

OPINION OF LAKE BALATON RESIDENTS ON LOCAL TOURISM AFTER THE PANDEMIC

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Abstract

The unexpected outbreak of the coronavirus in 2020 caused extreme damage to tourism, but after the release of the restrictions, Lake Balaton has once again become the focus of attention, especially for domestic tourism. According to a questionnaire survey of local people, they perceived a change in the level of tourist arrivals since COVID-19, with a significant percentage either just tolerating the presence of tourists in the area or being particularly disturbed by visitors. Typically, the respondents who are the most dissatisfied with the number of tourists are those who have lived at Lake Balaton in their entire lives. According to the feedback from respondents on their perception of the positive and negative effects of tourism, the disadvantages were somewhat more strongly experienced than the advantages.

Keywords: Lake Balaton, attitude survey, coronavirus, waterfront tourism, lake tourism

INTRODUCTION

In Hungary's tourism sector, waterfronts are one of the key attractions for travellers. The focus of the study is on the tourism area of Lake Balaton, which according to the website of the Hungarian Tourism Agency is one of the most important tourism areas in Hungary (MTÜ, 2023a). When breaking down tourist overnight stays in commercial accommodation establishments by tourism region, the Budapest-Central Danube Region (36.7%), which includes the capital, recorded the highest share of overnight stays in 2022, followed by the Balaton Tourism Region (19.8%) (KSH, 2023). As its role in the tourism industry in Hungary is very important, further, more detailed and specific studies are needed to contribute to the development of the region.

The research has a strong focus on the feedback of the population living in the Lake Balaton area, which was collected and systematically analysed through a questionnaire

survey. Understanding and regularly reviewing the attitudes of the people living in the host area is essential, as locals are affected by both the positive and negative impacts of tourism in the immediate surroundings of their homes.

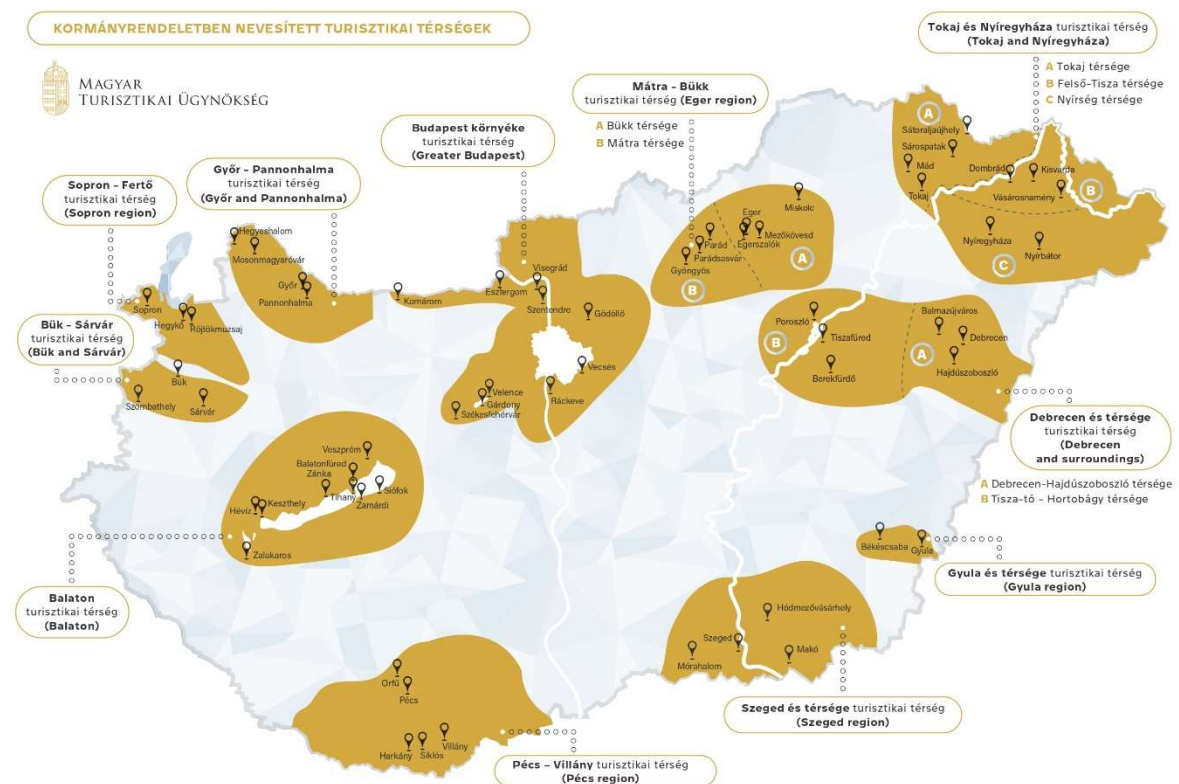
As part of the primary research, the experience of the population about tourism around Lake Balaton in the period following the COVID-19 outbreak will be presented, as there have been many changes in tourism since the outbreak of the coronavirus, and a transformation of travel habits has been observed worldwide, including in Hungary. The study also aims to assess the quality of the relationship between locals and tourists, to examine the impact of tourism as perceived by the local population, and to explore the current situation and development potential of tourism in Lake Balaton from the perspective of the local population.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

