

The Sustainable Development of the Tourism Industry and Social Acceptance

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ABSTRACT:

As the tourism industry expands in scale, the importance of sustainable development is also increasing (World Tourism Organization [WTO], 2023). The principles of sustainable development aim to guide industry activities in a beneficial direction, ensuring the greatest possible advantages for society, nature, and the environment. Tourists, in addition to being consumers, are also important stakeholders in the industry, as highlighted in the principles of sustainable development. The economic and social development of the sector, including practices in the Adjara region, significantly depends on their choices and level of satisfaction. However, evaluations of organizations providing tourism services often reveal negative feedback from tourists. Complaints frequently relate to rude, indifferent, or inattentive attitudes. According to social acceptance theory, such issues arise when relationships between different parties are shaped by aggression and rejection rather than cooperation. Since tourists act both as stakeholders and consumers, it is essential that they have the right and opportunity to receive hospitality services in a healthy social environment. Representatives of the tourism industry also bear ethical and social responsibilities toward them. This article discusses the principles of sustainable tourism development and the concept of social acceptance. In particular, it examines the attitudes of tourism organizations in Adjara toward tourists. The main aim of the study was to determine the role of social acceptance in ensuring the sustainable development of the industry. The study was conducted through an online questionnaire. The results revealed that social acceptance plays an important role in the economic development of the industry. It also demonstrated the significance of sustainable development principles, particularly visitor satisfaction.

Keywords: Tourism Industry, Sustainable Development, Social Acceptance

1. Introduction

The tourism and hospitality industry has steadily grown in economic terms over the past decades, while its social role—considering society, the environment, and national development—has also increased. The industry generates significant revenues, which are a major source of government budgets, and it provides approximately 200 million jobs worldwide.

The World Tourism Organization (2023) expects the industry to maintain sustainable and stable growth. Forecasts suggest that the number of visitors could reach 1.8 billion by 2030. However, it is important to note that:

1. The industry's economic growth is faster than that of many other sectors.

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2. Growth trends are higher in developing countries compared to developed countries.

Tourism functions similarly to a social institution because its development is closely linked to the quality of tourism-related social interactions. It is therefore essential to identify the factors influencing relationships in tourism and study their effects. Service providers' social attitudes are shaped by differences among tourists, including cultural, ethnic, religious, gender, xenophobic, and political variations. These factors determine whether social acceptance among parties is healthy or unhealthy.

According to psychologist Aaron Smith (2016), acceptance is a long, subconscious process that initially involves uncertainty and discomfort. Social acceptance and sustainable industry development are closely tied to ethics, responsibility, and attitudes toward tourism stakeholders. Discriminatory behaviors and negative attitudes toward tourists are considered unacceptable.

Tourists are not only the main consumers of tourism services but also stakeholders with specific needs and demands, linking them to the sustainable development agenda. The 2017 United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda, which includes 17 goals, addresses tourists' rights under the "Visitor Filling Point." This goal emphasizes unrestricted and equal access to tourism services and the provision of a safe and peaceful environment.

Social acceptance becomes crucial because unhealthy social attitudes—such as aggression or harsh treatment by service providers—can limit tourists' access to services, contradicting the "Visitor Filling Point." Furthermore, social acceptance has economic implications. Healthy social acceptance leads to more satisfied tourists, resulting in higher income from hospitality. This, in turn, positively affects the economic situation of businesses and regions. Zhang (2009) found that in Shanghai, tourism revenues and visitor satisfaction influenced economic growth. Similarly, a study in China reported a strong correlation between tourism revenue and economic growth (Yin, Hou, & Lang, 2018).

We find studies in international sources on social relations, interaction, and attitudes towards tourists, which identify negative, xenophobic, and unacceptable attitudes toward tourists in different cultures and societies, a study was conducted in Japan on perceptions of tourism and tourists-Japan, which has found that some of the local population has negative attitudes towards tourists, In some cases, these attitudes are explained by logical reasons, while in other cases they are hateful in nature and have no objective explanation. (Armenski, T., Pavluković, V., Pejović, L., & Lukić, T., 2011).

Similarly, a 2011 study in Serbia examined residents' attitudes toward tourism in three cities. This research also revealed both objectively explainable attitudes and xenophobic behaviors reflecting hatred and unacceptance toward tourists (Látková & Vogt, 2012)

Healthy relationships between tourists and residents are the key prerequisite for the development of the tourism industry, otherwise tourism is based on balanced relationships between host-residents and tourists, (Griffiths & Sharpley, 2012)

In the Adjara region, the issue of social attitudes and unhealthy social acceptance toward tourists is particularly relevant. Previous research and negative reviews on booking platforms indicate that service quality is often poor, and aggressive or rude behavior occurs among both residents and employees, thus the problem is studied in depth in the context

of the latest research in the article, The relationship between social acceptance and sustainable development of the industry has also been studied.

The article answers important questions such as:

- o What role does social acceptance play in the process of sustainable development of the tourism business?
- o To what extent can a social recipient influence tourist satisfaction and, consequently, the financial situation of a tourism business organization?
- o What factors create social acceptance and which factor's importance is most evident in relationships with tourists, etc.

The article examined the relationship between social acceptance and its factors with tourists' satisfaction and financial decisions, and also identified the role of social acceptance in the process of sustainable development. Research on social acceptance and sustainable development is not found in scientific sources, therefore the latest research in the article has innovative and high social significance.

