

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE POSITION IN THE MANAGEMENT HIERARCHY AND DIFFERENCES IN TOURISM MANAGERS' BELIEFS AND ATTITUDES ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE AND TOURISM

Aleksandar Racz (PhD)³

University of Applied Health Sciences Zagreb

aleksandar.racz@zvuh.hr

ABSTRACT

Profound knowledge about the beliefs and attitudes of tourism managers about the two-way relationship between tourism and climate change might be important in order to anticipate, plan and direct the use of mitigation measures and the prevention of negative impacts of climate change on the tourist accommodation industry and *vice versa*. This paper presents differences between managers' attitudes and beliefs about interrelation between climate change and tourism in the light of managers' level of responsibility in the managerial hierarchy in tourist accommodation facilities. For that purpose, an originally designed questionnaire was distributed to 1084 tourist accommodation facilities, representing the total population of all categorized accommodation facilities in Croatia by type (hotels and apart-hotels, tourist resorts and tourist apartments, camps, and marinas) covered by the national list of categorized facilities. Out of the total number of submitted questionnaires, 283 questionnaires were duly completed, representing 26.1% of respondents, including 4.60% of the members of Executive management board or Supervisory board, 46.65% of directors/heads of the facility including members of the Operational management, 19% Quality and environmental managers and 33.56% members of Middle level management staff. Significant differences in beliefs and attitudes were demonstrated between almost all categories of managers at different levels of management, in all three components of attitude, with a p value <0.001. The strongest pro-environmental attitudes and the highest level of environmental awareness were demonstrated by

managers working as part of CEO or members of Executive management and those acting as Quality and environmental managers.

KEY WORDS:attitudes, beliefs, climate change, management, tourism

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing global industries, with high growth rates and has a significant role in national and local economies (Gössling & Hall, 2006), both in Croatia (Ruzic & Demonja, 2013) and worldwide (Amelung, Nicholls & Viner, 2007).

Without any doubt, tourism as a global worldwide industry, significantly contributes to global warming through greenhouse gas emissions. Emissions from tourism, including transport to and from destinations, as well as emissions from accommodation, account for at least 5% of global CO₂ emissions (Simpson et al., 2008, 15).

The importance of evidence based research into the attitudes and beliefs of top managers in the tourism industry has rarely been addressed in tourism sector. A smaller section of researchers have correctly recognized that employees are important organizational stakeholders in tourism (Bohdanowicz, Zientara & Novotna, 2011) and noticed that employees are a functional hub for tourism companies in implementing eco-initiatives (Chan & Hawkins, 2010).

At the same time, while it is generally acknowledged that top managers' attitudes and beliefs about sustainable development might be among the main drivers of corporate responsible environmental behavior (Bansal & Roth, 2000), empirical evidence on the impact of top managers' attitudes on environmental protection is very scarce (Hall et. al, 2016; Šverko Grdić, Krstinić Nižić, & Mamula 2017).

The concept of this study is related to the Rosenberg's three-component structure, an attitude is a whole made up of cognitive (what an individual thinks of an object of attitude), emotional or affective (what an individual feels about an object of attitude) and conative or behavioral components (how an individual behaves toward an object of attitude).

Profound knowledge about all three components of attitudes of tourism managers about the two-way relationship between tourism and climate change might be essential for the prevention of negative impacts of tourism activities on climate and for the implementation of basic sustainable

development principles (Doran & Zimmermann, 2017; Schliephack & Dickinson, 2017).

AIM AND METODOLOGY

The aim of the paper was to analyse and present the relationship between the position in the management hierarchy and reported differences in tourism managers' beliefs and attitudes about the two way interrelation between climate change and tourism.

The study hypothesized that there were significant differences in beliefs and attitudes about climate change and tourism between managers with different areas and levels of responsibility and different positions in the managerial hierarchy.

For the purpose of determining the beliefs and attitudes on the influence of tourist accommodation on climate change among the managers of the Croatian tourist accommodation facilities, a questionnaire originally designed for this research was used (Racz, 2019).