As Hungary does not border the sea, it does not have a coastline and is not involved in the so-called 3S tourism (sea, sand, sun) as a host country (Szöllős-Tóth, 2022). Nevertheless, the country has waterfronts of tourist importance (riverbanks, lakeshores), which provide a variety of recreational opportunities for both domestic and foreign tourists (Pókó, 2019, Hojcska-Szabó, 2011). As a result, Hungary is able to achieve success in the field of water tourism, which includes activities in, on, or near the water (Csapó – Darabos, 2011; Győri – Horváth, 2018). The term 'lake tourism' is used when the main motivation of the visitor is to visit the lake, when the lake is a key factor in the visitor's experience (Pókó, 2019). Cooper (2006) points out that water quality is crucial for lake tourism, as many of the larger lakes are saltwater (e.g. the Caspian Sea).

In Hungary, 11 tourism regions have been designated by the government (Fig. 1), of which the Hungarian Tourism Agency (MTÜ, 2023b) has given special attention to the Lake Balaton tourism region, which is an excellent destination for holiday tourism, waterfront tourism, health and active tourism, and attracts visitors interested in culture, wine and gastronomy.

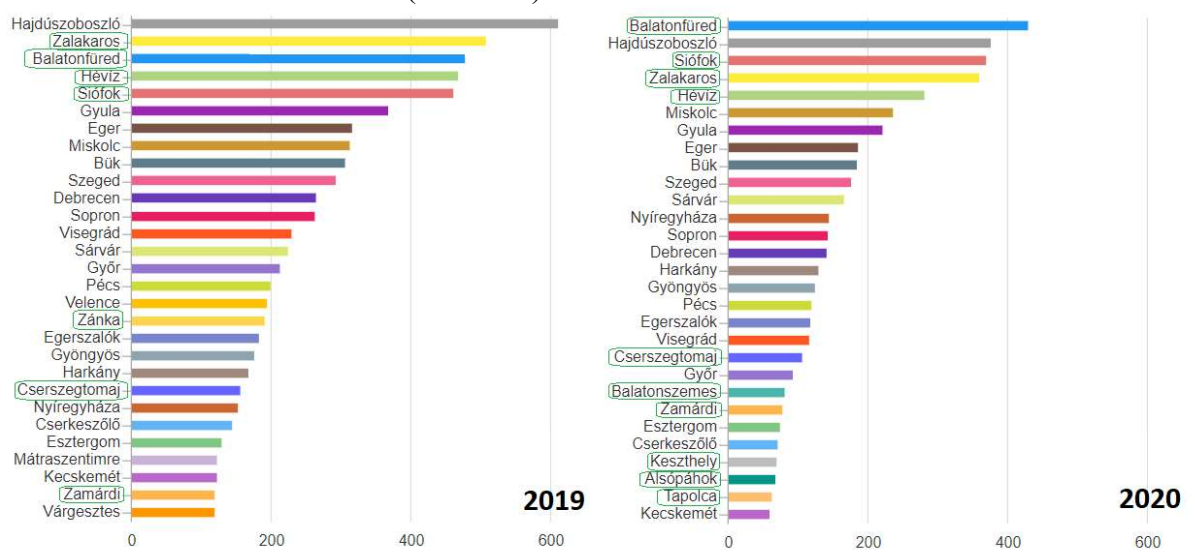
Figure 1 Tourism regions of Hungary



Source: MTÜ (2023b)

Some destinations in the Lake Balaton tourist region (Fig. 2) have been among the most popular domestic destinations for many years, based on the preferences of travellers.

Figure 2 The most popular rural settlements by nights spent in commercial accommodation in 2019 and 2020 (thousand)*



