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Editorial

Anestis Fotiadis, Co-Editor
Zayed University, United Arab Emirates

JEL Classification: *L83, M1, O1*

Biographical note: Anestis Fotiadis is professor of tourism, at the College, of Communication & Media Sciences, at Zayed University, in the United Arab Emirates (anestis.fotiadis@zu.ac.ae).

1 INTRODUCTION

We are pleased to present the nineteenth publication of JTHSM (volume 10, issue 1), the first issue in its tenth year of publication. In previous issues, this journal presented original refereed papers, both conceptual and research-based, focused on various topics of tourism, heritage, and services with an emphasis on marketing and management. Volume 10, issue 1 focus on furthering the journal's scope and consolidating its position in both conceptual developments and practical applications in tourism, heritage and services through publication of nine quality manuscripts that underwent rigorous double-blind reviewing: eight full papers and one research note.

2 PRESENTATION OF THE FIRST ISSUE FOR 2024

A study prepared by The-Bao Luong (Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology and Education, Vietnam) investigates the relationships between uses and gratification (U&G) theory, destination image, and tourists' attitudes and how they influence tourist behavioral intention. The data was collected from 590 Vietnamese tourists through social media platforms like Facebook, Zalo, and Instagram. The Smart-PLS program (version 4.0) was used for data analysis and hypothesis testing. This study contributes significantly to literature as it is one of the pioneering works in integrating U&G theory. The correlations between variables bring new findings inside the tourism literature field. Furthermore, this study offers practical applications for managing and marketing heritage sites by exploring the crucial factors influencing tourists' intentions to visit these sites.

The second full paper is written by Yenal Yağmur (Siirt University, Turkey) and Altan Demirel (Antalya Belek University, Turkey). The present study aimed to investigate the behaviors and preferences of university student-generation Z members towards outdoor activities based on the theory of leisure constraints. In this study, qualitative research methods and phenomenological design were adopted to reveal the behaviors and preferences of Z generation members towards recreational activities in depth. Content analysis was performed on 95 data obtained by convenience sampling. The research outputs obtained through content analyses provide concrete data for relevant literature and recreation industry stakeholders.

In the third full paper, Marta Marco-Gardoqui, María García-Feijoo and Almudena Eizaguirre all from University of Deusto (Spain), analyses, based on qualitative research, the changes in marketing strategies and activities at the main Spanish hotel chains in terms of turnover, following their commitment to sustainability. To that end, in-depth interviews were conducted with professionals in management positions at the hotel chains with the highest turnover. Data analysis was conducted using IRaMuTeQ software by performing a Descending Hierarchical Classification (DHC). The results enable us to conclude that product policy, price, distribution and communication are significant classes in text analysis and the price variable predominates over the rest. The analysis also shows positioning is highly important.

The fourth full paper is written by Pascal Friedmann (Darmstadt Technological University, Germany) and Lisa Brooks (Eastern Illinois University, USA). The purpose of this study is to develop a regression model which allows insight into the way restaurant attributes influence the willingness of prospective patrons to travel to dine at restaurants. Data was obtained from 194 U.S.-based consumers using an online questionnaire which measured the impact of 11 literature-based restaurant attributes on the time patrons are willing to travel to a restaurant. A linear-log ordinary least-squares regression model with travel time as the dependent variable and the restaurant attributes as independent variables was used to isolate significant predictors of acceptable travel time. Restaurant owners and managers who aim to increase their establishment's geographic market size should focus on instilling high levels of perceived authenticity and food quality. New restaurants with unique offerings in their geographic realm may face barriers to attracting patrons.

In the fifth full paper, Alain Decrop (University of Namur, Belgium) and Giacomo Del Chiappa (University of Sassari, Italy), explore choice overload by focusing on two services (i.e. hotels and telecommunication plans) and exploring the mediating role of decision strategy complexity on subjective states and behavioral outcomes. The contemporary retail landscape is marked by a vast array of products and information, presenting consumers with an increasing number of choices. This phenomenon, known as choice

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overload, often overwhelms individuals and leads them to abandon their purchase, delay their decision, or opt for simpler choices. This study applies an experimental approach with a 2 (large vs small choice set) by 2 (hotels vs telecommunication programs) factorial design being developed and applied to a sample of 220 Belgians. Results show that the complexity of the strategy used by decision-makers may play a mediating role on the consequences that a choice set size may have in terms of psychological and behavioral responses.

The sixth full paper is written by Eray Polat (Gumushane University,Turkey) and Serkan Çalışkan (Kastamonu University,Turkey). This study aims to determine the mean value by conducting a reliability generalization meta-analysis for the reported reliability coefficients of individual studies in Turkey's tourism field, which employed Pliner and Hobden's scale to investigate food neophobia. Additionally, this study explores variations in the mean value among subgroups. A reliability generalization meta-analysis based on a random-effects model was conducted to examine the heterogeneity of reliability coefficients in the study, along with heterogeneity analyses and moderator analyses. The results offer valuable insight for researchers seeking to select appropriate scales for investigating food neophobia.

In the seventh full paper, Spyridon Mamalis, Irene (Eirini) Kamenidou, Aikaterini Karampatea, Elisavet Bouloumpasi, Adriana Skendi (all from International Hellenic University, Greece), Spyridon Arseniou (Horizontal Support to Western Balkans DG NEAR, European Commission, Greece) and Glykeria Fourkioti (Regional Center of Plant Protection and Quality Control of Thessaloniki, Greece), explore winery visitors' attitudes towards terroir significance as well as perceptions of terroir for marketing communication and as a competitive advantage for wineries, and uses these as a basis to examine intergenerational cohort differences. An online questionnaire was distributed using criteria for inclusion and employing a non-probability sampling frame. Over a seven-month period, 1174 questionnaires from members of four different generational cohorts were obtained and statistically analyzed. Descriptive statistics, factor, reliability analysis and One-way ANOVA were used. Acknowledging actual and potential wine tourists' attitudes towards terroir significance and perception of terroir as a competitive advantage tool and for marketing communication, wineries may implement effective marketing strategies in order to survive and thrive in the current competitive wine tourism market.

The eighth full paper is written by Shang-Pao Yeh (National Kaohsiung University of Hospitality and Tourism, Taiwan), Tai-Ying Chiang (Chienkuo Technology University, Taiwan), Jia-Hao Zhong (National Chiayi University, Taiwan) and Shih-Shuo Yeh (National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan). This study aimed to explore the relationships between religious tourism motivation (RTM), tourist perceived value (TPV), social cohesion (SC), life satisfaction (LS), and fear induced by COVID-19 (FC). The focus was on understanding how these factors interacted during the Dongshan Welcomes the Buddha parade, particularly in the context of the ongoing pandemic. Dongshan is a small town in Tainan, Taiwan. Data collection with a snowball sample occurred from 23-12-2023, to 10-1-2024, yielding 304 responses. The survey assessed participant experiences and adaptations during the modified event. The relationships among RTM, TPV, SC, LS, and FC were analyzed using quantitative methods, with particular attention to the direct and indirect effects of RTM on TPV and SC, and their subsequent impact on LS. This study makes several theoretical and practical contributions religious tourism. It confirms the significant role of RTM in enhancing perceived value and social cohesion, and it establishes the importance of perceived value in fostering social cohesion and life satisfaction. Moreover, it highlights the resilience of these relationships despite external disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings offer valuable insights for managers and organizers of religious tourism events, emphasizing the need to enhance participant motivation and perceived value to boost social cohesion and life satisfaction, even amidst external challenges.

A research note is written by Aaron Tham (University of the Sunshine, Australia) and Hayley Stainton (Tourism Teacher, Australia). Suicide tourism has existed for several decades in countries such as Switzerland, allowing inbound tourists to seek death with dignity. The growth of suicide tourism has not gone unnoticed, with an emerging body of work unpacking this phenomenon, its underpinning factors, and its controversies. At present, most work surrounding suicide tourism is located within a demand-driven perspective, with very little known about how end-of-life hospitality should be conceptualized. Using the case of global destinations where recent policy changes have allowed for euthanasia, this article presents different dimensions for end-of-life hospitality, to guide current and future research directions toward a more nuanced understanding of the supply-side perspectives associated with suicide tourism. A conceptual framework on end-of-life hospitality is proposed, where different stakeholders and decisions related to such an undertaking are identified and discussed.

Last, a book review of "Post-Disaster and Post-Conflict Tourism" (Maximiliano E. Korstanje, Hugues Seraphin & Vanessa Gowreesunkar (eds). Palm Bay, CRC & Apple Academic Press, 2024) is written by Peter Tarlow (Texas A&M University, USA). Dr. Peter E. Tarlow is a world-renowned speaker and expert specializing in the impact of crime and terrorism on the tourism industry, event and tourism risk management, and tourism and economic development. Since 1990, Tarlow has been aiding the tourism community with issues such as travel safety and security, economic development, creative marketing, and creative thought.

Based on the above, I trust that you will enjoy reading this new issue of JTHSM!

Anestis Fotiadis
Zayed University
Co-Editor

The impact of uses and motivation gratifications on tourist behavioral intention: The mediating role of destination image and tourists' attitudes

The-Bao Luong
Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology and Education, Vietnam

Abstract:

Purpose: *This study investigates the relationships between uses and gratification (U&G) theory, destination image, and tourists' attitudes and how they influence tourist behavioral intention.*
Methods: *The data was collected from 590 Vietnamese tourists through social media platforms like Facebook, Zalo, and Instagram. The Smart-PLS program (version 4.0) was used for data analysis and hypothesis testing.*
Results: *The outcome indicates all the hypotheses were supported. The result shows that U&G motivations positively affect both destination image and tourists' attitudes toward using technology. Destination image positively affects tourists' attitudes toward using technology. Tourists' behavioral intention is positively affected by destination image and tourists' attitudes toward using technology. Moreover, the research delved into the intermediary functions of destination image and tourists' technological attitudes regarding the association between U&G motivations and tourist behavioral intention.*
Implications: *This study contributes significantly to literature as it is one of the pioneering works in integrating U&G theory. The correlations between variables bring new findings inside the tourism literature field. Furthermore, this study offers practical applications for managing and marketing heritage sites by exploring the crucial factors influencing tourists' intentions to visit these sites.*

Keywords: *uses and gratification motivations, destination image, tourist's attitude toward using technology, tourist behavioral intention*

JEL Classification: *C91, D7, L83*

Biographical note: The-Bao Luong (ltb@hcmute.edu.vn) is a Lecturer from the Faculty of Fashion and Tourism, Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology and Education, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Research interests include Food Tourism, Cultural Tourism, and Tourist Behavior.

1 INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector-related enterprises have depended on Information and Communication Technology (ICT), mainly smartphones, to interact with tourists' technology (Chatzigeorgiou & Christou, 2020; Palos-Sanchez et al., 2021; Tussyadiah, 2016). Several experts in the field of tourism have highlighted the requirement for additional research on the intersection of smartphones and tourism, utilizing a theoretical framework to evaluate both constructs and experiences (Moon et al., 2022; Moon & An, 2022; Wang et al., 2016). Research in the tourism industry suggests that tourists primarily use mobile technology, specifically smartphones, during both the planning phase and while on vacation to gather information related to their destinations (Singh & Sibi, 2023; D. Wang et al., 2016), with smartphones being recognized as a primary valuable and efficient tool for this motivation (Lamsfus et al., 2015). There is, however, not much research on why tourists use cell phones to access social media platforms and how this affects their experience in a place, their attitude about using smartphones during their vacations, or their future behavioral intentions. As such, the U&G theory may provide tourism researchers with an illuminating lens on visitor behavior, even though few studies have used it in this context.
Understanding visitors' uses and reasons for pleasure is critical in tourism studies. According to the uses and gratifications theory, individuals actively seek out and consume media or participate in activities to meet their unique wants and desires (Moon et al., 2022; Moon & An, 2022). This theory emphasizes the underlying motives that motivate visitors to pick certain places, participate in activities, and show certain behaviors in the tourism industry. Researchers may acquire insights into the varied requirements and desires that tourists attempt to satisfy throughout their travel experiences by examining uses and fulfillment motives. This information is useful for destination management organizations and marketers to build focused marketing strategies, provide customized backgrounds, and

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increase visitor satisfaction and behavioral intention (Krakover & Corsale, 2021; Logan, 2017). This research will contribute to the existing literature by offering insights into the complex interplay between motivations, destination image, attitude, and behavioral intention, thus informing effective destination marketing and management strategies.

In addition, different destinations and tourist attitudes have different dimensions of tourists' U&G motivations, leading to a lack of consensus among researchers. The previous survey identified three dimensions of tourist attitudes toward using technology (Moon & An, 2022): affective, cognitive, and behavioral. Some previous studies explored the correlation between motivation and tourists' attitudes (Lee, 2009; Li et al., 2023; Moon & An, 2022; Park & Lee, 2021; Wu & Kuang, 2021); and between motivation and destination image (Gong et al., 2020; Ho & See-To, 2018). Nonetheless, a research gap exists concerning the mediating influence of destination image and tourist attitude in the association between uses and gratification (U&G) motivations and tourist behavioral intention. There have been limited studies exploring this relationship. By examining these relationships, researchers could contribute to understanding the factors that affect tourists' decision-making processes and behaviors.

Although, there has been an increasing body of literature that has examined the relationship among uses and gratifications motivations (UGMs), destination image, tourists' attitude, and tourist behavioral intention and revealed a significant gap in the literature regarding the role of destination image and tourists attitude as a mediator of the above relationships (Gong et al., 2020; Krakover & Corsale, 2021; Nechoud et al., 2021; Park & Lee, 2021; Yağmur & Aksu, 2022). Up to date, the influencing role of destination image and visitor perceptions as well has mostly been neglected and researchers have been paying attention to the direct relationships rather than the mediating role. Finally, by investigating the mediating effect and gaining a better insight into the processes that determine the above relations, the proposed study aspires to expand the existing pool of evidence and strengthen the extant theoretical framework in the domains of consumer behavior and tourism (Daskalaki et al., 2020; Pereira et al., 2022; Wu & Kuang, 2021).

Destination image and tourists' attitudes are the building blocks of tourist behaviors (Caber et al., 2020; Luong, 2023a, 2023b; Zhang & Lei, 2012). These subjective experiences generate the destination image, which often influences both their anticipated and unexpected behaviors. The tourist attitude is another focus area that measures people's judgment and decision-making capability relating to a particular place (Pirnar et al., 2019; Sharma & Nayak, 2019; Thipsingh et al., 2022). A good attitude will likely result in positive behaviors, such as active recommendations and revisits, whereas a bad one will discourage people or prevent them from enjoying an action (Han et al., 2019; Passafaro, 2020). Investigating the mediating influence of destination image and tourist attitude may be used to increase destination management and marketing tactics.

The research will examine the motivation for uses and gratifications, destination image, tourist attitude, and their impacts on tourist behavioral intention. Additionally, the study examines the impacts of destination image and visitor attitude. The current study intends to provide new insights into the field of tourism by investigating these relationships and revealing the internal mechanisms through which the visitors' behavioral intention is formed. Equally, the findings of this study can benefit destination managers and destination marketers since they gain insights to employ effective strategies that can enhance destination image, create favorable visitor attitudes, and eventually affect desirable tourist behavior.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Uses and gratifications theory

Uses and Gratification (U&G) Theory, established in the 1940s, aims to research the relationship between mass media and people (Katz et al., 1973). According to this theory, media help people satisfy specific social and psychological needs and wants by using one or more of the given media (Ko et al., 2005). The basic premise of the theory suggests people's power to select the media they use (Wu & Kuang, 2021). Moreover, variations in the media and information environment can influence the user's gratification (Wu & Kuang, 2021). In tourism, visitors identify their requirements based on four motivations: social contact, information, entertainment, and convenience (Moon et al., 2022; Moon & An, 2022), and use smartphones to meet them. Furthermore, because smartphones are highly interactive and interpersonal, U&G is well-suited to smartphone research (Logan, 2017). The six factors of U&G, including "source credibility, usefulness, remuneration, innovation, immersion, and real-time interactivity, contribute to value-creation behavior" (Li et al., 2023, p. 1). Additionally, the study surveyed Chinese millennial travelers on how and why they decide on hotels through WeChat (Gamage et al., 2022).

2.2 Destination image

The construct of destination image has been broadly researched in the tourism literature (Bui, 2022; Gong et al., 2020; Ho & See-To, 2018). The "tourism destination image" mentions the awareness that tourists have about specific characteristics of the destination, including perceptions of the tourism industry's infrastructure, the hospitality environment, the unique cultural attractions of the area, etc. (Chen & Tsai, 2007). While earlier studies primarily concentrated on the cognitive components of destination image (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003), more recent perspectives and practical approaches have documented the cognitive-affective framework of destination image (Krakover & Corsale, 2021). The motivation behind travel refers to an individual's desires and characteristics that prompt them to vacation to a specific location. As previously mentioned, this concept has been divided into two categories known as push and pull motivation (Mutinda & Mayaka, 2012). The awareness of a destination is positively impacted by both personal factors (push factors) and external factors (pull factors) (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). Moreover, motivation factors are crucial in shaping the perceived image of a tourist attraction, particularly in terms of the quantity and quality of information available (Jalilvand et al., 2012). The study found that the entertainment, informativeness, and social aspects of gratification significantly impact a user's attitude toward a tourist attraction fan page (Ho & See-To, 2018).

Additionally, it has been observed that young Chinese free independent tourists are especially interested in obtaining trustworthy information regarding attraction sites from online sources (Gong et al., 2020). Given these findings, the study puts forward the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Uses and gratifications motivations positively affect destination image.

2.3 Tourists' Attitude

Attitude is a term used to describe a pre-existing tendency to respond consistently toward something, which may be either favorable or unfavorable depending on the situation (Pereira et al., 2022). Individuals' attitudes may be favorable or unfavorable, consistent with their responses to people, objects, or institutions (Ajzen, 2020). Among tourists, an attitude refers to their predisposition or feelings about vacation destinations and tourism services offered by those destinations based on their perception of the destination's products and attributes (Jiang et al., 2023). A study examining smartphone usage and attitudes towards it by tourists explores the relationship between U&G motivations. Furthermore, this study examines how tourists' attitudes toward smartphone use are related to the destination image.

According to a recent study, college students' intentions to share information on the Internet were affected by news looking for, socialization, status, and entertainment (Lee & Ma, 2012). Researchers built upon prior studies to explore whether the influence of gratifications varied across different contexts. To this end, they introduced the passing time factor and modified information by looking for information contribution (Lee & Ma, 2012; Thompson et al., 2020). In addition, rewarding U&G motivations can effectively motivate users to share content (Park & Lee, 2021). E-tourist satisfaction was significantly impacted by U&G motivations, which were found to influence tourists' attitudes toward smartphone use (Moon & An, 2022). Tourism attitudes to sharing travel content are controlled by U&G motivations (entertainment, sharing information, rewards) (Li et al., 2023). Users with favorable views shared information more frequently (Wu & Kuang, 2021). Accordingly, the hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 2: Uses gratification motivations positively affect tourist's attitude.

According to previous studies, tourists' attitudes are significantly influenced by the destination's image among tourists (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Pereira et al., 2022). An image of a destination can confirm or reinforce existing attitudes and behaviors, create new perspectives, or alter existing perceptions or attitudes (Hyounggon Kim & Richardson, 2003). Tourists' attitudes strongly influence travel decisions (Jalilvand et al., 2012). Attitude is vital in selecting potential and final destinations (Um & Crompton, 1990). Furthermore, tourists' attitudes are affected by the image of an organic destination (Hany Kim & Stepchenkova, 2015). Moreover, tourists' attitudes toward destinations are positively impacted by destination image (Jalilvand et al., 2012). Similarly, the research discovered a positive association between visitor motivation and attitude towards the place, mediated by destination image (Pereira et al., 2022). Hence, the hypothesis proposed is:

Hypothesis 3: Destination image positively affects tourists' attitudes.

2.4 Tourist behavioral intention

A relationship with a service provider can be maintained (good behavior) or retreated (negative behavior) and established the customers' behavior (Chatzigeorgiou, 2017; Daskalaki et al., 2020; Zeithaml et al., 1996). An individual's behavioral intention can also predict what actions they may take in the future. Consumer behavior is typically investigated by examining willingness to visit and return, spending and repurchasing, response to service suppliers, and recommendations (Ajzen, 2001; Kim & Han, 2010; Luong, 2023a; Singh & Sibi, 2023).

Numerous studies have extensively studied how destination image perception influences behavioral intention. An example is the effect of positive destination images on choosing tourist attractions or visit intentions (Luong, 2023a, 2023b; Qu & Qu, 2015; Xuan Nhi et al., 2023). Further, tourists' recommendations and visit intentions can be influenced by destination images (Bui, 2022; Nguyen Viet et al., 2020; Thipsingh et al., 2022; Yağmur & Aksu, 2022). Travelers who return to a destination are more likely to perceive it positively than travelers who visit for the first time (H. Qu et al., 2011). The primary purpose of destination marketing is to manage the overall perception of a destination and its attractions to influence tourists' destination choices (Bui, 2022; C. M. Chen et al., 2010; Chenini & Touaiti, 2018). Smart tourism is associated with memory-based tourism experiences and behavior intention (revisit and recommendation intention) through destination image (Sharma & Nayak, 2019). Hence, the hypothesis is as follows:

Hypothesis 4: Destination image positively affects tourist behavioral intention.

