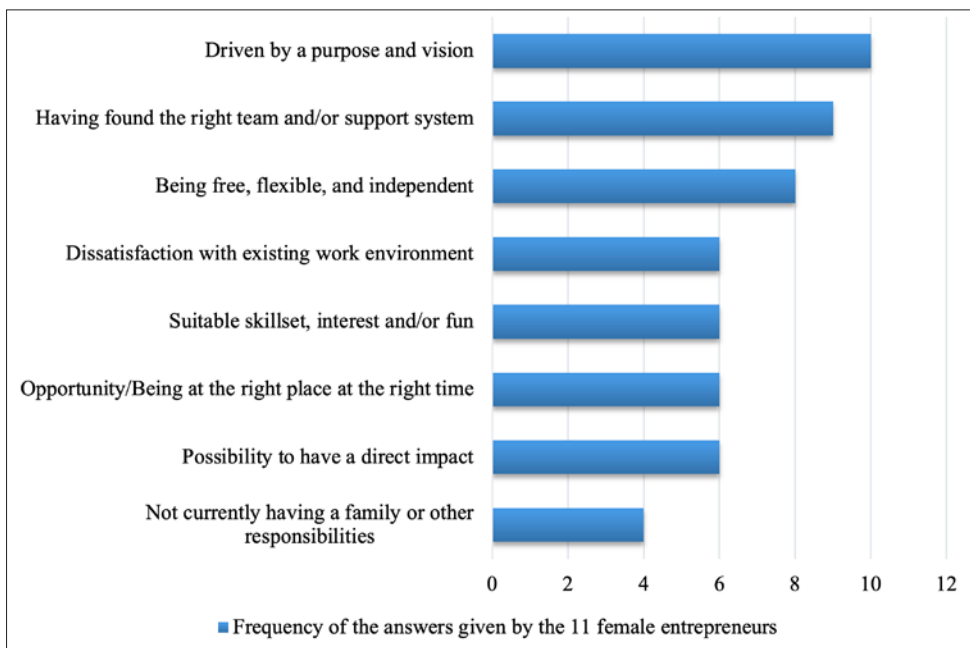
The development of female entrepreneurship is to a certain extent dependent on a country's circumstances which leads to *differences* between female entrepreneurs in Germany and Israel (cf. Welter, 2011). Female entrepreneurs mentioned that Germany shows an overall low level of digitalization and little exposure of girls and women to male-dominated industries such as tech. The German education system lags

behind the early access to relevant digital technologies for girls. The time in the military in Israel gives women early access to the newest technological development. Not only does it allow women to experience technology, but during military service, technology is used for a specific purpose, giving women the opportunity to explore technology in a hands-on way that they would not have otherwise experienced. Almost all interviewed Israel founders emphasized that their time in the military highly influenced their entrepreneurial career choices and activities. Early exposure to traditionally male-dominated areas through military service facilitates interest in technologies, creates confidence, and sparks entrepreneurial intention (cf. Polin and Ehrman, 2020). Furthermore, the Israeli founders claimed to have learned important competencies such as being organized, assertive, and confident around men and in public speaking during their military service. In Israel, there is a technology bias toward large deep-tech enterprises, and few funding options for small non-technological ventures – which are mostly founded by women, for example in hospitality –, and men are overly represented in sectors that require connections to the army, police, and government. Israel shows high interest in encouraging technology start-ups, early access to tech, and exposure to typically male-dominated areas for women due to military service for women and men. In Germany, various financial support options are available. Improving digitalization and flexible work conditions is crucial for competitiveness and talent attraction. Better parental leave and tax laws could make self-employment more appealing to women. German society still assigns family-related tasks to women, especially after 30.

In addition to the differences, country-specific circumstances may also lead to *similarities* between female entrepreneurs. In Germany as well as in Israel, the interviewed female founders taught themselves crucial skills needed for their ventures using digital technologies. Technologies also play a crucial role in their success and are used by the founders to enable access to knowledge, skills, and network in their day-to-day work. Ughetto *et al.* (2020) confirm that technologies improve access to networks, knowledge, and funding. In both countries, interviewees perceive that technical skills and competencies are more associated with men than with women. Discrimination against women happens offline as well as in the digital realms (cf. Martinez Dy *et al.*, 2018). In Germany as well as Israel, there are historically developed male power networks in the financially strong male-dominated industry sectors, which are difficult to access for the interviewed women. Personal networks are described as important sources for founders to receive financial as well as psychological support and gain economic advantages. The interviewees experienced that investments are mainly based on relationships, sympathy, and contacts with like-minded similar individuals rather than economic performance indicators. Investors allocate their financial resources to people whom they are familiar with and who have a personal connection. These connections grow over time often in gender-exclusive business networks. In both nations, there are funding opportunities and support systems, especially for female founders. In addition, many support opportunities are targeting mainly university graduates and young women who recently graduated. German and Israeli entrepreneurs agreed that the entrepreneurial mindset could hardly be learned at university or school. Therefore, a lack of education or training opportunities could not be identified as a causal barrier suggested by Raghuvanshi *et al.* (2017). The level of education as a personal factor, however, plays a role in the success of female-founded ventures (Gupta and Mirchandani, 2018), and is fueled by digital access to knowledge and skills. Being part of a mixed-gender team is perceived to be an advantage and a potential success factor for women-owned businesses. Male and female founders can complement each other, contributing specific skills and strengths to the venture. In addition, mixed-gender teams enable access to gender-exclusive networks and pitch events. Another advantage mentioned by German and Israeli founders is that founding as a team offers additional support. The ability to share responsibility can help to reduce the fear of failure and stress.

There are some *common patterns* regarding the characteristics of female entrepreneurs in both countries (see Figure 2). Female entrepreneurs are primarily motivated intrinsically and guided by a sustainable purpose and vision without displaying solely financial motivations. This is consistent with the literature that has been previously discussed (cf. Hirschfeld *et al.*, 2020; Jennings and Brush, 2013). No interviewed founder directly described money as a primary motivation to start the business. Female founders from both countries pointed out their intrinsic desire to learn and educate themselves and their curiosity. In addition, factors like having met the right people for founding a business and the motivation to be independent and flexible were often mentioned. At the same time, dissatisfaction with the existing work environment was a reason to start their own business for some women. Furthermore, female entrepreneurs benefitted more from their early socialization in their families because it empowered them with an entrepreneurial mindset. Entrepreneurial education at school or university was perceived as making less of a difference.

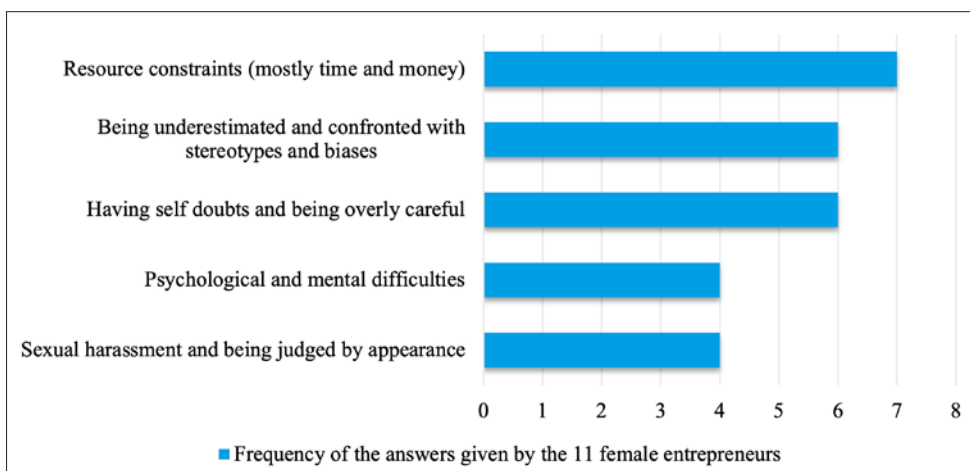
Figure 2.
Motivational factors and founding intentions



Source: own interview findings

External support and networks are crucial in motivating women to take the step to self-employment. Female entrepreneurs had different experiences with gender-only networks and received more authentic and valuable support in organically grown mixed-gender networks as they also helped to balance potential gender-related constraints. Access to networks as well as knowledge, skills, flexible remote work, and funding is facilitated through digital technologies. In addition to biases, gender stereotypes (cf. Ughetto *et al.*, 2020) and being underestimated were one of the most frequently mentioned difficulties. Only resource constraints related to time and money were mentioned more often. A lack of financial resources, especially start-up capital in the early stages, was brought up as lowering investment opportunities and hence hindering business growth. Other difficulties the female entrepreneurs faced were self-doubt, being more risk-averse, emotional labour and stress, and sexual harassment (see Figure 3). The founders presented exemplary situations in which they were confronted with inappropriate statements undermining their competencies and skills, primarily by male acquaintances. Examples include being asked for additional proof at a pitch event and comments about clothing styles in business meetings.

Figure 3.
Most frequently mentioned constraints, difficulties, or problems



Source: own interview findings

In general, however, the interviewed founders had difficulties mentioning constraints that in their opinion arise solely for female founders. Interviewed women who are part of a mixed-gender founder team interestingly stated that they on some occasions perceive themselves as less confident, less visionary, and more cautious than their male counterparts. Founders in mixed-gender teams describe the teams as successful since they complement each other in terms of for example risk aversion and skillsets. The female experts typically founded in female-dominated areas such as health and tourism (cf. Münster *et al.*, 2021), but also consulting. Furthermore, their start-ups are smaller (cf. Sternberg *et al.*, 2022), using the resources immediately available to them, but also more sustainable, meaning that they seek fundraising only for something that is fully achievable and which in turn makes them appear less visionary. Female gender does not necessarily imply disadvantages; there are also some advantages linked to being a female entrepreneur, like e.g., getting women-only support options and the paradox of women deemed "beautiful" are often underestimated regarding skills and leadership qualities. In addition, the interviewed founders discussed the advantage of being invited to women-only pitches and funding events.

German and Israeli female founders demonstrate *distinct variations* in their experiences and perspectives. Israeli founders attribute their entrepreneurial choices to compulsory military service, which instills early responsibility and exposure to male-dominated environments. They develop skills in public speaking, assuming responsibilities, and working comfortably alongside men. In contrast, German founders lack military service and express more concerns about risk. The interview findings suggest that German founders face greater gender-related constraints and rely more on support networks that were built during their time at university. While both groups recognize the advantages of being female founders, the specific advantages differ, with German founders mentioning them more frequently. The role of the family was mentioned more often by Israeli than by German founders. They documented that their families have encouraged them mentally and served as role models displaying progressive gender attitudes toward their daughters (cf. Mitra and Basit, 2021; Patrick *et al.*, 2016). Despite these differences, all interviewed women successfully establish their businesses and adapt to gender-related challenges, flourishing within their respective contexts.

The results show that there are some common features of female entrepreneurs that help provide general recommendations on fostering female entrepreneurship starting from a young age. However, some country-specific implications make one-size-fits-all solutions impossible. In addition, some factors such as the impact of the close family can only partially be influenced by the country-specific circumstances.

Conclusion and Implications

To answer the research question, of what the idiosyncratic characteristics of German and Israeli female entrepreneurs are as well as of the entrepreneurial landscape, and how the country-specific structures influence them, several expert interviews were conducted. Many similarities have been identified between German and Israeli female entrepreneurs, such as the motivation to start purpose-driven businesses out of intrinsic motivation rather than extrinsic. Key differences arise in country-specific circumstances. Germany scores low in entrepreneurial finance, taxes, and bureaucracy. In addition, the physical infrastructure in Germany is deficient. The main differences arise from missing early access to technology and outdated taxation laws in Germany, and compulsory military service for women in Israel. Israel scores high in social-cultural norms and low in governance-related frameworks such as government policies and entrepreneurial programs. Overall, founders from both countries speak positively about the opportunities in both countries. Non-financial support such as leadership seminars could be a meaningful addition to the existing support options in Israel. In Germany, there are many support options, especially in bigger cities targeting exclusively female founders. In Israel, the support system during a crisis such as the pandemic could be improved. Especially female founders in non-tech industries such as hospitality are affected by monetary losses.

To foster female entrepreneurship, further improving women's visibility as thriving entrepreneurs and businesswomen, ideally already at a young age at school, and in addition, especially in Germany, more opportunities for women over 30 and non-academics as well as IT education for young girls are suggested. In Israel, there is a need to establish more funding options for small non-technological ventures and companies that are not profit-oriented but address social issues. Female founders are purpose- and opportunity-driven and creating opportunities for women to pursue their ideas already in school or university for example by enabling a start-up semester, hackathons, or competitions tackling real-life problems with technology could spark entrepreneurial interests in girls and women. The goal should be to change the system to attract more women, not to focus on changing women to fit an existing system.

Fostering these kinds of business ideas is clearly relevant to the tourism industry since women already make up a large part of the workforce, and the industry is considered to have low entry barriers in comparison to technology-related fields (cf. Figueroa-Domecq *et al.*, 2020; Schwing and Zehren, 2022). Furthermore, start-ups in tourism are often sustainability-related as the industry is under pressure to be more sustainable as it is impacted more severely by climate change and crisis (cf. Figueroa-Domecq *et al.*, 2020). Consequently, supporting female entrepreneurs can be of great potential for tourism managers. Within the tourism industry, women-only awards or events can be a way to increase visibility and awareness, however, it is important to establish the same standards for men's and women's work and not to hand out special prizes or funding for women only. Founders are heterogeneous and increasing the overall visibility of different founders from early years on – possibly through school guest visits – is beneficial in attracting more young individuals into developing their own ideas and turning them into reality.

Evidence from qualitative interviews with female entrepreneurs has been compared with existing literature findings, laying the foundation for future research. However, the eleven interviews that were conducted should be considered a limiting factor and could be further expanded. Furthermore, all interviews were conducted with women belonging to a social majority, i.e., only Jewish women who attended university were interviewed in Israel. This may have led to certain biases. Therefore, future studies should also consider non-academic women and women belonging to ethnic minorities. Another limitation arises since the interviewer and interviewees are women. Hence, the study might be subject to gender-related biases. The interviews are a temporary snapshot of the interviewee's opinion, knowledge, and experience at that specific time and are subject to change.

Further research could also address the impact of technology on female entrepreneurship and how to overcome potential biases in the technology industry, as well as the advantages of women in the entrepreneurial ecosystem (e.g., sustainability, resilience, and purpose). In addition, it is important to measure the impact of female entrepreneurship in a specific tourism destination in Germany and Israel over a time-frame of several years. A cross-cultural focus in the academic literature on how to adapt country-specific entrepreneurial environments to attract more women into this career could lead to beneficial recommendations and an increasing number of female founders. In addition, this study shows that female founders experience advantages in the business world. Further research on the advantages could help to shift the narrative on positive aspects of this career path and hence help to promote women's entrepreneurship as an attractive career opportunity for women of all ages. Similarities mentioned by all female entrepreneurs suggest some kind of universal validity that could be explored further through a larger sample size or a quantitative research approach.

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Job Satisfaction of Female Employees in the Lodging Industry

Sanela Grujo Vrkljan, Ph.D. Institute for tourism, Croatia; e-mail: sanela.grujo.vrkljan@iztg.hr

Abstract

The employee satisfaction and motivation become one of the main subjects due to the lack of employees in tourism industry. The objective of this paper is to find what is the satisfaction level of female employees in the lodging industry and significance of chosen satisfaction factors. The quantitative research was conducted by the questionnaire on 262 female employees from 10 countries. Perception of satisfaction was measured on the five-point Likert scale. The mean scores of the satisfaction, the ratio of participants with responses 1 and 2 ("non-satisfied") and the ratio of participants with responses 4 and 5 ("very satisfied") were applied. For comparison between groups Student's two sample t-test of independent samples and two sample z-test of proportions were used. It was found, in general, that female employees show the highest degree of satisfaction with safety and stability of job and work independence, and the lowest degree of satisfaction with working hours and variable salary. There was no statistically significant difference between younger female employees up to age of 35 and female employees older than 36 on present job, except for the possibility of getting good tips with which younger employees were more satisfied. Full-time female employees were more satisfied with safe and stable job, working hours, defined job description and responsibilities, work performance measuring, and the possibility of further education through seminars and trainings organized by the employer than seasonal employees. There was statistically significant difference between female employees on cruise ships and land lodging providers for factors such as the possibility of getting tips, paid expenses, possibility of getting to know other destinations through work mobility, and basic salary. The cruise ships female employees were more satisfied with these factors. In addition, the land lodgings female employees were more satisfied with safety and stability of job.

Keywords: job satisfaction; female employees; human resources; lodging industry; tourism

Introduction

The subject of employee satisfaction and motivation becomes one of the main questions due to the lack of employees in tourism industry. Although the proportion of female employees in the lodging industry is markable, because of long working hours, weekend work, night shifts, seasonality of industry, dealing with emotions and stress, recognition and respect, low share of female employees in management boards, pregnancy and motherhood, low wages, and other characteristics of job environment and female nature, their job satisfaction should be researched.

Most common used models in exploring the aspects of empowerment are Friedmann's (1992) psychological, social and political, and Rowlands's (1997) power to (generative or productive), with (power of group) and power within (self-acceptance and awareness). Many women accept their subordinate position as the natural and only option due to the cultural norms determining gender roles and affecting psychological and social empowerment. The women take the natural and cultural norm of being mothers and housewives in the same time trying to express themselves intellectually. Kabeer (2017) research showed that paid work has brought greater voice in family and reduced the domestic violence. Moswete and Lacey (2015) define women empowerment as a freedom from economic dependency on men and society stating that it results in freedom to make choices, buy homes, provide for their families, educate their children, travel, engage socially with people, pursue additional business interests, etc. Diaz-Carrion (2018) showed that entrepreneurship in tourism can build social capital through increased self-confidence and overcoming social isolation what is not a linear process. Still, it is necessary to take with caution assumption that paid work and economic independence is enough for changes in other life areas and equality with men. Most reported form of empowerment after economic dimension, is psychological in terms of self-esteem, self-confidence and pride. Tourism can empower women in multiple ways, providing them with a job opportunity, income generating opportunities, but still gaining equality is long mile ahead. Equality in Tourism (2018) showed that in sample of 53 UK tourism companies, women made up 23% of board members,

still below the 25% target called for by Equality in Tourism in 2013 and well below government and other industry targets. In 2018, the professional associations had the highest percentage of women in boards (30%). Despite some improvement, cruise liners remained the lowest overall and tour operators made no significant increases. As it can be seen there is a great number of women working in tourism, still majority of them are on managing positions. Women face discrimination, occupational segregation, are undervalued, stereotyped and not promoted, given less training than men and struggle more with work-life balance (Wong and Ko, 2009). The women that are on top-levels management are more aware and will be more likely to implement gender equality measures than male managers. To implement gender equality, it will be important to create the necessary critical mass of women on leading positions. The most important factor affecting the empowerment is political and legal framework followed by institutional and business arrangements. As Ferguson (2018) stated, more than 20 years of feminist work on gender mainstreaming in international organizations has taught us that gender quality does not happen by accident. It requires funding, research, knowledge and senior management commitment with some concrete action points and further research and analysis need to be conducted to explore why the tourism industry has remain stubbornly resistant to incorporating demands for gender equality by developing guidelines and good practices for gender mainstreaming, especially compared to other sectors and industries.

As the step ahead, job satisfaction of female employees is condition to their motivation, career development, and equality. Although there is noticeable amount of researches on employees' satisfaction with different factors over years, there is a lack of researches specifically on female employees in lodging industry and tourism in general. This paper focuses on the female employees' job satisfaction, without getting into gender equality nor comparison of male and female job satisfaction. The objective is to find what is the satisfaction level of female employees in the lodging industry and significance of chosen satisfaction factors to provide inputs that could help lodging companies to achieve higher level of female employee's satisfaction, better business performance and results and thereby ultimately contribute to gender equality. Therefore, the following four hypothesis were set:

H1: The highest dissatisfaction of female employees in tourism lodging industry is with the working hours.

H2: There is a statistically significant difference between younger female employees up to age of 35 and female employees older than 36 years on present job in many satisfaction factors.

H3: Full-time female employees are more satisfied than part time female employees in tourism lodging industry.

H4: There is a statistically significant difference between land lodging female employees and cruise female employees on present job in many satisfaction factors.

Additional objective is to determine factors with low satisfaction which could lead to the gap that needs to be filled by adapting and improving human resources motivation politics.

Reverse Approach: From Employee Job Satisfaction to Motivation Policy Re-Creation

The lodging tourist experience is not only about the product. It is also the result of service provided by each employee, interaction between employees, interaction of employees with guests, as well as guests to other guests. Managing all these interactions through planning of human resources and planning of processes leads to smooth and successful business performance (Vrkljan *et al.*, 2023). Such human interaction and the intangible nature of services, highlight the relationship between job satisfaction and customer satisfaction, as the quality of service depends on the employee's performance (Nadiri and Tanova, 2010). Heskett *et al.* (1994) proposed the service profit chain, which explains that profit and growth are stimulated primarily by customer loyalty as result of customer satisfaction. If the service staff is satisfied, the guests will be satisfied and loyal, and consequently, the company will perform successfully. Companies which desire to enhance competitiveness need highly motivated, committed, satisfied and innovative human capital (Abou Elnaga and Imran, 2014). Talent management, or how to recruit, retain, and develop an engaged employees has played a critical role in tourism industry (Barron *et al.*, 2014). The marketing approach to human resources management proposes selecting employees with right personality, continuously training them to skills and service culture, encouraging teamwork, initiative and responsibility, monitoring their work performance, and awarding them for a good job (Vrkljan *et al.*, 2023). High job satisfaction leads to increased productivity and lower absenteeism and turnover rates (Yang, 2010; Yücel, 2012). Qasim and Sayeed (2012) asserted that satisfaction perception makes employees more loyal, committed,

productive and creative. Tourism studies have shown that employee motivation is strongly connected with a feeling of satisfaction resulting from the quality of work performed (Wildes and Parks, 2005). Chi and Gursoy (2009) and Koys (2003) have shown a significant positive relationship between employee satisfaction and financial performance. The similar is stated by Capelleras *et al.* (2021), successful talent management directly affects employees' job performance but also indirectly impacts organizational outcomes, especially financial outcomes. Considering rapidly changing, competitive business environment employees become the most significant and leading factor to achieve greater success, efficiency, and productivity (Güleç and Samancı, 2018; Nath and Agrawal, 2015). Managing the employee satisfaction in the lodging and hospitality industry becomes the most critical point in managing.

Some theories of motivation and attitudes at work can be used as basis for the understanding of job satisfaction such are Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs, Herzberg's (1968) Theory of Two Factors, Alderfer's (1976) ERG (existence-relatedness-growth) theory and others. Although many theories of motivation rely on needs of employees (such are perceptions, expectations, values, attitudes, preferences, demographic and sociographic characteristics), the characteristics of the job and work environment as determinants of motivation (colleagues, management style, working conditions, service culture, recognition of a good job and rewarding policy, skills, independence in work, interesting job, etc.) should be also considered. Organizational factors of job satisfaction arise from the characteristics of the company itself and the individual workplace, such as nature of work, possibility for promotion, relationship with co-workers, relationship with superiors, salary, awards and recognition, working conditions and job security. Personal factors of job satisfaction cannot be influenced by the company and include personal dispositions, mood and emotions, compatibility of personal interests and work, age, length of service of the employee and status (Noe, Hollenbeck and Gerhart, 2006). Motivation strategies such as material stimulation, redesigning and enriching work, management style, employee participation, management by objectives, flexible working hours, organizational culture, recognition and awards, training and career development, aim to increase motivational potential (Nakić and Lindov, 2020). Novaes Southgate and Savi Mondo (2017) have found that infrastructure, workload and stress management played an important role in the perceptions of satisfaction, especially with the regard to kitchen employees. Ineson and Berechet (2011) obtained results in which job satisfaction is also focused on opportunities for the development of personal skills, use of the workers' strengths and goal achievement, stating that the dissatisfaction is manifest in lack of career development. Satisfaction of socio-emotional needs (payment, recognition, support, etc.) of the employees encourage them to be more committed (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). Peterson *et al.* (2003) and Luthans (2010) mentioned management, relations of co-workers, pay levels, nature of the work, and promotion and carrier development. Laškarin Ažić (2017) showed a direct relationship between employee satisfaction with co-worker relationships and job satisfaction, as well as the employee satisfaction with management relations has a direct impact on job satisfaction. Yang (2010) indicated that there are influencing factors on job satisfaction in the hospitality industry such as role conflict, socialization and work autonomy. Slatten and Mehmetoglu (2011) have found a positive relationship between autonomy, strategic attention, role benefit and employee engagement. Managers who show high levels of supervisory support behavior make employees feel understood, valued, and cared about (Kang *et al.*, 2014). Nakić and Lindov (2020) wrote that education and training affect the performance of the organization if they are aligned with the strategic organizational goals and integrated into the human resources management function and have a positive influence on the motivation of employees as well as on job satisfaction. Furthermore, salary was considered as one of the main satisfaction determinants. Its importance lies in the fact that salary is related to the satisfaction of the individual needs, from the most basic needs to the highest such is social recognition (Novaes Southgate and Savi Mondo, 2017). However, Milman (2002) stated that the retention of employees in the workplace is primarily associated with personal fulfilment and working conditions, rather than the financial compensation, although money is considered as the most usual and the oldest way for motivating people.

The service culture supported by all employees and management is a foundation of success in service industry. Organizational identification which reflects oneness perception of members with organization, is known to increase job satisfaction (Feather and Rauter, 2004; Alegre *et al.*, 2016) and organizational commitment (Meyer *et al.*, 2004; Lee *et al.*, 2015). Building a strong brand identity also concerns internal marketing, i.e., to communicate and deploy the core values of the company in the service employees' minds to impact their role taking behavior (Skaalsvik, 2017). The lodging companies should hire the employees for their personality. This way employees are more likely to reflect the company value. The more merged beliefs of employees and company, the employees will be more dedicated to company, engaged in work, absenteeism will be lower, and the satisfaction will be higher. Feeling of loyalty to the organization stimulates employees' motivation to support organizational processes, take more responsibility and improve

job performance (Edwards, 2005; De Roeck *et al.*, 2014). Alegre *et al.* (2016) emphasized the higher level of identification with organizational values and goals and pleasant relations with workmates are indicated as driving force behind perception of satisfaction. Dissatisfaction of employees causes lower commitment (Sarwar and Abugre, 2013).

In recent decades, the emphasis in management has shifted to a participative management, with an emphasis on the psychological role of managers in managing and motivating employees. Understanding the factors of work motivation is necessary for the creation of a motivating system, better employee efficiency and service culture of the company. Bahtijarević Šiber (1999) stated that motivation is a common term for all internal factors that consolidate intellectual and physical energy, initiate and organize individual activities, guide behavior and determine its direction, intensity and duration. She explained it is a very complex and dynamic conception based on diverse human needs, aspirations, values and preferences that are not only different in different people but also for the same people in different situations and periods of their life and development. According to Locke (1969) job satisfaction reflects pleasurable emotions stemming from judgment toward one's job experience based on how well his/her needs and expectations are met. The job satisfaction is a set of positive or negative perceptions and feelings that employees experience. So, motivated employees can become not motivated if they are not satisfied on their job. Motivation implies a desire for a result, satisfaction the consequences of that result (Wehrich and Koontz, 1998). Though motivation and satisfaction are not the same categories, both could have similar factors. The motivation is the result of expectations in the future work, and job satisfaction is a positive or negative emotional state or feeling about past realized work. Following this point it could be expected that higher satisfaction with some factors leads to the conclusion that the company is good in motivation in those fields while the low satisfaction could lead to rethinking of different motivating approach (Vrkljan *et al.*, 2023). Service culture based on employees' behavior and satisfaction is still the hardest element to copy for the competition so companies should pay special attention to what motivates and satisfies their employees. As previously seen, the theory identifies many motivation and satisfaction factors. Their overlap is unquestionable, as well as that monitoring the level of employee satisfaction could and should provide guidelines for correction and improvement or creation of the company's motivation policy. A well-defined, implemented and periodically reviewed motivational system will result in employee satisfaction.

Methodology and Research Results

The data was collected from 262 female employees from 10 different countries in Europe, Asia, Africa and North America working in the lodging industry through the questionnaire using Google form in 2022. The questionnaire consisted of the socio-demographic questions and 20 questions on satisfaction factors. The perception of satisfaction was measured on the five-point Likert scale (1 = I totally disagree, 5 = I totally agree). The responses 1 and 2 were gathered as "low satisfaction", and 4 and 5 were considered as "high satisfaction".

Following the theoretical background the following factors were identified and tested: basic salary; variable salary (including commissions, bonuses, and incentives such as company car, laptop, mobile phone, etc.); the possibility of getting tips; defined working hours; flexible working hours; paid expenses (accommodation, travel, health insurance, etc.); safe and stable job; an organizational structure with a defined job description and responsibilities and measuring of work performance; good interpersonal relations encouraging teamwork; receiving feedback on work performance (performance feedback); the ability of the superior to recognize good job of employee (good job recognition); respect for employee opinion and suggestion for business improvement (employee opinion respect); work independence; flexibility and work creativity; possibility of further education through seminars and trainings organized by the employer; possibility of professional development, career planning and job promotion; public perception of the company (company's public image); possibility of identifying the values promoted by the company with employees own values and beliefs (company values); free and unlimited internet access; and employer location and possibility of experiencing other destinations through work mobility.

The following measures were applied: mean scores of the satisfaction, the ratio of participants with responses 1 and 2 ("non-satisfied") and the ratio of participants with responses 4 and 5 ("very satisfied"). The analysis was done dividing sample into: full-time and seasonal employees, up to age of 35 and 36 and more, and if they work on cruise ships or on land in hotels, camps and other lodging providers. For comparison between groups two main tests were used Student's two sample t-test of independent samples and two sample z-test of proportions.

There were 110 (42%) female participants up to 35 and 152 (58%) older than 36 years. Most of the participants were full-time employees (N=182; 69%), while 31% were seasonal employees. 35% (91) of them were employed by cruise ships companies and 65% (171) by land lodging providers.

Table 1.

Arithmetic mean of satisfaction with chosen satisfaction factors of female employees in the lodging industry

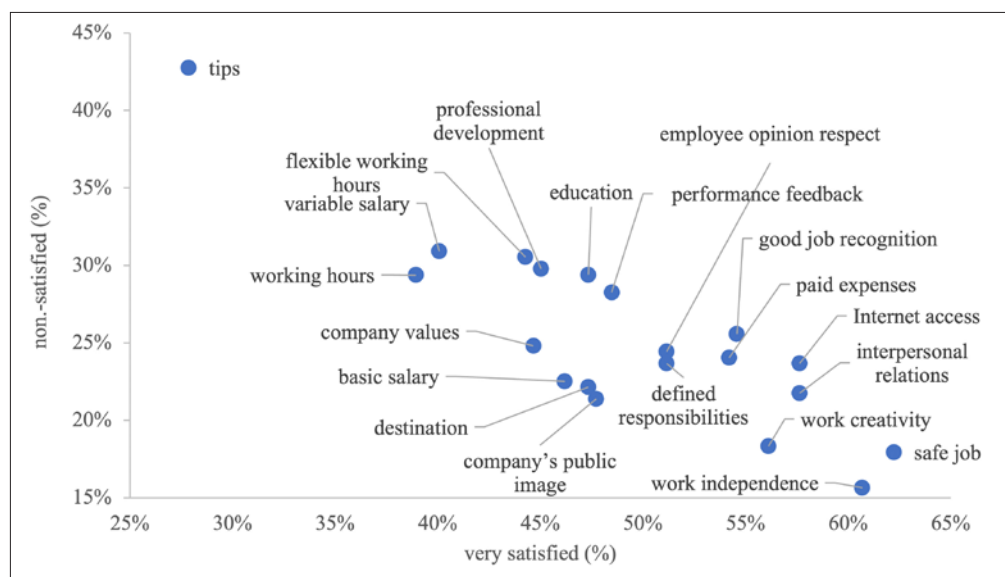
Factors	Arithmetic mean
safe job	3,71
work independence	3,70
work creativity	3,59
interpersonal relations	3,59
Internet access	3,55
paid expenses	3,53
good job recognition	3,46
destination	3,43
defined responsibilities	3,43
employee opinion respect	3,41
company's public image	3,41
basic salary	3,34
performance feedback	3,32
education	3,3
company values	3,29
professional development	3,26
flexible working hours	3,22
working hours	3,15
variable salary	3,11
tips	2,74

Source: author

It was found, in general, that female employees show the highest degree of satisfaction with factors such as safe and stable job and work independence, work flexibility and creativity and interpersonal relations encouraging teamwork (Table 1). The lowest degree of satisfaction is shown for defined and flexible working hours, variable salary, and tips.

Figure 1.

Percentage of high satisfaction and low satisfaction responses of female employees in the lodging industry

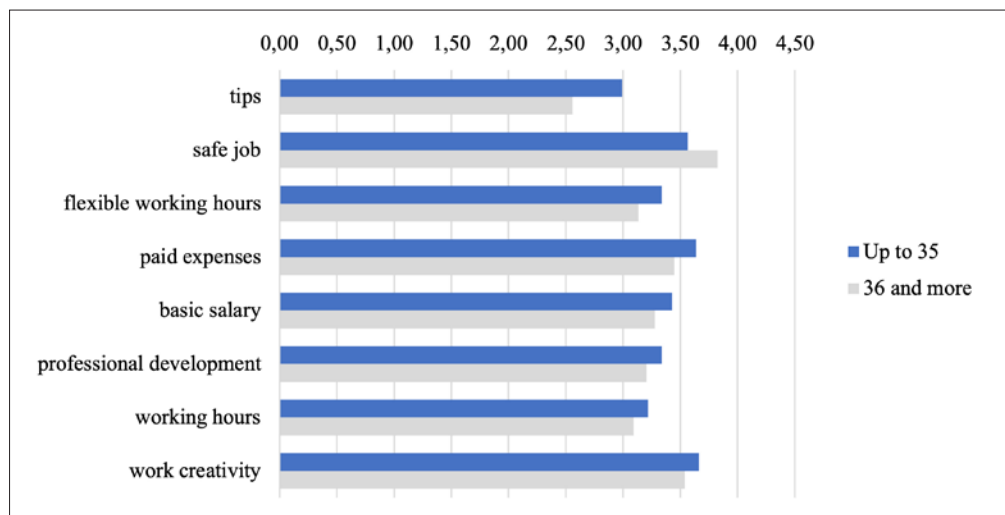


Source: author

H1: The highest dissatisfaction of female employees in tourism lodging industry is with the working hours is confirmed (Figure 1). This is expected and could be considered as one of the main obstacles of career development of female employees in lodging tourism industry.

Figure 2.

Arithmetic mean difference of job satisfaction between age groups (-35, 36+) of female employees in the lodging industry



Source: author

It was found that there is no statistically significant difference between younger female employees up to age of 35 and female employees older than 36 years on present job, except for the possibility of getting good tips (Figure 2). The younger female employees have shown the higher level of satisfaction with tips. It was expected that younger female employees will show the higher dissatisfaction due to pregnancy and motherhood, weekend work and night shifts, new generation characteristics etc. H2 is rejected.

Table 2.

Statistically significant difference of means, low and high job satisfaction according to age groups of female employees in the lodging industry

Factors	P-values		
	Test 1	Test 2	Test 3
tips	0,011**	0,001*	0,226
safe job	0,099	0,042**	0,162
flexible working hours	0,211	0,214	0,407
paid expenses	0,285	0,474	0,11
basic salary	0,311	0,407	0,423
professional development	0,436	0,838	0,537
working hours	0,43	0,523	0,416
work creativity	0,426	0,961	0,565

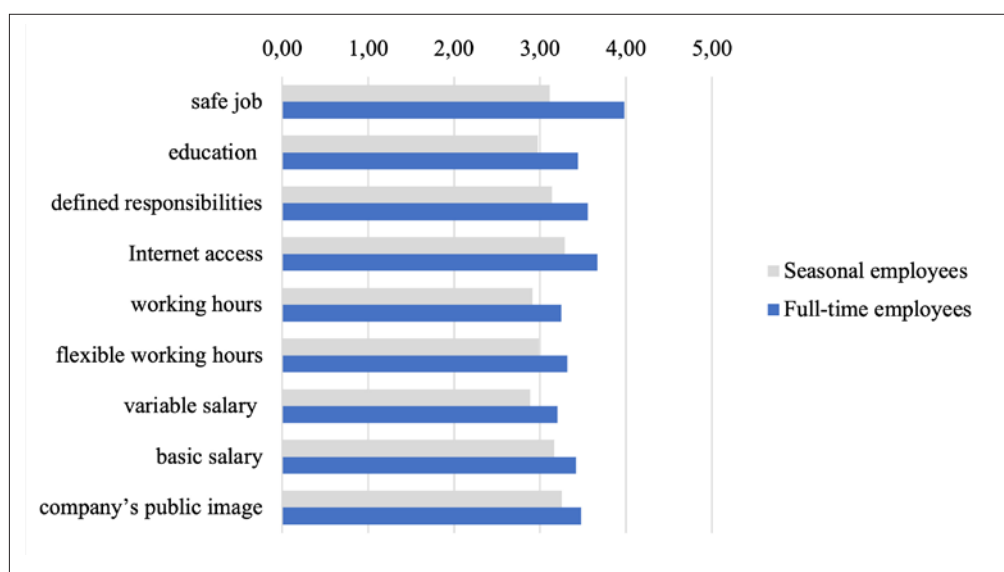
*Statistically different at significance level 1%; ** Statistically different at significance level 5%

Source: author

The Table 2, Table 3, and Table 4 show the results given by using three tests: Test 1 - Student's two sample test for difference between the mean satisfaction for the two groups; Test 2 - Two sample test for difference between the proportions of the "non-satisfied" employees for the two groups, and Test 3 - Two sample test for difference between the proportions of the "very satisfied" employees for the two groups.

Figure 3.

Arithmetic mean difference of job satisfaction factors between full-time and seasonal female employees in the lodging industry



Source: author

Comparing full-time and seasonal employees' satisfaction according to the arithmetic mean there is statistically significant difference for safe and stable job, working hours, an organizational structure with a defined job description and responsibilities and measuring of work performance, and the possibility of education through seminars and trainings organized by the employer (Figure 3). The more satisfied with these factors were full-time female employees.

Table 3.

Statistically significant difference of means, low and high job satisfaction according to full-time and seasonal employment of female employees in the lodging industry

Factors	P-values		
	Test 1	Test 2	Test 3
safe job	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*
education	0,011**	0,012**	0,004*
defined responsibilities	0,017**	0,055	0,008*
Internet access	0,051	0,055	0,097
working hours	0,049**	0,027**	0,091
flexible working hours	0,058	0,183	0,011**
variable salary	0,072	0,126	0,097
basic salary	0,110	0,201	0,016**
company's public image	0,171	0,534	0,014**

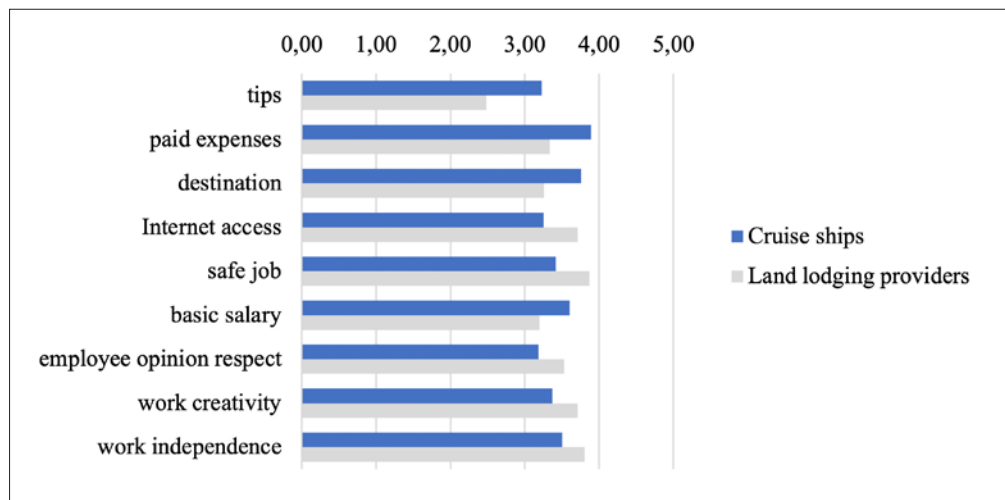
*Statistically different at significance level 1%; ** Statistically different at significance level 5%

Source: author

Looking at low levels of satisfaction the seasonal employees were less satisfied with factors such as working hours, safety and stability of job, and education and training possibilities. The higher level of satisfaction with factors such as safe and stable job, an organizational structure with a defined job description and responsibilities and measuring of work performance, and the possibility of education through seminars and trainings organized by the employer, salary, flexible working hours and public perception of the company is shown by full-time female employees. Therefore, H3: Full-time female employees were more satisfied than part time female employees in tourism lodging industry is confirmed.

Figure 4.

Arithmetic mean difference of job satisfaction between cruise ships and land lodging female employees



Source: author

There is statistically significant difference between female employees on cruise ships and land lodging providers for factors such as the possibility of getting good tips, paid expenses for accommodation, travel, health insurance, etc., employer location and possibility of getting to know other destinations through work mobility, and basic salary (Figure 4). The cruise ships female employees were more satisfied with these factors.

Table 4.

Statistically significant difference of means, low and high job satisfaction dividing sample to cruise ships and land lodging female employees

Factors	P-values		
	Test 1	Test 2	Test 3
tips	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*
paid expenses	0,002*	0,003*	0,005*
destination	0,002*	0,195	0,001*
Internet access	0,015**	0,009*	0,090
safe job	0,005*	0,009*	0,021*
basic salary	0,008*	0,044**	0,020**
employee opinion respect	0,045**	0,081	0,089
work creativity	0,038**	0,074	0,065
work independence	0,059	0,179	0,014**

*Statistically different at significance level 1%; ** Statistically different at significance level 5%

Source: author

In addition, there is statistically significant difference for factor safe and stable job with which were more satisfied female employees working for land lodgings. H4: There is a statistically significant difference between land lodging female employees and cruise female employees on present job in many satisfaction factors is confirmed. This may require different approach and set of motivation factors in land lodging and cruise ships' industry.