2. Literature review

The international business industry, including the tourism and hospitality industry, is characterized by intensive social relations that have high social and economic significance, To the extent that the nature of relationships, the quality of interaction, and communication lead to various tourism connections, negotiations, and revenue. Social interactions between tourism stakeholders and service providers can directly affect the financial future of the industry.

In the study, the relationships between tourism stakeholders and tourism service providers are presented as: Sustainable tourism development and stakeholder relationship management, To the extent that relationship management can contribute to the process of sustainable development. (Pérez & Rodríguez del Bosque, 2014).

According to the World Tourism Organization's 2023 Sustainable Development Guidebook, stakeholders in tourism and the industry include: state governments and directly state institutions, ministries, For example, the Ministry of Tourism and Resorts, international development agencies, the private sector and business operators, employees and their close associates, the local population, consumers-tourists, and others.

As we have already mentioned, the important stakeholder for this study is tourists, whose role in the sustainable development of the tourism and hospitality industry is related to the expenses they incur, which they spend to purchase tourist services, „Providing the main source of income to the sector” The industry is the most important economic and revenue-generating stakeholder group in this area, The economic and social situation of the industry and the tourism services and product suppliers participating in it depends on the financial decisions and choices of tourists., Thus, the industry should be oriented towards them – it should concentrate on their satisfaction, demands, and needs above all else. (UNWTO, 2017)

In our research conducted in 2019–2024, the aimed to of which was to study social attitudes towards tourists on the one hand and identify factors determining tourist satisfaction on the other, the following was repeatedly highlighted: The role and

importance of healthy social attitudes towards tourists in the 2024 study: "Social acceptance of tourists among tourists" - respondent tourists highlighted the several factors determining their satisfaction:

1. Healthy social attitudes, kindness, warm welcome, sincere hospitality, friendly attitudes—are decisive factors for 39% of respondents.
2. Attitudes free from homophobia, xenophobia, racism, and discrimination were identified as essential.
3. Security, both in terms of protecting property and tourists' rights, and accessibility to services—are undoubtedly important for 96% of respondents.

A 2019 in-depth interview study conducted among small and medium-sized hotel owners revealed:

1. Some hotel owners have selective attitudes and dispositions towards tourists.
2. The nature of attitudes is determined by factors such as tourists' nationality, sexual orientation, and religious beliefs. (Surmanidze, 2020)

A survey conducted among employees in large and medium-sized hotels in 2024 revealed:

1. Employees' attitudes and feelings towards tourists are determined by the tourists' sexual orientation (20%) and political factors (37%),

When considering tourists as key stakeholders in tourism, social acceptance is important as are their rights-healthy social attitudes, In terms of responsible and ethical treatment, Hopkins speaks about the importance of ethical and responsible treatment for the sustainable development of the industry. (Hopkins, 2003)

According to his view, a civilized society and a business oriented towards sophisticated services should demonstrate responsibility not only toward employees within tourism companies but also toward international consumers of services and products. Social acceptance—reflected in attitudes, perceptions, and respectful treatment of tourists—plays a crucial role in enhancing tourist satisfaction, meeting their expectations, and ultimately increasing the economic benefits for tourism organizations. Furthermore, responsible and ethical conduct helps to eliminate discriminatory, homophobic, racist, politically biased, and otherwise unhealthy social attitudes among tourism stakeholders.

According to Aaron Smith (2016), social acceptability may depend on several key factors:

- o A common language of communication. The ability to communicate in a shared language, particularly if it is native for at least one of the parties, greatly facilitates interaction. (Smith, 2016).
- o Shared cultural, historical, or religious background. Each ethnic group represents a unique social structure with its own traditions, perceptions, and values. When people from different cultures interact, these differences are visible in lifestyle, behavior, and beliefs. However, when countries share common historical or cultural "roots," a sense of familiarity often emerges, creating mutual understanding and providing common ground for dialogue (Smith, 2016).

Experience of coexistence with a particular ethnic group. Acceptance of tourists may also be shaped by previous positive or negative experiences of living alongside individuals

from that ethnicity. Positive experiences generally increase acceptance, while negative ones may reduce it (Smith, 2016)

Social acceptance, which can influence the satisfaction of stakeholders—tourists—in the sustainable development of the industry, is related to personally identifiable factors, including: The importance of key factors, including sexual orientation, skin color, ethnicity, political, cultural, and xenophobic factors, is relevant, given the results of our research conducted in 2019–2024. Also important are theories related to social acceptance, including theories of social interaction and distance, Andereck and Nyaupane (2011) demonstrated that frequent and positive social interactions between residents and tourists increase tolerance and cultural understanding. Ryan (2002) further noted that meaningful cultural exchanges promote visitor acceptance, whereas perceptions of rudeness or insensitivity can lead to social rejection and threaten tourism sustainability. Studies in ethnically diverse settings confirm that positive inter-ethnic contact reduces social distance and fosters mutual respect, thereby enhancing acceptability (Manente & Moro, 2014).

As for the social distance theory, it was first used by Robert Parke, who believed that people not only feel social distance from other people, but also have similar feelings towards races and social classes. (Park, 1924) Social distance is most pronounced between groups. The division of societies into social groups can occur on social, economic, racial, ethnic, or cultural grounds. Thus, social groups that feel closeness or distance in some way also perceive the symptom of social distance, Social distance is important in relation to social acceptance because social acceptance is also determined by the same factors as social distance: interaction and social exchange of information.