Attitudes tend to have different behavioral consequences in general and specific contexts, with particular attitudes affecting intentions and behavior more directly (Passafaro, 2020). Behavioral perspectives can be studied as a direct predictor of corresponding intentions and behaviors (Ajzen, 2001; Y. Kim & Han, 2010). Individuals' attitudes can potentially affect behavioral intentions directly, including those influenced by feelings and emotions (Passafaro, 2020). An individual's behavior is directly impacted by their attitude toward environmental concerns to engage in green actions (like reducing waste and saving electricity) during conventions (Han et al., 2019). Different empirical studies have shown that tourists' attitudes influence their intention to visit (Lam & Hsu, 2006). Travelers' attitudes toward green hotels significantly determined to revisit intention (Kim & Han, 2010). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 5: Tourists' attitude positively affects tourist behavioral intention.

Several studies have shown that destination images significantly influence tourists' impressions and intentions of recommending (Caber et al., 2020; Gómez et al., 2018; Kuhzady et al., 2020; Stylidis et al., 2017; Stylos et al., 2016). Further, destination images also mediate the correlation between cognitive images and affective images (Stylidis et al., 2017). The destination image explains the positive effect of consumption value on visit intention (Gómez et al., 2018). Compared with other studies, only people who have a holistic image of the destination are less likely to revisit those having a negative or conative image, while having a positive image also reduces the probability of returning (Stylos et al., 2016). City perception is one of the factors concerning satisfaction and quality, as well as the intention to revisit or event image (Li et al., 2021; Yağmur & Aksu, 2022). The relationship between the behavioral intention of tourists and involvement in the couch surfing industry was partly mediated by destination image (Kuhzady et al., 2020; Nechoud et al., 2021). Moreover, the role of destination perception is crucial in tying the results of perceived risks, perceived constraints, and behavioral intention together (Nazir et al., 2021). The literature review reports the mediator's role of the destination image proved in this study (Nazir et al., 2021). Thus, the following hypothesis can be suggested:

Hypothesis 6: Destination image mediating effects in the relationship between uses and gratification motivations and tourist behavioral intention.

The literature review emphasizes the main consideration that motivation is crucial to perceptions concerning behavior in tourism and other industries (Mehmood et al., 2018; Poon & Koay, 2021; Reitsamer et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2022). In the case of conventional travel plans, behavioral perception is the key factor of travel intention (Wang et al., 2022). Research also indicated that attitudes mediate the association between subjective norms and travel intention (Wang et al., 2022). Thus, destination attractiveness is mediated by how the tourist looks at the destination (Reitsamer et al., 2016). Prior literature indicates that attitudes toward heritage sites are possible mediators of traditional WOM and travel behavioral intentions between other factors (Mehmood et al., 2018). Specifically, research analyzing past visitors to Hong Kong indicated that trust in a destination was negatively related to the intention to revisit through tourists' attitudes (Poon & Koay, 2021). Based on the results, it is hypothesized:

Hypothesis 7: Tourist's attitude mediating effects in the relationship between uses and gratification motivations and tourist behavioral intention.

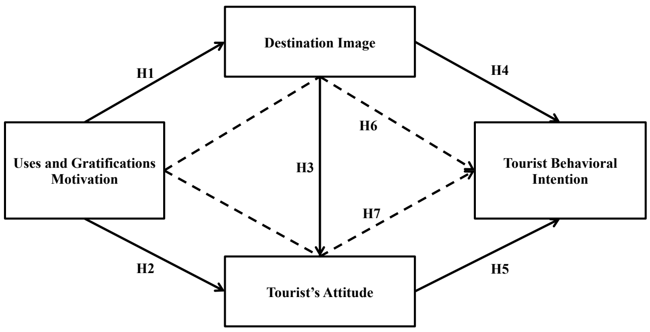

Figure 1. The research theoretical framework

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Destination site

Da Nang in Vietnam is an amazing place that combines the ultramodern and traditional culture. In addition to beautiful streets and great coffee shops, the city is rich in many pagodas and temples, most notably the Linh Ung Pagoda. Besides, visitors should visit the nearby Marble Mountains to enjoy the view of the city and surrounding area. South East Asia's best beaches, Non-Nuoc and My Khe Beach, attract water sports fans, sunbathers, and swimmers. Tourists can also admire the Dragon Bridge and experience the Floating Market, which is a great way to view the city at night. Thus, Da Nang can be an ideal place for a relaxing, fun, and enjoyable vacation.

3.2 Measures

To measure the variables of this study, previously validated measures were used. The U&G motivations were measured using a 19-item scale with 4-sub dimensions from previous research (Moon et al., 2022; Moon & An, 2022). The attitude construct was assessed using a 14-item scale with two subdimensions proved by earlier research (Moon & An, 2022). Consistent with earlier studies, a 5-item scale was presented to measure the destination image construct (Pereira et al., 2022). Finally, the tourist behavioral intention construct was measured using a 6-item scale with 2-sub dimensions from prior research (Sharma & Nayak, 2019).

The survey instrument was carefully tested to guarantee that it is comprehensive, dependable, and valid. An expert Vietnamese translator first translated it into English and then into Vietnamese. Two native Vietnamese speakers with specialized competence in both tourism and linguistics reviewed the translated version to confirm its accuracy and comprehensibility. Their comments were integrated into the finalized questionnaire. The pilot test comprised four respondents with considerable field experience. In this way, the feedback obtained from the results of this activity enabled the experts to develop the questionnaire items that are better oriented towards clarity and practical applicability. Additionally, a behavioral attitude subdimension containing four items explaining tourists' attitudes toward technology use was discovered as redundant and easily misinterpreted during the pilot test. Hence, it was eliminated from the questionnaire to guarantee a higher level of measurement accuracy and differentiation.

3.3 Data collection and analysis

Several social media platforms, including Facebook, Zalo, and Instagram, were used to distribute an online survey for this study. The survey was conducted between March 13th 2023, and April 15th, 2023. This study was prepared for Vietnamese domestic tourists aged 18 years and above. In order to determine the travel history of the participants, a screening questionnaire was administered. For the case of whether a respondent had visited Da Nang City, a filtering question was included, "Have you traveled to Da Nang City? If not, please skip this survey. Thank you so much". After applying this screening question, the study obtained 590 valid questionnaires for analysis.

Smart-PLS is a widely recognized statistical tool for partial least squares analysis suitable for this research objective. Therefore, this program enables the assessment of the relationships between variables and the effective testing of the study's hypotheses.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Participants' characteristics

Table 1 displays the participants' information. According to the results, the female participants were 71.19%, while 28.81% were male. 89.83% of participants are single. The most significant percentage of participants, 79.83%, are between 18 and 29. With 63.22% of participants have a monthly income under 8.000.000VND.

Table 1. Participants' demographics

Variable	Responses	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	170	28.81
	Female	420	71.19
Marital status	Single	530	89.83
	Married	60	10.17
Age (year)	18-29	471	79.83
	30-40	113	19.15
	41-50	6	1.02
Education	Undergraduate	497	84.24
	Postgraduate	93	15.76
Monthly income (VND)**	Under 8.000.000VND	373	63.22
	8.000.001-16.000.000VND	117	19.83
	16.000.0001-24.000.000VND	60	10.17
	Above 24.000.001VND	40	6.78
Occupation	Student	422	71.52
	Private company	100	16.95
	Government officials	19	3.22
	Own business	49	8.31

Note: **1 USD = 24.115VND as on 22 November 2023

4.2 Normality and common method bias test

The results showed that skewness and kurtosis values met the criteria for demonstrating a normal distribution (Table 2) (Byrne, 2016; Hair et al., 2006).

Table 2. The first-order construct

Construct and Items Measurement		Excess kurtosis	Skewness	Factor Loading	Cronbach Alpha	CR	AVE
Social interaction (SIR)					0.733	0.849	0.653
SIR1	"While in Da Nang, I use my smartphone to share my experiences."	-0.137	-0.323	0.734			
SIR2	"I make use of my smartphone to offer guidance to fellow tourists while in Da Nang."	1.086	-0.993	0.866			
SIR4	"I engaged in numerous discussions about Da Nang using my smartphone on this trip."	1.484	-1.227	0.819			
Information (INF)					0.804	0.864	0.559
INF1	"While on this trip, I employed my smartphone to search for restaurant reviews online."	0.110	-0.814	0.738			
INF2	"I use my smartphone to arrange transportation (via Grab or Uber) during my visit to Da Nang."	2.351	-1.411	0.757			
INF3	"To discover appealing destinations to visit, I utilized social media platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, or TripAdvisor through my smartphone during this trip."	0.839	-0.979	0.792			
INF4	"During my trip to Da Nang, I relied on Google Maps to navigate my way around the city using my smartphone."	3.957	-1.75	0.731			
INF5	"I used my smartphone during this trip to stay up-to-date with events in Da Nang."	-0.663	-0.525	0.719			
Entertainment (ENT)					0.819	0.874	0.583
ENT1	"I used my smartphone on this trip to upload pictures to my social media accounts."	0.367	-0.716	0.820			
ENT2	"I take photos using my smartphone during this trip to create lasting memories."	-0.752	-0.291	0.821			
ENT3	"I use my smartphone to capture videos and record trip memories."	-0.249	-0.78	0.755			
ENT4	"Using my smartphone, I share my trip photos with others during this trip."	0.639	-0.544	0.731			
ENT5	"I use my smartphone to share videos of my trip with others."	0.852	-0.877	0.682			
Convenience (CNV)					0.842	0.889	0.618
CNV1	"I use my smartphone on this trip to retrieve information about upcoming destinations."	-1.013	-0.023	0.788			
CNV2	"To stay informed about Da Nang, I used my smartphone to obtain real-time updates during this trip."	0.225	-0.576	0.887			
CNV3	"I used my smartphone to obtain up-to-date information about Da Nang during this trip quickly."	0.924	-0.83	0.719			
CNV4	"My smartphone is handy during this trip, allowing me to adjust my travel plans in response to unforeseen circumstances quickly."	0.216	-0.592	0.824			
CNV5	"I use my smartphone during this trip to remain flexible with my travel plans and make changes promptly if necessary."	-0.077	-0.286	0.696			
Affective attitude (AFT)					0.925	0.947	0.817
AFT1	"I find using my smartphone during this trip to be entertaining."	-0.490	-0.271	0.916			
AFT2	"Using my smartphone during this trip was a pleasant experience, in my opinion."	-0.144	-0.296	0.937			
AFT3	"I derive enjoyment from using my smartphone during this trip."	-0.714	-0.205	0.896			
AFT4	"I find using my smartphone during this trip to be an appealing activity."	1.051	-0.653	0.865			
Cognitive attitude (CNT)					0.884	0.912	0.635
CNT1	"I consider using my smartphone during this trip great value."	-0.682	-0.137	0.883			
CNT2	"Using my smartphone during this trip is an effective tool."	-0.710	-0.139	0.819			
CNT3	"I find using my smartphone during this trip to be practical."	-0.131	-0.369	0.755			
CNT4	"I believe that using my smartphone during this trip is beneficial."	-0.532	0.091	0.763			
CNT5	"Using my smartphone during this trip is helpful, in my estimation."	-0.150	-0.377	0.807			
CNT6	"I think using my smartphone during this trip is informative."	0.231	-0.877	0.744			
Destination image (DES)					0.876	0.910	0.671
DES1	"Da Nang, as a travel destination, possesses a unique character."	1.330	-1.241	0.824			
DES2	"Da Nang is a beautiful tourist destination."	-0.425	-0.165	0.746			
DES3	"Da Nang is an exciting tourist destination."	0.708	-0.859	0.823			
DES4	"Da Nang is an exciting tourist destination."	-0.893	0.066	0.844			
DES5	"Da Nang is an arousing/touching tourist destination."	-0.535	-0.140	0.853			
Intention to recommendation (RCM)					0.872	0.922	0.797
RCM1	"I intend to share positive feedback about Da Nang with others."	1.717	-1.425	0.898			
RCM2	"I will release positive information about Da Nang on social media."	-0.602	-0.319	0.858			
RCM3	"I plan to suggest Da Nang as a destination to others."	0.888	-0.985	0.921			
Intention to revisit (RVS)					0.824	0.896	0.741
RVS1	"I wish to return to Da Nang."	-0.439	-0.513	0.891			
RVS2	"I intend to revisit Da Nang."	-0.081	-0.758	0.791			
RVS3	"In the future, I want to revisit Da Nang."	0.417	-0.849	0.897			

Note: CR: Composite Reliability; AVE: Average Variance Extracted

Furthermore, all VIFs (inner model) were less than 5 (Table 3), showing that common method bias did not arise in this study (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 3. Collinearity statistics (VIF) – Inner model

Paths	VIF (inner model)
Destination image → tourist behavioral intention	4.886
Destination image → tourists' attitude	2.790
Tourists' attitude → tourist behavioral intention	4.886
Uses and gratifications motivations → destination image	1.000
Uses and gratifications motivations → tourists' attitude	2.790

4.3 Validity and reliability analysis

Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values of constructs were higher than 0.7 (Table 2); thus, the constructs' reliability was confirmed (Hair et al., 2019). Additionally, the factor loading of all items (except SIR3) was over 0.6 (Hair et al., 2006). As well, the AVE scores were greater than 0.50 (Table 2), suggesting convergent validity (Hair et al., 2019). Moreover, the discriminant validity was also confirmed in Table 4 (Hair et al. 2019).

Table 4. Discriminant validity

	AFT	CNT	CNV	DES	ENT	INF	RCM	RVS	SIR
AFT	0.904								
CNT	0.715	0.797							
CNV	0.750	0.801	0.786						
DES	0.878	0.780	0.781	0.819					
ENT	0.622	0.693	0.775	0.703	0.764				
INF	0.580	0.617	0.576	0.586	0.614	0.748			
RCM	0.700	0.668	0.662	0.732	0.518	0.478	0.893		
RVS	0.554	0.658	0.629	0.646	0.572	0.569	0.763	0.861	
SIR	0.564	0.529	0.556	0.587	0.572	0.612	0.558	0.530	0.808

4.4 Second-order factor model

The study identified UGM, TAT, and BEH as the second other factors. The UGM construct included 4 sub-dimensions (SIR, INF, ENT, and CVN). The TAT construct included 2 sub-dimensions (AFT and CNT). The BEH construct included 2 sub-dimensions (RCM and RVS). Furthermore, CR, AVE, and Cronbach's alpha values of TAT and BEH meet the accepted (Table 5) (Hair et al. 2019). The UGM construct was also accepted, even though the UGM's AVE value was slightly under 0.5, but CR and Cronbach's values were higher than 0.6 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Moreover, all factor loading values of first-order constructs are higher than 0.7 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 5. The second-order construct

Second-order /First-order constructs	Factor Loadings	Cronbach Alpha	CR	AVE
Uses and gratifications motivations (UGM)		0.921	0.931	0.431
Social interaction (SIR)	0.762			
Information (INF)	0.816			
Entertainment (ENT)	0.897			
Convenience (CNV)	0.890			
Tourists' attitude (TAT)		0.927	0.939	0.607
Affective attitude (AFT)	0.914			
Cognitive attitude (CNT)	0.937			
Tourist behavioral intention (BEH)		0.904	0.926	0.678
Intention to recommendation (RCM)	0.945			
Intention to revisit (RVS)	0.932			

Note: CR: Composite Reliability; AVE: Average Variance Extracted

4.5 Hypothesis analysis

All hypotheses were accepted in this study (Table 6 and Figure 2). The hypothesis showed that uses and gratification motivations significantly impact destination image (H1: β =

0.801, p < 0.01). Uses and gratifications motivations affect tourists' attitudes (H2: β = 0.358, p < 0.01). Destination image significantly impacts tourists' attitudes (H3: β = 0.605, p < 0.01).

Table 6. Structural model statistics and hypotheses

Hypothesis	Path	Beta	t	Result
H1	Uses and gratifications motivations → destination image	0.802	49.165**	AC
H2	Uses and gratifications motivations → tourists' attitude	0.360	13.639**	AC
H3	Destination image → tourists' attitude	0.604	21.933**	AC
H4	Destination image → tourist behavioral intention	0.283	4.377**	AC
H5	Tourists' attitude → tourist behavioral intention	0.281	3.901**	AC
H6	Uses and gratification motivations → destination image → tourist behavioral intention	0.227	4.264**	AC
H7	Uses and gratification motivations → tourists' attitude → tourist behavioral intention	0.101	4.117**	AC

Note: t: t-Statistics; AC: accepted; NA: not accepted; **: <0.01

The study indicated that destination image appreciably impacts tourist behavioral intention (H4: β = 0.344, p < 0.01). The tourists' attitude significantly influences tourist behavioral intention (H5: β = 0.440, p < 0.01).

In the indirect effect, the relationship between uses and gratification motivations and tourist behavioral intention is mediated by destination image (H6: β = 0.275, p < 0.01) and tourist's attitude (H7: β = 0.158, p < 0.01).

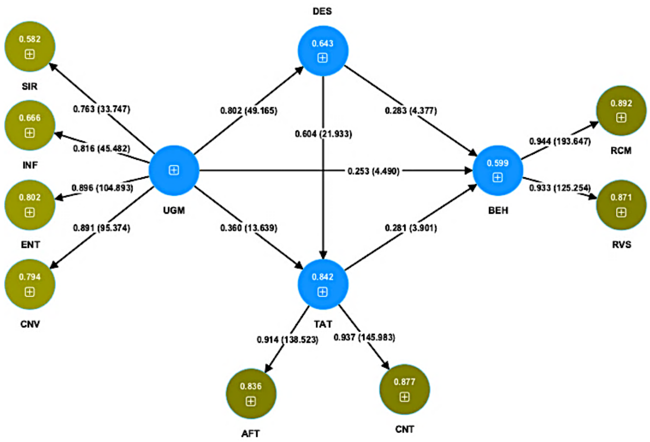

Figure 2. Results of PLS-SEM analysis.

4.6 Predictive capability

The outcomes resulted in a 64.2% variance in the destination image, 84.1% in tourists' attitudes, and 58.2% in tourist behavioral intention explained by model constructs. Furthermore, all Q^2 values in this study are higher than 0.35, indicating that this study has a strong predictive significance (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 7. Predictive capability

Construct	R^2	Q^2 predict
Destination image (DES)	0.642	0.640
Tourists' attitude (TAT)	0.841	0.708
Tourist behavioral intention (BEH)	0.582	0.504

5 DISCUSSION AND CONLUSION

5.1 Discussion

This study has examined the relationship between U&G motivations, destination image, and tourists' attitudes to identify the factors that affect tourist behavioral intention among Vietnamese tourists. The results showed a positive and significant relationship between uses and gratifications motivations and destination image. Consequently, the U&G motivations leading Vietnamese tourists to visit a destination significantly affect how they perceive and evaluate it. These results support that motivations significantly affect tourists' perceptions and attitudes toward a destination (Gong et al., 2020; Ho & See-To, 2018; Jalilvand et al., 2012). This means that Vietnamese tourists' motivations, whether they desire to relax, explore the culture, or have an adventure, also play a crucial role in shaping their general evaluation of a specific place. Knowledge about such motivations might help destination marketers and tourism officials develop effective approaches to enhancing the place's reputation and adding more Vietnamese tourists to the target audience.

The outcomes of this research reveal that U&G motives have a significant impact on the attitude of Vietnamese visitors. Indeed, the aspects that motivate Vietnamese visitors to visit a site change their attitude, affecting the overall sentiments. Some studies have also indicated that it is necessary to understand the visitors' motives to determine their feelings and behaviors (Moon & An, 2022; Thompson et al., 2020; Wu & Kuang, 2021). For Vietnamese visitors, factors such as the yearning for distinctiveness, socializing, or self-development lead to good sentiments about a place. The findings contribute to the body of knowledge and practice of destination marketers and tourism practitioners who can organize promotional activities in alignment with these motives to improve their perceptions of a place.

Therefore, as the results of this research show the influence of destination image on the attitudes of Vietnamese visitors, they definitely deserve further reference. Similarly, previous studies emphasized the significance of destination image for the formation of visitors' opinions and behaviors (Jalilvand et al., 2012; Hany Kim & Stepchenkova, 2015; Pereira et al., 2022). In other words, destination image may affect the development of positive attitudes of Vietnamese visitors towards the destination if it implies a good natural or cultural background or safety and the like. Hereby, the results of the study may reveal important implications for destination marketers and state that it is crucial to enhance and actively influence the destination image in order to receive positive attitudes and attract more Vietnamese visitors.

The results of this study indicate that there is a relationship between destination image and tourist behavioral intention when it comes to Vietnamese visitors. Specifically, the perception and evaluation that the Vietnamese have of a place greatly influences their desire to visit it again, as well as their potential to advocate for it through positive word of mouth. Previous studies have consistently highlighted the importance of a destination's image to the behaviors of travelers at their destinations (Luong, 2023a, 2023b; Pirnar et al., 2019; Thipsingh et al., 2022; Yağmur & Aksu, 2022). A positive and attractive perception of a destination that fosters aesthetics, authenticity, and innovation could encourage Vietnamese tourists to engage in more positive behavior (Chenini & Touaiti, 2018). Therefore, the findings of this study have significant theoretical and practical implications for destination marketers and the tourism industry in general. Furthermore, the findings reveal a positive relationship between attitudes and behavioral intention. Vietnamese tourism visitors' overall views of a specific destination can significantly affect the desire to engage in desired acts, including revisit intention and positive word-of-mouth. The literature review demonstrates the important role of attitudes in predicting behavioral intention in relation to tourism (Ajzen, 1991; Han et al., 2019; Passafaro, 2020). Thus, if attitudes to travel destinations are portrayed positively, based on satisfaction, perceived value, and emotional connection, Vietnamese tourists increase their intention to partake in the desired action. The findings have clearly discussed managerial implications for marketers and practitioners in the tourism context.

