Analysing Religious Tourism’s Influence on Tourism Policy Makers

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Introduction

Religious tourism (Zarb, 2020; Dowson, 2020) belongs to the group of selective tourism types (Vučetić & Lagiewski, 2016), i.e., special interest tourism (Ma et al., 2020; Kruja & Gjyrezi, 2011) or niche tourism (Swanson & Cavender, 2019; Sharma & Nayak, 2019). It is the particular selective tourism type, which includes religiously motivated visitors to travel to destinations (Liutikas, 2020; Rodrigues et al., 2019) and sites (Dowson, 2020; Huang & Pearce, 2019) of religious tourism. It is one of the oldest tourism types, which originates from Ancient times, i.e., from the period of ‘tourism before modern tourism.’ Religious tourist sites attract more than 300 million visitors and involve the spending of more than $20 billion US every year (Huang & Pearce, 2019). Religious tourism is a respectful part of the tourism industry, especially in developing tourism destinations, which do not have a high standard of living but have great number of religious people.

Montenegro is a country of religious people. At the last population census, of the total number of the census 96.1% people declared themselves as believers. Of the total number of believers 72.1% were believing people who belong to the Christian Orthodox church,
19.1% were those who practice Islam, 3.4% those who belong to Christian Catholic church, and 1.5% practice other religions (MONSTAT, 2011). The most important sites of religious tourism in Montenegro are - Orthodox Ostrog Monastery (Danilovgrad), Orthodox Cetinje Monastery (Cetinje), Orthodox Morća Monastery (Kolašin), Orthodox Podlastva Grbaljska Monastery (Budva), Orthodox Savina Monastery (Herceg Novi), Orthodox Đurđevi Stupovi Monastery (Berane), Catholic Cathedral of St. Tryphon (Kotor), Catholic Lady of the Rocks (Kotor), Orthodox Cathedral of St. Nicholas (Kotor), Orthodox Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ (Podgorica), Orthodox Cathedral of St. Jovan Vladimir (Bar), and Husein-paša Mosque (Pljevlja).

Montenegro attracts more than a million religious excursionists and tourists every year (MONSTAT, 2019). Some of them are motivated fully and some partially by religious reasons. In the very beginning, religious tourism developed spontaneously. However, in the last two decades, it is developing in a planned way with the support of tourism policy makers. Specific tourism policy helps religious institutions and organisations to grow and develop faster by the specific tourism policy measures and activities. On the other side, it is not known how religious tourism influences tourism policy
Religious tourism can be a part of mass tourism, but many tourism policy makers insist on small-scale religious tourism (Rodrigues et al., 2019). However, the majority of tourism policy makers try to develop religious tourism faster, through commercialisation of religious tourism heritage (Koren-Lawrence & Collins-Kreiner, 2018; Heydari Chianeh et al., 2018) and religious tourism sites (Huang & Pearce, 2019; Lochrie et al., 2018), neglecting the need for religious tourism to be a sustainable and responsible activity (Zarb, 2020). But the question remains - who tries to make religious tourism a bigger industry? and why is it necessary to make a more stimulating environment for religious tourism development?

Literature review

Religious tourism includes religious visitors (Verma & Sarangi, 2019; Milman & Oren, 2018), religious tourism destinations (Kim & Kim, 2019; Terzidou et al., 2018), religious heritage sites (Rodrigues et al., 2019; Verma and Sarangi, 2019), and religious activities, such as religious events (Lochrie et al., 2018; Albayrak et al., 2018), festivals (Dowson, 2020; Kim & Kim, 2019), celebrations (Terzidou et al., 2018), rituals (Rashid, 2018), and other factors of religious tourism. Speaking in economic and social terms, it is a powerful selective tourism type. It is one of the oldest selective tourism types. In contemporary times, religious tourism is a very popular special interest tourism type (Raj & Griffin, 2015) or niche tourism type (Lee, 2016). Until the second half of the XX century, religious tourism developed due to initiatives of believing peoples, inside and outside of religious institutions and organisations. Even today, nothing can stop believing people from travel motivated by religious reasons, but today it is necessary to have support from tourism policy makers (Liasidou, 2017).

There are two research hypotheses:

- $H_{01}$ – The impact of religious tourism on tourism policy makers is not significant.
- $H_{02}$ – The impact of religious tourism on tourism policy makers is significant.

Because of that, the main aim of this research is to determine the level of differences in managers’ perceptions of the impact of religious tourism on tourism policy makers.