In the Adjara region, where we will study the links between sustainable development and social acceptance, the revenues of tourism organizations have been characterized by an increasing trend, as has the number of tourists in recent years. Approximately 5.0 million guests were served by Georgian tourism industry establishments during the same time period, a 1.2% increase over 2022. 60.2% of this total was made up of foreign visitors, with the Russian Federation accounting for the largest group (355,000), though this percentage decreased by 4.0% from the previous year. 7.2% of foreign tourists were from EU nations, with Germany and Poland accounting for the majority of these visits. In 2023, leisure and recreation continued to be the main reason for foreign visitors to Georgia. Most often, tourists come to Georgia for recreational and business purposes. Social acceptance, which can influence the satisfaction of stakeholders—particularly tourists—in the sustainable development of the tourism industry, is shaped by personally identifiable factors. These include sexual orientation, skin color, ethnicity, political and cultural views, as well as xenophobic tendencies. The relevance of these factors is supported by the results of research conducted between 2019 and 2024.

Theoretical frameworks related to social acceptance are also significant. Theories of social interaction and social distance, for example, offer important insights. Andereck and Nyaupane (2011) demonstrated that frequent and positive interactions between residents and tourists increase tolerance and cultural understanding. Ryan (2002) further noted that meaningful cultural exchanges promote visitor acceptance, while perceptions of rudeness or insensitivity may lead to social rejection and pose challenges to tourism sustainability. Studies conducted in ethnically diverse settings confirm that positive inter-ethnic contact

reduces social distance, fosters mutual respect, and enhances overall acceptability (Manente & Moro, 2014).

Social distance theory, initially introduced by Robert Park (1924), posits that people experience varying degrees of social distance not only towards other individuals but also across races and social classes. Social distance tends to be most pronounced between groups, and societal divisions may occur along social, economic, racial, ethnic, or cultural lines. Groups that perceive closeness or distance to one another also experience corresponding levels of social distance. This concept is closely linked to social acceptance, as both are shaped by interaction and social exchange.

In the Adjara region, where this study explores the relationship between sustainable development and social acceptance, tourism organizations have experienced increasing revenues alongside a growing number of tourists in recent years. Approximately 5.0 million guests were served by Georgian tourism establishments during the same period, reflecting a 1.2% increase compared to 2022. Foreign visitors accounted for 60.2% of this total, with the largest group coming from the Russian Federation (355,000), although this represents a 4.0% decrease from the previous year. Tourists from EU countries made up 7.2% of foreign arrivals, with Germany and Poland contributing the majority of these visits. In 2023, leisure and recreation remained the main reason for foreign visits to Georgia, with tourism primarily driven by recreational and business purposes. (see Table 1)

Table 1. Tourist Arrivals in Georgia by Origin and Purpose of Visit (2023)

Tourist Origin	Total Visitors	Recreation & Leisure	Business/Professional	Treatment	Other
Total	9 4,999,15	3,994,190	617,662	54,12	333,187
From Georgia	1 1,989,65	1,396,834	400,542	34,201	158,074
From EU Countries	215,189	196,954	11,303	2,231	4,701
From CIS (DST) Countries	758,336	592,094	91,721	11,013	63,508
From Other Countries	3 2,035,98	1,808,308	114,096	8,675	104,904

Source: National Statistics Office of Georgia (2023),
Available at: <https://www.geostat.ge/ka/modules/categories/394>

Table 2. Average Monthly Number of Visits by Non-Resident Tourists to Georgia, by Satisfaction Level (thousands)

Distribution of the average monthly number of visits made by non-resident visitors to Georgia by satisfaction level, thousand							
Year	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	I don't know/I find it difficult to answer.	total :
2023	75,9	203,1	28,0	4,4	2,3	0,7	14,3
2024	85,9	217,7	26,9	3,6	1,6	2,3	38,0

Source: National Statistics Office of Georgia (2024),

Available at: <https://www.geostat.ge/ka/modules/categories/102/utskhoel-vizitorta-statistika>

The tourist satisfaction survey conducted by the National Statistics Service of Georgia, commissioned by the National Tourism Organization, provides important insights (see Table 2). However, these indicators do not detail the specific reasons or criteria behind satisfaction. For example, it is unclear whether tourists are satisfied with cultural experiences, pricing, service quality, or other factors. Furthermore, the recorded levels of tourist dissatisfaction are relatively low. In many instances, private tourism organizations are better positioned to analyze and understand both satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Ratings recorded on private booking and service platforms allow for more granular insights. Accordingly, our research examines in greater depth the factors influencing tourist satisfaction and dissatisfaction, particularly those related to social acceptance. To date, no tourism market has systematically studied social acceptance as a process that contributes to sustainable development. This research thus holds high innovative value, offering unique knowledge that tourism organizations can leverage to improve business processes and enhance stakeholder experiences. (National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2024)

2. Methodology

The aim of the study is to determine the role of social acceptance in the sustainable development of the tourism industry.

- o Describe social acceptance and principles of sustainable development of the industry in tourism organizations
- o Determine the importance of social acceptance and principles of sustainable development of the industry
- o To explore the relationship between sustainable development and social acceptance of tourists
- o To analyze the importance of tourist satisfaction and choice in the sustainable development of the industry

The selection of respondents was carried out through random sampling, taking into account the most important aspect: they had to be representatives of tourism organizations, employed in relevant institutions operating in Adjara. Both structured and exploratory answers were possible thanks to the questionnaire's mix of open-ended, closed-ended questions and likert scales. Closed-ended questions allowed for quantifiable, comparable data, but open-ended items allowed for a more thorough understanding of participants' individual experiences, viewpoints, and attitudes. The questionnaire consisted of questions about the main factors of sustainable development, social acceptance. The data obtained was analyzed in the form of diagrams, the answers to the open-ended questions were grouped according to similar positions, and different accents were also identified. The number of respondents was 315 in total.

