Moh'd Juma Abdalla / Hamad Said / Mohammad Walid Fikirini / Faizan Ali

Crowding Perceptions of Hotels in Zanzibar: The Role of Mindfulness in Enhancing Residents' Social Identity

Abstract

Underpinned by Stimulus Organism Response (SOR) theory, this study investigates the role of mindfulness in the relationship between hotels' crowding perceptions and cognitive and affective dimensions of residents' social identity. Drawing on a sample of 315 surveys distributed to the residents in Zanzibar, a partial least square structural modelling (PLS-SEM) was used to analyse the data set. The findings of the study supported all hypotheses. First, crowding perceptions positively affect mindfulness. Second, mindfulness is positively associated with cognitive and affective identities. Thus, the present study's findings provide discussion and lay the foundations for theoretical and practical implications. Finally, the areas for further research are suggested.

Keywords: crowding perceptions, affective identity, cognitive identity, residents' social identity, mindfulness, Zanzibar

1. Introduction

While the pre-pandemic era experienced overcrowding in many places of the world, which attracted significant scholarly attention to the subject matter (Hwang et al., 2021; Luque-Gil et al., 2018; Schuckert & Wu, 2021; Yin et al., 2020), the onset of COVID-19 hampered research on overcrowding perceptions. However, the current recovery period seems to open avenues for further inquiries on the subject matter, partly because crowding perceptions emerge in places experiencing over-tourism (Hou & Zhang, 2021). Despite the increasing growth of studies on overcrowding in the pre-COVID-19 era, little has surfaced in hospitality literature regarding hotel crowding perceptions (Hansson, 2020; Ruiz et al., 2021; Yin et al., 2020). Due to this scarcity, the present study develops and tests a conceptual framework to examine the effect of the hotel's crowding perceptions by the residents. Since crowding imposes enormous adverse effects on tourism, the concept usually equates with negativity, leading to tourists' dissatisfaction and inconvenience to the host community (Schuckert & Wu, 2021). Crowding equally shrinks the quality of experience among tourists (Nettles et al., 2020). Despite these negativities, other studies have also established the positive side of crowding (Popp, 2012). In sum, crowding is a subjective phenomenon whose tolerance level differs from culture to culture (Jin et al., 2016; Neuts & Nijkamp, 2012). While some studies argue that Eastern culture has a higher tolerance to tourist crowding than Western people (Neuts & Nijkamp, 2012), other research suggests that Western cultures are more tolerant (Jin et al., 2016; Jin & Pearce, 2011).

Moh'd Juma Abdalla, PhD, Researcher, Faculty of Tourism, Eastern Mediterranean University, Famagusta, Turkey; ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8791-829X; e-mail: mohd@zanzibarsafinatours.com

Hamad Said, Lecturer, School of Business, State University of Zanzibar, Zanzibar; ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3581-1869; e-mail: hsaid786@suza.ac.tz

Mohammad Walid Fikirini, Faculty of Tourism, Harbin University, China; ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0009-0007-4629-981X; e-mail: mohdfikirini@yahoo.com

Faizan Ali, PhD, Corresponding Author, Associate Professor, School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Muma College of Business; University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida, United States; ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4528-3764; e-mail: faizanali@usf.edu

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Extant research on crowding has investigated its several facets (Dogru-Dastan, 2020; Hou & Zhang, 2021; Hwang et al., 2021; Luque-Gil et al., 2018; Pikkemaat et al., 2020; Schuckert & Wu, 2021; Yin et al., 2020). For instance, (Hwang et al., 2021) scrutinised the functional role of crowding in a donation and found that it moderates the round-up versus flat dollars. Furthermore, Schuckert & Wu (2021) inspected the crowding effect among tourists; their results concluded the slight crowding effect imposed by tourists on other tourists. Finally, Eroglu et al., (2022) examined the impact of retail crowding on shoppers' satisfaction during the pandemic. Their findings suggested that crowding affects shoppers' satisfaction negatively. While these studies provide an excessive contribution to the crowding perceptions, little has been done on the effect of hotel crowding perception on residents' social identity, specifically the mediating role of mindfulness in the pre-mentioned relationship. While infrastructure development has always been considered one of the essential prerequisites for tourism and hospitality growth worldwide (Zhang & Zhang, 2022), the effect imposed by such an action has received little scholarly attention. Hotels are a developmental infrastructure that attracts tourists globally, while their mushrooming may irritate the residents. Thus, its growth warrants further investigation.

Overall, the existing studies have investigated the effect of crowding on tourists' price sensitivity (Hou & Zhang, 2021), motivation of users public concerning crowding and satisfaction (Luque-Gil et al., 2018), donation and crowding (Hwang et al., 2021), crowding and destination attractiveness (Yin et al., 2020), crowding-satisfaction in skiers (Pikkemaat et al., 2020). While crowding is a broader concept, many of its facets have not yet been explored. To respond to the available gap, this research sets out to advance studies on the hotel crowding perceptions by residents on cognitive and affective dimensions of residents' social identity and its indirect impact through mindfulness. Against this backdrop, the present study investigates the role of mindfulness as a promoter of (a) cognitive identity and (b) affective identity of the residents' hotel crowding perceptions.