In addition, the results obtained suggest that the destination's image operates as a mediator in the relationship between visitor behavior and U&G motives. This mediation effect has previously been identified in many relationships that comprise the tourist environment (Caber et al., 2020; Gómez et al., 2018; Kuhzady et al., 2020; Nechoud et al., 2021; Yağmur & Aksu, 2022). Consequently, one can assume that Vietnamese tourists' views and impressions of the place have an impact on the arrangements they make after getting to the place. The mentioned reasons for traveling are essential to understand how tourists grade and perceive a destination. There are numerous implications for destination marketers and tourism professionals; thus, there is a need to improve place image in order to promote favorable behavioral intent of Vietnamese visitors.

Lastly, the result also confirms that tourists' attitude serves as a mediator between U&G motivation and behavioral intention. The role of mediation that attitude plays signifies that Vietnamese visitors' attitudes, induced by incentives, can bridge that gap with the following behaviors. The role of attitude has been emphasized in several other studies with regard to the motivation gap between tourists' motives and their subsequent behavior (Mehmood et al., 2018; Poon & Koay, 2021; Wang et al., 2022). This implies that it is important for Vietnamese tourists, resulting in their motivation and the development of their behavioral intention concepts. This result has some managerial implications for DMOs and tourism practitioners by demonstrating the importance of influencing tourists' attitudes to induce the desired behavioral intentions among Vietnamese tourists.

5.2 Theoretical implications

The current research makes theoretical contributions. The theoretical implication that U&G motivations lead to the significance of a destination image can be generalized to suggest that people's perceptions of a destination are not only defined by its physical characteristics but also by the shape of the psychological needs they fulfill. The result is that U&G's motivations have been validated (Gong et al., 2020; Ho & See-To, 2018; Jalilvand et al., 2012). U&G theory has successfully shaped buyers in both media and tourism. U&G theory is observed in tourist behavior, where zero tourists choose their tourist destination based on their psychological needs, which is also a mechanism of choice. Therefore, discovering how U&G motivations shape a destination image contributes greatly to the theory and literature of tourist behavior. Moreover, U&G motives shaped how tourists mediated the use of technology is observed in buyers of media; hence, the discovery validates the study's theory (Lee & Ma, 2012; Li et al., 2023; Moon & An, 2022; Thompson et al., 2020; Tussyadiah, 2016). The U&G theories apply to the tourist industry and are often used in media and communication studies. Tourists make use of media and communication to suit their needs and encourage themselves, allowing researchers to study travel patterns and choices. Identification of travelers' U&G objectives may help identify and create unique experiences. Therefore, explaining the psychological and emotional impacts of tourist experiences on people and the underlying variables that make them engage in activities has contributed to the achievement of understanding tourism behavior and coming forth with effective marketing methods.

The results show that destination images have a significant impact on tourists' attitudes toward technology, which matches the result of some previous studies (Chatzigeorgiou & Christou, 2020; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Jalilvand et al., 2012; Pereira et al., 2022). Previous studies indicated that the attitude toward technology has a positive relationship with destination image (Chen et al., 2010; Nguyen Viet et al., 2020; Qu & Qu, 2015; Thipsingh et al., 2022). Further, with the help of technologies such as smartphones proving to be supportive during the journey, tourists at this instance have a good experience given that, however good it is reported to be, it leads to positive behavioral intentions, a point that is highly supported by the previous (Han et al., 2019; Passafaro, 2020; Peng & Wu, 2019). Most of this concept has been argued to have a keen influence on tourism-related behavior, and decisions can be well explained by previous literature to quite an extent. In line with this, mobile applications and digital platforms have increasingly been integrated into tourist research and booking in the business setup. By merging the destination image and tourists' attitudes towards technology use in the prediction of tourist behaviors, more insights have emerged that bring to light an important contribution to the studies and theories.

Finally, the findings confirm similar to previous findings (Kuhzady et al., 2020; Stylidis et al., 2017), the relationship between U&G motivations and tourists' behavioral intentions is mediated by destination image. As for attitudinal factors of the tourists towards the use of technology, past research found that they would mediate the relationship between the U&G motivations and the behavioral intention of tourists (Mehmood et al., 2018; Poon & Koay, 2021; Wang et al., 2022). On another note, these days, a lot of research has dived into the mediation effects of technology on tourist motivation and their behavior intentions (Kuhzady et al., 2020; Stylos et al., 2016). It further advanced the literature and theory by identifying the complexities of the tourist's decision process and the influences that contributed to their behavior.

5.3 Managerial implications

The implications to management from these results are three main. First, the findings help industry practitioners tailor remote well-being, personal growth, and social interaction through tourism. U&G motivations or concerns share similarities with the positive effect on destination image. Tourists are motivated to travel for individual and social interaction, information, convenience, entertainment, and information to share on social media destinations they have experienced. From this understanding and meeting of the motivations, a positive destination image could be created, which eventually would lead to returning of positivity. Aside from attracting many tourists, a positive destination image may also help bring the tourists doing some emotional fulfillment mission. This implies that the tourism industry needs to focus on the junction between U&G motivations and positive effects on the destination image in motivating to visit a destination.

Second, U&G motivations and destination image have practical value in relation to the tourism industry implications for tourists' attitudes towards using technology. For the tourist firms, a better understanding of U&G motivations of the tourists with respect to their attitude towards technology provides a channel through which to market and deliver services more appropriately. Businesses could help reach the highest level of customer satisfaction and that of the tourist experience whenever they create the marketing message with the tourists' motivation in mind and, at the same time, offer the corresponding technologies that will meet the desires of the tourists. On the other hand, the process would have an overall positive image with more members and, as a result, tourism destinations. In most competitive industries in tourism, businesses should look at understanding U&G motivations and the destination image for one to flourish, especially considering the attitudes of the tourists towards technology.

Finally, there are also existing mediating relationships between U&G motivations and tourist behavioral intention through destination image and tourists' attitudes toward the technology of tourists. A tourist destination has to maintain a strong destination image and repute to attract tourists. In addition to those, the relevance of tourist attitudes to technology, as more and more technology is integrated into the process of tourists' travel, cannot be ignored. Positive images of the destination will guide tourists on where to travel. A positive attitude toward technology will assist tourists and make their trip enjoyable when they return home. Through technology, the quality of life of the people in destinations positively increases visitor loyalty and extends the spending period in their destinations. Other than that, this has had practical implications of showing the business insight into why they have to customize a customer experience that is appealing to technological travelers. In addition, managers found that in destination marketing, they decide on strategies to capitalize on this knowledge to influence the decision-making of prospective visitors and to keep an understanding of the effect of destination image and technology on tourist behavioral intentions in mind. Digital location guidance and virtual experiences provoke the review of these online testimonies, which is basically a show of previous visitors provided through the promotion of these reviews and testimonials.

5.4 Limitation and future research

There is a sense that there were a number of limitations to this study. For one, the participants who took part in the study are most certainly a high percentage of females. While this is acknowledged, it was not explicitly the drive behind the possible differences or effects that took place with respect to this variable. Therefore, the validity of assumed gender differences in findings is presumably not to be made certain. These may inhibit generalization in the research findings and ground insight into the generality with regard to the gender-specific dynamics concerning destination image and tourist behavior. The recommendations of future studies revolve around a more balanced pool representation and a better investigation of gender-related variables to gain more insight into these potential influences on the attitudes and behavior of tourists. Second, the rate of students participating in the present study was relatively high. However, the fact that this particular targeted segment supplied meaningful data on their perception and behavior patterns, these findings can somewhat cage the generality to the broad population of tourists. It can also be noted that the characteristics and preferences of student travelers present some resulting judgments that come to mind, and limits are taken into account when generalizing the findings to other segments of tourists. The other advice for further research would be to consider a more diverse sample in terms of different demographic groups. This study, based on the findings of the Vietnamese tourists who have come to Da Nang City, has drawn a conclusion that although insightful in the results and hence valuable, they really cannot be generalized to another destination. Future research could collect data from multiple participants and destinations to compare and generalize the outcomes across different contexts. Furthermore, while this study recognizes the significance of tourists' smartphone usage in fulfilling their desires and seeking information, it is essential to acknowledge that other internet-related factors may also influence their attitudes, perceptions, and future behaviors. Therefore, future research could explore additional factors such as e-word of mouth, social identity, social media tourism information search, promotion, and other relevant variables to deepen the understanding of visitor behavior and its determinants.

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An exploratory study on determining motivations, constraints, and strategies for coping with constraints to participate in outdoor recreation activities: Generation Z

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Abstract:

Purpose: *The present study aimed to investigate the behaviors and preferences of university student-generation Z members towards outdoor activities based on the theory of leisure constraints.*
Methods: *In this study, qualitative research methods and phenomenological design were adopted to reveal the behaviors and preferences of Z generation members towards recreational activities in depth. Content analysis was performed on 95 data obtained by convenience sampling.*
Results: *The push-pull model developed was adapted as five themes in the context of recreation: social, physical, environmental, personal requirements, and spiritual regeneration-health. The strategies for coping with the constraints existing in the literature exactly overlap with the aggregate dimensions suggested in this research, and the difference in the context of outdoor recreation is based on the theme. The avoidance-ignoring theme is handled under the cognitive strategy aggregate dimension, while the behavioral strategy aggregate dimension comprises personal skills, environmental, social, planning, and financial themes. In addition, the classification of experience gained in the context of tourism as triple effects (immediate, destination, and global) has been expanded in the context of recreation by adding a new experience effect (individual-personal).*
Implications: *The research outputs obtained through content analyses will provide concrete data for relevant literature and recreation industry stakeholders.*

Keywords: *outdoor recreation, leisure constraints theory, qualitative research method, university students, generation Z*

JEL Classification: *L83, Q26, M31*

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Industrial Revolution triggered urbanization, and rapid urbanization causes a quantitative and qualitative increase in urban problems today. Migration from rural areas to centers of attraction, and rapid urbanization and concreting have deepened infrastructure problems such as education, health, drinking water, sewage system, housing, urban transportation, and environmental pollution in cities. While this situation has increased people's longing for nature (Gumus, 2018), it has also led to the emergence of urban-based problems and has turned cities into the source of their problems, in other words, the emergence of trouble-making features. In this regard, outdoor recreation, which allows for the mitigation or elimination of urban-related problems and the renewal, revival, and rebirth of people's power and spirit (Jensen & Neylor, 2000), has recently attracted attention. Although recreation has a deep-rooted history, outdoor recreation has begun to sit at the center of people's lives,

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especially after the Great Depression (1929) and World War II (Karasakal, 2020). Nowadays the number of participants in outdoor recreational activities is increasing daily, and activities are diversifying in direct proportion to this demand. Mass media, such as documentary channels based on living in nature, popular competitions (Survivor), various magazines (Outdoor) (Ardahan & Kaplan Kalkan, 2017), and people's desire to be outdoors and in nature and touch the green (Koçak & Yağmur, 2021) have also accelerated the tendency to participate in outdoor recreation activities. All these effects feed the development of the outdoor recreation industry and, at the same time, increase the number of individuals participating in activities daily.

The theory of leisure constraints provides information for leisure researchers and provider-businesses on the constraints within a certain group, how these constraints affect participation, and how people adapt or negotiate these constraints. On the other hand, it can improve the overall quality of the services provided by managers and researchers. It helps them understand the factors related to recreation, including motivation, conflict, and satisfaction (Covelli Metcalf et al., 2013). Jackson (1991; 2000) defines constraints as "factors assumed by researchers and perceived or experienced by individuals, limiting the formation of leisure preferences and preventing or prohibiting participation in leisure activities". Armstrong et al. (2022) emphasize that constraints can be seen as factors requiring negotiation that can affect an individual's participation in leisure/entertainment pursuits and/or choices. The concept of leisure constraints is accepted as a psychological and environmental feature that restricts one's behavior in leisure activities (Park et al., 2017), and leisure constraints are factors consisting of personal, interpersonal, and structural characteristics that negatively affect people's participation and enjoyment of leisure time (Kono & Sato, 2023). It is also assumed that leisure time constraints negatively affect individuals' leisure participation (Lin & Fu, 2018). However, individuals tend to overcome these limiting factors by negotiating their behavior and developing various strategies rather than being insurmountable (Gao & Kerstetter, 2016). In this regard, individuals' participation in leisure activities depends on their ability to successfully negotiate the constraints they encounter. Negotiation refers to the behavioral and cognitive strategies that people use to overcome constraints or pursue alternative leisure pursuits (Clark & Nyaupane, 2023). The driving force that leads to negotiate and overcome these constraints is motivation and motivation to participate in outdoor recreational activities represents a set of needs or stimuli that cause individuals to participate in recreational activities.

Technological developments in the last few decades have led to significant changes in people's behaviors, attitudes, and desires (Nalçacı İkiz & Öztürk, 2022). In particular, members of the Z generation, who draw attention as a group born and grown into technology, tend to behave individually, instantaneously, and freely, much different from the behavior patterns of previous generation members such as the Baby Boomer and the X generation. The fact that they have different behavioral patterns means that members of this generation may exhibit different behaviors in the field of recreation, as in many other fields. In this context, the present research focuses on university student Generation Z members and aims to shed light on the behaviors and preferences of Generation Z members towards participating in outdoor activities. The reasons why university student-Generation Z members were selected within the scope of the research are as follows: a) having an intense desire to participate in outdoor recreational activities (adventure, discovery, self-actualization, status indicator, etc.) and encouraging factors (clubs, social activities, etc.) to perform recreational activities in the campuses, b) high probability of encountering constraints due to various factors (economic, time, etc.) despite their wishes, c) they have high potential in terms of creative strategy development despite the constraints, and d) not avoiding risk in order to perform activities, live the moment, and obtain pleasure, despite the fact that some of the activities carried out have high risk hazards. In this context, it is thought that the outputs of the research will provide concrete data to universities and recreation industry stakeholders and fill an important gap in the relevant literature by systematically and comprehensively scrutinizing the motivations and constraints of the student-generation Z to participate in recreational activities outdoors, the effects of negotiation strategies, and the effects of the experience gained from recreational activities. Also, research on the theory of constraints in outdoor recreation activities are mostly descriptive studies rather than exploratory studies based on theory (White, 2008). Thus, the present study was designed based on a qualitative research method because of its exploratory features and was carried out on university student-generation Z members.

The research literature is divided into four sections: motivations to participate in recreational activities, constraints, strategies for negotiating with constraints, and generation Z. In the method section, after the sample, the data collection process and tools, analysis method, and information about reliability and validity are discussed in detail, and the research findings are outlined. Finally, a discussion and conclusion are presented, along with the theoretical and practical contributions of the research, and various suggestions for future research are presented.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Constraints to Participate in Outdoor Recreation Activities

In recent years, constraints have come to the fore as the main theme of leisure studies. Researchers examining the subject of early leisure constraints framed the subject constraints in terms of barriers to participation in recreational activities, with the assumption that if barriers were encountered, the individual would prefer not to participate in the activity (White, 2008). However, the understanding that the term barrier has a narrow meaning and does not fully meet the concept of constraints has begun to prevail (Covelli Metcalf et al., 2013). Accordingly, the constraints have been expanded as factors that may hinder participation in the activity or limit satisfaction (White, 2008), and the term "leisure constraints" has been used to demonstrate that the constraints are not only structural (e.g., facilities that are not accessible to people with disabilities) but also internal and social (Covelli Metcalf et al., 2013). To highlight how constraints impact participation and the development of leisure choices, Crawford and Godbey (1987) created constraints in three different forms: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural. Intrapersonal constraints are psychological traits that affect an individual's ability to improve their leisure choices. Schneider and Wynveen (2015) point to interpersonal constraints, which can be seen as the absence of opportunities to interact with others, or defined as social factors that affect the development of leisure preferences. Structural constraints consist of factors (time and money, information, and weather conditions) that interfere with the development of leisure preferences and participation (Crawford & Godbey, 1987). Intrapersonal constraints include stress, depression, perceived ability in an activity (Rushing et al., 2019), anxiety, beliefs or attitudes about leisure activities, low levels of vitality, and self-esteem (Alexandris et al., 2022; Alexandris et al., 2017). Therefore, these constraints are fragile and continually changing in response to contextual and environmental influences (Humagain & Singleton, 2021). Interpersonal constraints refer to the outcomes of relationships or interactions, such as difficulty participating in leisure activities due to different leisure preferences or family obligations between spouses (Rushing et al., 2019). Besides, such constraints refer to the individual's social isolation (for example, not being able to find friends and partners to attend) and a lack of knowledge about opportunities to participate in the event (Alexandris et al., 2017) and rely on the individual's stage of life, marital status, or type of activity (Humagain & Singleton, 2021). Structural constraints are those that are furthest from the individual, that is, environmental elements that are far from themselves or their immediate environment, and are more related to situational and functional features that restrict recreation (Rushing et al., 2019).

Constraints impact not just engagement (or non-engagement) but also the development of preference(s) for specific recreational activities and the leisure experience itself, encompassing frequency of attendance and acquired expertise (Evans & Gagnon, 2019). Crawford, Jackson, and Godbey (1991) developed a model of constraints and integrated these three dimensions into a hierarchical model, recognizing that additional forces, including an individual's preferences and motivation, can contribute to leisure participation. Crawford et al. (1991) suggested that in the hierarchical model, individuals first encounter internal constraints, and if these are overcome, interpersonal constraints and finally structural constraints (Schneider & Wynveen, 2015). Intrapersonal constraints influence people's decision to participate in the activity by entering their decision-making process. Structural constraints are the most remote and least powerful, and they limit participation rather than hinder participation. Interpersonal constraints can affect both the choice and aspects of participation (Alexandris et al., 2017). In brief, each type of constraint is interconnected with others, and when someone considers engaging in leisure activities, it is an internal restraint that must be overcome first. After addressing the interpersonal restrictions, structural constraints can be addressed if they are successfully overcome. Thus, it is generally accepted that constraints are resolved in an orderly and continuous manner (Bizen & Ninomiya, 2022).

Constraints can negatively affect satisfaction with participation in any activity, emotional well-being, or quality of life. Also, due to the dynamic nature of the constraints, constraints vary according to individual factors such as gender, socioeconomic status, age, education level, and marital status (Filo et al., 2020; Gao & Kerstetter, 2016). Similarly, Godbey et al. (2010) stated that constraints vary according to the context of an activity and different types of recreationists. Furthermore, constraints may not always be equally felt by everyone. For instance, constraints on visiting a park can be influenced by age, gender, race, income, and education (Rushing et al., 2019). Stodolska et al. (2020) listed constraints, such as cost, lack of information about parks and opportunities in these areas, access and transportation, time, schedules and facilities, safety concerns, and race and cultural issues.

2.2. Negotiation Strategies with Constraints to Participate in Outdoor Recreation Activities

As the literature on leisure constraints matured, the concept of negotiation of constraints emerged. It has become evident that these constraints do not inevitably lead to non-participation; instead, individuals should look for ways to lessen the impact of constraints on their preferred leisure activities (Humagain & Singleton, 2021). The term negotiation refers to "the effort of individuals to use behavioral or cognitive strategies to facilitate leisure participation despite constraints" and the process, resources and strategies used to "find a way, react, respond to" leisure constraints and "create, fulfil, challenge, reframe or review" (Guo & Schneider, 2015). From a broader perspective, negotiation also refers specifically to efforts to overcome constraints (Mueller et al., 2019).

Negotiation strategies are largely referred to as a set of tools that individuals use to reduce/mitigate and avoid the effects of constraints on leisure participation. The basic assumption of negotiation stems from social cognitive theory. This theory argues that when individuals encounter negative situations, they tend to change situational and environmental conditions using their past knowledge and experience rather than passively accepting it. Moreover, it assumes that recreationalists who have an intense desire to participate in an activity are more likely to use different negotiation strategies than potential participants (Lyu & Oh, 2014). Combinations of techniques including time management, skill development, interpersonal coordination, and financial resource management make up negotiation strategies (Nyaupane & Andereck, 2008) and may also include changes in leisure time. For example, reorganizing work schedules or reducing other expenditures to facilitate participation in the activity due to timing and program occupancy intensity (Humagain & Singleton, 2021). The results of the negotiation process vary according to the relative strength of the constraints, the interaction between constraints, and the motivation to participate. Higher constraint levels result in lower levels of participation, while higher levels of motivation increase participation. Therefore, it is assumed that the relationship between constraints and motivation is inversely proportional (Nyaupane & Andereck, 2008).

2.3 Motivations to Participate in Outdoor Recreation Activities

Motivation refers to the psychological needs and desires that direct or affect one's behaviors and actions (Chun et al., 2022). Motivation refers to internal characteristics or motivating drivers that explain why people engage in certain leisure activities (Humagain & Singleton, 2021). Motivation arises when an individual wants to meet a need, and is often studied in relation to the push and pull factors that influence visitor behavior. While push factors include the motivation of visitors to visit an attraction/destination and their socio-psychological structures (peace, loneliness, feelings of renewal, etc.) that prepare them in advance, pull factors emphasize the qualities of the environments that attract visitors to a certain attraction or destination (Gundersen et al., 2015). Knowledge, relaxation, harmony within the family, escape, self-discovery, status, and social contacts are examples of common push forces. The following elements are considered attractive: cost, comfort, security, accessibility, innovation, education, and natural and historical settings (Dai et al., 2022).

