

## TREND REPORT

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### **Interaction Between Tourists and Residents: Influence on Tourism Development\***

*Abstract:* One of the crucial things for achieving and maintaining sustainable tourism development in a destination is to create a positive interaction between residents and foreign tourists. The quality of interaction between tourists and residents contributes to both tourists experience and perception of the visited destination and acceptance and tolerance of tourists by residents. Thus, the aim of the study is to analyse influence of tourist's behaviour on resident's perception of tourists, their acceptance and social interaction between them in the destination. The research is conducted among residents of Belgrade, Novi Sad and Sombor during the year of 2010. The results showed that cultural incidents are very important for the acceptance of tourists by the local residents and that perception of tourist's behaviour was significantly affected by socio-demographic characteristics of residents.

*Keywords:* tourists-residents interaction; tourism development; social demography; Serbia.

### **Introduction**

Reagan (1985) cited in Mings (1988: 33) states that 'the promotion of travel for pleasure between countries contributes not only to economic growth but to the interchange between citizens which helps to achieve understanding and co-operation. Those impacts of tourism have been gaining increasing attention in the tourism literature. A number of studies in recent years have examined host residents' perception of the impact of tourism development on their community, and it continues to be an important issue.

Mutual social and cultural interaction between resident and tourists is inevitable, since the tourist movements contribute to encountering different societies and areas, with an increasingly altering level of their differences. Thus, the quality of interaction between tourists and residents contributes to both tourists experience and perception of the visited destination and acceptance and tolerance of tourist by residents. Many elements of national cultures (values, norms or rules) have a considerable impact

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\* The research presented here is a part of the project approved by the Ministry of Science of the Republic of Serbia (Demographic Transition in Serbia—No. 146017d).

on tourists' behaviour, their holiday expectations, satisfactions and consequently repeated visits (Reisinger, Turner 2003). Additionally, the acceptance and tolerance of tourists by residents has been acknowledged as being vital for a successful tourism destination (Thyne, Lawson, Todd 2006). Moreover, perception and attitudes of residents towards the impacts of tourism are likely to be an important planning and policy consideration for successful development, marketing, and operation of existing and future tourism programs (Ap 1992).

Thus, the aim of the study is to analyse influence of tourist's behaviour on resident's perception of tourists, their acceptance and social interaction between them in the destination.

The research is conducted among residents of Belgrade, Novi Sad and Sombor during 2010. Data was collected using a questionnaire survey. Research is based on the following hypothesis:

H: Socio-demographic characteristics of residents affect the social interaction with foreign tourists.

H1a: Age of residents affects the degree of social interaction with foreign tourists.

H1b: Gender of residents affects the degree of social interaction with foreign tourists.

H1c: Education levels of residents affect the degree of social interaction with foreign tourists.

H1d: Place of residence affect the degree of social interaction with foreign tourists.

For analysing data, standard SPSS computer programme was used. In the following, a description of our empirical investigation of the phenomenon is presented. The results of our survey are discussed and implications and directions for future research are offered.

### **Interaction between Residents and Tourists**

According to Williams (1998), each arrival of foreign tourists in to a local community inevitably provokes positive and negative influences. The main positive influence refers to the increased knowledge and understanding of hosts societies and cultures, which refers to positive interaction (Allport, 1954; Cook 1962; Bochner 1982) etc. On the other hand, tourism can provide negative effects such as debasement and the commercialisation of culture, increased tensions between imported and traditional lifestyles, erosion of strength of a local language, new patterns of local consumption, and risks of promotion of antisocial activities (gambling, drugs, violence, etc.).

The relationship between residents and foreign tourists is created by the ratio between the behaviour of foreign tourists in the tourist destination and the way local people perceive this behaviour. How the local people perceive the behaviour of foreign tourists, and evaluate it as positive or negative, is determined primarily by cultural and moral norms of the population of a certain destination. However, one must take into account that the behaviour of tourists during their stay in the tourist destination often does not reflect the everyday lifestyle of them. It means that tourists' behaviour

seems more relaxed during holidays, which is perceived in wearing casual clothes, increased food and beverages consumption, as well as in the trend of getting more entertainment. Such behaviour commonly creates a negative image of the country of their origin for the local population (Williams 1998).

