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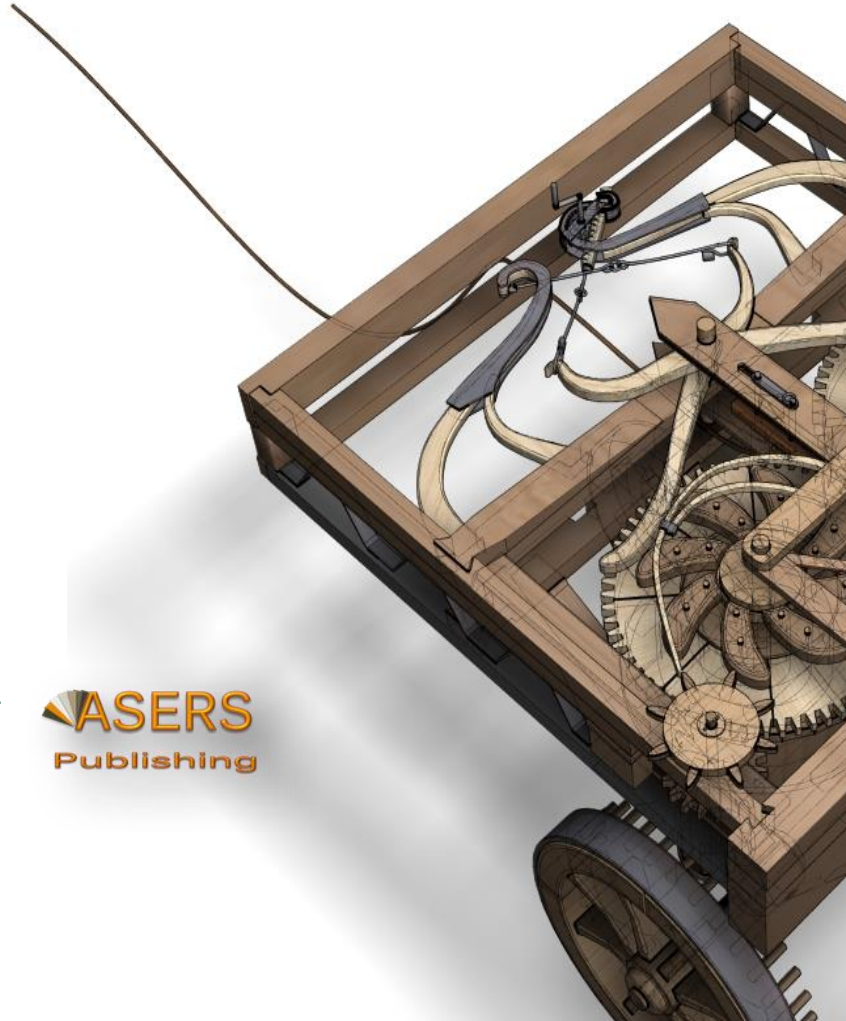
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Overtourism in a City Destination from the Perspective of Entrepreneurs: Evidence from Wrocław, Poland

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Abstract:

This study investigates how overtourism, as perceived by entrepreneurs operating in the local tourism economy, manifests itself in a large city – Wrocław (Poland). Data were collected via a questionnaire in November 2021. The study reveals overtourism symptoms in Wrocław, while their influence on selected city features is not recognized by entrepreneurs as a threat. Negative and positive effects of tourism in Wrocław are identified on the basis of research that considered (via nonprobability sampling) the opinions of entrepreneurial representatives participating in tourism organization and service from several sectors of the tourism economy. The findings presented here will help mitigate the above issues while neutralizing the threat of overtourism and its negative impacts.

Keywords: overtourism; tourism economy; urban tourism; Wrocław city; Poland.

JEL Classification: Q01; Z32.

Introduction

Tourist traffic concentration in attractive agglomerations in excess of their tourist capacity can result in overtourism. Consequences of overtourism include overcrowding, straining of physical and emotional resources, and a shift in local attitudes toward tourists and, indirectly, toward tourist entrepreneurs, generating and shaping

the flow of tourist migration to a given city. Overtourism results from tourism market activity and local socio-economic policy (UNWTO 2018). Manifestations of overtourism, especially its negative consequences, are visible in tourism destinations (Wendt *et al.* 2022; Yuval 2022): among others, in urban units (Santos-Rojo *et al.* 2023) where tourism is excessively concentrated in space and time (Becker 2013; Butler and Dodds 2022; Cooke *et al.* 2022; Kruczek 2019; Milano *et al.* 2018, 2019). This phenomenon should not only be perceived in a negative context (Borzyszkowski 2018) but also from the perspective of entrepreneurs who generate tourism by shaping and commercializing the offerings. Moreover, the impact of overtourism on an agglomeration is ambiguous when an assessment thereof is made from the perspective of tourists, entrepreneurs and residents, whose interests in a destination do not always coincide (Kruczek 2018; Kruczek *et al.* 2019; Milano 2017; Szromek *et al.* 2020; Walas 2019b).

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Wrocław, Poland was experiencing overtourism. In 2018, about 5.35 million tourists visited Wrocław, with a simultaneous, steady increase of foreigners along with a 7% increase in tourist numbers overall in 2016–2018 (Beeline Research & Consulting 2018). The number of tourists who stayed in lodging establishments in Wrocław grew by 40% between 2014 and 2018 (*Opracowanie... 2019*). The Wrocław tourism economy is well developed, as evidenced by the following data: Defert's population density (crowding) index: 4.78; Baretje-Defert's tourism development index: 21.78; Charvat's tourism intensity index: 3520.82; Schneider's index: 2183.59; or the number of enterprises operating in the tourism industry (here: accommodation, gastronomy, tourism organizers), totaling 4069 (GUS 2020).