Conclusion

Satisfied employees are loyal and enthusiastic employees, and only enthusiastic employees can "infect" guests with enthusiasm and satisfaction about lodging offer and service. Human resources management should apply the marketing approach to the employees, the same as marketing has to the guests (buyers)

researching their needs and wishes to provide them with the value package that will meet their needs and wishes and gain loyalty. Therefore, the management should provide the motivation package, ideally, individually created for each employee to attract them and keep their loyalty. The satisfaction level of motivation factors should be measured periodically and serve as a guide to the motivation policy revision and improvement. This paper focuses on the female employees' job satisfaction, without getting into gender equality.

H1: The highest dissatisfaction of female employees in tourism lodging industry is with the working hours was confirmed. H2: There is a statistically significant difference between younger female employees up to age of 35 and female employees older than 36 years on present job in many satisfaction factors was rejected. H3: Full-time female employees are more satisfied than part time female employees in tourism lodging industry was confirmed. H4: There is a statistically significant difference between land lodging female employees and cruise female employees on present job in many satisfaction factors is confirmed. It was found, in general, that female employees show the highest degree of satisfaction with factors such as safe and stable job and work independence. The lowest degree of satisfaction is shown for working hours and variable salary. The low satisfaction could lead to the gap that needs to be filled by adapting and improving human resources motivation politics of lodging companies to achieve higher level of satisfaction of female employees and therefore better business results. It was found that there is no statistically significant difference between younger female employees up to age of 35 and female employees older than 36 years on present job, except for the possibility of getting good tips. The younger female employees have shown the higher level of satisfaction with tips. The expectation that younger female employees will show the higher dissatisfaction due to pregnancy and motherhood, weekend work and night shifts, new generation characteristics etc. was not confirmed. Comparing full-time and seasonal employees' satisfaction according to the arithmetic mean it was found that there is statistically significant difference for safe and stable job, working hours, an organizational structure with a defined job description and responsibilities and measuring of work performance, and the possibility of further education through seminars and trainings organized by the employer. The more satisfied with these factors were full-time employed female employees. Looking at low levels of satisfaction the seasonal employees were less satisfied with factors such as working hours, safety of job, and education and training possibilities. Those results could also serve to the human resources management in better understanding on seasonal and part-time employees. Investment in education and training should be better planned and provided to the seasonal employees, possibility of safe repeat agreements and fair working-hours treatment should be considered. In addition, working hours are one of main obstacles to satisfaction. Better training of employees, mentoring system, better organization of work processes, etc. could contribute. The higher level of satisfaction with factors such as safe and stable job, an organizational structure with a defined job description and responsibilities and measuring of work performance, and the possibility of education through seminars and trainings organized by the employer, salary, flexible working hours and public perception of the company is shown by full-time female employees. There is statistically significant difference between female employees on cruise ships and land lodging providers for factors such as the possibility of getting tips, paid expenses primarily for accommodation and travel, the employer location and possibility of getting to know other destinations through work mobility, and basic salary. The cruise ships female employees were more satisfied with these factors. In addition, there is statistically significant difference for factor safe and stable job with which were more satisfied female employees working for land lodgings. The basic salary was not found as one of the main dissatisfaction factors, but in general, the variable salary politics and awarding through variable salary possibilities should be reconsidered.

The results of this paper could contribute to the practice and theory due to lack of research on female employees' satisfaction in the lodging industry and tourism. Further studies should include correlation analysis of motivation factors and satisfaction levels as well as comparison of female and male employees job satisfaction.

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Employment Equality of Women in Tourism in South European Mediterranean Countries – Myth or Reality

Kristina Bučar, PhD, Professor, University of Zagreb, Faculty of Economics, Croatia;
e-mail: kbucar@net.efzg.hr

Sanja Pesek, PhD, American University, Washington DC, USA; e-mail: sanjap@american.edu

Abstract

The tourism industry has experienced rapid growth over the past 70 years, necessitating adaptability to various societal changes such as shifts in lifestyles, economic fluctuations, conflicts, and global health crises like pandemics. This sector must continuously evolve alongside the international tourist market and changing modern lifestyles to remain efficient. As a labour-intensive industry, women constitute a significant portion of the workforce, yet they often face wage disparities compared to their male counterparts. This paper aims to assess the representation of women's employment issues in tourism within international documents and scientific literature. The research reveals a substantial presence of international documents, including declarations and policies, advocating for gender equality and women's rights in general, as well as in the context of work. Specifically, within the tourism industry, numerous international documents exist to ensure gender equality across various aspects of life. However, the literature review indicates a focus primarily on the economic impacts of women in tourism, with less emphasis on their employment equality within the industry. Despite a considerable number of scientific papers addressing women's employment in tourism, a limited proportion specifically delve into the gender equality aspects of women's employment, particularly within the European Mediterranean tourist region. In summary, while international documents acknowledge and promote gender equality and women's rights in the tourism sector, there remains a gap in the scientific literature regarding the specific issue of women's employment equality and rights in this industry, especially within the European Mediterranean context.

Keywords: women, tourism, Southern Europe tourist region, social responsibility, gender equality, normative ethics

Introduction

In the second half of the twentieth century, there was a marked and relatively rapid escalation in the volume of tourist arrivals in the world. Specifically, the year 1950 witnessed 25 million instances of international travel, a figure that burgeoned to approximately 1.5 billion by 2019, encompassing a diverse demographic spectrum including varied religions, nationalities, beliefs, and educational backgrounds (UNWTO, 2024). Consequently, the tourism industry faces an ever-increasing imperative to not only satisfy the exigencies and preferences of tourists during their travel but also to guarantee that tourism precipitates enduring beneficial impacts in the locales of its operation. This necessitates an orientation towards sustainability, encompassing socio-cultural, economic, and environmental dimensions (GTZ 1999). Such sustainable paradigms were globally endorsed in 1992 through the adoption of Agenda 21, a framework subsequently integrated within the tourism industry (WTO 1996).

The tourism industry represents a complex system of development involving numerous stakeholders, thereby presenting the primary challenge of orchestrating a unified approach towards sustainable development (WTO, 2004). Hence, tourism possesses the potential to foster opportunities for promoting gender equality and enhancing access to employment (Barišić, Bučar, 2022). To attain these objectives, it is imperative that all stakeholders, whether directly or indirectly engaged in tourism, embrace their share of responsibility in establishing conditions conducive to equitable rights and employment conditions for women within the tourism sector (Paskova, Zelenka, 2019). The notion of social responsibility, or corporate social responsibility (CSR), emerged in business practice during the 1960s, denoting a commitment to responsible conduct towards all participants in the business continuum (Saylor Academy, 2012). Since its inception, the concept of social responsibility has been enshrined in numerous international frame-

works. Within the tourism industry, the application of social responsibility principles commenced in the early 1980s, initially within the hotel sector, and has gradually been adopted across various facets of the industry (Font, Lynes, 2018). In this context, all individuals involved in tourism (directly or indirectly) must acknowledge their personal social responsibility (PSR), which encompasses advocating for gender equality and equal rights for women across all aspects of life (Paskova, Zelenka, 2019).

The intersection of normative ethics and gender equality within the tourism industry encapsulates a critical discourse on moral principles that should guide the behaviors and practices of stakeholders in this sector. Normative ethics, as a branch of ethical philosophy, offers frameworks for determining the rightness or wrongness of actions, and it is instrumental in evaluating and establishing the moral duties and obligations of individuals and organizations within the tourism industry towards gender equality (UN, 2016). Gender equality, as a fundamental human right and a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable world, intersects with normative ethics in the tourism industry through the lens of ethical theories such as deontology, utilitarianism, and virtue ethics (Britannica, 2023). Each of these perspectives offers unique insights into the moral imperatives behind promoting gender equality within the sector.

At the international level, women make up more than half of the global workforce in the tourism industry though they are mostly employed in lower-skilled and lower-paid jobs, such as housekeeping and they are paid 20-25% less than their male coworkers (ILO, 2020). In the EU, the tourism industry in 2019 counted about 12.5 million but labour costs and earnings were significantly lower than they are in the total economy of the EU (EC, 2023).

The objective of this study is to examine the extent of representation of women's rights issues in international documents and scientific literature. The research specifically focuses on women's rights in employment, emphasizing gender equality within the tourism industry. A particular emphasis is placed on Southern Europe, one of the most visited macro-regions globally. This region serves as an illustrative example due to the onset of tourism development in the 19th Century, culminating in its status as the most visited tourist region in the world during the 20th Century, constituting nearly 20 percent of global tourist arrivals and holding significant economic importance for the countries within this tourist region (UNWTO, 2024).

Southern Europe's appeal to tourists stems from its climate, extensive coastline, and cultural richness, including traditional local customs. This local culture and tradition resulted in the fact that the characteristics of women's employment in the tourism industry of southern Europe are different and often below the average for the EU (EIGE, 2023).

From a deontological perspective, emphasizing duty and rule adherence, the tourism industry must adopt policies that ensure gender equality, recognizing the inherent rights to equal treatment and opportunities. Contrastingly, utilitarianism advocates for gender equality based on the premise that it yields beneficial outcomes for the industry and society, such as improved economic performance and innovation. Virtue ethics suggests gender equality reflects key virtues like fairness and compassion, advocating for an ethical organizational culture that inherently values equality. Incorporating normative ethical frameworks into the gender equality discourse within tourism necessitates a thorough assessment of industry policies and practices, emphasizing ethical leadership, transparency, and the eradication of gender disparities. It calls for a collective effort among stakeholders involved in the tourism industry to maintain ethical standards promoting gender equality, contributing to the sector's ethical and equitable growth, and aligning with global gender equality and sustainable development goals.

The paper commences with an introduction, followed by an exposition of the methodology employed. Subsequently, the ensuing chapter presents the research findings and an analysis of international documents concerning women's rights and gender equality, particularly within the tourism sector. It also includes an examination of scholarly literature addressing women's rights in tourism, with a specific focus on the Southern European macro-region. The paper concludes with a discussion highlighting key research findings and offering recommendations for both practitioners and researchers engaged in women's rights and gender equality issues within the tourism context. The conclusion section encapsulates final reflections on the topic under consideration.

Methodology

To accomplish the objectives delineated within the scope of this paper, the research methodology was segmented into two primary phases, each further subdivided into two distinct components. Initially, a comprehensive desktop review was undertaken to quantify and categorize the documents pertaining to

women's rights that have been ratified on an international scale. Subsequently, the latter portion of this initial phase focused on a detailed examination of the extent to which such documents have been adopted specifically within the tourism industry.

In the subsequent phase of the investigation, conducted on March 1, 2023, a content analysis was employed to elucidate temporal trends in the literature addressing the employment of women within the tourism sector (Dabić, Mikulić & Novak, 2017; Bučar, VanRheenen, Hendija; 2019). This analysis entailed a comprehensive review of all relevant articles indexed within the Web of Science (WoS) Core Collection and Scopus databases. The initial part of this phase concentrated on literature encompassing the concatenated terms "employment* women* tourism*." This approach was designed to inclusively capture publications that discuss these thematic areas, with the asterisk (*) operator facilitating the identification of all lexical variations stemming from the root words. The subsequent segment of this phase narrowed the focus to documents integrating the terms "employment* women* tourism* South* Europe*," thereby honing in on regional specificity within the broader thematic framework.

The rationale behind selecting the Web of Science and Scopus databases stems from their recognition as the most extensive publisher-neutral citation indices and research intelligence platforms, particularly in the realm of social sciences. This research encompassed a diverse array of scholarly outputs, including articles published in journals, book chapters, and conference proceedings. The extraction of publications, executed on March 1, 2023, spanned documents from the mid-1950s—coinciding with the inception of WoS's electronic availability—to the current period, thereby offering a comprehensive longitudinal perspective on the subject matter.

Results

In this section, we delineate the outcomes derived from our investigation of online resources and the bibliometric analysis of scientific literature pertaining to the employment dynamics of women in the tourism industry. The seminal document advocating for women's rights, titled "The Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen," was introduced in 1791 by Olympe de Gouges in France (Britannica; 2024), which marked the inception of a series of international proclamations dedicated to the advancement of women's rights, extending into the realm of tourism. The findings from our comprehensive analysis illuminate a significant historical milestone: the enfranchisement and recognition of women's right to employment, which was secured nearly a century ago. Despite these legislative advancements, the practical enforcement of women's rights remains challenging, often relegated to merely declaratory status. This disparity underscores the persistent gap between the formal acknowledgement of rights and their tangible implementation in the workplace, particularly within the tourism sector.

Women's Rights and International Documents

The first document on women's rights from 1791 (The Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen) in 17 articles emphasizes and points to basic rights as rights to equality, freedom, and security should be extended and applied to women just as they apply to men (Britannica; 2024). Almost 155 years had to pass before the next document which emphasized women's rights to be adopted at the international level. The United Nations 1946 established the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) as a body from 1947 until 1962 whose main task was to deal with the issue of women's status, with a focus on setting new standards at the international level that would promote awareness of women's equality at all levels (UN, 1948).

In 1948 the UN established a document called The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and it still represents the fundamental document on which all other documents and declarations on human rights are based (UN, 2023). In 1952 UN brought up the Convention on the Political Rights of Women (UN, 1953). This act should guarantee women's rights to vote, participate in public functions, also to represent their countries at the international level and underline the fact that those rights shouldn't be attached to their matrimonial status it also affirms women's rights to non-discrimination in education, employment and economic and social activities (UN, 1953). In 1979 a document the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was brought by the UN, and it was internationally accepted two years later when 20 countries ratified it (UN, 2016). This document lightens all the areas in which women's rights and equality were denied and also brings agenda for actions by countries to guarantee rights for women in all fields of living (UN, 2016). At the international level, other documents

emphasize women's right to equality as well, such as the UN Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action from 1995 and the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women from 2015, and both documents emphasize women's rights to gender equality, but also that women should be one of the bearers of economic, ecological and socio-cultural sustainability (UN, 2015, UNAIDS & UN, 2015). Women's rights and equality are included in the international document Agenda 2030, in goal 5, where, in addition to women's rights to gender equality, women's rights to paid work are emphasized (UN, 2016). The last document at the international level emphasizing the importance of women's equality was adopted in 2022, Towards Improved Measures of gender inequality: An evaluation of the United Nations Development Programme's Gender Inequality Index and a proposal (UN, 2022). This document attempted to consolidate the conclusions of all previous UN international documents on women's rights and equality and to provide a methodology that could be used to determine the state and direction in which gender equality is headed using the index (UN, 2022).

All these international documents on women's rights point out that it is necessary to constantly make efforts to improve women's rights in all fields of life. Those documents also emphasize that the conditions and rights of women in the field of work should be improved, not only in the necessity of equalizing wages for equal jobs as men have but also in the working conditions themselves.

Women in Tourism – International Documents

Tourism is a labor-intensive sector that engages approximately 10 percent of the global population in its workforce (UNWTO, 2024). At the European Union level, the proportion of female employees in the tourism sector stood at 58 percent of the total tourism workforce in 2020, in stark contrast to their representation across other sectors, which amounted to 39 percent (Eurostat, 2024). Moreover, a closer examination of the accommodation segment within the EU reveals an even higher female employment rate, reaching 60 percent of the sector's total workforce (Eurostat, 2024).

Notwithstanding such demographics and the advent of the first international women's rights documents nearly eight decades ago, the specific consideration of women's rights within the tourism industry commenced only within the past three decades. In 1999, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) introduced the "Global Code of Ethics for Tourism," marking the first instance in which the rights of women in tourism were explicitly addressed (UNWTO, 2020). Article 2 of this document, titled "Tourism as a vehicle for individual and collective fulfilment..." asserts that "Tourism activities should respect the equality of men and women; they should promote human rights" (UNWTO, 2020). However, it is noteworthy that the document does not elaborate on women's rights to work and gender equality in any significant detail.

In 2010, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) published "The Global Report on Women in Tourism," marking a seminal moment in the organization's efforts to foreground the significance of women's rights and gender equality within the tourism sector. This report posited tourism as a potential catalyst for the empowerment of women (UNWTO, 2011). It delineated five key focal areas—employment, entrepreneurship, leadership, community involvement, and education—as critical pathways towards realizing the objectives of sustainable and responsible tourism development (UNWTO, 2011).

An ensuing document, the "Second Global Report on Women in Tourism" (2019), served as an updated discourse on the status of women's rights within the industry since the 2010 report. This edition was integrative of the objectives outlined in the United Nations' Agenda 2030, specifically Goal 5, which is dedicated to achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. It underscored the tourism industry as a sphere of action and provided specific strategies for actualizing the ambitions stipulated within this framework (UNWTO, 2019).

In a further effort to operationalize these ideals, the UNWTO introduced the "Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines for the Public Sector in Tourism" in 2022. This document offered explicit recommendations and actionable measures to facilitate public sector engagement in promoting gender equality within the tourism landscape (UNWTO, 2022).

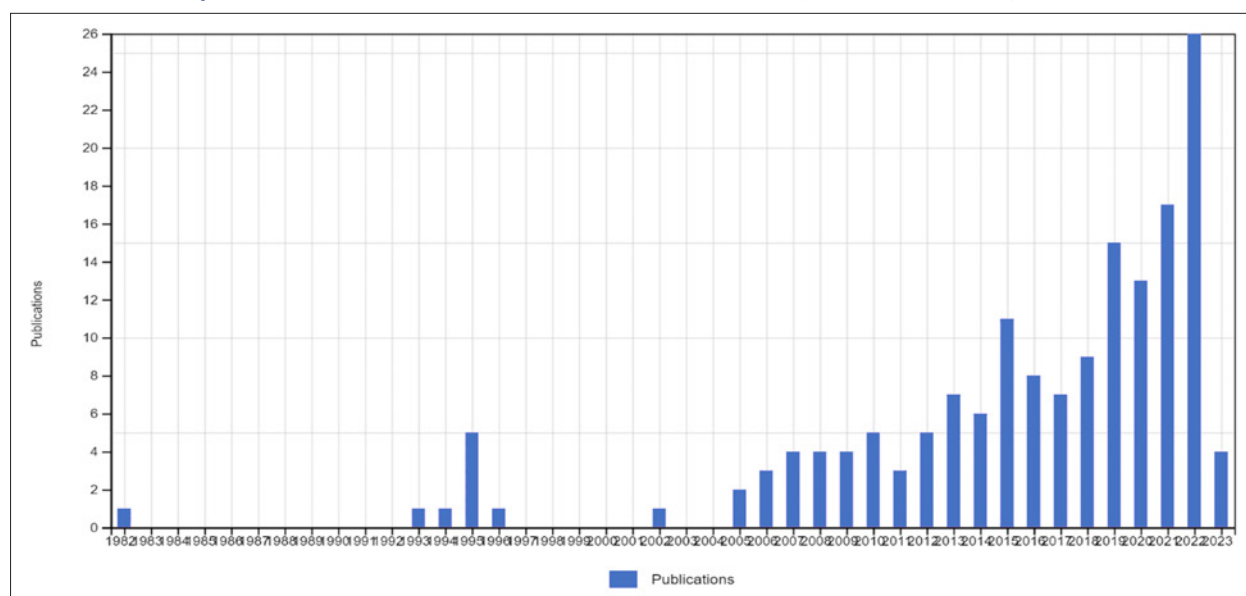
Parallel to UNWTO's initiatives, the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) has also mobilized to champion the rights of women within the tourism domain. In 2021, WTTC promulgated "The Cancun Women's Initiative Declaration," a testament to the organization's commitment to supporting women in travel and tourism. This declaration emerged in response to the recognition that women constitute 54 percent of the tourism workforce, yet their rights and contributions frequently remain overlooked. The document articulates specific guidance for the public, private, and academic sectors to ameliorate this disparity and fulfill the set objectives (WTTC, 2021).

A comprehensive analysis of international documentation within the tourism sector reveals a historical oversight of women's rights and gender equality. Despite the increased focus on these issues in recent years, the initiatives remain inadequate relative to the pervasive underrepresentation and undervaluation of women, who represent a majority of the workforce in this sector.

Employment Women in Tourism - Theory

The emergence of social responsibility within the tourism sector during the late 20th century signaled a transformative shift, aligning the industry with broader societal movements towards ethical practices and sustainability. This paradigm shift underscored the industry's obligations beyond profit, emphasizing its roles in societal welfare, environmental conservation, and stakeholder equity. The adoption of social responsibility principles, particularly impactful in advancing women's rights and gender equality, has become integral to sustainable tourism development. Scholars also recognized the importance of such tourism development, although perhaps not as quickly as would have been expected (Figure 1.).

Figure 1.
Total number of published scientific articles in WoS Core Collection (1982- March 2023)



Source: Web of Science Core Collection (2023) Search for a topic: employment* women* tourism*

Retrieved 1 March 2023 from: <https://www.webofscience.com/wos/woscc/summary/86eaa2b0-27ee-44a8-afcd-b5905536b035-8357983b/date-descending/1>

A bibliometric analysis was performed on March 1 2023 and using the WoS Core Collection database refers to the period from the 1950s since WoS collection is available online. Based on the keyword search - employment* women* tourism* - 184 scientific papers were identified in this database. The first paper was published only in 1982, although the first international document on women's rights was published 35 years earlier. However, that paper was published only three years after the first UNWTO (then WTO) document on women's rights in tourism appeared.

Following the initial publication on the subject, a decade elapsed before the next scholarly article was disseminated, and it was not until an additional decade had passed that a subsequent piece of academic literature was released. Since 2005 more than two papers per year have been published in this research field and for the first time in 2015, more than 10 papers had been published on the topic. Thus, two-thirds of all published scientific papers in this research field were published in the last decade. The following numbers of articles were published in 86 journals, where the most representative include: *Annals of Tourism Research* (12), *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* (5), *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* (4), *International Journal of Tourism Research* (4), and *Sustainability* (4). These scholarly works explored areas related to the employment of women in tourism, with a focus on women in tourism in general, entrepreneurship, wages, job satisfaction and corporate social responsibility.

A critical aspect of social responsibility in tourism is its commitment to gender equality and equitable employment. The sector has implemented numerous policies and programs supporting women's empowerment, including equal leadership opportunities, tailored training programs, and safe, respectful work environments. These initiatives reflect the industry's dedication to creating equitable workplaces and highlight the essential role of social responsibility in fostering gender equality. Furthermore, the industry's commitment extends beyond workplace equality to include community engagement and empowerment, often in collaboration with women's groups, to promote economic opportunities, cultural preservation, and social inclusivity. These efforts not only benefit women directly but also contribute to sustainable development and positive social outcomes in destination communities. Hence, scholars should make even greater efforts in researching this topic.

Women in Tourism in South European Countries – In Theory

Tourism is a working labour industry in the EU 58 percent of all workers are women while their share is 36 percent in other non-financial businesses - in travel agencies and tour operators, women make up 64 percent of the total employed workforce, and 60 percent in the accommodation sector (EC, 2024). Southern Europe is one of the tourist macro-regions of Europe with a long tradition of tourism development and in 2019 had a share of 20.9 in all tourism arrivals and a share of 16 of the receipts of world tourism (UNWTO, 2023). Tourism in this region began to develop at the end of the 19th century, and very quickly in the second half of the 20th century. In most countries of this region, tourism developed relatively quickly and unplanned, so numerous negative consequences of this kind of tourism development are visible in this area (Bučar, Izidora, Hendija, 2023). Nevertheless, tourism has an important role in the economy of the countries of Southern Europe, and in some of them, it accounts for up to 20 percent of the GDP of some countries, and employment in tourism accounts for as much as 25 percent of all employees in Greece, while in Italy and Spain it is a share of 15 percent (UNWTO, 2023). Hereof his region was chosen for the analysis of scientific papers in the field of employment of women in tourism.

In this field, a bibliometric analysis was also performed on March 1 2023 by using the keywords employment* women* tourism* South* Europe* in the WoS Core Collection database. Results refer to the period from the 1950s since the WoS collection is available online. The research showed that only 6 papers in this area were published in that period. All of them were published in different scientific journals. The first paper was published in 1994, while only two papers in this field were published in 2017. Researched micro-topics were tourism (three papers) and for one in the field of anthropology, social psychology and gender studies. Only three papers were taken as case studies countries in southern Europe as examples, namely Turkey, Italy and Croatia. The analysis of scientific papers in the field of women's employment showed that it is very poorly researched among scholars. That situation should be changed considering the importance and role of women in employment within the tourism industry, especially in this tourist region.

Discussion

Originating in the early 1980s, particularly within the hotel sector, social responsibility initiatives aimed to address environmental and social issues, reflecting the industry's growing awareness of its broader impacts. This movement towards ethical and sustainable practices underscored the need for harmonious tourism development that respects all principles, the local community, the environment and the economy.

Thus, data from the European Commission (EC) for 2019 show that the unemployment rate is much lower where the annual number of nights spent by tourists per capita of the local population is higher, and that 22 of the 30 regions had an unemployment rate below the national average (Eurostat, 2022). This shows that tourism is a labour-intensive industry, but on the other hand, the data show that the cost of labor in tourism is lower than in other economic activities (Eurostat, 2022).

Since more than 54 percent of the workforce is made up of women in tourism, understanding their position in the labor market is essential. EU countries located in Southern Europe where tourism makes up a significant share of GDP were taken as examples. For this purpose, the Gender Equality Index (GEI) by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) serves as a critical tool for monitoring gender equality progress within the EU (EIGE, 2023). It offers a comprehensive assessment across various domains, aiding policymakers and stakeholders in addressing gender gaps and promoting more equitable societies. To provide that, data was collected from all 27 EU countries with a total of 31 indicators, and the results are divided into six main domains - work, money, knowledge, time, power and health (EIGE, 2024). The

first indexes were published in 2013, and then in 2015, 2017, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023, but for the purposes of this paper, the results were compared only in the three observed years (Tab. 1). Indexes are calculated from 0 to 100, with 100 indicating complete gender equality (EIGE, 2024).

Table 1.
Gender Equality Index for South Europe EU countries

countries	Power			Work			segregation and quality of work		
	2013.	2019.	2023.	2013.	2019.	2023.	2013.	2019.	2023.
Greece	23.8	24.3	30.4	63.6	64.2	68.7	57.0	57.7	64.6
Spain	59.4	62.0	81.1	71.8	72.9	75.4	66.9	67.1	69.0
France	54.6	78.3	83.8	71.5	72.4	73.2	63.1	63.5	62.6
Croatia	22.9	34.8	49.5	67.2	69.2	72.1	60.3	60.7	64.4
Italy	47.8	47.6	62.7	61.3	63.1	65.0	57.8	58.5	61.4
Cyprus	25.9	28.2	29.2	70.5	70.7	76.5	58.3	58.8	67.9
Malta	24.5	32.2	45.3	65.1	73.3	80.0	72.3	73.5	78.5
Portugal	49.6	46.7	57.4	71.4	72.5	76.5	59.5	60.7	65.1
Slovenia	52.3	57.6	56.1	71.9	73.3	75.8	61.3	62.1	65.3
EU	53.2	51.6	59.1	69.7	71.1	73.8	62.6	62.9	66.2

Source: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2023/compare-countries>

For the purposes of this research, three out of six GEI categories in three observed years were analyzed. In each of the observed categories, transformations in women's rights from 2013 to 2023 are visible (Tab. 1). This is especially visible in the category power GEI category, where in 2013 only three countries (Spain, France and Slovenia) had the index above 50, while in 2023 the situation is almost the opposite, as in that year Greece, Cyprus, Croatia and Malta were below the index 50 in this category and Malta. In the GEI work category, all indexes are above 60. The best index in this category has Malta in 2023, 80. Malta also has the best GEIs in the category segregation and quality of work, which is a bit unusual considering the fact that France has a GEI of only 62.2 in this category, while it has the best GEIs in category power 83.8 in 2023.

Although only three categories of the Gender Equality Index have been observed in only nine selected countries of Southern Europe, such data indicates that a lot of effort still needs to be made to achieve better women's rights. It would be good if such data had been collected and counted for the tourism industry as well due to the fact that is a working labor industry and women make up more than half of the employees. Then it would be more likely to achieve sustainable development at the level of destination as one of the numerous effects that tourism has on an area.

This synthesis highlights the significant impact of social responsibility on women's rights and gender equality within tourism, underscoring the industry's influence on economic vitality and labor markets. Through its commitment to sustainable development and social equity, the tourism sector emerges as a key player in fostering societal well-being and economic growth. Tourism is a socio-cultural phenomenon that, if developed based on the principles of sustainability, can create an opportunity to create inclusive and fairer societies, which also implies gender equality (Barišić, Bučar; 2022). However, tourism is a specific industry for two main reasons, firstly the process of its development involves a large number of different stakeholders (directly and indirectly involved) and each tourist destination is specific according to its characteristics. Therefore, it is not possible to copy solutions that are found on a global level or in another tourist destination or area.

Social responsibility in tourism has significantly influenced the advancement of women's rights by embedding inclusive and ethical practices across the industry. This approach has positioned tourism businesses as catalysts for a more equitable, diverse, and socially responsible sector, benefiting women, communities, and the broader society.

The economic implications of tourism on local communities highlight a dual impact: while potentially affecting the quality of life in tourist-dense areas, it also enhances local economies and labor markets. Data analysis reveals that regions with high tourism intensity often exhibit lower unemployment rates than the

national average, indicating tourism's positive role in employment generation. However, the sector is also characterized by lower labor costs and earnings, pointing to areas for improvement in labor conditions.

Normative ethics, as a philosophical framework guiding moral behavior and decision-making, intersects significantly with women's rights as outlined in legal documents, particularly concerning their implications within the tourism sector (the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 5 on Gender Equality). Here's how these connections can be established to achieve *principles of justice and equality*, which are informed by theories like deontology and egalitarianism (Kant, 1998; Rawls, 1999). Legal documents such as the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) embody these principles by ensuring that women have equal rights, protections, and opportunities within society, including the tourism industry.

Ethical Responsibilities of Stakeholders underscore the ethical responsibilities of stakeholders, including governments, businesses, and individuals, towards upholding women's rights. Legal documents like the European Union Gender Equality Strategy and national laws on gender equality in employment and workplace rights impose ethical obligations on employers and policymakers in the tourism sector to promote gender equality, prevent discrimination, and provide a safe and inclusive environment for women. *Duty to Protect Human Dignity* is grounded in normative ethics that emphasizes the inherent value and dignity of every individual. Legal documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) enshrine this principle by recognizing women's rights to dignity, autonomy, and non-discrimination. In the context of tourism, this translates into ethical obligations to ensure that women's rights are upheld in tourist destinations, accommodations, and employment opportunities.

Promotion of Virtuous Behavior is underpinned by normative ethics that focuses on cultivating virtuous behavior and character traits. Legal frameworks promoting women's rights, such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, encourage virtuous actions that support women's empowerment, participation, and leadership in all sectors, including tourism. This aligns with ethical values of fairness, respect, and inclusivity in the treatment of women in tourism-related activities. *Ethical Leadership and Accountability* are also upheld by normative ethics, which emphasizes the importance of ethical leadership and accountability. Legal documents related to women's rights in tourism, such as national gender equality laws and international conventions, hold governments, businesses, and organizations accountable for their actions and policies affecting women. Ethical leadership entails taking proactive measures to address gender inequalities, combat discrimination, and promote women's rights in the tourism industry.

The integration of normative ethics into the understanding and advancement of women's rights within legal frameworks, including those pertinent to the tourism sector, has profound implications for both academics and practitioners. Normative ethics, with its focus on determining the moral standards that regulate right and wrong conduct, provides a critical philosophical foundation that complements legal approaches to women's rights.

This interdisciplinary amalgamation has significant implications: (1) *Enhanced Ethical Sensitivity* that provides a fertile ground for scholarly exploration and teaching by combining normative ethics and legal frameworks to promote women's rights in the tourism industry. This approach encourages the examination of both legal standards and their ethical foundations, cultivating a cohort of scholars and professionals sensitive to women's rights. (2) *Guidance for Legal Reforms* that enables practitioners, such as policymakers and legal professionals, to utilize insights from normative ethics to shape legal frameworks, ensuring alignment with ethical principles and fostering more effective legal reforms for women's rights protection. (3) *Corporate Accountability and Responsibility* that integrates ethical principles with legal obligations and encourages businesses in the tourism sector to adopt ethical business practices beyond mere compliance, thus safeguarding women's rights through fair employment, safe work environments, and anti-discrimination measures. (4) *Empowerment and Advocacy* that embeds normative ethics in women's rights advocacy and empowers activists to mobilize support and drive societal and industry change. (5) *Holistic Policy Development* that provides a roadmap for governments and international organizations to develop inclusive policies addressing the complexities of women's experiences in tourism, ensuring legal and ethical justness. (6) *Promoting Inclusive and Equitable Practices* that grounds women's rights in normative ethics and legal frameworks and fosters an environment of respect and dignity, promoting inclusivity and equity in the tourism sector and preventing future injustices.

In summary, normative ethics provides a philosophical foundation for understanding and promoting women's rights within legal frameworks, including those relevant to the tourism sector. By aligning ethical

principles with legal obligations, stakeholders can work towards creating a more just, equitable, and inclusive environment for women in tourism, ensuring their rights and well-being are upheld and protected. Therefore, the integration of normative ethics with legal frameworks provides a multifaceted approach to understanding and promoting women's rights in the tourism sector and beyond. It encourages a more nuanced, ethical, and effective engagement with the challenges facing women, ultimately contributing to a more just and equitable society.

Conclusion

Over the past eighty years, a plethora of international documents has endeavored to address the complexities surrounding women's rights. While a cursory examination of these texts may convey a sense of adequacy in addressing women's rights across different spheres, a deeper empirical analysis unveils a significant chasm between the aspirational standards outlined in these documents and their tangible realization. This discrepancy is starkly evident across diverse geographical landscapes and economic sectors. Beginning approximately forty years ago, scholarly inquiry into women's employment dynamics within the tourism sector has progressively intensified, especially over the last two decades. This body of research has mainly concentrated on examining job satisfaction, wage disparities, the impact of corporate social responsibility, and the pursuit of gender equality within the tourism industry. Despite these scholarly endeavors, there exists an evident dearth of exhaustive research specifically tailored to exploring women's rights and gender equality within the Southern European tourism context.

Although nascent, the existing academic discourse on this subject is incrementally contributing valuable insights, potentially poised to ameliorate the labor market status of women in the tourism industry. Nevertheless, the goal of attaining employment equity for women in this sector continues to hover in the realm of the aspirational, as underscored by the enduring discrepancy between the proclamations of equality and their practical application.

This study acknowledges certain limitations, notably its reliance on secondary data sources. Moreover, the research ambit was deliberately confined to investigating facets of women's equality within the business sphere, specifically focusing on the tourism industry.

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Is the Reconciliation of Career and Personal/Family Life Possible? Example of DMO Managers in Croatia

Izidora Marković Vukadin, PhD, Institute for Tourism, Croatia; e-mail: izidora.markovic@iztg.hr

Snježana Boranić Živoder, PhD, Institute for Tourism, Croatia; e-mail: snjezana.boranic@iztg.hr

Matina Gjurašić, PhD, Institute for Tourism, Croatia; e-mail: Matina.gjurasic@iztg.hr

Vedrana Stěrmassi, mag.oec. University of Dubrovnik, Croatia; e-mail: vedrana.stermasi@gmail.com

Abstract

In recent years, the business community has made significant progress in ensuring female representation in top management positions. The number of women on the board of directors in the tourism industry has also risen significantly. They occupy various positions, including destination management organization positions (DMO). Despite their essential role in the tourism industry, women often face unique challenges, such as a lack of recognition and opportunities for advancement, gender-based discrimination, and a lack of flexible work arrangements to accommodate the demands of motherhood and family life. Therefore, this paper explores the current state of women in management and the challenges they face in the workplace, emphasizing balancing work and family obligations, especially motherhood. Interviews with women working as DMO directors in Croatia were conducted to answer the research objectives. Through research, it was stressed that women managers who are mothers may have to work long hours, travel frequently, and handle a large workload, which can make it difficult for them to be with their children and family. Thus, motherhood represents a challenge for women employees in the tourism industry. Providing women-friendly benefits such as flexible work arrangements or working from home can enable women to take up leadership positions without the intention of leaving their family ambitions behind or having to choose between the two. A concerted effort from organizations, policymakers, and society is required to achieve this.

Keywords: DMO, manager, family, children, obstacles

Introduction

Pursuing a fulfilling career alongside a harmonious personal/family life has long been a topic of interest across various professional domains. This paper explores the unique context of Destination Management Organization (DMO) managers in the tourism industry in Croatia, who face distinct challenges in reconciling their demanding careers with familial responsibilities. The tourism sector, known for its dynamic nature and extensive working hours, provides a compelling backdrop for investigating the interplay between career and family. Understanding the experiences of DMO managers in this context can inform organizations, policymakers, and individuals seeking to establish more inclusive and supportive environments for work-life balance.

Despite their essential role in the industry, women in tourism management often face unique challenges. These include a lack of recognition and opportunities for advancement, gender-based discrimination, and a lack of flexible work arrangements to accommodate the demands of motherhood and family life. Therefore, this paper aims to explore the current state of women in management and the challenges they face in the workplace, emphasizing balancing work and family obligations, especially motherhood.

This study employs a qualitative approach to delve into the experiences of women (DMO) managers in Croatia. This research seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of how these professionals navigate the intricate balance between their roles in the tourism industry and their personal and familial commitment via in-depth interviews with DMO managers from diverse regions of Croatia. This study aims to uncover the challenges, strategies, and perspectives in both Continental and Adriatic Croatia. The deliberate selection of participants from these contrasting tourism landscapes allows for a holistic exploration of the management practices shaping women's experiences in this sector. However, the study acknowledges

limitations, such as the relatively small sample size and the influence of external factors on specific aspects of the research findings. Nonetheless, this research contributes valuable insights into the dynamic interplay between professional responsibilities and personal life among women DMO managers in Croatia's tourism sector.

Literature Review

Women occupy multiple roles, such as employee (in this case, manager), mother, caretaker, wife, and so on, and they are still expected to perform in all those roles equally successfully (Agarwal & Lenka, 2015). Compared to men, women in management still carry the significant burden of home and family problems, and, in general, more than 50 % of women spend around 30 (unpaid) hours per week on family responsibilities (Apostu, 2017). Moreover, motherhood exerts a direct adverse impact on the performance of women and restricts the array of roles they can embrace. This underscores the significance of its influence on the trajectory of career progression (McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005, cited by Rowe et al., 2023). From other perspectives, it is believed that a woman must choose a priority and dedicate herself more to one thing than another. With that, it's thought that she cannot be successful in her career and be a good mother (Rowe et al., 2023). But, with a growing number of women in management (and in the workforce), this opinion is changing.

The role of managers, especially women, is complex, demanding effective leadership at work while managing home responsibilities (Perkov et al., 2015). Managers face many challenges, including dealing with clients, fieldwork and dealing with employees, which often requires spending long hours at work, work overload, travel distances, attending many meetings and others (Mahasha, 2016; Hofmann & Stokburg-Sauer, 2017). With all that, management positions bring unpredictable rhythms (Woodward, 2007). New technologies, although aiding in multitasking, also made managers constantly available at home and in the workplace (Begum & Osmany, 2019). Due to the scope of their work, managers often experience work-life conflict (Mahasha, 2016).

The term "work-life balance" was first created over 40 years ago as a reaction to the trend in the 1970s and 1980s when men and women began prioritizing work and career over family, friends and other (leisure) activities (Muna & Mansour, 2009). Nowadays, one can find many articles and research on this topic. Work-life balance can be defined as equal satisfaction and involvement of the multiple roles in a person's life (Konard & Mnagel, 2000, cited in Alqahtani, 2020; Brough et al., 2020; Wood et al., 2020). It affects almost every aspect of their life, including careers, family, health (Begum & Osmany, 2019) and stress levels (Deery & Jago, 2015). Sundaresan (2014) found that many working women have trouble balancing work and family due to excessive work pressure, too little time for themselves and the need to meet others' expectations (Chen et al., 2016). Work-life balance can be easily disrupted, and work-life conflicts can occur. In most societies, this conflict seems to be high, especially for working women, because women do most of the work associated with household and care activities (Alqahtani, 2020).

Work-life conflict is related to decreased job satisfaction, decreased career satisfaction, decreased organizational commitment, increased absenteeism and turnover intention, and reduced job performance (Allen et al., 2000a, cited by Hsieh et al., 2005). Furthermore, the presence of a child in the household leads to notably higher work-life conflicts than in households without children (Crompton & Lyonette, 2006). Conflict also impacts various elements such as physical health, mental health, decreased satisfaction with life and job, productivity, and workplace mistakes (Shah & Shah, 2016; Muna & Mansour, 2009; Costa et al., 2017).

Maintaining good mental health is a challenging task for managers due to lots of stress and trauma (Begum & Osmany, 2019). Sometimes, they must give up their leave to meet the deadlines, catch up with all the work, and compensate for the staff shortage. The constant workload and the prevailing culture of extended working hours make employees vulnerable to stress and fatigue (Chen et al., 2016; Begum & Osmany, 2019). Yet, it's not just mental wellness being impacted; there are also physical consequences. Working women experience more stress, muscle tension, headaches, weight gain, and depression due to conflict compared to their male counterparts (Alqahtani, 2020). Manager positions often result in a lack of personal time and feelings of guilt for not spending enough time with their children and being forced to leave them for work (Alqahtani, 2020). Crompton and Lyonette (2006) have found that women complained the most about too little time spent at home and tiredness, which prevented them from doing all the household and family responsibilities.

An ideal work-life balance can be challenging for women in managerial roles. Therefore, they must develop efficient and practical skills while managing their priorities (Shah & Shah, 2016). They try to adjust

their work hours to align with their children's schedules, which involves skipping lunch breaks, working during late evenings or early mornings, using mobile IT tools, and optimizing business travel. Mahasha (2016) conducted a study to find out what strategies women in management used to balance work and family. Participants' strategies involved structuring and scheduling tasks and activities within specific time frames. Also, following role theory, women balance work and family commitments by fully embracing their roles or intensively managing boundaries. The latter, known as boundary management, includes women's strategies to delineate work demands from their household responsibilities (Mahasha, 2016). Most participants in the referenced study highlighted that managers should have planning, organizing, time management, and delegation skills.

These same competencies apply to family responsibilities (Mahasha, 2016). In essence, women strategically choose their roles and allocate time accordingly. Furthermore, they establish priorities among tasks and obligations. They outsource and delegate specific responsibilities (Mahasha, 2016; Sun et al., 2020). It was also emphasized that it is essential to concentrate solely on work during designated work hours and guarantee the accomplishment of daily tasks (Lin et al., 2015). This approach mitigates the need to bring work home (Mahasha, 2016). Such a stringent and well-structured work organization could be perceived as exceptionally innovative but can appear starkly contrasting within a work culture emphasizing sociability and networking (Guillaume & Pochic, 2009).