To contribute to the existing body of knowledge, the present research advances three primary contributions. Firstly, the present study explores the direct effect of crowding perceptions on cognitive and affective identities. Secondly, the research examines the effect of mindfulness on cognitive identity. Thirdly, the present study scrutinises the impact of mindfulness on affective identity. Therefore, the findings of the current study bridge the available gap in understanding the effects of hotel crowding perceptions on tourists' destinations which has rarely been investigated before. The rest of the paper is divided as follows: Next section reviews the extant literature on the focal construct, namely crowding perception, residents' social identity, and mindfulness. This next section presents the theoretical reviews, hypothesis development and a conceptual framework. The following section offers methodological insights such as sample and sampling procedures, data collection procedures and data analysis methods. The following section provides the findings and the data analysis. Finally, the paper presents a conclusion discussing the results and implications and suggests areas for further examination.

2. Literature reviews

2.1. Crowding perceptions

With its origin in economics, crowding is traced back to the work of Abrams and Schitz (1978). Several disciplines have widely employed the term (Schuckert & Wu, 2021). Perceived crowding refers to psychological stress due to the high ratio of individuals in a particular place in the surrounding milieu (Altman, 1975; Stockdale, 1978). Crowding has two facets; they may relate to physical or social density relative to the anticipated or accepted levels (Rapoport, 1975). While crowding has a positive impact, early research equated crowding with tourism's adverse effects (Goldblatt, 2000; Van Der Borg et al., 1996). For instance, crowding reduces the quality of the experience (Nettles et al., 2020). It equally intensifies aggression and competition Stokols et al., (1973), reduces shopper satisfaction (Machleit et al., 1994), enhances interpersonal antagonism (Griffit & Veitch, 1971), and promotes prevention-focus orientation (Maeng et al., 2013).

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They were crowding results from heavy promotional campaigns for destinations and services (Hou & Zhang, 2021). Prior studies have investigated the crowd-out effect of tourism products on other products. The mega and other events have a crowd-out effect on conventional tourism products. (Fourie & Santana-Gallego, 2011; Li & Song, 2013). In addition to megaevent, prior studies have established the impact of tourists crowding the host communities. (Brida et al., 2010; Yang & Lo, 2018). It has been noted that the costs incurred in transportation and official tourist accommodation force tourists to opt for residents (Neuts & Nijkamp, 2012). This shift imposes challenges on the residents due to the increase in congestion and decreased service quality, which subsequently impose the residents' dissatisfaction (Brida et al., 2010).

2.2. Residents' social identity

Social identity refers to the part of one's self-concept emanating from the knowledge of a social group's belongingness and the value and emotional significance attached to that membership (Tajfel, 1978, p. 63). Social identity puts individuals in a position where they have fundamental needs that force them to be below a particular group. Social psychologists suggest three interconnected components contributing to social identity (Hogg et al., 2017; Hornsey, 2008). These constituents involve the evaluative, cognitive and emotional components (Zhang et al., 2019). Bernardo & Palma-Oliveira, (2016) opined that social identity is a multifaceted concept that explains the characteristics of individuals, especially their self-identity, that triggers their emotional and evaluative ability regarding their societies. Furthermore, social identity can be perceptive to the external environment; hence, individuals who possess such quality exhibit responsiveness to sensory stimuli. Thus, social identity is a prerequisite to human behaviour change that impacts their fundamental needs (Pei, 2019), including caring for their surrounding environment (Prati et al., 2017).

Different positive attributes are associated with the residents' social identity, for example, caring for social welfare and contributing to public goods (Candelo et al., 2017), amplifying cooperative behaviours among the society members to achieve the community goals (Pei, 2019), and improving the compliance with community standards that lead to effective contribution to public goods (Candelo et al., 2017). The fact that social identity has a significant contribution to the respective community can be reflected from the genesis of the concept itself, that individuals with a higher level of social identity contemplate their society as an integration of social structures that cement the sense of belongingness (Zhang et al., 2019).

As the binding effect of the society soars among the community members, they reveal their patriotic behaviours; they view their community as better than others. Also, they like to share their thoughts, judgements, knowledge, and faith, which signifies their social identity (Nezlek & Forestell, 2020).

2.3. Mindfulness

Mindfulness was initially conceptualized based on Buddhism, which focuses on and emphasizes consciousness and memorizing, that is, being aware of the surroundings and remembering to pay attention to the surroundings. Conceptually, the discussion of mindfulness-based on two different angles. First, some theorize mindfulness as practice and those who see mindfulness as a characteristic of individuals (Karl et al., 2022). Second, mindfulness is defined by Brown et al. (2007) as paying careful attention to and being aware of current events and experiences. Moreover, Shapiro (2009) defined mindfulness and derived it from the contemporary Buddhist perspective. These perspectives include remembering what occurs in one's direct experience with care and discernment.