The context of the research was Wrocław, an agglomeration with over 600,000 inhabitants, which in its dynamic development considers residents' expectations. For example, in the ranking of the Mercer consulting company, Wrocław was ranked 100th as "The best city to live" in 2019. Wrocław is popular among many foreign visitors and its tourist attractiveness is based on a centuries-old and highly diversified cultural heritage. In 2016, Wrocław was the European Capital of Culture, and since 2019, it has been the UNESCO City of Literature. It is also a city with rapidly developing infrastructure for meetings. In recent years, Wrocław authorities have taken actions to illustrate the importance of tourism. Opportunities for tourism development are created, which cannot happen without the involvement of local tourism industry entrepreneurs. They constitute the primary tourism stakeholders in Wrocław. Therefore, it becomes necessary to determine whether this local tourism policy direction, especially in the face of the COVID-19 epidemic (Goodgrer and Kieran 2020; Walas 2019a; Walas and Kruczek 2020; Wen *et al.* 2020), should be continued in the coming years and whether it is an action leading to the tourism sustainable development in Wrocław. Given the fact that there is still limited research in this area, this study investigates how the phenomenon of overtourism, as perceived by entrepreneurs operating in the local tourism economy, manifests itself in a large city of Wrocław. In particular, the study examines the circumstances, factors, and manifestations of overtourism in a large agglomeration of high tourist attractiveness from the viewpoint of local tourism entrepreneurs directly involved in serving and shaping the tourist traffic in Wrocław.

1. Review of Literature

1.1. Overtourism

Overtourism has grown in popularity across a variety of media (Fedyk *et al.* 2020). Currently constituting a global challenge (Milano *et al.* 2018), it refers to "the impact of tourism on a destination, or parts thereof, that excessively influences perceived quality of life of citizens and/or quality of visitors experiences in a negative way" (UNWTO 2018, 4). Milano *et al.* (2019, 1) refer to it as "the excessive growth of visitors leading to overcrowding in areas where residents suffer the consequences of temporary and seasonal tourism peaks, which have caused permanent changes to their lifestyles, denied access to amenities and damaged their general well-being". According to Goodwin (2017) in overtourism stage, locals, hosts, guests and tourists feel that there are far too many tourists and the quality of life particularly for locals in the destination is not satisfactory. The Center for Responsible Travel (CREST) (2018, 1) characterizes the phenomenon as "tourism that has moved beyond the limits of acceptable change in a destination due to quantity of visitors, resulting in degradation of the environment and infrastructure, diminished travel experience, wear and tear on built heritage, and/or negative impacts on residents". Overtourism is further defined by Koens (2018, 7) as "tourism that exceeds the limits of acceptable change in a destination or parts thereof, with regards to the environment, perceived quality of life and/or experience quality", while Kruczek (2019, 46) refers to overtourism is a "negative effect of mass tourism on host communities and/or the natural environment". A common feature of the numerous overtourism definitions is the negative connotation (Koh 2020).

Overtourism can be discussed in a variety of contexts. First, it indicates a surpassing of a city's capacity to receive and absorb tourists (Liberatore *et al.* 2019). Second, one should emphasize that the excessive presence

of tourists lowers local inhabitants' quality of life. Finally, overtourism deteriorates the quality of tourist experiences (Murzyn-Kupisz and Holuj 2020). Overall, it is treated as a dysfunction of contemporary tourism.

Overtourism is a complex phenomenon, largely owing to the dynamic development of tourism and effects that are difficult to predict. It is therefore a challenge for people dealing with destination management (Zmysłony and Pilarczyk 2020). Overtourism has contributed to the emergence of such unprecedented phenomena as anti-tourism marches, including those in Barcelona, Dubrovnik, and Venice (Alexis 2017; Seraphin *et al.* 2019c). The effects of overtourism are felt in many other spheres of socio-economic life. All these features, as well as the intensity of the phenomenon, have led to an increase in research interest in the problem. Recently, several relevant publications have appeared. A significant part of the research concerns Europe, including France (Becker 2013), Palma de Mallorca, Paris, Berlin, Reykjavik (Milano *et al.* 2018), Majorca, Amsterdam (Milano *et al.* 2019), Norway (Oklevik *et al.* 2019), Dubrovnik (Panayiotopoulos and Pisano 2019), Budapest (Smith *et al.* 2019), Munich (Namberger *et al.* 2019), Zakynthos (Lidzbarski 2020), Florence, Rome, Prague, and Krakow (Kruczek 2018, 2019). The problem of overtourism has also been considered in other countries and regions of the world, including the Philippines, Thailand (Cruz and Legaspi 2019; Hess, 2019), Costa Rica (Cañada 2019), and Africa (Kepher-Gona 2019).

One should emphasize the thematic diversity of these analyses. There are studies on government actions to reduce overtourism effects (Maingi 2019), the local communities' quality of life (Gowreesunkar and Seraphin 2019), and the role of social media in generating excessive tourist traffic (Jang and Park, 2020). Most scientific studies examine overtourism in predominantly large urban agglomerations (*e.g.*, Amore *et al.* 2020; Bouchon and Rauscher 2019). However, other destinations, such as coastal or rural areas, are also exposed to this phenomenon (European Parliament 2018). Hence, overtourism, occurring in many places in the world, regardless of the area type, requires new, detailed research.

1.2. Overtourism and Stakeholders

Overtourism, owing to its complexity, can be analyzed in many respects. The stakeholders' perspective is particularly important (Atzori 2020). The primary groups of stakeholders include residents, other local users of the city, visitors, industry players, policy-makers and destination management organizations, and wider municipal stakeholders (UNWTO 2018). This is because overtourism is perceived differently by particular groups of interested entities. In addition, it negatively affects tourists and local residents alike, despite benefiting tourism entrepreneurs (Fedyk *et al.* 2020).