However, for the sustainable development of tourism, one of the crucial things is to create a positive interaction between residents and tourists. The quality of these interactions contribute to both tourists experience and perception of the visited destination and acceptance and tolerance of tourist by residents.

There are many papers dealing with cross-cultural relationships in the context of tourism (Allport 1954; Amir 1969; Pearce 1982; Amir, Ben-Ari 1985; Milman, Reichel, Pajamas 1990; Pizama, Jafari, Milman 1991; Pizama et al. 1991; Anastasopoulos 1992; Pizama, Uriely, Reichel 2000), as well as papers related to the satisfaction of a local community in the context of development of tourism in a destination (Who, Steward 2002). However, there are few researches dealing with the question of how behaviour of tourists affects the resident's perception.

Tourists' behaviour, or incidents that may exist at a destination, directly influence the creation of attitudes and tolerance of local people towards them. For example, standing too close to others may create anxiety (Fisher, Byrne 1975; Hall 1966) and so may perceptions of crowding (Bateson, Hui 1986). One's appearance, although only partially a function of behaviour, may prompt others to feel warm or threatened (Aronoff, Woike, Hyman 1992) or may evoke stereotyped evaluations (Anderson, Sedikides 1991). Too little or too much eye contact between strangers may be negatively perceived (Albas, Albas 1989). Finally, breaking in line causes frustration for some people (Caballero, Lumpkin, Brown, Katsinas, Werner 1985), and smoking in the presence of others often is perceived to be unhealthy or offensive (Gallup 1990).

Thus, different behaviour of tourists in the destination affects the degree of acceptance and tolerance of the local population. The acceptance and tolerance of foreign tourists is a prerequisite for a positive social interaction and influences the degree of interest of local people towards tourists.

Social interaction is far more researched in the context of the customer-to-customer relation (Cedric 2007) than tourist to resident relation. Nevertheless, we believe that the tourist to resident relation is far more important, because the acceptance and tolerance of foreign tourists by the local population is crucial for the development of tourism in a destination.

However, as in customer to customer relation and in tourist to resident relation the creation of opinions and attitudes is based on the same manifestations of behaviour, the authors of this paper used the patterns of behaviour to measure the social interaction, that were taken from Martin (1996) who in his work researched customer to customer relation. In his work, he came up with patterns of behaviour that directly affect the satisfaction and interaction of other customers' experience. He took a wide range of both verbal and non verbal behaviours that were reported by respondents. A principal components analysis of the 32 behaviour ratings was conducted in an effort to identify the dimensionality of these customers' perceptions, including being gregarious, grungy, inconsiderate, crude, violent, malicious and leisurely. The seven

factors seem to be able to be generalized to most public business environments where customers may come into contact with one another directly or indirectly. As such, they provide a checklist for identifying other behaviours beyond the scope of the present study that potentially affect the satisfaction of other customers' experience.

List of identified behaviours is, for the purposes of this study, modified meaning that patterns of behaviour that can manifest themselves only in customer-to-customer relations are not used but patterns of behaviour that are identified in tourist to resident relation are used. Out of 32 items a total of 17 items are used for the research.

## **Methodology**

### **1. Data Collection**

The data of this research comes from a survey of residents from Belgrade, Novi Sad and Sombor. Belgrade as the administrative, political and cultural centre attracts the greatest number of tourists throughout the year. It represents a destination for business, city break, cultural tourism (Zakić 2009). Nationality of tourists visiting the city is varied. Novi Sad is the second largest city in Serbia and administrative centre of the Vojvodina Province (northern part of Serbia). In addition to the business and the city tourism, the most developed is event tourism (Dragičević, Blešić, Stankov 2010). Musical event "EXIT," which is held annually during the summer season, attracts a large number of young tourists. The majority of tourists are coming from Britain and the Nordic countries (Armenski, Zakić, Dragin 2009). Sombor is a small town in a rural setting in the western part of Vojvodina Province, near border with Croatia. The number of tourists is much lower than in Novi Sad and Belgrade. Tourists are mostly from Hungary, Germany and Italy. In a surrounding area of Sombor hunting tourism is developed and rural and transit tourism are in development.

These three cities were chosen because it was important to ensure that responses from host communities were based on a full range of experiences with different levels of involvement in tourism. A total of 113 valid responses were collected.