The motivation to participate in a leisure activity may stem from an individual's psychological or sociological pursuits. Engaging in recreational activities might be driven by an individual's psychological or sociological interests (Humagain & Singleton, 2021), and in line with these, individuals reach goals and rewards. If an individual receives a reward for participating in an outdoor activity, it is due to sociological seeking; however, if the individual is doing the activity to achieve internal and specific goals, it is due to psychological seeking. In general, motivations for participating in outdoor recreation resources can be listed as: love of nature, escaping from the crowd and routine, creativity, renewal-rest, physical movement, adventure seeking, challenge, and learning new things (Karasakal, 2020).

In the literature, the relationship between motivation, constraints, and negotiation is detailed in the context of leisure constraint theory. In this regard, the results of the negotiation process depend on the relative strength of the constraints and motivations for participation, so the relationship between constraints and motivation is assumed to be inversely proportional (Humagain & Singleton, 2021). In addition, in theoretical and empirical studies, the results that a person's motivation to participate in a certain activity to meet his or her specific needs encourages allocation of resources to participate in the activity and negotiate constraints are widely accepted in the body of knowledge (Chun et al., 2022).

2.4 Generation Z

A generation is defined as a group of people or communities that share their birth years and experiences while acting together over time, influencing, and being affected by various critical factors (Rahimi & Stylos, 2022). The concept of generation consists of four dimensions: demographic, ancestry, and family, historical and sociological. Every generation's values are shaped by historical events, but they are also influenced by the political, economic, and cultural environments in which they live. Generation Z can be classified as a group of individuals born in the same temporal period (Haddouche & Salomone, 2018) and between 1996 and 2010 when they share unique events created by common age situations in history (e.g., September 11, 2001). Generation Z is named or labeled by various names, including "Post Millennials, iGeneration, Online Generation, Switchers, Gen Tech, Centennials, Do-It-Yourself Generation, Digital Natives, GenTech, Generation I and Gen Wii". The fact that the Z generation was born in a period when the Internet started to be used daily and even widely causes them to see the Internet as an integral part of their daily lives, in this sense, not to know or recognize a world without the Internet (Ali et al., 2023).

While the Z generation is conceptualized in relation to mobility, social networks, and digitalization (İlhan et al., 2022), the main features of the generation are as follows: has dialog-enhancing features, have unisex consumption patterns, without stereotypes, have knowledge of the media, extremely sensitive to the environment, actively seeking truth in all aspects of their desires, attitudes, choices and consumptions, providing active participation in the collaborative economy, have a determination to pursue meaningful careers, both to express individual goals and to serve the purposes of society, connectivity through digital platforms, which makes them micro-influencers as a result of giving them more power to make the world the place they want (Rahimi & Stylos, 2022). Furthermore, generation Z is considered a sincere, interested, independent, and self-loving, determined, and ambitious, prepared, cautious (İlhan et al., 2022), talented generation group (Ali et al., 2023), and because of their intense interest in technology, Z generation members tend to spend more time indoors (Parker et al., 2012). Furthermore, their growth in economically difficult times pushes them to be more careful and pragmatic when spending money (Jiang & Hong, 2021).

3 METHODOLOGY

This research aimed to reveal the behaviors and tendencies of university student-Z generation members towards outdoor recreation activities in depth and comprehensively, based on the theory of leisure time constraints. In this context, the qualitative research method was preferred in the research. Qualitative research is "a research approach that focuses on exploring individuals' experiences with a phenomenon by collecting or analyzing narrative or text data expressed in words or images" (Clark & Ivankova, 2018: 4). The main reasons for choosing the qualitative research method within the scope of this study are that the qualitative method is carried out in a natural environment and has features such as revealing the inner worlds of people in depth (Creswell & Creswell, 2016); the majority of the studies on the theory of leisure constraints in the literature are not exploratory (White, 2008). A phenomenological design, which is one of the most frequently used qualitative research designs, was chosen. Phenomenology deals with the examination of people's conscious experiences of their routine lives, that is, their daily lives and social actions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Merriam, 2009), At the same time, phenomenology is concerned with revealing meanings by describing facts, objects, situations in integrity, and in multiple ways (Karagöz, 2017). In this research, the phenomenology was preferred because it can explain people's perceptions, experiences, perspectives, and meanings of facts in depth and provides a holistic perspective on these (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013), and aims to derive the unique meanings of the person and the phenomena in the outside world by using people's experiences to describe and interpret their experiences (Altunışık et al., 2022). Also, this study, transcendental phenomenology, was chosen because its focus is on revealing and understanding lived experiences (Yalçın, 2022). Accordingly, seven questions were prepared by examining the literature in depth. The questions were sent to an academician with expertise and experience in the field of recreation science, and feedback on the questions was requested. As a result of the feedback, one question was removed, and the questionnaire was made ready to be implemented as a total of six open-ended questions. The open-ended questions created in the questionnaire allow people to reveal their views, experiences, comments, and reactions that reflect their inner world (Karagöz, 2017). Before the implementation was carried out on the participants, a pilot interview was conducted with seven people to clarify the questions and correct spelling errors, after which the implementation phase was started on the participants, since no problems were observed regarding the questions. The questions prepared within the scope of this study were as follows:

- Which outdoor activity did you participate in last?
- How was the experience of this activity, how would you describe it?
- What motivates you to go on an outdoor recreation activity?
- What are the difficulties/constraints in participating in an outdoor recreation activity?
- How do you overcome or negotiate with these challenges/constraints when planning or during an outdoor recreation activity?
- How does the presence or absence of difficulties/restrictions in participating in recreational activities affect your decision to participate in the next activity?

This research was conducted with Siirt University students. The reason why Siirt University was chosen within the scope of the research is that the region it is located in contains a wide variety of recreational attractions, while the reason for the university students to perform many different outdoor recreational activities intensively or at least the students' tendency to perform outdoor recreational activities is high. Although the universe of the study consisted of all Siirt University students, convenience sampling, which is a purposeful sampling method, was preferred. Convenience sampling is a widely used sampling method in qualitative research and provides advantages in terms of working on a familiar sample, speed, practicality, time, and cost (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). The convenience sampling method was preferred within the scope of the present paper because it is a sample made with volunteers who meet the appropriate conditions and want to participate in the study (Christensen et al., 2015) and it allows the study of situations that are thought to have rich information (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). The study was conducted between March 1 and May 30, 2022. Participants were recruited through academicians working at Siirt University, and data were obtained from participants who were active students in eight units in total (Faculty of Agriculture, Art and Science, Veterinary Medicine, Engineering, Education, and Tourism, Physical Education and Sport, and Foreign Languages Schools). Data collection in the study was carried out through a face-to-face answering-questionnaire technique. The data in the research were obtained through a face-to-face answering-questionnaire technique, and the questionnaires were administered in a classroom environment where the participants felt comfortable to ensure that they gave sincere answers through academicians. Before the questionnaire was distributed to the participants, they were informed about the purpose of the study, and it was explained to them that their participation in the research was voluntary, and that the information obtained would not be shared anywhere other than for the purpose of scientific study. While examining the data obtained from 95 participants, it was decided that the research had reached sufficient saturation, and the data collection process was terminated. In qualitative research, the adequacy of sample size is relative (Sandelowski, 1995), that is, there is no calculation, recommendation, or limitation for determining the number of samples. Karagöz (2017) points out that a small sample should be preferred to conduct in-depth analysis of the situation or situation examined in phenomenology studies. Answering the open-ended questions in the questionnaire varies between 10-15 minutes. In qualitative research, analysis is not completely undisciplined, although not as strictly as the recipe steps in any cookbook. The practical experience of conducting qualitative research, as well as the analytical styles described in many texts, shows that most qualitative analyses follow a general five-step cycle: a) compiling, b) disassembling, c) reassembling and organizing, d) interpreting, and e) concluding (Yin, 2016). In the present study, content analysis was conducted with a comprehensive inductive approach to the questionnaires obtained during the research, regardless of the undergraduate program of the participants. A qualitative data analysis technique called content analysis seeks to identify ideas and connections that might make sense of the information gathered (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013) and is the basic data analysis of qualitative research (Altunışık et al., 2022). The steps involved in content analysis are as follows: a) data coding; b) topic (theme) discovery; c) code and theme organization; d) data examination in relation to codes and themes; and e) disclosure and interpretation of the results (Altunışık et al., 2022; Yıldırım & Şimşek 2013). Within the scope of the research, initial coding was carried out in an inductive manner to categorize the data obtained. The researchers discussed the initial codes and decided on the final codes. Based on the codes, a certain classification was made and thematicization was made. Thus, the codes and themes of the data were examined, and then the resulting codes and themes were scrutinized in depth and the findings were interpreted.

Validity and reliability tools in qualitative research are different from those in quantitative research and are not as tangible as those in quantitative research. Qualitative research on reliability and validity focuses on the "existence and meaning of the phenomenon," while quantitative research focuses on the "existence of the phenomenon." In other words, qualitative research focuses on the "quality" of the investigated facts and events, while quantitative research focuses on "numerical data" (Altunışık, 2022). Several tactics have been employed to improve reliability and validity. To guarantee the internal validity of the study, a thorough investigation of the literature was conducted, and inquiries were made along these lines. In addition, an academician working in the field of recreation asked for their opinions on the questions. The academics to whom questions were sent received feedback regarding some word suggestions that would increase the understandability and clarity of the questions and the ordering of the questions. Then, changes were made to the interview questions in line with the feedback. To ensure the clarity of the interview questions, a pilot interview was conducted with seven participants. To ensure construct validity, the participants were informed about the research topic, purpose, and interview questions, but no guiding explanation was made to ensure that the researchers did not influence the opinions of the participants. The procedure, approach, data gathering, and analytic procedures pertaining to the qualitative investigation were thoroughly explained in order to guarantee the internal and external reliability of the findings. The acquired data were provided in a thorough and detailed manner, and analytical generalization was used to explain the results. Moreover, two researchers employed the reliability between encoders suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) to ascertain the agreement and disputes among the researchers to guarantee the validity of the study. All values obtained were above the limits (Karagöz, 2017), and Kappa values are presented in the relevant tables.

4 RESULTS

In this study, the tendency of university student-generation Z members to participate in outdoor recreational activities is discussed in the context of the theory of leisure constraints. Thus, this study aims to provide a conceptual framework by shedding light on the behavioral tendencies of Z generation members and to present strategic data to university administrations, recreation industry, local administrations, and recreation planners with the information framework to be created. In this regard, first, demographic characteristics obtained from 95 participants were presented, and then the research themes revealed by content analysis of the data obtained based on the order of the research questions specified in the questionnaire were listed.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of participants

Variable		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	66	69.5
	Male	29	30.5
Year of being a student	1st	36	37.9
	2nd	33	34.7
	3rd	15	18.8
	4th	11	8.6
Age	18-20	51	53.7
	21-23	38	40.0
	24 -26	6	6.3
Average monthly spends for activities	0-300 TL	54	56.8
	301-600 TL	19	20.0
	601-900 TL	4	4.2
	901 TL and above	3	3.2
	Unspecified participant	15	15.8

When the demographic characteristics of the participants were examined, it was observed that 69.5% of the participants were women, and 72.6% were students who continued their education in the 1st and 2nd grades. All participants were members of the Z generation (born between 1996 and 2010), and approximately half of the participants were between the ages of 18-20. In terms of the average monthly expenditure for outdoor activities, 56.8% of the participants had an income of 0-300 TL. The most preferred activities in terms of recreational activities carried out by the participants outdoors were trekking/hiking, picnics, city tours, and concert activities.

Table 2. Recreational activity preferences of the participants (outdoor)

Recreational Activities	Frequency	Percent
Trekking-Hiking	20	19.6
Picnic	20	19.6
City Tour	18	17.6
Concert	11	10.7
Nature Park (Tillo)	8	8.0
Cycling (University Campus)	6	5.9
Cave Excursion	5	4.8
Mountain Climbing	4	4.0
National Parks (Botan Valley)	3	2.9
Camping	2	2.0
Meditation (in the park or outdoors)	2	2.0
Boat Tour	2	2.0
Zoo Trip	1	0.9
Total	**102**	**100.0**

The opinions of the participants about their experiences with recreational activities were divided into two main categories, positive and negative, based on the content analysis. The positive experiences of the participants from recreational activities consist of features that allow self-improvement, hedonic features that give a sense of self-transcendence and enable the pleasure of enjoying life, and finally, the theme-features of spiritual regeneration-health that provide regeneration by reducing stress and making individuals feel good.

Table 3. Positive experience characteristics of participants from the recreational activity

Theme	Code
Self-improvement	Developing relationships with individuals (Interaction)
	Social development
	Instructive
	Triggering the discovery
Hedonic/Pleasure-based	Freedom
	Allowing you to enjoy life
	Diversity - to get rid of routine
	Enabling self-actualization
	Giving a sense of self-transcendence
	Enjoyable
	Pleasant
	Fun
	Excited
Spiritual Regeneration-Health	Enabling renewal
	Strengthening
	Feel good
	Relaxing
	Calming
	Peaceful
	Stress reliever
	Avoidance (from people, society, stress, routine)

Note(s): Kappa=0.71
Source(s): Author's own creation

On the contrary, the negative features of the participants from recreational activities include the psychological theme that is seen as a waste of time and reflects the mental characteristics that do not meet expectations, the environmental theme that meets the weather and nature conditions, and the physical theme that reminds them of fatigue and inability to rest. Negative experiences compromise the extrinsic-environmental aggregate dimension, which includes the environmental theme, and the intrinsic-personal aggregate dimension, which includes psychological and physical themes. While the extrinsic-environmental aggregate dimension refers to the effects of the experiences that individuals have obtained from the external environment, the intrinsic-personal aggregate dimension consists of the individual's own perceptions or perceptions, feelings, and images that belong entirely to the individual.

Table 4. Characteristics of negative experiences obtained by participants from recreational activity

Aggregate Dimension	Theme	Code
Extrinsic-Environmental	Environmental	Temperature
		Noise pollution
		Landscape-lack of green space
		Environmental pollution
Intrinsic-Personal	Psychological	Boring
		Oppressive
		Difficult
		Bad
		Waste of time
		Not meeting expectation
	Physical	Tiredness
		Inability to rest

Note(s): Kappa=0.94
Source(s): Author's own creation

The participants' opinions on their motivation to participate in outdoor recreational activities were divided into five themes. Social motivation aims to improve family friend relationships and social interaction in individuals participating in recreational activities. Participant opinions regarding this theme are as follows: "…the most basic factor in participating in an outdoor activity is to do something with friends…" (K22). "…close friends of mine and I of them are constantly motivating each other to do something, and I love interacting with new members to join our group at outdoor activities. It is also important to participate for personal development and socialization…" (P38). While physical motivation is related to health, weight control, and fit appearance, environmental motivation reflects the positive and negative characteristics of being in nature, the attractiveness of the environment, and the place where living or recreational activity will be performed. Opinions on physical motivation: "… walking and climbing in nature not only fascinates me but also makes me look physically fit…" (P45). Participant views on environmental motivation are as follows: "... getting rid of the crowded and oppressive atmosphere of city life and breathing in the open air are important things that motivate us in our work or in our lives..." (P8). "…being outdoors, in nature, and feeling like I am a part of nature relaxes me…" (P12). "… it is vital for me to get away from the crowd, see new places and enjoy nature…" (P66). Personal requirements include motivation, life responsibilities, other life obligations, and economic status. Opinions on the theme of personal requirements: "... I like to do outdoor activities such as running, city tour, walking, etc. instead of doing an activity in indoor areas (cinema, mall trip, fitness, etc.) and it costs almost nothing..." (K80). "…to relieve the stress of school…" (P2). "...the daily obligations I have to do make me very tired and worn out, so I have to protect myself from these effects..." (P81). Lastly, spiritual regeneration-health motivation reflects personal needs such as self-discovery and self-evaluation; personal feelings such as freedom and happiness; escape from the environment; and getting away from personal negative emotions such as mood and spiritual renewal, as well as personal well-being towards relaxation. Opinions on spiritual regeneration-health motivation: "… running away from people, city, and life…" (P22-32). "…the desire to relax, get rid of my bad mood and loneliness…" (P26). "…spiritual depression…" (P89). "… calmness and peace…" (P3-39-75). "…renewing myself, regaining my energy…" (P33). "…city life, indoor areas, daily routine, and responsibilities consume me and take away my freedom. Outdoor offers freedom, happiness, and distraction…" (P91). The theme of spiritual regeneration-health consists of categories-features based on mental relaxation, such as peace and well-being, aimed at getting rid of internal negative situations, such as boredom and depression, and at the same time based on internal positive characteristics, such as freedom and fun. The environmental theme is composed of the nature-weather conditions category, which reflects attractions worth seeing and the desire to be in nature, and the inhabited city category, which indicates features such as crowding and transportation status. Whereas the social theme characterizes the categories of friend groups and socialization, the theme of personal requirements refers to the categories of economic and favorable conditions.

Table 5. Motivation to participate in outdoor recreational activities

Theme	Category	Code
Social	Fellowship	Spending time with friends
		Friend environment
	Socialization	Socialization
		Interaction
		Getting to know new people
Physical	Physical	Doing physical activity
		Physical well-being
Environmental	Nature-Weather Conditions	Weather conditions
		Environment
		Attractions worth seeing
		Clean air
		Being in nature and loving nature
		Weather conditions
		Seeing new places
	City of Residence	Inadequacy of the city
		Crowd
		Transport
Personal Requirements	Economic	Monetary-material adequacy
	Suitable Conditions	Enough leisure time
		Advice from others
Spiritual Regeneration-Health	Intrinsic Positive	Freedom
		Loneliness
		Exploring
		Curiosity
		Fun
		Adventure
		Happiness
		Memory hoarding
	Intrinsic Negative	Time passing
		Boring
		Depression
		Avoidance (from people and routine)
		Avoidance of stress
		Avoidance of future anxiety
		Mood
	Relaxation-Health	Feeling good
		Peace
		Obtaining energy
		Spiritual renewal
		Silence-calmness
		Relaxation

Note(s): Kappa=0.76
Source(s): Author's own creation

Participation constraints for outdoor recreational activities are based on the framework of constraint categories expressed as intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural, developed by Crawford and Godbey (1987), which is widely accepted in the literature, since it is consistent with participant views. Intrapersonal constraints refer to internal psychological characteristics, situations, and qualities; interpersonal/external constraints refer to interpersonal and situational characteristics experienced by individuals (Palen et al., 2010). Structural constraints emphasize the factors that fall between leisure preferences and individuals' participation (White, 2008).

Table 6. The constraints of participating in outdoor recreation activities

Theme	Code
Intrapersonal	Difficulty meeting new people
	Security-anxiety (perception of getting hurt, getting sick and losing time)
	Perception that activities will be challenging
	Impatient behavior
Interpersonal	Lack of friend group or circle group (accompanying)
	Conflict-divergency
	Lack of leader-guide
Structural	Lack of time
	Cost-lack of money
	Lack of knowledge (for opportunities to participate in activities)
	Weather and environmental conditions
	Transport
	Crowd
	Lack of equipment
	Inconvenience of activity time (school density-life responsibilities-problems from living in dormitory)
	Limited opportunities due to the location of the city

Note(s): Kappa=0.81
Source(s): Author's own creation

Participants' views on strategies for negotiating the constraints of participating in recreational activities were divided into six themes. Mueller et al.'s (2019) conceptualization of negotiation strategies as planning, financial, social, and skill is consistent with the four themes obtained in the research. The codes for negotiating with the constraints obtained in the research, such as cost, time, lack of information about opportunities, security, and lack of program for certain segments-time mismatch (Table 6), coincide with the themes revealed by Stodolska et al. (2020). Lyu et al. (2013) found that the social, health, cost, trust, weather conditions, time, and commitment dimensions are similar in the context of research strategies for negotiating with the constraints of participation in activities. Also, Jackson et al. (1993) and Lee and Scott (2009) divided the strategies of negotiating with constraints into two categories as cognitive and behavioral strategies, and this classification was based on the aggregate dimension within the scope of the research. Jackson et al. (1993) underlines that cognitive strategies are based on the mechanism of reducing cognitive dissonance and points out that unselected or restricted activity alternatives are devalued by the participants. Thus, participating in the activity created a sense of insignificance in the eyes of the participant. In other words, a person tends towards a rationalization strategy in the context of self-protection psychological behavior. In this respect, the theme of escaping ignoring can be placed under the cognitive aggregate dimension. Behavioral strategy, on the other hand, involves seeking alternative actions related to leisure time itself, that is, exhibiting a behavior instead of ignoring or escaping, and also changing the individual's behaviors towards meeting responsibility and compulsory needs (Lyu & Oh, 2014). In this context, personal skills and environmental, social, planning, and financial themes can be placed under the behavioral aggregate dimension.