Examples show that in cities and other destinations where overtourism symptoms are visible, the approach of the local community and tourist entrepreneurs is different. While the former group notices a growing problem, the latter tries to ignore it (García-Hernández *et al.* 2019). The attitude of tourist entrepreneurs, who are naturally interested in the increase (at least to a certain level) of tourist traffic, is particularly interesting: tourists are often the primary recipients of their services and products. Additionally, considerations regarding overtourism should cover a broader context. The importance of tourism for many destinations is often forgotten. Tourism drives economic activity, income, and employment. It has many advantages, especially when visitors use the accommodation or catering services of local entrepreneurs (Hospers 2019).

One should also consider the differences between residents and entrepreneurs in perceiving the phenomenon at hand. For instance, local residents' protests against increasing tourist traffic take on understandable significance to entrepreneurs, who fear being subject to criticism and ridicule. This is especially true when residents demand a policy to reduce the visitors number, which can adversely affect tourism businesses' profitability (European Parliament 2018). An additional source of conflict between residents and entrepreneurs may be the limited availability of basic goods and services for residents as a result of a clear shift of local entrepreneurs toward addressing visitors' needs (González 2018). The spreading of overtourism makes it difficult to look for solutions to eliminate or at least limit the phenomenon. This is due to the lack of common understanding of the specific problem among various interested parties (McCool and Lime 2001). Lack of communication is an additional risk (Koens *et al.* 2018). Despite the conflicts between groups of tourism stakeholders, there is often compliance on the role of tourism in a destination's development. Interestingly, many stakeholders think positively about tourism and tourism development. This is verified by the example of Dubrovnik. Although the city is under considerable pressure during periods of increased tourist traffic, one cannot talk about any tourism-related phobia or antagonism among its inhabitants. This is because Dubrovnik's economy relies on tourism (Abbasian *et al.* 2020).

These considerations lead to a broader reflection on establishing cooperation between stakeholders to reduce overtourism. The issue owes its significance to the interdisciplinarity of tourism in general (Okumus *et al.*

2018). The 11 strategies articulated by the UNWTO (2018) attempt to communicate with and engage local stakeholders. Such actions are necessary; they may result in creating a general framework for managing the phenomenon and for defining the stages of actions taken (Plichta 2019). From the viewpoint of limiting overtourism effects, these actions should be undertaken by all stakeholders operating in a specific destination (Jang and Park 2020). Developing specific actions requires the cooperation of many stakeholders (Šegota *et al.* 2017). Stakeholders' cooperation is about more than relations between particular parties at a given level. Effective action to reduce overtourism demands the engagement of the government and regional and local authorities (Dodds and Butler 2019b). These considerations imply additional problems that are especially evident in developed destinations with a large and diverse group of stakeholders. The multitude of tourism stakeholders should lead to a discussion, for example, on selecting a mediator or leader to manage the conflict in question (Zmysłony and Pilarczyk 2020). The ability to influence various stakeholder groups' behavior should be a key success factor (Ivars-Baidal *et al.* 2019). Such a well-thought-out strategy will allow management of the situation in the context of measures taken to combat overtourism while considering the specificity of the destination management process.

1.3. Overtourism versus COVID-19

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, urban tourism had developed quite dynamically (Goodwin 2017; Nientied 2020). Many destinations globally were affected or threatened by overtourism, but the pandemic brought about a complete change (Vegnuti 2020) and sidetracked any debate about overtourism altogether (Gössling 2020). The pandemic radically affected the tourism economy, especially in destinations experienced high flows of international tourism, where people were more prone to falling for and dying from COVID-19 (Farzanegan *et al.* 2020). In many places so far affected by overtourism, people have begun talking about "no tourism" (Koh 2020). Of course, the pandemic did not influence the perception of overtourism; it is still treated as a negative phenomenon. Moreover, the pandemic has partially "strengthened" the negative image of traveling in the public health context (Godovykh and Ridderstaat 2020). Nevertheless, it is undeniable that COVID-19 contributed to the global slowdown in tourism, which reduced both environmental pollution and overtourism (Sigala 2020).

Additionally, one could mention the unexpected opportunity to "reevaluate" tourism development plans in destinations hitherto affected by overtourism toward sustainable development (Wen *et al.* 2020). The pandemic triggered other, often unprecedented, phenomena. City residents fleeing the pandemic headed for second homes located in rural areas, which aroused opposition from local communities. The main complaints against tourists included the potential overload of medical and other facilities in those areas. For example, in Norway, there was a travel ban from one's county of residence or on staying in second homes (Baum and Hai 2020). COVID-19 policies have put the tourism economy into forced hibernation (Bausch *et al.* 2020). The temporary break in tourism caused by the COVID-19 pandemic does not mean, however, that the challenges of overtourism will disappear. The situation can be starting point for reflections (Lehto *et al.* 2020). This can give an opportunity to rethink and offer solutions for overtourism (Koh 2020).

1.4. Development of Hypotheses

There are three main types of activities related to overtourism: (1) prevention, most often implemented by city authorities and reflected in local strategies and development plans (although not always effectively put into practice); (2) eliminating or reducing negative overtourism effects undertaken by city authorities or tourist organizations and based on special action plans; and (3) adaptation activities introduced by tourism stakeholders to acclimate the city to excessive tourist traffic, often performed in consultation with local tourism entrepreneurs or in line with inhabitants' expectations. Such activities require a multifaceted approach to overtourism that includes diagnostic recognition of threats to stakeholders (Forlicz *et al.* 2017) and destinations. This current study focuses on the third type of the above-mentioned actions to formulate the research hypotheses.