There are two research hypotheses:

- $H_{01}$ – The impact of religious tourism on tourism policy makers is not significant.
- $H_{02}$ – The impact of religious tourism on tourism policy makers is significant.

Figure 3: Husein-paša's Mosque
By Cornelius Bechtler - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=1393538
Today religious tourism is progressively becoming part of mass tourism (Marine-Roig, 2016). There are a few main reasons for mass travel as part of religious tourism. Firstly, religious institutions and organisations have more and more expenses related to priests, religious objects, and activities, but the number of religious philanthropists who support them by donations does not grow so fast. Because of this, religious institutions and organisations need an increase of tourists, even if they are not primarily motivated by religious motives. Secondly, many governments try to legally regulate religious tourism, because of the benefits generated by it, such as tourism taxes (for example - tourists’ taxes and excursionists’ taxes) and other benefits (for example - additional employment of the population and positive impacts on the balance of payments). Thirdly, different tourism enterprise types try to develop religious tourism offerings, because of tourism’s economic effects. Today, they are a crucial factor in religious tourism development in the international market of religious tourism. Fourthly, all visitors (tourists and excursionists) are demanding additional offers and activities in destinations, and one of the most important of these, in many destinations, is the religious tourism offering.

Tourism policy makers are managers in public, private, and non-governmental organisations, who create tourism policy measures and activities to improve tourism development in destinations. Tourism policy makers can operate at a local-, regional-, national- or international-level (Koufodontis & Gaki, 2019b). They are professionals who create stimulative measures and activities for the development of all selective tourism types, i.e., agritourism (Karampela et al., 2017), ecotourism (Liu & Huang, 2016), shopping tourism (Zaidan, 2015), and other selective tourism types such as religious tourism (Hall et al., 2015). Their main goal is to improve the efficiency in industries such as the hotels (Arbelo et al., 2018) and the tourism sector as a whole with a view to increase destination competitiveness (Andrades & Dimanche, 2017; Cuculelli & Goffi, 2016; Kim et al., 2015).

Managers from different tourism enterprise types in the religious tourism sector are the main partners of tourism policy makers in the process of formulating a set of specific tourism policy measures and activities for stimulating religious tourism development. The level and quality of the communications between tourism policy makers and managers will directly influence the conditions of religious tourism development. Because of that, it is very important to explain the influence of managers from the religious tourism sector, i.e., different tourism enterprise types in the religious tourism sector on tourism policymakers. To do this, it is necessary to create an effective and efficient research methodology.

**Methodology**

The initial sample size in this research was N=2,104 cases, and the calculated necessary minimum sample size was N = 168 cases (F test with medium influence on sample size). The research seeks to explain the influence of managers from the religious tourism sector on tourism policy makers. The respondents’ structure is shown in Table 1.

Respondents (Table 1) were managers from seven tourism enterprise types: hotels - 1,359 (64.6%); travel agencies - 321 (15.3%); museums - 90 (4.3%); tourism organisations - 102 (4.8%); ports of nautical tourism - 90 (4.3%); national parks - 95 (4.5%); and business units of airline companies - 47 (2.2%). This represents the structure of tourism enterprise types in Montenegro. All tourism enterprises in this study are situated in centres of religious tourism. There are more tourism enterprise types in Montenegro, but those are the most important for religious tourism development.
Three groups of managers are unequal for two basic reasons. The sample size is from a small tourism destination - Montenegro is a former socialist and transitional tourism destination in which it was forbidden to be religious, i.e., one was not allowed to be a believing person even two decades ago. These unequal-size groups will not significantly influence the results of statistical procedures.

The research had one independent variable Religious Tourism Offer (RTO) which was divided into three categories:

- **Tourism enterprise does not have religious tourism offer at all (DnHRTO)**;
- **Tourism enterprise has an offer of religious tourism as an additional offer (HRTOaAO)**, and
- **Tourism enterprise has an offer of religious tourism as a primary offer (HRTOaPO)**.

The study did not include other institutions and organisations within the religious tourism sector of Montenegro, such as religious organisations and institutions, church communities, or non-governmental organisations in the field of religious tourism. This is because the aim was to determine the influence of managers from tourism enterprise types in the religious tourism sector on tourism policy makers. Respondents themselves identified their classification according to the independent variable, by answering the question - had the possibility to answer the question, ‘Does the tourism enterprise you work in have a religious tourism offer?’