In a survey conducted in America, 65 % of working people agreed that working mothers are better listeners than other employees. In comparison, 51 % said they're calmer in a crisis, and 44 % said they're better team players. In addition, 63 % said moms are better at multitasking, and 89 % thought that working mothers in leadership roles bring out the best in employees (Bright Horizons, n.d.).

Both employers and employees must recognize the significance of achieving work-life balance and take appropriate measures (Sirgy & Lee, 2018). Work-life balance offers numerous advantages for employers, such as increased productivity, enhanced recruitment, and retention rates, decreased absenteeism, lowered overhead costs, an enriched customer experience, and a more motivated and contented workforce (Chowhan, 2017). Employees also have the benefits of work-life balance, including improved quality of life, gratifying work experiences, opportunities for career advancement, sound health, control over time management for meeting both work and personal commitments, access to further education, accessible childcare and elder care, leisure time for spending with family and friends, and the pursuit of travel and hobbies (Chowhan, 2017). Work-life policies or programs empower employees to blend work and family obligations (Downes & Koekemoer, 2011, cited by Mahasha, 2016). Other organizations, such as on-site childcare facilities, subsidized elder care, and employee assistance programs, initiate many work-life policies. Such work-life balance policies enable employees to effectively coordinate their familial responsibilities while committing to their professional roles (Mahasha, 2016).

Furthermore, technological advancements have led to more employers embracing allowing certain employees to work remotely from their homes (Muna & Mansour, 2009). Other measurements include flexible work hours, job shares, compressed working hours, annualized hours, and career breaks (Doherty, 2004). Active participation of both partners in income generation and division of housework would ease the burden on the women and help them establish a work-life balance.

Women managers in public sector organizations tend to have a more favorable work-life balance than their counterparts in other sectors. This could result from the more supportive atmosphere fostered by public sector entities, often due to policies and legal regulations benefiting women (Begum & Osmany, 2019). Regarding mental well-being, women managers working in the private sector are prone to more significant psychological distress and diminished mental health compared to those in other sectors (Begum & Osmany, 2019). This underscores the urgency for substantial changes in the work environments of private sector organizations, including implementing work-family policies and creating supportive frameworks for employees. These changes would enable employees to effectively fulfil their obligations in the workplace and within their families while avoiding mental stress (Begum & Osmany, 2019).

Methodology

A comprehensive mixed-methods approach was adopted to achieve the objectives of this study. This approach combines qualitative and quantitative methodologies to provide a nuanced understanding of the research topic. In this case, qualitative data were gathered through in-depth interviews with Destination Management Organization (DMO) managers across various regions in Croatia, like Sun et al. (2020) research. These interviews served as a vital tool for delving into the intricate perspectives, experiences, and

strategies DMO managers employ in balancing the demands of their professional careers with personal and family commitments. The qualitative nature of the interviews allowed for rich insights to be unearthed, providing a deeper understanding of the challenges and approaches adopted by these individuals.

Through open-ended questions and probing discussions, participants were encouraged to share their insights, experiences, and reflections on managing the complexities of their roles within the tourism industry while juggling personal and family responsibilities. The aim was to capture diverse perspectives and experiences, acknowledging the unique contexts and challenges faced by DMO managers operating in different regions of Croatia. In March 2023, interviews were conducted with women Destination Management Organization (DMO) managers hailing from Croatia. A total of ten interviews were carried out, with a specific distribution of participants - four interviews with DMO managers representing regions in Continental Croatia and six interviews with those representing regions in Adriatic Croatia.

The rationale behind this deliberate distribution stemmed from the distinct tourism dynamics prevalent in these regions. Adriatic Croatia, characterized by its intensive summer season, experiences a surge in tourist activity during the warmer months, with coastal areas bustling with visitors seeking sun, sea, and cultural experiences. In contrast, Continental Croatia boasts a tourism landscape of lower intensity, with attractions spread throughout the year rather than concentrated in a specific season. By engaging with DMO managers from both Continental and Adriatic Croatia, the interviews aimed to capture diverse perspectives, challenges, and strategies prevalent in regions with varying tourism profiles. This approach allowed for a comprehensive exploration of the nuanced dynamics shaping the management practices of women in the Croatian tourism sector. Through interviews, women managers highlighted their experiences and challenges in balancing work and motherhood obligations and the possibilities of managing these confronted areas of life.

However, the research findings should be interpreted within certain limitations. One such restriction pertains to the relatively small sample size of participants involved in the study. While efforts were made to capture a diverse range of perspectives, the size of the sample may restrict the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. Additionally, it's essential to acknowledge the influence of external factors, such as the nature of public sector employment, on the study's outcomes. In public sector roles, including those within Destination Management Organizations (DMOs), salaries are typically determined by regulations and are not subject to direct gender discrimination. As a result, the study's scope in examining salary differentials based on gender may be limited within this specific context.

Results and Discussion

Participants from Adriatic Croatia provided insights into the intricacies of managing tourism operations during peak seasons and navigating the challenges of overcrowding, infrastructure demands, and environmental sustainability concerns. On the other hand, DMO managers from Continental Croatia offered perspectives on sustaining tourism activities throughout the year, leveraging cultural heritage, natural attractions, and niche experiences to attract visitors beyond the traditional tourist season.

Through these interviews, a holistic understanding of the experiences and strategies of women DMO managers in Croatia was sought, focusing on the intersection of gender dynamics, professional roles, and the unique tourism landscapes of Continental and Adriatic Croatia. According to the latest information, there are 301 DMOs in Croatia. Even though a high share of DMO managers are women (68,8%), they often face biases and stereotypes in the workplace, which can limit their opportunities for advancement and negatively impact their performance evaluations and promotions. The insights gleaned from these interviews serve to inform future initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality, enhancing managerial practices, and fostering sustainable tourism development across diverse regions of Croatia.

Challenges in Advancement

In interviews, it was emphasized that women in tourism management face a myriad of challenges that stem from profoundly ingrained gender biases and stereotypes prevalent in the workplace. Among the primary challenges they encounter, gender bias and stereotypes stand out as significant barriers to their professional advancement and overall success. Gender bias and stereotypes manifest in various forms, creating obstacles for women in managerial positions. These biases can be subtle or overt, but their impact is profound. Women often encounter preconceived notions about their capabilities, competence, and leadership style simply because of their gender. It was stated that stereotypes dictate that women are

inherently less capable or suited for leadership roles, perpetuating the belief that they are better suited for support or administrative positions.

In extension, most of the respondents have said that these biases and stereotypes not only limit women's opportunities for career growth but also influence how their performance is evaluated. Despite demonstrating equal or superior competence, women may be unfairly judged or scrutinized based on gender stereotypes, leading to biased performance evaluations and hindered chances for promotion. Consequently, the glass ceiling remains a persistent barrier, preventing women from reaching top-level managerial positions in organizations.

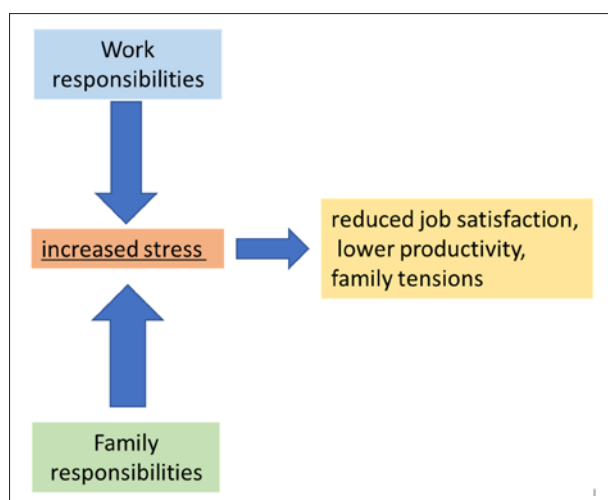
It was stressed that to address these challenges effectively, organizations must adopt strategies aimed at mitigating gender biases and dismantling stereotypes in the workplace. Implementing comprehensive diversity and inclusion initiatives is crucial to fostering an environment that values and respects the contributions of all employees, regardless of gender. This includes training and awareness programs to educate employees about unconscious bias and promote inclusive leadership practices.

It is paramount to underscore that the role of a DMO manager is intricately linked with the responsibilities akin to that of a mayor, serving as the director of the DMO organization. Consequently, these professionals often find themselves subjected to unfounded accusations, predominantly through gossip channels and occasionally via media scrutiny. These allegations range from purported political affiliations to personal connections and, regrettably, may extend to insinuations of impropriety, particularly when the mayor holds a male identity. Such conjectures undermine the professional integrity of DMO managers and detract from their genuine contributions to the tourism sector. This pervasive atmosphere of suspicion underscores the need for greater recognition of the challenges DMO managers face, especially concerning the unjust scrutiny often accompanying their leadership roles.

Personal Life/ Family Life Challenges

The impact of motherhood on women employees in the tourism industry, as in any other industry, can be significant. As mothers, women often face challenges balancing their work and family responsibilities, resulting in reduced job satisfaction, increased stress, and lower productivity. In the tourism industry, women employees who are mothers often face scheduling difficulties, such as working irregular hours, weekends, and holidays. This can make it difficult for them to arrange childcare and other family-related responsibilities. Additionally, women in the tourism industry may travel frequently for work, which can be challenging for mothers with young children.

Figure 1.
Relationship between responsibilities and stress



Source: authors

Women are often expected to balance their work and family responsibilities, which can limit their ability to fully engage in their careers and make it difficult for them to advance to higher levels of management. Being a mother and a manager in the tourism industry can be challenging, as both roles require significant

time and energy. Women managers who are mothers emphasize that they face difficulties balancing their work and family responsibilities, which can lead to stress and burnout (Figure 1)

Interviewed DMO managers frequently emphasize the societal expectation for them to effortlessly balance multiple responsibilities, often justified by the stereotype that women excel at multitasking. Moreover, they underscore that a crucial prerequisite for attaining and successfully managing the position of a DMO manager is the active involvement and support of a reasonable, cooperative, and inclusive husband and father figure. These managers stress the significance of having a partner who understands the demands of their professional role and actively participates in domestic responsibilities, enabling them to fulfil their duties effectively. This acknowledgement underscores the vital role of familial support in facilitating women's success in leadership positions within the tourism industry.

It is intriguing to note that several interviewed DMO managers emphasized the indispensable role of grandmothers in enabling them to fulfil their professional obligations. These managers candidly acknowledged that without the support and assistance of grandmothers in caring for their children, managing their demanding roles would have been considerably more challenging. This acknowledgement sheds light on the critical role of familial networks in facilitating women's participation in leadership positions within the tourism industry. The reliance on grandmothers for childcare underscores the intricate interplay between professional aspirations and familial responsibilities, further highlighting the need for systemic support structures to enable women to thrive in leadership roles while balancing familial duties

Simultaneously, the role of DMO managers is inherently complex, particularly during the summer season, predominantly in Adriatic Croatia. During this time, managers must be present at various events and manifestations, often extending into evening and night hours. In contrast, Continental Croatia experiences a less pronounced seasonality, resulting in a more evenly distributed schedule of events throughout the year. Consequently, DMO managers in Continental Croatia find it comparatively easier to organize and balance their personal lives due to the more predictable nature of their professional commitments. This disparity in seasonal demands underscores the unique challenges DMO managers face in different regions of Croatia, highlighting the need for adaptable strategies to reconcile professional responsibilities with personal obligations.

Steps to be Done (Possible Solutions)

However, some tourism companies recognize working mothers' challenges and are taking steps to support them. For example, flexible work hours, on-site childcare facilities, and paid parental leave can help mothers balance their work and family responsibilities better. Additionally, creating a supportive work environment where mothers are valued and respected can help reduce stress and increase job satisfaction for female employees. Additionally, organizations should prioritize creating transparent and equitable promotion processes based on merit rather than gender. By establishing clear criteria for advancement and ensuring that decision-making processes are free from bias, women can be evaluated fairly and given equal opportunities to progress in their careers.

Furthermore, fostering mentorship and sponsorship programs can provide invaluable support to women in management roles. Pairing female managers with experienced mentors or sponsors can help them navigate their challenges, gain access to career development opportunities, and expand their professional networks. Ultimately, addressing the challenges faced by women in management requires a concerted effort from both organizations and individuals. By actively challenging gender biases and stereotypes, promoting inclusivity, and creating opportunities for mentorship and advancement, we can work towards achieving gender equality in leadership roles and creating more inclusive and diverse.

Research Implications

The research conducted in Croatia with women directors of tourist boards is mainly in line with previous research on women's problems in the business environment. First, the higher proportion of female managers in tourism boards reflects the general statistics on the higher employment of women in the tourism sector. According to the UNWTO report (UNWTO, 2019), 54% of people employed in tourism are women, compared to 39% of people employed in the broader economy. These jobs mainly include operational tasks related to the destination's marketing, which include going on business trips, participating in international tourism fairs, and organizing press trips for travel journalists, bloggers, vloggers, Instagram influencers, photographers, and events.

All this includes a lot of travel, often working on weekends and holidays, and thus good coordination with family obligations, as pointed out by the interviewees and in the literature review by Masha 2016 and Chen et al., 2016. This means that women are faced with expectations from themselves and expectations that come simultaneously from the family and business environment. In traditional societies, this can be a big problem and a source of dissatisfaction. If all this is interwoven with prejudices that women have fewer opportunities in leadership positions, women face a series of obstacles in their business careers. The research conducted, by Deery and Jago (2019) pointed out, confirmed this and that there is still relatively less understanding and support systems from the environment and society that could facilitate and help women on their career path.

Since there is no systematic and sufficient help from society through institutions, women mainly rely on family help, which has significant limitations. This is why it is necessary to systematically work on changing prejudices about women's leadership abilities, which are often the result of traditional values that come from history but are rapidly changing due to contemporary trends. Young families can rely less and less on the help of their parents; they usually live separately from them. On the other hand, people live longer, are healthier, have higher incomes, and organize their third age differently than a few decades ago.

Although it can be expected that the position of women in the business world, specifically in the positions of managers of tourist boards, will strengthen over time, it is still a relatively slow process. This is supported by the fact that the presidents of tourist boards are primarily men (89%). According to the Act on Tourist Boards and Tourism Promotion (NN 152/08), the presidents of tourist boards are mayors. Managers of tourism boards are responsible for their work to the tourist council and the president. In such a gender relationship, it is essential to constantly work on attitudes of equal opportunities and leadership abilities of women and men.

Conclusions and Further Research

In the tourism industry, women managers who are mothers may have to work long hours, travel frequently, and handle a large workload, making it difficult for them to be present for their children and family. Additionally, the stigma surrounding motherhood and the expectations for women to prioritize their family responsibilities over their careers can create additional challenges for women managers who are mothers. Motherhood can have a significant impact on women employees in the tourism industry. Still, they can continue contributing to the industry while balancing family responsibilities with the proper support and accommodations.

In conclusion, while women have made significant progress in business, they still face numerous challenges in pursuing management positions. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort from organizations, policymakers, and society. By creating a more inclusive and equitable workplace, we can help women reach their full potential and make meaningful contributions to their organizations and communities.

Despite these limitations, the study still provides valuable insights into the experiences, challenges, and strategies of women DMO managers in Croatia. By exploring factors beyond salary differentials, such as career advancement opportunities, work-life balance, and organizational culture, the research offers a more holistic understanding of gender dynamics within the tourism sector.

Future research endeavors could address these limitations by expanding the sample size or exploring additional variables that may influence gender equality within public sector roles. By doing so, a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities surrounding gender dynamics in tourism management can be attained, ultimately contributing to advancing gender equality initiatives within the industry.

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Trust as Basis for Peer-to-Peer Accommodation Trading Business Among Women in Split: The Case of Radunica Street

Ingeborg Matečić, PhD, Faculty of Economics and Business Zagreb - Department of Tourism, Croatia; e-mail: imatecic@efzg.hr

Helena Tolić, Faculty of Philosophy Zagreb Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Croatia; e-mail: [hetolic@m.ffzg.hr](mailto:hetalic@m.ffzg.hr)

Abstract

By investigating social and business ties between women, the study examines several kinds of informal employment centered around P2P accommodation trade, either online or offline. As informal employment has a significant risk component, the question was what facilitates cooperation. This qualitative, exploratory study used semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions. The sample included women from all facets of these unofficial occupations, including housekeepers, booking agents, and apartment owners. According to the study's findings, women joined together to gain income, and as a result, some new informal occupations based on trust and solidarization arose. Some became intermediaries between host and guests and supplied services such as interacting with tourists through online P2P accommodation platforms, others were trustworthy housekeeping women in charge of cleaning apartments, some did the work of check in and check out of guests and others all or just some of the described work. The most crucial component in social and business interactions, as well as the foundation for informal employment centered on the P2P accommodation trading market, was trust. Informal work centered around P2P accommodation trading resulted in economic and social empowerment of women in Radunica street.

Keywords: women; tourism; trust; peer-to-peer accommodation; Split; informal employment

Introduction

Women make up most of the worldwide tourism workforce, although they typically work in low-wage, low-status jobs (UNWTO, 2010). Even though women dominate the self-employed labour in the larger economy, they do not predominate in the self-employed workforce in the tourism (UNWTO, 2019:53). However, when discussing informal employment in general, the percentage of women in informal employment is lower than the share of men globally, although there are 55.4% more countries where the share of women in informal employment surpasses the share of men, such as sub-Saharan African countries, many Southern Asia countries, and Latin American countries (ILO, 2019:26). Women work informally more often than men in emerging countries. They are also often found in occupations most affected by decent work deficits, such as domestic work or family work (ILO, 2019:26). The tourism system may provide more prospects for female entrepreneurship than the rest of the economy (UNWTO). However, according to estimates, a growth in tourism boosts the informal economy if the level of tourism development is too high (Lv, 2020).

Furthermore, peer-to-peer (P2P) accommodation has received a lot of scholarly interest in recent years (Reinhold and Dolnicar, 2018; Dolnicar, 2019; Kuhzady *et al.*, 2020) researching many different topics ranging from changing nature of homes (Stabrowski, 2017; Roelofsen, 2018) to impacts of short-term rentals and possible approaches to manage them from resident's perspective (Park and Agrusa, 2020; Stergiou and Farmaki, 2020). Yet, research on the P2P accommodation trade and the potentials for informal employment and relations among women, is limited. Paid offline P2P accommodation trade refers to both informal and illegal lodging and is related with short-term rentals. The term paid "offline" P2P accommodation is used in this article because the economic activity of P2P accommodation trade within the community of Radunica street (henceforth called Radunica) began and existed long before online P2P platforms such as Booking.com or Airbnb.com entered the Croatian tourism market, and it was associated with an illegal economic activity while remaining a form of "peer-to-peer" activity (Tolić and Matečić, 2022, p. 41). This article covers both periods of this type of economic activity, when accommodation was traded offline without the help of P2P accommodation trading platforms, and later online P2P accommodation trading.

Moreover, trust in tourism has been studied utilizing economics, psychology, and sociological approaches in specific tourism contexts, notably in relationships between tourists and tourism providers (McKnight and Chervany, 2001; Williams and Balaž, 2021). Most research on trust in tourism examines consumer trust in service providers, particularly online (Sparks *et al.*, 2016; Oliveira *et al.* 2017), or in business cooperation (Wu and Chang 2006; Poppo *et al.*, 2016), or in customer loyalty (Moliner *et al.*, 2007). However, this research focuses on micro levels of trust at the interpersonal level as a broader sociological and psychological perspective. According to sociology, interpersonal trust is influenced not just by peoples' experiences or knowledge, but also by depersonalized category-based trust and process-based trust, both of which have consequences for assessing uncertainty connected to displacement. In category-based trust, trustworthiness is judged using social categories that act as trust cues (Kramer 1999). They may stem from the trustee's identification, reputation, social rank, participation in a certain social group, or just his or her physical appearance (Yu *et al.*, 2014; Sofer *et al.*, 2015).

The purpose of this study was to research women who joined together to generate additional income by first participating in offline P2P accommodation trade and subsequently online. Their collaboration was not formal, as they did not establish a business and therefore did not fall under the regulation of the government. By investigating social and business ties between those women, the study examined several kinds of informal employment centered around P2P accommodation trade, either online or offline. As informal employment has a significant risk component, the question was what facilitates cooperation.

Theoretical Background

Trust in Tourism and Women Entrepreneurship

The notion of trust was developed by psychologists in the 1950s and has since spread to many other fields such as sociology (Lewis and Weigert, 1985; Zucker, 1986; Wang *et al.* 2014), management (Das and Teng, 1998; Hosmer, 1995; Wang *et al.* 2014), and marketing (Anderson and Weitz, 1989; Moorman *et al.*, 1992; Wang *et al.* 2014). Trust often falls under the category of social capital in economic research, where it is the central element in the development of social capital (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998). Moreover, Patulny and Svendsen (2007:34) defined trust as "to have trust in and, subsequently, willingness to co-operate with other people". In that sense, Patulny (2004) argues that there are two forms of trust: generalized and particularized trust, where the former refers to morality and faith in others in general while the latter corresponds to information and experience regarding other individual and forms trust towards that specific person (Putnam, 1995).

Williams and Balaz (2020:3) argue that there are numerous trust settings in tourist research, but they all involve four essential types of connections: (a) between tourism service providers and tourists; (b) between tourism businesses; (c) between visitors and the local community (or hosts and guests); and (d) between tourists, tourism firms, local residents, and government officials.

Brush *et al.* (2006) discovered that women are fastest growing group of entrepreneurs and that women's entrepreneurship contributes to social growth in a variety of ways, particularly as inventors, but also simply as employers. Only a few studies (Surangi, 2016; Bernhard and Olsson, 2020) examined the participation of women entrepreneurs in networks with a focus on cooperation with local communities and trust-building processes in women's entrepreneurship (Bogren and von Friedrich, 2016). There is a dearth of studies in tourism research field examining women's trust and informal entrepreneurship.

P2P Accommodation

Paid online P2P accommodation is summarized by Dolnicar (2019) as "space suitable for overnight stays sold by a non-commercial provider (the host) to an end user (the guest) for short-term use through direct interaction between host and guest" (2019:248). As stated by Dolnicar (2019), besides *paid* and *online* characteristics, there are numerous elements of the definition worth mentioning to better understand the notion. These dimensions, or "key building blocks" as Dolnicar (2019:248) refers to them include:

1. space - encompasses many types of spaces suited for overnight stay, ranging from low-quality shared rooms to luxury apartments aimed at various market segments (Lutz and Newlands, 2018; Dolnicar, 2019).
2. non-commercial provider (the host) - the primary goal of the host is frequently connected with acquiring additional revenue for objectives such as loan repayment, basic needs, or the purchase of a new

item, or just for socializing and meeting new people (Hardy and Dolnicar, 2018; Ikkala and Lampinen, 2015; Karlsson and Dolnicar, 2016).

3. direct engagement - When a host and a visitor connect directly rather than through an intermediary, commerce happens between two peers (Dolnicar, 2019).

For the purposes of this research paid online P2P accommodation is a space traded on online peer-to-peer accommodation network platforms and paid offline P2P accommodation is a space traded between hosts and tourists on site and in person.

When critically reviewing the literature on P2P accommodation Belarmino and Koh (2020) singled out several topics such as consumer behaviour in P2P accommodations: legal issues pertaining to P2P accommodation, conceptualization of P2P accommodations, revenue management, owner motivations, affordable housing concerns and finally employment as one of the emerging fields of research.

Trust and P2P accommodation were explored from the perspective of the online environment, trust as it develops in online communities where consumers rely on user-generated content to determine the trustworthiness of owners and hosts (Murillo *et al.*, 2017; Belarmino and Koh, 2020).

Methodology

Split is a Croatian town located on the Dalmatian coast of the Adriatic Sea and one of the Croatia's most prominent tourism destinations. Split's city center and its closest neighborhoods create a network of *kaletas*, narrow, tiny streets of distinctive Mediterranean architecture. Radunica is one of such streets and represents the focus of the investigation. Radunica is the main street of Lučac, one of the town's oldest neighborhoods outside of the ancient city center. Radunica was one of the first streets in Split where residents engaged in offline P2P accommodation trade (Tolić and Matečić, 2022:44).

This qualitative, exploratory study used semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions. The interviewees were eight women closely connected to the online and offline P2P trade of accommodation in Radunica. The sample included women from all facets of these unofficial occupations, including housekeepers, informal booking agents, and apartment owners, hosts. A total of 12 interviews were conducted, two persons was interviewed twice within a period of 3 months. The interviews were transcribed, and the data was coded, themes, patterns, and relationships were identified. This qualitative research has achieved saturation, with no new information or themes emerging from the data (Guest *et al.*, 2006:59; Guest *et al.*, 2020).

Based on prior research, Radunica is seen as a site of social production and social space formation (Tolić, 2019; Tolić and Matečić, 2022), as well as a micro-tourism destination that has seen changes in social relations and transformation of the space brought about by the rise of private accommodation renting to tourists. In addition, this study builds on a previous study of offline and online P2P accommodation trading in Radunica (Tolić, 2019). The interviewees describe the time when this type of tourism activity was operated in its initial phase, as well as the time when P2P accommodation network platforms such as Booking.com entered the Croatian tourism market and acted as intermediaries between hosts and tourists. (Tolić, 2019; Tolić and Matečić, 2022). All interviewees' names have been changed to protect their identities.

The Research Results

With the advent of Booking.com and then Airbnb.com, some hosts did not have enough knowledge and confidence in P2P network platforms and could not upload their houses or apartments online. They were seeking for someone to do it in their stead. The respondent describes the relations and the situation of doing business with Booking.com as well as with hosts: "...and then shortly after that, the new agent [of Booking.com] came... and when she came, she had more field work, so she would come here and then sign contracts with the owners [hosts], and as you quickly connect with people from [the same] profession, she has completed an MBA, and we got along very quickly, and then she realized who she was dealing with, and then she would come ...and we would organize a stall for her on the square behind Peristil...and people would wait in line to sign contracts, and then we would say that's enough for today, we've done our work, now we're going for lunch... it was private [organized privately by the respondent 1]... and so the woman had trust in the person, in me and in my good intentions and profession and so we just told her come to Split: "We have 20 contracts for you to sign."

The respondent was the one who, on her initiative, organized the signing of the contracts between the hosts and the Booking.com agent, and the relations were based on interpersonal trust. Here, two parties trusted one person and her ability to do business outside of a formal setting. The trust was evident between the respondent and the hosts as well as between the respondent and the booking agent. Both parties trusted her due to her professional behaviour, although she was just the intermediary. The respondent also describes the situations in which hosts trusted her to manage their profiles and make bookings for them, as well as to conduct correspondence with tourists instead of the hosts.

"...And then I managed some of these profiles and they [hosts] were completely fine with it...those 10 people, those are the one which Iva manages and that's it... so they [hosts], it's easier for them to coordinate technical things with one person...[otherwise] they should have some IT knowledge to upload, to set it all up [the profile on Booking.com], management of prices... left and right, because people they didn't, they didn't have experience, then I would manage all profiles, communicate with guests, payments... in the beginning there was no payment to the account, but everything [was paid] in cash, and that was a huge amount of money, and then you [hosts] need to **trust** the people who manage your profiles. And they [Booking.com] didn't check at first, everything was based on trust, you shouldn't have any papers, no categorization, no license, or anything... So, we had a good collaboration because people's voices would spread throughout Split fast [saying] give Iva a call, she'll put you on Booking.com right away..."

The hosts entrusted the respondent with the management of their Booking.com profiles and no contracts were signed between her and the hosts to formally support this collaboration. She was innovative in her quest to make money and she invented the job of an intermediary who negotiates with tourists, answers the questions instead of the hosts and even collects payments from the tourists. The respondent relied on her reputation (depersonalized based trust) to further develop the job.

On the other side of the collaboration were the hosts. The motives and reasons why the hosts entered this kind of cooperation become clear in the answers of a woman who owns a flat and rents it out to tourists via Booking.com.

"...I don't want to communicate with strangers, that's the point. I do not want. I don't want emails to arrive while I'm working, while I'm in the middle of this or that work..., to be called, to be asked...give me this or that..."

She [the booking lady, the intermediary] organizes the transfer and then takes my money, great, good for her, good for me, no one bothers me ...that is that, you know, those are the [grey] zones now...but I don't know, she can do whatever she wants, she can cheat on me, I don't know... At that moment, I have been [involved] in tourism [activity] for one month, and she has been in tourism for 40 years. And then you play on trust... she taught me in the end that you must know how to share money, that's what she taught me."

For the hosts who did not want to give up their regular jobs and have contacts with tourists, but still wanted to rent out their flats for extra income, the booking lady saved their time. They were willing to share the profit with her in return for not being disturbed and interrupted and having their peace of mind. Moreover, they were satisfied with the income, even if they distributed it to the cleaning lady and the booking lady.

"...I give it to the cleaner, I give to the booking lady and let them do their job, I shared part of my profits, I'm happy with what [money] has remained, and everyone is doing great. And you can't do everything [each and every of those jobs alone], you'll be scattered [burned out]..."

Another job and relations it created outside the formal contractual environment was the job of cleaning apartments. Two ladies, one was the owner of the apartments Ljilja and the other the housekeeping lady Čista, were interviewed together and here is the extract from the interview:

"Ljilja: She has the keys, it's like her house, she arranges everything to them [hosts].

Čista: Well, I carry two kilos [of keys] at a time, so...

Ljilja: She carries the keys.

Čista: So, yes...

Ljilja: She [Čista] comes alone, they [hosts] tell her when, what, how, she has the keys to all those houses and apartments. There are guests, there guests leave their money, there they leave their mobile phones...

Ljilja: it is not easy to find [a person like that] so, so... They all know how to clean this and that but give the keys of the house to someone!!"

In this dialogue, Ljilja describes the trustworthiness of the Čista and explains how difficult it is to find a person to whom one can entrust the keys of a real estate and entrust the real estate itself. This individual must be trustworthy, not only for the sake of the hosts, but also for the security of the guest's items.

Moreover, the theme of solidarity and trust between four women in Radunica emerged. The period described concerns the time before P2P accommodation network platforms entered the Croatian tourism market. That was the time when hosts searched the streets of Split for tourists in need of accommodation, and the time when not only apartments, but mostly rooms were rented out in Radunica.

"There were four of us, until all four of us [our accommodation] were not full, there is no going home. Because we [accommodation] want to be full. And she to me and I to them – to her still lacks one room [one room is empty], Jasenka's room, let's all go down and search [for tourists]! ...then if one of my rooms was empty, they would all come to me, they would all spread out and ask [around town] that we all be full and then we would go home!"

Four women organized themselves informally on a basis of mutual trust and helped each other find tourists who needed accommodation. The collaboration was entirely voluntary.

The basis of the informal relationships formed around P2P accommodation trading activity was interpersonal trust.

Conclusion

In Radunica, women joined together to gain additional income. For some, this activity was not only the additional but the only source of income. In this way, new informal professions based on trust and solidarity emerged, such as intermediaries between hosts and tourists – booking agents who offer services to hosts, such as interacting with tourists via P2P accommodation platforms on the internet, communicating, organizing, checking guests in and out, and sometimes even collecting payments. In such case, the P2P accommodation trading model is questionable as it is not a P2P relationship, because an intermediary stands between the peers. In this respect the study expands the conceptualization of P2P accommodation trade.

Based on trust, one of the respondents earned enough money to move from being the person who picks up tourists on the street to being the owner of the apartments. Informal work centered around P2P accommodation trading resulted in economic and social empowerment of women in Radunica.

The investigation's shortcoming is that it only focuses on one street. The research may be expanded to include the entire city of Split. Trustworthiness is judged in depersonalized category-based trust determined by social categories such as the trustee's identification, reputation, social status, participation in a certain social group, or even physical appearance. In depersonalized trust, just reputation arose as a category. It is advisable to investigate the trustee's identification, rank in society, or even physical appearance.

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The Gender Dimensions of Global Value Chains in the Tourism Sector in Croatia

Diana Baus, Institute for Tourism, Croatia; e-mail: diana.baus@iztg.hr

Abstract

The research conducted with this paper is focused on the role of women in the labour market in Croatia, with particular emphasis on women's labour in tourism, keeping in mind that tourism is the most progressive industry of the Croatian economy. Tourism is a very heterogeneous economic branch, directly and indirectly contributing the most to the Croatian GDP. In such a heterogeneous labour market, the position of women in terms of gender representation (gender dimension) was analysed, especially the participation of women in high-ranking workplaces through global value chains (GVC) in Croatia's labour market in tourism. This paper seeks to integrate gender into the GVC tool to assess the gender dimensions of integration and economic and social upgrading in the labour market. Policymakers on the global level are increasingly turning to integration and upgrading in GVCs as a means of driving development, including generating employment and raising incomes, which, in the case of Croatia's most productive industry and gender integration, is very important. Considering that, the paper's main objective is to propose potential indicators through which the participation of women in GVC in Croatian tourism could be elaborated.

Keywords: Croatian tourism; labour market; gender dimension; global value chains (GVC); potential indicators for GVC

Introduction

Like other transitional countries, Croatia has passed through massive socio-economic and general cultural changes in the last three decades. In particular, the process of deindustrialisation has had a significant impact on the labour market. In the first post-war years of the War for Independence, due to the war destruction and the indiscriminate and premature privatisation of social property, there were many unemployed people in almost all sectors of the economy.

This transition process has brought fundamental changes in many spheres of work and life, especially in the employment structure. With the collapse or inadequate restructuring of many industrial companies, there has been an enormous number of unemployed people. This further resulted in creating a highly precarious labour market, characterised by flexible forms of employment, which mainly came at the expense of newly employed people, primarily women.

Moreover, high unemployment rates and dissatisfaction with working conditions among youngsters in the past decade resulted in high emigration from Croatia to other countries, mainly to the European Union and the United Kingdom. This left negative long-term consequences on the country's demographic development. The lack of labour force is noticeable primarily in the tourism industry, which significantly lacks domestic workers.

The post-war unemployment rate of women from 1996 until 2002 was regularly higher compared to the men's unemployment rate. In 1996, the unemployment rate for women was 10.5%, and the unemployment rate for men was 9.5%. A few years later, in 2001, these rates were 17.8% (of women) and 14.1 (of men). In 2002, the rates were 16.6% versus 13.4% (Croatian Bureau of Statistics, 2002). The disparity between both rates was high in some years, e.g. while in 1996, the unemployment rate for women was 1.0 percentage points higher than that of men, this gap widened to 4.3 percentage points in 2001. In 2002, the disparity was reduced to 2.5 percentage points. The exceptionally high unemployment rate of young women during the '90s and early '00s was among women aged 18 to 49, 33.6%. In contrast, women aged 50 to 64 had a lower unemployment rate, at 8.3%, which indicates that women in their most productive years could not find employment (ibid).

In 2020, the number of employees in Croatia, viewed through the lens of the gender dimension, was satisfactory, and there was no significant deviation from the corresponding values to those in other European Union countries, according to the EUROSTAT data from the same year. This was an inevitable outturn of sociodemographic, socioeconomic, and general cultural changes that contributed to this workforce phe-

nomenon, significantly impacting women's position in the labour market and society. Moreover, it is essential to note that gender equality is represented satisfyingly in tourism and all aspects of the economic and social development of Croatia and that this trend of gender representation is continuously pursued. Further on, considering a developing country's ambition, such as Croatia, to strengthen the potential of the tourism sector is very important for the employment of people with an extensive profile of occupation, which significantly contributes to gender equality in employment policy (Marinakou, Women in Hotel Management and Leadership: Diamond or Glass?, 2014).

Although we see that the bare minimum standards of gender equality are generally met, i.e., the total number of employed men and women is approximately the same. Unfortunately, this is not a significant indicator that all working conditions and equality standards are ensured when discussing gender participation in the labour market. Therefore, a new set of indicators regarding the gender dimension and the tourism industry must be evaluated. For these purposes, this paper recommends using the GVC model. In that way, the whole process of production of the product or service could be fragmented, from where the information on workers' participation could be dissolved on gender and their role during the whole process.

This paper attempts to define relevant indicators for the participation of women's work activities through the GVCs system in tourism in the Republic of Croatia. This paper aims to analyse the position of women in the labour market in Croatian tourism through the following phases of research:

1. As an essential starting point for this research, it is necessary to determine potential indicators, which are defined based on work activities performed by women in the labour market.
2. Further analysis determines the positioning of women's work activities in the labour market in tourism by applying potential indicators.
3. In the third stage, the positioning of women's work in relation to men is determined on the GVC scale.
4. Finally, analyse the socio-economic implications that follow from the representation and position of women in the labour market in tourism.

Potential Indicators Relevant for Estimation of Participation of Women's Work Activities in GVC in Tourism

Gender equality has always been a human rights issue. Until today, societies focus on enabling policies to integrate women into society to participate actively in economic, social, and political life. Enhancing women's access to opportunities in services not only enhances gender equality but also makes sense when analysing economics, as it improves productivity, efficiency, and the economy's competitiveness, leading to more inclusive growth and better development outcomes for all. Gender equality in employment today is a matter of social fairness and an economic necessity (OECD, 2011). Equality in pay, adequate recognition and evaluation of women's abilities, skills and knowledge, and policies allowing employees to balance their family and work obligations will attract more women to the labour market and offer an additional economic incentive. Increased economic activity of women is an important factor in European economic growth. For example, it is estimated that about a fifth of the annual GDP growth of 2.3% in the European Union can be explained by an increase in women's economic activity. Therefore, the European Council in Lisbon in March 2000 set the objectives of increasing the employment rate of women in the European Union from 54% to 57% in 2005 and 60% in 2010 (EU employment and social policy 1999–2001: jobs, cohesion, productivity, 2001). In 2021, the European Commission reported that 67.7% of women were employed, whereas 78.5% of men were employed. In other words, there is still a gender employment gap of 10.8 p.p., which has only slightly decreased in the last ten years (European Commission, 2022). The economic loss due to the gender employment gap amounts to €370 billion annually (ibid). It is estimated that improving gender equality could lead to an increase in GDP of up to €3.15 trillion by 2050.

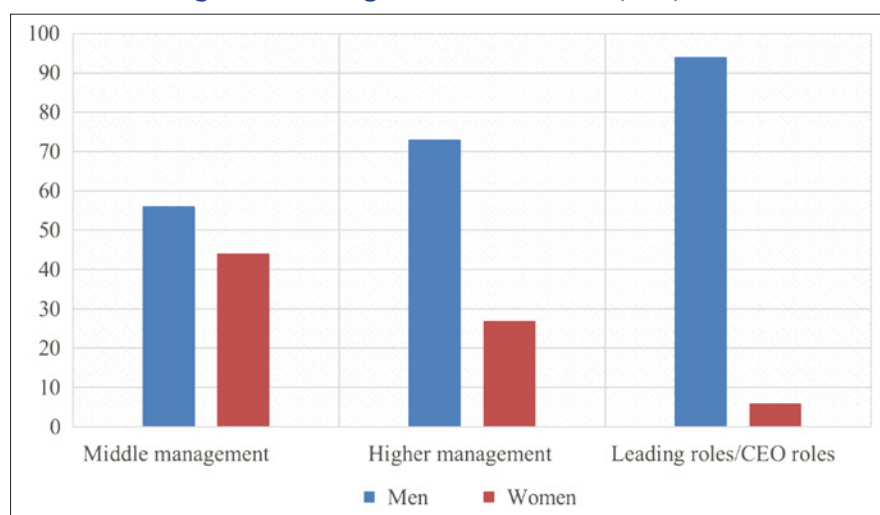
Taking action is both a social and an economic imperative. In addition, it is also necessary to develop new institutional and social frameworks that will monitor changes in labour profiles and support equal choice for women and men in aligning responsibilities in the family and the workplace. Therefore, a more active policy is needed, such as one that will go hand in hand with the family upbringing and career development, i.e., one that will help strike a work-family balance. Besides that, enabling a more straightforward return to work after absenteeism from the labour market is crucial. Equality in pay, adequate recognition and evaluation of women's abilities, skills and knowledge, and policies allowing employees to balance their family and work obligations would undoubtedly attract more women to the labour market and mean an additional economic incentive. Increased economic activity of women is an important factor in Euro-

pean economic growth. For example, it is estimated that about a fifth of the annual GDP growth of 2.3% in the European Union can be explained by an increase in women's economic activity. Therefore, the European Council in Lisbon in March 2000 set the objectives of increasing the employment rate of women in the European Union from the current 54% to 57% in 2005 and 60% in 2010 (EU employment and social policy 1999–2001: jobs, cohesion, productivity, 2001).

Focusing on Croatia, according to the 2019 Gender Equality Index, with 55.6 out of 100 points, Croatia ranked 22nd in the EU on the Gender Equality Index. Its score was 11.8 points lower than the EU's (55.6 vs. 67.4) (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2019). Croatia is progressing towards gender equality at a slower pace, and its ranking has remained the same as in 2005. The number of women who want to work is steadily growing. Still, when competing with men, it is harder for women to find work, even though they are often better candidates, as employers prefer male workers (Avelini Holjevac, 2006). Most women seek employment as saleswomen, office clerks, tellers, and other less demanding vocations, although there are also unemployed women among professionals and scholars (ibid). Primorac et al. (2016) researched a sample of fifty leading female managers in Croatian tourism organizations who participated in an online survey. Their findings indicated that gender inequality was present in female employment in general and, more specifically, in Croatian tourism. Further on, women employed in the tourism sector were less motivated for managerial and leadership roles but more likely for subordinated roles, such as housekeeping, cleric roles, food preparation and serving, etc. It is important to emphasize that the tourism industry is competitive; therefore, keeping current with sustainable development goals is crucial. Enhancing women's role in the sector would implement Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, gender equality, in terms of women's empowerment (Lipowiecka and Kiriti-Nganga, 2016). With the right policies and regulations, the service sector can achieve SDG 8, decent work, and economic growth by generating more productive and higher-paid employment opportunities and decent work for both men and women (ibid.).

Many indicators today say that the position of women working in tourism is still worse than that of men, e.g., women are in poorer jobs of low complexity, have a lower salary for the same type of work, are not engaged in management structures, etc. Figure 1 shows the ratio of women versus men in Croatia's leadership positions. Vertical discrimination is visible, in which the number of female managers decreases as the level of management increases. There are the most female managers at the middle management level (44%) and the least at the highest management level (6%). On the contrary, most managers are at the highest management level (94%), and the least are at the middle management level (56%).