The research on overtourism perception by entrepreneurs is limited to individual case studies (Olearnik *et al.* 2017; *Strategia...* 2017). Tourism entrepreneurs' activities increase tourist traffic and may induce a rise in overtourism and its negative impact on the city space, its inhabitants, and other tourism stakeholders. Nijs (2017) indicates that people working or managing in the sphere of tourism services opt more explicitly for the growth of tourist traffic in the urban space. Ignoring tourism entrepreneurs' opinions on overtourism (Szromek *et al.* 2020) may lead to adopting wayward directions of city tourism development and disturbing its sustainable character (Eichelberger *et al.* 2020). Tourism entrepreneurs expect local authorities to pursue a targeted tourism policy that would ensure smooth functioning, development, and stability of their business when growing tourist traffic causes threats that they recognize (Devkota *et al.* 2020). At the same time, the seldom-investigated attitudes of tourism

entrepreneurs toward overtourism are inconsistent (Szromek *et al.* 2020), as the tolerance among residents (in part being entrepreneurs) toward an excessive inflow of tourists depends on local and private interests (McCool and Lime 2001; Saveriades 2000). Kruczek and Szromek (2020) imply that the key social value indicated by tourism entrepreneurs in a large urban agglomeration is the prevention of negative effects of excessive tourist traffic. Against this background, one may, with due caution, propose the following:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): *Tourist entrepreneurs notice the negative impact of tourism on their city.*

It is not easy to identify the values adopted in the business models of tourism enterprises in large agglomerations regarding entrepreneurs' attitudes toward excessive tourism. A study by Kruczek and Szromek (2020), applying Doxey's model, highlights differences (euphoria or irritation) among tourism entrepreneurs concerning overtourism when conducting business with or without a sustainable development assumption. It is noted that overtourism erodes the socio-cultural tissue and local identities of a city, which results in "tourist enclaves" (Kubicki 2017). The overtourism discourse points to the need for voluntary compromises between tourism entrepreneurs and district residents, aiming to effectively prevent the growing problems related to tourist traffic and its spatial concentration (Kruczek and Szromek 2020; Russo and Scarnato 2018). As reported by Nijs (2017), residents' tolerance of social difficulties caused by excessive tourist traffic may be higher owing to economic benefits when they work in or manage tourist businesses. Such tolerance increases in city-center districts with developed tourist functions. Kruczek and Szromek (2020) indicate that inhabitants and entrepreneurs from individual districts differ in their opinions regarding the observed moderate tourist traffic in urban spaces. Hence, the following hypothesis can be put forward:

Hypothesis 2 (H2): *Perception of overtourism symptoms by tourism entrepreneurs depends on the district in which the business is conducted.*

There are questions about overtourism impact on the destination itself, with an argument that it can be a limiting and cumulative phenomenon which shapes the potential decline of a destination's tourism sector (Benner 2020). Kruczek and Szromek (2020) state that the key value for tourism entrepreneurs taking advantage of the tourist traffic in an agglomeration lies in creating the city tourist offerings and the opportunity to develop their own business. Of note, entrepreneurs tend to be more optimistic than residents when it comes to their outlook on tourism (Kruczek and Szromek 2020). Research concerning the spheres and types of tourist entrepreneurship indicates that overtourism and its negative impacts are exacerbated by an increase in new and non-institutionalized forms of tourist accommodation (Sarantokou and Terkenli 2019), including changes in the market of residential real estate in a tourist agglomeration converted into apartments for temporary rental (Plichta 2018). Negative phenomena caused by overtourism are also observed in tourist attractions, including those taking the form of commercial ventures (Kruczek 2019), and in tourism-related services (*e.g.*, catering, transport, etc.) implemented in the night-time economy (Pinke-Sziva *et al.* 2019; Sommer and Helbrecht 2017). The referenced positions and theses imply the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3 (H3): *The symptoms of overtourism perceived by entrepreneurs are dependent on their economic activity sector.*

2. Methodology

This current study analyzed secondary and primary data, including relevant literature, tourism development plans in Wrocław (Beeline Research & Consulting 2018; Galar *et al.* 2006; *Strategia...* 2017), reports on tourist traffic, Statistics Poland data, and website data. Primary research was carried out in Wrocław in November 2021 and consisted of a survey on overtourism from the perspective of local tourist entrepreneurs. A questionnaire was applied that included the opinions of 160 people from the tourism sector in the Wrocław agglomeration: tourist entrepreneurs representing various sectors of the tourism economy (tour guides, tour operators, hoteliers, operators of catering facilities and tourist attractions) who were considered experienced observers with established views on tourism-related phenomena in the city space and tourism economy. The indicated group involved respondents experiencing positive and negative effects of tourist traffic both in their everyday lives and in business activities. Nonprobability sampling served to reflect the generic (quantitative and qualitative) structure of the tourism enterprise sector in Wrocław.

The surveyed group was diverse demographically (respondents were aged between 24 and 65+ years, with women and men in almost equal proportion) and represented different tourism economy sectors and city districts where their business was located. All 5 districts of Wrocław were represented: Fabryczna, Krzyki, Psie Pole, Stare Miasto, and Śródmieście (Table 1). The X1 variable denotes the city district in which the tourist

business was located. In turn, the aggregated types of tourism economy sectors (X2 variable) represented by the respondents were: tourist traffic service and organization, accommodation services, tourism-related services, and catering services (Table 2).

Table 1. Distribution of respondents depending on tourist business location in Wrocław

Location of tourist business (city district) (X1)	Number of respondents	Percentage of the respondent group
Fabryczna	29	18
Krzyki	35	22
Psie Pole	27	17
Stare Miasto	24	15
Śródmieście	45	28

Source: Authors' own study.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents depending on tourist business sector in Wrocław

Tourist business sector (X2)	Number of respondents	Percentage of the respondent group
Tourist traffic service and organization	84	52,5
Accommodation services	10	6,25
Tourism-related services	14	8,75
Catering services	52	32,5

Source: Authors' own study.

The questionnaire took into account 11 groups of variables, with 2 key variables selected for in-depth analyses referring to the surveyed entrepreneurs' opinions: the evaluation of the city socio-economic development, in particular the tourism impact (including overtourism) on the local tourism economy (P1), and the evaluation of selected Wrocław city features, the nature of which might also indicate overtourism (P2). Variable P1 included questions assessing tourism impact on the city (Table 3), while variable P2 assessed selected features of Wrocław (Table 4). In addition, the authors drew on their own professional experiences to make sound inferences.