Similarly, Moscardo (2009) refers to mindfulness as a thoughtful and focused reaction to a social and environmental stimulus. Langer and Moldoveanu (2000) consider mindfulness as the state of mind vigorously processing new information within the surrounding. For this study, we contemplate mindfulness as a state; as such, it can be conceptualized as a modifiable factor and can be predisposed by different practices (Said & Tanova, 2021).

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The state of mindfulness tends to observe what is going on during the time without making any judgment. As a result, mindfulness increases people's capacity to be impartial in internal and external situations since they dissociate from their thoughts and sentiments (Toniolo-Barrios & Pitt, 2021). Therefore, mindfulness can help people dissociate from bad experiences and enhance their mental well-being (Toniolo-Barrios & Pitt, 2021). Furthermore, individual perception and cognitive and affective identity can define a person's mindfulness level because a person with a high level of mindfulness can easily control their emotions and behaviours, which would affect both their self and social awareness (Gip et al., 2022).

2.4. Theoretical framework and hypothesis development

SOR delineates this research. The theory considers the environment a critical stimulus making individuals act a certain way. The reaction is determined by two emotional responses, namely, approach behaviours and averting behaviours. While approach behaviours relate to positive actions, such as the desire to affiliate, explore and stay, averting behaviours relate to aggressive measures, including the willingness to act negatively (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). However, Bitner (1992) expanded the theory by incorporating physiology and cognition aspects within SOR theory. Overall, SOR posits that the external environment is an essential trigger of an individual's emotions for a person exposed to it. Therefore, we argue that crowding, an external environment, affects residents' mindfulness level, subsequently enhancing their social identity.

2.4.1. They were crowding perceptions and mindfulness

SOR posits that an external environment may trigger the intrinsic emotions of the individual exposed to it. Several pieces of literature have briefed on the impact of tourism growth on the mindfulness of a place. For instance, Moscardo (1996) argues that the development of tourism activities directly relates to the immediate effect of positive support on positive mindfulness. He further contends that it would improve conservation efforts and more sustainable tourism practices for practical interpretation. Notwithstanding (Moscardo, 2009), mindfulness positive tourist satisfaction encourages reassessing information and promotes sustainability (Frauman & Norman, 2004). Previous literature discusses mindfulness as a critical instrument for gauging tourist experiences (Frauman & Norman, 2004). Mindfulness is a form of consciousness that involves moment-to-moment awareness; thus, mindfulness remains within the present moment (Chen, 2015).

Moreover, mindfulness can be viewed as an outcome, which in this ideology is argued as mindful awareness, which is exercising the freedom of mind (Shapiro, 2009). In line with that, individuals with a high level of mindfulness enhance retention of memories because they are more attentive to their environment in a tourist destination (Tung et al., 2017). Furthermore, mindfulness improves individuals' abilities and can assist them in focusing on what is more important to them. Mindfulness also strengthens psychological resources such as creativity, which can be a potential tool in solving complex problems (Gip et al., 2022). Accordingly, we argue that the hotel crowding enhances the residents' mindfulness. Thus, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H1: The perception of hotel crowding affects residents' mindfulness negatively.

2.4.2. Residents' mindfulness and cognitive identity

The stimulus organism response model suggests that the external environment triggers an individual exposed to the external environment. As such, the hotel crowding, an external environment, enhances the residents' mindfulness, subsequently enhancing their cognitive identity. It is seconded that mindfulness increases self-clarity and problem-solving skills (Galles et al., 2019). This is more frequent when an individual decides based on certain circumstances. Promisingly, mindfulness has shown some effects on cognitive functions in people in general, such that it improves not only their memories and attention but also increases their social cognition (Langer et al., 2020).

Furthermore, individuals with a high level of mindfulness do not judge what is happening now. Instead, they merely observe it. As such, their ability for objectivity increases (Toniolo-Barrios & Pitt, 2021).

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In sum, individuals with a high level of mindfulness would focus on what they want to achieve, possibly affecting their orientation in their society. As the level of understanding and objectivity increase, their cognitive ability does the same (Langer et al., 2020). Concomitantly, individuals with a high level of mindfulness do not contemplate negative thoughts and feelings for the future or because of their past experiences. Hence, they are better positioned to solve different problems effectively, efficiently enhancing their life fulfilment and bringing happiness (Galles et al., 2019). More importantly, mindfulness can solve various social issues that arise due to the ongoing social changes and other complex situations that societies encounter (Moldoveanu & Langer, 2000). The possibility that mindfulness can solve those social predicaments can reflect the proposition that mindfulness inflicts positive thoughts on individuals so that their cognitive abilities improve. Therefore, this study establishes the following hypotheses:

> *H2:* Mindfulness affects the cognitive identity positively

2.4.3. Residents' mindfulness and affective identity

The SOR model suggests that the external environment stimulates an individual to respond to a particular circumstance. Again, hotel crowding, as previously mentioned in this paper, has been conceptualized as promoting the residents' affective identity through the organism, which in this case is the residents' level of mindfulness. At one point, mindfulness improves the feeling of belongingness or connectedness to a particular group or nature (Richter & Hunecke, 2022). Moreover, the possibility that a high level of mindfulness would increase affective identity has been unveiled by (Junça-Silva et al., 2021). Beaumont (2011) has broadly described the qualities of mindfulness as being connected to the internal state of the individual in which the person with a high level of mindfulness is subject to show a high level of cognizance, mental flexibility, open-mindedness, autonomy, self-assurance, sympathy, satisfaction, ability to understand people's feelings, and subjective well-being.