Respondents had to express their degree of agreement with several statements on a 7-point Likert scale (on a scale of 1-7), with grade 1 meaning 'strongly disagree', 4 meaning 'neither agree nor disagree' and 7 meaning 'strongly agree' with the stated statement. The scale examined the cognitive, behavioural and, to a lesser extent, affective component of attitude. The survey was aimed at managers in all categorized accommodation facilities included in the list of categorized facilities on the Ministry of Tourism's web site on 3/7/2019. The survey included managers included in management of categorized hotels and apart-hotels, hotel and apartment complexes, campsites and marinas. In total, top managers from 1084 individual categorized accommodation units were invited to participate in the research.

The survey was conducted through online web site and was completely anonymous, with targeted distribution of survey questionnaires or calls through professional associations, competent bodies, and chambers. It was conducted over a period of 45 days between April and June 2019.

IBM SPSS Statistics software version 25.0 was used in the analysis. Data processing was performed using the Microsoft Excel. Continuous values were shown using medians and interquartile ranges, and the differences between them were analysed by Kruskal-Wallis' test, and presented in a box and whisker plot showing median values, interquartile ranges, minimum and maximum values, and extreme values which differ from the medians by more than 1.5 interquartile ranges.

RESULTS

The issue of climate change has recently become a global environmental, economic and political issue (Bramwell & Lane, 2012), and climate change is increasingly regarded as one of the most serious global environmental problems (Scott, Gössling & Hall, 2012).

Out of the total number of 1084 questionnaires submitted, 283 questionnaires were fully completed, representing 26.1% of the respondents. Since the survey focused on the attitudes of top managers, persons holding a managerial function (CEO or member of a Executive management board or Supervisory board, director of facilities, Quality and environmental manager, Middle level manager, etc.) were asked to fill in the questionnaire. The analysis of the received answers showed that among the respondents who completed the questionnaires there were 13 members of Executive management board or Supervisory board or members of the strategic management or ownership group (4.60%). The largest number of participants, 132 (46.65%), was recorded in the ranks of facility managers or facility managers, or members of operational management, and a relatively significant number of Quality managers or management members, 43 of them (15,19%). The survey also included the participation of as many as 95 (33.56%) Middlelevel management employees who had no significant influence on strategic and developmental decision-making, and who were not the primary target group of this research. However, study has shown that Middle level manager staff were entrusted with the task of completing a survey, which speaks to the manager's approach to scientific research in tourism.

The post hoc comparison of p values showed that there were statistically significant differences in the respondents' attitudes regarding the level of responsibility in the managerial hierarchy for the cognitive component of attitude. It has been proven that there were statistically significant differences when comparing the attitudes of the members of Executive management board or Supervisory board with the attitudes of Quality and environmental managers ($p=0,005$) or comparing their attitudes with those of Middle level management staff ($p<0,001$) as well as when comparing attitudes of Quality and environmental managers with those of Middle level management staff respondents. (see Graph 1).

The significance of the differences was not noted only when comparing the attitudes of the members of Executive management board or Supervisory board with those of the director of the tourist accommodation facility ($p=0,286$), since these were two groups of respondents who are both part of the management level staff. The highest degree of acceptance of the

assertions offered and the highest degree of environmental awareness in the cognitive component have been demonstrated by Quality and environmental managers. The least pronounced eco-conscious attitudes were recorded in the group of respondents belonging to the Middle level management staff ($p < 0,001$).