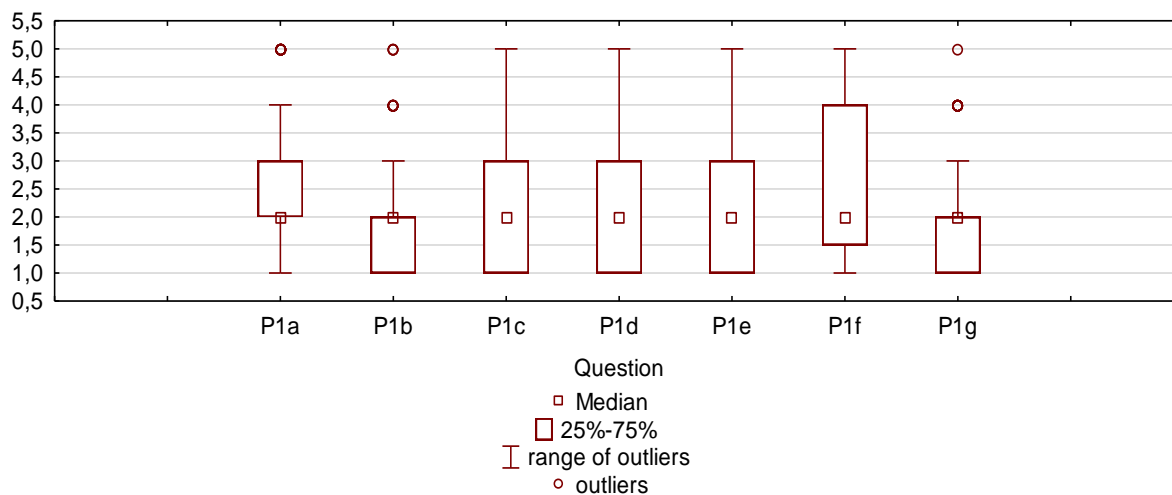
3. Results

A total of 160 respondents who resided and worked in Wrocław participated in this study. Nonprobability and qualitative sampling methods were applied. In-depth analyses of the P1 variable were carried out. The P1 variable included questions assessing tourism impact on the environment (P1a), economic development (P1b), local community (P1c), tourist values (P1d), tourist infrastructure (P1e), communication and transport (P1f), and the city tourist offerings (P1g). The respondents answered the questions (using the Likert scale) by choosing from among the following possible answers: I strongly disagree (1), I rather disagree (2), I don't know / It's hard to say (3), I rather agree (4), I strongly agree (5).

Owing to the nature of the investigated variables, the suitable statistical measures to present the outcomes were positional. The Statistica 13 software served to analyze the results and prepare their graphic representation (Figure 1 and 2). The study results (Figure 1) show that at least half (and in most questions about impact, as many as 75%) of the respondents disagreed at some level with the existence of symptoms of a negative tourism impact (including overtourism) on Wrocław. Thus, hypothesis H1 was not supported.

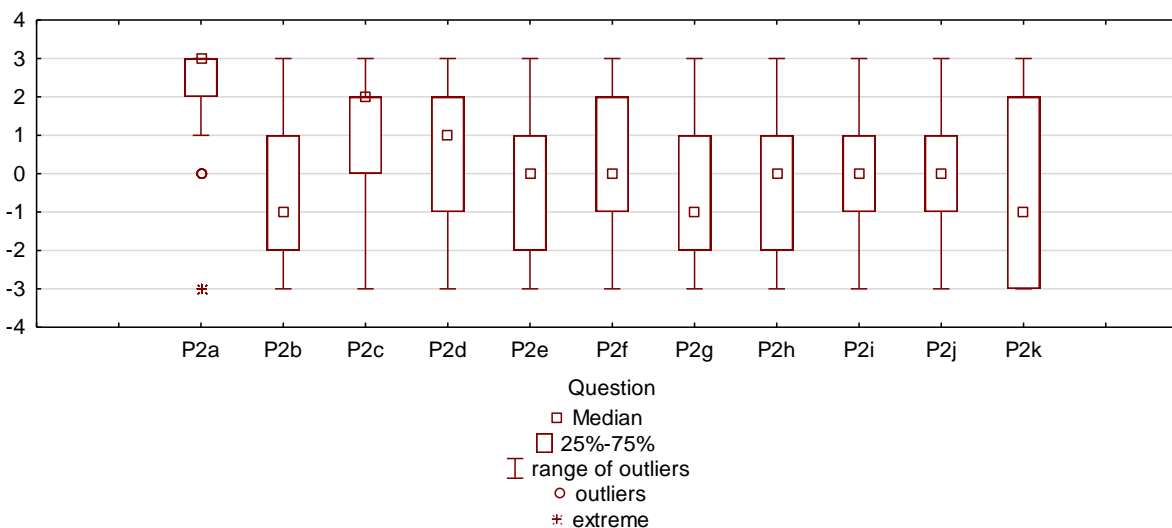
The respondents evaluated selected features of Wrocław, constituting the second tested variable (P2), on a scale from -3 (completely disagreeing with a given feature) to +3 (completely agreeing with a given feature), with the opinion closer to +3 meaning that the feature was better assessed. The rated features of Wrocław were: the attractiveness of the city for tourists (P2a), air cleanliness (P2b), cultural and entertainment offerings (P2c), infrastructure (P2d), population density (P2e), safety in the city (P2f), the level of housing prices (P2g), the level of prices in gastronomy (P2h), the level of tourist services prices (P2i), the number of tourists (P2j), and the number of parking lots (P2k) (Figure 2, Table 4).

Figure 1. Respondents' evaluation of Wroclaw socio-economic development and the impact of overtourism on the local tourism economy (P1 variable)



Source: Authors' own study.

Figure 2. Respondents' evaluation of selected Wroclaw features (P2 variable)



Source: Authors' own study.