Consequently, individuals with high affective identity would be motivated to identify themselves in a group to augment their satisfaction (Johnson et al., 2012). Furthermore, it is clear that the level of mindfulness, as stipulated by different scholars (Beaumont, 2011; Richter & Hunecke, 2022), increases individuals' understanding of their environment, consequently leading to rational decisions. More importantly, effective identity plays an important role when individuals engage with their environment, such that individuals within their environment show a high level of affective identity and value their environment much better than others (Hinds & Sparks, 2008). To this end, we propose the following hypothesis:

> *H3:* Mindfulness favourably impacts affective identity.

Figure 1
Study conceptual model
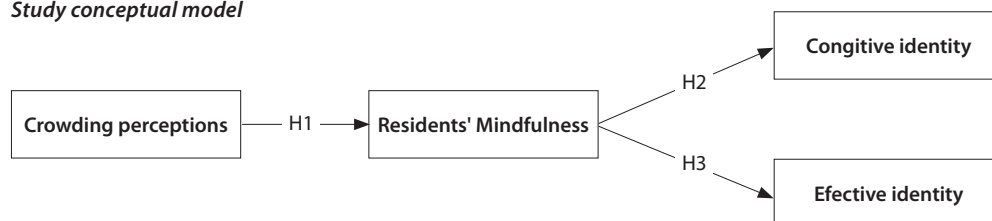
3. Methodology

3.1. Description of the study area

Data were collected in areas oversupplied with hotels in Zanzibar. The archipelago boasts of its attractive white sand beach and cultural tourism. Composed of 2 big islands and 52 small islets, the Zanzibar archipelago is located in the Indian Ocean 35 km off the coast of mainland Tanzania. Zanzibar is one of the two

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countries forming the United Republic of Tanzania (2010). Despite the unification, Zanzibar retains its semi-autonomous in Tanzania and has complete autonomy in all non-union matters (Mwesiumo et al., 2021). Zanzibar was selected due to its considerable dependency on tourism and its many accommodation facilities. The archipelago has registered over four hundred and sixty tourist hotels (Abdalla et al., 2021; Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar [RGoZ], 2020).

3.2. Sampling

The study used quantitative methods. The questionnaires were distributed to the local community in Zanzibar, focusing on the highly populated areas of tourism accommodation. Zanzibar was selected for data collection because it is one of the destinations with a good number of tourist accommodation facilities and high in tourism (Abdalla et al., 2021). Using random sampling, 315 self-administered surveys were distributed to local Zanzibar residents. The questionnaires in a sealed envelope were distributed on arbitrary dates and times to avoid non-inclusive results. We used a single-time data collection method due to time limitations. The data collection process started on the 01st of January 2021 and ended on the 16th of February 2021. Both men and women among the local population aged eighteen were involved in surveys. Questionnaires were left with residents and were collected by the researchers on the second day.

3.3. Measures

Data was collected through a structured survey questionnaire. The English version of the questionnaire was back-translated into the Swahili language to facilitate understanding of the residents' content. The questionnaire had five parts; the first part measured the effects of hotels' crowding perceptions (HCP), and the second part was about residents' social identity involving both affective (AFI) and cognitive (COI) dimensions. The third part operationalised mindfulness (MND), and the last part was on the respondent's demographic information (DMI). All the above five latent constructs items were adopted from the previous literature. For instance, HCP was operationalised though eight items were assumed (Machleit et al., 1994). Palmer et al. (2013) inspired nine items for residents' social identity. Moreover, six questions for mindfulness were adopted from Taylor and Norman (2019). Finally, we controlled for age, gender, education and number of years residing in this study as we believed the four variables have an essential effect on mindfulness.

Table 1
Measures of the constructs

Constructs	Abbreviations	Items
Crowding perceptions (CP)	CP1	The increase in the hotels makes the areas very crowded for me.
	CP2	The increase in hotels makes the area a little too busy.
	CP3	The increase in hotels causes much traffic in the area.
	CP4	The increase in hotels brings a lot of tourists to the area.
	CP5	Despite the increase in hotels, the area still seemed very spacious.
	CP6	The increase in hotels in this area makes residents feel cramped.
	CP7	Despite the increase in hotels, the area has an open feeling.
	CP8	This area felt confining to residents.
Affective identity (AID)	AID1	I identify with others who are Zanzibaris.
	AID2	I am like others who are Zanzibaris
Cognitive identity (CID)	CID1	I have little respect for the Zanzibaris
	CID2	I would instead belong to another nationality.
	CID3	I would instead not tell others that I am Zanzibari.
	CID4	I dislike being Zanzibari.
	CID5	I feel good about Zanzibaris
	CID6	I think the Zanzibaris have little to be proud of.
	CID7	I would like to continue interacting with the Zanzibari people.