The dependent variable in the study was Tourism Policy Makers (TPM) which was divided into nine categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>European Commission (DV-1), Government of Montenegro (DV-2), Montenegrin Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism (DV-3), National Tourism Organisation of Montenegro (DV-4), Regional Tourism Organisation of Montenegro (DV-5), Chamber of Commerce of Montenegro (DV-6), Professional association in the tourism sector of Montenegro (DV-7), Local governments of Montenegro (DV-8) and Management of organisations in the tourism sector of Montenegro (DV-9).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

There are more tourism policy makers types than in this research, such as Regional Governments, but they did not pass pilot study and had no place in the final questionnaire. When asked ‘how important is this tourism policy maker for religious tourism development?’ they had the possibility to choose one of the following answers: 1.00 = Highly unimportant (j = -2), 2.00 = Unimportant (j = -1), 3.00 = Neutral (j = 0), 4.00 Important (j = +1), and 5.00 = Highly important (j = +2).

A pilot study was conducted with 100 respondents (managers) from all the above-cited tourism enterprise types. After that, the dependent variable with the highest score was chosen for the final questionnaire. Data were collected electronically over a period of two years, without any influence on respondents, and analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics 26 (George & Mallery, 2020). The primary statistical method was a one-way MANOVA (Clark & Creswell, 2015).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: Descriptive</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variables</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>DV-1</td>
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<td>DV-2</td>
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<td>DV-3</td>
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<td>DV-4</td>
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<td>DV-5</td>
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<td>DV-6</td>
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<td>DV-7</td>
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<tr>
<td>DV-8</td>
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<tr>
<td>DV-9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Analyzing Religious Tourism’s Influence on Tourism Policy Makers

Vučetić

violation of normality of distribution results. The initial sample size has 28 univariate outliers, which is 1.3% of the total number of cases (cases: 2,050; 2,049; 1,988; 1,795; 1,789; 1,765; 1,739; 1,696; 1,681; 1,657; 1,583; 1,439; 1,425; 1,411; 1,322; 1,316; 1,292; 1,254; 1,232; 1,086; 1,075; 19, 16, 13, 11, and 6). After univariate outliers are deleted, no multivariate outliers are found (MD = 6.96, Critical MD is 27.88, and 0.007 ≤ CD ≤ 0.014). The new work sample size is N = 2,076 cases. Examining the dependent variables, organisations that have an offer of religious tourism, as the primary or additional offer, there exists medium-strong negative linearity. On the other hand, organisations that do not have an offer of religious tourism, there exists strong negative linearity (Table 3).

Of the total number of correlations, 25% exhibit medium correlation and 75% exhibit high correlation. Box's M = 194.192, F = 2.126, df1 = 90, df2 = 522648.672 and Sig. = 0.000. DV-1 (based on mean) = 0.000 and DV-1

Empirical results

After minimum sample size was calculated (Effect size f²(V) = 0.1428571; α err prob = 0.05; Power (1-β err prob) = 0.80; N = 168), descriptive statistics were undertaken (Table 2).

None of the dependent variables has a normal distribution of results. The biggest difference between mean and trimmed mean has dependent variable DV-3, and the lowest has dependent variable DV-1. None of the means are equal to the median, and variance and standard deviation values confirm that the majority of distribution results are grouped in the wider interval on the positive part of the Likert scale. In relation to skewness, 77.8% are moderately skewed, and 22.2% are highly skewed. All skewness is positioned left in one mode. The influence of skewness on the sample size is 0.186. Regarding kurtosis, 100% belong to leptokurtic peakedness. The influence of kurtosis on the sample size is 0.232. All Kolmogorov-Smirnov values from the Tests of Normality show a violation of normality of distribution results.