The analysis of the results (Figure 2) shows that various features of the city were assessed differently, although positively in general. There was a clear consensus of opinions on the city attractiveness for tourists (P2a) and a strong differentiation of opinions on the appropriate number of parking lots (P2k). The negative assessment of several Wroclaw features is noteworthy: a high level of air pollution (P2b), high housing prices (P2g), and the number (lack) of parking lots (P2k). These features are treated in the subject literature as symptoms identifying overtourism in a city.

The relationships between variables X1 and X2 and the answers to individual questions under variables P1 and P2 were assessed with the chi-squared independence test (Table 3), with the null hypothesis (H_0) that variables X_i and P_i were independent. The null hypothesis of the chi-squared test means that there is no relationship between the categories of the population variables. The chi-squared test is used to verify whether there is a statistically significant difference between the expected and observed frequencies in one or more categories of the contingency table (McHugh 2013). Variables X1 and X2 were measured on the nominal scale, and variables P1 and P2 were measured on the ordinal scale.

When assessing the relationship between variable X1 and individual questions within variable P1 (Table 3), it can be concluded that for questions P1b, P1c, P1e, P1f, and P1g, the results of the chi-squared maximum likelihood ratio test ($p = 0.28978$), with the adopted significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$, indicate no grounds for rejecting the verified null hypothesis (H_0) – *i.e.*, the district in which a respondent conducts tourist business is not significant

for their assessment of the socio-economic development of Wrocław. In turn, for questions P1a and P1d, the results of the chi-squared maximum likelihood ratio test, with the adopted significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$, indicate rejection of the verified hypothesis H_0 . Entrepreneurs running tourist businesses in various Wrocław districts differently assess the impact of tourism on the city environment (P1a) and tourist attractions (P1d).

Table 3. Relationship between the district of the respondents' tourist business (X1), the tourism economy sector (X2), and the socio-economic development of Wrocław (P1)

Variable P1: Socio-economic development of Wrocław	X1		X2	
	Chi squared	p-value	Chi squared	p-value
P1a: There are signs of a negative impact of tourism on Wrocław environment	28.14	0.0304*	23.58	0.0232*
P1b: There are signs of a negative impact of tourism on Wrocław economic development	18.60	0.2898	13.38	0.3423
P1c: There are signs of a negative impact of tourism on Wrocław local community	18.00	0.3241	26.60	0.0088*
P1d: There are signs of a negative impact of tourism on Wrocław tourist attractions	29.54	0.0205*	25.41	0.0130*
P1e: There are signs of a negative impact of tourism on Wrocław tourist infrastructure	16.61	0.4110	22.09	0.0365*
P1f: There are signs of a negative impact of tourism on Wrocław communication and transport	21.74	0.1519	19.30	0.0815
P1g: There are signs of a negative impact of tourism on Wrocław tourist offerings	17.52	0.3529	10.82	0.5443

* Values significant at the level of 0.05.

Source: Authors' own study.

When assessing the relationship between variable X2 and individual questions within variable P1, it can be stated that for questions P1b, P1f, and P1g, the results of the chi-squared highest likelihood ratio test, with the adopted significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$, indicate no grounds for rejecting the verified hypothesis H_0 . The sector of the tourism economy in which the respondent conducts tourist business is irrelevant for their assessment of the socio-economic development of Wrocław. For questions P1a, P1c, P1d, and P1e, the results of the chi-squared highest likelihood ratio test, with the adopted significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$, indicate rejection of the verified hypothesis H_0 – i.e., respondents running businesses in various tourism economy sectors differently assess the socio-economic development of Wrocław.

Table 4. Relationship between the district of the respondents' tourist business (X1), the tourism economy sector (X2), and Wrocław features (P2)

Variable P2: Features of Wrocław	Median	X1		X2	
		Chi squared	p-value	Chi squared	p-value
P2a: unattractive for tourists / attractive for tourists	3	13.61	0.628	12.29	0.423
P2b: excessively polluted air / no polluted air	-1	17.10	0.844	15.78	0.608
P2c: insufficient cultural and entertainment offer / rich cultural and entertainment offer	2	34.16	0.082	17.40	0.496
P2d: backward in infrastructure / with modern infrastructure	1	17.77	0.814	15.98	0.594
P2e: too crowded / not crowded	0	41.80	0.014*	28.72	0.052
P2f: dangerous / safe	0	33.55	0.093	23.83	0.161
P2g: too high housing prices / reasonable housing prices	-1	27.43	0.285	15.83	0.605
P2h: gastronomy prices are rising excessively / the increase in gastronomy prices is moderate	0	19.78	0.709	22.53	0.209
P2i: prices of services in tourist zones are excessively high / prices of services in tourist zones are in line with the quality	0	28.15	0.254	18.38	0.431
P2j: too few tourists / too many tourists		22.02	0.578	18.21	0.442
P2k: not enough car parks / enough car parks	-1	0.22	0.376	14.02	0.728

* Values significant at the level of 0.05.

Source: Authors' own study.

When assessing the relationship between variable X1 and individual questions within variable P2, it can be concluded that only the answers to question P2e depend on the respondents' tourist business district. However, in the X2 variable, no different positions of the respondents were observed depending on their tourism sector. In other cases, the assessment of Wrocław features does not depend on the district of tourist business or the type of tourism sector. In Figure 1 and in Tables 2 and 3, it is clearly visible that the research results are ambiguous. On the basis of the study results, one can conclude that research hypotheses H2 and H3, regarding the perception of overtourism symptoms in Wrocław (depending, respectively, on the location and sector of the respondents' economic activity), were not supported. The examined features are perceived differently by the groups of respondents (from various sectors and districts) – namely, variable X1: P1a, P1d, P2e (for research hypothesis H2) and variable X2: P1a, P1c, P1d, P1e (for research hypothesis H3).