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Table 1 *(continued)*

Mindfulness (MIN)	MIN1	I like to have my interest captured.
	MIN2	I like to search for answers to questions I may have.
	MIN3	I like to have my curiosity aroused
	MIN4	I like to inquire further about things at the destination.
	MIN5	I like to explore and discover new things.
	MIN6	I like to feel involved in what is going on around me.

3.4. Data collection procedure

Before data collection, face and content validity were verified. The questionnaire was given to two highly respected academicians and two practitioners to assess the understandability of the items (Afellat et al., 2021). In addition, a pilot study was conducted with 20 questionnaires randomly distributed to the respondents. The results obtained from the pilot study will be used to modify the questionnaire items (Prentice et al., 2020).

3.5. Common method variance

To mitigate the effects of standard method variance that leads to common method bias. Several procedural and statistical remedies were considered, as suggested by (Podsakoff et al., 2003). First, the questionnaire was given to respondents who showed interest and consent to participate in the study only. Second, the researchers assured the respondents' confidentiality and anonymity. Third, the instrument included phrases such as "the participation in this questionnaire is voluntary, and the research will observe the anonymity of the respondents." Fourth, the study's objective was concealed to ensure psychological separation. Finally, two statistical tests, Harman's single factor and VIF, were conducted to determine the presence of standard method variance (CMV). The results of the Harman factor demonstrated less than 50 per cent of the variance explained by a single element, and the VIF value scores were less than 3.3.

4. Research results and analysis

4.1. Sample characteristics

The demographic characteristics of the samples are shown in Table 2. There were 207 males (65.7%) and 108 females (34.3%). The most frequent age group sampled was people in their 20s, with 98respondents (31.1%). The majority of people, 199 (63.2%), were married. Concerning residence less than one year (29; 9.2%), people who were currently enrolled in a university or had graduated from a university accounted for the highest percentage of respondents (94; 29.8%), followed by those that are currently studying at or already graduated from college, postgraduates, graduates from senior high school, and others. There were 92 longer than 20 years (29.2%).

Table 2
Profile of sample respondents (N = 315)

	Frequency %	Percentage
Age		
18-27	91	28.9
28-37	98	31.1
38-47	76	24.1
48-57	35	11.1
57 or older	15	4.8
Gender		
Male	207	65.7
Female	108	34.3
Marital status		
Single or divorced	116	36.8
Married	199	63.2

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Table 2 *(continued)*

Education		
Secondary and high education	141	44.8
College degree	80	25.4
Graduate degree	94	29.8
Length of residence		
Less than one year	29	9.2
1-5 years	49	15.6
6-10 years	49	15.6
11-15 years	44	14.0
16-20 years	52	16.5
Longer than 20 years	92	29.2

4.2. Assessment of measurement model

The measurement model was assessed through the validity, composite reliability, average variance extracted and the loading factors. The convergent validity was evaluated by Cronbach alpha, where the item's value was > 0.07, and the validity of the constructs was confirmed. Convergent validity of the latent constructs was assessed through average variance extracted (AVE), Composite reliability (CR) and the factor loadings. The AVE >0.50, CR >0.70, and factor loadings >0.50. Therefore, the convergent validity was confirmed (Hair et al., 2011). Discriminate validity was also observed. This study employed the Fornell and Larker criterion, where when the square root of AVE was more significant than the correlations of the items within the constructs, the discriminate validity was therefore validated.

Table 3
The assessment of discriminant validity

	AID	CID	CP	MIN
The square root of the AVE				
AID	0.791			
CID	0.509	0.866		
CP	0.338	0.375	0.759	
MIN	0.526	0.479	0.307	0.742
Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)				
AID				
CID	0.694			
CP	0.472	0.570		
MIN	0.676	0.681	0.448	

Table 4
Internal consistency, validity and reliability

Items	Standardised loadings	rho_A	Composite reliability	AVE
Mindfulness		0.731	0.830	0.550
MIN1	0.709			
MIN4	0.709			
MIN5	0.775			
MIN6	0.772			
Crowding perceptions		0.637	0.803	0.577
CP1	0.794			
CP2	0.787			
CP4	0.693			

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Table 3 *(continued)*

Cognitive identity		0.669	0.857	0.751
CID4	0.797			
CID5	0.753			
CID6	0.844			
CID7	0.766			
Affective identity		0.809	0.870	0.626
AID1	0.859			
AID2	0.874			