Source: KSH (2020) modified by the authors

*Settlements of the Lake Balaton tourist area marked with green

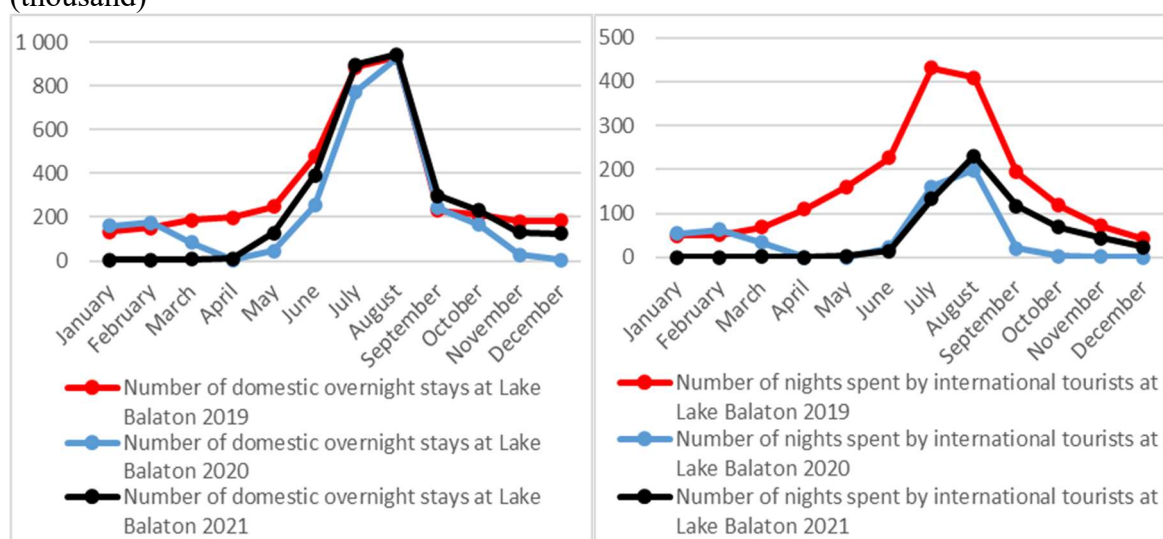
Among the most popular destinations at Lake Balaton are Zalakaros, Hévíz, Balatonfüred and Siófok. Hévíz has been the most visited location by international tourists for more than a decade now, after the capital.

The world was shocked by the COVID-19 epidemic in early 2020, the total impact of which could hardly be mentioned on an endless list. The most significant drop in turnover was in sectors where personal contact is more important (Dey-Chowdhury et al., 2022; Haryanto, 2020). In Hungary, the turnover of hotels and restaurants in 2020 was only 43.4% of the 2019 result (KSH, 2022b), while the turnover of spas in 2020 was 50.8% of the previous year's turnover (KSH, 2022c). According to a recent study, the operators in the domestic tourism sector did not expect any threat from health risks before the emergence of COVID-19 (Keller et al., 2022).

The role and situation of Lake Balaton in tourism have been the subject of significant research for decades, with Rátz (1999) on the socio-cultural impacts and Puczkó (1999) on the environmental impacts of local tourism, but the latest results from recent years are also worth mentioning, for example, Szalók et al. (2017) or Lőrincz et al. (2019). The study by Szalók and colleagues highlights the importance of the local population's attitude towards tourism development and how much it means for tourism if local people are "tourism-friendly". Lőrincz and his colleagues' primary research among residents shows that Balatonfüred, Tihany and Siófok are the most attractive settlements in the region. These destinations are also popular among visitors and are shown in Fig. 2.

The importance of Lake Balaton for domestic tourism is undisputed, even during the periods when the availability of most tourist services was limited due to the pandemic. Fig. 3 shows the number of overnight stays by foreign and domestic visitors for the year before the pandemic and the two years after the pandemic.

Figure 3 Nights spent in tourist accommodation in the Lake Balaton tourist region* (thousand)



Source: edited by the authors based on KSH (2022a)

*Data comparability is limited due to incomplete data reporting due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The data of the peak summer period show that while the number of domestic overnight stays in August 2020 (928 thousand nights) almost reached the August 2019 level (932 thousand nights) and exceeded it in 2021 (944 thousand nights); the number of foreign overnight stays in August of the two years under review (2020: 200 thousand nights; 2021: 231 thousand nights) was far below the base year of 2019 (408 thousand nights). This is in line with the results of several international studies of other tourist destinations, where a major decrease in the number of foreign visitors has been reported (Kubičková – Holešinská, 2021; Mandić, 2023).

The specific objectives of the research are to assess, through a primary questionnaire survey, the following:

- The opinion of the local population on the current situation of tourism in Lake Balaton.
- The residents' opinion on the direction of tourism development in the area of their residence.
- The attitude of the local population towards tourists coming to their residential area.
- The perceived negative and positive effects of tourism in their residential area.

DATA AND METHODS

This paper was based on a questionnaire survey that used database analysis, data visualisation, and statistical tests. Attitude research, as a primary research tool, can be successfully applied in many disciplines. Studies are known from the field of pedagogy (Cotton et al., 2007),

marketing (Nábrádi et al., 2017), environmental issues (Erhabor – Don, 2016), travel and security (Repnik – Mekinc, 2015), tourism development (Vargáné Csobán, 2007), as well as from the examination of the perception of the impact of tourism (Szöllős-Tóth – Vargáné Csobán, 2021).

This study aims to explore the perspectives and attitudes of local people towards regional tourism and the positive and negative impacts of tourism in the years following the pandemic. The questionnaire was also based on a review of other authors' primary research papers (Juray, 2008; Szöllős-Tóth – Vargáné Csobán, 2021).

The respondents to the questionnaire included property owners and people who live in the area of Lake Balaton (within a maximum distance of 20-30 km). The survey, which was available online in the Lake Balaton-related groups (e.g.: Minden, ami Balaton - Balaton.hu, Balatoni programok, Balatoni társaság) of the social media platform, was open to locals who wished to participate in the survey in the first half of 2022, during which a total of 261 valid responses were received and analysed.