4. Discussion and Conclusion

This study investigated how the phenomenon of overtourism, as perceived by local entrepreneurs manifested itself in a large city of Wrocław, Poland. According to the study results, local entrepreneurs did not agree with the symptoms of a negative tourism impact (*i.e.*, overtourism) on the space of Wrocław. On this basis, hypothesis H1 was not supported. This issue is of crucial importance because the studied phenomenon is usually perceived negatively, if one considers the opinions of various stakeholder representatives, with a frequent emphasis on the dominance of such factors as environmental degradation, crowding, or capacity overload (Atzori 2020). On the other hand, individuals working in the tourism sector are not inherently “more tolerant” of overtourism. They can point out its negative effects, while those who have nothing to do with tourism can recognize positive effects of the phenomenon (Muler Gonzalez *et al.* 2018). Hypotheses H2 and H3 were also not supported by the study results. Data for this study were collected during a period of anti-tourism movements (mainly articulated by local authorities and agglomeration residents), concerning the negative effects of overtourism (Seraphin *et al.* 2019a). The presented research fills a gap in the literature regarding tourism entrepreneurs' perception of overtourism impact on the agglomeration space, as most studies focus on assessing the impact of overtourism on the comfort and quality of life of residents and the direction of actions taken by local authorities to reduce the negative effects of excessive tourist traffic. The position of tourist entrepreneurs is disregarded, which is surprising because they are the main driving force behind the dynamization of tourist traffic to a given destination (and further, its market position and attractiveness). It is worth pointing out, following Dodds and Butler (2019a), that tourism stakeholders lack unity of goals in the field of local tourism development. Moreover, it is indicated that tourism is occasionally (and wrongly) recognized as being responsible for negative opinions and dissatisfaction of local residents (Smith *et al.* 2019). At the same time, we do not give voice to the entrepreneurs from the local tourism market, who are often also residents of a given destination and for whom tourism development and dynamization are conditions for survival. Thus, the postulated and implemented restriction of (over)tourism in agglomerations by the authorities of many cities, and even proclaiming an exit from tourism, is too far-reaching a strategy that may not allow for achieving sustainable development on a given destination tourism market (Seraphin *et al.* 2019b).

The considerations in this paper are of particular importance from the viewpoint of the current tourism situation related to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Although in most world destinations (including urban ones), the problem of overtourism has practically ceased to be visible in 2020-2021, one cannot expect that the situation will repeat itself in the coming years. The process of global tourism reaching “normality” will certainly take at least several months, if not years. This is confirmed by the OECD forecasts that the revival will take place no sooner than 2021 or 2022 for domestic urban tourism and no sooner than 2024 for international tourism (OECD 2020). Hence, the article deliberations on the perception of overtourism by Wrocław entrepreneurs during the COVID-19 pandemic may be an important starting point for determining the future directions of tourism development in this and other destinations. Wrocław, like other destinations, should take specific actions to support and consolidate the sustainable development of the tourism function (Wen *et al.* 2020). Virtually all entities interested (or not interested) in the development of tourism must be involved in this process (Lehto *et al.* 2020). The presented research results clearly indicate that these efforts should involve tourism entrepreneurs, whose view of overtourism may differ significantly from that of, for instance, residents or visitors (tourists and one-day visitors). The “calming down” of the situation in most urban destinations in 2020-2021 may therefore encourage discussion and, consequently, cooperation toward the development of tourism that will meet the expectations of all stakeholder groups, including city authorities, entrepreneurs, tourists, visitors, and residents. The process of further development of the Wrocław tourism market is currently becoming a challenge for all tourism stakeholders. The phenomena accompanying overtourism affect Wrocław agglomeration, which in turn brings the

need for an action model to eliminate or limit the effects of overtourism visible to various types of tourism stakeholders (Fedyk *et al.* 2020). The emerging tendencies to determine tourism growth, especially desired by local entrepreneurs, should be verified so as not to expand any conflict with the stakeholders who perceive overtourism negatively.

5. Theoretical and Practical Implications

This current study fills a theoretical gap in the overtourism field. The authors of this current study analyzed this phenomenon in terms of its perception by a specific group – *i.e.*, representatives of the agglomeration tourism industry. So far, numerous discussions on overtourism have mainly focused on the attitude of inhabitants and tourists as the basic stakeholders of tourism. The in-depth analysis highlights the viewpoint of another group (entrepreneurs), thus enriching the existing overtourism literature. This current study is among the first ones focusing on Wrocław agglomeration. It contributes to the limited knowledge on overtourism in both cognitive and practical categories.

5.1 Theoretical Implications

The current study verified the methodological assumptions regarding the adopted methods of measuring tourist traffic concentration. Our research contributes to the determination and distinction of partial and synthetic indicators of current tourist traffic dysfunctions noticed in large cities. The applied variables – agglomeration districts and tourism economy sectors – confirm the accuracy of the assumptions regarding the differentiation of stakeholders' opinions on overtourism in Wrocław. The results may constitute a reference point for continuing research on overtourism (cf. Dodds and Butler 2019a, 2019b; Dredge 2017; Kruczek 2019; Milano *et al.* 2018, 2019; Seraphin *et al.* 2019c) in Wrocław or other cities, especially from the perspective of entrepreneurs. The study of overtourism as perceived from many viewpoints should currently be a scientific and pragmatic standard, applied in all planning and strategic studies of cities with an observed intensity of tourist traffic.

5.2 Practical Implications

The information obtained in the research may be used by practitioners who contribute to tourism development. It should become instructive for industry representatives and marketing managers, whose activity largely generates tourist traffic, thus increasing overtourism. It should constitute a practical "signpost" for local authorities, whose priority would be caring for the interests of various stakeholders, including residents, tourists, and entrepreneurs. The research findings offer local authorities specific strategies related to overtourism for tourists, residents, and entrepreneurs, as well as create opportunities for enterprises. Taking such actions can contribute to assuming a long-term sustainable tourism strategy, approved by various groups.