3. Data Collection

Due to the scale of the study, the number of respondents, the sensitivity of the topic, and the need to respect the principle of anonymity, an online survey method was used for the study. Through questionnaires, important knowledge was obtained about the perception, assessment, and sustainable development of social acceptance.

For data analysis, responses to three types of questions were processed. Responses to open-ended questions were sorted according to similar and identical positions, and different positions were also identified. The answers to the closed questions were presented in the online questionnaire itself in the form of diagrams and percentages, while the data obtained on the Likert scales were first transferred to Excel spreadsheets. Where each respondent and question was assigned its own code, e.g. Question 1 – Q1 and respondent B2, we determined the values of the three answers on the diagrams using a simple formula:

For example: =IF(B2<=3;"Not Important";IF(B2<=7;"Neutral";"Important"))
Formula 1

Accordingly, the indicators obtained according to the assessments were transferred to the diagrams in the form of percentages, and they are presented in the research results.

5. Results

The survey items were carefully designed to correspond with the main factors affecting social acceptance and sustainable development. Among respondents, 67% were male and 33% (see Figure 1) were female. Regarding socio-economic status, 42% belonged to the middle class, 19% to the upper class, and 39% to the lower class (see Figure 2).

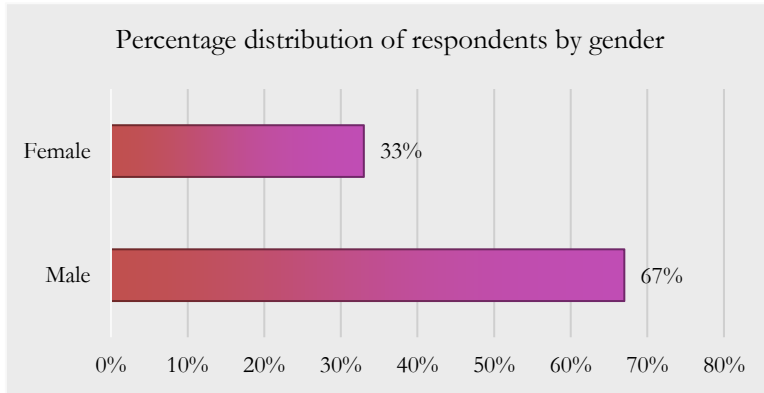


Figure. 1 Percentage distribution of respondents by gender

Source: Author's study

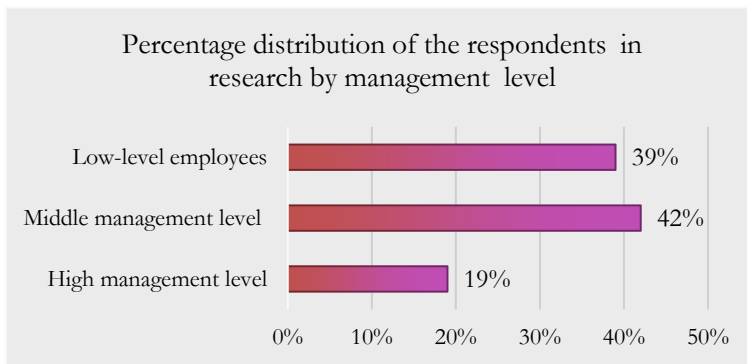


Figure 2. Percentage distribution of the respondents by management level in research, 2025

Source: Author's study

It is important to consider respondents' views on the significance of social acceptance in the service process. For a small portion of respondents (7%), social acceptance is not considered important. Only 2% could not provide an accurate answer. For the majority, 91%, social acceptance is of high importance (see Figure 3)

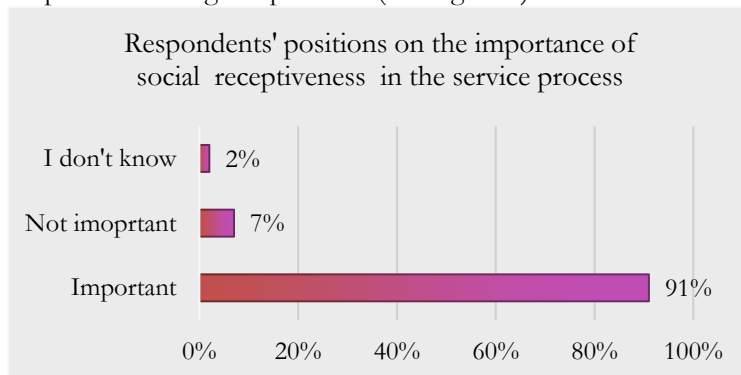


Figure 3. Respondents' views on the importance of social receptiveness in the service process, 2025

Source: Author's study

In response to the open-ended question, “Does the way you serve tourists affect their spending and demand?”, the answers were predominantly positive. Representatives from all organizational tiers indicated that service quality and attitude influence satisfaction:

"Yes, of course."

"I've had many such cases. They feel how sincerely we serve them."

„It happened often"

"I remember one time I hosted a family from Israel, and they noticed my mood and left me a tip at the end of the tour."