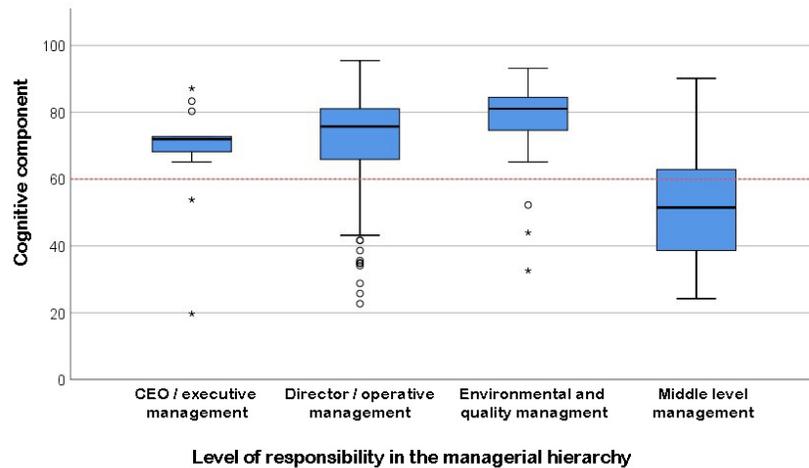
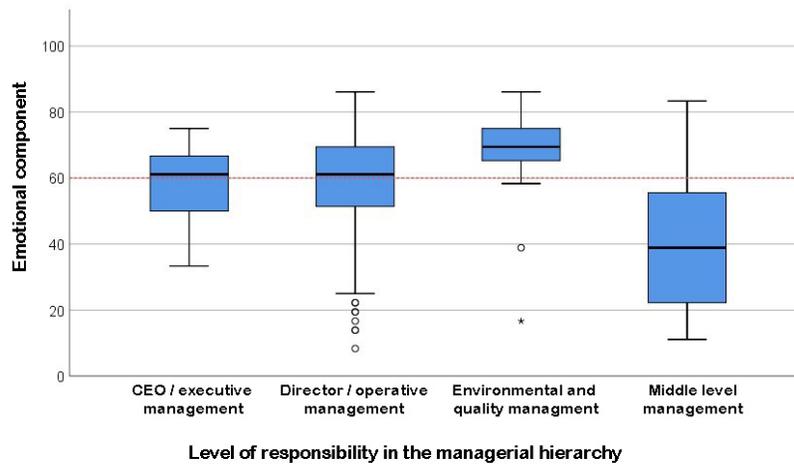


Chart 1 Differences in respondents' attitudes with respect to the level of responsibility in the managerial hierarchy for the cognitive component of attitude presented using the Box and Whisker plot

Furthermore, a post hoc comparison of p values for the affective component of attitude was performed. The results again showed that there were statistically significant differences between the attitudes of members of Executive management board or Supervisory board and the attitudes of Quality and environmental managers ($p = 0,001$). Statistically significant differences were also demonstrated in the attitudes of environmental managers with those of Middle level management staff respondents ($p < 0,001$).

Differences in the affective component of the attitude were not observed when comparing the attitudes of the members of Executive management board or Supervisory board with those of the director of the tourist accommodation facility itself ($p = 0,569$). As expected, the highest degree of acceptance of the claims offered in the affective component was demonstrated by Quality and environmental managers. The least pronounced environmentally conscious attitudes in the emotional component were reported by Middle level management staff (see Chart 2).

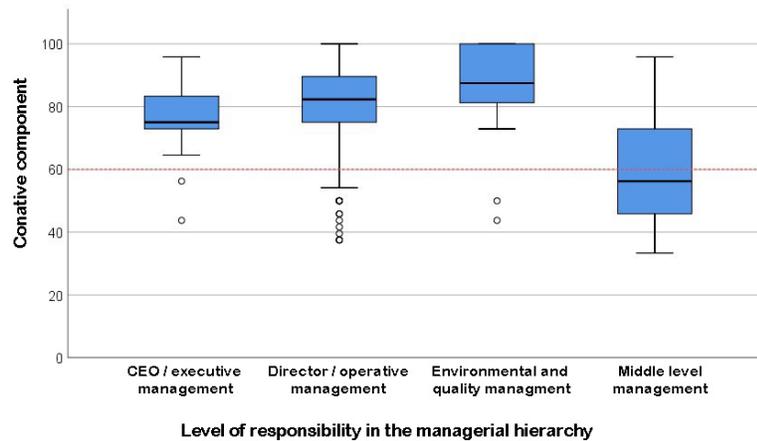


Graph 2 Differences in respondents' attitudes with respect to the level of responsibility in the managerial hierarchy for the emotional component of attitude presented using the Box and Whisker plot.