The respondents were young (the majority are 19–29 years old), women (65.6% female), well-educated (33.6% have a 4 year college degree). The majority of respondents are living in Novi Sad.

### **2. Measures**

To measure the social interaction between tourists and residents that is how residents perceive the foreign tourist's behaviour, 17 items were used, taken from Martin (1996). The behaviour of foreign tourists was measured by five-point Likert scale (from 1—"I do not like the behaviour of foreign tourists at all" to 5—"I like the behaviour of foreign tourists very much").

The degree of social interaction between residents and foreign tourists is measured in relation to gender, age, education level and place of residence of respondents.

Table 1  
Sample of respondents

Number of responses	113
<b>Age</b>	
under 18	1.8%
19–29	58.4%
30–39	10.6%
40–49	8.8%
50–59	11.5%
60–69	8.8%
<b>Level of education</b>	
elementary school (Grade 1–8)	1.8%
high school / vocational school	28.3%
2-year collage	14.2%
4-year college	33.6%
master's degree	20.4%
PhD degree	1.8%
<b>Place of residence</b>	
Novi Sad	46.9%
Belgrade	35.4%
Sombor	17.7%
<b>Gender</b>	
Female	65.5%
Male	34.5%

Source: Survey research.

## Results

To assess the appropriateness of factor analysis we used Bartlett's test of sphericity (903.674, sig: 0.000) and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test of sample adequacy (0.025) with a value of 0.820, which therefore falls within the acceptable range. These results showed that the set of items is suitable for factor analysis. Principal component analysis with Varimax rotation was used to identify the dimensionality of the 17 social items.

Table 2 shows the grouping of items into three factors that have Eigen value greater than 1.0. All three factors in total explain 60.28% of total variances. By interpreting the factors, the conduct of foreign tourists can be classified into three categories, which have Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) coefficient reliability values, respectively of 0.80, 0.85, 0.82 (Table 2). Cronbach's  $\alpha$  is a coefficient of reliability of a factor. It varies from 0 to 1 (maximum). This indicates internal consistency of the items within a given factor (Pagano 1998) and as a rule of thumb alpha should be at least 0.7 indicating that the scale is reliable (DeVellis 2003).

The factors are as following:

Factor 1: Grungy incidents—include breaking in line, becoming upset after receiving poor service, complaining about the service, telling inappropriate jokes and so on. Therefore, it was named "grungy incidents," and 34.6% of total variances can be explained by it.

Table 2  
Factor Analysis

Factors	Item	Eigen value	Factor loading	Explained variance (%)	Cumulative explained variance (%)	$\alpha$ Cronbach's value
F1 Grungy incident	11. Breaking in line	5.89	0.75	34.6	34.60	0.80
	12. Becoming upset after receiving poor service		0.71			
	13. Complaining about their service		0.67			
	14. Telling inappropriate jokes		0.64			
	15. Not wearing a shirt		0.67			
	17. Smoking cigarettes near me		0.67			
F2 Violent incident	5. Hitting an object in the vicinity when angry	2.38	0.81	14.0	48.68	0.85
	6. Kicking an object around me on purpose		0.83			
	7. Quarrelling with another person		0.74			
F3 Cultural incident	8. Smelling as if they had not showered in several days	1.97	0.74	11.59	60.28	0.82
	1. Shaking my hand		0.80			
	2. Beginning a conversation with me		0.79			
	3. Seeming more interested in socialising		0.85			
	4. Holding the door for me		0.74			

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy: 0.820  
Bartlett's test of sphericity: 903.674; significance: 0.000.

Factor 2: Violent incidents—include hitting an object in the vicinity when angry, kicking an object in the vicinity on purpose, quarrelling with another person. Therefore, it was named “violent incidents,” and 14.0% of total variances can be explained by it. Factor 3: Cultural incidents—include a variety of protocol and benevolent acts, such as conversation with me, shaking my hand, seeming more interested in socialising, holding the door for me. Therefore, it was named “sociable incidents,” and 11.59% of total variances can be explained by it.

With the application of correlation analysis, we wanted to establish whether there are significant differences between the two groups: factors (F1, F2 and F3) and socio-demographic characterises of the responders (including gender, age, level of education, place of residence). Correlation between perception of incidents and socio-demographic characteristics of residents was measured using linear Pearson correlation coefficient (Table 3).