Figure 1.
Gender of managers and managerial level in Croatia (in %)

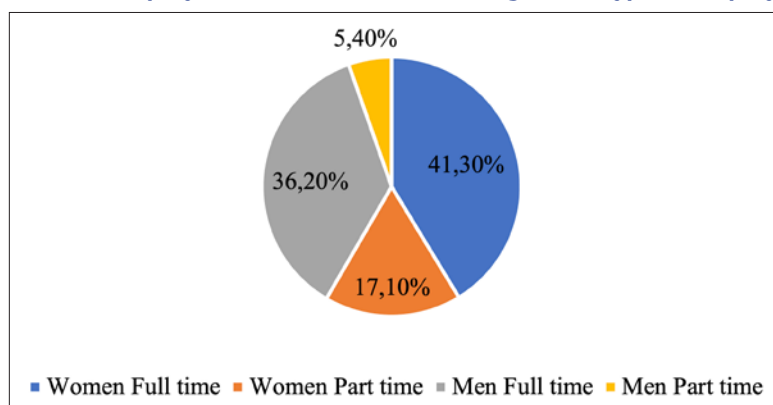


Source: made by the author from the book by Fikreta, B.Š. (2014). Strategic management of human resources: Contemporary trends and challenges

Employment in tourism, in addition to the above, has some specificities that can affect measures to establish equal opportunities, such as seasonal work, which can affect the balance between men and women in employment for specific positions, and it is crucial to ensure equal access to everyone regardless of gender. Work in tourism can also include working at night, on holidays and in more distant destinations. Such conditions can be a problem, especially for women with family responsibilities. On the other hand, part-time, seasonal, and flexible working hours are also suitable for women with families. Figure 2. be-

low shows that the percentage of women working full-time (41.3%) is higher than that of men working full-time (36.2%). Also, there is a higher percentage of women with part-time work (17.1%) than men with part-time work (5.4%).

Figure 2.
Share of employed women in men according to the type of employment



Source: Author by accessing Eurostat data, 2023

Nevertheless, in the last decade, the transfer and development of new modern technologies, especially information technologies, significantly changed women's position in the labour market, especially in tourism. Thanks to that, women are leaving traditional employment models in tourism and changing to "non-standard forms of employment", which were exclusively reserved for men in the past.

This slow trend of establishing gender equality at all working levels inevitably raises the following questions:

- 1) What is the quality and degree of complexity of the work performed by women?
- 2) What is a woman's salary concerning a man's salary for the same complexity of work?
- 3) How can we enable women to control and manage functions?

To answer these questions, it is necessary to conduct research by analysing women's work process and direct labour participation in tourism. As a fundamental prerequisite for evaluating the participation of women in a process, it is necessary to determine the relevant indicators for this work participation. In previous studies, some authors have proposed defining potential indicators that would allow women's work activities to be included in GVCs (Staritz and Reis, 2015). When defining indicators, groups of work activities, which can be incorporated into GVCs, related to the female population were considered as follows (UNCTAD, 2015; Bamber and Staritz, 2016):

1. Gender effect of upgrading. (Indicators: benefits from integration in GVCs and economic upgrading, benefits from social upgrading)
2. Women as entrepreneurs. (Indicators: gender inequality, real estate ownership, possession of financial resources, control of infrastructure utilities, access to various inputs, access to education, access to IT business networks, etc.)
3. Women as employees in the administration. (Indicators: participation of women in the labour sector, or work profile of women, the possibility of labour promotion, quality of work contracts, equality of wages with men for the same job, working conditions, possibility of education, etc.)
4. Women as workers in reproductive jobs. (Indicators: time spent in the workplace, paid work of a woman versus a man)

The detailed indicators for gender participation in GVCs are proposed by Bamber and Staritz (2016) in Table 1.

Gender Upgrading in GVCs

Global value chains (GVCs) result from liberalisation and globalisation of the market, where several countries' dispersive participation in producing a single product is enabled. The methodology implemented in this work suggests using the global value chains (GVC) model when calculating women's involvement in the tourism industry.

Firstly, it calculates Croatia's share in the national and international tourism production of goods and services. Secondly, by deducting women's share in the production of a particular good or service in the tourism industry, and lastly, by indicating the position of women in the labour process using gender equality indicators from Table 1. which are suggested by Bamber and Straitz (2016).

What is graded as an inadequate approach when combating the gender dimension is to state the overall share of women employed in the tourism industry. The share does not say anything about the nature and quality of the work or the implications of how women and men participate in delivering certain goods or services to the industry; therefore, GVC is used to inspect not only the outcome of the work but also individual participation and degree of involvement. For developing countries like Croatia, this means increased employment opportunities, contributing to female empowerment (Bamber and Staritz, 2016).

Table 1.
Potential Indicators to Measure Women's Participation in GVCs

	Challenge	Indicator	
Women's Reproductive work	Time Infrastructure	Average time spent on paid work of women vs. men	
		Average time spent on unpaid reproductive work (household responsibilities, childcare, etc.) of women vs. men	
		Access to electricity, water, etc., in reproductive work	
Women as workers	Patterns of segregation	Participation of women by sector, GVC stage, occupation, or job profile	
	Job status and access to promotion	Women's share of supervisory, managerial, professional, technical, and clerical work	
	Vulnerable employment	Women's share of informal/contract/seasonal employment Women's share in permanent jobs with contracts	
	Wage gap	Average wages by gender by GVC stage	
		The ratio of women's wages to men's wages for similar work	
	Working conditions	Average number of working hours for women vs. men	
		Number of occupational health and safety incidences for women vs. men	
		Share of women with access to social security	
		Share of women with access to paid sick leave	
		Share of women with access to maternity leave	
Provision of on-site childcare and nursing facilities			
Share of women with discrimination/sexual harassment claims			
Access to training	Women's participation rate in TVET and other external training programmes Women's participation in "on-the-job" training programmes		
Women as entrepreneurs	Patterns of segregation	Share of female entrepreneurs/producers vs. men's in GVC-linked operations Participation of women by sector, activity, or crop type Size of women's firms compared to size of men's	
	Access to land	Women's share of land access, landholding, and immoveable property Women's size of landholdings/land access vs men's	
	Access to finance	Women's share of bank/savings accounts Women's share of total loan portfolio Size of women's loans compared to size of men's loans	
	Access to infrastructure and utilities	The proportion of female-owned businesses with access to electricity, water, transport, etc. The proportion of female-owned businesses with access to mobile phones and internet Share of female entrepreneurs/products	
	Access to inputs	Women's participation in collective buying and productive schemes Women's use rate of storage and processing facilities	
	Access to skills and technology	Women's participation rate in skill training programmes in different areas (entrepreneurship, technology, etc.) Women's participation rate in extension services	
	Access to information and networks	Women's participation in relevant industry associations Women's participation in trade unions and workers' groups Women's participation in cooperatives Inclusion of women's groups in industry-relevant negotiations	
	Gendered effects of upgrading	Benefits from integration in GVCs and economic upgrading	Women's vs. men's share of employment by value chain segment
			Women's vs. men's share in higher-skilled jobs created due to economic upgrading
Women's vs. men's ownership of businesses that successfully upgraded change in gender share due to economic upgrading of jobs and firms			
Benefits from social upgrading		Women's vs. men's share in better jobs created due to social upgrading Change in gender share due to social upgrading of jobs and firms	

Source: Bamber and Staritz, 2016

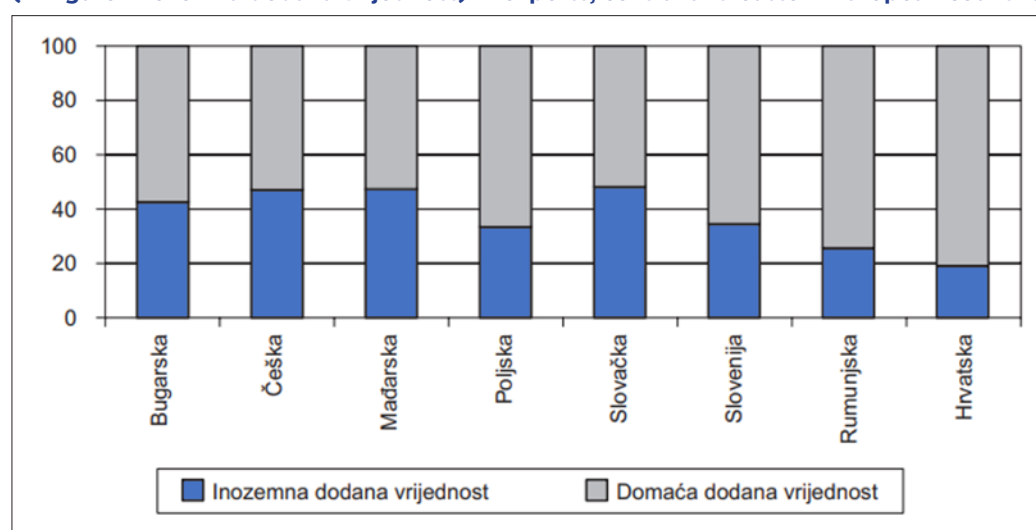
This fragmentation of the work process allows a detailed quantification of the performance of an individual subject, i.e. a direct, explicit measurement of its newly created additional value. GVCs give the possibility of measuring the added value (intermediate value) on the product for each operator in the chain and, thus, more broadly, more accurate determination of actual exports (precise determination of domestic added value in exports) (Fernandez-Stark, Bamber and Gereffi, 2011). The GVC participation index represents the sum of the share of domestic value added in foreign exports (DVA/EXP) and the share of foreign-added value in domestic exports (FVA/EXP):

$$GVC \text{ Participation Index} = TWO/EXP + FVA/EXP$$

International input-output tables are required to calculate value-added. Wassily Leontief has developed classic Input-Output analysis as a standard tool for monitoring the participation of individual working entities in the production process of a single product and/or service (Dietzenbacher and Lahr, 2009).

Figure 3.

Shares of domestic (in figure: domaća dodana vrijednost) and foreign added value (in figure: inozemna dodana vrijednost) in exports, central and eastern European countries in 2014

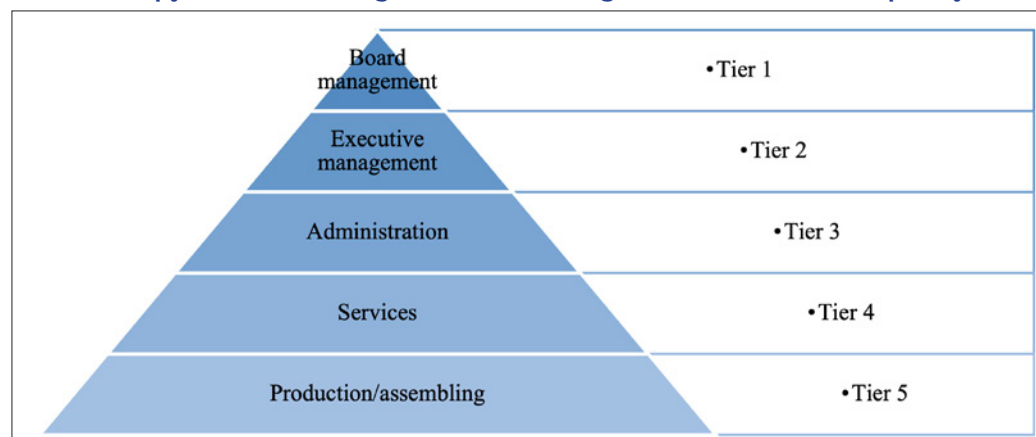


Source: Trade in value-added, TIVA Nowcast Estimates, OECD, 2017

Then, we proceed to further fragmentation of the work process so that at the microeconomic level, a single company can determine gender equality and then position it on the GVC scale. This approach allows for the explicit quantitative determination of women's participation in a work process of production and/or service delivery.

Figure 4.

Hierarchical pyramid of work organisation according to the structure of complexity of work tasks in tourism



Source: author

Furthermore, analysing Figure 4., the question arises of how women can progress in the organisational pyramid, from the base to the top (from Tier 5 to Tier 1), in the GVC in the direction of upstream. On this path of working toward emancipation and better organisational positioning, many barriers arise from personal characteristics and the general socioeconomic and general cultural environment (Maume, 2004) (Marinakou, 2014).

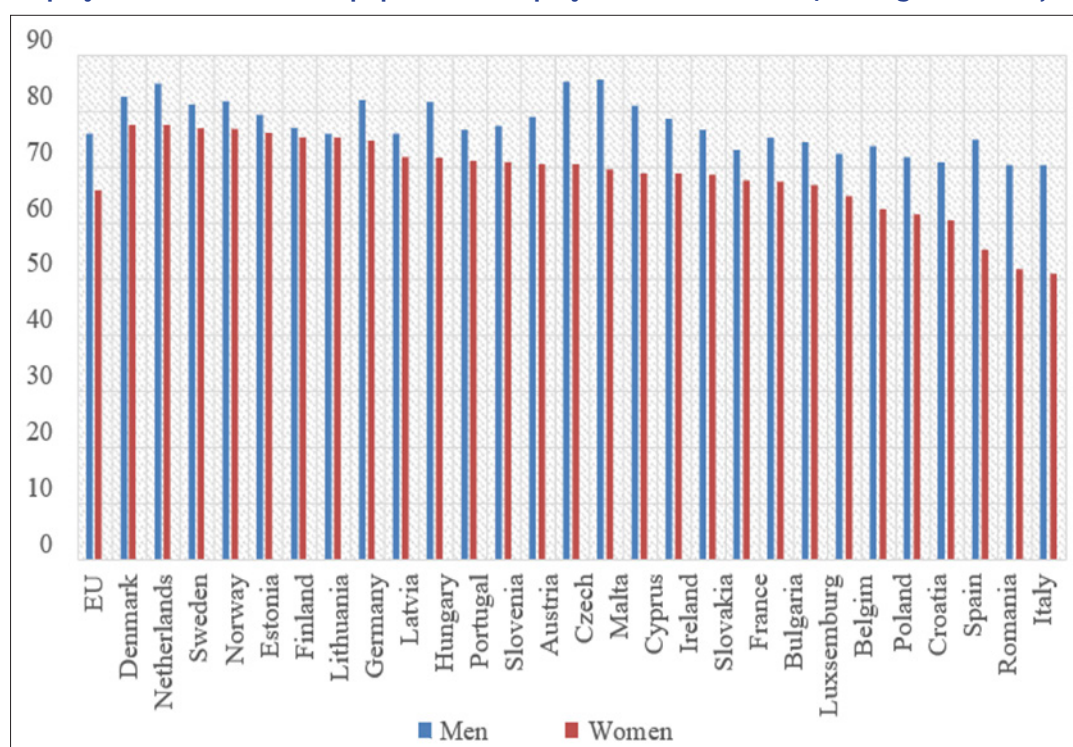
Advances in computer and communications technologies, fierce international competition, and firms' quest to keep labour costs low have driven many firms to take advantage of relocating ICT-related and ICT-enabled jobs from developed to developing countries. ICT has an enormous potential to reduce gender gaps in labour force participation by making employment arrangements more flexible and generating new opportunities in online work, e-commerce, and the sharing economy (The World Bank, 2016b).

On the other hand, focusing on the lower bottom of the pyramid, the production sector is a critical component of a thriving tourism and economy. It contributes to economic growth, drives job creation, and provides crucial economic inputs and public services. A competitive production and service sectors contribute to development in four ways: through output growth and productivity gains; through effects on employment and national incomes; through impact on the range and quality of services, including critical social services and business services; and by diversifying the economy and offering a source of competitive and comparative advantage in terms of trade (Cali and Willem de Velde, 2008).

Services are thus crucial to promoting inclusive growth; they provide jobs for people experiencing poverty, form the backbone of the economy, and offer critical opportunities for growth through trade. Through output growth and productivity gains, services can contribute more to GDP growth, job creation, and poverty reduction than manufacturing (Ghani and Kharas, 2010).

This situation highlights the need for regulations in tourism and the ongoing support of diversity education in society to empower women and secure equal conditions for women in the workplace. Specifically, the recommendation is for implementing gender quotas at the board level, sanctions for pay gaps between men and women, and work-life balance policies to help reconcile work commitments with maternity, childcare and family obligations (Marinakou, 2014). Figure 5 shows that in all EU countries, there are more employed men than women in the overall economy. Denmark has the highest employment rate for women, while Greece has the lowest. Croatia is in 24th place.

Figure 5.
Employment rate of the total population - employment rate of women/men aged 18 to 64, the total



Source: author by accessing the data from Eurostat, 2023

When discussing limitations, Straitz and Reis (2013) emphasise that the use of the GVC model will not necessarily lead to reduced inequalities, such as gender segregation in types of occupations and activities, gender gaps in terms of wages and working conditions, and gender-specific constraints in access to productive resources, infrastructure, and services. However, it will bring a broad picture of the socio-economic situation, which could be altered and enhanced through social and political measures.

Socio-Economic Impact of GVC on Social Development

A new approach in the analysis of the position of women in the work process, starting from the basic guidelines of sustainable development within corporate social responsibility, can be substantively divided into three dimensions: the economic, the social and the environmental.

From an economic perspective, tourism is a crucial branch of socio-economic development, mainly manifested through increased employment, economy, international trade, and infrastructure (Campos Soria and Robles Teigeiro, 2019).

Many recent studies indicate that the rapid development of modern tourism increases greenhouse gas emissions, leading to climate change (Lasisi, Alola, Eluwole, Ozturen and Alola, 2020). However, within the framework of sustainable tourism development, the application of renewable energy sources is also developing, which has a very small or almost insignificant negative impact on the environment (Baus, 2017). According to the program on the application of renewable energy sources by 2050, renewable energy is projected to amount to 50% of the total energy consumption in one country (Gössling and Peeters, 2015).

It is imperative to say that significant social, economic and environmental changes have led to a demand for trained personnel who will be up-to-date with the demands of the labour market. In recent years, this has opened up additional opportunities for women. Many studies have pointed to the positive implications of employing women on a company's board, which has very positive implications for developing corporate social responsibility (Ferguson and Moreno Alarcon, 2015) (Bear, Rahman and Post) (Galbreath, 2011). Due to more cognitive diversity and information resources, following a different observation of the problems, women as leaders can contribute to better landscaping of tourist destinations, reducing the consumption of energy and other resources in the tourism sector, introducing innovation in the tourism sector, and reducing CO2 emissions in the environment of a tourist destination. From the very natural diversity arises a deep division between a man's and a woman's behaviour, thus a diversity of world views. For example, we can take the essential role of women in the care of children and households, where they are advantageous over men. Studies have shown that women are far more willing to collaborate, work in smaller groups, be more transparent and meticulous, and have more responsibility in some details, which men find less important (Frias-Aceituno, Rodriguez Ariza and Garcia Sanchez, 2013).

Unfortunately, there are still specific barriers in the form of organisational stereotypes, which reduce the number of women on the company board. However, this is changing over time, in a way that women today are increasingly represented at the highest levels of management in companies, not only in tourism but also in other branches of economies and various social and political bodies and associations. Similarly, incentives through tax policies or social recognition should be provided to firms that offer promotions to women. At the same time, tourism managers' commitment to gender diversity is essential. Firms should implement human resource policies based on equal opportunities for men and women that cover all processes, from selection and training to promotion and compensation.

In addition, the lack of involvement of these organisations in caring for the planet is a warning sign for entrepreneurs in this sector, who must increase their awareness and implementation of environmental practices, given that their activity depends heavily on the local area's natural resources. Accordingly, the managers of these firms should create programmes to raise awareness and manage their environmental impact.

Such programmes represent the only way to create policies and actions that contribute to corporate environmental education and build collective awareness and involvement in the need to care for the environment. This care for the environment is the only way to guarantee access to the resources this sector has depended on for generations. Therefore, public administrations need greater involvement, which must encourage the implementation of these practices through environmental policies and incentives.

Conclusion

This paper analyses the position of women in the labour market in tourism in Croatia through gender equality at all working levels in the tourism industry. It suggests using the GVC model for calculating women's participation in the tourism production of goods and services. Through the GVC model, we can get a clear picture of the role of women in the tourism industry and enhance their labour position through social and economic policies. Furthermore, responsible management policies dictated on a global level and the implementation of SDGs ask for the inclusion of all genders on the labour market to improve equality of gender dimension in terms of labour and education and eradicate hunger and poverty. Also, tourism, as a versatile industry, demands versatile workers.

Moreover, gendered GVC analysis improves our understanding of women's and men's roles, opportunities and constraints and the overall functioning of GVCs and upgrading processes. A gender-differentiated analysis is imperative because it highlights the impact of GVC integration and upgrading on female workers, producers, and entrepreneurs and, thus, the broader socioeconomic effects of such processes. Secondly, it is crucial because it allows an understanding of gender-specific opportunities and constraints concerning competitiveness and upgrading, improving the effectiveness of interventions and policies. Particularly as women account for a large portion of the workforce in many GVCs, failing to understand and address their specific constraints can undermine countries' ability to be competitive and upgrade in GVCs. The starting point for this research was the definition of potential indicators relevant for positioning women in the labour market in tourism in Croatia, starting from an extensive range of work activities in the tourism sector.

The research focuses on the possibility of positioning women in the highest management levels of tourism structures, considering gender. In a broader sense, the positive impact of women's work in tourism on the overall development of society valorised through GVC is analysed, considering the initiation of employment, gender equality, and socio-economic dimensions. In previous years, GVC was a primary tool for driving development, including generating jobs and raising incomes. Access to and benefits from participation in GVCs are closely related to gender issues.

This paper presents the first insights into the relationship between gender and tourism, focusing on the role of female employees in GVC in Croatia. The results achieved so far give the author an impetus for further research.

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The Impact of Women's Empowerment on the Establishment of Sustainable Tourism Development in Rural Areas

Draženka Birkić, Karlovac University of Applied Sciences, Croatia; e-mail: dbirkic@vuka.hr

Lidija Žganjer Gržetić, Štrudlafest, Croatia; e-mail: lidija.zganjer@gmail.com

Abstract

Rural areas are characterized by a very rich natural, cultural, and traditional heritage, but also by depopulation issues and the abandonment of traditional activities, weak economic activities, transportation isolation, and a predominantly elderly population. In such circumstances, sustainable development solutions are sought in tourism, in the form of sustainable businesses, whose products and services stem from the unique culture and tradition of the rural area, with women at its core. Women are the ones who nurture culture and tradition, produce food, preserve biological diversity, uphold family traditional values, and thereby become key players in the development of tourism in rural areas. The aim of this study is to investigate the impact of women's empowerment on the establishment of sustainable tourism development through rural entrepreneurship. The research is operationalized through a "multidimensional conceptualization of empowerment," which includes psychological, political, and social concepts. The research is based on the Štrudlafest event in Jaškov, Karlovac County, Republic of Croatia, whose main organizers are women living and operating in the village of Jaškov. Primary research was conducted using two adapted research scales. The multidimensional scale for measuring women's empowerment, developed and validated by Boleyeva and McGehee (2014), as well as Elshaer *et al.* (2021). A total of 122 women participated in the research, and the research results were analyzed using the SPSS tool. The research results indicate a strong and significant correlation between the impact of women's empowerment and the establishment of sustainable tourism development in rural areas, as well as the fact that women are leaving passive roles in the establishment of rural entrepreneurship. They can and are the leaders of entrepreneurial initiatives in tourism in rural areas, and women's empowerment plays a crucial role in the establishment of rural entrepreneurship and sustainable tourism development in rural areas.

Keywords: women's empowerment; rural areas; sustainable development; tourism; Štrudlafest

Introduction

Rural areas are often characterized by rich natural, cultural, and traditional heritage, but they also face challenges such as high depopulation rates, an aging population, low population density, the abandonment of traditional activities, a decline in economic activities, limited opportunities for creating new jobs, and retaining existing ones. Additionally, there are issues related to physical accessibility, distance from decision-making centers, and a lack of technical infrastructure. The decline in economic activities in rural areas is one of the main causes of depopulation and emigration from rural areas, which has negative consequences for social infrastructure and the long-term establishment of sustainable development. It is becoming increasingly clear that the challenges faced by rural areas can be more effectively addressed through new ways of thinking and acting based on the principles of sustainable development. Tourism is one economic activity that can revitalize rural areas. The establishment of sustainable tourism development in rural areas involves the inclusion of women because they are the ones who preserve culture, tradition, produce food, and uphold traditional family values. UNWTO advocates for increasing the positive impact of tourism development on the lives of women, thus contributing to the achievement of the fifth sustainable development goal, which is "to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" (UNWTO, 2019). In most regions of the world, women constitute most of the tourism workforce and are predominantly concentrated in the lowest and least paid positions. Sustainable tourism development can help bridge gender inequality and empower women (Boley *et al.*, 2017; Je *et al.*, 2020), especially in countries with traditional values (Gil Arroyo *et al.*, 2019; Almathami *et al.*, 2020; UNWTO, 2020a; Elshaar *et al.*, 2022). In the Republic of Croatia, significant progress has been made in the empowerment of women in recent decades. However,

in rural areas, there are still significant disparities compared to urban areas. According to the National Plan for Gender Equality for the Period Until 2027., the women's employment rate in the labour market in the Republic of Croatia in 2021 was 42.1%, with a targeted value of 60% by 2027. To achieve the set goals, it is necessary to promote activities aimed at empowering women. This study explores the impact of women's empowerment on the establishment of sustainable tourism development through rural entrepreneurship, using the example of the Štrudlafest event in the village of Jaškovo, Karlovac County.

According to the 2021 population census, Jaškovo has a population of 380 residents, consisting of 194 men and 194 women. Over the past 10 years, the village of Jaškovo has not been on the tourism map, but today, thanks to the traditional skill of making and stretching dough and preparing the traditional pastry known as "štrudla," it has become a central point for tourism events in Karlovac County.

Štrudlafest is a gastronomic event aimed at popularizing the making of the traditional pastry "štrudla" using the traditional dough-stretching technique. Štrudlafest attracts over 15,000 visitors with more than 45,000 pieces of štrudla sold.

The research is operationalized through a "multidimensional conceptualization of empowerment," which includes psychological, political, and social concepts. The research results indicate a strong and significant correlation between the impact of women's empowerment and the establishment of sustainable tourism development in rural areas, as well as for achieving the goals of the European Parliament Resolution on women and their role in rural areas. The research findings have significant implications for national policy makers, tourism planners, regional and local authorities, as well as for scientists and researchers studying the relationship between women's perceptions and their involvement in achieving the concept of sustainable tourism development in rural areas.

Literature review

Sustainable development of rural tourism is a process that enables its growth and development without depleting the resources upon which it relies, such as an authentic way of life in harmony with nature, preserved architectural heritage, and the maintenance of sociocultural characteristics of rural environments. The development of tourism in rural areas can stimulate various economic activities and the return of the population, especially considering the continuous growth in demand for this form of tourism. Tourism, as a development strategy in rural communities, brings numerous advantages (Eagles *et al.*, 2002; Petrić, 2006): it supports local employment, improves the demographic landscape, diversifies, or expands the operations of existing entities (e.g., rural farms), contributes to stabilizing their income, and, by attracting financial resources, influences the improvement of the appearance of the local environment and infrastructure. This involves the maintenance and enhancement of the appearance of buildings and rural settlements in general. It also restores a sense of pride and self-awareness to rural populations, who often feel marginalized.

Local residents, primarily women, with their culture, traditional values, heritage, and knowledge, as well as their friendliness and hospitality, impart specific characteristics or identity to the destination, making it desirable to visit (Birkić *et al.*, 2019, Birkić *et al.*, 2020).

Through sustainable tourism development, it is possible to complement the primary activities of family-owned agricultural farms by successfully combining agriculture and tourism (Kljajić *et al.*, 2013), thereby improving the quality of life. The quality of life in rural areas advances when the rural community can generate additional income from tourism activities (Alrawadieh & Alrawadieh, 2018; Leu, 2019). It will improve through the development of community-based rural entrepreneurship, as scientists (Elena *et al.*, 2015; Harpa, 2017) emphasize the importance of community, highlighting that successful rural entrepreneurship should be community-based. This involves community encouragement for the involvement of local residents, in this case, women, in entrepreneurial activities and the creation of opportunities for employment and self-employment, the generation of new jobs, the retention of existing jobs, and the creation of new value for the community (A. R. Galvao *et al.*, 2020). The key driver of tourism development in rural areas is the local population, particularly women who are bearers of the culture, traditions, and customs of the region. The involvement of the local community also creates conditions for long-term sustainable regional growth and development (Birkić, 2016; Harpa, 2017; Birkić *et al.*, 2020). Scientists like López *et al.* (2019), Birkić (2016), Akrivos *et al.* (2014), and Choi Shiraky (2005) in their works emphasize that involving the local population or community is a prerequisite for sustainable development.

Furthermore, Kallmuenzer *et al.* (2019) state that rural tourism entrepreneurship can create positive impacts on the regional economy, society, and the environment by researching and strengthening local identity, culture, and tradition, retaining rural populations in the region, and minimizing negative impacts on the environment, market development, resources, productivity, employment opportunities, and creativity (Ribeiro-soriano, 2017; Sá, 2019; Galvao *et al.*, 2018). There is a positive relationship between rural tourism, entrepreneurship, and women's empowerment, which synergistically leads to the establishment of sustainable rural tourism development. Empowering women involves promoting a sense of self-worth, their ability to make their own choices, and their right to influence social changes for themselves and others. Women seeking entry into the labour market, entrepreneurial leadership, or self-employment encounter various challenges due to a lack of specific training, lower self-confidence levels, limited access to social and business networks, or discouragement from the challenges of balancing work and family life. Research shows that tourism contributes to bridging gender inequalities and ensures the empowerment of women (Boley *et al.*, 2017; Je, 2020). Additionally, the tourism industry has the potential to empower women and effectively involve them in development (Gil Arroyo *et al.*, 2019; Almathami *et al.*, 2020; UNWTO, 2020a).

Empowering Women for Involvement in Tourism

According to Boley and McGehee (2014) (Boley *et al.*, 2015), for a better understanding of the concept of empowering women in the context of tourism, it is crucial to consider a "multidimensional conceptualization of empowerment" that encompasses psychological, political, and social aspects. Until recently, within tourism literature, lower-level concepts of involvement such as participation were mistakenly interpreted and operationalized as empowerment (Movono and Dahles, 2017). According to Elshaer *et al.* (2021), the following provides a detailed explanation of the multidimensional concept of empowerment, which includes psychological, political, and social aspects. Psychologically, empowerment is conceptualized as a type of intrinsic stimulus embodied in four main constructs: *meaning*, *competence*, *impact*, and *self-determination* (Seibert *et al.*, 2011; Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990). Meaning involves an individual's concern for the assigned task and is well explained through alignment between an individual's set of values and organizational tasks (Hackman and Oldham, 1975). Competence is typically related to the range of skills that an individual deems sufficient to perform entrusted tasks and duties (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990). Impact is expressed through an individual's sense of being able to strongly influence outcomes and drive results at their organizational level (Spreitzer, 1995). Self-determination is reflected in an individual's ability to make decisions when dedicating themselves to a specific role, such as the ability to choose among different alternatives while initiating a particular action (Singh and Sarkar, 2014; Spreitzer, 1995).

Political empowerment of women is considered a process that enables women to realize their full potential by providing them with continuous access to opportunities, raising their voices to influence change, and leaving a positive impact on society. It helps women lead their lives from a position of their own power, independently and with dignity at the individual, organizational, and societal levels (Sundstrom *et al.*, 2017). Political empowerment means being involved and participating in decision-making that directly or indirectly affects our lives and the community. It can be divided into four elements: resources, institutions, achievements (Kabeer, 2005), and the rule of law (Barro, 1997; Bjornskov, 2012). While resources refer to the sum of opportunities available to women, acting through institutions implies women's ability to have the choice to resist sources of power. The concept of achievements relates to women's strength in standing out and realizing their full potential. The rule of law manifests in the enforcement of laws that enhance women's economic capability, activities, enable their political participation, and eliminate gender discrimination. The involvement of the local population in decision-making about tourism development is a key indicator of sustainable community tourism development. By applying the theory of sustainable tourism development in real-time and space, the local population is placed at the center of tourism planning and development. Direct and indirect support for the participation of the local community is the foundation of the sustainability paradigm (Choi and Shirakay, 2005).

Socially, empowerment is a multi-layered process that involves challenging societal norms to gain full control over one's life and freely address issues that hold specific value for them (Page and Czuba, 1999). The two fundamental areas that determine the social empowerment of women are cultural and societal norms (Bayeh, 2016). Culture is particularly important due to its ability to influence societal structures related to a range of human rights (Merry, 2009). Societal norms are crucial in shaping the status of women within society and their involvement in various social networks, as well as strengthening their social influence

and capacity (Gizelis, 2009). In the context of empowering women for involvement in tourism, the representation of women in high and leadership positions is also observed, where underrepresentation within the tourism industry is present, and their male counterparts dominate, despite women representing the majority of the workforce in the tourism industry (UNWTO, 2019). Based on Scheyvens' (1999) research on empowerment, it could be argued that the economic empowerment of women in the tourism industry is conditioned by the extent to which women are psychologically, politically, and socially empowered (McMillan *et al.*, 2011). Psychologically empowered women tend to rely on themselves to shape their own roles and careers in tourism, which then equips them to better fulfill their assigned tasks, enhances their ability to improve their professional lives, and fully develop their professional potential (Boudrias *et al.*, 2004). Guided by empowering social and cultural norms, socially empowered women could find a stable path to success in the tourism industry and more favorable growth opportunities at different levels (Chaudhary *et al.*, 2012; Flintan, 2008; Gholipour *et al.*, 2010; Mosedale, 2005). Similarly, Joo *et al.* (2020) emphasize that educating residents about tourism, including women, can significantly impact their psychological, political, and social empowerment and ultimately their involvement in tourism.

Methods and Research Results

In the empirical part of the research, data were collected, and statistical analyses were conducted to test the formulated hypotheses.

For the purposes of this study, women involved in the organization and implementation of the "Štrudlafest" event were surveyed. The main hypothesis of this study is "Empowering women in rural areas for engaging in tourism is positively related to establishing sustainable tourism development in rural areas."

Two adapted research scales were used for the research and writing of this paper. A multidimensional scale for measuring women's empowerment, developed and validated by Boley and McGehee (2014) and Elshaer *et al.* (2021), was used. The scale consisted of three dimensions: psychological empowerment (5 items), social empowerment (3 items), and political empowerment - planning (4 items), and tourism involvement (6 items) adapted from Suhartanto *et al.* (2018).

To measure sustainable tourism development (STD), a scale consisting of three sub-scales (economic, ecological, and socio-cultural) was applied, adapted from Nicholas *et al.* (2009), and the SUS-TAS model developed by Choi and Shirakaya (2005), using a social dimension.

The participants were asked to assess the level of agreement for each item using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). The results presented in this research are based on the responses of 87 participants aged from 18 to 70 and above, who were involved in various capacities in the organization of the Štrudlafest event, as well as those who did not participate but lived in the area. Given the population size in the village of Jaškovo and the number of active participants in the organization and implementation of the event, the number of participants in the study is considered relevant.

Data collection was carried out using a questionnaire, which the authors of this paper distributed themselves online through the Google Forms platform, while some of the participants were interviewed in person. The research was conducted in January and February 2023. The research results were analyzed using IBM SPSS version 26, which was used for obtaining descriptive data, testing reliability using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, and determining the correlation or connection between women's empowerment and the achievement of sustainable tourism development in rural areas.

The two most important characteristics of a quality measurement instrument are reliability and validity. The reliability of a measurement instrument can be assessed in various ways, and one of the most reliable methods is the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which is particularly suitable for variables with multiple response options, including the Likert scale (Sekeran, 2000). A reliability coefficient greater than 0.7 is considered acceptable (Hair 2014; Sekeran, 2000). In exploratory research and research conducted for the first time, a coefficient value between 0.6 and 0.7 is acceptable (Hair 2014; Nunnally 1994).

According to Saunders (2011), the validity of a measurement instrument signifies the "degree to which the measurement instrument measures what it is supposed to measure." Validity measures the precision and accuracy with which variables within a concept measure that concept. For a measurement instrument to satisfy the conditions of content validity, it should be based on relevant scientific theory as well as previous research, which is achieved in this paper. The literature has been thoroughly analyzed, and a significant number of similar studies have been conducted.

The results of the reliability analysis of the extracted factors show satisfactory results. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients are above the recommended level of 0.70 for all items, indicating high internal reliability. Slightly lower values for Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients were obtained for psychological empowerment at $\alpha = 0.55$ and involvement at $\alpha = 0.62$. In contrast, in Elshaer *et al.*, 2021, the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for all factor loadings ranged between 0.7 and 0.9.

Table 1.
Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficients

Subscale	Cronbach alpha	N of items
Psychological	,558	4
Social	,838	4
Planning	,906	4
Involvement	,628	5
Economic	,752	11
Environmental	,614	3
Sociological	,725	8

Source: authors

The research results are based on the responses of 87 women, including 56% from the village of Jaškovo and its surrounding area, 24% of respondents from the Karlovac County area, and 20% of women who are not from the Karlovac County area but are involved in the organization and implementation of the Štrudlifest event through certain activities.

Table 2.
Demographic characteristics of the respondents

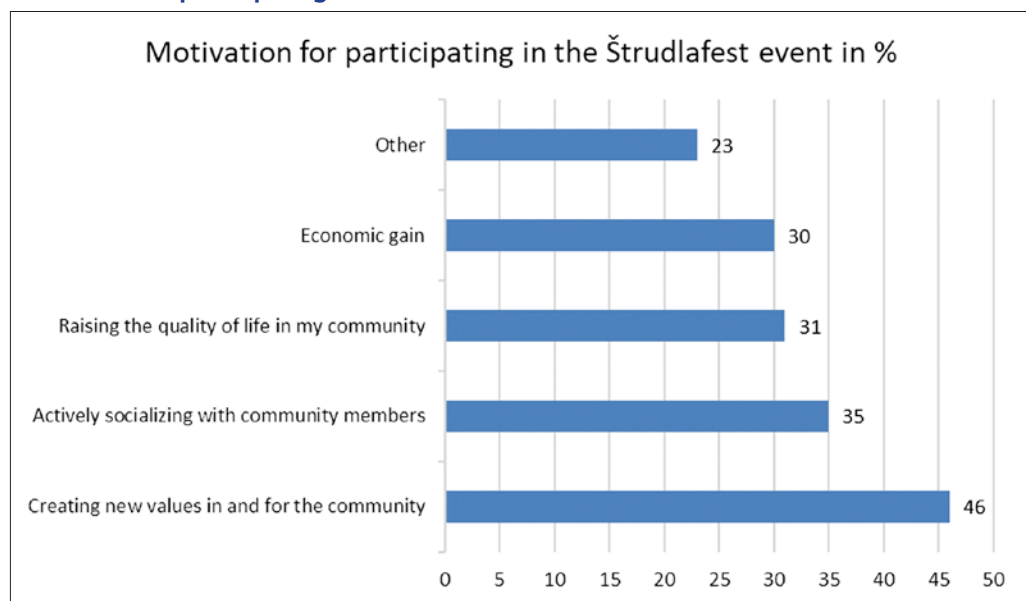
Characteristics N=87					
Age	Number	%	Residence	Number	%
18-29	9	10	Jaškovo and surrounding areas Karlovac other	49	56
30-39	12	14		17	20
40-49	29	33		21	24
50-59	14	16			
60-69	19	22			
70 and above	4	5			
Education level					
Primary school	2	2			
High school degree	39	45			
University graduated	46	53			
Employment					
Employed	76	87			
-fully employed	51	67			
-part time/ sesonal	8	11			
-business owner	11	22			
Unemployed	11	13			

Source: authors

The most represented group of women falls into the middle age category, specifically between 40 and 49 years old, comprising 33% of the respondents. Additionally, 22% of the respondents are in the age range of 60 to 69 years. In terms of educational attainment, the majority of women have completed high school or hold a college degree, accounting for 53%. Among the respondents, 67% are employed full-time, and 22% have their own business or trade.

Regarding motivation for participating in Štrudlifest, respondents were allowed to provide multiple answers. The responses are presented graphically in Figure 1.

Figure 1.
Motivation for participating in the Štrudlafest event



Source: authors

Considering the motivation for participating in the Štrudlafest event, it is pleasantly surprising to note that economic gain ranks fourth, with only 30% of the respondents highlighting Economic gain as the key motivation for participating in the Štrudlafest event. This result supports the claim that focusing solely on economic gain for establishing entrepreneurial initiatives in rural areas may not fully achieve sustainable tourism development (UNWTO, 2019).

A significant number of respondents, 45%, identified "creating new values for the community and actively socializing with community members" as a key motivation for their participation in the organization and implementation of Štrudlafest. Additionally, 35% of them cited "active socializing with community members" as a crucial motivation. These responses corroborate the assertions of Elena *et al.* (2015) and Harpa (2017) that rural entrepreneurship should be community-based, which can positively impact addressing the challenges faced by rural communities today.

In response to the open question about "other factors that motivate them to participate in the organization and implementation of Štrudlafest, the respondents mentioned various factors, including promoting local gastronomy, raising awareness of the culture, traditions, and customs of the region where Štrudlafest takes place, self-affirmation and self-realization, knowledge transfer, skills, and tradition from older to younger generations, intergenerational collaboration, new business contacts, the development of business networks, the development of new entrepreneurial ideas, and collaboration on joint projects.

When asked what it takes for women to decide and participate in Štrudlafest, 30% of the respondents emphasized "family support" as crucial, while 13% highlighted the idea as essential. Furthermore, 16% of them pointed out the importance of support and connection with the community. Additionally, 30% of the respondents mentioned that they always have ideas and ways to get involved in such activities.

Regarding how Štrudlafest affects the quality of life in the village of Jaškov, the respondents noted that the place is more organized, sports and recreational facilities have been created and made available to the local population, new opportunities for additional income have emerged, and there are opportunities for socializing with family and friends.

In the following Table 3, the main research findings related to confirming the hypothesis of this study, which states that "Empowering women in rural areas to engage in tourism is positively associated with establishing sustainable tourism development in rural areas," are presented.