### Table 3: Spearman’s Correlation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DV-1</th>
<th>DV-2</th>
<th>DV-3</th>
<th>DV-4</th>
<th>DV-5</th>
<th>DV-6</th>
<th>DV-7</th>
<th>DV-8</th>
<th>DV-9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DV-1</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.553 **</td>
<td>.485 **</td>
<td>.479 **</td>
<td>.468 **</td>
<td>.508 **</td>
<td>.500 **</td>
<td>.411 **</td>
<td>.402 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DV-2</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.669 **</td>
<td>.572 **</td>
<td>.490 **</td>
<td>.520 **</td>
<td>.491 **</td>
<td>.541 **</td>
<td>.541 **</td>
<td>.482 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DV-3</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.730 **</td>
<td>.614 **</td>
<td>.539 **</td>
<td>.497 **</td>
<td>.512 **</td>
<td>.552 **</td>
<td>.552 **</td>
<td>.552 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DV-4</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.752 **</td>
<td>.567 **</td>
<td>.519 **</td>
<td>.512 **</td>
<td>.549 **</td>
<td>.549 **</td>
<td>.549 **</td>
<td>.549 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DV-5</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.640 **</td>
<td>.609 **</td>
<td>.527 **</td>
<td>.569 **</td>
<td>.569 **</td>
<td>.569 **</td>
<td>.569 **</td>
<td>.569 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DV-6</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.716 **</td>
<td>.574 **</td>
<td>.565 **</td>
<td>.565 **</td>
<td>.565 **</td>
<td>.565 **</td>
<td>.565 **</td>
<td>.565 **</td>
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<tr>
<td>DV-7</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.621 **</td>
<td>.601 **</td>
<td>.601 **</td>
<td>.601 **</td>
<td>.601 **</td>
<td>.601 **</td>
<td>.601 **</td>
<td>.601 **</td>
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<tr>
<td>DV-8</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.626 **</td>
<td>.626 **</td>
<td>.626 **</td>
<td>.626 **</td>
<td>.626 **</td>
<td>.626 **</td>
<td>.626 **</td>
<td>.626 **</td>
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<tr>
<td>DV-9</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4: Multivariate Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>DF Error</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pillai’s Trace</td>
<td>0.570</td>
<td>303.953b</td>
<td>9.000</td>
<td>2065.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilks’ Lambda</td>
<td>0.430</td>
<td>303.953b</td>
<td>9.000</td>
<td>2065.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotelling’s Trace</td>
<td>1.325</td>
<td>303.953b</td>
<td>9.000</td>
<td>2065.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roy’s Largest Root</td>
<td>1.325</td>
<td>303.953b</td>
<td>9.000</td>
<td>2065.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTO</td>
<td>0.023</td>
<td>2.729</td>
<td>18.000</td>
<td>4132.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pillai’s Trace</td>
<td>0.977</td>
<td>2.735b</td>
<td>18.000</td>
<td>4130.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilks’ Lambda</td>
<td>0.024</td>
<td>2.742</td>
<td>18.000</td>
<td>4128.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotelling’s Trace</td>
<td>0.020</td>
<td>4.627c</td>
<td>9.000</td>
<td>2066.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Using Bonferroni’s adjustment method, the new alpha value of 0.006 is calculated, therefore Type I error is avoided. Within the independent variable Religious Tourism Offer, significant differences in managers’ perception of the impact of religious tourism on dependent variable Tourism Policy Makers are shown as follows:

European Commission – comparing managers in organisations that have religious tourism as a primary offer and organisations that have religious tourism as an additional offer results in $p = 0.000$ and $MD = \pm 0.44273$; organisations that have religious tourism as a primary offer compared with organisations that do not have an offer of religious tourism at all results in $p = 0.000$ and $MD = \pm 0.36730$.

Government of Montenegro – organisations that have religious tourism as a primary offer compared with organisations that do not have an offer of religious tourism on one side and dependent variables: $DV-1$, $DV-2$, $DV-3$, $DV-4$, $DV-5$, $DV-6$, and $DV-8$; on the other side. However, it is not clear which organisations present the highest differences, and thus, usage of multiple comparisons is necessary.
tourism at all results in $p = 0.000$ and $MD = \pm 0.27928$; organisations that have religious tourism as a primary offer and organisations that have religious tourism as an additional offer results in $p = 0.001$ and $MD = \pm 0.28531$.

**Montenegrin Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism** – organisations with religious tourism as a primary offer and organisations that do not have an offer of religious tourism at all result in $p = 0.000$ and $MD = \pm 0.27064$; organisations that have religious tourism as a primary offer and organisations that have religious tourism as an additional offer result in $p = 0.002$ and $MD = \pm 0.24890$.

**National Tourism Organisation of Montenegro** – organisations that have religious tourism as a primary offer and organisations that do not have an offer of religious tourism at all result in $p = 0.000$ and $MD = \pm 0.39266$; organisations that have religious tourism as a primary offer and organisations that have religious tourism as an additional offer result in $p = 0.006$ and $MD = \pm 0.36388$.

**Regional Tourism Organisation of Montenegro** – organisations that have religious tourism as a primary offer and organisations that do not have an offer of religious tourism at all result in $p = 0.002$ and $MD = \pm 0.24308$; organisations that have religious tourism as a primary offer and organisations that have religious tourism as an additional offer result in $p = 0.006$ and $MD = \pm 0.23838$.