4.3. Assessment of structural model

The structural model was evaluated using R^2 and the path coefficients' significance level (Hair et al., 2011). Partial least square (PLS) uses R^2 results to determine the amount of variance in the construct. Path coefficients represent the hypothesised relationship among the constructs (Hair et al., 2013). Therefore, this study measured the direct impact of crowding perceptions on cognitive and affective social identities and its indirect impact through mindfulness using the path coefficients (beta), R^2, and p-value. The effects are considered significant when the p-value is <0.05 (Hair et al., 2020). In addition, based on Shmueli et al. (2019), we ran the PLS predict test to determine the predictive capacity of our model. All values scores of the PLS-SEM RMSE were lower than those of LM RMSE. This confirms that the model of the present research has sufficient predictive capacity. Table 5 shows the PLS predict results.

Figure 2
Structural model

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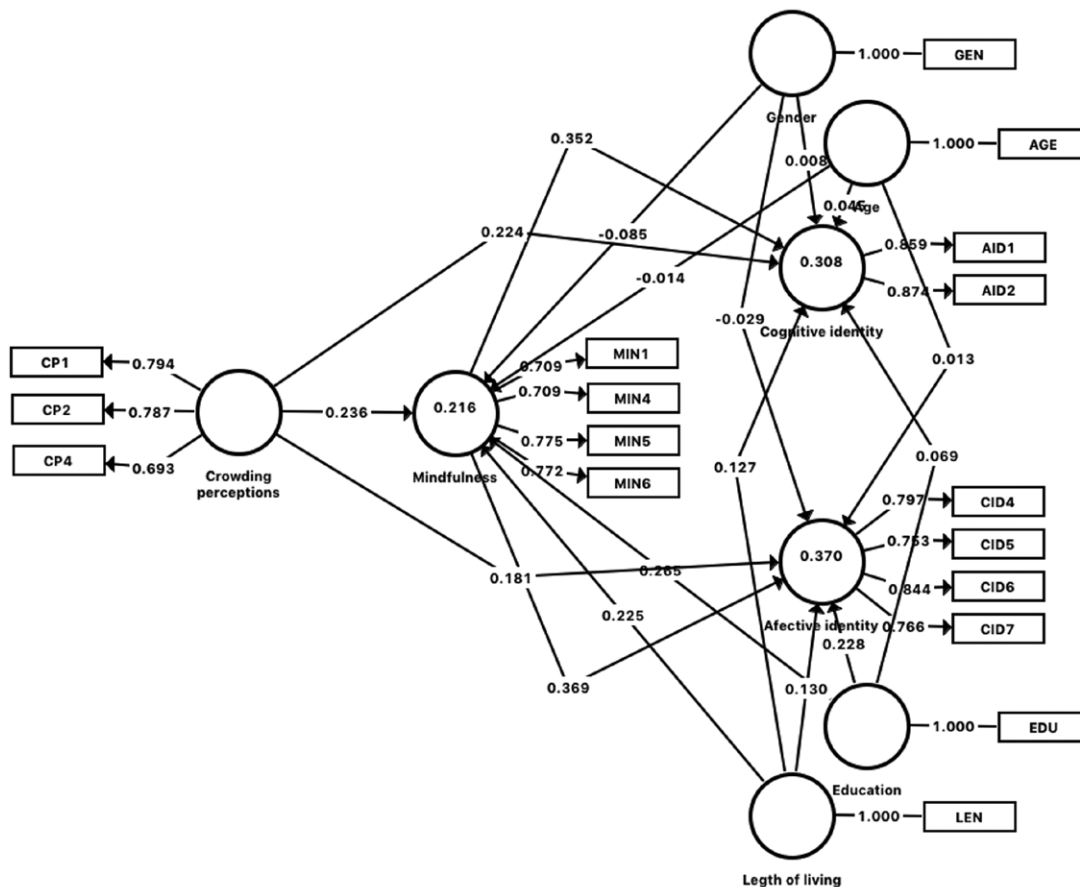
As a result of bootstrapping with 10000 subsamples to test the hypothesis, crowding perception (CP) was found to have significant positive effects on mindfulness (MIN) (β = 0.236, p=0.00). Thus, H1, which states that CP positively affects the MIN, is supported. Likewise, the findings of hypothesis two showed significant positive effects of MIN on cognitive identity (CID) (β = 0.352, p = 0.000). Therefore, the hypothesis is also accepted. Finally, the results of hypothesis three equally revealed the significant positive effects of MIN on affective identity (AID) (β = 0.369, p = 0.000). Therefore, this hypothesis is similarly supported. Overall, all three hypotheses of the present study are supported. Table 6 highlights the findings.