Table 3.
Correlation between empowerment of women and the establishment of sustainable development of rural tourism

Empowerment		Sustainability		
		Economic	Ecological	Sociological
Psychological	Pearson Correlation	.540**	.500**	.517**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	87	87	87
Social	Pearson Correlation	.560**	.514**	.543**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	87	87	87
Political	Pearson Correlation	.609**	.584**	.561**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	87	87	87
Involvement	Pearson Correlation	.724**	.726**	.567**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	87	87	87

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

Source: authors

The analysis of the correlation between the dimensions of women's empowerment through the multidimensional model of psychological, social, and political empowerment shows a strong and significant association with the construct of sustainable development. We can observe a strong correlation between psychological empowerment and the establishment of sustainable development through economic ($r=.540$, $p < 0.01$), ecological ($r=.500$, $p < 0.01$), and sociocultural dimensions ($r = .517$, $p < 0.01$).

Psychological empowerment of women contributes to building pride in their place of residence, raising awareness of their unique culture and tradition, which they are exceptionally proud of and willingly share with friends and visitors. According to the results of this study, a staggering 89.7% of respondents fully agreed with the statement: "I feel proud because, thanks to Štrudlafest, people visit Jaškovo to see and experience the culture and tradition that we showcase through Štrudlafest." Likewise, 87.4% of respondents fully agreed with the statement: "I feel proud because, thanks to Štrudlafest, visitors come to Jaškovo where they want to have a good time, socialize, and have fun," and 95.3% of respondents fully agreed with the statement: "Štrudlafest reminds me that we have a unique culture and tradition that we gladly share with visitors."

Similarly, we can observe a strong correlation between social empowerment and elements of establishing sustainable development through economic ($r=.560$, $p < 0.01$), ecological ($r=.514$, $p < 0.01$), and sociocultural dimensions ($r = .543$, $p < 0.01$).

The phenomenon of social empowerment of women is linked to the support provided by the broader community.

According to the results of this study, we can conclude that the respondents are socially highly empowered, which we attribute to the cultural heritage, social and religious standards, and widely accepted norms of behavior in the region where they live. Regarding the statement "The Štrudlafest event promotes a sense of community within me," 98.1% fully agreed with it. With the statement "Because of Štrudlafest, I feel more connected to the community where I live and operate," 85.3% of respondents fully agreed, and with the statement "The Štrudlafest event promotes a sense of community within me," 78.2% of respondents fully agreed.

The research results confirm the findings of Elena *et al.*, (2015) and Harpa, (2017) who emphasize the importance of community and suggest that rural entrepreneurship should be community-based. "The Štrudlafest event promotes a sense of community within me" was fully agreed upon by 98.1% of respondents, and with the statement "Because of Štrudlafest, I feel more connected to the community where I live and operate," 85.3% of respondents fully agreed. Furthermore, with the statement "The Štrudlafest event promotes a sense of community within me," 78.2% of respondents fully agreed.

Involvement also strongly correlates with the establishment of sustainable development, with economic $r=0.724$, $p < 0.01$ and ecological dimensions $r=0.726$, $p < 0.01$, while involvement correlates slightly less with the sociocultural dimension of sustainable development, $r=0.567$, $p < 0.01$.

The dimension of political empowerment also shows a strong correlation with elements of sustainable tourism development, economic ($r=.609$, $p<0.01$), ecological ($r=.584$, $p<0.01$), and sociocultural dimensions ($r=.561$, $p<0.01$). The involvement of the local population, in this case, women, in decision-making regarding tourism development, is a key indicator of sustainable tourism development within the community.

The analysis of research results leads to the conclusion that women are still not sufficiently empowered when it comes to participating in the decision-making process in rural areas. For example, only 41.4% completely agreed with the statement "I feel that because of Štrudlafest, I have the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process when it comes to the development of tourism in my area." When asked to express their agreement with the statement "I feel that because of Štrudlafest, I have the opportunity to share my ideas and plans for the development of tourism in my area with the rest of the community," only 37.9% completely agreed.

Conclusion

This empirical research examines the empowerment of women through rural tourism and its direct impact on the establishment of sustainable rural tourism. The results of this research support findings from similar studies, clearly indicating that tourism is a means of empowering women, and empowered women contribute to the establishment of sustainable tourism in rural areas. Given the numerous challenges facing rural areas and communities, the results of this research emphasize the crucial role of women's empowerment in retaining them in rural environments, directing them toward rural entrepreneurship based on the principles of sustainable tourism, and thereby contributing to the mitigation of negative processes affecting the social infrastructure of rural areas. The results of this research have demonstrated a strong positive correlation between the empowerment of women and the establishment of sustainable tourism.

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Female Sex Workers and Tourism in Croatia

Hrvoje Mataković, PhD, Institute for Tourism, Croatia; e-mail: hrvoje.matakovic@iztztg.hr

Abstract

Prostitution is a complex and contradictory social phenomenon that has been present in human society since its earliest beginnings. In Croatia, prostitution is prohibited by law and sex workers are prosecuted. Prostitution has an obvious gender dimension: in Croatia, as in other countries, most of those who sell sexual services are female and most of those who buy them are male. This paper aims to analyse the characteristics of tourism-related prostitution in Croatia and explore the role of women as sex workers in this form of prostitution. It will also examine whether there is a difference between the occurrence of prostitution in the coastal (Adriatic) part of Croatia, which is the most tourism-intensive, and other parts of Croatia. The data for this analysis was gathered from different sources: one is statistical data on criminal charges and misdemeanours against public order and peace related to prostitution, covering the period from 2008 to 2019. Since these data only contain information on offences reported to the police, it can be assumed that some offences were not reported to the police. Therefore, the statistical data were supplemented with data from the media and from other research conducted so far. When analysing the data on offenders, we found that 34.54% of the persons against whom criminal charges were filed in connection with prostitution and 91.72% of the persons accused of misdemeanours related to prostitution were female, which is significantly higher than the average participation of women in crime in Croatia. Regarding the socio-demographic characteristics of female sex workers, most of them are between 30 and 39 years old, have attended secondary school and are mostly unemployed.

Keywords: sex workers, prostitution, tourism, Croatia

Introduction

Prostitution is a complex and "significantly contradictory" (Kanduć and Grozdanić, 1998:44) social phenomenon that has been present in human society since its earliest beginnings (Kovačević, 2016). Prostitution is not viewed in the same way in all societies: some see it as a harmful and undesirable phenomenon and therefore take measures to suppress it, while in other, it is viewed less negatively or neutrally, and prostitution is seen as any other business activity and the level of protection of sex workers varies depending on how regulation is applied (Šipić *et al.*, 2022). In the Croatian academia prostitution is a poorly studied phenomenon that has only attracted the attention of a few scholars (Radačić and Pajnik, 2017), and it is not possible to say with certainty how it is perceived by the public. The fact that prostitution is not viewed entirely negatively in this part of the world is shown by somewhat anecdotal data from a survey conducted in Serbia, where 31.4% of respondents believe that one of the main disadvantages of Belgrade as a destination compared to other European capitals is that it does not legalise prostitution (Vujović *et al.*, 2020). However, the reality of prostitution and sex workers is anything but anecdotal: most sex workers in Croatia reported being victims of various forms of violence (physical and sexual) and regularly face fear of panderers, clients, and the police (Stelko, 2017), as well as fear of stigmatisation due to their work (Radačić and Šikić Mićanović, 2017).

Apart from the fact that prostitution in Croatia is generally insufficiently researched, prostitution related to tourism is an even less explored phenomenon. In early papers dealing with tourism-related crime (Carić, 1976; Prvan, 1970; Prvan and Horvat, 1967), tourism-oriented prostitution is described as an emerging phenomenon and a negative consequence of tourism development, but without more detailed research. In more recent papers (Štulhofer *et al.*, 2009; Štulhofer *et al.*, 2017) authors only briefly address tourism-related prostitution, which is understandable as these papers primarily focus on the analysis of sexually transmitted diseases associated with prostitution. Radačić (2017) identifies tourism-related prostitution by analysing prostitution practises.

The lack of interest in tourism-related prostitution in Croatian academia is somewhat surprising since Croatia is strongly oriented towards tourism and hosts millions of tourists each year, some of whom are likely to engage in prostitution. In 2021, 17.7 million tourists visited Croatia and made 70.2 million overnight stays, and tourism contributed 15.9% to GDP (Ministarstvo turizma, 2022). These data show that tourism

has a significant impact on economic activities in Croatia. The intensive development of tourism in the second half of the 20th century was a catalyst for economic development in many countries, especially in the less developed countries, and had various positive effects, such as an increase in employment and income, the development of local economies and an overall improvement in the quality of life (Ap and Crompton, 1998). However, the development of tourism also had negative consequences: tourism development changed lifestyles in various dimensions, such as demographic, occupational, and cultural. It also changed social norms and moral values, making phenomena such as crime and prostitution more acceptable to host societies (Pizam and Milman, 1986).

Tourism and prostitution share some common features, so their connection is not unexpected. One of the basic and most visible is temporality: a visit to a sex worker and a tourism visit are both temporary activities. Because of their short and limited duration both activities seem to be different from other everyday activities. Within this period people are free to do things which are not restricted by the constraints and social roles they usually have. Moreover, just like visiting a sex worker, tourism satisfies the need for relaxation, as well as the need for companionship and friendship. Also, like tourism, a visit to a sex worker satisfies the need for novelty, new experiences, and variety (Ryan and Kinder, 1996).

Prostitution has a tangible gender dimension: most people who sell sexual services are female and most who buy them are male (Šipić *et al.*, 2022). This paper aims to analyse the characteristics of tourism-related prostitution in Croatia and the role of women as sex workers in this form of prostitution. Specifically, the following questions will be addressed:

- 1) Does the incidence of prostitution in the coastal (Adriatic) part of Croatia, which is most affected by tourism, differ from that in other parts of Croatia?
- 2) To what extent are women involved in prostitution in Croatia?
- 3) What are the main characteristics of female sex workers in tourism-related prostitution?

Regulation of Prostitution in Croatia

As mentioned in the introduction, prostitution is a complex phenomenon that is viewed differently in different societies. Therefore, there are different models of regulation that can be divided into three groups (Kurmaiev, 2017):

- (1) Prohibition - prostitution is considered socially dangerous and should therefore be prohibited by law (*ibid.*). A specific form of prohibition is implemented in Sweden, where prostitution is prohibited, and users of sexual services are sanctioned. This approach considers sex work as an exploitation of women and is therefore considered unacceptable (Šipić *et al.*, 2022). In Croatia prostitution is prohibited by law and sex workers can be prosecuted.
- (2) Legalisation - prostitution is considered a commercial activity, and sex workers are under public supervision. The government administers tests to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, and taxes are levied on sex work. This model is used, for example, in Germany, the Netherlands, and Austria (Šipić *et al.*, 2022).
- (3) Mixed model - some elements related to prostitution are allowed, while others are prohibited by law. In most European countries applying this regulatory model, encouraging prostitution and pandering are prohibited, and in some countries some forms of indoor prostitution, such as brothels, are also prohibited (Danna, 2014).

Apart from the fact that prostitution is viewed and therefore regulated differently in different countries, it should be noted that even in the same country, prostitution has been viewed and regulated differently at different times (Kanduć and Grozdanić, 1998). Until 1918, when Croatia was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the regulation of prostitution was left to local authorities, so that brothels and other forms of prostitution existed in some towns. In the Kingdom of Yugoslavia prostitution was banned in 1929 under the influence of medical institutions and the church. After 1945 prostitution was also prohibited in communist Yugoslavia, as it was considered a remnant of bourgeois society (Radačić and Pajnik, 2017). During the communist period, "this phenomenon was not discussed as it does not exist" (Kovačević, 2016:61), so it was not regulated until 1976, when the Criminal Code criminalised the organisation and promotion of prostitution. The sale of sexual services was considered a misdemeanour against public order and peace and has been regulated by the Law on Misdemeanours Against Public Order and Peace since 1977.

This regulatory approach was transferred to the legal system of the Republic of Croatia in 1990. Therefore, activities related to prostitution are still, in the legal sense, viewed in two ways: as a criminal offence and as a misdemeanour against public order and peace. The basis for determining whether an activity related to prostitution is a criminal offence or a misdemeanour is coercion and encouragement, so criminal offences are considered activities that involve some form of coercion or encouragement. According to the Criminal Code (2011, 2022), until 2013, offences related to prostitution were International prostitution (Art. 178) and Pandering (Art. 195). With the amendments to the Criminal Code in 2013, the criminal offences related to prostitution are Prostitution (Art. 157) and Pandering of a child (Art. 162). Acts that do not involve coercion or encouragement and are voluntary are considered misdemeanours against public order and peace and are defined in the Law on Misdemeanours Against Public Order and Peace (1990, 2022); these are engaging in prostitution (Art. 12) and renting facilities for prostitution and assisting in the practice of prostitution (Art. 7). Criminal offences constitute a more serious form of violation of the law and are punishable by imprisonment of up to 10 years, while misdemeanours against public order and peace constitute a less serious form of violation of the law and are punishable by fines of up to EUR 170 and imprisonment of up to 30 days.

Data and Methodology

The data for this analysis were obtained from several sources: the first is publicly available statistical data collected by the Croatian Bureau of Statistics on reported criminal offences (statistical report "Adult Perpetrators of Criminal Offences, Reports, Accusations and Convictions" for the period from 2008 to 2019) and misdemeanours against public order and peace (statistical report "Perpetrators of Misdemeanours" for the period from 2003 to 2019). Apart from the number of offences committed, which can be used to study crime trends, this data is a valuable source for finding out some characteristics of the sex workers who have come into contact with the justice system, such as gender, age, geographical location and sanctions pronounced. Being it so, a more detailed picture of sex workers engaged in tourism-related prostitution can be provided. In this paper, we have analysed statistical data for the period from 2008 to 2019.

Of the criminal offences reported up to 2013 the offences of International prostitution (Art. 178) and Pandering (Art. 195) have been included in the analysis and of those since 2013, the offences of Prostitution (Art. 157) and Pandering of a child (Art. 162). For misdemeanours against public order and peace in this paper are analysed engaging in prostitution (Art. 12) as well as renting facilities for prostitution and assisting in the practise of prostitution (Art. 7). In this analysis offences that are recorded separately by the Croatian Bureau of Statistics under a specific article of the law were integrated into one category to obtain more visible data. Juveniles were not included in the analysis of criminal offences, as they were not reported for these offences. Furthermore, juveniles were rarely accused of misdemeanours, therefore, they were not included in the analysis of misdemeanours either. In this way, the data obtained are comparable to the data on criminal offences, as this only includes adults. These data suggest that sex workers in Croatia are almost entirely adults, in contrast to some Southeast Asian countries such as Thailand or the Philippines, where juveniles make up a significant proportion of sex workers (Ryan and Hall, 2001).

Since these statistical data are data recorded by the police, i.e., data on crimes committed that are known to the police, it can be assumed that there is a so-called "dark figure" and that a certain number of crimes committed remain unknown and are therefore not recorded in the official statistics. A dark figure is to be expected in prostitution, since in a commercial sexual transaction there is no victim or injured party to inform the police because the sex worker charges for the service her client uses (Kanduć and Grozdanić, 1998). Since statistical data were relatively incomplete, they were supplemented with data from the media. The media were searched on the internet by entering a combination of keywords such as prostitution, tourism, and Croatia into the Google search engine. This approach has also been used in other papers addressing tourism safety issues, such as wild mammal attacks on tourists (Durrheim and Leggat, 1999) and tourist fatalities (Reid, 2017). The data from the media covers the period from 2009 to 2022. In addition, the data from the studies conducted so far were used.

Results and Discussion

In this part of the paper, first will be presented the characteristics of prostitution and then the characteristics of sex workers, such as age, gender, and pronounced sanctions.

Characteristics of Prostitution

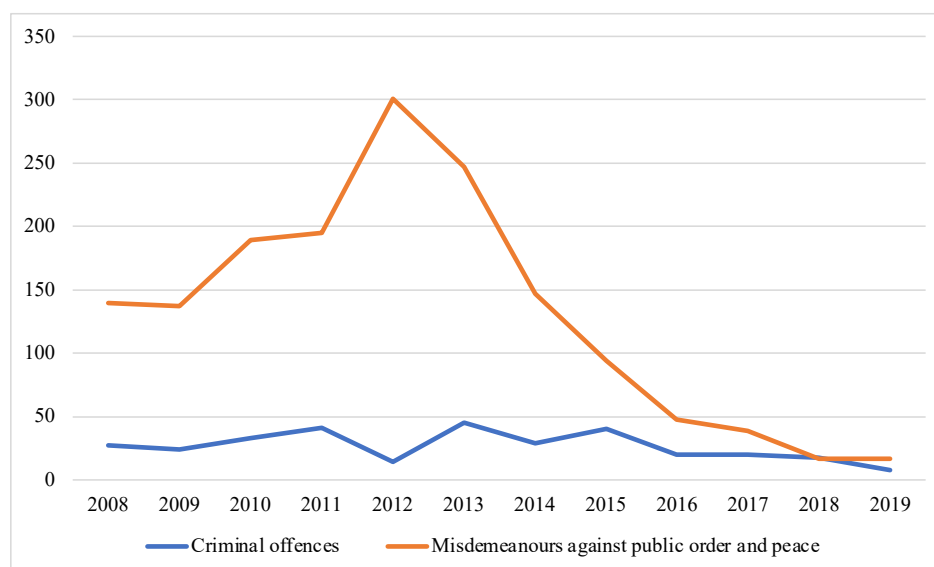
There are three forms of tourism-related prostitution in Croatia: street prostitution, indoor prostitution, and prostitution on yachts.

Street prostitution represents the lowest level of prostitution and is found in larger cities such as Zagreb and Split. It has declined over the last decade as street prostitution has largely moved indoors. In smaller cities there is no street prostitution because the demand is lower due to the smaller population (Pajnik, 2017). Moreover, in smaller towns where "everyone knows everyone", sex workers are more likely to be stigmatised because of their work (Radačić and Šikić Mićanović, 2017). Tourists do not often use the services of street sex workers. Stelko (2017) reports the testimony of a street sex worker from Split who claims that she had contact with foreign tourists only a few times.

Indoor prostitution is more widespread than street prostitution and is performed in places such as flats, hotels, massage parlours, and clubs. In summer, sex workers come to the Croatian coast, rent flats, and offer their services through ad sites on the internet, such as Cro Escort (Radačić, 2017) or Euro Girls Escort; their main clients are tourists visiting the coast. The media reported about a renter from Istria who was warned by his neighbours that there were often men on the stairs in front of his flat. This information made him suspicious, and he found a young woman to whom he had rented a flat on the website Euro Girls Escort. He realised that she was engaging in prostitution in his flat (Dobran, 2022). In the past, hotel receptionists and taxi drivers gave tourists information about sex workers, but with the development of the internet, the need for their information has decreased (Pajić Bačić, 2022).

One of the forms of prostitution is prostitution on yachts. According to people who are well acquainted with prostitution on yachts, this seasonal form of prostitution involves wealthier clients with younger women of an attractive appearance who are sought for this job (Dubrovnik Insider, 2018).

Figure 1.
Reported criminal offences and misdemeanours related to prostitution



Source: Croatian Bureau of Statistics

Figure 1 shows the reported criminal offences and misdemeanours related to prostitution. Criminal offences show a largely stable trend, with the exception of 2012, when there was a decrease. Until 2016 there were two to five times more misdemeanours than criminal offences. The steady decline in misdemeanours since 2012 is probably not related to a lower intensity of prostitution, but to the decline in street prostitution, which is the most obvious, and to fewer sex workers coming into contact with the police and the justice system. Prostitution has largely moved indoors; it is no longer arranged live but mediated online or via mobile phones, making it more difficult to detect and sanction. In addition, the police have reduced the suppression of voluntary, independent prostitution, which is considered a misdemeanour and focus more on the organisation of prostitution, which is considered a criminal offence (Kruljac, 2023).

To determine the geographical spread of prostitution, for the purpose of this paper Croatia has been divided into three geographical areas: continental Croatia, comprising 13 counties; coastal Croatia, com-

prising seven counties; and the City of Zagreb, the capital city where one fifth of the Croatian population lives, was used as a separate unit of analysis. Most tourists in Croatia visit the Croatian coast; in 2021, 89% of tourist visits and 96% of overnight stays were realised in the seven counties on the Croatian coast (Ministarstvo turizma, 2022), so we can assume that tourism-related prostitution is most common in coastal Croatia. To avoid the influence of size, i.e., the number of inhabitants, for each of these three units of analysis the crime rate was calculated according to the standard method used by the police, i.e., the number of crimes per 100,000 inhabitants.

Table 1.

Crime rates in specific parts of Croatia – all reported criminal offences and reported criminal offences related to prostitution

Year	Reported criminal offences - all				Reported criminal offences - prostitution			
	Croatia (total)	Continental Croatia	Coastal Croatia	City of Zagreb	Croatia (total)	Continental Croatia	Coastal Croatia	City of Zagreb
2008	1,652.54	1,258.76	1,881.32	2,299.08	0.63	0.19	0.78	1.53
2009	1,626.88	1,289.49	1,837.47	2,147.70	0.56	0.24	0.56	1.40
2010	1,622.46	1,286.10	1,886.13	2,039.37	0.77	0.38	0.64	2.03
2011	1,563.94	1,219.36	1,660.63	2,294.03	0.96	0.53	0.78	2.40
2012	1,477.07	1,153.17	1,672.61	1,970.78	0.33	0.15	0.50	0.50
2013	1,316.85	1,127.82	1,417.73	1,623.74	1.06	0.20	1.35	2.76
2014	1,210.23	1,040.64	1,312.41	1,460.00	0.69	0.49	1.14	0.38
2015	1,376.58	1,177.78	1,487.64	1,678.29	0.95	0.50	1.08	1.87
2016	1,448.99	1,265.28	1,521.16	1,773.17	0.48	0.25	0.43	1.12
2017	1,417.15	1,186.27	1,570.80	1,706.06	0.49	0.21	0.94	0.37
2018	1,326.47	1,147.73	1,443.52	1,547.24	0.44	0.05	0.87	0.62
2019	1,297.87	1,078.54	1,422.69	1,594.22	0.20	0.21	0.15	0.25
Average	1,444.75	1,185.91	1,592.84	1,844.47	0.63	0.28	0.77	1.27

Source: Croatian Bureau of Statistics, calculation by author

Table 1 shows that total crime rates for criminal offences are higher in coastal Croatia and the City of Zagreb than the national average, while they are lower in continental Croatia. Crime rates for criminal offences related to prostitution are also higher in coastal Croatia and the city of Zagreb than the national average, while they are lower in continental Croatia.

Table 2.

Crime rates in specific parts of Croatia – persons accused of all misdemeanours against public order and peace and of misdemeanours related to prostitution

Year	Accused of misdemeanours - all				Accused of misdemeanours - prostitution			
	Croatia (total)	Continental Croatia	Coastal Croatia	City of Zagreb	Croatia (total)	Continental Croatia	Coastal Croatia	City of Zagreb
2008	1,149.68	1,034.76	1,312.71	1,164.77	3.25	0.24	0.78	15.81
2009	1,171.06	1,198.56	1,416.55	656.30	3.18	0.19	1.55	14.10
2010	1,124.68	1,131.12	1,277.32	834.42	4.41	0.43	1.06	20.90
2011	1,103.42	1,150.64	1,182.66	838.63	4.56	0.24	1.35	21.59
2012	1,048.37	1,079.00	1,150.31	788.19	7.06	0.34	1.42	34.50
2013	1,232.60	1,201.64	1,450.17	928.14	5.82	0.20	1.49	27.86
2014	1,242.23	1,225.95	1,322.04	1,143.50	3.48	0.15	2.71	13.25
2015	980.68	856.98	1,244.72	829.23	2.24	0.00	2.15	7.99
2016	879.47	793.96	1,007.31	867.67	1.16	0.00	2.16	2.24
2017	947.80	814.87	1,114.38	980.22	0.95	0.05	1.81	1.62
2018	903.70	766.63	1,118.65	859.69	0.42	0.00	1.16	0.12
2019	739.45	701.61	847.87	643.08	0.42	0.11	0.80	0.49
Average	1,043.59	996.31	1,203.72	877.82	3.08	0.16	1.54	13.37

Source: Croatian Bureau of Statistics, calculation by author

These differences are even more evident in the case of misdemeanours, as can be seen in Table 2. Although coastal Croatia is the only geographical unit in this analysis where the total crime rate for misdemeanours is higher than the national average, only in the city of Zagreb is the crime rate for misdemeanours relat-

ed to prostitution higher than the national average. In coastal Croatia, the crime rate for misdemeanours related to prostitution is twice as low as the Croatian average, and in continental Croatia, it is even lower.

These data suggest that most of misdemeanours related to prostitution were registered in Zagreb. From this, one could conclude that prostitution is most widespread in Zagreb. This is only partially true: Zagreb has the most street sex workers, who are often targeted by the police, so Zagreb also registered the most arrested sex workers. In continental and coastal Croatia it is more complicated to detect prostitution and, consequently, to record it in the statistics, as sex workers mainly work indoors. And unlike overt street prostitution, it is more difficult to arrest people suspected of organising or practising prostitution, as this form of prostitution is covert and difficult to prove (Matejcic *et al.*, 2012). It should also be noted that Zagreb is the largest city in Croatia, where a fifth of the population lives, so the demand for sexual services is even greater. Furthermore, Zagreb has a long tradition of prostitution, especially street prostitution, and was a centre of prostitution in the former Yugoslavia in the 1960s and 1970s (Telegraf, 2016).

The geographical spread of prostitution can also be determined by analysing the cities listed on the Euro Girls Escort website, where the range of sexual services offered is presented. This website provides an overview of the sexual services offered by country and city and lists 12 cities in Croatia. Apart from Zagreb, Osijek is the only city in continental Croatia where sexual services are offered, and all the other ten cities are located in coastal Croatia. Most sex workers offer services in Zagreb, Zadar, Split, and Rijeka (Dobran, 2022).

Characteristics of Sex Workers

The exact number of sex workers is difficult to determine. Even in countries where prostitution is legalised, there is no reliable data on the number of people engaged in prostitution and their number can only be estimated (Wagenaar, 2018). The media estimated that there are 6,700 sex workers in Croatia (Radačić, 2017), and estimates from academia are more moderate: Lovrinčević *et al.* (2015) estimate that about 3-5 thousand women are engaged in prostitution in Croatia. These authors estimate that 1,500 women are professionally involved in prostitution and that sex work is their only source of income. They also estimate that 2,500 women engage in prostitution occasionally. They have a legal job, and prostitution is their additional source of income, as they only engage in prostitution irregularly and on certain occasions. Non-governmental organisations supporting sex workers estimate that 250-300 female sex workers are active in Zagreb and 100-150 in Split throughout the year; in Split and the surrounding coastal region, this number increases in summer due to the arrival of tourists who are their potential clients (Štulhofer *et al.*, 2017).

Table 3.

Persons reported for all criminal offences and for criminal offences related to prostitution

Year	Reported criminal offences - all					Reported criminal offences - prostitution				
	Total	Unknown perpetrators	Known perpetrators	Female	Female in %	Total	Unknown perpetrators	Known perpetrators	Female	Female in %
2008	71,221	30,026	41,195	5,704	13.85	27	0	27	7	25.93
2009	70,002	27,241	42,761	5,843	13.66	24	0	24	10	41.67
2010	69,601	27,361	42,240	5,771	13.66	33	1	32	10	31.25
2011	66,874	25,012	41,862	5,962	14.24	41	0	41	13	31.71
2012	62,955	29,448	33,507	4,277	12.76	14	0	14	4	28.57
2013	55,924	29,203	26,721	3,717	13.91	45	0	45	20	44.44
2014	51,136	26,562	24,574	3,398	13.83	29	0	29	10	34.48
2015	57,688	29,559	28,129	4,541	16.14	40	0	40	20	50.00
2016	60,194	28,567	31,627	5,695	18.01	20	1	19	6	31.58
2017	58,181	28,044	30,137	5,703	18.92	20	1	19	5	26.32
2018	54,070	25,502	28,568	5,345	18.71	18	3	15	6	40.00
2019	52,670	24,565	28,105	5,240	18.64	8	1	7	2	28.57
Average	60,876.33	27,590.83	33,285.50	5,099.67	15.53	26.58	0.58	26.00	9.42	34.54

Source: Croatian Bureau of Statistics, calculation by author

Table 3 shows the overrepresentation of women in reported criminal offences related to prostitution. Of all reported criminal offences between 2008 and 2019 where were known persons against whom criminal charges were filed, 15.53% were female. For criminal offences related to prostitution, 34.54% of those charged were female, which is significantly more than for total reported offences.

Table 4.

Persons accused of all misdemeanours against public order and peace and of misdemeanours related to prostitution

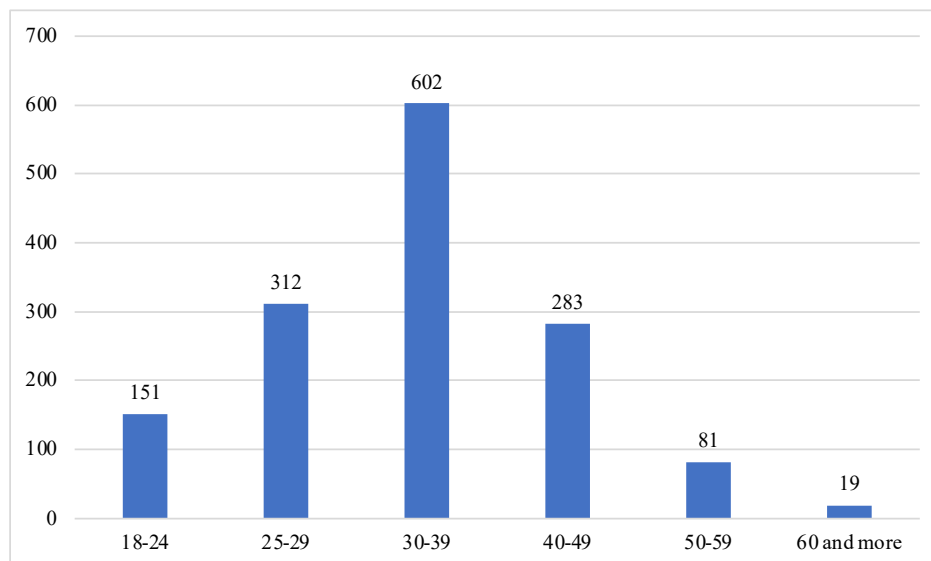
Year	Misdemeanours against public order and peace - all			Misdemeanours against public order and peace - prostitution		
	Total	Female	Female in %	Total	Female	Female in %
2008	49,549	7,008	14.14	140	120	85.71
2009	50,389	6,781	13.46	137	125	91.24
2010	48,247	6,740	13.97	189	177	93.65
2011	47,182	6,748	14.30	195	165	84.62
2012	44,683	6,440	14.41	301	280	93.02
2013	52,346	7,830	14.96	247	239	96.76
2014	52,488	8,157	15.54	147	142	96.60
2015	41,097	6,614	16.09	94	88	93.62
2016	36,535	6,351	17.38	48	48	100.00
2017	38,912	6,661	17.12	39	37	94.87
2018	36,837	6,189	16.80	17	14	82.35
2019	30,009	4,971	16.57	17	15	88.24
Average	44,022.83	6,707.50	15.40	130.92	120.83	91.72

Source: Croatian Bureau of Statistics, calculation by author

The gender difference is even more noticeable for misdemeanours against public order and peace, as Table 4 shows. Similar to reported criminal offences, the proportion of women accused of misdemeanours against public order and peace is 15.40%, but for misdemeanours related to prostitution, women make up 91.72% of the accused. These data show that criminal offences related to prostitution, which include organising prostitution, i.e., coercing or encouraging prostitution, are mostly committed by men. Misdemeanours, which mainly involve the provision of sexual services, are mostly committed by women. In Croatia, men who engage in prostitution provide homosexual services or services to heterosexual couples, and the situation where women are clients of male sex workers is rare (Matejčić, 2011), unlike in some countries such as Barbados or Jamaica, where such a form of sex work is quite common (e.g., Phillips, 1999).

Figure 2.

Age groups - females accused of misdemeanours related to prostitution, 2008 to 2019 (n = 1450)



Source: Croatian Bureau of Statistics

Most sex workers enter prostitution at a young age, usually without knowing what they are doing (Radačić and Šikić Mićanović, 2017). Figure 2 shows the age distribution of females accused of prostitution-related misdemeanours. The most accused sex workers were between 30 and 39 years old and between 25 and

29 years old. This data is consistent with research conducted by Štulhofer *et al.* (2015) in Split with female sex workers in 2008 and 2014. In the 2008 sample, most respondents (53.9%) were in the 29-39 age group, and in the 2014 sample, most were in the 18-28 age group (40.5%). Other socio-demographic characteristics can be derived from these surveys: most of the respondents attended secondary school (70.8% in the 2008 sample and 74.7% in the 2014 sample); however, most of them were unemployed (64.8% in the 2008 sample and 70.5% in the 2014 sample).

In Radačić and Šikić Mićanović's (2017) study of sex workers, they note that the main motive for sex work is money, i.e., difficult socio-economic circumstances, and that very few sex workers were aware of prostitution as a career choice or pursued prostitution in search of self-fulfilment (see Ryan and Hall, 2001). With the income from sex work, they cover various financial needs: some of them are poor because they are insufficiently educated; some are unemployed single mothers; and others finance their drug addiction (Radačić and Šikić Mićanović, 2017). Drugs are common in the sex work milieu; some sex workers who worked on yachts stated that drugs were abundant there and that their clients sometimes offered them drugs to encourage them to engage in sexual activities that they would not have agreed to if they had not been on drugs (Dubrovnik Insider, 2018). In the survey conducted by Radačić and Šikić Mićanović (2017), four of the six respondents stated drugs as a motive for entering prostitution.

The exact proportion of foreign nationals among sex workers operating in Croatia is difficult to determine, as the data collected by the Croatian Bureau of Statistics are not detailed enough and do not include information on the nationality of persons accused of misdemeanours related to prostitution. From the publicly available data, the nationality of offenders could only be determined for the period from 2003 to 2007: in 2003, 6.04% of persons accused of prostitution had a foreign nationality; in 2004, it was 3.41%; in 2005, it was 1.97%; in 2006, it was 1.72%; and in 2007, it was 5.70%.

Representatives of non-governmental organisations argue that in Split-Dalmatia County during the summer, prostitution among foreign citizens is mainly carried out by sex workers from neighbouring countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Serbia (Radačić and Šikić Mićanović, 2017). In the summer of 2022, three sex workers from Brazil were arrested in Šibenik (Baranović, 2022), and sex workers from Brazil were also present in Dubrovnik, as were those from Ukraine and Russia (Pajić Bačić, 2022). In April 2023, two Colombian women came to Croatia. They offered sexual services in Zagreb for a short time and planned to stay in Split for the summer; however, they were soon arrested (Karakaš Jakubin, 2023). Similar migration during summer was noted in Slovenia, where sex workers from Slovenia temporarily migrate to Italy and Austria, and women from Croatia and other countries of the former Yugoslavia temporarily migrate to Slovenia, which also has an increased demand for sex workers during the summer-time (Pajnik, 2017). In addition to working in rented flats, sex workers from neighbouring countries also work on yachts and try to establish themselves in the sex business by offering sex services cheaper than Croatian sex workers (Badovinac and Rašeta, 2017).

For engaging in prostitution sex workers are sanctioned under the Law on Misdemeanours Against Public Order and Peace (1990, 2022). Of the 1571 sex workers sanctioned between 2008 and 2019, 82.49% were fined, 8.52% were given suspended prison sentences, and 8.97% were sanctioned by some other measure. Judges usually sanction sex workers with the lowest penalty prescribed by law. However, imposing fines on sex workers is pointless, considering how they get the funds to cover the fine (Kolarec, 2007).

Conclusions

Croatia attracts tourists with its natural beauty, rich cultural heritage, gastronomy, and various events; sexual entertainment is probably not the predominant motive for visiting Croatia (Žižović, 2020). However, some tourists are attracted to this form of "tourism offer". Our analysis has shown that the number of criminal offences and misdemeanours related to prostitution is higher in coastal Croatia than in continental Croatia. People familiar with prostitution argue that tourism-related prostitution occurs mainly in destinations that host wealthier tourists, such as Dubrovnik, Hvar, Brač, Opatija, Poreč or Rovinj (Kovačević and Rašović, 2012).

Although there is no official data confirming the existence of an organised group of rich people in Croatia who exploit women from South-Eastern Europe for sex tourism (PSD, 2009), the circumstances of sex workers in tourism are as unfavourable as in other parts of the world. They are almost exclusively female and mostly between 25 and 40 years old. Some of them come to the Croatian coast in the summer from other parts of Croatia, which are poorer and offer worse employment opportunities, and from neighbouring countries where economic conditions are worse than in Croatia, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina,

Montenegro, and Serbia, but also from other countries such as Brazil, Colombia, Ukraine, and Russia. Most of these women engage in sex work out of financial necessity, as they are insufficiently educated and hardly employable; they see prostitution as a way out of poverty and other unfavourable life circumstances. Experts (Radačić, 2017; Šipić *et al.*, 2022) argue that the Croatian model of prostitution regulation is not adequate as it sanctions sex workers. Apart from better regulation, Croatia should provide systematic support to these women so that they can find new business and life opportunities outside of prostitution.

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Ladies in Tourism: UNWTO Gives Young Tourism Women a Chance to Express Creativity and Knowledge

Igor Stamenković, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Geography, Tourism and Hotel Management, Faculty of Sciences, University of Novi Sad, Serbia; e-mail: igorrrrogi@yahoo.com

Marija Vukadin, PhD Student, Department of Geography, Tourism and Hotel Management, Faculty of Sciences, University of Novi Sad, Serbia; e-mail: marija-bl@hotmail.com

Dajana Kopuz, PhD Student, Department of Geography, Tourism and Hotel Management, Faculty of Sciences, University of Novi Sad, Serbia; e-mail: dajana.kopuz@gmail.com

Nikoleta Račićević, MSc, Department of Geography, Tourism and Hotel Management, Faculty of Sciences, University of Novi Sad, Serbia; e-mail: n.racicevic@gmail.com

Abstract

There are not many competitions where students of tourism, hospitality, management and associated fields can demonstrate their knowledge, especially at the global level. During the year of 2019, The World Tourism Organization (further: UNWTO) develops a unique competition for tourism and travel students at a global level. The competition UNWTO Students' League gathered undergraduate students from their before last or last year of studying. From all around the world, approximately 60 teams formed from 4 or 5 students, were grouped into two big units - Global East and Global West. Through five challenges, teams have the opportunity to show their creativity, knowledge and skills by resolving issues in front of them. The main topics of these challenges were connected to crucial questions that the tourism industry is facing daily and the solutions to assigned tasks had to be in accordance with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with emphasis on Goals 8, 12 and 14. A Serbian team from University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Sciences, who participated in the UNWTO Students' League, was made up of 5 female undergraduate students. Emphasizing the importance of the role of women in tourism and tourism education, the name of the team from Serbia was Ladies in Tourism. The methodology included preliminary field research and later cabinet research because a pandemic was declared at the beginning of the competition. During the previous years of study, through field teaching, authors visited localities and examples of good practice that were part of the competition concepts. There are several purposes of this paper. The main purpose of the presented paper is to illustrate the importance of competitions at this level, especially for female students from less developed countries. The special attention will be paid to one of the five challenges, the one that is connected to more inclusive societies and incorporating marginalized groups of society. Also, one of the purposes of this paper is to emphasize the importance of female figures in the tourism industry and the importance of proper, constant and thorough education of females in tourism. These topics will be referred to from the perspective of former contestants and mentors that took part in the competition UNWTO Students' League.

Keywords: women; tourism; UNWTO; Students' League; Sustainable Development Goals

Introduction

Before the pandemic, tourism was for a whole decade one of the fastest-growing economic sectors in the world with a contribution to global GDP of 4% in 2019 (UNWTO, 2021; UNWTO, 2022). According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (further WTTC) contribution of Travel and Tourism with all direct, indirect and induced impact was in total 10.3% of global GDP and during the pandemic this rate decreased to 5,3%. The consequences of the crisis caused by the pandemic were also felt in the labour market and service industries were particularly affected. In 2019, 333 million (1 in 10 of all jobs globally) were employed in the travel/tourism sector and 62 million jobs were lost, which led to a number of 271,3 million jobs (WTTC, 2022).

WTTC estimates that the total contribution of the travel and tourism sector to Serbian GDP was 5,9% in 2019 and since then a significant drop has been recorded, probably caused by a pandemic (WTTC, 2022). The vision of the development of tourism in Serbia implies that tourism will become one of the most

dominant branches of the economy in the following years and at the same time this sector will be very attractive for employment, especially young people (Ministry of trade, tourism and telecommunications, 2016). Therefore, it is important to studiously present the situation in this segment of the economy and further investigate possibilities of development.

Importance of employment in tourism and similar activities lies in its inclusiveness. Tourism gives opportunities for marginalized groups of people to be included in the labour market, especially females that are the focus of this research.

Females in Serbia - Education and Employment

Education is a basic human and child right (United Nations, 1989; United Nations, 2015).

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, the number of men who were educated was significantly higher than the number of women and after the Second World War, the ratio of male students to female students was 4 to 1, according to the Serbian case (Aksić and Arsić, 2022). Inclusion of females in higher education was more present after the Second World War which will, at the end of the century, result in a higher percentage of females finishing their higher education at undergraduate and doctoral level (Popović, 2008). According to statistical data, nowadays, it is mostly women who enroll in and graduate from higher education institutions in Serbia (Republički zavod za statistiku, 2020a).

Table 1.
Enrolled and graduated students in Republic of Serbia

Year	Students enrolled			Graduated students - first and second stage			Graduated students - third stage		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
2019/20	241968	104058	137910	41114	16967	24147	792	344	448
2020/21	242550	103123	139427	40463	16138	24325	719	320	399
2021/22	243952	102581	141371	39591	15368	24223	726	323	403

Source: Republički zavod za statistiku, 2020, 2021, 2022

Education, health and social care, the arts and humanities are the top three spheres in higher education, where the percentage of women is significantly more dominant. Men are more dominant in the fields of information and communication technology and engineering, manufacturing and construction (Republički zavod za statistiku, 2020a). When it comes to services, females are the ones who choose to enroll in higher education processes, but males are the ones who are finishing them more (Republički zavod za statistiku, 2020a).