Correlation analysis has determined that factor 1 shows negative statistical significance in relation to age ( $r = -0.464$ ,  $\text{sig} = 0.000$ ) and place of residence ( $r = -0.384$ ,

Table 3

**Correlation among Perception of Incidents and Socio-Demographic Factors**

		Gender	Age	Level of education	Place of residence
F3	Pearson Correlation	0.073	0.244**	-0.174	0.181
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.440	0.009	0.066	0.056
	N	113	113	113	113
F2	Pearson Correlation	-0.045	-0.154	0.261**	-0.207*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.639	0.103	0.005	0.028
	N	113	113	113	113
F1	Pearson Correlation	-0.080	-0.464**	0.292**	-0.384**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.400	0.000	0.002	0.000
	N	113	113	113	113

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

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

For the value of F1, F2, F3 see Table 2.

sig = 0.000) and positive statistical significance in relation to the level of education ( $r = 0.292$ , sig = 0.002). This means that older people perceived more grungy incidents by foreign tourists than younger respondents and those highly educated residents perceived more grungy behaviour of foreign tourists in the destination than less educated responders.

Factor 2 is positively correlated with the level of education ( $r = 0.261$ , sig = 0.005) and negatively correlated with the place of residence ( $r = -0.207$ , sig = 0.028) meaning that highly educated responders perceived the behaviour of tourists more violent than less educated responders.

Factor 3 is positively correlated with age ( $r = 0.244$ , sig = 0.009), meaning that cultural incidents between residents and tourists are more perceived in younger subjects. Neither of factors 1, 2, 3 did show significant differences regarding the age of the responders.

Since factor 3 showed statistical significance only in relation to the age of the respondents, we can conclude that hypothesis is only partially confirmed, thus out of all socio-demographic parameters only the age category affects the level of cultural interaction. Cultural incidents must be very frequent in order to create cultural interaction between older residents and foreign tourists and to contribute to creating positive perception of foreign tourists in the mind of older residents.

Having obtained significant correlation between factors 1 and 2 factors in relation to place of residence, we have done the analysis of variance (One way Anova) to determine whether there are differences between groups of respondents from different places of their residence (group 1: Novi Sad; group 2: Belgrade; group 3: Sombor).

Using the single factor analysis of variance (One way Anova) we have found that the level of factor 1 differ significantly in relation to place of residence (factor 1  $F(2,110) = 11.5$ , sig = 0.000). F-test compares between-group variability against within-group variability—in this case differences among cities. F-test varies from 1 to  $\infty$  (maximum). If a null hypothesis (no differences among the cities) is falsified

Table 4

**Analysis of Variance Between Groups Place of Residence and Factors 1 and 2 (Dependent Variable)  
(One way ANOVA)**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
F1	Between Groups	10,842	2	5,421	11,487	0,000
	Within Groups	51,911	110	0,472		
	Total	62,754	112			
F2	Between Groups	2,936	2	1,468	2,500	0,087
	Within Groups	64,600	110	0,587		
	Total	67,535	112			

then, this is followed by tests of multiple comparisons among levels of the factor. In this case, the Least Significance Difference (LSD) post hoc analysis is more appropriate, because of the small sample (113 cases). Therefore, we have done the Least Significance Difference (LSD) post hoc analysis to determine in which groups (cities) there are differences in responders answer comparing to dependent variable factor 1 (grungy incident).

Table 5

**Multiple Comparisons among Places of Residence in Perception of Grungy Incidents (Factor 1)  
(LSD Post-Hoc Test Analysis)**

Dependent Variable	(I) Place of residence	(J) Place of residence	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Upper Bound	Lower Bound
F1	Novi Sad	Beograd	0.593*	0.143	0.000	0.308	0.878
		Sombor	0.668*	0.180	0.000	0.311	1.025
	Beograd	Novi Sad	-0.593*	0.143	0.000	-0.878	-0.308
		Sombor	0.075	0.188	0.691	-0.297	0.447
	Sombor	Novi Sad	-0.668*	0.180	0.000	-1.025	-0.311
		Beograd	-0.075	0.188	0.691	-0.447	0.297

\* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Using the LSD post hoc test we found that factor 1 is more pronounced among respondents from Novi Sad then among respondents from Belgrade (dif = 0.593, sig = 0.000) and Sombor (dif = 0.668, sig = 0.000), meaning that respondents from Novi Sad believe that foreign tourists manifested more unpleasant behaviour (grungy incident) than respondents from Belgrade. The least perception of grungy incident in the destination was shown in the answers of responders from Sombor.