6. Limitations and Future Research

This current study has several limitations. First, the considerations are limited to the analysis of an important phenomenon only in the example of one urban destination. Although Wrocław is one of the most popular destinations in Poland, frequently visited by both domestic and foreign tourists, limiting the analysis to one city should be considered a significant limitation affecting the issue of inference. Additionally, the analysis concerns only a selected aspect of overtourism. The study assessed the viewpoint of one stakeholder group – local tourism industry representatives – without taking into account the positions of other important market segments, such as residents, visitors, or local authorities. However, it is worth noting that the viewpoint of tourism entrepreneurs is equally important in the context of overtourism occurrence and actions taken to limit it in the city space.

The phenomenon of overtourism is generally assessed mainly from the perspective of its negative effects on the inhabitants, agglomeration authorities, or a given tourist destination. With due caution of inference, one can suggest that investigating and assessing the views of entrepreneurs is marginalized. On the one hand, they are one of the key beneficiaries of the growing tourism. On the other hand, they are the drivers of the increasing migration to the agglomeration. As residents, in turn, they can also experience the negative effects of overtourism. It is worth pointing out that the methods and techniques for assessing overtourism are scarce, mainly based on surveys. This indicates challenges in reaching a representative sample. The survey utilized in this study yields the following conclusions regarding the necessary directions of overtourism research: (1) There is a need to evaluate overtourism from the perspective of different stakeholders in the tourism industry. This is often discussed in recent empirical studies, which indicate that overtourism is not perceived as a one-dimensional phenomenon that is only unfavorable for the stakeholders in destinations. (2) The key is to look for methods and measurable data identifying overtourism symptoms in the space of an agglomeration or tourist destination, which

would be perceived in an analogous way (as favorable or unfavorable features) by all types of tourism economy stakeholders, including local authorities, residents, and entrepreneurs. (3) An important research challenge is to objectively assess overtourism impact on local tourism entrepreneurs operating in an agglomeration, whose opinions on the phenomenon often depend on the economic activity sector and sometimes on the spatial location of the business (e.g., the city center or outskirts). (4) The analyses of the circumstances, factors, and manifestations of overtourism in a large agglomeration with high tourist attractiveness should indicate directions for sustainable tourism development of the destination as profitable for authorities, residents, and entrepreneurs alike. (5) A research challenge in the near future would be to assess the COVID-19 pandemic impact on the tourism economy, including overtourism, with a visible slowdown in many areas of tourism (Sigala 2020). Finding synergy of interests among stakeholders in destinations is an inevitable path of inquiry for researchers dealing with overtourism.

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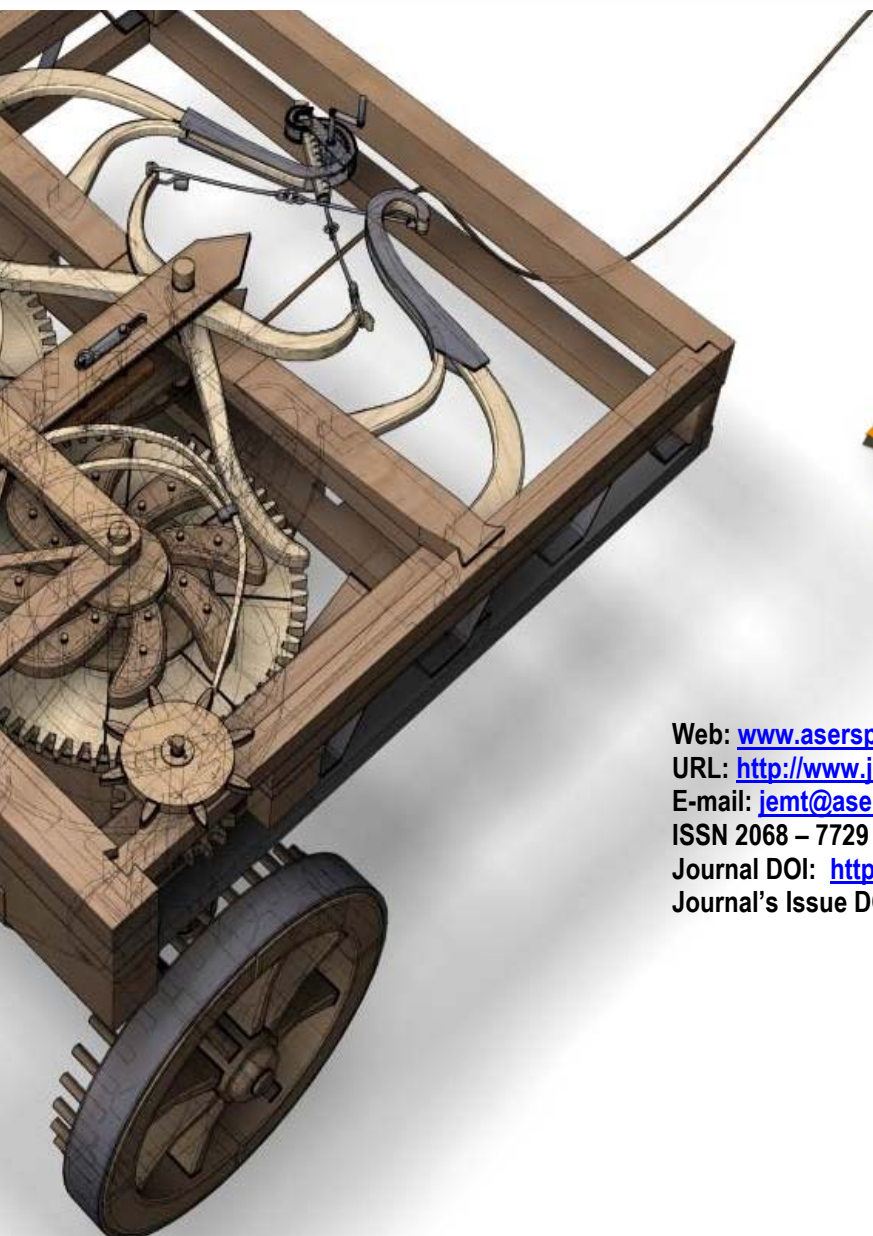
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