WTTC estimates that in 2021 around 5,4% (123.3 thousand) of total jobs in Serbia were connected to travel and tourism, which represents a certain drop since 2019 when 6,3% (137 thousand) of employees was working in tourism and travel. Serbian official statistical data do not present how many employers are currently working in tourism (WTTC, 2022). Observing the accommodation and food services shows that there are no bigger differences in the number of employers between genders (Republički zavod za statistiku, 2022b). When it comes to younger age, young females from Serbia are most likely to work in service, while young males are more dominant in jobs connected to agriculture and industry (Marjanović, 2016).

Table 2.
Economic activity in Serbia

	Female		Male	
Total population aged 15 and over	3031,6		2825,3	
Economically active (Activity rate)	1425,4 (47,00%)		1775,8 (62,9%)	
Employed (Employment rate)	1253,4 (41,3%)		1595,4 (56,5%)	
Unemployed persons (Unemployment rate)	172,0 (12,1%)		180,4 (10,2%)	
Outside the labour force (Outside the labour force rate)	1606,2 (53,00%)		1049,5 (37,1%)	
Number of employees regarding to type of settlement (in 000)	Urban	774,6	Urban	874,3
	Other	478,8	Other	721,1
Number of employees in Accommodation and food service activities (in 000)	45,3		45,1	

Source: Republički zavod za statistiku, 2022b

Women in Serbia are facing with wages that are lower comparing to male and average wages (Republički zavod za statistiku, 2022b), but overall low wages can be a demotivator for choosing a career in tourism. Average net wages for jobs in tourism are almost twice less comparing to average net wages on national level (Table 3).

Table 3.
Wages in Serbia

	September 2020			September 2021		
	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male
Average wages (in RSD*)	82515	77826	86622	89980	83908	95178
Average wages and salaries by activities (in RSD*)	Average gross wages and salaries			Average net wages and salaries		
	2020	2021		2020	2021	
Republic of Serbia (in RSD*)	82984	90784		60073	65864	
Accommodation and food service activities (in RSD*)	50837	54556		36864	39687	
Accommodation (in RSD*)	61580	68160		44820	49667	
Food and beverage service activities (in RSD*)	47934	50883		34714	36993	
Travel agency, tour operator and other reservation service and related activities (in RSD*)	49874	54062		36356	39484	

Source: Republički zavod za statistiku, 2022b (117,00 RSD* = 1,00 EURO)

Development of entrepreneurship can lead to the economic development of a country (Jovanović and Lazić, 2018; Šormaz, 2021) and the same example can be applied directly to the Serbian economy (Drakulić and Budimčević, 2016). It is necessary to create an environment in which an entrepreneurial climate will be encouraged (Đorđević *et al.*, 2010; Šormaz, 2021). More than a decade, the Serbian government has been introducing a series of legal acts and documents that are recognizing and encouraging female entrepreneurship (Drakulić and Budimčević, 2016) but their application in practice and effectiveness is being questioned (Munitlak Ivanović *et al.*, 2016).

Young Serbian female students are also showing less courage to become entrepreneurs comparing to male students (Marčetić and Mušikić, 2020). Practice has shown that women in Serbia have limited knowledge about incentive entrepreneurship programs offered by the government and different institutions (Beraha and Đuričin, 2020). According to Jovičić Vuković and Papić-Blagojević (2019), Serbian tourism students are faced with lack of entrepreneurial education since only 1/3 out of 104 respondents had an opportunity to learn about entrepreneurship from formal and informal sources of learning.

The rural environment and living conditions in which women from Serbia live are characterized as quite challenging (Munitlak Ivanović *et al.*, 2016) and number of females employed in nonurban area confirms this (Table 2). Self-employment and entrepreneurship in the sphere of tourism can solve the problem of low employment of women in these areas. Contribution of females in tourism development of nonurban areas is characterized as important for local development (Martini *et al.*, 2020) and Serbian females show interests in developing business in areas of rural tourism (Vuković *et al.*, 2021). Marčetić and Mušikić (2020) came to a similar conclusion where, examining the attitudes of economics students, authors determined that young men have the most entrepreneurial intentions in the sphere of agriculture and IT, while young women show more inclination towards starting a business in the sphere of services and tourism.

The strength of tourism is reflected in the fact that tourism is able to employ surplus labour from the secondary sector (Bartoluci and Budimski, 2010). It is crucial to encourage employment and entrepreneurship of Serbian females. Some specific forms of tourism, such as rural tourism, stimulate creation of new jobs for females (Radović and Radović-Marković, 2016).

Education in Tourism

Serious approaches in higher education in tourism started in the 1960s (Airey *et al.*, 2015). Since the middle of the past century until today, the number of students who decide to study tourism has been increasing (Airey *et al.*, 2015), but also the number of new study programs and overall tourism literature is

noticeable (Airey, 2016). When it comes to public higher education institutions in Serbia, there are 4 public Universities with tourism or similar study programs on one of the three academic levels (Table 4). Private higher education institutions also make a significant contribution to the education and development of human resources in the field of tourism and hospitality.

Table 4.
Public universities with tourism and related study programmes in Serbia

Faculty of Sciences, University of Novi Sad	Faculty of Hotel Management and Tourism Vrnjačka Banja, University of Kragujevac	Faculty of Sciences and Mathematics Niš, University of Niš	Faculty of Geography, University of Belgrade	Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Belgrade
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Source: Authors

Education is crucial for a sustainable future in all fields and industries. Also, education can shape a better future for employees in tourism (Amoah and Baum, 1997) and the importance of quality and effective education in tourism grows with the fact that it is a labour-intensive sector with people from both sides of the "production process." Labour-intensive sector, as tourism, seeks for workers with developed and quality skills which will provide services of great quality (Batoluci and Budimski, 2010). It is important that students have as much contact with practical examples as possible during classes (Brkanlić *et al.*, 2017), since gaps in knowledge of tourism and hospitality and its practice fields are detected (Lugosi and Jameson, 2017). Uniformity in tourism education can be fatal for the quality of provided and obtained knowledge (Amoah and Baum, 1997). Tourism is an activity that is threatened by constant unpredictable changes that will require completely new skills from current students (Dredge *et al.*, 2015). Traditionally based ways of education are present, but specific approaches that will be constantly innovated and perfected are required.

UNWTO Supporting Tourism Education

In 1998, UNWTO founded UNWTO Academy (former UNWTO. Themsis Foundation), to help develop human capital that is key for success in the tourism industry. Intention is to achieve economic benefits from tourism, effectively manage numerous but qualified and motivated human capital using tools such as education and training programs, seminars, courses and workshops (Kalbaska and Rosani, 2022; UNWTO, 2020a).

In the field of Tourism Education, digitalization plays an important role. With digital media, for tourism students it is easier to improve soft skills which are important for future jobs (Balula *et al.*, 2019). By using the advantages of online education, UNWTO launched the UNWTO Tourism Online Academy platform that offers online courses that educate individuals to deal with challenges in the tourism industry. Mainly covered challenges are globalization, marketing, digitalization and sustainability (UNWTO, 2020b). Academy gained major success during COVID-19 pandemic and in 2022 this platform reached 18,000 of users in 191 countries and a network of 17 universities (UNWTO, 2022).

One of UNWTO Academy products is UNWTO.TedQual certification (or *Quality Assurance for Tourism Education, Training and Research Programmes*). UNWTO.TedQual aims to support continuous improvement of education, training and research programs in tourism and it is assigned to institutions that fulfill certain requirements (UNWTO, 2011; UNWTO, 2014). There are numerous benefits seen from a perspective of a given institution such as: improving educational system, gaining international recognition, possibilities of mobility for teachers, professors and students, encouraging other departments to go through the relevant certification processes in their areas (Atef *et al.*, 2019).

Latest contribution of UNWTO to global education in tourism is publication *UNWTO Tourism Education Guidelines*. According to UNWTO, achieving improvement in tourism education is possible with: increase access to tourism education, update tourism curricula, integrate tourism education into secondary school curricula, innovative undergraduate and graduate tourism education, standardize certification, expand tourism education quality assurance and connect tourism graduates with employment opportunities (UNWTO, 2022).

One of the incentive programs that help youth for gaining new knowledge and skills, more precisely university students, is UNWTO Students' League. Since this program is the main focus of this paper, more about the UNWTO Students' League will be said in the next chapter.

UNWTO Students' League

UNWTO Students' League is a relatively new invention of this organization that involves university students from all around the world. Students' League is a global competition that gathers tourism, management or hospitality students and enables them to demonstrate their previous knowledge, creativity and skills by finding solutions to various challenges and problems in the tourism industry. This competition brings students closer to the real situation in the tourism sector and encourages them to find sustainable answers (UNWTO, 2019). The challenges themselves are designed in such a way that they are in line with sustainable development and especially with the Sustainable Development Goals 8, 12 and 14 (UNWTO, 2019).

Further, from the point of view of former contestants, authors of this paper will explain their experience during and after participation.

Ladies in Tourism and UNWTO Students League

The rules of the competition stipulated that, beside the mentor, there should be 5 students in the team that are penultimate or the last year of their higher education. In accordance with the rules, the only team from Republic of Serbia that represented University of Novi Sad was composed of 5 female students of the penultimate year. For all team members it was a first chance to be a part of a global event that supports young future professionals in the field of tourism. The initiative to participate in the UNWTO Students' League came from the students and at the same was immediately supported by the mentor. Since all student members were enterprising young females, for them, it was crucial that the team's name sends a strong and encouraging message. With the help of external associates, the decision led to the name "*Ladies in Tourism*".

Application Process

The first task for the team was to prepare an effective application which would enable general participation in the competition. The application form was composed of several segments. First of all, to participate in this competition, each team was required to obtain written approval from the institution they represent. Besides photographs of team members, every student was obligated to write a resume. Probably, the central segment of the application process was a short 1-minute video of the team and institution. Requested visual presentation was the first assignment where students had to work as a team. The aim of the one-minute video was to present the short history and achievements of the Department. One of the messages that wanted to be sent, and which is perhaps recognized by UNWTO, is the importance of educated young females and their role in managing interactive, sometimes challenging and demanding sectors like tourism. With the main idea of the video and the symbolic name "*Ladies in Tourism*", the whole application process for the team from Serbia was finished.

Challenges

The UNWTO Students' League was first held in 2020, from January until 23rd July, when the finale of the competition was held. In the first version of this competition, there were 62 teams from all around the world. These 62 teams were divided into two groups – Global East and Global West. Students had an opportunity to show their knowledge through 5 challenges.

Challenge 1 - In the focus of the first challenge was the development of one of the popular forms of tourism which depends heavily on other sectors of the economy. Even though tourism relies mostly on other economic activities, tourism can be an accelerator of positive changes in this sector. Tourism can manage to find solutions which will make that certain activity more approachable to a bigger number of people. This form of tourism was one of the well developed in the region of Vojvodina, which was further inspiration for the development of solutions for this challenge. The main topics covered in the presented action plan were: organization and cooperation, finances, education and promotion. Solutions from the team resulted in a new cultural tour and route that gathered several entrepreneurs in the Vojvodina region and also with the visual identity of the route.

Challenge 2 - Discrimination of certain social groups in different industries is unfortunately widespread in today's world -youths, national minorities, females, people with disabilities, certain races or sexual orientation are just examples of sources of discrimination in professional and private life. One of the

main characteristics of modern tourism is its inclusiveness. Tourism gives an opportunity to everyone to take part on both sides of the market - whether as a part of an offer or demand. The aim of the second challenge was to present positive examples of inclusiveness in tourism and introduce innovative tourism products and services developed by certain groups of society. Besides Serbian examples of youth and female entrepreneurship, the importance of national minorities in the development of tourism offer and inclusiveness of people with disabilities, the team explored positive examples from neighboring country - Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Challenge 3 - This challenge happened in the midst of a pandemic; therefore new circumstances served as an inspiration for the topic in the third challenge. At that moment, 100% of world destinations closed their borders to international arrivals. Tourism was facing one of the biggest crises in history and young future leaders were called to suggest effective solutions for tourism recovery. Solutions are supposed to be created for one European Mediterranean country with a high percentage of tourism involvement in national GDP. Basic solutions at the moment, from the aspect of the Serbian team are seen in: creation of an effective crisis management board, physical distancing and improvement of technical aspects of tourism, digitalization of tourism services, encouragement of domestic tourism. These resolutions were supported by numerous existing examples from other countries.

Challenge 4 - Today, almost every region of the world has plenty to offer to heterogeneous tourist demand. The Middle East as a region has become more popular on tourist maps. According to UNWTO, there are destinations where tourism is greatly developed in this region and places where the oil industry is the primary activity should not be ignored either, since such places show strong indications for future tourist development (UNWTO, 2020). For the integration of oil industry-based cities and regions, it is necessary to find innovative solutions that will attract tourists. These destinations are not the ones with traditional attractions, but that does not mean that their offer is not capable of giving a unique experience for guests. The purpose of the last challenge was to create a unique tourist offer for quite an untraditional tourist area.

Challenge 5 - Last challenge was reserved for 4 teams that achieved the best scores in the previous four challenges. The topic was the connection between social media and tourism. The first idea was to hold the final competition live with 4 teams, but unfortunately, due to the pandemic, it was not possible to manage. Globally, education was deeply affected by COVID-19 (UNWTO, 2022). The necessity of continued modernization and application of new technologies in education was especially pronounced during the pandemic period (Marković Krstić and Milošević Radulović, 2021). Therefore, a live stream was provided, where finalists could present their solutions to the last challenge. This was also an opportunity for other contestants to meet organizers and learn more about the main aims of the competition and its contribution. Results from the first four challenges were decided by the ranking of teams that were not included in the final challenge. The Serbian team took 15th place in the Global East team and in the overall ranking, the Serbian team was placed 30th.

Positive and Negative from Aspect of Team

The Students' League as a form of competition is quite an unusual challenge for tourism students, but highly beneficial for several reasons. By studying research for solving challenges, each student has an opportunity to expand knowledge in their main field of research - tourism. Competition gave an opportunity to develop several skills and as the most important remain organizational, teamwork, leadership and problem-solving skills. SDGs represent an important framework and its implementation is crucial for shaping a better and sustainable future and the application of SDGs in solutions raise awareness about its importance. In the future, it can be expected that young leaders will pay more attention to sustainable tourism development due to experience in the Students' League. Besides gaining more knowledge, students are able to develop different skills and abilities. Probably, one of the aims of this competition was to share experiences and knowledge. By publishing details about teams and organizations enrolled in the competition, contestants are able to make connections with other institutions and colleagues. In the Serbian case, participation in the competition enabled individual members of the team to expand their horizons and continue future levels of education at one of the other faculties participating in the competition. This is quite a significant accomplishment of the Students' League since internationalization of higher education and a growing number of international students can lead to improvement of the level of intercultural knowledge and better management of cultural sensitivity (Lugosi and Jameson, 2017). Technically, well organized online form of the UNWTO competition allowed Serbian students to be aware of advantages of this study form. Besides students, professors also benefit from the Students' League. Mentoring a team was a chal-

lenge since mentors were in charge of overall presentation of complete knowledge and skills of students. Leading a team requires from individual to set clear boundaries between mentoring and just helping and solving problems. For the purposes of the competition, it was necessary to additionally include literature, and to present and combine existing resources. The aggravating circumstance at that moment was the adaptation of regular classes to online classes due to the pandemic and the further work of the team in such conditions. One of the aims in Serbia is to further work on the development of tourism and multiple positive and applicable examples of development and its results can be found in neighboring and other countries. Through this competition, students were able to gain a better picture of the level of tourism development of the country they are representing. Further, comparing the accomplishments of their own region/country with other world areas could give them possible entrepreneurial ideas that they can develop in their country. Implementation and adaptation of certain foreign practices in tourism can be helpful for the development of tourism at local levels and the development of the entrepreneurial spirit of contestants.

Table 5.
Advantages and disadvantages of participation in Students' League

Which benefits make it worth competing in the Student League again?	What are the disadvantages that would make you think about participating again?
- Acquisition of new professional knowledge - Application of SDGs in tourism - Online form of the competition - Development of an entrepreneurial spirit - Development of teamwork, organizational, problem-solving and other things - New connections with travel and tourism students and institutions - Consideration of new practices and methods of education in the field of tourism - The possibility of observing the level of tourism progress in the region and the country - Comparing the tourism development between Serbia and other countries - Self-promotion and promotion of Department in media	- Undetermined scoring scale - The topics of the challenges were sometimes not general enough, which could affect that individual teams coped better and achieved better results (etc. challenge 3 and 4) - Lack of the feedback after the proposed solution - as a team, there was not possibilities to improve mistakes in next challenges

Source: Authors

Since the Students' League in 2020 was the first ever held, some omissions were somewhat to be expected. The disadvantages seen by the Serbian team do not necessarily have to be the disadvantages seen by other teams during the competition. Even though a scale was presented before the competition started, after sending solutions, teams were not able to understand what gained the highest score. Possible feedback could lead to better solutions in the next challenges, where students would know in which direction to go. In a few challenges, teams were bonded to one particular destination and literature research was at the moment quite challenging since there was research in languages other than English. These observations were not something that was not motivating for students and its future possible enrolment in similar competitions or other incentive activities organized by UNWTO.

Advantages for UNWTO

A competition of this level, which brings together young future professionals, is also very important for the institution that organizes it. UNWTO Students' League first has an opportunity to create a powerful and extensive database of: 1) entrepreneurial and socially engaged travel and tourism students who are potential future leaders in this field, 2) professors as their mentors who leave the formal shackles of education and find alternative ways of learning and, of course, 3) institutions that support and show interest in actions that come from proactive students. The process of accelerating knowledge and ideas in the described environment is not one-way. Besides students, there was a lot of what UNWTO and organizers could learn. By analyzing proposed solutions to challenges, UNWTO could: witness the creation of new ideas that will improve this sector, recruit new people and their ideas into the Organization, realize the level of knowledge and skills of young people and create further incentive programs, strategies and plans for improvement of education based on this realization, compare how young people from more or less touristic countries perceive tourism, notice the understanding and knowledge of young tourism professionals about SDGs. Students' League was also a great possibility for the further promotion of UNWTO and its work with a special and important target group like young people are.

Conclusion

Informal and non-traditional forms of learning and improving skills are crucial for development of students and their future performances on labour market. Students' League is seen as one of the positive ways of gathering new knowledge and developing an impressive set of already existing and new skills in the field of tourism. The competition managed to direct the students to think more about the sustainable future and the SDGs and their application in tourism. The network of higher education institutions that has been created is particularly important, and that in the future may result in significant cooperation. Organization of Students' League was a quite challenge for itself since it was held in the peak of pandemic. Technically, competition was organized even in these conditions and in the future, it can only be improved. Educational system in Serbia managed to find efficient solutions for distance education during the pandemic period in Serbia, which was confirmed by students, teachers and the general public (Marković Krstić and Milošević Radulović, 2021) which confirms that this online competition was not making difficulties for Serbian team. The presented shortcomings can serve as guidelines for further development and improvement of this competition.

Overall, more advantages than disadvantages when it comes to Students' League, points to the importance of further organizing this and similar competitions in the following years.

Tourism represents a development opportunity for employment of women. Incentive programmes and competitions are important for the development of young professionals, but also for parts of the societies that have been marginalized. The economic importance of tourism highlights the constant importance of innovation in the field of education in tourism. A greater number of women in education is advantageous for the governments of the world, therefore they are the ones who should encourage the education of girls (Moriarty, 2017). In Serbian case, it is possible to see that majority of enrolled students are females, which shows that some traditional patterns of lifestyle are overcome. On the other hand, labour market in Serbian case shows still several obstacles for females such as unemployment, especially in non-urban areas. In the future, it is necessary to encourage development of female entrepreneurship and it is already confirmed that women entrepreneurship in tourism is seen as development opportunity. Active involvement of females in nonurban area can be helpful for the economy of the countries in development such as Serbia.

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From the Tragic Fates of Women to Tourist Attractions or Heritage Commercialized in Modern Times

Ivo Tokić, MSc, Croatian Information and Documentation Society, Croatia; e-mail: ivo.tokic@gmail.com

Ksenija Tokić, PhD, Institute for Tourism, Croatia; e-mail: ksenija.tokic@iztg.hr

Abstract

Women were a particularly vulnerable group in past times. On the one hand, their material existence was insecure, on the other hand, their social status depended mostly on their family or a man. Additionally, they faced numerous personal limitations due to limited access to education and restrictive societal expectations with few opportunities for social, material, spiritual, or psychological support. Many women managed to cope with these conditions and found their way. However, many couldn't overcome their circumstances and experienced tragic fates. Some of them left a mark in their communities, becoming subjects of local folklore and even legends. Over time, if their stories were recorded in songs or books, they became part of the local cultural heritage preserved, in part, in libraries and museums, passing on to new generations. Some of these memories live on in local toponyms. This study examines three examples of legends or memories of real women in our regions who had unfortunate or tragic destinies. Their fates entered folklore, which is now part of the local cultural heritage and can be used for tourism purposes. These include the persecution of women as witches, suicides due to unhappy love and societal pressures, and the story of a woman who, living in poverty, became a local legend even in her own time in one Croatian tourist destination. The unfortunate lives of these real women, subsequently woven into local folklore and general cultural heritage of these communities, now represent a heritage resource, i. e. tourist attraction, complementing the usual tourist offerings of the places where these women once lived.

Keywords: tragic women's fates; heritage; tourism; Croatia

Introduction

In the past, women constituted a particularly vulnerable group of the population, both in Europe and worldwide. It is well known that they often endured an uncertain existence marked by difficult labor for survival. In terms of social status, they lacked voting rights in political and public matters, with their position largely dependent on the family they came from or the man they married. Consequently, they faced personal limitations due to the limited access to education for most women. Despite these challenging conditions, many women managed to lead their lives without strife. However, a considerable number of them could not overcome the difficult circumstances they lived in and experienced unfortunate fates or tragic ends.

Some of these women left a significant impact on their communities due to their tragic destinies, and their memories entered local folklore, becoming legends. If these stories were recorded in tales, songs, books, or other artistic works, they also became part of the oral folk tradition and local cultural heritage preserved today in libraries and museums. These institutions enable the transmission of such heritage to future generations.

However, oral tradition is resilient and powerful even without the presence of cultural institutions. For example, certain memories from folklore, legends, and beliefs have persisted in local place names (Trošelj, 2021). Thus, certain city streets, groves, hydrological and geographical features like rivers, lakes, rocks, mountain peaks, and cliffs, or sinkholes are sometimes named after women, such as "Đulin ponor" (Julia's Abyss). Moreover, generic names may include feminine possessive adjectives, like in the examples of "Djevojački kamen" (Maiden's Stone) or "Djevojački kuk" (Maiden's Cliff). Often, these names originate from memories of a tragic and significant event associated with one or more women during a particular period. (Dragić, 2014; Maglajlić, 1991).

This research examines three examples of legends or memories of real women in Croatian regions who had unfortunate and tragic destinies in the past. Their fates became part of folklore, now utilized as a component of local cultural heritage for tourism purposes. These women include those accused of witchcraft, those who died by suicide due to unhappy love and societal pressure, and a woman who, despite living in poverty, became a local legend during her lifetime because of her character and profound love. The unfortunate destinies of these real women, which later became part of the local folklore and general cultural heritage of their communities, now represent a cultural resource or tourist product that complements the typical contemporary tourist offerings of the places where these women once lived.

Theoretical Background

In the development of their offerings, tourism entrepreneurs often utilize elements of the destination's cultural heritage. They brand their tourism products, such as tours, souvenirs, gastronomy, etc., by connecting them with characters from local legends or real individuals who are part of the cultural heritage of a certain destination. Over time, some aspects of the original event may change or be completely lost, while other attributes may be emphasized, and even entirely new characteristics may be added in line with the current needs of the community. Consequently, the original meaning of an event can be altered, and it may acquire an entirely new significance in the collective consciousness (Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2021).

In the tourism practice of commercializing certain elements from collective memory for tourism purposes, those components of the event are often taken from cultural heritage that are suitable for adaptation and the creation of a tourism product. This means that often in the transformation of a heritage story about an event into a tourism product, certain aspects of the story may intentionally be downplayed, while others are emphasized to make the story more appealing to domestic and foreign tourists. In short, it aims to successfully commercialize the narrative. Some elements of the original event may be off-putting to modern tourists or may only be of interest to specific niche groups of visitors, while incomprehensible or even inappropriate for other groups. Therefore, it is necessary to select those elements of the story that enable the narrative and its product to be understood, acceptable, and close to tourists while also being attractive to them.

The legend enters the collective consciousness of a community as a testimony or shared memory of an individual event. Under the influence of various historical, social, cultural, or political factors, the collective consciousness may retain layers of meaning inherent in the original event, add to those meanings, or alter one or more layers of meaning originally associated with the event (Durkheim, 1933, 1982, 1995). Through this process of defining the meaning of the original event in the collective consciousness, the event becomes a component of that part of the collective consciousness consisting of firmly defined concepts that form the value system and identity of that community, known as its historical or cultural heritage. Therefore, as an element of heritage, the original event represents a historical/political/religious/cultural construct that, in some of its aspects and meanings - whether original, added, or modified - corresponds to the symbolic needs of that community and is part of its identity-forming past (Mance, 2012; Open Learn, n.d.).

There are various reasons why certain elements or events and their cultural interpretations from the collective consciousness, encompassing cultural, historical, and scientific heritage, are chosen for tourism products. These reasons are historically changeable with the spirit of the times. It seems that almost anything can be used for commercialization through tourism products due to the great contemporary diversification of potential audience interests.

As an illustration of the transformation of cultural and historical heritage into tourism products, this research examines three examples of unfortunate fates of women from the past related to memories of the witch trials in Zagreb, the suicide of a young girl due to unhappy love in Ogulin, and the case of a woman who found her great love despite extreme poverty but tragically ended her life in Split. Of these three examples, tourist and other products related to the witch trials in Zagreb are the most well-developed in Croatia, while the tourism offer associated with the legend of Đulin ponor in Ogulin is established and well-integrated into Ogulin's otherwise diverse tourism offerings. On the other hand, the case of Cicibela from Split is just starting to be significantly commercially exploited. The research will demonstrate which elements of these historical events served as the basis for creating the current tourism products and how this was achieved.

Methodology

The research uses historical and desk research methods. Three examples of historical legends or memories of real women who lived in Croatian regions and experienced unfortunate and tragic destinies have been selected for the study. These examples are differentiated based on the following criteria: i) the type of unfortunate fate (death sentence, suicide, or tragic death), ii) the number of women involved in each example of unfortunate fate (many women experiencing the same fate, several women experiencing the same fate, or one woman experiencing her fate), and iii) the geographical scope of the events that constitute each example (events spanning a large geographical area across the entire continent and beyond, events occurring in multiple countries or regions, or events restricted to a local setting). However, precisely because of their differences, these examples complement each other within the framework of this research.

Accordingly, the persecution of witches in Croatia are part of a broader witch-hunting phenomenon that occurred throughout Europe and North America over several centuries and in which, according to recent scholarly research, thirty to fifty thousand women perished (Miesel, 2001). Suicides of young women due to unhappy love or dishonor were widespread in Europe, particularly in Central and Southeastern Europe, and occurred over many centuries, leading to the tragic end of numerous young girls. The case of Cicibela, a woman who lived in abject poverty but experienced a profound romantic love and ultimately met a tragic fate along with her love, represents a unique urban legend from the city of Split dating back a century. The examples in this research serve to describe the practice in Croatia of how part of the heritage, related to the unfortunate fate of women in the past, can be used to create new products in the development of the tourism industry in a destination.

Cases of Commercialization of Tragic Fates of Women for Tourism Purposes

The Witch Hunt in Zagreb: Death, Intrigue, and Fun in the Destination

The witch hunt in Zagreb, today the capital of Croatia, was part of the larger phenomenon of witch hunts that occurred throughout Europe over several centuries, from the 13th to the mid-18th century. However, the intensity of this historical phenomenon varied over time, with periods of reduced witch trials. Additionally, not all European countries or cities participated in witch hunt with the same intensity; some strongly persecuted witches, while others did not engage in such practices (Miesel, 2001). The peak of witch hunts took place in the 17th and 18th centuries. A turning point occurred in the late 15th century when Pope Innocent VIII issued the papal bull "Summis desiderantes affectibus" in 1484, laying the foundations for the systematic persecution of witches as heretics and by the publication of the theological treatise "Malleus Maleficarum" in 1486, which significantly intensified the treatment of those accused of witchcraft. It emphasized the belief that the fundamental sin of witches was the rejection of the Christian faith and the so-called a contract with the devil (Bayer, 1982), thereby connecting the concepts of magic and heresy. On the other hand, this book focused almost exclusively on women, blaming them for such deeds (Vukelić, 2009).

In Croatia, the trends mirrored those in Europe and the rules and procedures for the major witch hunts in the 17th and 18th centuries came from German lands. The court processes and number of trials aligned with the prevailing European practices for witch trials. Most of these trials were held in Zagreb. Between 1360 and 1758, a total of 248 individuals were accused of witchcraft. Of these, 233 (94%) were women, and 15 (6%) were men.

There are several examples of women and their fates recorded in archival documents. The first written evidence of witches in Zagreb dates to 1360 and refers to the trial of Alica and Margareta. They were acquitted due to the testimony of reputable witnesses vouching for their innocence. In 1475, one of the saddest stories from court archive is recorded. Jelena Rogačica was accused as a witch, and during torture confessed that she bathed her cousin Luka's wife in water infused with evil roots so that her husband would not beat and curse her, but instead love her.

The first witch burning took place on September 6, 1496, shortly after the publication of "Malleus Maleficarum". It was Ursula, the daughter of the shoemaker Luke, who was accused of using black magic to destroy her brother's marital happiness. In 1733, Margareta Kuljanka was burned because she was identified as a witch by a previously condemned witch. Margareta claimed that the witch's troupe had its own

hierarchy, including captains, sergeants, duchesses, and even a cook. She was one of the most severely tortured witches, which led her to accuse 28 other women of witchcraft, resulting in their deaths.

The last officially accused "witch" in Croatia was in 1757. Magda Logomer, also known as Herucina, hailed from the city of Križevci. Magda practiced herbal medicine. Empress Maria Theresa ordered her personal physician and advisor to examine Magda's case. Consequently, Magda was called to Vienna and was acquitted there.

In the collective memory of Croatia, the personal sufferings of 233 women and 15 men were primarily preserved through archived court documents and stories passed down in oral tradition. The memory of these events spread through folk ballads, as well as through artistic works, such as the highly popular and likely most-read Croatian novel cycle "Grička vještica" (The Witch from Grič) written by Marija Jurić Zagorka, and poetry, such as the celebrated collection of poems "Balade Petrice Kerempuha" by one of the greatest Croatian writers, Miroslav Krleža. The novel cycle "Grička vještica" served as a basis for dramatic performances by the popular acting troupe Histrioni, which are still performed today. Furthermore, "Grička vještica" was adapted into a comic strip by Croatia's greatest comic author, Andrija Maurović, which was serialized in the most widely read daily newspaper, Večernji list, from 1960 to 1962. Additionally, "Grička vještica" was also adapted into a rock opera, which premiered in Zagreb in 1979.

All of this has allowed the concept of witches who were persecuted in Zagreb to become associated with the heroine of the most popular novels and other literary and journalistic works, thus preserving their trace in the collective consciousness. The revitalization of memories of witches in Zagreb has also been aided by the interest in the occult witnessed in the world in recent decades. This is evident in the immense popularity of the literary and film series about Harry Potter, other children's books that delve into the world of magic, such as "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe," the fascination with the works of the English writer J.R. Tolkien, both in literature and film, the popularity of the fantasy genre in popular literature, films, and computer games, numerous educational publications for children and young adults that depict magic, witches, and wizards, and the tremendous success of television series like Game of Thrones, where magic plays one of key roles.

During the commercialization of these historical events for tourism purposes, the existing resources of the Upper Town (Gornji grad) of Zagreb were utilized, particularly the part that has preserved its original architecture dating back to the Middle Ages, as well as various locations associated with witch trials and other historical events and legends. Private tourist entrepreneurs formed a group called "Gornjogradske coprnice" (Witches of the Upper Town) and, like other independent storytellers, they lead very popular evening tours around the Upper Town that focus on legends, secrets, and stories about the fates and lives of witches in Zagreb. For these occasions, the tour guides dress up as witches, talk about beliefs related to witches, customs and practices of witches, the fates of some witches, and the city's customs at the time. During the tours, witches' practices of preparing potions are also staged as if real witches did it that way. Additionally, in Zagreb, various souvenirs related to witches are offered, and a local brewery has commercialized this theme with its beer brand "Grička vještica" (The Witch of Grič). The beer is so popular that even in the nearby town of Samobor, a favorite weekend destination for people from Zagreb, the local brewery has introduced beer brands with witch-related themes, called "Coprnica" (Witch) and "Elf." Even the Zagreb Zoo offers a nighttime tour of the zoo guided by a "coprnica" (witch).

Here arises an ethical problem concerning the commodification of the tragic fate of real women. These successful tourist products have been well-received in the market, partly because the entire narrative of all these tourist offerings is stylized in a way that easily recognizable concept of witches, which is intellectually and emotionally light, fun, and acceptable to many. What is characteristic of this commercialization of the tragic fate of women accused of being witches is that they are constantly referred to as members of a witches' cult. Probably, the large number of court proceedings and the common denominator of accusations for these victims contributed to the creation of such a generic concept of victims. As a result, these women today do not have individual characteristics, but are lumped together into the generic concept of victims as witches or "coprnice." This confirms the findings of other researchers regarding the practice of using the deaths of women in dark tourism, which distorts the real perception of their lives by legitimizing the cultural exploitation of deceased women, leading, among other things, to their sexualization, beautification, and erasure of their identities (Stone and Morton, 2022).

Only occasionally are some of the persecuted women given their individual names when narrating their individual cases. However, even then, those are only cases that are interesting enough to attract tourists. As most of these real women have lost their individual characteristics and names, the next step was to

lose the dignity of the tragedy of their lives in the modern tourist narrative. Thus, the focus of these tourist products is either on certain aspects of their tragic fate as elements of dark tourism or on the more entertaining presentation of magical practices that these women may have done, but more likely not at all, just like the women in other countries (Baroja, 1979).

Thus, in this case of commercialization, only those elements from the tragic lives of real women are selected that fit into a standardized, stylized, pleasant, and entertaining image that is adapted and acceptable to consumers of Zagreb tourism of different ages from various parts of the world. There is no portrayal of the horrifying reality of the sadistic torture procedures inflicted upon poor elderly women from lower social classes who appeared shabby and worn in their humble dresses. In their contemporary presentation, this tourist product presents women in sumptuous 18th-century gowns or black dresses and cloaks from the 19th century, sometimes with pointed hats, antique lanterns, magic wands, and the like. Attractive and beautiful, easily understandable to everyone, this is an excellent and entertaining story and design for tourists, resembling popular depictions of witches in Hollywood kids' movies. In this way, some original elements of local heritage, creative presentation, and general elements of global popular culture are blended in tourist products based on the representation of this segment of local heritage. However, in doing so, it becomes impossible to maintain a dignified memorial to the tragically and horrifically persecuted women whose lives are now commercialized and portrayed through a popular representation of practices they mostly never engaged in. Thus, another, perhaps final, veil of historical oblivion is drawn over the largest number of their personal individual destinies.

The Maiden's Leap of Zulejka Gušić (Đula) in Ogulin: Death due to Lost Love

The legend related to Đula's abyss is a part of a broader phenomenon of tragic female destinies celebrated in oral folklore, which some literary researchers refer to as the concept of the maiden's leap (Maglajlić, 1991). It involves a version of a legend about the suicide of a virtuous young girl who, in a desperate and hopeless situation, chooses death over a dishonorable end to her maidenhood.

This motif has been known since ancient Greece, where innocent young girls were pursued by the woodland deity Pan or Apollo and thrown from cliffs into chasms, transformed into birds, olive trees, or laurels, or they would disappear in some other mythological way. Such legends are present, for example, in Central Europe, where in Austria, Germany, and the Czech Republic, the pursuer is often a violent king or a demon in the alpine forests. In Southeastern Europe, during the Turkish rule, the aggressor was often a representative of a conquering religion, so besides preserving honor and personal dignity, there was also an element of choosing death to uphold religious ideals for the innocent girl as the victim. Later, true destinies of young girls intertwined with legends, elevating them above their sad and burdensome everyday lives to become ideals. Because of this, their sacrifice was remembered by their fellow villagers and celebrated in various ways as an example. Often, it was a song, or a story preserved in oral tradition that turned into a legend, and these places of tragic demise were symbolically marked by giving them appropriate names as a remembrance of those crimes and the tragic fates of virtuous young girls (Marijanović, 2022/2023).

The toponym "Đula's abyss" contains these symbolic meanings. In geographical terms, it refers to a hydrogeological natural landmark in the center of the town of Ogulin located in central Croatia. It represents the end of a river gorge with a massive opening where the river Dobra sinks into the ground under 40-meter-high and steep rocky cliffs. This is one of the entrances to a cave system with 16,396 meters of horizontal length, making it the second-longest such speleological system in Croatia (Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2021). In the traditional sense, Đula's abyss is a site associated with a legend from the beginning of the 16th century.

In the legend, as always, historical facts are mixed and likely altered to fit the emotions and needs of the people creating the legend. It is known that during the Turkish conquests, Ogulin found itself on the border area between free Croatian territory and occupied regions. In that region, the most powerful Croatian nobles, the Frankopans, built a system of numerous defensive fortresses during the 15th century to repel the Turkish raids aimed at conquest and plunder of the area. At the beginning of the 16th century, the commander of the fortress in Ogulin was a Croatian nobleman named Ivan Gušić, who had a daughter named Zulejka, affectionately called Đula. According to the customs of the time, the parents promised Zulejka to an older nobleman for marriage. However, a young, handsome, and brave captain named Milan Juračić arrived in the neighboring fortress of Tounj for service. He often visited the Gušić family in Ogulin, and Zulejka fell deeply in love with him, and he with her. Unfortunately, the Turkish attacks became more

frequent, and in one of those battles, Milan was killed. When Zulejka learned about this, overwhelmed with grief, she threw herself into a deep abyss. This tragic event deeply moved the locals of Ogulin, and they named the abyss after her, Đula's abyss. Over time, the legend was supplemented with some new details. For example, one rock at the entrance to the abyss resembles a figure of a man seemingly looking into the depth. According to the legend, it is Captain Milan searching for his lost Đula.

The memory of this tragic fate of a young girl enters the collective consciousness and is preserved primarily due to the local tradition that has been fixed on this specific toponym, Đula's abyss, and is renewed every time it is mentioned or visited. The legend was also strong in the past, as evidenced by the fact that on the first geographic map of Croatia, drawn in 1673 by the Jesuit Stjepan Glavač, Ogulin was called Đulin grad (Julia's Town) based on the legend of the girl Đula and the abyss above which the town was built (Novosel, 1973). The writer Milan Hanžek published the drama "Zulejka" in 1910, in which he dramatizes this legend about how the abyss got its name after Đula. However, there is also a dark aspect of the truth about Đula's abyss that keeps the site in the collective consciousness. It is a fact that throughout history, numerous individuals have jumped into the abyss, and even in recent times, about every decade, someone attempts or commits suicide by jumping into the abyss. Media reports have recorded three such cases in the last 15 years.

Today, Đula's abyss, with its legend, is fully integrated into the developed tourist offer of Ogulin, which includes not only visiting the abyss and historical monuments like the preserved Frankopan fortress but also speleological tourism in the caves accessed from Đula's abyss. Additionally, there are numerous activities such as fishing, cycling, hiking, skiing, and exploring the mountains Klek and Bjelolasica, the rivers Dobra and Mrežnica, and the lake Sabljaci. Ogulin is branded as the city of fairy tales due to the numerous legends from the region, such as those about witches and fairies on Klek, fairy water, and the dragon from Šmit's Lake. A significant part of Ogulin's tourist offer is also related to the life and work of Croatia's greatest children's writer, Ivana Brlić Mažuranić, known for her fairy tales that combine the world of fantasy with ancient Slavic beliefs. Due to all these aspects, the legend of the fatal love and destiny of the girl Đula easily became part of Ogulin's tourist offer. There is a tour called "Paths of Ogulin's Legends," where tourists are greeted in front of Đula's abyss by Zulejka/Đula, who narrates the legend of her love and fateful destiny. Other local entrepreneurs also use the legend in various ways, including as the name for their products offered to tourists, such as "Apartments Zulejka" near the lake.

Dujka Ljubica (Cicibela) in Split: Eternal Love Despite Everything

The third example in this work is an extremely local legend related to the city of Split on the Adriatic coast. The commercialization of this urban legend for tourist purposes has only just begun.

It is the life story of Dujka Ljubica, also known as Cicibela or simply Cicela, who was born in 1877 as the daughter of poor parents – Špiro Bašić, a baggage carrier, and Manda Drljače, a housewife. At the age of 18, she became an orphan. She was illiterate, uneducated, and without any skills for employment. She suffered from hunger and begged for food around taverns and stores. Due to poverty and her unkempt appearance, many mocked her, and she defended herself the only way she could – with loud curses. Cicibela had a knack for swearing better than anyone else, so soon in Split, the saying "You curse like Cicibela!" emerged, which locals used to say to their wives and daughters when they were being impolite.

Roko Ljubica, also known as Balauška, was a poor fisherman who lived in an abandoned boat in the old fishing port of Matejuška and fell in love with the poor Dujka. One day, Roko protected her from a merchant who insulted her for asking for bread, and then he fed her. From that moment, they were together. He invited her to come to his worn-out boat, but Cicibela wanted to maintain her maiden reputation as a respectable person. That's why they first got married on February 16, 1903 (shortly after the holiday of Valentine's Day, the patron saint of lovers) in the Church of St. Križ in Vela Varoš in Split. And so, they began their married life on abandoned boats. They struggled to survive from fishing because Roko didn't have his own boat to go out and catch more fish. Nevertheless, this impoverished couple was known to everyone in the city, and they enjoyed lively political discussions with friends at the nearby local tavern of Vujica Brajević in Matejuška. They were so vivid that even tourists in the early 1930s photographed them on their boat in the harbor.

Despite great poverty and hardships, including occasional loud arguments witnessed by the entire Matejuška, they loved each other deeply and went through all life's difficulties together, supporting each other.

The terrible winter of 1936 came, so, with the desire to save them from freezing on the boat, one of their acquaintances allowed them to use a shack at Antonova street 14. However, as Cicibela and Roko lived together, they also died together one night in the very cold winter of 1936/37, freezing to death. They were found huddled together on the dirty floor of the shack.