Table 7. Strategies for negotiating constraints to participate in outdoor recreation activities

Aggregate Dimension	Theme	Code
Behavioral	Personal Skills	Using the skills
		By adopting a solution-oriented approach
		Positive thinking/Focusing on loved things
		Stubborn-belief behavior that can be overcome
		Taking advantage of dealing with difficulties earlier
		By thinking about the good things to be achieved and being psychologically motivated
	Environmental	Precautions for safety (injury, illness, environmental risk)
		Measures for transportation
		Considerations for weather-nature conditions
		Complaint to relevant organizations
	Social	Family and friend support
		Support from experienced people who have faced similar problems before
		The expectation that others will find solutions to my difficulties (guide, organization owners, etc.)
	Planning	By planning
		By preparing a roadmap for the solution
		Developing a solution-oriented strategy/ Behaving proactively
	Financial	Seeking support in financial matters
		Finding support to obtain the necessary equipment
		Covering the cost by reducing various expenses
Cognitive	Avoid-ignore	Let it flow
		Leave the environment / abandon the organization
		Accepting with low expectations
		Recognizing that adversity is constantly encountered

Note(s): Kappa=0.86
Source(s): Author's own creation

Participants' opinions at the decision-making stage about participating in another activity after the constraints encountered in outdoor recreational activities were presented under three different headings. Under heading "not participation," codes of prejudice, disappointment, and fear of negative experiences are given. In this respect, it can be inferred that the tendency of the participants to be prejudiced and not risk the same disappointment again, according to their previous experiences, pushes them to adopt a behavior such as not participating in the next activity to avoid having a negative experience. Under the title of "participation," the codes of struggling with difficulties, providing motivation, gaining experience, and acceptance are given. It can be deduced that the participants can struggle with and even endure these difficulties based on their previous negative experiences, that they may tend to ignore negativities because they are already used to negativities, and that these negativities can create an important motivation and experience in individuals. In this context, it can be inferred that the participants can struggle with and even endure these difficulties based on their previous negative experiences, that they may tend to ignore negativities because they are already used to negativities, and that these negativities can create an important motivation and experience in individuals.

Table 8. Factors affecting participation in activities in case of constraints encountered in outdoor activities

Recreation Activities		
Not Participation		Participation
Prejudice	(-) Conditional Participation (+)	Tackling Challenges
Disappointment	Economic	Providing Motivation
Fear of negative experience	Social Environment	Gaining Experience
	Mood	Acceptance (habit, endure, and indifference)

Note(s): Kappa=0.86
Source(s): Author's own creation

In the last title, the participants pointed out that they can participate in the activities on a conditional basis, in the form of “conditional participation,” depending on whether people feel good or not. The constraints that affect this conditional participation are presented in economic, social, and mood codes.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The experience of the Z generation from the recreational activities they carry out in the outdoor areas, their motivation, and constraints to participate in the activities, and the strategies of negotiating the constraints; in other words, the recreation tendencies of the Z generation based on the theory of leisure constraints have been investigated in a wide framework. All research participants were members of the Z generation, and the majority of the participants (69.5%) were female. The predominance of Generation Z and female participants means that analytical generalizations, that is, broad insights and general findings, can be made within the framework of the qualitative research method in the context of these groups. The average amount allocated to recreational activities by 76.8% of the participants was between 0 TL and 600 TL. Although this amount is seen as little or a reasonable budget, Rahimi and Stylos (2022) and İlhan et al. (2022), the characteristic features of the Z generation–being determined and ambitious in achieving personal goals, and being fond of their freedom–show that the economic adversities they encounter in performing recreational activities are not substantial or vital for the members of the generation. Jiang and Hong (2021) similarly emphasized that their growth in an economically difficult period pushed them to act more carefully and pragmatically with their income. Besides, rather than showing that the members of the Z generation are frugal-reluctant about spending and consumption, it indicates that although they have limited opportunities to realize their goals or dreams, they are courageous, solution-oriented, and never give up on tackling difficulties.

The members of the Z generation participated in 13 different activities in terms of the types of recreational activities carried out in the outdoor areas. Participants carried out only “city tour and concert” activities in terms of participating in social, artistic, and cultural activities held in outdoor areas in city centers. This is because the participants live in Siirt province or small-developing cities close to the province of Siirt in terms of geography or because the participants are not open to different outdoor recreational activities; in other words, Z generation members are digital natives (Robinson & Schänzel, 2019); that is, they are intertwined with technology. In addition, city tours, concerts, and meditation activities in outdoor areas and parks were at the forefront among the activities carried out by the participants. This supports the view that the participants could not participate in different activities due to the limitation of outdoor recreational activities in the city in which they live. Although cities have turned into places that create problems for people, approximately three out of ten people (30.3%) cannot stay away from the comfort and charm of cities. As for outdoor activities held on the university campus, the situation is not different from that of city centers in terms of the type of activity. The only recreational activity on campus was cycling. In contrast, the participants were active in outdoor recreational resources within the scope of this study. However, the number of participants in activities held in nature parks and national parks is low. Indeed, according to data from the US National Park Service, national parks will receive approximately 312 million recreational visitors in 2022 (National Park Service, 2023). By 2022, the US population was predicted to be approximately 334 million (Census, 2023). Almost every US citizen visited a national park. When a similar comparison is evaluated in the context of research participants – Z generation members–it can be said that it is still in its infancy in the context of visiting national parks and natural areas with 10.9%. Lastly, Z generation members tend to prefer outdoor recreational activities (camping, mountain climbing, etc.) that require equipment less due to their lack of economic freedom or low income.

The experience of the Z generation from outdoor recreational activities consists of positive images and environmental, physical, and psychological negative images that provide personal development and pleasure and enable health-spiritual regeneration. Rahimi and Stylos (2022) argue that the experience gained from tourism/recreation by the Z generation has three main effects: immediate effects (related to family, friends, and local events), destination-environment effects (socio-political, cultural, and physical aspects), and global effects (including climate change, terrorism, financial volatility, geographical policies, and technological developments). The experience effects observed in this study among generation Z partially align with the effects proposed by Rahimi and Stylos (2022). However, global effects, such as escape and spiritual renewal due to technological development, were relatively rare in the research findings. Noteworthy characteristics of the Z generation include their determination to actively pursue societal goals and their role as micro-influencers, shaping the world according to their desires. In another saying, the generation tends to take active responsibility to change the society and the world for the better. Also, while the global impact of the experience gained from outdoor recreation activities is limited, it is more significant concerning immediate and destination-environmental effects. Participants’ experiences primarily revolve around these two categories. However, when examining the effects of the recreational activity (Table 3-4), participants’ opinions are based on individual-personal effects, which are not accounted for in the classification. Individual-personal effects consist of personal psychological and physical positive and negative features that enable various personal development, hedonic, and spiritual regeneration. Therefore, the classification proposed by Rahimi and Stylos (2022) can be extended as a fourth category of individual-personal effects in the context of outdoor recreational experience effects. The Z generation has tendencies towards individual and instant effects much more than global and environmental effects in terms of the effects of the experience they get from recreational activities. In this regard, similar to post-modern tourist behavior, the expectations of the Z generation regarding recreational activities revolve around seeking individualized, authentic, pleasure-based experiences that bring physical and spiritual well-being. However, the outcomes of these experiences are influenced more by internal factors than external negative aspects.

The views of the Z generation on the motivation to participate in outdoor recreational activities are divided into 5 themes (inspired by the dimensions of the motivation scale developed by Masters et al. (1993)). The push and pull model, made functional by Crompton (1979), is widely used in the literature in terms of examining leisure travel motivations (Shi et al., 2012). The codes of the 5 themes cover most of the motivation dimensions developed by Crompton (1979). The difference in the present research is due to the motivation to participate in outdoor recreational activities and to be presented based on 5 themes that are more holistic and at the same time inclusive. The main-intensive motivations of the Z generation for participating in outdoor activities compromise of environmental motivations created by the natural conditions and the city categories they live in, and the characteristics of the spiritual renewal-health theme forming of internal positive and negative motives and relaxation categories. When the motivation features are evaluated in general, it is important that the internal-personal motives of the Z generation members are more important than the external factors. In other saying, the internal-personal motives of the Z generation members cover or occupy a more important space in their minds than the external factors. While it includes the features that come to the forefront in the context of internal personal motives, escaping from or getting rid of negative emotions, or alleviating emotions, psychological well-being and physical and mental regeneration stand out in terms of recreational activities for Z generation members. In terms of external factors, the desire to be in the natural environment, natural attractions and the features originating from the place where the living or recreational activity is carried out are important.

Opinions of the participants-Z generation members on the factors that constraints participation in outdoor recreational activities are discussed under 3 themes. The prominent theme of the Z generation to participate in recreational activities is external constraints. Structural constraints are related to the external environment (Covelli Metcalf et al., 2015) and while they are related to constraints such as inappropriate transportation, financial, and work commitment, they usually emerge after leisure preferences are developed (Lyu et al., 2013). The constraints of the Z generation to participate in recreational activities consist of the features that limit participation in recreational activities under the structural theme, such as time, cost, lack of information, transportation, lack of equipment, themes of weather and environmental conditions (similar to the dimensions-themes in the studies by Stodolska et al., 2020; Lyu et al., 2013), crowding (Walker & Virden, 2005) and especially the opportunities offered by the city. Difficulty meeting new people, challenging activities, safety-anxiety elements express the intrapersonal constraints of generation Z in participating in recreational activities. The reason for the emergence of these elements-themes may be due to the fact that the members of the Z generation are born into the digital world and grow up in the digital world, and therefore have difficulties in face-to-face communication. Besides, the members of the generation spending long periods in indoor areas may cause difficulties in activities performed due to lack of physical activity in sports and outdoor areas and may lead to safety and concerns such as injury, illness, and loss of time, especially due to going out of their control area, that is, outdoors. Finally, interpersonal constraints consist of lack of peer group or environment, conflict, and lack of guide-leader. Although the Z generation tends to be free, they are in need of guiding person/s as well as looking for people who support their participation while performing outdoor activities. This may be due to their need to share the risk and the uncertainty with other members of the group, that is, the outdoor activity carried out in the outdoor areas can be caused by the lack of experience. The theme of conflict-divergency points out that the dialogue-enhancing and collaborative characteristics of the Z generation are not valid in the context of participating in outdoor activities.

The coping-negotiation strategies of the Z generation members in participating in outdoor activities were discussed in the context of 6 themes and the aggregate dimension of behavioral and cognitive negotiation strategies. Members of generation Z widely use the aggregate dimension of the behavioral negotiation strategy and the theme of personal skills to overcome the constraints they face. In this regard, it is understood that the Z generation is determined to achieve their individual goals and they tend to seek solutions in line with their own abilities on a large scale. Indeed, Jun and Kyle (2011) emphasized in their study that behavioral strategies are used to alleviate various constraints at interpersonal and structural levels, while cognitive strategies are used to alleviate several internal constraints and stated that people tend to prefer behavioral strategies primarily against the constraints they encounter. On the other hand, as stated by Covelli Metcalf (2015), constraints and constraints negotiation strategies match-overlap, in other words, solution strategies for constraints are being developed. In this context, whereas the Z generation encounters structural-external constraints on a large scale, they prefer personal skills on a large scale, and behavioral negotiation strategies when considered from a broader perspective. Additionally, although the Z generation is generally talented in producing solutions and developing strategies, they tend to prefer the aggregate dimension of cognitive negotiation strategy such as ignoring, accepting and escaping-giving up on negotiation with the constraints of participating in outdoor activities.

The opinions of the members of the Z generation in the context of participating in the next activity in case of encountering constraints while performing outdoor activities were assessed under three headings as “participating, not participating and conditional participation”. While there are codes of prejudice, disappointment, and fear of negative experience under the heading of not participating, these three codes are placed under the theme of stereotypes. Among the distinctive features of the Z generation is the absence of stereotypes about any subject or situation, but this is not the case in outdoor activities. The members of the Z generation tend to have stereotypes about participating in outdoor activities due to the negativities, fears, and bad beliefs to be experienced. The members of the Z generation participate in an activity even if they experience negativity in terms of having a circle of friends, having sufficient economic conditions, and feeling personal well-being, but they prefer not to participate in the opposite case. Also, the negativities experienced by the members of the Z generation can create a source of strength such as motivation, fighting spirit and experience in terms of participating in activities, while sometimes negativities can cause acceptance.

5.1 Theoretical and Practical Implications

The research has a number of theoretical and practical implications. In the way of theoretical implications, first, the research has presented a deep, holistic, and comprehensive framework to the literature by considering the behaviors, attitudes, and experiences of Generation Z members-university students towards outdoor activities in the context of leisure constraints theory. Second, the classification proposed by Rahimi and Stylos (2022) as immediate, destination and global effects for the effects of experience gained from tourism-recreational activities has been expanded and rearranged in the context of outdoor recreation, and a new category has been proposed as individual-personal experience effects. Third, the push and pull model, which was transformed into a functional one by Crompton (1979), was adapted to the outdoor recreation area on the basis of 5 themes: social, physical, environmental, personal requirements and spiritual regeneration-health. Leisure constraints in the form of internal, interpersonal, and structural, developed by Crowford and Godbey (1987), were presented with a similar theming in the context of outdoor recreation, and it was seen that there was a valid classification in terms of outdoor recreation as well. Fourth, strategies for coping and negotiating with constraints Jackson et al. (1993) and Lee and Scott (2009) classified it as cognitive and behavioral. The aggregate dimensions suggested within the scope of the research overlap with this classification, and the difference in the context of outdoor recreation is based on the theme. While cognitive strategy is handled in the context of avoidance-ignoring theme, behavioral strategy consists of personal skills, environmental, social, planning, and financial themes. Last, a behavior matrix is presented on how the constraints encountered in participating in a recreational activity shape the behaviors of Generation Z members.

As for the practical implications, Lyu et al. (2013) highlighted that constraints play a vital role in the decision-making process to participate in desired activities and help individuals to better understand the reasons for leisure behavior and choice. Economic situation, internal and social characteristics are the factors that affect positively and negatively the behavior of Generation Z members in participating in activities. Internal characteristics and acceptance by the group and society are significant determinants of participation behavior. Similarly, the most determining element in the behavior of not participating in activities is internal characteristics (fear, prejudice, and disappointment). The main element that affects Generation Z individuals' participation in activities are spiritual well-being, renewal, and health characteristics, that is, internal characteristics. When it comes to constraints on participation in activities, structural features, that is, external factors, are the strongest constraints affecting individuals within the scope of the research, as Alexandris et al. (2017) stated (time and cost), Generation Z individuals try to overcome these constraints by exhibiting reaction behavior, and in this regard, their most important strategies are personal skills. In this respect, the recreation industry, local government, university administrations and planners need to provide support, such as equipment supply and economic contribution, for Generation Z members to participate in activities, and organize organizational arrangements such as training, courses and events that will strengthen their personal development to overcome the constraints they face. Goh and Okumus (2020) underlined that members of Generation Z are an important rising group within the total workforce today and emphasized that Generation Z has some important characteristics such as self-confidence in the work environment, embracing team-group dynamics, desiring workplace pleasure, and seeking career security. These characteristics are also important qualities sought in personnel working in the recreation industry, and in this respect, Generation Z stands out as important players for the recreation industry. The motivation of Generation Z members towards a job varies depending on the working climate, their managers, and the conditions the business provides them. For motivation, Generation Z needs the touch of a magic hand from outside, that is, someone or something to trigger them (Kavak & Şener, 2021). Singh and Dangmei (2016) indicate that in this respect, generation Z has very different requirements and motivation characteristics than generations X and Y. In this regard, the need for a different workforce management is obvious. For instance, the motivation of Generation Z members in the work environment can immediately decrease and increase. The reason for this is that they quickly get bored of the work conditions and cannot tolerate the conditions. To overcome this situation, a business decided to create a club within itself. The business has noticed that through this club, their employees increase their retention and well-being. In this context, it is clear that such activities within the business are crucial for Generation Z members (Kavak & Şener, 2021), and it is essential for businesses' human resources management to develop strategies that will support the social lives of Generation Z members, especially their leisure time behavior and tendencies, in terms of reducing workforce turnover rates and the happiness of employees. Further, as Marx emphasized, in the context of "reproduction of labor power", recreation increases the decreasing work efficiency by providing spiritual renewal and physical rest for individuals through recreational functions (Özel, 2002). Revealing the leisure time tendencies of Generation Z can provide concrete outputs to businesses in terms of increasing employee productivity. Furthermore, understanding the leisure time behaviors and preferences of Generation Z is vital in terms of improving the business-consumer relationship in the recreation industry and providing competitive advantage for businesses, considering that they will represent a large group in the future.

5.2 Limitations and Future Research Directions

The fact that the paper was based on qualitative-exploratory methods caused some limitations. Since the nature of qualitative research is based on obtaining in-depth information on a limited sample, research results cannot be generalized as in quantitative research methods, on the contrary, broad insights, and general findings can be made. The research was carried out on the members of the Z generation, who have limited economic opportunities and have limited time due to being university students and staying in dormitories, while examining the behaviors of Siirt University students-Z generation members towards outdoor activities in depth in the context of leisure constraints theory.

Indeed, Alexandris and Carroll (1997) underline that economic conditions are an important variable in the participation of university students aged 18-25 in recreational activities. In this regard, the economic conditions of the students are important in the recreational preferences of Generation Z university students, and this is an important limitation for present study. Also, the scope of the research was limited to recreational activities performed in the open area. In terms of future studies, this limitation can be removed and their general tendencies towards recreation or their behaviors towards indoor or digital recreation due to spending long periods indoor areas due to high dependence on the internet and smart technologies can be discussed in the context of similar or different theories. Time is an important parameter for the Z generation (Rahimi & Stylos, 2022) and because of the generation's technology adoption velocity and technology-oriented habits, the recreation industry and activity planners, on one hand, support traditional recreation products with various smart applications, on the other hand, need to develop strategies for important tools of digital recreation such as metaleisure, virtual-augmented-mixed reality, digital games, and simulations. Thus, as underlined by Rahimi and Stylos (2022), by developing products based on the general behavior and recreational tendencies of the Z generation, to create high connections with the rising Generation Z, bridges can be built between the enterprises and goals and at the same time, relationships/connections can be kept vivid or bustling. Further, studies can be conducted to determine the effects of digital technologies on the daily lives of Generation Z members and manage these effects (Turhan & Tutar, 2023), to create personalized digital recreation activities for members of Generation Z based on their interests and to determine the behavioral patterns of this generation regarding participation and consumption of digital recreation activities (Baran & Karaca, 2023). Furthermore, the study can be extended through qualitative-quantitative and mixed methods in the context of different geographies, cultures, and Z generation members.

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Changes in marketing strategies at Spanish hotel chains under the framework of sustainability

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Abstract:

Purpose: *This study analyses, based on qualitative research, the changes in marketing strategies and activities at the main Spanish hotel chains in terms of turnover, following their commitment to sustainability.*
Methods: *To that end, 8 in-depth interviews were conducted with professionals in management positions at the hotel chains with the highest turnover. Data analysis was conducted using IRaMuTeQ software by performing a Descending Hierarchical Classification (DHC).*
Results: *The results enable us to conclude that product policy, price, distribution and communication are significant classes in text analysis and the price variable predominates over the rest. The analysis also shows positioning is highly important.*
Implications: *This research allows to establish the details of the main marketing changes that have taken place at the main organisations in the Spanish tourism sector. It also helps other organisations to define their action framework in the current context of sustainability.*

Keywords: *tourism, marketing strategy, marketing mix, sustainability, hotels, SDG*

JEL Classification: *M00, L1, M31*

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1 INTRODUCTION

There is no question that organizations nowadays have to attend to different stakeholders and help achieve a balance between economic, social, and environmental needs. This trend, which has been maturing in our societies for years, was accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which jeopardized the whole system. The business strategies of both public and private companies must consider not just financial returns but positive returns on key aspects for society and the planet.In 2015, the United Nations, through its 2030 Agenda, proposed

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a global formula to achieve this: "We call upon all businesses to apply their creativity and innovation to solving sustainable development challenges" (United Nations General Assembly, 2015, p. 25). Given the complexity of implementing the 2030 sustainable development agenda, the commitment of the whole of society is required, including governments and the private sector, from micro-enterprises to cooperatives and large multinationals (Jones et al., 2018). According to a study by the Business and Sustainable Development Commission, the economic rewards of providing SDG solutions could be at least $12 trillion per year in market opportunities and could generate up to 380 million new jobs by 2030. Businesses play an important role in achieving these goals (Van der Waal & Thijssens, 2020), and the importance and relevance of organizations are determined by their raison d'être in society. Thus, the private sector largely defines the levels of social and environmental performance across the entire value chain in which it operates, from production to the supply and marketing of consumer goods (Pedersen, 2018).

Within private enterprise, different initiatives and certifications have been launched concerning sustainability and the balance between financial returns and the environment. Amongst these initiatives, this paper focuses on the hotel sector in Spain, as the hotel industry is increasingly seen as a source of economic, environmental, social, and cultural benefits thanks to its contribution to the promotion of employment, the improvement of infrastructure, and respect for different cultures (Séraphin et al., 2017). However, the research conducted on the hospitality industry is still very limited, despite the sector being considered essential for the advancement of sustainability (Nosratabadi et al., 2019) and its impact on achieving the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda (Serrano-Baena, 2022).

The authors also consider the significant contribution of tourism to Spain's GDP, which poses a challenge for the country in terms of reducing its environmental impact.

The Responsible Research Business and Management Network (RRBM, 2019), composed of leading business and marketing specialists, specifically asks marketing experts to commit to the SDGs. In addition, marketing specialists have a long history of engagement with sustainability (Lund, 2018; Tollin & Christensen, 2019). Marketing capabilities associated with the innovation of new products, services, and business models constitute a strong driver for leveraging commitment to sustainability (Tollin & Bech Christensen, 2019).