We gathered a range of insightful responses to the open-ended question regarding what influences a tourist’s sense of satisfaction and well-being during service interactions. Participants identified several key factors, including:

The cost of products,

The appeal, variety, and infrastructure of the location,

The pricing of specific services,

The overall culture of hospitality – such as warmth, courtesy, and the quality of the welcome.

However, many responses emphasized the importance of human connection. The nature of relationships and interactions between staff and tourists emerged as central to tourists’ happiness:

"I think all factors are equally important, including the quality of service you provide and the form in which you provide it."

"Sometimes satisfaction is individual, what is a priority for someone"

"Kindness and warm hospitality"

"No matter how much hospitality culture and hospitality you have, if a tourist does not feel that you are happy to have him/her, the hard work is of no use"

"It has a location and people, some serve it so badly that the tourist will not come to you or to them a second time, the strength of our culture is hospitality and relations"

When asked to identify the most influential factor in shaping social acceptance, respondents most frequently highlighted cultural aspects (37%). This was followed by racial factors (22%) and religious considerations (16%), among others (see Figure 4).

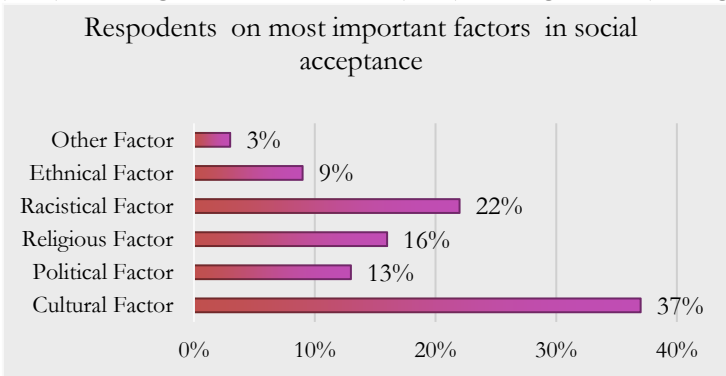


Figure. 4 Respodents positions on most important factors in social acceptance, 2025

Source: Author's study



Figure 5. Respondents' answers to the question: Do you think social acceptance has an impact on the sustainable development of tourism organizations?

Source: Author's study

For most respondents (87%), social acceptance and attitudes influence the sustainable development of tourism organizations. Ten percent of respondents reported a neutral position, indicating that, in their view, the effects of social acceptance are neutral. Only 3% believed that social acceptance does not affect the sustainable development process (see Figure 5).

In terms of sustainable development, what influences tourists' financial decisions the most?

In response to a specific question, respondents, based on their experience, indicated consideration of tourists' rights - this point is one of the 17-point sustainable development plan adopted by the United Nations, It also implies healthy treatment of tourists. According to respondents, the working conditions of employees also influence tourists' financial decisions, 33% of which depend on the behavior of employees And consequently their attitudes towards tourists, because often an unhealthy, toxic and tiring work environment affects the employee's mood and work motivation. (See Figure 6)

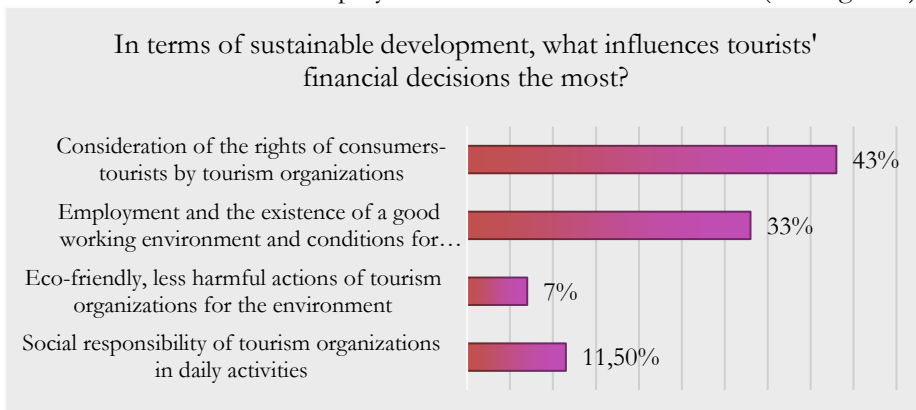


Figure 6. Respondents answers to the question: In terms of sustainable development, what influences tourists' financial decisions the most?

Source: Author's study

- o Social responsibility of tourism organizations in their daily activities – 11.5%
- o Eco-friendly, less harmful actions of tourism organizations for the environment – 7%
- o Employment and the existence of a good working environment and conditions for employees – 33%
- o Consideration of the rights of consumers-tourists by tourism organizations – 43%
- o Development of industrial and technologically innovative infrastructure – 9.5%

Respondents also assessed the importance of social acceptance in the process of sustainable development of the industry (see Figure 7).

For most respondents, the importance of social acceptance in the process of sustainable industrial development is high – 68%, i.e., it is important. For some respondents, it is neutral – 23%, and it is not important – 9%.