Even during their lifetime, Cicibela and Roko became legends of Split, and apart from the swearing saying, a story about them circulated for a long time, passed down to new generations. In the collective memory of Split and beyond, this story became a definitive legend when half a century after their tragic death in poverty, the Split-based writer and journalist Miljenko Smoje wrote the drama "Roko i Cicibela" (Roko and Cicibela). In their life story, Smoje depicted the poorest social stratum of old Split, which managed to create a life philosophy from its own poverty that could save them even in the toughest moments. Based on this text, a TV movie was made in 1978, featuring top actors, and the title song "Ča je život vengo fantazija" (What is the life if not a fantasy) was sung by one of the most respected Croatian singers, Oliver Dragojević. The song encapsulated the life philosophy of the people of Split and remains a hit to this day. The drama is performed during the summer in Split and neighboring places along the coast and islands.

The greatest symbols of Split as a tourist destination have always been the ancient gem of Roman architecture, Diocletian's Palace, as well as a series of other Roman and Romanesque Christian monuments in the city itself or its immediate surroundings, along with its interesting geographical position from the Marjan forest park, the sea bays on both sides of the peninsula and the islands in front of Split, to the Mosor and Kozjak hills rising in the hinterland of the city. In Split, which is the administrative center of Dalmatia and has been a significant transit hub since ancient times, some niche forms of tourism are now developing more strongly, including the music festival Ultra and party tourism. These events attract tens of thousands of younger and middle-aged tourists to the city every year. With this new development of tourism products, the legend has also begun to be commercialized.

First, in 2008, the city of Split renovated the old fishing port of Matejuška. In it, tribute was paid to 20 old, well-known Split families, and their surnames were carved into stone slabs that paved the approach to the harbor. A special honor was given to the memory of Cicibela and Roko. Their names are carved together on one stone slab. Next to their slab, another one was placed with verses from another popular love song by the greatest Split operetta composer, Ivo Tijardović, which celebrates pure love. The legend of their love came to life on internet portals as well. A nearby restaurant in Matejuška was named Cicibela, and young tourists now leave locked padlocks on the fence near the stone slabs with the names of Cicibela and Roko, hoping that their love will be as strong as that of Cicibela and Roko.

Conclusion

The fact is that the tragic destinies of unfortunate women from the past left a profound impression on their contemporaries. For various reasons, some of which are historical, religious, national, emotional, and others, these individuals became so meaningful to their communities that their memory was preserved over long periods of time. Subsequent generations also kept their memory alive in their collective consciousness through various forms of expression and communication (stories, legends, performances, poetry, songs, etc.), which collectively form the heritage of a community. This study explored examples of tragic destinies of women within the framework of the witch hunt phenomenon in Croatia, suicides of girls due to unrequited love, and tragic fates due to poverty, which transitioned from stories to legends and became part of the heritage of the entire nation.

In contemporary times, as part of the cultural heritage of a destination, the unfortunate fates of these women have been commercialized and turned into tourist products that can enhance the regular tourist offerings of the places where these women once lived. However, it has been observed that some of these commercializations, for instance, those related to presenting the destinies of women who were condemned as witches, raise certain ethical questions. Their individual identities as victims are lost in the collective notion of witches, and their original suffering and lives are often distorted or not portrayed at all to facilitate the easier commercialization of the tourist product, catering to the needs, desires, and expectations of today's globalized tourists who seek to be entertained while in search of an authentic experience.

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Storytelling: A connection Between Visitors and Destination

Maja Jakobović, Ec.S. Požega-Slavonia County Tourist Board, Croatia; e-mail: mjakobovic@gmail.com

Ivana Radić, PhD, Požega-Slavonia County Police Administration, Croatia; e-mail: iradic0@gmail.com

Snježana Boranić Živoder, PhD, Institute for Tourism, Croatia; e-mail: snjezana.boranic@iztg.hr

Abstract

The purpose of this research was to identify the possibilities of using the communication skill of storytelling, based on elements of cultural heritage, with an aim of marketing a destination. Respecting the essential elements of storytelling: perspective, narrative, interactivity and medium, the so far unexplored topic of life and work of Countess Greta Turković was investigated and it was confirmed that it contains sufficient elements for successful storytelling. A qualitative approach to data collection was applied, which included a discussion of a focus group formed by representatives of the stakeholders of tourism offer of the Kutjevo vine-growing region who are directly involved in tourism of the observed destination. The results cannot be generalized, given the qualitative nature of the research. In order to enable the generalization of the findings, future research should include quantitative measures that could also include potential visitors to the destination in the sample. This paper is a useful source of information for the stakeholders in Kutjevo vine-growing region tourism offer, but also of other destinations. It expands knowledge in the field of communication sciences by defining the possibility of creating and conveying a story about a historical figure of a region, building identity and arousing emotions, thus creating connections between visitors and a destination.

Keywords: storytelling; cultural heritage; destination; Countess Greta Turković; Ampelographic atlas

Introduction

Tourism, as an economic activity, with the exception of several years of economic, political or health crises, has recorded continuous growth rates since the 1950s. The fact that in 1950, 25 million international tourists were recorded, and in the record-setting 2019 year, this number increased to 1.5 billion, confirms the upward trend. The COVID-19 pandemic led to a big drop in 2020 when only 407 million tourist arrivals were recorded, but recovery soon followed and as soon as 2022 as much as 963 million tourist arrivals were recorded (UNWTO, 2023). Social and technological development enables travel to an increasing number of people, thus further growth of tourist movements can be expected in the future on a global level.

In the circumstances of dynamic growth, an increasing number of destinations are trying to position themselves on the target market, while on the other hand, consumers or target groups are overwhelmed by an increasing amount of information. In this wealth of information, destinations are looking for the best ways to present their offer to the target group through authenticity, uniqueness and other attributes that allows them to stand out from the crowd.

Today, a destination's attractiveness is understood much more broadly than just its physical features, i.e. cultural and natural resources. Tourists are increasingly looking for unique experiences that go beyond the mere consumption of products or services (Reitsamer, Brunner-Sperdin and Stokburger-Sauer, 2016). The attractiveness of destinations is increasingly viewed through memorable tourist experiences. However, experience is a subjective category and it can be affected by numerous intangible elements that, for example, relate to intangible cultural heritage, hospitality, atmosphere, etc. The attractiveness of a destination can be experienced, among other things, through the people who marked it, authentic food, unique nature, customs, historical events and numerous other elements. Tourists are increasingly looking for authentic experiences, and, in order to best respond to this type of demand, destinations very often utilise storytelling as a marketing tool (Clara and Barbosa, 2021).

In the first part of the 20th century, the area of today's Kutjevo vine-growing region and beyond was managed by the Turković family (Potrebica, 1982; Šatović, 1969; Štiglic, 1982; Turković, 1939). A prominent member of that aristocratic family is an academic artist Countess Greta Turković, whose field of work in-

cluded sculpture, painting, design and applied art. Countess Greta was primarily a sculptor, but she made an extremely significant contribution to painting by working on scientific illustration themes. Winemaking in the Kutjevo vine-growing region has a long history reaching back as far as 1232, and during the work of Countess Greta, through several years of systematic work, she obtained a collection of 90 paintings of grapes, 60 of which were printed in Ampelographic Atlas. It is an extremely important scientific work containing descriptions of grape varieties by Count Zdenko Turković, and scientific and artistic illustrations were done by Countess Greta Turković. For this work, the Turković spouses received the international recognition of Laureate and the diploma of the Office international de la Vigne et du Vin¹ in Paris (Vranić, 1996), and the Atlas is now a required reading at all European faculties of agriculture.

In Ampelographic Atlas, the description and paintings emphasize the engineering approach, both through the text and through the paintings, with an emphasis on precision and varietal recognition with all the essential morphological characteristics of a single grape variety. The Turković family and Countess Greta as a prominent artist marked an important period in the history of Kutjevo region, not only with great economic progress, but also in terms of heritage and legacy. Kutjevo vine-growing region, as an already recognized destination, requires new forms of marketing communication, where storytelling based on a historical figure represents a certain potential.

Storytelling and wine tourism

According to Čerepink (2011), people are exposed to an extremely large amount of information every day, which makes it difficult to find topics that will interest them and attract their attention. For this reason, a large part of everyday messages and topics do not stimulate interest or consumers pay minimal attention to them and such messages and topics go unnoticed (Mikulandra Volic, Krajnovic and Bosna, 2017). Therefore, the big question is how to stimulate interest, convey information and maintain the interest of modern consumers. One of the methods used in modern marketing is storytelling. Salmon (2010) defines storytelling as a skill of telling stories that encourages different uses of narrative, from oral storytelling to storytelling using digital communication channels. This skill uses virtual immersion in a multisensory and staged environment, thus encouraging interactivity and the listener's imagination. "Storytelling traditionally belongs to the domain of culture and art, but in the world of leisure and tourism it is increasingly used for creating an interesting, emotional experience" (Calvi and Hover, 2021:630).

Since storytelling uses the thoughts and emotional connections that people already possess, it is considered one of the more effective tools in communication sciences. Stories convey information and knowledge, which are simultaneously used for motivational and inspirational purposes (Delgado-Ballester and Fernández-Sabiote, 2016). In order to keep up with the times and consumer habits, destinations should consider utilising storytelling communicated via digital channels in their marketing strategies. This enables a continuous and uniform communication between different stakeholders and the target audience (Clara and Barbosa, 2021). Traveling has proven to contain an emotional dimension, and that dimension should be nurtured by stories based on local culture, tradition, and history of a region in the form of storytelling (Clara and Barbosa, 2021). Storytelling, in the context of destination marketing, should convey a message about the important attributes of a destination, including cognitive, affective and conative dimensions (Youssef *et al.*, 2019).

Storytelling is increasingly used in tourism promotion, especially through the emergence and use of new technologies. Stories arouse emotions in people, take them back to the past and stimulate imagination. Stories about tourist destinations should increase their competitive advantage and raise the meaningfulness of tourists' experience (Mossberg, 2008). Storytelling has four main elements: perspective, narrative, interactivity and medium, which are manifested in communicating the content and meaning of a story, defining the time and space in a scenario, and a manner in which a story is conveyed from a storyteller to a listener/consumer (Lugmayer, Sutinen, Suhonen, Sedano, Hlavacs and Montero, 2017).

Wine tourism represents a complex tourism product that goes beyond visiting a vine-growing region or a winery for a simple purpose of tasting or purchasing wine (Santos *et al.*, 2022a). In addition to enriching tourism product of a destination, wine tourism in itself motivates and initiates travels and is closely related to hedonism. Tourists for whom wine tourism is the main motive are particularly interested in winemakers' stories about production, tradition, environment, local specifics, history, secrets, curiosities and events

¹ The International Organization of Vine and Wine founded in 1924 by an intergovernmental agreement between Spain, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Luxembourg and Tunisia, which, among other tasks, works to protect the origin, purity and authenticity of wine production and to promote legislation, standardize analytical methods and protect consumers.

that are not available through other sources. Tourists who are motivated by wine value not only the wine, but also all the moments of interaction with the owners and winemakers and what they hear and experience from them. Through these experiences, they learn about traditions and culture of a region they visited. Brochado, Lupu and Stoleriu (2019) highlighted three production levels that distinguish this product from other tourism products: grape growing, wine production and tertiary services that include services, accommodation and hospitality. They also point out that most research on sensory dimensions is focused on one or two senses that are used in the experiences of visiting wineries, wine roads or wine events – sight and taste, but that wine tourism is an experience that stimulates all five human senses. Therefore, storytelling is extremely important in the presentation of wine tourism since it can add elements that stimulate imagination and create memorable experiences. "Wine, through storytelling as a cultural product, has the role of a catalyst between culture, history and the countryside" (Santos *et al.*, 2022b:238).

Although the topic of storytelling has attracted the attention of scientific and professional community in recent years, this topic is still relatively under-researched (Youssef, Leicht and Morongiu, 2018), especially in the field of wine tourism. Due to the lack of conducted research on the possibility of using storytelling in wine tourism marketing, the need for further research on this topic was detected. Accordingly, the aim of this paper is, while respecting the essential elements of storytelling: perspective, narrative, interactivity and medium (Lugmayr, *et al.*, 2017), to answer the research question: Do life and work of Countess Greta Turković contain sufficient elements for successful storytelling?

Methodology

For research purposes, a focus group of participants who have certain common characteristics important for the research subject was formed based on literature on qualitative research (Krueger and Casey, 2015). The representatives of stakeholders in the tourism offer of Kutjevo vine-growing region were chosen because they are directly involved in the tourism of the observed destination, and simultaneously possess knowledge on the connection between the Turković family and the observed area and understand the importance of passing on the cultural heritage through stories. When selecting the eight focus group participants, particular attention was paid to their many years of professional experience and the representation of individuals with different offer such as winemakers, restaurateurs, and tourism public stakeholders in the field of potential implementation of storytelling. The criterion of gender structure of the sample in relation to the target group is also met. Such selection of participants achieved a homogeneous structure of the sample in terms of common interest in the research subject, while at the same time the participants were chosen from different stakeholders of the destination's offer, which enabled discussion.

The focus group was conducted using a semi-structured interview, where the interviewees discussed the essential elements of storytelling in the context of analysing and connecting a real historical figure with the possibilities of its interpretation. The focus group was conducted in May 2023.

The protocol for the semi-structured interview was structured through five groups of questions based on a manual for applied research (Krueger and Casey, 2015). The questions covered the basic components of storytelling grouped into four elements: perspective, narrative, interactivity and medium according to Lugmayer *et al.* (2017). Furthermore, when creating the questions, the process that a consumer of storytelling goes through, i.e. a consumer's cognitive, affective and conative dimension of attitudes in relation to the story, was addressed (Youssef *et al.*, 2019). Before the start of the conversation, the participants were informed that the discussion would be recorded, to which they verbally agreed, and that the protection of their identity would be fully respected. They were also informed that participation in the research is voluntary and that they can withdraw their consent at any time, and that the collected data will be used for the purposes of drafting a scientific paper. The 60-minute discussion based on the aforementioned protocol for a semi-structured interview was facilitated by two moderators and a professor of the Croatian language, thus enabling a balanced participation in the discussion.

Data from audio transcripts were coded and compared using constant comparative analysis using the grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967/2006). The collected data were analysed on a descriptive level.

Results and Discussion

The first part of the focus group discussion during the research was related to the opening of the conversation through the presentation of the role of the participants in the offer of the destination, i.e. the observed area. The participants presented what they do in terms of business, what their role in the busi-

ness entity they represent is and what they offer to a consumer/guest. Five representatives of wineries, one representative of a catering facility and two representatives of public stakeholders, i.e. tourist boards, participated, one of whom is also a representative of a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe.

The next set of introductory questions began with a question regarding the importance of communication, verbal and/or non-verbal, with a consumer/guest in the form of hospitality and caring for a consumer/guest. The aim was to get an explanation of the importance of communication in relation to consumer/guest satisfaction. The participants agreed that communication with a consumer/guest is extremely important, emphasizing the differences in the approach to communication depending on the type of a business entity and its size. Thus, it was stated that smaller entities such as small wineries communicate directly with almost every consumer.

"Those of us who work in smaller wineries... we literally know every guest, our customer. So we have a kind of a more friendly relationship with our customers." One of the participants emphasized the importance of non-verbal communication in correlation with consumer/guest satisfaction. "Certainly, no scowling, angry person will attract someone and hold their attention for a long time..." Through the conversation, we concluded that it is impossible not to communicate and that silence is a form of communication, but also that successful non-verbal communication encourages verbal communication. "If non-verbal communication is good, then verbal communication offers more opportunities."

In addition to communication with a consumer/guest, an important element for their satisfaction is a good product, the first impression they get, and post-sales communication, on which the research participants displayed positive attitudes. They particularly emphasized the importance of the environment, ambience, aesthetics, the atmosphere that a consumer/guest experiences, the impression of a person they are in contact with and that person's mood.

The introductory questions were concluded with a discussion on what is important for a modern consumer/guest to take with them (whether tangible or intangible) after consuming a product/service.

The participants agreed that the visual attribute of the offer is extremely important, which confirmed the cognitive dimension of the conceptual framework of destination storytelling according to Youssef *et al.* (2019). Citing examples from practice, they pointed out that the visual component of the offer brings about certain effects such as visibility, attention, interest, impression and experience as a guest's reaction to consumption, which simultaneously encourages them to repeat consumption and return.

The third set of questions began with a conversation about the importance of creating a different, special feeling for a consumer/guest compared to other business entities with a similar offer in the near or far surroundings. In doing so, the moderators pointed out that they should compare themselves with other business entities similar to themselves outside the observed destination. Since consumers/guests come to similar areas with the intention of consuming similar products/services, one of the participants mentioned the differentiation through the introduction of a new and unique product of a wine vault in a cellar, as well as a special offer of a tour of the vineyards in a carriage with a tasting of wine produced from grapes from the corresponding localities. This idea arose from relations with business partners, and was subsequently commercialized.

"Well, we all have more or less similar or the same products. Now, it's up to each of us to find that niche that will make us special and that will attract some of our clientele..." Another participant pointed out the general saturation with information and products and that one of the important factors is to find a way to stand out. The participant cited developing a story related to a product or service from the offer as a good method for standing out. *"It can be something really simple, we can create a story around something simple or something important... what matters is to have that point to build the story around."* Expressing their opinions, the participants agreed that the attributes of uniqueness and authenticity are the key content of the offer, which confirmed the affective dimension of the conceptual framework of destination storytelling according to Youssef *et al.* (2019). By giving practical examples, they also confirmed how the components of uniqueness and authenticity of the offer have an effect of excitement on a consumer/guest.

During further discussion, the participants presented their knowledge about the activities of the Turković family and their opinions about their significance for the Kutjevo vine-growing region. Among other things, they stated that the role of the Turković family, from the time they arrived in the area of today's Kutjevo vine-growing region until the end of World War II, was exceptional. This was supported by the fact that the Turković family replanted vineyards after a disease caused by grape phylloxera pest, which destroyed almost all vines in Europe in the second half of the 19th century. They also stated that they

have uplifted this entire region economically and socially. The focus group participants confirmed that they were familiar with the work of the Turković family by presenting several details. For example, the inhabitants of the observed area were engaged in viticulture and agriculture even before the arrival of the Turković family, but the family systematized the natural wealth of the area, i.e. they regulated property and legal relations and introduced a forerunner of today's cadastral census and applied statistical monitoring of crops and yields. All focus group participants agreed that the Turković family had visionary undertakings and laid the foundations for serious winemaking in the area.

As representatives of the destination's offer, the focus group participants stated that they were all aware of the fact that Zdenko and Greta Turković created Ampelographic Atlas containing authentic paintings of all existing grape varieties in today's Kutjevo vine-growing region. They agreed that these depictions are the most important contribution of Countess Greta Turković to the region.

Discussing the associations they have with the concept of Countess Greta Turković, the focus group participants stated that she was trained as a sculptor and painter as one of the first women attending the Royal Academy of Arts and Crafts in Zagreb, today's Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb. Briefly discussing the position of women at that time, they pointed out that she left a valuable legacy with her approach to art and her opus.

Regarding the scope of Countess Greta's activities, the participants stated that, in addition to Ampelographic Atlas, she left a significant imprint at the international level in the field of pomology and phytopharmacology in the form of pictorial depictions, with which she contributed to the varietal recognition of apples and medicinal herbs.

Presenting segments from her life and work, the participants pointed to certain content, meaning and story in which we recognize the element of perspective defined by Lugmayer *et al.* (2017) as one of the four main elements of storytelling.

To define the actual content that is present in the story of Countess Greta, the focus group participants were asked a question on the possible role of Ampelographic Atlas as an element of recognition of the destination. A discussion followed that highlighted the general conclusion on the need for a more significant marketing approach to the topic and at the same time a concrete definition of a possible way of making the Atlas available to a wider audience.

"...its own place where it is displayed so that it can be seen and that people can come and browse through it... at least a replica."

What has been said can be interpreted as opening a space for a modern way of presenting heritage using interactive digital aids, which includes digitizing the Atlas and thus making it available to a wider audience, while at the same time avoiding the threat of damaging it. The digitized Atlas should be accompanied by the story of the international award of the *Diploma d'Honneur de l'Office International dala Vigne et du Vin*, received in 1957 in Paris, as well as the fact that even today the Atlas is mandatory literature at all European faculties of agriculture.

By introducing the author of the Atlas, Greta, and her work as a story scenario, in the time and space where she created, we come to the second of the four main elements of storytelling, i.e. narrative (Lugmayer *et al.*, 2017).

The key questions were opened by asking about the application of communication by the offer stakeholders with a consumer/guest on the topic of the Turković family or Greta and the reaction it invokes. Based on the answers received, it is clear that the respondents found different links between their offer and the topics of the Turković family, i.e. Countess Greta. *"We have a history written through barrels in the basement... one barrel depicts the Turković family and it contain a carving of Greta painting."* *"I mention the Turković family... I have a link because our great-grandfather worked for them. I have my own way of telling it, people are quite interested in it."* The participants who are in contact with a consumer/guest in wine tasting rooms point out the following regarding the story of the Turković family and Greta: *"...the elderly may be interested in the story, but the youth not so much."*

The public sector representative expressed the opinion that the topic will be more prominent among visitors after the realization of the conceptual project of Kuća Graševine (in English: The House of Welschriesling) and the accompanying Greta's Park. Furthermore, one of the private sector representatives stated that in the past they had in their offer a small area dedicated to displaying illustrations from Ampelographic Atlas and other elements from the Turković family period, such as layouts of the contemporary vineyards. Based on this, they have recently included in their offer tastings that start in that area.

Discussing the existence of products/services that carry a connotation or a name related to the Turković family and their opinion on the usefulness of this, the focus group participants listed much fewer existing examples in their own business than in the case of the aforementioned communication with a consumer/guest. Thus, they state that some labels of current wines on the market have Greta's illustrations of grape varieties, that some accommodation facilities use the same illustrations for interior design, and that some sales areas and tasting rooms use Greta's paintings of grapes to present their offer. In addition to the above, illustrations from Ampelographic Atlas were included in a monograph designed by one of local self-government units in the Kutjevo vine-growing region.

In the absence of an interesting and well-rounded story about Greta for the younger population of visitors, who do not seem sufficiently interested in the oral story, the idea of a digitized version that would be sufficiently individualized for each representative of the offer arises.

Focus group participants, when expressing their opinions regarding communication with a consumer/guest through a story or through a product/service related to the Turković family and Countess Greta, clearly describe an already developed interaction based on the modification of the story on the topic in question. In comparison to oral communication, they state to a lesser extent the existence of physical attributes of communication, such as paintings or pictures for interior decoration and product packaging. At the same time, they expressed an interest in communicating with a consumer/guest via digital communication channels with the use of individualized digital content.

In the expressed interaction between the stakeholders of the offer and consumers through the modification of the story and the interest in expanding the existing communication channels, we recognize the remaining two elements of storytelling, interactivity and medium (Lugmayer *et al.*, 2017). Following the confirmed communication and interaction between the stakeholders of the offer and consumers on the subject of life and work of Countess Greta, the participants confirmed hospitality as a key attribute of the offer that results in the final choice and satisfaction with a product/service. This confirms the conative dimension of the conceptual framework of destination storytelling according to Youssef *et al.* (2019).

Additional space for the use of Greta Turković's opus in the offer of their products and services is perceived by the participants in the form of concrete examples such as the special series of wines currently on the market named Graševina Vinkomir (Vinkomir Welschriesling), as a connotation of Vinkomir's special wine-growing position related to the Turković family. *"Specifically, I'm looking at Vinkomir again and you scan the code, and you have virtual reality and when you turn it, you see Greta painting."*

In the further discussion, it was concluded that digital communication channels are the basis on which further improvements of communication with a consumer/guest should be based.

Another focus group participant noted that a contemporary winery where they work uses cultural and historical heritage in terms of architecture, but failed to use Greta's achievements when designing the space and label. Adopting the communicated facts, they recognized missed opportunities and listed several possible applications. *"Surely there is space, with a restaurant serving dishes of various names, various stories... some kind of interactive maps... virtual reality."*

Building on the topic of insufficient use of Ampelographic Atlas as a promotional material of the area, the respondents gave an example of a recent visit of 35 oenology students from Asti region in Italy. Namely, due to the lack of standardized communication with guests that introduces them to the important facts about the area, they are not sure whether students, when visiting any winery in the Kutjevo vine-growing region, are aware of the fact that they are in the area where the famous Ampelographic Atlas was created, which, as was already stated, is an integral part of mandatory literature at all European faculties of agriculture.

The closing questions aimed at summarizing everything that was said and highlighting what is most important for successfully communicating the work and significance of Greta Turković's achievements. Thus, as the most important issue, it was stated that the Turković family period needs to be given greater importance in any interpretation of the history of the Kutjevo vine-growing region, recognizing them as the founders of modern and contemporary agriculture in the subject area. At the same time, it is necessary to highlight the importance of Ampelographic Atlas and the work of its authors.

After the initial thoughts of a part of the participants on the implementation of storytelling requiring a specific thematic infrastructure, a consensus was reached that the implementation of storytelling for individual stakeholders of the offer depends on them. The participants also agreed that they needed initial standardized digital materials in order to facilitate storytelling of life and opus of Greta Turković to a

consumer/guest in a desired way. For this purpose, it is necessary to provide modern tools such as digital guides and audio-visual content both in the public space and in the private sector.

In the continuation of the final part of the discussion, the participants unanimously agreed that the Turković family and the work of Greta Turković can contribute to raising the recognition of Požega-Slavonia County as a vine-growing region and building a unique image of the area. This claim is additionally strengthened by the fact that other historical figures of the region are also connected to other destinations, while in the case of the Turković family and their achievements it is possible to find elements unique solely to the Kutjevo area. They emphasized that the synergy of all stakeholders is necessary in this realization, and that the foundation of the story should be excellence. We find excellence as the basis for storytelling in the work and legacy of Zdenko and Greta Turković, with an emphasis on internationally significant Ampelographic Atlas and Greta's contribution to it.

The participants agreed that it would be useful for their future business to have a prepared story – storytelling on the topic of Greta Turković, adapted for each business entity depending on its offer.

Conclusion

Excellence, a woman, the first Croatian designer who worked outside the borders of Croatia at the beginning of the 20th century and other key elements from life and work of Greta Turković offer the possibility of creating a unique story. Storytelling as a marketing tool uses the communication of unique stories to convey information, ideas and emotions. Namely, utilising this way of storytelling, consumers/guests better understand the information presented, remember the message that is being conveyed to them more easily, identify with the characters of the story, and based on that make further decisions regarding a product or a service.

The results of the conducted qualitative research confirm that life and work of Countess Greta Turković, as one of the prominent members of the nobility from the Kutjevo vine-growing region, contains sufficient elements for successful storytelling. Namely, through the discussion of the focus group, the essential elements of storytelling were recognized, namely perspective, narrative, interactivity and medium, thus answering the research question in the affirmative. The content and meaning of the story were identified, the scenario was set in time and space, and the interaction of stakeholders was recognized with the possibility of expanding communication channels. At the same time, three dimensions of the conceptual framework of destination storytelling according to Youssef *et al.* (2019) were confirmed that lead from initial choice to subsequent loyalty. The cognitive dimension explains the thoughts and beliefs of a consumer/guest, the affective dimension explains their feelings and emotions, and the conative dimension conditions future actions in relation to the past.

Since the importance of storytelling for creating lasting heritage is known, storytelling has emerged as a tool that can be used to shape innovative tourism content that can create a complete user experience. As Mossberg (2008) points out, in the development of any tourist product, the attitudes, feelings and behaviour of consumers should be considered, and it is necessary to understand their desire for fantasies, dreams and authentic experiences.

The results of this research cannot be generalized due to its qualitative nature, but they open the possibility for quantitative research and further analysis and elaboration on the topic of the application of storytelling in heritage tourism. This paper expands knowledge in the field of communication sciences by defining the possibility of creating and conveying a story about a historical figure of a given region, thus building identity and arousing emotions, which creates connections between guests and a destination.

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Women and About Women from Tourist Travel Books (Until the First World War)

Jasenka Kranjčević, Assoc. Prof. PhD., Institute for Tourism, Croatia; e-mail: jasenka.kranjcevic@iztg.hr

Nora Mustać, PhD, Institute for Tourism, Croatia; e-mail: nora.mustac@iztg.hr

Abstract

The position of women in travelogues is a poorly addressed topic in scientific literature in general, and especially from the period of the beginning of the development of modern tourism. This scientific paper provides the basis for further research on the topic of women in travelogues. The main aim of the research was to present the position and role of women through the analysis of travelogues from the middle of the 19th to the end of the 20th century. In addition to the prism of a woman's perspective, the paper also deals with discourse analysis in travelogues written by men, which emphasize and describe the representation of women in society. Women who wrote travelogues were mostly women from high and middle-high society due to the financial means and opportunities to travel. However, they depicted women from all levels of society in the places they visited. Furthermore, the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century in Croatia was the time of the awakening of national consciousness, but also the position and role of women in society. The social movement through process of modernisation also plays an important role in history of tourism.

Keywords: women in tourism, women in tourism promotion, travelogues, history of tourism, Croatia

Introduction

Numerous organizations from the field of tourism are dealing with gender equality topics today. The UN-WTO document from 2023 named *The Sustainable Development Goals Report – Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls* is one of the prominent documents with the goal of improving women's position in tourism. However, the question of the role of women in tourism, as well as in other industries, has changed throughout history. Sport events as part of tourism had great role in achieving gender equality through women higher participation, as well as safeguarding policies (UNWTO, 2023).

Although the topic of gender equality at the end of 20th and beginning of 21st century in tourism is relatively a common topic, there is a lack of historical research about position and role of women in development of tourism by individual time periods at the level of each state. In this way, comparative analysis between countries, but also between different time periods, would be possible. Comparative analysis would make easier to follow changes - progress or regression in relation to an observed period.

This paper aims to show the position of women through the time period up to the First World War from different sources. Due to the time lag and availability of materials, an important research source are tourist travel guides as well as other promotional tourism materials which were presented in exhibition *"Women in the Promotion of Tourism in Croatia"* like postcards, posters, guides, travelogues and films on which women are shown. In order to take as objective as possible on the position and role of women in tourism, it is indispensable to analyse and valorise domestic and foreign authors of tourist travel books, especially to emphasize the difference how women wrote about women and how men wrote about women.

Furthermore, travelogues are most often analysed from the aspect of literature, but they are neglected as a source for historical research on tourism and on the position and role of women in history of tourism. This paper tends to use the travelogues as main resource for researching position of women in society until First World War. As a case study, the area of the Croatian side of the Adriatic was chosen, considering that coastal part of Croatia has had an active and continuous modern tourist activity since the middle of the 19th century. To research the position and role of women, domestic and international travel books in different languages written by authors from different countries - Croatia, Ottoman Empire, Italy, Austria, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, America and Czechia - were researched.

In Croatian literature, as well as in world literature in general, travelogues are most often researched from the aspect of literature (Krlježa, 1939). More precisely, travelogues or travel books are researched as liter-

any genre while research from the aspect of the history of tourism or the position and role of women in the promotion of tourism is ignored (Duda, 1998). An additional incentive for processing this topic is the fact that even today in numerous travel magazines and travel books the woman is presented as an object that should attract tourists. These images usually contain a model in the foreground behind which some attraction, national monument, cultural heritage or natural wealth is shown. Such a presentation has nothing to do with travel, nor a description of the country to be visited (Kaplan, 2023).

Research methodology is based on historiographical approach and scope of research include travelogues, travel books and other promotional materials in tourism like postcards and brochures. The research was conducted using general scientific methods of cognition: analysis of published literature, synthesis, specification, generalization, abstraction, deduction and formalization. Through the research of literary tourism materials, the temporal approach and changes in the position and role of women in society on the Croatian Adriatic were identified. The depiction of the position and role of women in society served tourism promotion, but also social distinctiveness and identity. Through national depictions, a comparative analysis of the position and role of women was carried out, and it can be used for temporal changes in tourist representative areas with similar characteristics.

Women are involved in development and in the promotion of tourism since the beginning of modern tourism in Croatia, but their social position vary over time (Andrić-Kauzlarić, 1971). Tourism was promoted by foreigners as well as local women residents. In order to determine the position and role of women in the promotion of Croatian tourism, domestic and international travel books, tourist guides, prospectuses, posters, postcards and magazines about Croatia were used. Considering the time gap, the research is mostly based on secondary sources, and the analytical and interpretative method was used to answer the research questions.

Historical overview

Observing the history of tourism in all segments, not only the destination but also the entire country, it is evident that there is a lack of historical research on the position and role of women in the promotion of tourism or in tourism marketing. The above is particularly visible in small European countries such as Croatia, which has a tradition of modern tourism for more than one hundred and fifty years. After the connection of Rijeka and Trieste with the railways of Europe in 1873, the eastern coast of the Adriatic became more and more accessible and a favourite destination for researchers and tourists. Direct information about today's Croatian Adriatic was transmitted to the public through the printed media of the time - travel books, guides, postcards, magazines, and newspapers. Given that the end of the 19th century was marked by the awakening of national consciousness and women's rights, the largest part of the paper refers to articles and travelogues about the Croatian part of the Adriatic, which are written by women or describe their position (Andrić-Kauzlarić, 1971).

Given that travel attracts tourists from different countries with different speaking areas, future tourists can learn about certain destinations through travelogues translated into their native languages. The language barrier is an important factor that nowadays can be easily overcome with the help of modern technology. However, once the language barrier and translation into local languages was an important factor in approaching future visitors. Following the above, Pederin (1991) collected and analysed Austrian and German travelogues related to the Croatian Adriatic. Kostić (2006) collected and analysed English travelogues of the city of Rijeka and its surroundings. Furthermore, when Rijeka was the European City of Culture in 2022 translated segments of Hungarian travelogues were published (Kiss and Čurković-Major, 2020) and which were used in the research of this topic. Furthermore, it should be emphasized that numerous journeys of the ruler are recorded through diaries. Diaries today represent an important source for researching the history of tourism, culture and political situations. Thus, Krmpotić (2002) translated the travels of Emperor Francis I in Croatia in 1818.

On the covers of numerous tourist guides before WWI, women were shown on the covers, such as for: Baška on the island of Krk, Opatija and Stubičke Toplice. Numerous domestic and international magazines have published articles on destinations that attract with their natural and cultural riches. In this way, they introduced readers to the destination and encouraged them to visit it. Among the Croatian magazines that contain numerous contributions about travels stands out *Danica Ilirska*, published since 1835, and *Hrvatski planinar*, published since 1898 to the present day. Furthermore, the Austro-Hungarian magazines that deal with the topic of tourism and how to improve tourism in today's area of Croatia are: *Österreichische Badezeitung - Organ für die Interessen der europäischen Kurorte und des Kurpublikums*, published in Vienna

from 1872 to 1886; *Der Fremdenverkehr*, from 1908; bilingual magazine *Deutsch-Englischer-Reise-Courier*, from 1904; *Moderne illustrierte Zeitung für Reise und Sport*, from 1909; *Adria* from 1908 to 1914, published in Vienna, Graz, Trieste and Klagenfurt. Some health resorts publish their own magazines, and by publishing the names and surnames of guests (*Curliste*), they were a kind of advertisement and help in the statistical processing of arrival data. Thus, Opatija published the magazine *Kur- und Bade-Zeitung der österreichischen Riviera*, published from 1906 to 1914.

Travelogues can be analysed from a literary and cultural aspect. Analysing travelogues from a literary aspect, they can be classified into individual time periods from antiquity through the Renaissance and Baroque to modern times, and their valorisation as a literary work also requires a special approach. Ottoman travel writer Evliya Çelebi¹ from the Ottoman Empire in his travelogue in the middle of the 17th century travelled through Dalmatia and visited Split and noticed beautiful women in Dalmatia. Furthermore, the German writer Hermann Bahr in his book "*Dalmatian Travels*" from 1908 also mentions the beauty of the women of Split and the surroundings of Dubrovnik. Adolfo Veber Tkalčević, Croat by origin, in his travel book "*Road to Constantinople*" from 1886 presents the opportunities, customs, and way of life of women in Turkey. In the said travelogue, he states that women are mostly in the role of beggars asking for alms. Therefore, based on these claims, it can be concluded that women are forced to ask for alms if they have no family or protection.

Tourism - an opportunity to strengthen the position and role of women in society

In order to gain insight into the position of women in society in Croatia, it is necessary to point out that women in Croatia gained the right to vote² in local elections on January 28, 1881, but they lost it due to changes in the law in 1895 (Čepulo, 2000).

In Croatia, there is no systematic research on travelogues and their relationship to tourism (Pederin, 1991). Researching the topic of women in tourism raises question: what is known about the position and role of women in the promotion of tourism in Croatia. The role of women can present the forgotten lesson while the research results can be used in cultural tourism. Hence, the aim of the paper is to research the position and role of women in the promotion of tourism in Croatia to the end of WWI. Furthermore, paper, by addressing this topic, puts the Croatian tourism in the European historical and development context.

Women are involved in the promotion of tourism since the beginning of modern tourism in Croatia, but their social position vary over time. Tourism was promoted by foreigners as well as local women residents. Although globalization leaves opportunities for research in specialized areas, such as the position and role of women in certain countries, they are often difficult for the wider academic community: due to the unavailability of materials - not sufficiently digitized nor systematized, language specificity - Croatian is not a world language, small number of researchers and commercial unprofitability.

By visiting various libraries and museums in Croatia, the research showed that from the very beginning of the development of modern tourism, women were engaged in the promotion of tourism as a subject and as an object. Hence, women from higher and lower social strata are engaged in the promotion of tourism. Women were also involved in the promotion of different types of tourism, from business, leisure, cultural, sports, health to rural tourism.

Looking at a period of almost 150 years, it can be concluded that women have always played an important and active role in the promotion of Croatian tourism, but the channels³ and the way of interpretation have changed. Women in Croatian tourism promotion had the same European context in terms of position and role in tourism promotion.

It was also concluded that the historical position and role of women in the promotion of Croatian tourism is a forgotten lesson, insufficiently used in cultural tourism and also represents a missing body of knowledge that needs further research. To conclude, women were used to promote different types of tourism as well as to brand the destination and create tourism supply and demand.

¹ The travelogue Evliya Çelebi was translated into Croatian in 1996.

² During socialist Yugoslavia, women regained the right to vote in 1945, and the Constitution of 1990 guaranteed gender equality and the prohibition of discrimination, i.e. equal rights for women and men.

³ From textual description to drawing, photography, radio, television, internet etc.

Travelogues and descriptions of women by country of origin

Although the entire Croatian area is attractive for tourism, there is a lack of serious research on the women who promoted Croatia as a tourist. Some of the most important promoters of tourism in Croatia in the analysed period up to the First World War were women. Among them, Croatian educator, writer and fighter for women's rights and education Marija Jambrišak stands out. She was a prominent member of the *Croatian Pedagogical-Literary Choir* and the *Association of Teachers of the Kingdoms of Croatia and Slavonia*. She published three biographies about famous women from around the world and Croatia. Today, her books can be a motive for coming to Croatia. She wrote about Cvijeta Zuzorić, an extremely educated and beautiful renaissance woman from Dubrovnik, and her writing could be linked to the tourism-developed Dubrovnik. Some of her books have seen several editions. Furthermore, Dragojla Jarnević, governess and writer, was the originator of mountaineering and alpinism in Croatia and is considered the first Croatian mountaineer and alpinist. Also, Sofija Jelačić, wife of ban Jelačić, promoted health tourism at the Topusko spa after recovering from rheumatoid arthritis. After her treatment, she organized a ball in Topusko that was visited by many officers and fans of the *Illyrian revival* - which was called Sofia's ball. The ball was described by Dragojla Jarnević (Jarnević, 2000).

Among the male authors in Croatia, we can mention Dragutin Hirc. He published the travelogue "*Hrvatsko primorje*" 1891 in the Croatian language. At the end of the 19th century, he looks back at the weak development of tourism in Croatia, but in the attached graphic contributions, women are often depicted as modern, self-aware tourists who explore new areas (Hirc, 1891).

In this paper, the selection of travelogues is made of those that are most relevant for this topic. The travelogues are divided according to the author's country of origin, and the research challenges are the language in which they wrote. In addition to Croatian, research included travelogues published in Czech, Ottoman Empire, Italian, German, Hungarian, Great Britain and American travelogues.

Czech travelogues

At the time when the Kingdom of Dalmatia and the Czech lands were an integral part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, direct information about Dalmatia was conveyed to the Czech public primarily through travelogues and rare guidebooks (Hrabal, 2022). In the second half of the 19th century, the Czechia was one of the most economically developed parts of the Monarchy due to its developed industry. With the emergence of excess free time and capital in Prague, the *Club of Czech Tourists* was founded in 1888, which organized numerous trips to the Croatian Adriatic. The aforementioned club organized a 15-day trip in 1897 on the Croatian Adriatic.

The published photo monograph "*Od Tater k Adrii*"⁴ from 1901 presents in an illustrative way the possibility of traveling and what can be seen on a journey from the Czechia to the southern part of the Monarchy - Istria, Kvarner and Dalmatia. By reading the monography, readers and travellers could familiarize themselves with the geographical, cultural and natural diversity of the Monarchy. In the monograph, alongside men, women can be seen confidently and lightly walking in the mountains despite their long dresses and using binoculars to discover new spaces. In this way of presenting travel, women received information that there is no danger of traveling for them, and that they can travel together with men and discover unknown places (Laurenčić, 1901).

The Czech teacher, writer and translator Anna Řeháková, who published several travel books, novels and stories, contributed to the direct and indirect promotion of the Croatian Adriatic. In her travelogues, she dealt with women's issues that were in the background of the content of the text (Řeháková, 1909a; Řeháková, 1909b; Řeháková, 1910). Thus, in 1909, she published the travelogue "*Na Korčule*"⁵ in *Národní listy*⁶ (Řeháková, 1909a) and she published the article in a women's magazine named "*Odveta gospy Zorky Obrázek z Dalmácie*" (Řeháková 1909b). The following year, she published the literary collection "*Z dalmatského jihu*"⁷ (Řeháková, 1910; Hrabal, 2022a). By placing the plot in her novels, stories and travelogues in the picturesque and sunny areas of the Croatian Adriatic, she undoubtedly made readers interested in visiting this part of the Mediterranean and indirectly contributed to the tourist promotion of the Croatian

⁴ "From the Tatra to the Adriatic".