The effect of the pandemic on the tourism sector and specifically on hospitality cannot be ignored; as reported in numerous studies, it has been devastating. It constitutes a watershed, as in just a few months global tourism went from "mass tourism" to "no-tourism" (Dodds & Butler, 2019; Seraphin et al., 2018). In this sense, many authors argue that the pandemic should prompt reflection on the sector's contribution to climate change (Gossling et al., 2020). Additionally, this crisis presents a distinctive chance to reshape the sector, emphasizing growth alongside inclusivity, sustainability, and responsibility. In addition, to build for the future, special attention should be placed on building resilience and promoting sustainability at all levels (UNWTO, 2020b, p. 33). Thus, it appears that the best way for the industry to reach the SDGs is through the engagement of all stakeholders (Byrd, 2007; Waligo et al., 2013). In the words of Firoiu et al. (2019), future research should go deeper by collecting data from companies operating in different countries and analyzing whether they have integrated the SDGs in every country where they operate. Our research has been carried out among the hotels with the highest turnover in Spain. The Spanish context is particularly interesting, as public authorities have launched several initiatives to improve the environmental performance of tourism, one of its most relevant sectors (Ayuso, 2006). In the same author's words, as the accommodation products offered by hotel companies are strongly connected to the tourist destination and the quality of the natural, social and cultural environment, it would be interesting to link the discussion on company-specific tools with sustainable tourism strategies at the regional level. Within the specific tools available to the company, we highlight the role of marketing. For this purpose, this study has focused on the marketing strategies that have been developed by the main hotel companies to advance in their commitment to sustainability. Furthermore, Chan (2013) notes that there have been few studies on green marketing in the hotel industry. In addition, as emphasized by Kim et al. (2019), future research is void of key areas that could add value to the discussion of sustainability in the hospitality industry.

The aim of this research project is to explore how large hotel companies have changed the way in which they act following the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals. We seek to explore the impact of increased awareness of the importance of rebalancing economic, social, and environmental benefits on the marketing strategies and actions of the largest hotel chains. These ideas can inspire other hotel groups and even organizations in other business sectors. To that end, we conducted eight in-depth interviews with members of the management teams at the hotel chains with the highest turnover in Spain

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Sustainability and the tourism sector

In recent years, the concept of sustainability has had a strong social, economic, and political impact all over the world. Indeed, sustainability is seen as a fundamental aspect of business development, and there has been a growing interest in both theoretical and empirical research (Mathew & Sreejesh, 2017). In this context, the researchers administered a questionnaire-based survey to gather data from 432 residents across three distinct tourism destinations in India. Their objective was to assess how responsible tourism influences the perceived quality of life within these communities and to explore the mediating effect of perceived destination sustainability. Recognizing the necessity for policy reform, governments have opted to strategically prioritize actions that promote sustainability. Among all the actors involved in attaining the SDGs, this exploratory study focuses solely on the role of business, which can significantly promote (or discourage) sustainable development when making decisions on resource use and management, investment, infrastructure, innovation, value creation, personnel management, education, communication with consumers and society, investor relations, etc. (Agarwal et al., 2017; Firoiu et al., 2019; Fonseca & Carvalho, 2019; López, 2020; Scheyvens et al., 2016). For example, Fonseca and Carvalho (2019) examined the extent of involvement among 235 Portuguese organizations with Quality, Environmental, Occupational Health, and Safety (QEOHS)-certified management systems in supporting and reporting progress towards the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined in the 2030 Agenda. Thus, organizations are invited to play a positive role and align development with sustainability (Kolk & Van Tulder, 2010). The United Nations 2030 Agenda provides a holistic, multi-sector vision of sustainability through the Sustainable Development Goals (Bandari et al., 2021), encouraging companies in any sector to become agents of change.

Out of all the sectors and company typologies, this paper focuses on tourism and specifically on the hotel sector, mainly for the following two reasons: Firstly, due to its impact on global GDP, The tourism sector accounts for more than 10% of global GDP and 8% in Spain, and according to the latest data published by the INE (Spanish National Statistics Institute), tourism was worth €97.126 billion in 2021. And secondly, due to its role in terms of sustainability, which is currently highly questioned. Despite its aforementioned contribution to GDP, the sector does not yet have a sustainable, open source management approach that would enable and help it to "lead by example" to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (Rubio-Mozos et al., 2020).

Sustainability is a very important topic in tourism planning and development (Weaver, 2006; Hall et al., 2015). The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), as a specialized agency of the United Nations, holds a prominent position globally within the tourism sector. Its primary mission revolves around advocating for responsible, sustainable, and inclusive tourism, aiming to ensure universal access. Its overarching objective is to contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Evidence of political commitment to sustainability can be seen in the approval of the Tourism Sector Conference held in 2022 under the Programme of Sustainable Tourism Plans at Destinations. In addition, the Secretary of State for Tourism will allocate €23 million to this edition to move towards directing tourist destinations towards a model based on environmental, socio-economic, and territorial sustainability (Ministry of Industry, Government of Spain).

The term "tourism sector" encompasses companies in the hotel, catering, and transport sectors, along with any other activities directly associated with tourism. Of all the areas and sub-sectors that make up the sector, this paper focuses on hotel companies, as they have been recognized as the most harmful to the environment due to their intensive use of resources (Rahman et al. 2012). Indeed, hotels generate a significant amount of waste and consume a great deal of energy and water. Hotels are partly responsible for water and air pollution, environmental degradation, increased use of water and energy resources, the generation of local employment, and the use of local materials to provide products and services to their guests (Dodds & Butler, 2010). Given the impact generated by the industry, there is some pressure on hotel entrepreneurs to properly manage the economic, cultural, and social impacts to achieve sustainability (Masadeh et al., 2017). Through a quantitative analysis, the primary outcomes of their research demonstrated a notable positive influence of hotel development on the advancement of sustainable tourism. The hotel industry certainly plays a fundamental role in the sustainable development of tourism (Serrano-Baena, 2021). If it can properly manage resources while advancing in its commitment to sustainability, it can make a positive contribution to the social and economic development of the area in which it operates (Golja & Nizic, 2010). It is important to point out that those authors have focused on the importance of environmental awareness among the managers of the highest category hotels in the Republic of Croatia. Our study also examined management's perspective.

When considering the sector’s progress in terms of sustainability, it must be borne in mind that one of the characteristics of hotel chains is the global scope of their activities. In this sense, governments should establish policies to implement the 17 goals of the 2030 Agenda, which focus on both developed and developing countries to improve the quality of life of the host community and have a positive impact on the tourism industry (Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2015). However, despite all of the literature that highlights the significance and impact of the tourism sector and, in particular, the role of hotels in sustainability, relatively little research has been conducted on the role of responsible hotel practices in attaining the Sustainable Development Goals, especially in developing countries (Abdou et al., 2020). In their quantitative study involving a sample of 48 participants from 4 to 5 Green Stars hotels in Egypt, they unveiled that hotel operators ought to effectively integrate green hotel practices into their operational strategies to attain the environment-related SDGs. This is the case despite the fact that sustainability is increasingly understood as a key competitive advantage in the tourism industry (Rodríguez-Daz & Pulido-Fernández, 2020) that brings significant benefits to tourism destinations (Calvante et al., 2021).

2.2.Marketing and the tourism sector

Marketing plays a very important role in the different fields in which hotels operate. It enables a company to create relationships with its consumers. The ultimate aim of marketing is to make those relationships as profitable as possible for both parties (Kotler & Armstrong, 2020). Many current production, consumption, and purchasing models are unsustainable and detrimental to achieving social, environmental, and economic balance (Burroughs, 2010; Kautish et al.,. 2020), but marketing strategies can be designed to raise consumer awareness of sustainability and help meet the SDGs (Amoako, 2020; Campo et al., 2020; Palakshappa & Dodds, 2020; Singh & Pathak, 2020). In fact, the perception of sustainability has also been associated with satisfaction, the perception of value, brand loyalty, the word-of-mouth effect, and market segmentation (Cavalcante et al., 2021), all related to key marketing strategies and activities.

A company can therefore influence how consumers consume and purchase, whether via more sustainable products or proposals, services with a lower environmental impact, or through the use of more efficient and cleaner distribution channels, etc. Numerous studies have related perceived sustainability to marketing variables such as value creation, image, product or service performance, and behavioral and perceptual consumer issues (Iniesta-Bonillo et al., 2016).

Current marketing philosophy encourages organizations and marketing managers to recognize consumers as the power and key to obtaining sustainable, competitive, and profitable business outcomes (Kuada, 2016; Dzogbenuku & Keelson, 2019), while taking into account stakeholder impact (Mitchell et al., 2010; Palakshappa & Dodds, 2020). Likewise, a company can employ marketing to communicate the value of its activities or even educate the consumer using tools such as advertising, social networks, or public relations. We therefore believe that marketing is a key area in which to implement important changes that contribute to the fulfillment of the SDGs and their integration with an organization's overall strategy.

Marketing is one of the traditional functional areas of the company, and its ultimate goal is to build and manage profitable relationships with customers (Kotler & Armstrong, 2020). In order to manage those relationships, marketing areas need to articulate a series of strategies that, although defined at the departmental level, must be aligned with the organization's overall strategic plan. Like any other area, to achieve its objectives, it needs to define a series of strategies and actions. There is a natural, necessary association between marketing strategies and the marketing mix. According to Walker et al. (1992), marketing strategies consist of defining the market segment or segments to be reached and the range of products to be offered. In addition, firms seek synergies and competitive advantage by designing an integrated marketing plan (the 4 Ps) tailored to customer needs and desires in the target segments (Zinkhan & Pereira, 1994). Slater & Olson (2001) agree on this association and integration between marketing strategies and marketing activities, explaining that marketing strategy encompasses decisions concerning market segmentation, targeting, and the design of positioning strategies. Ansary (2006) points out that marketing strategy can be defined as the total sum of the integration of segmentation, targeting, differentiation, and positioning strategies designed to create, communicate, and deliver an offer to a target market. Thus, the first step is to divide the market, assess the different consumer segments, and decide which of them to target. The second is to decide the company's positioning in consumers' minds and, finally, to choose the attributes that make you different from the competition. Marketing managers must adapt their marketing mix elements, including products, prices, channels, and promotional tactics, to suit the requirements of individual consumers (Camilleri, 2018).

Marketing must be able to manage many decisions that happen in the day-to-day life of organizations, which involve different areas of the organization and help in achieving the organization's mission. In this sense, Varadarajan (2010) states that marketing strategy refers to an organization’s integrated pattern of decisions that specify its crucial choices concerning products, markets, marketing activities, and marketing resources in the creation, communication, and/or delivery of products that offer value to customers in exchanges with the organization and thereby enable the organization to achieve specific objectives.

Although the integration between marketing strategies and activities is closely intertwined, it must not be forgotten that the marketing mix serves to put the defined strategies into practice. Putting them into effect today means considering the most sustainable options available on the market. In fact, an increasing number of companies claim to be publicly committed to a global definition of sustainable development that encompasses a mix of sustainable products and services (Jones et al., 2008). In this regard, as argued by Jones et al. (2008, it is important to recognize that there is a growing interest in "sustainable marketing," defined by Charter et al. (2006) as the creation, design, and development of sustainable solutions with a high net sustainable value while satisfying customers and other stakeholders. The marketing mix (the traditional 4 Ps: product, price, place, and promotion) defined by McCarthy (1960) is still valid, as stated in the American Marketing Association (2013), but in this new context of organizational commitment to sustainability, it must be married to the specific aims of sustainability: participants (or people), processes, and physical evidence (Pomering, 2017). This is also emphasized by Sheth & Parvatiyar (1995), who propose, for example, that marketing mix decisions need to be redefined towards sustainability. According to Diez-Martin et al. (2019, great progress has been made in the fields of marketing and sustainability. This progress is evidenced by more than 2000 publications between 1990 and 2018, with more than 30,500 citations in total from the Web of Science Core Collection. Specifically, these papers were included in the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) and the Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI). Diez-Martin et al. (2019) list the topics addressed in the literature: consumers and sustainability, advertising linked to environmental issues, ecological and social marketing, responsible marketing, green marketing, sustainable marketing, and sustainable value chains.

2.3. Sustainability, consumer perceptions and hotel marketing

The marketing area is responsible for managing the relationship with the hotel's clients. To build and profitably manage this relationship, marketing may act in at least the following three directions:

1. It gathers their sensitivities and responds to them. Advances in information technology and the introduction of new methods of communication have led to increasingly significant changes in consumer behavior. These changes have produced a shift in focus in companies’ marketing strategies and business administration, especially in the hotel industry (Cantallops & Salvi, 2014). Additionally, the industry is highly customer-oriented and resource-consumptive, and it is sensitive to many predictable and unpredictable market and environmental changes (Lu & Nepal, 2009). Thus, the marketing area can be used to capture such changes and provide a better response.
2. It educates the user to be more sensitive to sustainable development. As the importance of sustainability for hospitality consumers increased, academic attention has shifted towards the relationship between sustainability practices and consumer satisfaction, as evidenced by a burgeoning number of studies examining the contributory role of sustainability actions on consumer satisfaction (Punitha et al., 2016). Furthermore, Gao & Mattila (2014) found that consumer satisfaction increased when companies engaged in environmentally

friendly practices.

3. It communicates and explains the hotel's commitment to sustainability. According to Dief & Font (2010), the reviewed literature suggests that a few successful marketing managers, mainly from leading hotel chains in Western Europe and North America, have come to realize the value of green marketing as a tool to position their companies in the market, to differentiate their companies' products and services from those of competitors, and to create trustful relationships with their environmental stakeholders—non-governmental organizations, market intermediaries (e.g., tour operators), the public, and most importantly, their guests (Kasim, 2008). In fact, the authors Ham & Choi (2012) suggested that green practices can potentially appeal to customers' attention and increase marketing sales.

As Dief & Font (2010) said, there is a lack of literature about the implementation of environmental strategies, and few studies have addressed the impact of environmental issues on the marketing strategies of businesses. In order to address this gap, we have conducted an exploratory study to analyze the changes in marketing strategies and activities at the main Spanish hotel chains in terms of turnover, following their firm commitment to sustainability.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research method: In-depth interviews

In order to achieve the research objective, the authors decided to carry out qualitative research. Among all the available tools for information gathering, in-depth interviews were selected as they were considered to be an ideal data collection technique to create a connection between the researcher and the interviewee. Moreover, they are useful to explore participants' experiences and collect ideas, knowledge, and impressions of the interviewees (Kaliber, 2018; Tong et al., 2007). As Malhotra (2020) pointed out, they are an unstructured, flexible, and direct way of obtaining information and are conducted on an individual basis. The open-ended interview aims to understand informants' perspectives on their lives, experiences, or situations as expressed in their own words (Mariampolski, 2001).

3.2 Context

This study analyses the marketing strategies and actions of the largest hotel chains in Spain following their firm commitment to sustainability. We obtained results for 8 of the 10 hotel chains with the highest turnover. The enactment of the SDGs can be seen as a turning point in global commitment to sustainability since, among many other things, the 2030 Agenda helps to organise, identify, unify and, above all, establish specific lines of action. However, the reality is that many companies, for various reasons, had already committed to sustainability. From a social and economic science perspective, sustainability has evolved into the concept of sustainable development. Sustainable development is defined as the ability to meet current needs without compromising the progressive ability of future generations to meet theirs. (Garrigos-Simon et al., 2018) (Dixon & Fallon, 1989).

3.3 Sample and participants

The sample employed constitutes a very relevant population as far as the hotel sector is concerned. The top 10 national hotel chains were selected by turnover according to the Hosteltur ranking (the main specialised media in the professional tourism sector). This ranking has become a benchmark for the sector. As stated on the Hosteltur website, the main characteristics of the ranking are as follows: (a) "Large hotel chain" is considered to mean a company that manages more than 1,000 rooms; (b) the hotels run by each chain are counted, indicating whether they are owned, rented, managed or franchised, but under no circumstances including establishments associated in marketing networks that conduct marketing and promotion work for them but are under individual, independent management.

The pandemic has had a devastating impact on the hotel sector. In fact, some of the demographic data reveal that at some points during the pandemic more than 90% of the world's population lived in countries with some form of international travel restrictions, and many of those countries also had some form of domestic travel restrictions, such as limited air travel or a ban on travelling abroad (Gössling et al., 2020). The authors therefore consider it more appropriate to use a sample based on pre-pandemic data (2019). Table 1 lists the 10 hotel groups with the highest turnover in Spain and gives some descriptive variables of these groups.

Table 1. Characteristics of the main hotel groups in Spain by turnover.

Hotel chains and brands under which they operate	Year founded	Public or private capital	Workforce	Domestic and/or international scope	Commitment to sustainability.	Turnover 2019 (million Euros)
Meliá: Meliá, Gran Meliá, ME, Paradisus, Melia, Innside, Tryp, SOL, Circle.	1956	54% Family 46% Free float	>30,000	380 hotels in more than 40 countries on 4 continents	Linking the CSR model to the 2030 agenda	2,846
Iberostar	1960	100% Family	>26,000	100 hotels in 17 countries	Own Agenda 2030	2,353
Riu: Riu, Plaza, Palace, Adults Only, All inclusive	1977	51% Family 49% TUI Group	>24,000	100 hotels in 20 countries	Assessment of its contribution to the 2030 Agenda, with respect to the GRI indicators (empowering sustainable decisions).	2,240
Barceló: Royal Hideaway, Occidental, Allegro, Barceló.	1931	100% Family	>34,000	150 hotels in 22 countries	Own Code of Ethics (2013)	2,218
NH: BH, Nh Collection, Nhow, Tivoli, Anantara, Avani, Elewana, Oaks.	1978	94% Minor Capital 6% Free Float	>12,000	361 hotels in 29 countries	Holistic perspective framed under the premise of corporate governance.	1,718
Bahía Príncipe: Bahía Príncipe, Grupo Piñero, Soltour, Coming2, Tropic one, Scuba, Turiscar.	1977	100% Family	>8,000	27 hotels in 6 countries	Integration of SDGs as a roadmap for activity management.	800
Palladium: Palladium, TRS, Grand Palladium, Palladium Boutiques, Fiesta, Ushuaia, Bless, Only You, Ayre, Hard Rock.	1969	100% Family	>13,000	50 hotels in 6 countries	Sustainability policy within the framework of Corporate Social Responsibility	752
H10: H10, Ocean, The One.	1981	60% Family	>1,500	55 hotels in 18 countries	Own code of ethics and sustainability project (2017)	660
Hotusa Group: Eurostars, Aurea, Exe, Ikonik, Crisol, Tandem.	1982	100% Family	>5,000	214 hotels in 16 countries	Specific unit with general management involved	620
Princess Hotels.	1967	100% Family	>5,000	22 hotels in 3 countries	Cross-cutting Corporate Social Responsibility Programme	286.80

*Data provided by the hotel chains.

The researchers contacted the top ten hotel chains to identify the right person at each organisation to approach directly. In some cases the hotels have their own sustainability department, but in many others there is no such department, so it was necessary to conduct an internal analysis of the suitability of the participant's profile. Finally, in all cases, the interviewees were personnel in senior management positions at each of the hotels (either general management or marketing, communication and/or sustainability management). The final sample is composed of 8 hotel groups, as two companies decided not to participate in the study (Bahía Príncipe and Riu).

3.4 Interview structure

In order to conduct the in-depth interviews, a semi-structured interview script was used based on a systematic review of the concept of marketing and sustainability (Marco-Gardoqui et al., 2022). A review of the relevant literature and theoretical framework made it possible to identify the main marketing strategies and activities within companies and thereby structure the interview script. The following table lists the different questions asked in the interviews and the categories associated with each.

Table 2. Interview

The impact of sustainability on hotel groups' marketing strategies and activities

No.	Questions	Category
1	What is the impact of the growing concern about sustainability on marketing strategies?	Differentiation and Positioning
2	What about the impact on the end consumer?	Segmentation (Consumer)
3	What about the impact on product policies or value propositions?	Product
4	What about the impact on pricing policies?	Price
5	What about the impact on distribution policies?	Distribution
6	What about the impact on communication policies?	Communication

3.5 Data collection procedure

Interviews were conducted between January 2022 and July 2022. Once all participants had been identified, they were contacted and informed of the purpose of the research. All participants signed a confidentiality agreement and agreed to participate in the study. Informing and sharing the research objectives beforehand with them meant that the interviews were conducted in a cordial, trusting atmosphere that enabled us to delve into very significant and relevant matters that were the object of the study. The in-depth interviews made it possible to investigate, broaden or explore in more depth issues relevant to each context.

The interviews, lasting between 45 and 75 minutes each, were conducted by one of the authors via Google Meet (video call). They were digitally recorded and transcribed in full. Participants were contacted via email and/or LinkedIn. Confidentiality and data protection conditions were explained to participants, and they were assured that they could withdraw from the study at any point, before, during, or after the interviews, if they chose to do so.At all stages of the research process, from data collection to data analysis, priority was given to reflection (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009). The authors considered the sample to be sufficient to explore the object of study. Moreover, the marketing and sustainability policies at the hotel chains surveyed were implemented at group level and at all hotels within the company. This could be seen in many of the interviews when the interviewees alluded to the types and characteristics of the hotels that make up their hotel offering worldwide.

3.6 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using IRaMuTeQ software developed by Pierre Ratinaud, specifically designed to cater to the research needs of social sciences and humanities. The analysis involved a material linguistic examination of various document types. IRaMuTeQ is an R interface for Multidimensional Text and Questionnaire Analyses, facilitating information analysis and efficient data processing. This open-source program is very practical for working with large amounts of text, as it identifies patterns that would otherwise be very difficult to detect (Carvalho, 2019; Larruzea, 2019). Among the multiple functionalities offered by this R-based software, we used the Reinert method for our analyses. This enables top-down hierarchical clustering (Reinert, 1983, 1986, 1990) to analyse the lexical similarities and differences in texts and subsequently recognise repetitive lexical patterns (Portillo & Arroyo, 2020).