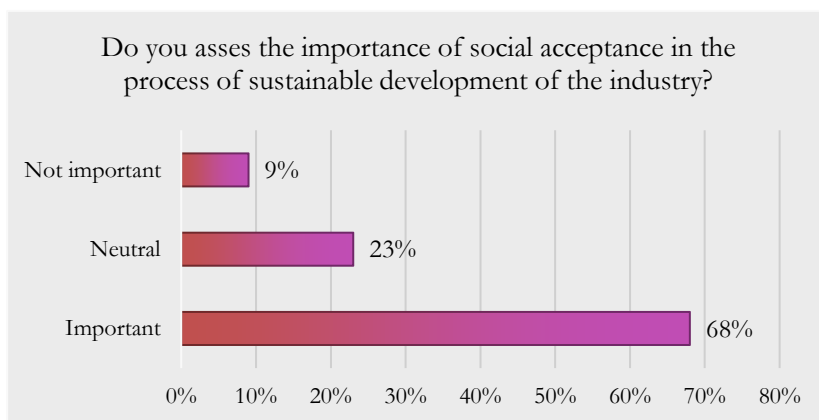


Figure 7. Respondents' answers to the question: "Do you assess the importance of social acceptance in the process of sustainable development of the industry?"

Source: Author's study

On average, how much % more does a satisfied tourist pay for tourist services? 42% of respondents believe that a tourist spends 1–5% more if they are satisfied, 20% of respondents believe that 6–10% of the tourists pay extra, 18% believe that they do not pay extra, 11% confirm that the additional payment can be 11–15%, while 7% believe that a satisfied tourist can pay 16% more. (See Figure 8)

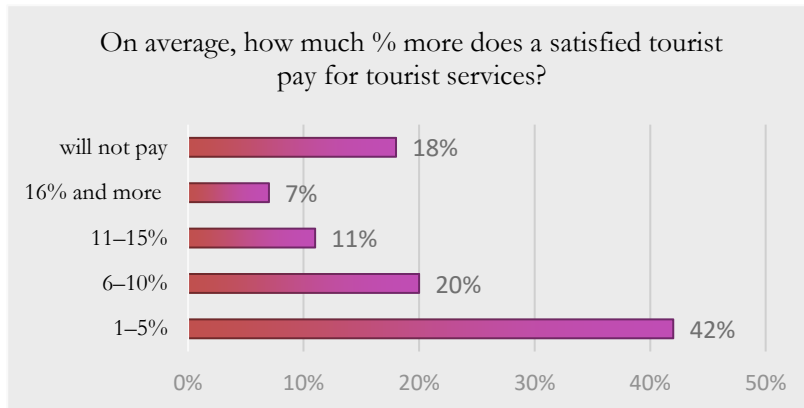


Figure 8. Respondents' views on additional payments made by satisfied tourists, expressed in percentage terms.
Source: Author's study

To the question: What determines tourists' satisfaction the most: The majority of respondents (40%) answer that: kindness and cordial hospitality determine tourists' satisfaction, timely and accurate service delivery – 27%, Services oriented to tourists' needs – 21% and affordable prices – 12%. (See Figure 9)

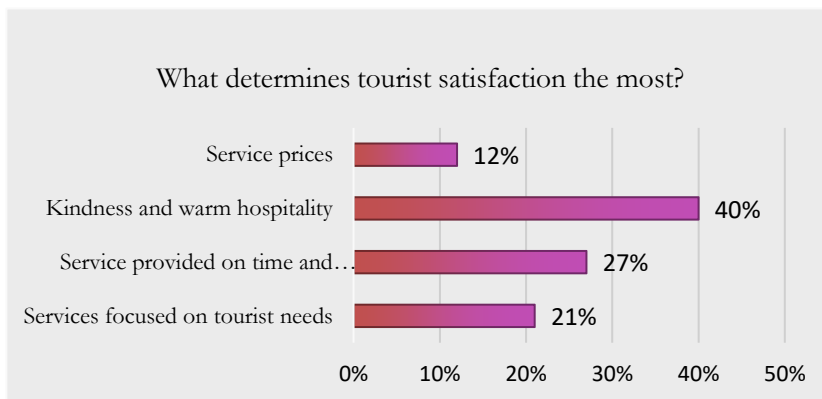


Figure 9. Respondents' positions: What causes tourists' satisfaction the most?
Source: Author's study

When asked how do you think social acceptance can contribute to sustainable development, what role does it play in the development of the industry? Respondents answer:

"Sustainable development and progress of the industry cannot be achieved without the satisfaction of tourists, thus the reasons for the satisfaction of respondents are the most important, including social attitudes. Any detail, no matter what it is related to, that does not satisfy the tourist and does not contribute to sustainable development" Social conditions and healthy attitudes can make tourists happy, which in turn can influence their spending. Sustainable development is first and foremost economic development. Thus, social acceptance can influence sustainable development.

„I think it plays an important role
Because money comes from tourists and how you host is important, i.e. it also affects development.”

„If there is no satisfaction, there is no rating and there are no more tourists, in other words, without this, the industry cannot develop.”

„It might play a pretty good role.”

„There is nothing to worry about here, of course, moods create satisfaction and financial well-being.”

„Without tourists, none of the above sustainable development goals can be achieved.”

„I can't say for sure, I don't know.”

Respondents also answered the question: What social acceptance factor can hinder the sustainable development of the industry? According to respondents, stable, healthy social relations and the growth of economic benefits can be hindered by:

"Homophobic and racist attitudes towards tourists"

"Ignoring their rights, discrimination";

"Misperception of difference, for example, if a tourist is a representative of another culture, negative attitudes towards him/her due to this different factor"

"In my opinion, the breakdown of all factors of social acceptance hinders sustainable development to some extent.";

"We cannot talk about sustainable development, about business progress if we do not have satisfied customers."