The results of this study include Pearson Chi-square tests, which is a statistical method used to determine if there is a significant association between two categorical variables. The chi-square test is based on comparing the observed frequencies in each category with the frequencies that would be expected in those categories by chance. The Pearson Chi-Square test is the most commonly used and assesses the discrepancy between observed and expected frequencies (Field, 2009).

The authors of this paper wish to highlight the limitations of using statistical tests such as the chi-square test. Since the data from primary research are not representative, it is not possible to draw conclusions on the whole population, and possible biases must be taken into account. Nevertheless, the use of non-representative samples to gain a preliminary understanding can be beneficial. Such surveys help in formulating hypotheses and identifying key variables for further study. Other researchers (Szondi, 2018) believe that using Chi-square tests on non-representative samples provides meaningful data that contribute to scientific knowledge, even if the results cannot be generalised to the wider population.

RESULTS

Characterisation of the participants

The primary research aimed to survey the attitudes of the residents of the settlements located on the coast of Lake Balaton. Representativeness was not ensured in this survey. The largest

number of respondents - 100 people - live in Balatonfüred, 25 respondents from Balatonlelle, 22 from Szigliget, 21 from Zamardi, and responses were also received from other settlements. The uneven geographical distribution of respondents is mostly due to the high activity of the members of the group of residents of Balatonfüred, who were eager to share their opinions and express their agreement or disagreement on the topics discussed in the comments below the post. The respondent who has lived in the Lake Balaton area the longest has been a resident since birth, i.e. for 72 years. Of the 261 respondents, 110 have lived in Lake Balaton since they were born. When asked what the respondent's main connection to the town was, the most popular answer was family (52.1%), followed by nature and water (26.4%) and then work (12.6%).

The survey also found that 59% of the Balaton residents surveyed were married, and 34.5% of the sample had two children. Almost half of the survey respondents (47.1%) were employed, 16.5% were self-employed and 14.9% were retired. In terms of income, 25.7% of respondents had significantly below-average and also 25.7% had significantly below-average incomes, while 20.7% had average incomes and 18.8% had above-average incomes.

Questions concerning the tourism of Lake Balaton

One of the fundamental questions about tourism on Lake Balaton is what residents think the main attractions for tourists are. In addition to nine pre-defined options, the respondents were allowed to give their own opinions. The most popular answers were festivals and events (151 respondents), followed by open beaches (122 respondents) and then closeness to nature (121 respondents). For this question, nine of the respondents gave their own opinion, of which six specifically mentioned the prestige of the Lake Balaton area.

This is in line with a primary survey published in 2019 (Lőrincz et al.), where the respondents are residents of a municipality in the Lake Balaton region, either working or studying there, or have a second home or holiday home in the area. When participants were asked what they were most proud of in the Lake Balaton region, the majority (31%) said that it was a natural feature (location, landscapes). They were also asked what first came to mind about Lake Balaton and found that the most common (42%) were summer-related terms (beach, paddle boats, tourists, festivals).

The survey participants were asked to rate local tourism on a 5-point Likert scale according to the criteria given (Tab. 1). The collection of criteria was inspired by the doctoral thesis of Tünde Juray, who surveyed the tourism attitudes of the inhabitants of a major Hungarian city – Szeged (Juray, 2008). When rating tourism in Lake Balaton, the scale scores were reported as follows: 5 - excellent; 4 - good; 3 - fair; 2 - acceptable; 1 - unsatisfactory.

Table 1 Evaluation of tourism in Lake Balaton on a 5-point Likert scale

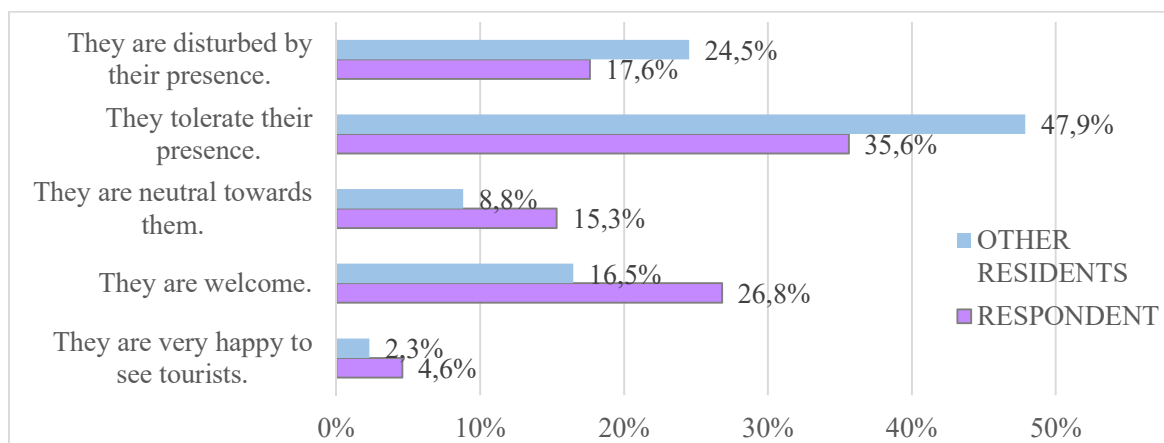
Aspect to be evaluated	Average	Standard deviation
Public safety	3,54	1,02
Spending by tourists	3,36	0,94
Quality of events	3,33	1,09
Number of tourists	3,25	1,37
Information about attractions	3,22	1,00
Awareness of attractions	3,22	1,02
Cleanliness, tidiness	3,08	1,15
Infrastructural facilities	2,77	1,10
Visitors' knowledge about the area	2,62	0,98
Behaviour of tourists	2,13	0,96