**Chamber of Commerce of Montenegro** – organisations that have religious tourism as a primary offer and organisations that do not have an offer of religious tourism at all result in $p = 0.003$ and $MD = \pm 0.23886$.

**Local governments of Montenegro** – organisations that have religious tourism as a primary offer and organisations that do not have an offer of religious tourism at all result in $p = 0.002$ and $MD = \pm 0.25131$.

Of the total number of significant differences, 58.3% belong to managers in organisations that have religious tourism as a primary offer and organisations that do not have an offer of religious tourism at all. Furthermore, 41.7% belong to managers in organisations that have religious tourism as their primary offer and organisations that have religious tourism as an additional offer.

Significant differences are not shown between managers in organisations that have an offer of religious tourism as additional offer and organisations that do not have an offer of religious tourism at all.

Managers from organisations that have religious tourism as their primary offer have the opinion that religious tourism significantly influences tourism policy makers. Those managers are employees in travel agencies primarily specialised in religious tourism, heritage hotels within religious sites, local tourism organisations within religious sites, and ports of nautical tourism on the coast of Montenegro. Usually, they have continuous and intensive communication with tourism policy makers, which is the main reason why they grade the influence of religious tourism on tourism policy makers in a range from 1.0342 to 1.4521. Managers from organisations that do not have an offer at all or have an additional offer of religious tourism do not have continuous and intensive communication with tourism policy makers about religious tourism development (Zarb, 2020).

Managers give the highest grades for the influence of religious tourism on the National Tourism Organisation because of the promotion of Montenegro as a destination for religious tourism. Managers do not exhibit significant differences in opinion about the influence of religious tourism on Management of organisations in the tourism sector of Montenegro, and Professional association in the tourism sector of Montenegro, however, they grade them with more than 1.

Of the total number of significant differences 50.0% belong to the level $p=0.000$, 25.1% belong to the level $p=0.002$, 8.3% belong to the level $p=0.001$, $p=0.003$ and $p=0.006$. Significant differences of managers’ perception of the influence of religious tourism on tourism policy makers were on a very high level (Koufodontis & Gaki, 2019a), especially between managers in organisations that have religious tourism as a primary offer and organisations that do not have an offer of religious tourism at all. This level of significance is shown with regard to the European Commission and the National Tourism organisations of Montenegro.

Theoretical implications can be divided into few parts. First, the study explains the concept of religious tourism. Second, the research determines three organisation types regarding the religious tourism offer. Third, the article explains the concept of tourism policy makers, which
includes nine tourism policy maker types. Fourth, this research determines a methodology for examining the perceived impact level of religious tourism on tourism policy makers. Fifth, the results expand the theoretical knowledge about religious tourism (Raj & Griffin, 2015) and tourism policy.

It is possible to divide the practical implications into a number of outputs. During the theoretical concept development, much practical knowledge is demonstrated. The research focuses on practical communication activities between managers in the religious tourism sector and tourism policy makers. In this regard, the study offers practical usage of a methodology for influence estimation of religious tourism on tourism policy makers. Thus, the article helps tourism policy makers to optimise the set of religious tourism policy measures and activities (Raj and Griffin, 2015).

Research limitations can be seen in some aspects. The study is about a small religious tourism destination. Despite this, there are also more tourism policy makers than in this article, but those chosen are the most important ones for this research. There are also many more tourism enterprise types that can be included in this research, but the most important for religious tourism development in Montenegro were chosen and used in this research. Furthermore, there are more statistical procedures and methods that can be applied in this study, but the chosen ones are seen as the most appropriate. This kind of research could include many other independent variables, such as gender, religiosity of the respondent, proximity to particular sites etc. (Raj & Griffin, 2015; Hall et al., 2015). All of these limitations could be recommendations for future research about religious tourism and tourism policy makers.

**Conclusion**

The survey focus was on determining the influence of religious tourism on tourism policy makers in Montenegro. The two research hypotheses were

\[ H_{01} \rightarrow \text{The impact of religious tourism on tourism policy makers is not significant} \]

\[ H_{0A} \rightarrow \text{The impact of religious tourism on tourism policy makers is significant.} \]

The primary statistical method was a one-way MANOVA (Clark & Creswell, 2015). Spearman’s correlation and Pillai’s trace criteria were both used.
### References