"I think that first of all, disrespect for their rights can hinder them";

"I can't say for sure, it's probably more dissatisfaction with the service, which is due to many factors, including rude staff, high prices, etc.";

To the question: Does the economic development of tourism organizations depend on the number of tourists and what can cause their loss? Some of the respondents' answers are as follows:

„Yes it is";

„The entire industry is based on tourists";

"The quantity is important, and the category of tourists is also important. Some people don't like to spend money, for example Pakistani and Indian tourists, so I think losing Arab tourists is more harmful."

"Tourists with average purchasing power buy the most of our services, so losing them would be more damaging. Their loss is caused by dissatisfaction with the service and reception."

"Both the reputation of tourism organizations, the realization of services, and the economic well-being depend on the goodwill of tourists. In general, hospitality is all about relationships, Even before we talk about the principles of sustainable development or the environmental activities of companies, water and electricity conservation, etc., we must first emphasize Organizing an environment for tourists saturated with healthy social responsibilities, where they will receive full service, where their rights will be taken into account and they will be taken care of. ";

Respondents also answered the question: What are the basic needs of a modern tourist, taking into account the principles of sustainable development?

Conducting tourism organizations' activities in a way that does not harm nature, the environment, or people

"In my opinion, any tourism service provider, not just tourism organizations, should try to protect natural resources, using environmentally friendly products in the service process is important to a certain segment of tourists.

"Tourists like it best when companies deliver on their promises and meet their expectations."

"A very large proportion of tourists pay attention to other tourists' evaluations of company services, including how attentive the employees were to them, how conscientiously and politely they provided service."

"Tourists need care";

"Among the tourists of my company there are many different customers, but one thing makes them happy most of all: direct attitudes and care. Attention."

"Tourists need emotions, impressions and quality";

"High-quality logistics and infrastructure"

The majority of respondents (87%) believe that ensuring accessibility and safety of services for tourists as a stakeholder in the industry is important, 9% are neutral, and 4% are not important. (See Figure 10)

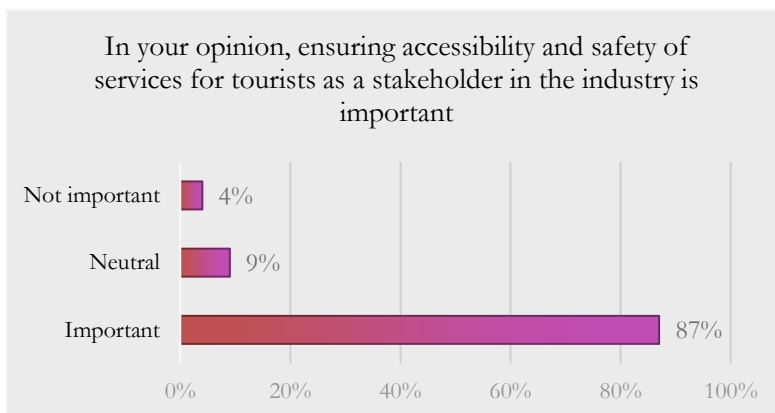


Figure 10. Respondents' answers to the question: "In your opinion, how important is it to ensure accessibility and safety of services for tourists as stakeholders in the industry?"

Source: Author's study

6. Discussion

The present article and the most recent research, conducted to assess the role of social acceptance in the sustainable development process, differs from previous studies in several key ways. Unlike other research, it not only examines the process of sustainable development within social relations and the tourism industry but also bridges the knowledge between these two areas. The study highlights the connection between social inclusion and sustainable development, demonstrating the importance of social acceptance as a facilitating factor.

This integrative approach is innovative, providing a new perspective on how social factors interact with industry processes. Furthermore, the findings emphasize the significance of tourists' choices and satisfaction as stakeholders. These factors influence the sustainable development process through tourism service and product delivery, ultimately impacting revenue growth and overall industry performance.

An interesting limitation can be considered that the existing research does not reflect the influences and interdependencies of various factors of social acceptance in multiethnic tourism. Such research requires a separate, more in-depth and detailed investigation, which may reveal different attitudes, reasons for social acceptance, and factors, likely more related to cultural awareness.

According to the research, there is a pressing need for managing relationships with tourists, taking into account social acceptability, in order to regulate negative and positive attitudes towards individual factors. The limitations and difficulties in conducting the research were the respondents' willingness to consider the sensitive subject matter, as well as the number of companies in the market and the respondents' openness, very often, due to cultural awareness, those employed in the tourism industry avoid discussing certain topics and experiences.

Another difficulty and limitation for the article was the availability of scientific sources and existing studies, the number of which is quite small. The subject of tourism has not been properly studied, not only in the field of tourism, In the service sector in general, not enough attention is paid to the role of social acceptance and subjective attitudes in the business development process.

The results of our research can be partially compared to the survey of social acceptance among owners of Adjara's housing facilities in 2019: common highlights are:

1. Sensitive attitudes towards individual factors of social acceptance of respondents;
2. Unacceptable, negative attitudes towards certain groups of tourists;
3. The importance of tourists in terms of business development and revenue generation of a tourist facility. (Surmanidze, 2020)

7. Conclusions

As a result of the research conducted, it is possible to say that social acceptance is important in terms of the sustainable development of the industry, it can play 2 very important roles in the sustainable development of the industry:

1. Promoting tourist satisfaction positively influences tourists' financial decisions and the amount of money they spend on tourism services. Consequently, this also contributes to sustainable economic growth.
2. It can enhance the visitor experience by ensuring fundamental tourist rights. These include the ability to relax in a healthy social environment, equal access to tourism services and products, and the protection of their rights and property.