Source: own research (2022)

As can be seen from Table 1, public safety (3.54) received the highest average score from residents, who are the most satisfied with this aspect. Tourist spending also received a high score (3.36), as did the quality of events (3.33). The lowest average scores were for tourist behaviour (2.13), visitor knowledge about the area (2.62) and the quality of local infrastructure (2.77). The standard deviation from the mean was quite low for the tourist spending aspect (0.94), and the largest standard deviation was found for the number of tourists (1.37).

The higher standard deviation also shows that the opinion of locals is divided on the number of tourists coming to Lake Balaton: 31.4% of the sampled respondents consider the number of tourists in their place of residence to be satisfactory. Only 4.2% said that there are too few tourists, and 64.4% said that there are too many tourists in the Balaton area.

It was also surveyed how the respondent personally feels about tourists visiting Lake Balaton and how the respondent thinks other members of the local population in general feel about tourists visiting the area (Fig. 4).

Figure 4 The respondent's attitude towards tourists and the attitude of other locals towards tourists coming to Lake Balaton

Source: own research (2022)

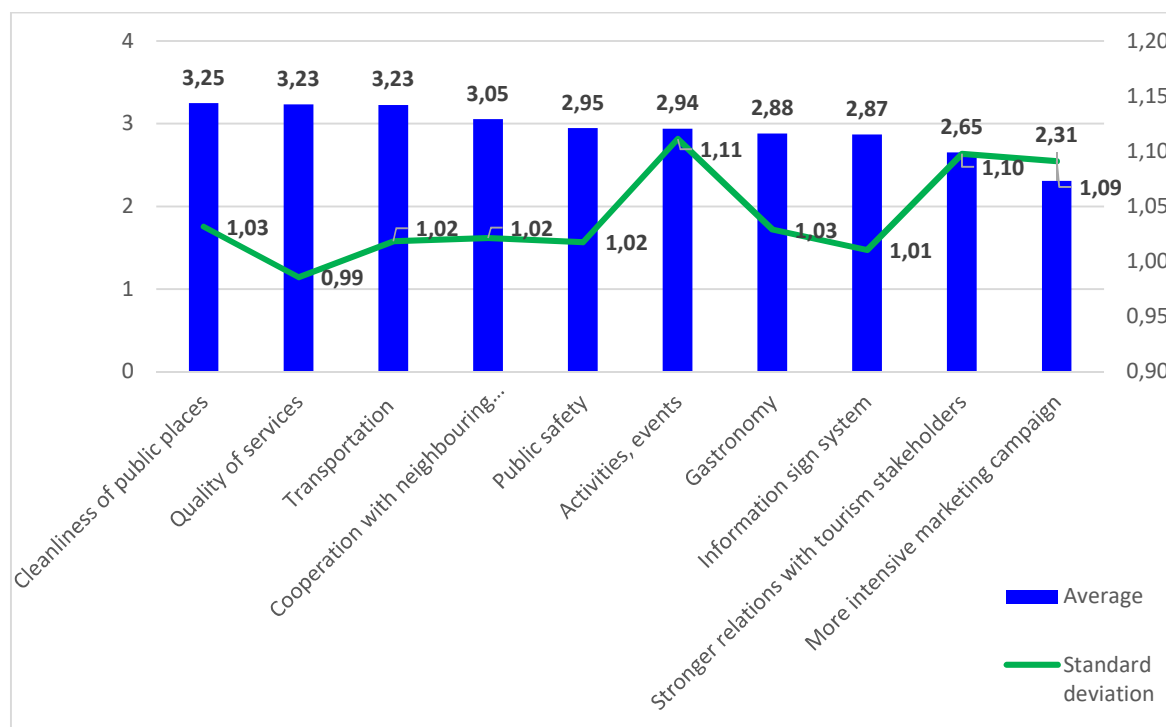
When looking at the attitude of locals towards tourists, it is striking that only 4.6% (respondents' own attitude) and 2.3% (attitude of other locals, according to the respondents) of the residents are particularly happy to see tourists. The two most popular responses (annoyed by tourists and tolerates tourists) together account for 53.3% (own attitude) and 72.4% (attitude of other locals). Not only is it remarkable that the two most negative attitudes received the most marks, but also that respondents see the attitudes of other locals as being significantly more negative than their own.

Similarities can be observed with the results of the primary research of Szőllős-Tóth and Vargáné Csobán (2022) in Hajdúszoboszló. According to the results of their research, only a small proportion of the residents of Hajdúszoboszló are specifically happy to see tourists, and in the majority of cases, the locals are more likely to just tolerate the presence of tourists.