In the final phase, a post hoc comparison of the p values of the respondents' attitudes was also conducted considering the different levels of responsibility in the managerial hierarchy for the conative, behavioral component of attitude.

Also, when analyzing the conative component, similar results were obtained as well as when analyzing the other two components of attitude.

Graph 3 shows that there were statistically significant differences when comparing the attitudes of managers as members of Executive management board or Supervisory board with those of Quality and environmental managers ($p=0.003$) or comparing their attitudes with those of Middle level management staff ($p=0.003$) and when comparing the views of Quality and environmental managers with those of respondents from Middle management staff ranks ($<0,001$). Statistically significant differences in attitudes were observed when comparing between all other groups of respondents ($p<0,001$). Only the significance of differences in attitudes was not noted when comparing the attitudes of the members of Executive management board or Supervisory board with those of the director of the tourist accommodation facility itself ($p=0,269$).



Graph 3 Differences in respondents' attitudes with respect to the level of responsibility in the managerial hierarchy for the conative, behavioral component of attitude presented using the Box and Whisker plot.

The results of this study provide a series of insights that may be relevant for the development of sustainable practices in the tourism sector and in particular hotel industry in general as they contribute to the understanding of the attitudes of key decision-makers and can provide the basis for predicting their behaviour in relation to the application of environmental protection measures against the negative impact of tourism. Further research should be focused to understand the attitude-behaviour gap in sustainable tourism. (Juvan & Dolincar, 2014).

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

Although the relatively satisfactory response to the survey participation obtained in this survey are actually expected and typical of email surveys (Medina-Munoz & Garcia-Falcon, 2000; Jeong, Oh & Gregoire, 2003), non-response managers from over 70% of accommodation objects leaves room for caution when generalizing the results obtained.

CONCLUSION

All levels of management are responsible "for the systematic implementation of the principle of corporate social responsibility", which ultimately refers to the responsibility of economic activity for activities that go beyond profit-making (Krkač, 2007, 437). The purpose of sustainable tourism is to strike a balance between protecting the environment, preserving cultural integrity,

establishing social justice and promoting economic benefits, meeting the needs of the host population in terms of improving living standards in the short and long term. Tourism development based on the principles of sustainable development must embrace the different interests and attitudes of all other stakeholders who influence tourism development in different, either direct or more often, indirectly indirect ways. Therefore, it is necessary to get to know their views, otherwise it is not possible to develop the positive communication and partnership that is necessary in the process of implementing sustainable tourism development (Ribarić & Smolčić Jurdana, 2006). This research is a small but significant contribution to understanding the beliefs and attitudes of tourism managers.

The beliefs and attitudes of managers in tourist accommodation facilities are the result of various sociodemographic characteristics, among them as a result of the position in managerial hierarchy where stronger pro-ecological attitudes and higher levels of ecological awareness about climate change and the connection between climate change and tourist accommodation has been manifested by managers whose area of working responsibility is the area of Quality and environmental protection or by those who are part of the executive structures.

Explains should be sought in their greater education in the topics of sustainable development, their greater corporate responsibility, and in part in their education in the management of the area of total quality management (Tasquier & Pongiglione, 2017.)