Considering the results of the survey, representatives of travel agencies recognize tourists as important stakeholders in the tourism industry. The economic well-being of the sector depends on their satisfaction, which, in turn, can positively influence another aspect of sustainable development – poverty reduction.

According to the survey, respondents indicated that tourist satisfaction is primarily determined by the culture of hospitality, healthy social acceptance, friendliness, and positive attitudes toward visitors. These factors consistently contribute to tourist satisfaction, as confirmed both in the main study presented in this article and in previous research conducted between 2019 and 2024.

Conversely, tourist satisfaction is negatively affected by unhealthy social attitudes. Discrimination against tourists' rights – including access to recreation, a healthy environment, tourism services and products, and freedom of behavior – can lead to dissatisfaction. Discrimination on various grounds, such as racial, cultural, sexual, political, or other bases, is particularly detrimental to the tourist experience.

According to respondents, the needs of tourists from a sustainable development perspective are most closely related to: the point of replenishing visitors, which involves providing them with healthy social attitudes and goodwill.

According to the respondents participating in the study, the most important factor in social acceptance is cultural, if we compare it with 2 previous studies conducted in hotels. The results of a study on social acceptance among hotel owners suggest that the basis for negative attitudes towards tourists among hotel employees and hotel owners is homophobic, Racist attitudes, unacceptability of LGBT tourists, and political factors also play a significant role in the existence of inhospitable attitudes towards Russian tourists.

An important finding from the survey results is that 87% of travel agency representatives believe that social acceptance has an impact on the sustainable development of the industry. The result of the question: What determines tourists' satisfaction the most is important: The majority of respondents, 40%, answer that: Kindness and warm hospitality determine tourists' satisfaction.

When asked about the importance of social acceptance in the service process, 91% of respondents indicated that it is important. However, it is also necessary to consider the remaining 9% whose views differ: 7% believe it is not important, and 2% could not provide a specific position. Respondents who were unable to give a clear answer may have difficulty expressing strong opinions or may lack sufficient information about social acceptability. This issue is still not widely discussed, highlighting the need for public awareness and employee education through official meetings and training programs. Industry representatives should acquire essential knowledge regarding social acceptance. For those respondents who do not consider social acceptance important, several factors may be involved in addition to a lack of information:

1. Challenges related to stereotypical or traditional cultural awareness, evaluation, and perception.
2. Limited understanding of the overall significance of the process.
3. Insufficient monitoring of the socio-economic impact of social acceptance.
4. Limited experience working within the tourism industry.

The most important development points for tourists' satisfaction are: employment and the existence of a good working environment and conditions for employees – 33%; Consideration of the rights of consumers/tourists by tourism organizations – 43% Respondents believe that stable, healthy social relations, The growth of economic benefits can be hindered by discriminatory attitudes towards tourists on cultural and

sexual grounds. In their answers to this question, respondents also emphasize that the economic well-being of the industry depends on the satisfaction of tourists.

When asked about the factors influencing the economic progress of tourism organizations and the causes of tourist loss, respondents highlighted a key issue: tourists are often lost due to unethical, irresponsible, or impolite behavior by industry representatives. The majority of respondents emphasized the industry's attitude toward tourists and the importance of ensuring their satisfaction. The repetition of these responses underscores the credibility of the research and the sincerity of the respondents' positions, particularly given the role of tourists in the social and economic development of the tourism sector.

According to 87% of respondents, the safety of tourists is a critical concern. Respondents also highlighted other important needs, including safe and healthy social attitudes, alignment of services with expectations, and quality logistics and infrastructure. Among these, friendliness and the ability to contribute to tourists' happiness were most frequently mentioned. Ensuring these aspects is seen as central to meeting tourists' demands and enhancing their overall experience.

In order to fulfill the above-mentioned points of sustainable development and to regulate social acceptance problems, it is appropriate and desirable to:

1. Tourism organizations should conduct intensive introductory training's and thematic lectures to raise awareness among employees about social acceptance in their facilities. Training's can be conducted on the following topics:

- 1.1 Social relationships and the importance of service
- 1.2 Sustainable development and tourists satisfaction
- 1.3 Social acceptance factors and attitudes toward tourists
- 1.4 Cultural mindset and social relationships

2. Explain to employees their role and importance in the service process, in terms of determining tourist satisfaction. Team members must understand that they are just as responsible for tourist satisfaction as other employees.

3. Demonstrate respect for tourists' rights, privacy, and responsibilities in the organization's corporate culture and values.

In addition to private organizations, it is also desirable for the Ministry of Tourism and Resorts to organize large-scale introductory meetings.

In order to promote the importance of social acceptance through mass media and social networks, it is also important to initially develop specific handbooks based on existing research and practices that will outline: 1. What difficulties do tourists face while traveling? 2. Tourist rights? 3. The importance of sustainable development points? 4. The latest statistical data on tourist expenditure and income 5. The tourism industry's dependence on tourist choice and satisfaction, etc.

According to this and other studies, it is important for industry participants to understand both the importance of social acceptance and the significant role their attitudes can play in the economic advancement of the industry. Awareness also implies an awareness of the differences that may exist between tourists and local residents, the importance of acceptance as a given that exists despite denial And that it is important to take care of tourist satisfaction in the service process.

Promoting social acceptance will help:

Encouraging responsible behavior towards customers by business operators;
 Increasing the possibility of having more satisfied tourists – increasing revenues;
 Generating more investment money, which can be used to further strengthen sustainable development points;
 In a traditionally minded society, it is recognized that indifference and neglect are a form of discrimination.

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