Since data in Fig. 3 presented earlier cannot be considered fully reliable in light of the lack of data due to the coronavirus outbreak, it was important to get an idea of the perceptions of the local population. Collecting information was important not only because the reliability of the data is uncertain due to the coronavirus but also to gather information on the interests of the residents, which could lead to a better relationship between the residents and the tourists, and ultimately contribute to the tourist experience. This form of primary data collection is neither suitable nor intended to test the reliability of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office's data, but it can be useful in assessing attitudes towards tourism. Almost half of the sample (49.8%) perceived that tourist arrivals in the two summers following the outbreak of the coronavirus (year 2020 and 2021) exceeded those of the previous years; 29.1% felt that the same level of arrivals had occurred; and just 21.1% perceived that the number of tourists had decreased in the area. The respondents' opinion on this subject is a rather subjective assessment, but it is important to highlight it, as it is the local population that first perceives seasonal congestion, overcrowding, and other signs of overtourism.

The responses received on the possible directions for the development of tourism in Lake Balaton are presented below (Fig. 5). To ensure a clear distinction between questions on tourism impact and questions on tourism development, different scales were used for the two types of questions. The 4-point Likert scale used for rating the directions of development is defined as follows: 1 - would not do; 2 - might do; 3 - probably would do; 4 - definitely would do.

Figure 5 If you had the opportunity, which of the following would you improve in order to attract more tourists to Lake Balaton?



Source: own research (2022)

According to local people, the cleanliness of public places is the aspect most in need of improvement, with the highest average score (3.25) and 58.2% of respondents selecting option 4 (would definitely do). The cleanliness of the places is essential not only for visitors but also for the population, so improving it would meet the needs of several stakeholders. Similarly, high average scores (3.23) were given to improving the quality of services and transportation, which would also improve the living conditions of the local population, as well as the tourist experience.

The lowest average scores were for a more intensive marketing campaign (2.31) and stronger relations with tourism stakeholders (2.65). These two development options and the development of activities and events were the most divisive, with the largest standard deviations (1.09; 1.10; 1.11).

In the next section, on a 5-point Likert scale, respondents were asked to indicate how much they perceive the positive and negative impacts of tourism (Tab. 2 and 3). The Likert scale scores in this case are: 1 - not at all; 2 - a little; 3 - moderately; 4 - rather yes; 5 - very much.

Table 2 Perception of the positive effects of tourism by local population

Positive effect	Average	Standard deviation
Social and cultural life revitalisation	3,11	1,19
Increased role of the services sector	3,11	1,13
Revitalisation of local arts and cultural events	3,01	1,18
More leisure opportunities	2,99	1,12
Increased value of vocational skills, language skills	2,95	1,21
Infrastructure development	2,93	1,15
More quality leisure opportunities	2,93	1,15
Job creation	2,87	1,22
Rise in living standards	2,66	1,25
Protection of natural resources	2,21	1,15

Source: own research (2022)

In the questionnaire, a total of ten positive impacts of tourism are listed. The highest average scores were given to the boost to social and cultural life (3.11) and the strengthening of the service sector (3.11), followed by support for local arts and cultural events (3.01) and the expansion of leisure opportunities (2.99).

The least perceived by surveyed locals was the impact of tourism in creating jobs (2.87) and raising living standards (2.66), as well as the protection of natural resources (2.21).

The standard deviation of the scores for the perception of the impacts studied ranged from 1.12 to 1.25. The average score for the perception of all positive impacts was 2.88.

Table 3 Perception of the negative effects of tourism by local population

Negative effect	Average	Standard deviation
Rising property prices	4,72	0,71
Increased difficulty in buying property	4,30	1,13
Rising rental costs	4,20	1,14
Increased number of non-residents	4,19	1,11
Crowding, congestion	4,18	1,06
Increase in seasonal jobs	3,92	1,08
Excessive noise	3,77	1,27
Waste, polluted environment	3,66	1,20
Increase in stereotypes	3,57	1,18
Labour shortages in traditional sectors	3,47	1,26
Growth of the grey economy	3,17	1,21
Fading of local traditions	3,16	1,36
Damage to public goods, vandalism	3,12	1,20
Reduced sense of security	2,79	1,28
Increase of crime	2,55	1,27

Source: own research (2022)

82% of the surveyed residents around Lake Balaton chose the highest possible score for their perception of rising property prices, meaning they experience this negative effect to a large

extent. The average score is thus 4.72; the standard deviation for this aspect was the lowest (0.71) even when positive and negative effects are examined together. Therefore the opinion of the sample was the most consistent in this case. Difficulty in buying property (4.30) and rising rental costs (4.20) also received high average scores. Cases of negative impacts related to housing difficulties were at the top of the ranking in terms of average scores.

The lowest average scores were given to increasing crime (2.55), reduced sense of security (2.79), damage to public goods, and vandalism (3.12), all of which were related to security. Based on the responses, security issues seem to be the least perceived of all the negative aspects of tourism.