⁵ "On Korčula".

⁶ "Vengeance of Lady Zorka from Dalmatia".

⁷ "From Dalmatian South".

Adriatic as well as women's rights. It is known that Řeháková was involved in the women's movement and was a member of *Vojte Náprsteka's* American Women's Club.

The development and improvement of health tourism on the island of Krk is due to Zdenka Čermakova, who, at the invitation of the tourist enthusiast from the Czechia, Emil Geistlich, came from Prague in 1910 (Šale and Pavlović, 2004; Frančić and Juranić, 1971). She permanently moved to Baška on the island of Krk and pointed out the balneological values of Krk, which she published in the Czech and Polish tourist publications (Hrabal, 2022b). The Czechs were enchanted by the mild Mediterranean climate of the Croatian Adriatic and the picturesque settlements, and due to economic development, a large number of Czechs could afford to travel as tourists even before the First World War. It was not unusual that they were also investors in the beginnings of the development of tourism in the Croatian Adriatic.

Turkish (Ottoman empire) travelogues

Although it is difficult to look at the world and culture of the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the 17th century and their attitude towards women, especially from the aspect of Western European culture, the review of the famous traveller and travel writer of the Ottoman Empire, Evlija Celebi, is interesting to research. After traveling through the Dalmatian coast, he published a travelogue in several books (volumes). When he visited Split, he noticed the beauty of the women of Split. That's what he states: *"Since this city is located on the coast, the climate is mild, and the women are reputed to be beautiful. I saw them sitting in many shops and selling goods. There were really beautiful ones like the so-called Frankish beauties. Their eyes are like gazelles, their faces are bright, their words are sweet. They confirm the accuracy of the half-verse: It is a special picture that captivates the mind of the viewer."* This depiction of a woman in today's terms would not be accepted and could be classified as sexism. However, it was created in the 17th century and talks about the physiognomy and clothing of women in Split. It can be said that Croatia, that is, Dalmatia, has always been a part of Europe with its way of life, and this travelogue supports that. Namely, Celebi compares women from Split to French women.

Italian travelogues

When the Croatian coast of the Adriatic was a part of the Republic of Venice, Italian theologian, naturalist, travel writer and monk Alberto Fortis travelled there in the second half of the 18th century. An experienced travel writer Fortis, travelled through Dalmatia, the Primorje and Istria. Fortis published several books about Croatian coast but the most important is *"Viaggio in Dalmazia"*⁸ from 1774, which represents his travels from 1771 to 1773. Beside *"Viaggio in Dalmazia"* Fortis presented two travel books describing Dalmatia and Primorje to the European audience. In the first book, the chapter that idealizes the life of peasants in the hinterland of Dalmatia (*Morlaka*⁹) gets the most attention, while in the second book discussed many geographical, economic and ethnic issues. This travel book had a great response, and it was only fully translated into Croatian in 1984. The book is criticized by educators and causes outrage over the *Morlacs*, while Fortis sees them as peaceful, noble, honest, and hospitable. His chronologically first book *Ogled*, written in 1771, contains observations about the island of Cres. It was founded as a mineralogical study, but it came out as a study of population and folk culture. It provides information about language and oral literature. That natural history mission was an undertaking financed by Fortis' patron John Stuart, a Scottish nobleman and Earl of Bute. To him, Fortis dedicated his most famous chapter from the *Journey through Dalmatia*, the chapter on the *Morlacs*, because Stuart himself was interested in *Morlacism*. In his most famous work, he describes the position and role of young and married women through the description of folk customs. In this way, he showed the European audience the position and role of women in society in Dalmatia.

German travelogues

Travelogues are the connection between the German writer Ida von Reinsberg-Düringsfeld and the Croatian Adriatic. When she married the language and culture researcher Otto Freiherr von Reinsberg, she accompanied him on his long trips to the Czechia, Italy, Dalmatia, Belgium and Switzerland. She covered her travel impressions in numerous cultural and historical novels and stories. Her novels *"The Red Hat and*

⁸ "Journey through Dalmatia".

⁹ Vlach nomadic ethnic group in the Adriatic hinterland formed by the fusion of Roman colonists and autochthonous Balkan peoples such as Illyrians and Thracians.

Milena" from 1863 are related to Dalmatia. Her famous study about Dalmatia known as "*Reisskizzen – Aus Dalmatien*"¹⁰ was published in five parts in Prague in 1857, as well as in Germany. During her relatively long stay in Dalmatia, Ida completed her prior knowledge, which was not so insignificant, by studying numerous sources for the history of Dalmatia, the most important works of Dalmatian writers, and getting to know cultural monuments. She was in direct contacts with the inhabitants who meant an inexhaustible source for her, whether they were ordinary people or bearers of the literary, cultural and political life of Dalmatia. Ida Düringsfeld managed, thanks to her personal characteristics, her preoccupations in life, to always gather around her a wide circle of acquaintances and friends with whom she held lively, skilful conversations about literature and art. She is connected to Dalmatia by sad moments as a wife and mother because in Dalmatia she gave birth to a daughter who died soon after. In her travelogue "*Travel sketches from Dalmatia*" from 1857 she described local women, customs, and everyday life.

Austrian travelogues

It is not unusual that Crown Princess Dowager Archduchess Stephanie took up writing. As a member of the highest social class, she published in Vienna in 1892 a description of the Habsburg estate of the island of Lokrum (*Lacrom*), its rich cultural and natural heritage, and the summer house created by Maximilian's adaptation of a Benedictine monastery. The presentation of the island certainly contributed to a better understanding and recognition of the tourist potential of the island near the attractive Dubrovnik together with its heritage. This book is full of information on how the island looks and how it should look, and today it is used for researching the tourist surroundings near Dubrovnik (Žaja Vrbica, 2016).

Marija Lenz Guttenberg, born in Trieste in 1885 and died in Croatia, Opatija, in 1981, as the wife and assistant of an island doctor, witnessed the development of spa tourism under the management of the Kuppelwieser family in Brijuni. During her thirty years of residence in Brijuni from 1907 to 1938, she was a witness and participant in the humble beginnings, brilliant ups and downs of the elite Brijuni resort and health resort. As the wife of an island doctor, she witnessed the visit of prominent personalities from the world of science, art, politics, military structures, and fashionable life in general. In her diary, she recorded her memories of the lost paradise of Brijuna, which was translated from German and published in 2007. Her diaries today represent an important source for studying the history of tourism in the Brijuni Islands (Pavlečić, 2007).

Austrian writer Hermann Bahr in his travelogue "*Dalmatinische Reise*"¹¹ from 1908 longingly recalls the warm sun and blue sea on his journey from Vienna to Dalmatia. Among the beauties of the area, he mentions the beauty of the women of Split and the surroundings of Dubrovnik. Furthermore, Ludvig Salvator, through his graphic representations at the end of the 19th century, pointed out the richness of the folk costume of women in the entire area of the Croatian Adriatic and its hinterland (Kranjčević, 2021). Also, the publisher Leo Woerter pointed out that women managed to preserve rich and colourful folk costume despite the increasingly equalizing fashion in Europe.

Die österreichisch-ungarische Monarchie in Wort und Bild in three volumes 10, 11 and 24 deals with the present-day area of Croatia from 1891 to 1902. This magazine presented women in different ways, whether through agricultural production, making clothes, but also as people who wear beautiful national costumes. Women are described through the culture of life and work, and in this way readers of the Germanic and Hungarian languages could learn about the position and role of women in society in Dalmatia.

British travelogues

Englishwoman Maude Holbach certainly contributed to the tourist promotion of Dalmatia on the Anglo-Saxon market with the publication of her travel book "*Dalmatia: the land where East meets West*" in 1908. Her book was also published in German "*Dalmatien: das Land, wo Ost und West sich begegnen: mit 56 Abbildungen und einer Karte*" in 1909. The book was written at the instigation of Count Harrach, the president of the *Society for the Economic Development of Dalmatia*. The Society included tourism and deals with similar topics. Although she notices the economic underdevelopment of Dalmatia, as a woman, in her travelogue, she points out that women in Dalmatia age faster because they work a lot in the fields. Besides that, she points out the beauty of women in Dalmatia, especially Split and Dubrovnik, and their

¹⁰ "Travel Sketches from Dalmatia"

¹¹ "Dalmatian travels".

adorned with beautiful national costumes. She also wrote about the value of the lace from island Pag. In her travelogue, she compares women from Dalmatia with women in Europe (Holbach, 1908).

Hungarian travelogues

Numerous Hungarian authors describe Kvarner with Rijeka and Dalmatia in their travelogues. They also contain descriptions of the position and role of women in society (Kiss and Ćurković-Major, 2020). In the book edited by Kiss and Ćurković-Major *"Rijeka and the Surroundings in Hungarian Travelogues"* numerous Hungarian travel writers are mentioned. From this book, it can be read that through Hungarian travelogues, women are depicted as free, while the importance of financial autonomy as a prerequisite for travel is emphasized. More precisely, female authors are not financially dependent on men.

American Travelogues

Famous American magazine *National Geographic* wrote about Croatia in 1908. The authors of the article, using then-modern technology - cameras - recorded numerous segments of Croatian life and folk customs. Today, their observations are viewed as tourist attractions. Through their photographs, they recorded the folk costumes of the surroundings of Zagreb. The photos show saleswomen at the market in Zagreb, but also women who were engaged in drying and catching fish in the Rijeka area, selling cherries in Zadar, and washing clothes on the Dobra river. According to Koch (1908) numerous attractive photos were a certain type of tourist promotion.

Alice Lee Moqué's travelogue *"Delightful Dalmatia"* (1914) was based on a trip with her husband to Dalmatia. This travelogue reveals numerous details about the women she meets: *"I'm so glad I wasn't born a Dalmatian - otherwise I would have been a Croatian suffragist who throws bombs and pours acid!"* Although she is portrayed as a bit mischievous, her descriptions of Dalmatia are careful, detailed and knowledgeable. The fact that she describes Dalmatia immediately before the First World War gives a clear insight into the economic development and political situation in Dalmatia. The additional value of the book is given by the text accompanied by photographs, despite military bans on taking photographs in many of the places they visited. This travelogue was Alice Lee Moqué's great success.

Conclusion

This paper presents international and domestic travelogues before the First World War which contributed to the strengthening of the role and position of women, but also to the development of tourism in Croatia. The research showed that the authors of the travelogues are both women and men. In addition to women, it was not unusual for men to notice women in their travelogues, but also the socio-cultural attitude towards women and their position in society. Such a description of life and customs, through an indirect depiction of the social position of women, were interesting topics for readers and future tourists because they got a "picture of the space" and could compare it with the situation in their countries.

Although the subjective impressions of the authors are very often used in the travelogues, some travelogues used statistical data like number of inhabitants, number of literates and employment of women in industry. Notwithstanding, travelogues present impressions about the position and role of women in society as well as their rights, which is direct and indirectly contributed to the strengthening of awareness of women's rights, but also the position and role of women in the development of tourism. Undoubtedly, through travelogues we can see that women were direct and indirect promoters of the development of modern tourism, regardless of whether impressions were recorded, or facts found, until the beginning of the First World War, although they were not fully aware of it.

Also, due to the large number of travelogues about the Croatian area in different languages it indicates that this research needs to be investigated in more detail. Travelogues can also be used for other research from the history of tourism development relation to cultural and natural heritage for the needs of tourism, then traffic, tourism policy etc.

Until the First World War, the active authors of travel books were women from the upper and middle social strata, although they also described women from the lowest strata of society. Research has shown that along with the text of travelogues, graphic attachments, drawings and photographs, are increasingly used, especially at the beginning of the 20th century, with the aim of conveying to the readers the geographical, natural and cultural characteristics of the area. Connecting the exhibition on *"Women in the*

Promotion of Tourism in Croatia" as a graphic background, which has had 13 guest appearances in Croatia so far, with the analysis of the travelogues, it is evident that women directly and indirectly contributed to the development of various types and forms of tourism: health, recreation, mountain, sports and business. Used as a subject and as an object for the development of tourism, recognition and preservation of identity, multicultural connection, women contributed to international visibility. The question remains in which direction tourism would have developed if WWI had not happened.

The topic of the gender role of women in tourism is comprehensive and requires an interdisciplinary approach. With this paper, research on the role of women in travelogues has begun, while further research on the topic that will cover the position of women in tourism more comprehensively is planned for later research. Future research will include collaboration with sociologists, anthropologists, historians and theorists of literature in order to address the topic of the gender role of women in tourism in more detail. This kind of analysis will be used in tourism branding.

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Challenges, Opportunities and Expectations of Women Employees from Asia Working in Tourism Industry in Croatia

Izidora Marković Vukadin, PhD, Institute for Tourism, Zagreb, Croatia; e-mail: izidora.markovic@iztg.hr

Naser Ul Islami, PhD, School of Skill Education, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India

Damir Krešić, PhD, Institute for Tourism, Zagreb, Croatia

Leona Matotek, Faculty of Science, Zagreb University, Zagreb, Croatia

Ante Mandić, PhD, Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism, University of Split, Split, Croatia

Abstract

The tourism industry is a vital sector in Europe, significantly contributing to the continent's economy and employment landscape. Post-pandemic recovery has accelerated growth in tourism, resulting in a heightened demand for skilled and unskilled labour. Concurrently, demographic trends, including aging populations and declining birth rates, have led to labour shortages across many European countries. This scenario has facilitated an increased influx of employees from Asia to Europe, drawn by the promise of higher wages, better living standards, and robust workers' rights. The attractiveness of the European job market for Asian workers is multifaceted, driven by high living standards, attractive remuneration packages, and strong workers' rights and protections. Intermediary agencies have also played a crucial role in this migration trend, streamlining the recruitment process to meet the growing demands of the tourism industry. Tourism is a labour-intensive industry that thrives on the human touch and personalized experiences provided by its workforce, with women constituting the majority of this workforce globally.

This paper aims to shed light on the specific experiences of Asian women working in the European tourism sector. It will explore the opportunities and challenges these women face and how their unique cultural backgrounds and work ethics contribute to the industry. Asian women bring a diverse perspective and a wealth of cultural knowledge to their roles in tourism, enriching the visitor experience and providing a broader, more inclusive cultural exchange. However, their journey is not without challenges, including adapting to new cultural environments and navigating workplace dynamics. A critical aspect of this paper will examine whether the expectations of Asian workers in the European tourism industry align with their actual experiences. The study will investigate if the anticipated advantages of better economic opportunities and career advancement are met. Issues such as gender disparities in income, job roles, and opportunities for advancement will be scrutinized to understand the true impact of migration on these workers. The methodology involves a dual approach: a comprehensive analysis of statistical sources on foreign migration and qualitative research through interviews with Asian women working in the hospitality industry.

Keywords: Asia, employees, catering, hospitality, cultural differences

Introduction

The tourism industry is a vital sector in Europe, significantly contributing to the continent's economy and employment landscape. Post-pandemic recovery has accelerated growth in tourism, resulting in a heightened demand for skilled and unskilled labour. Concurrently, demographic trends, including aging populations and declining birth rates, have led to labour shortages across many European countries. This scenario has facilitated an increased influx of employees from Asia to Europe, drawn by the promise of higher wages, better living standards, and robust workers' rights (Madera et al., 2017; Tomčíková et al., 2021).

The attractiveness of the European job market for Asian workers is multifaceted. High living standards and attractive remuneration packages are significant pull factors (Alas & Edwards, 2011). Additionally, Europe's adherence to strong workers' rights and protections provides a stark contrast to the conditions many Asian workers face in their home countries. Intermediary agencies have also played a crucial role in this migration trend, bridging the gap between job seekers in Asia and employers in Europe. These agencies

streamline the process of recruitment, ensuring a steady supply of labour to meet the growing demands of the tourism industry. Tourism, by its nature, is a labour-intensive industry. It thrives on the human touch and personalized experiences provided by its workforce. The sector is heavily reliant on women, who constitute the majority of the workforce in tourism globally (Kusluvan et al., 2010; Baum, 2015; Erdogan, 2020; Valeri & Katsoni, 2021). This paper aims to shed light on the specific experiences of Asian women working in the European tourism sector. It will explore the opportunities and challenges these women face, and how their unique cultural backgrounds and work ethics contribute to the industry.

Asian women bring a diverse perspective and a wealth of cultural knowledge to their roles in the tourism industry. Their presence enriches the tourism experience for visitors, providing a broader, more inclusive cultural exchange. These women often demonstrate high levels of dedication, resilience, and a strong work ethic, qualities that are highly valued in the hospitality sector. However, their journey is not without challenges. From adapting to a new cultural environment to navigating workplace dynamics, Asian women encounter several hurdles that impact their professional and personal lives.

One critical aspect that this paper will examine is whether the expectations of Asian workers in the European tourism industry align with their actual experiences. Many Asian women migrate to Europe with hopes of better economic opportunities, career advancement, and improved quality of life. This study will investigate if these expectations are met and how the reality compares to the anticipated advantages. Issues such as gender disparities in income, job roles, and opportunities for advancement will be scrutinized to understand the true impact of migration on these workers. Moreover, the paper will delve into the professional growth opportunities available to Asian women in the European tourism industry. While the hospitality sector, in general, macro offers clearer pathways for career advancement, barriers still exist, particularly in comparison to their male counterparts and domestic workers. This analysis will highlight the systemic and cultural factors that influence these dynamics and propose strategies for creating a more equitable work environment.

The methodology for this study involves a dual approach: a comprehensive analysis of available statistical sources on foreign migration and qualitative research through interviews with Asian women working in the hospitality industry. The statistical analysis will provide a macro-level understanding of migration trends, employment statistics, and gender-specific data, while the interviews will offer nuanced insights into the personal experiences of these workers. By integrating these two approaches, the study aims to present a holistic view of the contributions and challenges of Asian women in the European tourism sector.

In conclusion, this paper seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on labour migration and gender dynamics within the tourism industry. It will underscore the benefits that both employees and the industry gain from the participation of Asian women in the European workforce. By examining the intersection of migration, gender, and labour within the tourism sector, this study aims to inform policies and practices that support the integration and advancement of migrant workers, fostering a more inclusive and dynamic industry.

2. Literature Review

Foreign Workers in Tourism in the EU and Croatia

The tourism industry in the European Union (EU) and Croatia heavily relies on foreign labour to address labour shortages and meet the demands of seasonal peaks (McCollum & Findlay, 2015; Lutz, 2016; Van Mol & De Valk, 2016). This review synthesizes findings from various studies to provide a comprehensive understanding of the roles, challenges, and experiences of foreign workers, with a particular focus on female workers, in the tourism sector.

Foreign workers in the Croatian tourism sector predominantly occupy low-skilled, seasonal positions such as housekeeping, waiting tables, and physical labour in construction (Butković, Samardžija, & Rukavina, 2020; De Haas, 2021). A similar trend is observed in other EU countries where foreign labour is concentrated in entry-level and physically demanding roles (Joppe, 2012; Přívarová et al., 2022). The reliance on migrant workers is particularly pronounced during the summer months, reflecting the seasonal nature of the tourism industry (Gašparović, 2022). Furthermore, according to literature, the quality of life and work conditions for foreign workers vary significantly (Salazar, 2022). Studies highlight both positive and negative aspects of their experiences, known as push and pull factors in the migration theory (Khalid & Urbański, 2021; Urbański, 2022). In Croatia, many foreign workers report a high level of satisfaction with their life

and social integration, despite facing challenges such as inadequate housing and lower wages compared to domestic workers (Božić, Kuzmanović, & Barada, 2013). Similarly, immigrant workers in Slovenian tourism appreciate the legal status and social care they receive, but express concerns over excessive working hours and lack of free days (Žigo, Gabruč, & Juvan, 2017).

Foreign workers from non-EU countries like the Philippines and India are increasingly employed through recruitment agencies, often under temporary contracts. This arrangement can lead to job insecurity and exploitative conditions (Butković et al., 2020). The war in Ukraine has exacerbated labour shortages in Croatia, pushing employers to seek workers from further afield, complicating the recruitment process due to longer visa processing times (Brzić, 2022).

Gender-Specific Challenges

Female foreign workers in tourism face unique challenges, including potential discrimination and gender-specific barriers to career advancement. They are often employed in roles such as housekeeping and hotel marketing, where they may experience both formal and informal workplace challenges (Hodak, Kesar, & Matečić, 2019). The intersection of gender and migrant status can exacerbate vulnerabilities (Anthias, 2022), leading to greater risk of exploitation and less favourable work conditions compared to their male counterparts. It can also lead to other complex inequalities in groups combining social privilege and disadvantage (Gkiouleka & Huijts, 2020). Furthermore, it was showed that ethnic minority migrants living in high-income countries exhibit higher frailty than their indigenous counterparts, and generally at a younger age (Majid et al., 2020).

Moreover, the concept of "work-life balance" emerged over three decades ago in response to a societal shift during the 1970s and 1980s, when both men and women began prioritizing their careers over family, friends, and leisure activities (Muna & Mansour, 2009). Today, extensive research and literature explore this topic, defining work-life balance as achieving equal satisfaction and engagement across various roles in an individual's life (Konard et al., 2000; Koc, 2020). This balance significantly impacts career progression, family dynamics, and overall well-being (Mahasha, 2016; Begum & Osmany, 2019), which can be a source of frustration for female workers abroad. Such challenges often lead to disruptions in work-life balance and conflicts between professional and personal roles. Notably, women often bear a disproportionate burden of household and caregiving responsibilities, intensifying these conflicts (Alqahtani, 2020).

Impact on Tourism Experience

The presence of foreign workers can impact the tourism experience both positively and negatively (Chen, Cheng, & Kim, 2020). Research indicates that while some tourists value the local cultural authenticity provided by local workers, the overall satisfaction is not significantly diminished by the presence of foreign employees (Hodak et al., 2019). However, there are concerns that over-reliance on foreign labour could affect the quality and authenticity of services offered (Gašparović, 2022).

Integration and Policy Responses

Effective integration of foreign workers is crucial for both their well-being and the sustainability of the tourism industry. Countries like Ireland have developed comprehensive strategies to address cultural diversity and integration, engaging various stakeholders including employers and educational institutions (Joppe, 2012). In contrast, most EU countries, including Croatia, lack such integrated approaches, resulting in varying levels of support and integration outcomes for foreign workers (Brell, Dustmann, & Preston 2020).

The influx of foreign workers is essential for filling labour shortages but comes with economic and social implications. On one hand, it supports the tourism industry by providing necessary labour. On the other hand, it can lead to social tensions and concerns over job competition with domestic workers (Přívarová et al., 2022). The economic impact extends to the home countries of migrant workers, although remittances are often used for immediate consumption rather than long-term development (Přívarová et al., 2022).

Methodology

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the migration patterns and employment conditions of Asian women in the European hospitality industry, an in-depth analysis of available statistical sources was conducted. Data on foreign migration trends, employment statistics, and gender-specific migration patterns

within the EU were analysed based on data provided by Eurostat, OECD and World Bank. The main source of data for Croatia was the national statistical databases, Croatian Bureau of Statistics. The main objective of these data was to identify the number of Asian female workers in the EU and Croatia, their distribution across different sectors, and any changes over recent years.

To gain deeper insights into the personal experiences of Asian women working in the hotel and hospitality industry in Croatia, qualitative research was conducted through semi-structured interviews. Purposive sampling was conducted, with main criteria being Asian women working at different levels of job complexity in the hotel and hospitality industry in Croatia. Interviews had a semi-structured format with open-ended questions to allow participants to share their experiences, challenges, expectations, and motives for moving abroad. Main topics of the interview were:

- Experiences and challenges faced in the workplace.
- Expectations and motivations for migrating to Europe.
- Perceptions of gender and income disparities.
- Impact of cultural background on their work experience and social integration.

In-depth interviews were conducted face-to-face, with each interview lasting between 15 to 25 minutes. Audio recording of interviews (with participants' consent) for accurate transcription and analysis was done. A total of 9 participants were interviewed: four from the Philippines, two from Nepal, two from India and one from Bangladesh. All participants were employed in tourism sectors on diverse jobs: cleaning personnel, waitresses, pool manager and kitchen staff.

Despite the comprehensive approach, this study may encounter several limitations. The availability and quality of statistical data from different sources vary, potentially affecting the accuracy and comparability of the analysis, especially gender statistics.

Furthermore, the purposive sampling method and limited sample size does not fully represent the entire population of Asian female workers in the Croatian and European hospitality industry, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Participants' willingness to share their experiences and the potential for interviewer bias may influence the reliability of the qualitative data. Cultural and language differences may affect communication during interviews, potentially leading to misinterpretations or incomplete data. Finally, the study's findings are based on data and interviews conducted within a specific timeframe, which may not fully capture long-term trends and changes in the industry.

By addressing these limitations and employing robust data collection and analysis methods, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the experiences and contributions of Asian women in the European hospitality industry.

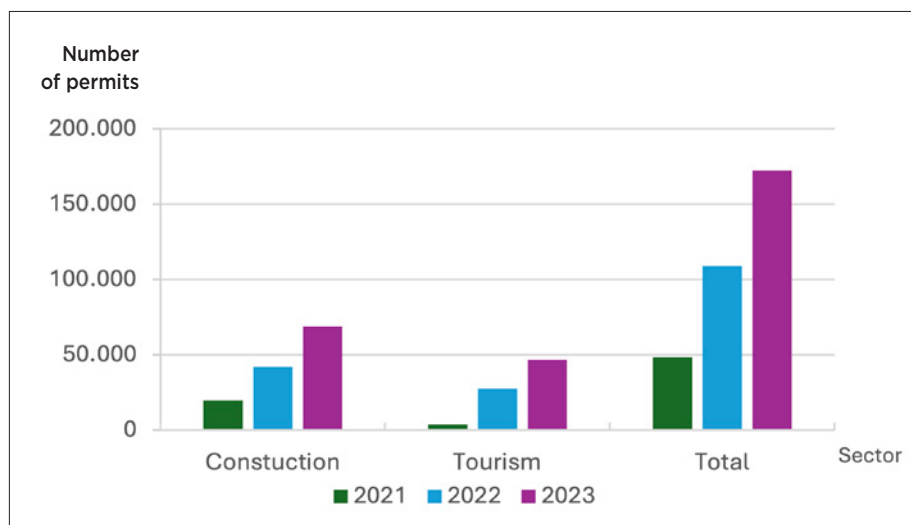
Review of statistical data

In 2021, 8.84 million non-EU citizens were employed in the EU labour market, out of a total of 189.7 million persons aged from 20 to 64, which corresponds to 4.7% of the total workforce. A significant fact to consider is that many of these non-EU citizens are "essential workers", playing crucial roles in sectors such as healthcare, agriculture, and transportation, which are vital for the functioning and sustainability of EU economies.

In 2021, there was a particularly significant increase in the issuance of work-related permits in the EU. The share of work-related permits grew from 39% in 2020 to 45% in 2021, highlighting a rising demand for foreign labour and the essential role of non-EU workers in various sectors. This increase reflects the growing need for skilled and unskilled labour to support the EU's economic recovery and growth post-pandemic. Non-EU workers have become increasingly vital in filling labour shortages, particularly in industries such as healthcare, agriculture, and technology. This trend underscores the importance of effective immigration policies to manage and support the integration of non-EU workers into the EU labour market, ensuring both economic stability and social cohesion.

Analysing the data on work permits issued in Croatia for different years, sectors, and regions has led to several insights. As of April 2024, a total of 72,872 work permits were issued. The majority of these permits were for the construction sector (25,237) and the tourism sector (22,631) (Figure 1). By continent, workers from Asia (32,081) and Europe (31,644) make up the largest portion, while only 1,711 permits were issued to workers from Africa. The distribution of permits by region is as follows: Central Croatia - 20,882; Northern Croatia - 7,102; Slavonia - 5,209; Istria and Primorje - 17,646; Dalmatia - 20,619; and Lika and Gorski Kotar - 1,414.

Figure 1.
Work Permits issued in Croatia in total, in construction, and in tourism in 2021, 2022, and 2023



Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs, Republic of Croatia, Statistical Data on Residence and Work Permits Issued for 2023.

In 2023, a total of 172,499 work permits were issued. The construction (68,912) and tourism (45,868) sectors received the most permits. Workers from Europe (89,842) and Asia (63,935) dominated the workforce. The regional distribution of permits for 2023 was: Central Croatia - 54,768; Northern Croatia - 18,179; Slavonia - 12,767; Istria and Primorje - 39,852; Dalmatia - 43,767; and Lika and Gorski Kotar - 3,166 (Table 1).

Table 1.
Work Permits Issued for 2023 by Region

Work Permits Issued for 2023 by Region	
Total	172.499
Central Croatia	54.768
Northern Croatia	18.179
Slavonia	12.767
Istria and Primorje	39.852
Dalmatia	43.767
Lika and Gorski Kotar	3.166

Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs, Republic of Croatia, Statistical Data on Residence and Work Permits Issued for 2023.

In 2023, the most sought-after occupations for permits were construction workers, with 17,418 permits issued, and workers in the tourism sector, with 46,709 permits. Similarly, in 2022, construction workers (10,685 permits) and workers in the tourism sector (27,634 permits) were the most in-demand occupations. In 2021, bricklayers were the most sought-after occupation with 5,354 permits, followed by workers in the tourism sector with 3,852 permits.

From these data, we can conclude that the construction and tourism sectors consistently require the most work permits in Croatia. Although the number of permits issued varies significantly year by year, construction and tourism remain the primary sectors. Additionally, the largest portion of the workforce consists of workers from Asia and Europe, while the number of permits issued to African workers remains relatively low. The number of permits issued varies across different regions of Croatia, with Central Croatia, Dalmatia, and Istria and Primorje having the highest numbers.

Interview results

The qualitative research aimed to explore the experiences of Asian women employed in Croatia's hotel and hospitality sector through semi-structured interviews. A purposive sampling approach was utilized to select participants representing diverse job roles and nationalities, including individuals from the Philippines, Nepal, India, and Bangladesh, all living in Croatia from one to two years.

Motivations for coming to Croatia

The motivations of foreign workers for coming to Croatia vary, but several key factors often stand out. One of the main reasons is economic opportunity. Workers from lower-standard countries, such as the Philippines, often come for the earning potential, which is higher than in their home countries. Filipinos, for example, work in sectors like tourism, hospitality, and construction, where the wages, though relatively low by Croatian standards, are still competitive compared to what they would earn at home. They are also motivated by safer working conditions and the opportunity to support their families back home.

"...comparing my salary and overall work conditions here with those in the Philippines is quite significant to me. In Croatia, the salary I earn allows me to meet my basic needs more comfortably compared to what I might have earned in the Philippines. --- there are more structured policies and regulations that ensure fair treatment and safety standards, which can sometimes be lacking back home" (A.V.F, the Philippines)

Another important motivating factor is stability and security. Workers from unstable or war-affected regions view Croatia as a safer destination for work and life. Additionally, Croatia's EU membership opens possibilities for easier transitions to work in other EU countries after gaining some work experience and residency rights.

The working conditions offered by employers play a significant role. Providing accommodation, food, and basic living conditions is an additional motivation for many workers. However, issues of underpayment and inadequate accommodation conditions persist, potentially affecting worker motivation and satisfaction.

Education and language skills, such as proficiency in English among Filipino workers, also represent an advantage that makes them desirable in the Croatian labour market, especially in sectors requiring communication with tourists. These factors together make Croatia an attractive destination for foreign workers, despite the challenges they may experience in integrating and adapting to a new environment.

Challenges Faced by Foreign Workers:

Through the research multiple challenges that women employees from Asia face while working in the tourism industry in Croatia have been emphasized, such as language barriers, cultural differences, and adjusting to a new working environment. These challenges are even more pronounced when it comes to working women, who, in addition to the already mentioned challenges, often have stronger family ties, which makes leaving and staying in a foreign country more difficult (Mahasha, 2016).

Cultural differences can also pose challenges for employees from Asia. For instance, the work culture and expectations in Europe are different from what they are used to in their home country. This leads to misunderstandings and difficulties in adapting to the new work environment. The interviewees stressed language proficiency as essential for employees in the tourism industry, as they need to communicate effectively with tourists. Another of the highlighted challenges for working women is to facilitate work-family balance (Thorntwaite, 2004), which is impossible in these geographical relationships, and represents significant stress for female employees.

One of the primary challenges is the regulation of legal status and issuance of work permits. For instance, an Indian employee (J.V.), faced problems obtaining a new work permit despite having previously held a valid one. Such cases highlight obstacles that can disrupt the lives and work of foreign employees. Besides legal difficulties, foreign workers often struggle with the recognition of their qualifications and degrees. Many highly educated workers end up in jobs below their qualifications because their foreign achievements are not recognized in Croatia. For example, H.C., an economist from the Philippines, works as a cleaner, and V.M, a psychologist from the Philippines, has limited opportunities to work in her field. Additionally, working conditions are frequently substandard, with workers housed in overcrowded buildings and receiving low wages that do not align with the cost of living in Croatia.

"Living in Croatia as a woman, my experience has been a mix of positives and challenges. Croatia offers a safe environment overall, which is important. However, as an Nepal woman, cultural differences sometimes affect social integration and acceptance" (R.T., Nepal)

Language barriers also pose significant challenges. While there are initiatives to organize Croatian language courses, many workers lack access to these courses or the time to learn the language due to demanding work schedules.

Advantages of working in Croatia

Despite the challenges, Asian women working in Croatia's hospitality industry highlight several advantages that their unique backgrounds bring to the table. They believe that their cultural heritage and knowledge significantly enhance the tourism experience for visitors, offering a rich and diverse perspective that leads to innovative ideas and approaches. This cultural diversity is invaluable, fostering a deeper connection with guests from various parts of the world and improving overall guest satisfaction in their opinion.

"...since I am a stranger, it is easier for me to handle other strangers (tourist) all day long, I feel less foreigner then" (H.C., the Philippines)

Most participants said that Asian employees are known for their hardworking and motivated nature, which contributes significantly to the success. A calm and devoted demeanour is well-received by colleagues, helping to build good relationships and facilitating smoother integration into the workplace. New friendships often form at work, aiding in their assimilation into society, though it can be more challenging to establish friendships with male coworkers due to cultural restrictions.

"My experience with colleagues in Croatia has been generally positive. I've found that I am well received, which has helped me form new friendships at work. These friendships have been crucial in helping me assimilate into the local society and culture" (H.C., the Philippines)

Participants believe that to improve the experience of Asian employees in the European hospitality industry, employers can provide cultural sensitivity training and create support networks that promote inclusivity and understanding. Encouraging open communication and celebrating cultural diversity can make a significant difference, making Asian employees feel more connected and supported. Overall, Asian employees bring valuable cultural knowledge, language skills, and a unique perspective that drive innovation and enhance guest experiences. Their dedication and strong work ethic contribute to the operational success of businesses. By embracing diversity and leveraging the strengths of Asian employees, the hospitality industry in Europe can continue to grow and provide exceptional service to a global clientele.

Expectations of Asian Female Workers in Croatia

Asian female workers in Croatia had varied expectations upon starting their jobs. Many were surprised by the relaxed lifestyle in Europe, which contrasted with the fast-paced environments they were accustomed to in cities like Manila or Bombay. They appreciate the significantly better incomes compared to their home countries but are aware of the gender income disparity, with lower wages compared to their male colleagues.

"Initially, I expected a fast-paced and demanding work environment like what I was used to in my home country. However, I was pleasantly surprised by the more relaxed lifestyle in Europe. The work-life balance here is much better, which allows for a more enjoyable and fulfilling life outside of work, I would love my family can enjoy it too (relaxed and fulfilling life)..." (P.A., Nepal)

A major challenge they face is the limited opportunities for career advancement, particularly in the hospitality industry. Unlike their local counterparts, they find it difficult to move up the career ladder. However, the hotel industry seems to offer clearer pathways for growth and a more supportive environment, increasing their chances of long-term employment in Europe. The working environment in Croatia is generally positive, with friendly and supportive colleagues, which has facilitated their adaptation to the new environment. Management is open to feedback and appears willing to make improvements. Despite these positives, the workers hope for more emphasis on gender equality, including addressing income disparities and providing clear pathways for professional growth. They also advocate for more cultural sensitivity training and support networks to better integrate international employees. In some cases, foreign workers may enjoy better working conditions in Croatia, including higher wages, job security, and decent working hours, compared to what they experienced in their home countries.

Based on participant attitude working abroad allow foreign workers to travel and explore different parts of the host country and region, which can be an additional benefit for those who enjoy exploring and learning about new cultures, contrasting with their usual life in their home country.

"...here no one cares about my background, my caste status, I am more free to interact and I believe I will not be able to go back to India again" (T.A., India)

Foreign workers have different plans about staying in Croatia. Some may be in the country temporarily for work or study, while others may decide to stay long-term if they find stable employment or establish other connections with Croatia, such as marriage or family.

Research implications

The influx of Asian female workers into the European tourism industry, particularly in countries like Croatia, has significant practical and theoretical implications. The findings from literature review, statistical data, and interviews provide a multifaceted view of this phenomenon, highlighting the various dimensions and outcomes of employing foreign female workers in tourism.

Practical Implications

The increasing reliance on Asian workers necessitates policy adjustments to ensure their protection and integration. Governments and regulatory bodies should streamline visa and work permit processes to minimize delays and uncertainties. Additionally, policies should address the recognition of foreign qualifications to prevent skilled workers from being underemployed in low-skilled jobs. Since recruitment agencies play a significant role in sourcing foreign workers, it is imperative to regulate these agencies to prevent exploitative practices and ensure they provide accurate information about job roles, wages, and working conditions. Transparent and ethical recruitment practices can help in building trust and attracting quality workers.

Employers in the tourism sector need to enhance working conditions to retain foreign workers. This includes providing adequate housing, fair wages, and reasonable working hours. Addressing issues like workplace discrimination and exploitation through strict enforcement of labour laws is crucial for creating a supportive work environment. Addressing gender disparities in wages and career advancement opportunities is essential. Employers should ensure equal pay for equal work and create clear pathways for career progression, regardless of gender. This can help in retaining talented female workers and promoting a more equitable workplace.

Furthermore, given the cultural differences between Asian workers and their European counterparts, implementing cultural sensitivity training for all employees can foster a more inclusive and harmonious workplace. Such training can help mitigate misunderstandings and improve the overall work experience for foreign workers. Establishing support networks and integration programs can aid foreign workers in adjusting to their new environment. These programs could offer language courses, social integration activities, and counseling services to help workers navigate cultural differences and build support systems away from home.

Theoretical Implications

The study of Asian female workers in the European tourism industry contributes to labour migration theories by highlighting the unique push and pull factors specific to this demographic (Khalid & Urbański, 2021). The economic opportunities and better working conditions in Europe serve as strong pull factors, while economic hardship and limited opportunities in home countries act as push factors. Understanding these dynamics can refine existing migration models.

The intersection of gender, ethnicity, and migration status provides a rich area for theoretical exploration, as was earlier shown by Anthias (2022). Asian female workers face distinct challenges and opportunities that differ from their male counterparts and other migrant groups. Exploring these intersections can deepen our understanding of the vulnerabilities and strengths of different migrant populations. The gender-specific challenges faced by Asian female workers contribute to the broader discourse on the gender studies in labour markets. The study highlights issues such as gender-based wage disparities and career advancement barriers, which are critical for understanding the systemic inequities in labour markets. This can inform policies and practices aimed at achieving gender equality.

The integration experiences of Asian female workers can inform social integration models by providing insights into the factors that facilitate or hinder their social and cultural assimilation. The role of workplace friendships, community support, and employer initiatives in promoting integration can be further explored to enhance these models.

The increasing presence of Asian workers in European tourism reflects globalization's impact on labour markets (Brell et al., 2020). The study underscores the need to examine how global economic trends in-

fluence labour migration patterns and the distribution of labour across different regions. This can enhance our understanding of globalization's effects on both sending and receiving countries.

In conclusion, the practical and theoretical implications of this research highlight the complexity of labour migration and the need for multifaceted approaches to address the challenges and opportunities it presents. By integrating these insights, stakeholders can better support foreign workers and foster a more inclusive and equitable tourism industry.

Conclusion

The employment of foreign workers in the tourism sector in the EU and Croatia is characterized by seasonal, low-skilled jobs with varying degrees of job satisfaction and integration challenges. Gender-specific barriers further complicate the experiences of female workers. Addressing these issues requires comprehensive policies and practices that promote fair treatment, integration, and the well-being of foreign workers, thereby ensuring the sustainable growth of the tourism industry.

Foreign workers in Croatia encounter numerous challenges, ranging from administrative issues to social and economic difficulties. Overall, the influx of Asian workers to Croatia is a double-edged sword. On one hand, they help fill gaps in the labour market and enable the economy to function; on the other hand, challenges related to their working conditions and integration remain significant issues that need to be addressed.

In conclusion, women employees from Asia working in the tourism industry in Europe face challenges, but also bring many advantages to the industry. They bring a unique cultural perspective and knowledge (Ordóñez de Pablos, 2002), as well as hard work and dedication, which can contribute to the success of the industry. In order to fully embrace the benefits of having employees from Asia in the tourism industry, it is important to promote inclusivity and diversity in the workplace. This can lead to a more dynamic and successful industry, as well as a more enjoyable experience for tourists.

The research on Asian female workers in the European tourism industry, particularly in Croatia, opens several avenues for further investigation. These directions aim to deepen the understanding of their experiences, challenges, and contributions, while also informing policy and practice improvements.

Some of the possible further research directions can be to investigate the effectiveness of current policies aimed at protecting and integrating foreign workers as well as to conduct surveys and interviews to gather detailed insights into housing conditions, wages, working hours, and instances of workplace discrimination. Moreover, researchers should explore gender-specific challenges and opportunities for Asian female workers by conducting comparative studies on wage disparities and career progression between male and female foreign workers. One of the research directions should be the study the role of workplace friendships, community support, and employer initiatives in facilitating cultural assimilation and social integration. Finally for further impacts on policies it would be useful to conduct longitudinal studies to track the long-term integration and career progression of Asian female workers in the European tourism industry and to monitor changes in job satisfaction, social integration, and career advancement over time.

By pursuing these research directions, scholars and practitioners can gain a comprehensive understanding of the complexities surrounding the employment of Asian female workers in the European tourism industry. This knowledge can inform the development of inclusive policies and practices that promote fair treatment, integration, and the overall well-being of foreign workers, thereby contributing to the sustainable growth and success of the tourism sector.

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