REFERENCES

- Amelung, B., Nicholls, S., & Viner, D. (2007). Implications of global climate change for tourism flows and seasonality. *Journal of Travel research*, 45(3), 285-296. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0047287506295937>
- Bansal, P., & Roth, K. (2000). Why companies go green: A model of ecological responsiveness. *Academy of management journal*, 43(4), 717-736. <https://doi.org/10.5465/1556363>
- Bohdanowicz, P., Zientara, P., & Novotna, E. (2011). International hotel chains and environmental protection: an analysis of Hilton's we care! programme (Europe, 2006–2008). *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 19(7), 797- 816. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2010.549566>
- Bramwell, Bill, and Bernard Lane. "Towards innovation in sustainable tourism research?." *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 20.1 (2012): 1-7. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2011.641559>
- Doran, P. T., & Zimmerman, M. K. (2009). Examining the scientific consensus on climate change. *Eos, Transactions American Geophysical*

Union, 90(3), 22-23. <https://doi.org/10.1029/2009EO030002>, (accessed 15 January 2020)

Gössling, S., & Hall, M. C. (2006). *Tourism and global environmental change: Ecological, social, economic and political interrelationships* (Vol. 4). Taylor & Francis.

Gössling, S., & Scott, D. (2018). The decarbonisation impasse: global tourism leaders' views on climate change mitigation. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 26(12), 2071-2086. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2018.1529770>

Hall, C. M., Dayal, N., Majstorović, D., Mills, H., Paul-Andrews, L., Wallace, C., & Truong, V. D. (2016). Accommodation consumers and providers' attitudes, behaviours and practices for sustainability: A systematic review. *Sustainability*, 8(7), 625. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su8070625>

Jeong, M., Oh, H., & Gregoire, M. (2003). Conceptualizing web site quality and its consequences in the lodging industry. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 22(2), 161-175. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0278-4319\(03\)00016-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0278-4319(03)00016-1)

Juvan, E., & Dolnicar, S. (2014). The attitude-behaviour gap in sustainable tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 48, 76-95. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2014.05.012>

Krkač, K. (2007). Uvod u poslovnuetikuikorporacijskudruštvenuodgovornost. Mate.

Medina-Muñoz, D., & García-Falcón, J. M. (2000). Successful relationships between hotels and agencies. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27(3), 737-762. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383\(99\)00104-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383(99)00104-8)

Racz, A. (2019). Doctoral dissertation summary: Climate changes as determinants in shaping tourism supply-attitudes of management. *Tourism and hospitality management*, 25(2), 439-444. <https://hrcak.srce.hr/230570>

ŠverkoGrdić, Z., KrstinićNižić, M., & Mamula, M. (2017). Povezanostklimatskihpromjenaiturizma: multikriterijskaanalizaocjenjivanjamjeraprilagodbe. *Ekonomskamisaoipraksa*, (1), 171-185. <https://hrcak.srce.hr/183554>

Ribarić, H. M., & Jurdana, D. S. (2016). 23rd Biennial International Congress, Tourism & Hospitality Industry 2016 (THI2016), Trends and Challenges, Opatija, Croatia, 28-29 April 2016. In 23rd Biennial International Congress, Tourism & Hospitality Industry 2016 (THI2016), Trends and Challenges, Opatija, Croatia, 28-29 April 2016.. Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management, University of Rijeka.

Ružić, P., & Demonja, D. (2013). PrirodnaiantropogenaosnovaturizmaHrvatske. *Sociologijaiprostor: časopiszaistraživanjeprostornogaisociokulturnograzvoja*, 51(1 (195)), 45-65. <https://doi.org/10.5673/sip.51.1.3>

- Schliephack, J., & Dickinson, J. E. (2017). Tourists' representations of coastal managed realignment as a climate change adaptation strategy. *Tourism Management*, 59, 182-192.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2016.08.004>, (accessed 5 January 2020)
- Simpson, M. C., Gössling, S., Scott, D., Hall, C. M., & Gladin, E. (2008). Climate change adaptation and mitigation in the tourism sector: frameworks, tools and practices. *Climate change adaptation and mitigation in the tourism sector: frameworks, tools and practices*. <http://www.unep.fr/scp/publications/pdf/DTIx10xPA-ClimateChange.pdf>
- Tasquier, G., & Pongiglione, F. (2017). The influence of causal knowledge on the willingness to change attitude towards climate change: results from an empirical study. *International Journal of Science Education*, 39(13), 1846-1868. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09500693.2017.1355078>