In our sample, the standard deviation for the perception of negative impacts ranged from 0.71 to 1.36. The mean score for the perception of all negative impacts was 3.66.

Cross-tabulation analysis, Chi-square test

The use of SPSS software has enabled us to carry out several Chi-square tests. In most cases, comparing nominal or ordinal measurement-level variables did not reveal a relationship. The variables tested were mostly independent of each other, even in cases where, according to the conditions of the Chi-square test, we treated some cluster variables together in order to achieve the expected number of items per cell of at least 5 (e.g. age grouping, conversion to dummy variables).

In the following, cases are presented where the null hypothesis "H0: there is no relationship between the variables under investigation" was rejected at a 5% significance level.

In the first of these tests of significance, the independent variable was gender. In the case when we selected the option of programmes and events as the dependent variable among the development opportunities for tourism in Lake Balaton, it turned out that the two variables were not independent ($\chi^2=8.873$; $df=3$; $p=0.031$; Cramer's $V=0.184$). Among the options of the four-point scale, the value 4 was chosen by a significantly higher proportion of women (46.9%) than expected (41.8%), while it was less popular among men (30.5%). In parallel, the lowest value of the scale was less popular among women (14%) than expected (16.9%), while it was more popular among men (23.2%).

While 7.3% of men chose a score of 4 - the highest possible - for a more intensive marketing campaign among the development proposals, 22.3% of women did, with an expected frequency of 17.6% ($\chi^2=10.506$; $df=3$; $p=0.015$; Cramer's $V=0.201$).

The development of an information sign system around Lake Balaton was also divisive between genders, with a significant difference revealed by cross-tabulation analysis ($\chi^2=8.063$; $df=3$; $p=0.045$; Cramer's $V=0,176$). Women (36.9%) were more supportive than expected (32.2%), while men were less so (22%).

In the question where respondents were asked to rate the tourism of Lake Balaton on a 5-point Likert scale, a relationship between the two variables was also found. Despite the expected prevalence (7.3%), 17.1% of men and 2.8% of women chose a score of 1 (unsatisfactory) for the quality of events ($\chi^2=18.633$; $df=4$; $p=0.001$; Cramer's $V=0,267$). Therefore, it showed that among men, there was a higher level of dissatisfaction with the events at Lake Balaton.

Although in the questionnaire several possible answers were given to the question of whether the work of the respondents was related to tourism, in the cross-tabulation analysis some of these categories were merged to meet the Chi-square test criterion of a frequency of at least 5 in each cell of the cross-tabulation. Thus, it ended up with 'yes' (70 persons, 26.8%) and 'no' (191 persons, 73.2%) as dummy variables, where the 'yes' answer includes individuals who are owners in the tourism industry as well as those who are employees in either hospitality, hotel industry, tour operator or other tourism fields.

Regarding the future orientations of local tourism, a significant relationship was found between the variables for stronger marketing activity, which are not independent of each other ($\chi^2=9.613$; $df=3$; $p=0.022$; Cramer's $V=0,192$). For this question, on a 4-point scale, a score of 3 (3: likely to develop) was more frequent than expected (26.4%) among those working in tourism (40%), while a lower proportion of those not working in the sector (21.5%).

Among the surveyed residents, those who work in tourism had a more favourable relationship with tourists, meaning that being in the industry influences the relationship with tourists visiting the area ($\chi^2=14.875$; $df=4$; $p=0.005$; Cramer's $V=0,239$). While only 20% of those working in the industry chose a score of 2 on the 5-point Likert scale (2: tolerates their presence), 41.4% of those not working in the industry chose a score of 2. Furthermore, 35.7% of those working in tourism selected a 4 (4: welcome), while only 23.6% of those working in other fields selected a 4.

In order to meet all the conditions of the Chi-square test, it was also necessary to group the sample according to the age of the respondents. This resulted in a group of 155 respondents under the age of 50 (or 50 years) and a group of 106 respondents over the age of 50.

It was found that a higher percentage (33%) of those aged over 50 perceive the negative effects of tourism on labour shortages in traditional sectors (Likert scale 4: rather yes) than those younger than them (18.7%) ($\chi^2=10.458$; $df=4$; $p=0.033$; Cramer's $V=0,200$). However, a high perception of the presence of stereotypes (score 5) is more prevalent in younger people (31.6%) than in people over 50 (20.8%) ($\chi^2=10.075$; $df=4$; $p=0.039$; Cramer's $V=0,196$).

The authors hypothesise that residents who have lived in the Lake Balaton area since birth think differently about certain issues than local people who moved to the lake at different time in their lives. Among the options for improvement, a significant difference was found for transport: respondents who have lived near Lake Balaton since birth were less likely (14.5%) to choose 3 (3: would probably develop) out of the four options than those who moved to the area later in their lives (30.5%) ($\chi^2=10.224$; $df=3$; $p=0.017$; Cramer's $V=0,198$).

Findings of another analysis showed that a higher proportion of those who had lived near Lake Balaton all their lives (26.4%) considered the number of tourists in the area inadequate compared to those who had moved to the area later (9.9%) ($\chi^2=17.160$; $df=4$; $p=0.002$; Cramer's $V=0,256$).