Following this method, text segments are classified according to the words or vocabulary they contain. Thus, the software algorithm analyses the texts, identifies the most frequent words and gathers the lexical worlds (sets of words that make up a discourse fragment) expressed by the interviewees (Larruzea-Urkixo et al. 2020). This analysis obtains classes that share similar vocabularies which, at the same time, differentiate them from all other classes. The chi-square test ($\chi 2$) is utilized to demonstrate the degree of association between words and their corresponding class. A factorial correspondence analysis brings to light the different variables associated with each class and enables the most characteristic text segments related to each one to be retrieved, which allows for a qualitative analysis of the data (Camargo & Justo 2013; Díaz-Iso et al. 2019). To analyse the information from the interviews, they were first transcribed, then a top-down hierarchical classification was conducted thanks to data processing. Lastly, the classes were interpreted. A comparison between the Reinert method and classical content analysis shows that the latter carries out the interpretative process when building the coding categories, while the IRaMuTeQ software shifts the interpretative process to later when the statistical analysis is conducted (Allum, 1998).

4 RESULTS

The complete corpus of interviews consists of 11,066 words classified according to their nature into active and supplementary forms. The active forms are composed of adjectives, adverbs, common nouns and verbs. Supplementary forms are composed of demonstrative, interrogative, numeral, possessive and supplementary adjectives, supplementary adverbs, definite and indefinite articles, unrecognised forms, supplementary nouns, demonstrative, indefinite, personal, possessive and relative pronouns and supplementary verbs. The Descending Hierarchical Classification (DHC) analysis of the interviews classifies the corpus into five classes. “The classes were interpreted by the three researchers independently and contrasted by a tourism marketing expert”.

As can be seen in Figure 1, the 5 main classes (or lexical worlds) identified in the interviews conducted with the CEOs or sustainability managers of the 8 largest hotel chains by turnover in Spain refer to the following aspects: the importance of positioning and communication concerning sustainability (class 1, comprising 17.3% of the text analysed); redefinition of the existing service offering to attain greater sustainability (class 2, accounting for 21.1% of the text analysed); the trend in the importance of sustainability in strategies (class 3, accounting for 20.25% of the text analysed); the importance of the sustainable location of hotels (class 4, accounting for 18.14% of the text analysed); and the costs associated with sustainability (class 5, accounting for 23.21% of the text analysed). An overview is provided in the following figure.

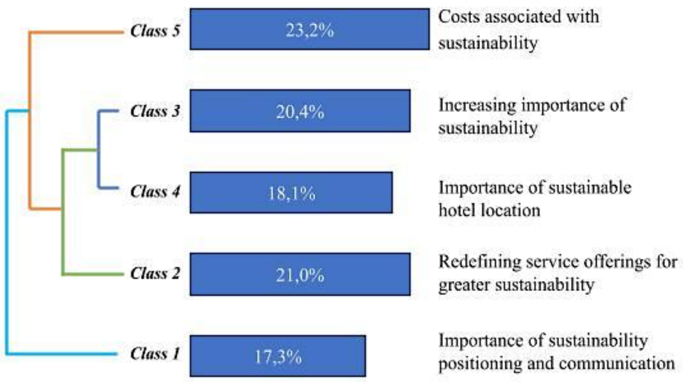

Figure 1. Dendogram of interview classes and percentage of the corpus accounted for by each class.

Class 1: Importance positioning and communication concerning sustainability.
The first class corresponds significantly to the categories of communication ($\chi2$= 19.82, P=<0.0001) and positioning ($\chi2$= 4.79, P=<0.02856). Participants believe that positioning and communication concerning sustainability help the brand to increase its perceived ($\chi2$=59.1) value ($\chi2$=29.43) for users. “Thanks to the sustainability approach we have been able to raise the real and perceived value of our hotels and improve the positioning of our brands in the market” (participant 1; score 252.33). At the same time, they believe that the recognitions obtained for their commitment ($\chi2$=14.56) to sustainability have served to communicate ($\chi2$=29.43) and reinforce ($\chi2$=24.42) their corporate values ($\chi2$=19.45). “All of the recognition obtained as a company committed to sustainability has certainly resulted in a significant improvement in our corporate reputation and has strengthened us as a high-value company by enabling us to communicate sustainability from different angles and perspectives” (participant 1; score 187.47). In addition, more projects ($\chi2$=18.76) and initiatives ($\chi2$=14.77) concerning sustainability have been promoted than at any other time, and the interviewees consider how important it is to communicate them correctly. "The big project this year is to launch our commitment to sustainability” (participant 5; score 80.35). “We are seeking ways to bring this sustainability proposition closer to our customers via attractive and easy-to-understand projects and initiatives” (participant 1; score 128.62). “Sustainability has been a challenge in terms of marketing, as we have to highlight all the initiatives we have performed” (participant 2: score 113.27). “We presented our sustainability project this year, which we hope to communicate via our regular communication channels” (participant 7; score 104.08). Furthermore, this commitment to sustainability helps improve ($\chi2$=14.53) existing positioning and management models. “We view sustainability as a management lever that contributes to transforming and improving management models" (participant 1; score 187.47). These results can help to understand the relevance of communication in the brand's positioning and the significance not only of being committed to sustainability but also of being able to communicate it effectively.

Class 2: Redefining existing service offerings to achieve greater sustainability.
The second class is significantly related to the product/service category ($\chi2$= 26.76, P=<0.0001).
In this case, study participants consider that eliminating ($\chi2$=15.22), reducing ($\chi2$=15.22) and removing ($\chi2$=11.36) the use of plastics ($\chi2$=46.03) is a fundamental action to take when redefining their product and service portfolios. “In terms of amenities there have been substantial modifications due to the new regulation on the use of plastic and we have taken advantage of this circumstance to review our whole concept of amenities and align it with our sustainability policies” (participant 4; score 68.89). “We have started to remove all gel, shampoo and cream bottles from the rooms and replace them with wall dispensers” (participant 6; score 15.22). Thus, suppliers ($\chi2$=8.53), as intermediaries in the value chain, have come to play a key role in sustainability strategies. “We have changed our amenities policy and negotiated with suppliers to ensure all material is compostable and has the lowest possible environmental impact” (participant 7; score 48.82).
In this respect, the use of plastics in clothing ($\chi2$=15.22) for bed and bath linen also has a very significant impact due to the high volume ($\chi2$=11.36) of washing and changing in hotels of this type. “We commit to putting all plastics in a sack and use different colours for delivery and collection so that they can be reused for each service” (participant 6; score 95.42). On the other hand, the impact ($\chi2$=4.64) and footprint ($\chi2$=3.79) of certain actions are very significant. “The decision to remove a plastic bottle from a room may seem silly but you are still talking about 3,000 bottles a day across all the rooms so the impact is very significant” (participant 6; score 64.08) "We are going to work on sustainability based on 4 axes, one of which is the water footprint of our hotels”. (participant 7; score 62.36). And all these changes have an impact on the experience of users, who often demand ($\chi2$=8.53) certain comforts and services to which they are accustomed. “High luxury demands exclusivity and this is detrimental to many of the eco-responsible philosophies” (participant 5; score 42.20).Therefore, these results imply that hotels must adapt their product and service offerings to the current scenario by taking care of the environment in which their hotels are located. In this context, they are required to reduce the use of plastics and promote the responsible use of water. However, it seems that there might be discordances depending on the positioning of each hotel, as consumers demand other types of conveniences.

Class 3: Increasing importance of sustainability.

The third class is closely associated with one of the participating hotel chains (χ2=12.99, P=<0.00031).

In this case, the word year (χ2=23.54) is included in the participants' responses as a comparison between what was done before and what is done now. “A few years ago we didn't do anything like that, but we have been adapting to all the recycling" (participant 3; score 124.33) “Maybe the commitment comes from before but there was a break during the financial crisis years and I think that COVID has accelerated this trend significantly” (participant 4; score 79.81). The association between sustainability and health (χ2=7.55) after the pandemic is also recurrent. “The trend is unstoppable and is very much linked to health elements as the pandemic has made us more sensitive in everything related to our health” (participant 3; score 109.99). “I think our sector has a very promising future because for many people travel is important to their mental health, as leisure has become a necessary component of life” (participant 3; score 98.12).

Consumers (x2 =23.18) also play a prominent part in this trend as they see (χ2=29.68), believe (χ2=28.26) and consider it relevant (χ2=2.23) to promote sustainable initiatives during their stays. “Experiences linked to sustainability are very much liked by our consumer" (participant 3; score 93.47). “Consumer demand after the pandemic has been much more radical and I would say that by going for sustainability we have a win-win situation; a win for our consumers and a win for our employees” (participant 6; score 51.48). “Consumers are increasingly aware and choose brands that have a genuine commitment to sustainability” (participant 2: score 29.08). The issue of user experience (χ2=5.71) is also addressed by the increased use of local aspects (χ2=11.96) at different hotels. “For some time now we have been trying to be more local because globalisation makes the experience too standardised: when you go to Mexico the experience has to be different than when you go to Tenerife” (participant 3; score 71.92). It seems undeniable that sustainability is definitely an imperative issue that must be integrated transversally in the companies´ strategies. Beyond being a trend, it is something absolutely necessary for society and for the planet.

Class 4: Importance of sustainable hotel location.

The fourth class is significantly associated with the distribution category (χ2= 11.88, P=<0.00056). The location (χ2=4.82) of hotels has become a key element in meeting the sustainability requirements of each hotel. “We cannot locate so close to the sea as before, we cannot break up an ecosystem, we have to consider the location of our hotels” (participant 6; score 85.49). “The sun is a very important energy source, and it is taken into account when choosing the location of the new hotel” (participant 6; score 63.31). “Hotel location was already a fundamental strategy, but now the sustainability variable for the new location has a very significant impact” (participant; score). Being sustainable (χ2=13.79) or not also has an impact on the distribution networks used for room bookings. “For search engines, and specifically Google, the inclusion of “sustainable” as a hotel attribute is increasingly important and is a determining factor when choosing” (participant 7; score 41.16). They also have to cater for the opinion of booking intermediaries when considering (χ2=4.82) their hotels as an option. “Intermediaries such as Booking or Expedia draw on their own parameters when considering whether a hotel is sustainable or not and thus give you more or less visibility” (participant 4; score 20.79). In this case, regarding the location and distribution of the hotel's service offer, it becomes evident once the commitment to sustainability has been made, that the scenario has considerably changed. Likewise, the way of selling or positioning the product offer has shifted towards brokers that have sustainability as an indispensable attribute.

Class 5: The cost associated with sustainability.

The fifth and last class is significantly associated with the price category (χ2= 4.02, P=<0.04496) and with one specific hotel chain(χ2= 9.92, P=<0.00163). Adaptation to new circumstances and the demands arising from the commitment to sustainability come at a price (x2 =40.5) that it is not clear whether the consumer (χ2=16.59) is willing (χ2=20.37) to pay (χ2=6.12). “Users may get annoyed as they pay a high price for the room and are used to asking for towel changes after each use, and they are now denied this” (participant 6; score 61.55). “If the eggs at breakfast are not from free-range chickens consumers may give a negative review, however if you raise the price of breakfast to provide organic eggs, they are not willing to pay for it” (participant 4; score 114.33). “The fact that there are no organic or zero-kilometre kiwis or macrobiotic breakfasts is perhaps inconceivable in the luxury sector, where consumers are willing to pay more” (participant 6; score 107.74). “We need to look at which consumers are willing to pay more for what” (participant 2; score 65.43).

Table 3. Distribution of the classes and their respective units of meaning..

Class 1 Importance of positioning and communication concerning sustainability			Class 2 Redefining existing service offerings to achieve greater sustainability			Class 3 Increasing importance of sustainability		
Word	Freq	χ2	Word	Freq	χ2	Word	Freq	χ2
Value		59.10	Delete		15.22	Year		23.54
Perceived		29.43	Reduce		15.22	Health		7.55
Commitment		14.56	Remove		11.36	Consumer		23.18
Communicate		29.43	Plastics		46.03	View		29.68
Reinforce		24.42	Suppliers		8.53	Believe		28.26
Corporate		19.45	Volume		11.36	Relevant		2.23
Projects		18.76	Clothing		15.22	Experience		5.71
Initiatives		14.77	Impact		4.64	Local		11.96
Improve		14.53	Footprint		3.79			
			Demand		8.53			

Class 4 Importance of sustainable hotel location			Class 5 The cost associated with sustainability		
Word	Freq	χ2	Word	Freq	χ2
Location		4.82	Price		40.5
Sustainable		13.79	Consumer		16.59
Consider		4.82	Willing		20.37
			Pay		6.12
			Car		20.37
			Environment		20.37
			Balance		9.24

Many customers who stayed at the hotels surveyed rented a car (χ2=20.37) to make the most of their stay. This issue is also of medium (χ2=20.37) environmental concern (χ2=20.37). “We have implemented a rooms package that includes a hybrid car and access to a premium breakfast which is gaining a lot of interest among some consumers because of the existing move towards environmental protection" (participant 5; score 94.37). "Electric car charging is included in the price of the room and now also in the price of dining at our restaurants" (participant 5; score 53.20). The most significant challenge for hotels is to find a balance ($\chi 2$=9.24) between meeting their sustainability targets and the cost to be passed on to consumers. "We have to find a balance, not everything is black and white, we have to be very careful when standardising or cutting back on certain things for some experiences" (participant 4; score 23.09).

This finding is particularly relevant as it is a key concern in business and environmental terms. Companies need to strike a balance between economic profitability and the pursuit of sustainability, between offering products appealing to different consumer segments and moving forward with their proposals to improve environmental sustainability. Table 3 illustrates the representation of the primary classes derived from the IRaMuTeQ top-down hierarchical classification analysis of the corpus of earlier interviews. In consistency with the reviewed academic literature, the results show five classes that address specific key tourism marketing strategies such as positioning, communication, service and product development, place and price.

5 CONCLUSIONS

This work has contributed to further understanding of what fundamental changes have been made in the marketing strategies and activities of the main hotel chains in their commitment to sustainability. In general, it can be affirmed that certain changes in marketing strategies and activities have a very significant impact in terms of achieving social and environmental sustainability. It also appears that the organisations interviewed have made certain changes in their marketing strategies and activities to reflect their growing concern for sustainability. It should be noted however that, as shown in the analysis above, some variables and strategies are more significant than others. The interviews distinguish between 5 classes; (1) importance of positioning and communication concerning sustainability (17.3%), (2) redefining existing service offering to achieve greater sustainability(21.1%), (3) increasing importance of sustainability (20.25%), (4) importance of sustainable hotel location (18.14%) and (5) the cost associated with sustainability (23.21%). The class with the greatest presence in the text is class 5, which refers to the price-related marketing mix variable (23.21%). Commitment to sustainability implies costs, a culture and, above all, a conviction that sometimes requires a willingness to pay a higher price to cover the associated costs, and at other times however, it requires a change in certain consumption patterns that entails giving up certain comforts or acquired habits. All of this is associated with costs that are reflected in the prices of the services offered. The second biggest group in terms of presence in the corpus refers to another of the variables in the marketing mix: product (21.1%). It implies the redefinition of the services offered with the aim of achieving a lower environmental impact. This involves modifying everything from room amenities to breakfast products, hotel lighting, laundry circuits, etc., as detected based on the interviews. The third biggest category refers to the trend in the importance of the concept of sustainability (20.25%) in the definition of marketing strategies. This shows the fundamental role that sustainability plays nowadays in the definition of company strategies, as an axis on which the companies in the sector pivot. The next biggest category in terms of presence in the text analysed is class 4, which is related to the location or distribution of the services offered (18.14%). This refers to another of the marketing mix variables: distribution. The fifth and final category covers another marketing mix variable - communication - and its relationship with the positioning strategy (17.3%). In this sense, it is clear that the positioning strategy accompanied by a series of communication activities significantly reinforces the consumer's perception of the hotel chain. In summary, the 4 Ps of the marketing mix appear in the analysis as significant classes (with 62.45%), with the price variable standing out above the rest. The significance of the positioning strategy over the other three marketing strategies defined in the theoretical framework (segmentation, targeting and differentiation) is also relevant in the corpus.

5.1 Implication of research findings

We believe that the findings have valuable implications for other hotel managers as they offer efficient marketing guidelines for enhancing sustainability and improving consumer relations. For instance, these results can help to understand the relevance of sustainability communication for the improvement in brand's positioning. Furthermore, these results help to adapt the hotels´s product and service offerings to the current scenario of sustainability requiring a better management of the use of plastics water consumption. We would like to highlight that there might be discordances between the hotel´s positioning and their consumer's convenience expectations. It is undeniable that sustainability is definitely an imperative issue that must be integrated transversally in the companies´ strategies. There has been an important shift of the location and distribution of the hotel's service offer. Lastly, pricing and sustainability are particularly relevant for a business and environmental perspective.

5.2 Practical and societal implications

We believe this work will have valuable implications for hotel managers. In instance, to know what underlies the marketing strategies of the hotels involved in the study. It would also be interesting to see/contrast/compare if there is alignment or not with what the rest of the hotels have said. Lastly, it would be very interesting to assess the progress made in terms of sustainability compared to the rest of the hotels.

We also consider that our study has five important implications on a societal level. In the first place, to ascertain the attitude of the hotel groups with regard to sustainability. Secondly, to understand the evolution of sustainability issues in each of the hotels. Also, to find out what the hotels are doing (specific actions) in the face of sustainability challenges. Furthermore, to distinguish the commitment with regard to the different aspects that sustainability encompasses. And finally, it is interesting to see the opinion of the hotel groups regarding the role that the greater or reduced commitment to sustainability plays in the users' choice of hotel.

5.3 Limitations

This study is not without limitations and we therefore consider that the following recommendations may be valid for future researchers. The sample could be extended to other hotel chains with lower turnover. This study is qualitative in nature, so a quantitative study could help to consolidate the findings more conclusively. And finally, it would be interesting to know the demand perspective (customers) as this study focuses exclusively on the supply view. Furthermore, we believe that this exploratory study should be complemented by the view of other stakeholders, such as tourists, visitors, residents, travel agencies and policy makers. It would also be very interesting to establish to what extent consumers are willing to pay a price premium to fund sustainability. In this sense, it would be very relevant to conduct a study based on different consumer segments and analyze their sustainable consumption patterns.

5.4 Future research

We propose a further series of future lines of research to address the previous limitations: to conduct a descriptive study of the hotel chains operating in Spain; to explore the main hotel chains in another country, for example in the USA, and then make a comparison; to consolidate the findings more conclusively through a quantitative research; and finally, to explore the demand perspective (customers) as this study focuses exclusively on the supply point of view.

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Restaurant attributes and consumer choice

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Abstract:

Purpose: *The purpose of this study is to develop a regression model which allows insight into the way restaurant attributes influence the willingness of prospective patrons to travel to dine at restaurants.*
Methods: *Data was obtained from 194 U.S.-based consumers using an online questionnaire which measured the impact of 11 literature-based restaurant attributes on the time patrons are willing to travel to a restaurant. A linear-log ordinary least-squares regression model with travel time as the dependent variable and the restaurant attributes as independent variables was used to isolate significant predictors of acceptable travel time.*
Results: *Perceived authenticity and food quality are the only two predictor variables that significantly increase the maximum acceptable travel time to a restaurant. Uniqueness of the restaurant in the geographic area reduces acceptable travel time.*
Implications: *Restaurant owners and managers who aim to increase their establishment's geographic market size should focus on instilling high levels of perceived authenticity and food quality. New restaurants with unique offerings in their geographic realm may face barriers to attracting patrons.*

Keywords: *restaurants; consumer behavior; restaurant quality; authenticity; patronage decision*

JEL Classification: *L84, D19, E2*

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1 INTRODUCTION

The impact of restaurant attributes on patron satisfaction, restaurant revenue, and repeat patronage has been a relatively common research topic since at least the early 1990s (e.g., Auty, 1992; Weiss et al., 2004; Longart et al., 2018). One common shortcoming of these studies is that they have generally measured attitudes of patrons in the existing markets of a restaurant, rather than investigating the ability of an attribute to actively expand a restaurant's geographic market. Using results of a survey of consumers living in the United States (n = 194), our study aims to fill this gap by building a linear-log ordinary least-squares regression model that measures the impact of various restaurant attributes discussed in the extant literature, with maximum acceptable travel time (TIME) as the dependent variable. In terms of the independent variables, we focus on restaurant attributes for which the locus of control lies with restaurant management and ownership. The result is a model that allows not only for scientific discussion of consumer behavior, but that also allows restaurant owners and managers seeking to expand their geographic reach by giving them actionable attributes to focus on as they improve their offerings.

Our overarching research question is how various controllable restaurant attributes influence potential patrons' willingness to travel for a dining experience at a restaurant. The results of our analysis show that perceived authenticity of the restaurant's ambience and cuisine and food quality in terms of taste and presentation both have the ability to expand the restaurant's geographic market. Surprisingly, the uniqueness of a restaurant in the geographic vicinity actually shortens acceptable travel time. Acceptable travel time as the dependent variable is subject to moderation by the patron's most commonly-used mode of transportation.