Table 5
Results of PLSpredict

	PLS-SEM		LM	
	RMSE	Q2 predict	RMSE	PLS RMSE – LM RMSE
CID4	0.773	0.162	0.786	-0.013
CID5	0.791	0.095	0.802	-0.011
CID6	0.799	0.161	0.810	-0.011
CID7	0.821	0.141	0.829	-0.008
AID1	0.745	0.132	0.749	-0.004
AID2	0.776	0.122	0.789	-0.013

Table 6
Results of the structural model (n= 315)

		Beta	t-value	p-value	Significance
	Direct effects				
H1	CP -> MIN	0.236	4.302	0.000	Yes
H2	MIN -> CID	0.352	4.831	0.000	Yes
H3	MIN-> AID	0.369	5.379	0.000	Yes
	CP -> CID	0.224	3.777	0.000	Yes
	CP -> AID	0.181	3.452	0.001	Yes
	AGE-> CID	0.045	0.854	0.393	No
	AGE-> AID	0.013	0.263	0.792	No
	AGE-> MIN	-0.014	0.260	0.795	No
	EDU-> CID	0.069	1.467	0.142	No
	EDU-> AID	0.228	5.804	0.000	Yes
	EDU-> MIN	0.265	6.234	0.000	Yes
	GEN-> CID	0.008	0.156	0.876	No
	GEN-> AID	-0.029	0.583	0.560	No
	GEN-> MIN	-0.085	1.627	0.104	No
	LENGTH-> CID	0.127	2.125	0.034	Yes
	LENGTH-> AID	0.130	2.608	0.009	Yes
	LENGTH-> MIN	0.225	3.932	0.000	Yes
	Indirect effect				
	CP -> MIN-> CID	0.083	3.144	0.002	Yes
	CP -> MIN-> AID	0.087	3.305	0.001	Yes

Next, we analyse the direct effect of crowding perception on CID and AID. The relationships in both links were positively significant. This justifies that CP exhibits partial mediation in the two mentioned relationships. Likewise, further analysis was conducted on the control variables, namely age, gender, and place of residence. Length of living was significantly associated with CID, AID and MIN. Education showed significant association with AID and MIN but did not manage to lend signifiable relationships with CID. Finally, age and gender did not significantly affect CID, AID, or MIN. Table 6 summarises these results.

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5. Discussion

Despite the favourable impacts of crowding, such as employment, and income generation, the rapid mushrooming of hotels in many places substantially affects residents and their destinations. Based on the SOR theory (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), this study examined the role of mindfulness as a promoting mechanism for the residents' cognitive and affective identities in areas mushroomed with tourist hotels. In doing so, three hypotheses were advanced, all supported. Thus, the present study provides valuable theoretical insights and actionable practical implications, as discussed below.

Based on the SOR theory (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), the hotels' crowding perceptions as an external environment enhanced the residents' mindfulness. According to the tenets of the theory, an external environment becomes a significant predictor in shaping people's behaviours through organisms (Jiang, 2022). While crowding has been perceived as an external environment, the mindful organism of Zanzibar residents becomes more conscious when they see the mushrooming of tourist hotels. These findings are justified by a heavy dependence on tourism by the Zanzibar people (Abdalla et al., 2021). Unexpectedly, the mushrooming of hotels seems to boost the resident's mindfulness positively by anticipating more employment opportunities and raising their income. This is reflected in most cases that the availability of hotels improves the economic benefits of the residents (Piuchan et al., 2018), which ignites their cognitive ability to support the existence of such hotels. Unlike in other parts of the world, where crowding has been reported as a problem, the high dependence on tourism among the Zanzibari people seems to welcome the mushrooming of hotels. These findings contradict previous studies on crowding (Yin et al., 2020) that deem it a negative aspect and provide new insight on the bright side of crowding. Currently, Zanzibar earns about 80% of its foreign exchange earnings and 27% of its GDP from tourism (Said & Tanova, 2021).

Next, the link between mindfulness and cognitive identity on the one hand and affective identity on the other underscored significant positive results. These findings align with prior studies (Verweij et al., 2018), arguing that mindful individuals are more aware of themselves, can accept themselves, and are better at assessing the environment and making proper decisions. In addition, mindful people do usually not eye things negatively (Galles et al., 2019). Thus, despite the general assumption that crowding is a negative construct, conscious people see it as positive. Next, the findings demonstrated that mindfulness increases the cognitive identity of the residents living in areas crowded with tourist hotels. Because mindfulness enhances cognitive ability such that an individual's ability to decision-making and problem-solving skills increased (Galles et al., 2019; Langer et al., 2020). The arguments are equally supported by Abdalla et al. (2021), who demonstrated that Zanzibar residents perceive tourism as a vital sector which could hardly create negative perceptions against tourism crowding.

Furthermore, tourism generates money for both government and the people. This is justified by the 27 per cent of the Zanzibar GDP derived from tourism, and 80% of the foreign exchange earnings emanate from tourism (Said & Tanova, 2021). This situation may have been one reason for the residents to have more perceptions of the benefits and forget about the negative impacts of tourism on the Zanzibar destination. As such, the perceived crowding of hotels does not seem to be a problem among most Zanzibaris. Moreover, our findings demonstrated that mindfulness equally triggers the residents' affective identity since mindfulness increases the affective identity and the feeling of belongingness or mutually connected to others (Junça-Silva et al., 2021; Richter & Hunecke, 2022).