Among the negative effects of tourism, 53.3% of the sample rated crowding and congestion as a 5, which means a high level of perception. Cross-tabulation analysis revealed that a higher proportion of residents who had lived near Lake Balaton all their lives (62.7%) chose this rating than those who had not lived there since birth (46.4%) ($\chi^2=13.800$; $df=4$; $p=0.008$; Cramer's $V=0,230$).

CONCLUSION

Examining the relationship between tourists and locals, it was found that the proportion of people who are particularly pleased to see tourists is negligible. The highest scores on the five-point Likert scale (bothered by tourists and tolerate tourists) together reflect the attitudes of more than half of respondents, and almost three-quarters of locals think that these two scores characterise the attitudes of other locals. It can be seen that the two most negative attitudes were the most frequently selected. Residents who took part in the questionnaire survey perceive their own attitudes as more friendly towards tourists, while they believe that the attitudes of other locals are more negative. Improving relations between the permanent population and temporary visitors would be essential for all stakeholders, as one of the basic

conditions for tourism is the existence of calm and peaceful conditions (except for disaster tourism).

The evaluation of tourism in Lake Balaton revealed that locals are most satisfied with public safety, which is in line with the analysis of the perception of tourism-generated negative impacts, which showed that the least perceived negative impacts in our sample are vandalism, damage, reduced sense of security and crime. A sense of security is essential not only for the residents but also for travellers, and it is important to continue to ensure this in the tourism area.

The other side of the list, the perception of negative impacts, has also been surveyed. Based on the average scores, the negative impacts related to housing difficulties were the most perceived by residents. A large number of non-permanent residents may not only lead to a lack of a safe environment, but can also contribute to rising property prices and rents through increased demand and make it more difficult to afford property. In recent years, the sharing economy has become an important player in the real estate market in Lake Balaton, including the sharing of accommodation for short-term rentals, i.e., Airbnb (Dudás et al., 2019). As the responses of local people show that real estate is the most difficult issue for them, we believe that there is a need to provide support and detailed information to residents about the possibilities available.

The aspect of crowding and congestion should be highlighted specifically, as it is one of the most easily noticeable signs of the overtourism phenomenon. According to the Balaton population, the perception of this is also strong in the area, so it is suggested to support activities that aim to reduce seasonality. An excellent example of this is cycling tourism, of which Lake Balaton and Lake Tisza are popular destinations. Lake Balaton is mostly visited by cycling tourists in September and Lake Tisza in June, so neither case are tourists concentrated in July-August, which is the peak season. This is related to the fact that a significant number of waterfront tourism visitors visit the lakes during the high season, while cyclists have difficulties bypassing the mass of holidaymakers (Somogyi, 2018).

An analysis of the perception of the positive effects of tourism has shown that the local population experiences relatively low levels of protection of natural resources. There is also a lack of perception of the effects of tourism in terms of job creation and raising living standards. The protection of natural resources is not only in the interest of those living there, but also of visitors. Greater involvement of the general public and tourists in the conservation activities of the national park authorities would be beneficial to society as a whole. To achieve

this, it seems essential to promote environmental protection programmes more widely and then to increase the number of programmes.

When looking at the positive and negative impacts together, it can be seen that the disadvantages scored higher on average than the advantages, suggesting that residents experience the inconveniences of tourism more strongly in their daily lives.

The hypothesis testing revealed that a higher proportion of women among our sample of Balaton residents would improve the range of local programmes and events, place more emphasis on the existence of signage to provide information and also support marketing campaigns. Women are more supportive of improving the quality of events. Meanwhile, men are more dissatisfied with the quality of programmes. It would therefore be desirable to develop a more favourable offer of events for both women and men.

Based on the sample examined, the null hypothesis that those residents who work in tourism have a more positive relationship with tourists than those who work in other areas has been accepted. Working in this sector has a positive impact on the relationship with tourists visiting the area.

When evaluating the number of tourists, respondents who have not spent their whole life near the lake were more likely to rate the number of tourists in the area as excellent, in other words, respondents who have lived in the area all their lives are more likely to rate the number of tourists as inadequate. This is in line with another finding that among the negative effects of tourism, crowding and congestion are most felt by those who have lived in the area since birth.

As with most papers, this study has various limitations. First of all, the primary research is not representative, only 261 inhabitants could be reached, of which 38.3% come from one municipality – Balatonfüred. As respondents were voluntarily included in the survey, it should be taken into account that certain groups may be over- or under-represented. Of the social media groups, it was possible to reach more people in those where there was discussion or debate in the comments. Further statistical methods could have been used to analyse the data collected. The Chi-square test used by the authors is only suitable for testing the relationship between two categorical variables, so it does not show causality. For the Chi-square test, the expected frequencies must be at least 5, in order to meet this condition, certain groups were merged. Nevertheless, it is hoped that this study will provide a useful and interesting perspective to ensure that future tourism, entertainment, cultural and infrastructure developments serve the interests of both local populations and holidaymakers.

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