### Conclusion

Based on the research, it was found that the relations of residents and tourists have great influence on the development of tourism in a destination. The quality of in-

teraction between tourists and residents contributes to both tourists' experience and perception of the visited destination and residents' acceptance and tolerance for tourist. Moreover, this is crucial for sustainable tourism development and managing a destination.

The results of this study also confirmed that there are significant differences in the perception and acceptance of the behaviour of foreign tourists in regard to age, level of education and place of residence of respondents from Serbia.

Research showed that older responders in the destination perceived more grungy incidents by foreign tourists than younger respondents and those highly educated responders perceived more grungy behaviour of foreign tourists in the destination than less educated responders. Meaning that, older residents and residents with higher education need more cultural incident in the destination to create positive perception of foreign tourists, to accept foreign tourists and to create cultural interaction between them.

Also it should be noted that the place of residence had significantly influenced the acceptance and positive perception of foreign tourists, probably because in each city a specific form of tourism that attracts differently motivated tourists is developed. Respondents from Novi Sad believe that foreign tourists manifested more unpleasant behaviour (grungy incident) than respondents from Belgrade and least perception of the grungy incident in the destination was shown in the answers of responders from Sombor. Motives of tourists to visit a particular destination affect their behaviour in the destination, which is still perceived by the local population and significantly influences their mutual interaction in a destination. For example, residents of Novi Sad, because of the highly visited music festival "EXIT," believed that the grungy and aggressive incidents are far more common, compared to residents from Belgrade where business, urban and cultural tourism are developed and residents from Sombor where transit and urban tourism are developed. Tourists visiting a music event in Novi Sad are primarily younger tourists who are motivated by low prices in the destination (accommodation, tickets for the festival, low prices of food and alcoholic drinks) and a good atmosphere of the festival. Their behaviour is far more relaxed and they are more prone to violent and grungy incidents during their stay at the destination. Belgrade, despite the high traffic does not have this problem because tourists who are visiting the destination, are motivated by business and city break tourism, and their behaviour is in accordance with their motive for travelling, thus they are far more positively perceived by the local population.

In creating a positive or negative perception of tourists, residents are also affected by the number of tourists at a destination. For example, the music event "EXIT" is visited by 30,000 foreign and domestic tourists during the four days of the event, which is a tenth of the total population of Novi Sad (335,381 inhabitants). About 40,000 foreign tourists visit Novi Sad yearly, so most of the foreign tourists visit Novi Sad during the festival.

On the other hand, considering Belgrade, with 1,690,433 inhabitants, has an annual visit of 367,380 tourists (Institute of Statistic, 2010). Number of foreign tourists in relation to the total population is much smaller than that of Novi Sad, and the

tolerance of the local population of Belgrade towards tourists is much higher, also the interaction of residents and foreign tourists is rated far more positively compared to Novi Sad. In Sombor, which has 92,729 inhabitants, the number of tourists is much lower than in Novi Sad and Belgrade, and on an annual basis amounts to 1,744 tourists (Institute of Statistic, 2010). However, despite the small number of tourists, residents of Sombor were very interested in interacting with foreign tourists, and they have shown the highest tolerance and had a positive perception of foreign tourists. Therefore, from the results of this research it can be concluded that the negative perception of residents is connected with the number of foreign tourists at a destination relative to its population.

The managerial and marketing implications of these results are that the residents need to be considered when developing destination-marketing strategies, especially in the development of target market strategies. Tourism policy makers in Serbia are paying a minor or entirely insignificant attention to the reactions of residents in creating marketing strategies that are focused on foreign demand.

To conclude, for the sustainable development of tourist destinations one of the key elements is the acceptance and tolerance of foreign tourists by the local population. This implies the necessity of continuing research and monitoring of tourist to resident relations. Further research of the tourist to resident relations should be related to the research of a degree of interaction, acceptance and tolerance of tourists considering their nationality and motive of the visit, which would have a great affect on management and marketing of tourist destinations.

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