Interestingly, the results of the potential alternative explanations demonstrated that education enhances mindfulness and affective identity. These findings suggest that more educated people become more mindful than uneducated ones. Furthermore, the results indicate that knowledgeable people are likely to have a more effective identity than less-educated people (Zarotti et al., 2020). Likewise, the length of stay has significantly positively impacted all variables, namely mindfulness, affective and cognitive identities. These findings imply

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that the people who have spent more time in the areas become more mindful of the changes occurring due to hotel crowding than those who stayed a short time. These results concur with Said and Tanova (2021), who measured the hindrances of workplace bullying on mindfulness in the hotel industry; it was revealed that seniority is a crucial factor in improving mindfulness. Equally, people who lived in a place for a long time tend to have a more cognitive and affective identity with the site than those who live for a short time.

5.1. Theoretical and practical implications

Our analysis also provides substantial theoretical implications in studying tourism growth and the hotels' crowding perceptions. The model tested in this study provides empirical evidence of the academic link between the effects of perceived crowding on mindfulness and the subsequent impact of mindfulness on both cognitive and affective identities. Based on the stimulus organism theory, this study further substantiates the significant role of mindfulness as a mediator in the association between the crowding perceptions and cognitive identity on the one hand and emotional identity on the other. Prior studies employed mindfulness as a mediator to measure the impact of workplace bullying in the hotel industry, and it was found to moderate the relationship (Said &Tanova, 2021). This study has yielded the same results. The stimulus organism theory in this study has again proved appropriate in bullying contexts and crowding situations. Likewise, the theory was previously used by Abdalla et al. (2021) to assess the impact of psychological contract breach, and it shows conformity to the model proposed. Thus, the present study's findings have extended the use of SOR theory in the context of hotel crowding. These findings provide new insights into using the theory under wording perceptions.

The sample of this study was drawn from the residents of Zanzibar residing in the hotels' intensity areas and evidenced the substantial increase of hotel facilities in the archipelago. The tourism industry and hotels have increasingly become significant economic sectors in Zanzibar, providing many direct and indirect employments. Therefore, empirical verification contributes to the existing knowledge of the link between the hotel's crowding perceptions and mindfulness and between cognitive and emotional identities. The evidence justifies the role of mindfulness in promoting mental and affective identities among the Zanzibari residents.

The study has equally practical implications for the Zanzibar tourism authorities and residents. Through the findings of this study, the destination managers and residents need to understand that hotel crowding is not a negative issue when the country is heavily dependent on tourism. While positive perception dominates the Zanzibaris' opinion as they see the economic benefits of tourism, it is notable that the crowding could impose some issues on environmental sustainability. To mitigate this potential problem, the government has to invest in other economic sectors to avoid overdependency on tourism. The experienced learned from COVID-19, for instance, has demonstrated the suffering of the Zanzibar people, who had hardly any other economic alternatives (Abdalla et al., 2021). Likewise, the authority should plan on enhancing the mindfulness of the Zanzibar residents as a way to promote the residents' social identity. This could be done by educating residents.

5.2. Limitations and future suggestions

Despite the substantial contributions, our study provides several limitations. First, the data was collected from Zanzibar, which highly depends on tourism. Their high dependence on the industry may influence their response. Hence the results may lack generalizability. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies be conducted longitudinally to provide insight into other parts of the world. The less dependent regions on tourism may likely give different understandings of the perceived impact of the hotel mushrooming.

Likewise, this study investigated the effects of hotels' crowding perceptions on mindfulness and the later impact on cognitive and affective identities. This study opens up an avenue for further research

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on several aspects of hotel crowding perceptions by residents and tourists. For instance, future studies may investigate the effect of hotels' crowding perceptions on destination sustainability. They may also likely use the moderation role of religiosity in the relationship between hotel crowding perceptions and destination sustainability.

5.3. Conclusion

Despite its importance to the country's economy, hotel crowding has been habitually considered adversely. Guided by the SOR theory, the present study developed a conceptual model examining the direct effect of crowding perceptions on mindfulness and the subsequent impact of the latter on cognitive and affective identities. The data were collected from the residents' areas mushroomed by Zanzibar hotels. While the previous studies eyed crowding as a negative construct, this study demonstrated the positive side. Thus, the present study fills the existing gap in the literature, precisely on the impact of crowding perceptions on mindfulness and residents' social identity.

The empirical results reveal that hotels' crowding perceptions triggered the residents' mindfulness and later enhanced the residents' affective and cognitive identities. Therefore, the findings indicated that mindfulness is an essential mediator of the relationship between crowding perceptions and the residents' social identity dimensions. The current study anticipates the results to help enhance the social identities of the residents in areas mushroomed with hotels. This research also allows policymakers in Zanzibar and elsewhere to implement several programs to improve the mindfulness of their residents.

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