As a result of our findings, we recommend that restaurant managers and owners should focus their efforts on providing a dining experience that is most likely to be perceived as authentic by a plurality of potential patrons in the geographic target market, regardless of whether the overall offering is legitimately an authentic representation of the restaurant's associated native culture and cuisine (e.g., genuine Mexican culture and cuisine for a Mexican restaurant). High standards of food quality should be maintained, both in terms of taste

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and presentation of the food. In terms of geographic market expansion, these two factors outweigh other commonly-cited satisfaction drivers (e.g., service quality, cleanliness, various speciality menu options) significantly. An empirical justification for restaurant clustering (Omholt, 2015), especially that of ethnic restaurants with lower levels of diffusion in the United States restaurant market, is also given by our study's finding in terms of uniqueness of a restaurant being negatively associated with willingness to travel. Those looking to open a speciality or ethnic restaurant that is highly differentiated from other offerings in the local market should therefore consider whether opening nearby a similar restaurant may be more beneficial.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Several studies have been conducted on restaurant quality attributes and their impact on patronage behavior. Such studies have investigated the impact of restaurant attributes using multivariate models and investigation of individual parameters. Two significant studies which have tested the impact of multiple attributes on restaurant patronage intention are Auty (1992) and Bujisic et al. (2014). Auty found that once restaurants had reached the evoked set of a potential customer, patronage decisions were mostly based on restaurant style. This means that patronage decisions are made primarily based on qualitative attributes, such as the type of cuisine and the alignment of the restaurant type (e.g., fast food, casual, fine dining) with current affective customer desires. Bujisic et al., in contrast, found that the primary determinant of patronage intention was food quality, with restaurant type as a significant moderator of the impact of food quality on patronage intention. Service and ambiance-related factors were also significant but secondary to food quality factors. While significant heterogeneity is present between both studies and resulting gaps exist in terms of the specific relationship between quality dimensions and attributes of restaurants, the common denominator is that higher scores on positively-coined attributes generally improve the likelihood of patronage.

H1: Overall restaurant quality perception is positively related to willingness to travel for patronage.

In addition to studies which have aimed to build overarching models across a number of quality dimensions and attributes, numerous studies exist which focus more closely on individual attributes. For this study, we focus on attributes for which the locus of control is centered on the restaurant owner or manager, such that the attribute rating can be influenced by managerial or quality control means. Attributes recurring in the literature include perceived authenticity, service quality, food quality, cleanliness of restrooms, uniqueness of cuisine, portion size, organic food, perception of food as healthy, perceived environmental and social sustainability, and perception of the restaurant as luxurious.

The role of authenticity in determining quality perception of a restaurant is still rather understudied, and distinctions between authenticity in the food dimension and in the overall dining experience (which also includes servicescape and ambience dimensions) have not been thoroughly addressed in the extant literature. Typically, authenticity ratings have been focused on the food dimension, and our study aims to address the gap by measuring an overall authenticity score for the whole dining experience. Kovacs et al. (2013) found in their empirical review of online restaurant reviews that reviews mentioning that the food had been perceived as authentic received higher overall ratings than reviews lacking such a mention of authenticity. Family-owned, single-unit, single-cuisine restaurants were perceived as more authentic than establishments with other characteristics. The importance of ownership on authenticity perception has also been confirmed by other studies, such as by Kim et al. (2020) and Song et al. (2019). Both of these studies found that local, native-to-cuisine ownership increased the value perception of the food offering, which in turn positively impacted overall quality perception, patronage intention, and patronage. Finally, evidence of ethnic restaurant clustering (Chang & Zolin, 2014; Omholt, 2015) suggests that restaurants of similar cuisines which display a particularly high degree of authenticity tend to be located in relative vicinity to each other. As a larger number of patrons is required to make the operation of such ethnic restaurants economically feasible in close proximity to each other, we hypothesize that authenticity is a relevant value driver for restaurants.

H2: Higher levels of perceived authenticity of the dining experience are positively related to willingness to travel for patronage.

Service quality is a heavily-studied dimension of restaurant quality, with some studies finding that service quality is the most important attribute in predicting customer satisfaction and patronage intention (e.g., Gregory & Kim, 2004; Nguyen et al., 2018; Kristiawan et al., 2021). Despite different effect sizes, studies have generally pointed towards a positive perception of service quality leading to greater customer satisfaction and patronage (Madanoglu, 2006).

H3: Higher levels of perceived service quality are positively related to willingness to travel for patronage.

Food quality is the other major determinant of patronage intention at restaurants which has been studied extensively. Although it is likely the most commonly-cited key driver in quality perception, patronage, and especially repeated patronage (e.g., Auty, 1992; Ryu et al., 2012; Yi et al., 2018), isolated studies have found that food quality does not significantly predict patronage levels, especially in fast food establishments (Kristiawan et al., 2021). It is therefore conceivable that restaurant type significantly moderates the impact size of food quality on patronage (Cha & Borchgrevink, 2018), although Arora's (2012) findings point towards similar impacts of food quality on delight and behavioral intentions to return to the restaurant regardless of restaurant type. At a more specific level, Namkung & Yang (2007) found that taste and presentation of food are the two primary contributors to the food quality dimension.

H4: Higher levels of perceived food quality are positively related to willingness to travel for patronage.

Restroom cleanliness of restaurants is generally understudied, but Kim & Bachman (2019) found that restroom cleanliness is perceived by many patrons as an overall indicator of adherence to hygiene standards and higher levels of food safety. The study noted a significant moderating effect of patron age, such that younger patrons' overall perception of hygiene adherence was less strongly associated with restroom cleanliness than that of older patrons. The inference of restroom cleanliness on the perceived food safety at the establishment was also supported in earlier studies (Macaskill et al., 2000; Barber & Scarcelli, 2009).

H5: Perceived cleanliness of restrooms is positively related to willingness to travel for patronage.

The customer's need for uniqueness is a relatively well-established concept in consumer behavior research (Knight & Kim, 2007; Franke & Schreier, 2008; Wu et al., 2011). As such, it is not surprising that several studies have established that restaurant patrons may derive additional utility from a dining experience being unique, or at least unique in their geographic realm (Hyun & Park, 2016; Leong et al., 2020). Researchers have generally held that added value is derived directly from the uniqueness factor of the restaurant and its cuisine, and not the entire added value can be attributed to other qualities (e.g., exceptionally high food quality, service quality, or authenticity). However, it is worth noting that in contrast to uniqueness, familiarity may also be considered a value driver, especially if the previous exposure has been positive (Dursun et al., 2011). In spite of this, we expect that the need for uniqueness will outweigh the need for familiarity, and uniqueness will effectively increase restaurant market size.

H6: Higher levels of perceived uniqueness of the restaurant are positively related to willingness to travel for patronage.

Portion sizes as a measure of restaurant quality perception are still understudied, and the implications of the main study on the topic are inconclusive with regard to the direction of the effect (Ge et al., 2018). In particular, Ge et al. found that the impact of smaller portion sizes on value perception (a predictor of patronage; see Ashton et al., 2010) was moderated by food quality, such that only food with some degree of weakness led to a decrease in perceived value as portion size was reduced. For high-quality food, especially that of upscale restaurants, this relationship was not significant. However, in the population of all restaurants, we propose that the increased value from larger portion sizes (such as the ability to take home leftovers) is sufficient to turn the effect of portion size on overall quality perception positive and significant.

H7: Larger food portion sizes are positively related to willingness to travel for patronage.

Early studies on the intention to purchase organic foods both in a grocery store and restaurant setting commonly revealed a discrepancy between overall positive attitudes towards organic food and a low-to-moderate intention of buying organic food. As such, the evidence pointed towards a disconnect between attitudes and behavior (Wee et al., 2014). Wee et al. also noted a significant positive association between education level and intention of buying organic food. Lu & Gursoy (2017) further illustrated that the competitive advantage of offering menu items labeled as organic is greatest for fast food restaurants and diminishes for casual and upscale dining establishments. This is likely because as the expected food quality of a restaurant increases, the magnitude of an organic ingredient differentiator decreases. However, there does not appear to be a type of restaurant where organic food offering significantly decreases perceived value.

H8: The presence of organic menu options at a restaurant is positively related to willingness to travel for patronage.

The positive hedonic value impact of choosing healthy dining options over less healthy ones in a restaurant setting is relatively well established in the literature (Hwang & Lorenzen, 2008; Kang et al., 2015). Hwang & Lorenzen note a positive association between voluntary nutritional information disclosure and willingness to pay for a higher-priced menu item. In contrast, a study of casual dining restaurant menus by Turnwald et al. (2017) found that healthy menu sections generally used less vocabulary that is likely to appeal to patrons than the restaurants' main menus, resulting in a shortfall in promoting healthy menu items.

H9: The presence of healthy menu options at a restaurant is positively related to willingness to travel for patronage.

Sustainability in the hospitality industry is a relatively active field of research, and in general, studies have found a positive association between perceived and advertised environmental and social sustainability initiatives and the hedonic value of the dining experience for patrons (e.g., DiPietro et al., 2013; Chu et al., 2018; Yang & Zheng, 2019). DiPietro et al. note that this relationship is strongest among highly-educated and female patrons, and that restaurant type moderates the impact of sustainability initiatives on dining intention such that upscale restaurants likely benefit more than restaurants in the casual and fast food categories. We were unable to locate any studies which showed a significant negative effect of sustainability initiatives on value perception, dining intention, or patronage behavior.

H10: The presence of advertised environmental sustainability initiatives of a restaurant is positively related to willingness to travel for patronage.

H11: The presence of advertised social sustainability initiatives of a restaurant is positively related to willingness to travel for patronage.

We have previously established the moderating effect of restaurant type on several quality dimensions relevant to this study, but we are also aiming at isolating the impact of a restaurant being perceived as luxurious on patronage intention and willingness to travel. Chen et al. (2015) found that while the appearance of a restaurant being luxurious generally increased willingness to pay, patronage intention increases were unevenly distributed across demographic segments. Yang & Mattila (2016) found that patronage decisions in the luxury restaurant context are driven primarily by the extracted hedonic value of the experience. It is hence reasonable to assume that luxury dining is a special occurrence for most patrons, which would likely increase their willingness to travel.

H12: The perception of a restaurant as luxurious is positively related to willingness to travel for patronage.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Sample profile

We initially sampled a total of 200 persons using Centiment, an online survey panel. The inclusion criteria were fairly straightforward, such that we included adults living in the United States in our sampling pool. As such, the population for our study consists of U.S. adults, of which there were nearly 260 million in 2020 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). Centiment then distributed the survey to randomly selected participants in its panel, until 200 completed questionnaires were collected. Data was actively collected from August 21 to August 23, 2022

Table 1: Sample Characteristics (n = 194)

Variable	Response	Number of Respondents	Proportion of Sample
Age	18 - 24	7	3.6%
	25 - 40	111	57.2%
	41 - 60	63	32.5%
	61 and Older	13	6.7%
Gender	Male	95	49.0%
	Female	99	51.0%
	Other	0	0.0%
Location	Urban	125	64.4%
	Suburban	42	21.6%
	Rural	27	13.9%
Education	No HS Diploma	3	1.5%
	High School	18	9.3%
	Some College	13	6.7%
	Bachelor's Degree	144	74.2%
	Graduate Degree	16	8.2%
Transportation	Car	99	51.0%
	Public Transit	36	18.6%
	Walking	37	19.1%
	Bicycle	22	11.3%
Class	Working	90	46.4%
	Lower Middle	33	17.0%
	Upper Middle	71	36.6%
	Upper	0	0.0%
Restaurant Patronage	Multiple Times per Week	75	38.7%
	Multiple Times per Month	111	57.2%
	Multiple Times per Year	5	2.6%
	Once a Year or Less	3	1.5%

After 200 questionnaires were returned, they were reviewed for input quality in accordance with the process laid out by Biemer and Lyberg (2003), which resulted in the exclusion of six outlier questionnaires. As such, the final number of questionnaires included in the analysis for this study was 194. We excluded only questionnaires which violated the data type parameters (four questionnaires) by, for example, entering unrelated letter string characters instead of the required integers, and questionnaires which did not include answers to all questions (two questionnaires). The following table illustrates the demographic make-up of individuals who returned completed questionnaires that were included in the data analysis:

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3.2 Study design

Our aim was to create a relatively intuitive but robust model that can be interpreted by hospitality researchers and students, as well as managers of both standalone and chain restaurants. Multiple regression models, while bearing some complexity, have the advantage over other research outputs that typically, they directly yield actionable insights in easily digestible units. We therefore aimed to build a regression model which would predict the influence of various restaurant characteristics on patrons' willingness to travel for the dining experience. Not only is one-way travel time a dependent variable that fulfills the continuity requirement of ordinary least-squares regression (OLS), but it also internally controls for differences in transportation, mobility, and geography (Gkiotsalitis & Stathopoulos, 2015).
Based on the review of literature, we suggested that our regression model would include the following variables: the dependent variable travel time (TIME), and the predictor variables Authenticity (AUTH), service quality (SERV), food quality (FOOD), restroom cleanliness (REST), uniqueness (UNIQ), portion size (PORT), organic menu options (ORGA), healthy menu options (HEAL), social sustainability (SOSU), environmental sustainability (ENSU), and luxury (LUXU). This yields the following theoretical regression model:

$$\text{TIME} = \text{X0}+\beta(\text{AUTH}) +\beta(\text{SERV}) +\beta(\text{FOOD})+\beta(\text{REST}) +\beta(\text{UNIQ}) +\beta(\text{PORT})+\beta(\text{ORGA})+ \beta(\text{HEAL}) +\beta(\text{SOSU}) +\beta(\text{ENSU}) +\beta(\text{LUXU})+\varepsilon$$

We further utilized the following control variables: age (AGE), gender (GEND), location (LOCA), education level (EDUC), primary mode of transportation (TRAN), social class (CLAS), and the frequency of restaurant patronage (FREQ).

3.3 Data analysis

Minor data combination was necessary to derive some of our predictor variables from our raw data. In particular, we computed the arithmetic mean of the individual responses to questions about authenticity, portion size, environmental sustainability, and social sustainability, in order to reduce dimensions of these attributes and yield a single input for the AUTH, PORT, ENSU, and SOSU variables from each questionnaire. In order to normalize our independent variable distributions and minimize the disruptive impact of outliers on our model's validity, we also log-transformed our independent variables. In terms of interpretation, this meant that a 0.01 change in a coefficient would roughly translate to a 1% change in the dependent variable (TIME). For example, a coefficient of 0.2 would indicate that the presence of that attribute would increase acceptable travel time on average by roughly 20% (Benoit, 2011). Finally, we also standardized responses around the respective variable means, so that each variable had both negative and positive inputs.

After cleaning our raw data as explained above, we reviewed whether the assumptions of ordinary least-squares regression were met (homoskedasticity and lack of severe multicollinearity), using a Breusch-Pagan test ($p = 0.452$) and variance inflation factors (see Table 3 and Table 4), respectively. We further tested whether any of our predictor variables should be excluded due to excessive correlation to another predictor variable, using Pearson correlation, with the table displayed below (see Table 2). Finally, we tested for common method bias by employing a Harman Single Factor test (Percentage of Variance: 40.65).

Upon clearing these hurdles of OLS regression models, we were able to run the initial regression model in SPSS. In reviewing the data, we stepwise-excluded insignificant predictor variables in order to optimize our model for predictive reliability, using a significance level of $\alpha = 0.1$. Finally, we reviewed the impact of our control variables on the willingness to travel for dining experiences using ANOVA, in order to appropriately account for differences between demographic and behavioral groups in the sample. For control variables displaying significant between-groups differences, Tukey LSD post-hoc tests were used to establish the nature and direction of these differences.

4 FINDINGS

Pearson correlations between our independent variables were generally weak to moderate and exclusively positive, which could be expected given their conceptual collinearity and potential latent interaction effects. Particularly strong positive correlations of $r > 0.7$ between independent variables were identified as follows: food quality and restroom cleanliness ($r = 0.807$), food quality and the uniqueness of the establishment ($r = 0.744$), portion size and environmental sustainability ($r = 0.746$), portion size and social sustainability ($r = 0.73$), organic cuisine and environmental sustainability ($r = 0.706$), organic cuisine and luxury perception ($r = 0.711$), healthy cuisine and social sustainability ($r = 0.709$), and environmental and social sustainability ($r = 0.742$). In contrast, the correlations between travel time as the dependent variable and our model's independent variables are significantly weaker. At a 90% significance level, acceptable travel time is positively correlated to authenticity ($r = 0.277$), portion size ($r = 0.1$), organic cuisine ($r = 0.107$), environmental sustainability ($r = 0.137$), social sustainability ($r = 0.168$), and luxury perception ($r = 0.111$). It is worth noting that per conventional standards for estimating correlation strength, all these correlations between the dependent variable and the independent variables would be considered significant but weak (Akoglu, 2018). There are no statistically significant negative correlations between travel time and any independent variable in our model.

Table 2: Correlation matrix

	AUTH	SERV	FOOD	REST	UNIQ	PORT	ORGA	HEAL	ENSU	SOSU	LUXU	TIME
AUTH	1											
SERV	0.48	1										
FOOD	0.374	0.473	1									
REST	0.28	0.296	0.807	1								
UNIQ	0.332	0.451	0.744	0.686	1							
PORT	0.518	0.634	0.661	0.584	0.588	1						
ORGA	0.419	0.592	0.608	0.442	0.438	0.681	1					
HEAL	0.458	0.591	0.589	0.473	0.431	0.641	0.663	1				
ENSU	0.535	0.681	0.667	0.54	0.557	0.746	0.706	0.684	1			
SOSU	0.579	0.604	0.567	0.398	0.427	0.73	0.668	0.709	0.742	1		
LUXU	0.459	0.519	0.512	0.306	0.395	0.62	0.711	0.532	0.635	0.67	1	
TIME	0.277	0.044	0.097	0.063	-0.022	0.1	0.107	0.08	0.137	0.168	0.111	1

Our initial raw regression revealed that the bulk of our dependent variables (except AUTH) were not significant predictors of acceptable travel time. However, per guidance from Heinze & Dunkler (2016), this alone was not sufficient reason to discard the model altogether. Instead, we applied stepwise backward elimination to reduce the number of variables in the model until all remaining variables were significant at a level of 90%, progressively eliminating the least significant independent variable..

Table 3: Raw regression model

Variable	Coefficient	t-value	Standard Error	Significance	VIF
Constant	22.69	20.38	1.11	<0.001	
AUTH	0.34	3.51	0.10	<0.001	1.62
SERV	-0.12	-1.09	0.12	0.279	2.33
FOOD	0.13	1.08	0.12	0.282	4.75
REST	0.02	0.16	0.10	0.875	3.61
UNIQ	-0.23	-2.05	0.11	0.042	2.57
PORT	-0.06	-0.34	0.17	0.733	3.5
ORGA	0.03	0.3	0.11	0.768	3.08
HEAL	-0.11	-0.96	0.12	0.339	2.61
ENSU	0.11	0.64	0.17	0.525	3.75
SOSU	0.12	0.73	0.16	0.464	3.56
LUXU	-0.03	-0.28	0.09	0.776	2.53
R^2	0.118				
Alpha	0.1				

The transformation from the initial raw regression model to the final version of our model is evident in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 4: Stepwise backward elimination regression model

Variable	Coefficient	t-value	Standard Error	Significance	VIF
Constant	22.67	20.63	1.1	<0.001	
AUTH	0.32	3.97	0.08	<0.001	1.17
FOOD	0.14	1.61	0.09	0.109	2.33
UNIQ	-0.24	-2.38	0.1	0.018	2.25
R^2	0.103				
Alpha	0.1				

We found that the overall model, both in the raw and in the backward-eliminated version, was significant ($p < 0.001$). As discussed earlier, due to the log-transformation of the independent variables, coefficients should be interpreted as approximately percentage changes in the dependent variable. We would expect the constant of 22.67 minutes to be a general baseline of acceptable travel time to a generic restaurant across the entire population. The perception of the dining experience as authentic alone would be expected to increase this predicted acceptable travel time by approximately 32% to 29.92 minutes. Using the same approach, an improvement in food quality of one unit would yield a 14% increase in predicted acceptable travel time to 25.84 minutes. The uniqueness of the establishment in the area is expected to decrease acceptable travel time by 24%, to 17.23 minutes. Combinations of various significant predictive attributes are also conceivable. For example, a restaurant that is perceived as authentic and unique in the area, while also providing satisfactory food quality, would have a predicted acceptable travel time of 25.93 minutes for the average patron. It is worth noting that, as indicated by the relatively small R-squared values for both models, there is a significant variation between the respective attribute-induced changes in travel intention for individual patrons.

To gauge how our control variables affect acceptable travel time, we compared how acceptable travel times varied across demographic and behavioral groups. Significant differences between groups exist only for the TRAN variable, which measures the patron's primary mode of transport. Acceptable travel times increased for patrons walking and using public transportation, compared to those using bicycles or their own cars. None of the other control variables, including age, gender, location, education level, social class, and frequency of dining out, revealed significant between-groups variation in terms of acceptable travel time.

Table 5: Control variables

Variable	F	Significance
Age	0.74	0.533
Gender	0.73	0.393
Location	0.72	0.489
Education	0.16	0.957
Transport	1.96	0.122
Class	0.1	0.909
Frequency	0.19	0.903

As a result of the analyses, we find that sufficient evidence exists to accept hypotheses H1, H2, and H4. Specifically, we find that overall restaurant quality perception as a composite score positively affects willingness to travel for patronage (H1). This finding is rather intuitive and should be interpreted as a quality indicator of the overall model, rather than as a unique central finding to our study. We were also able to confirm our hypothesis that perceived authenticity increased the acceptable travel time (H2). Under the assumption of a more lenient, model-specification focus, we were also able to confirm our hypothesis that food quality positively affected acceptable travel time (H4). We were unable to confirm the impact of service quality (H3), restroom cleanliness (H5), portion size (H7), organic menu options (H8), healthy menu options (H9), environmental sustainability (H10), social sustainability (H11), and luxury (H12). The positively hypothesized impact of relative uniqueness of the establishment on acceptable travel time was negative (H6). A review of both confirmed and rejected hypotheses and the respective decisions concerning them are found in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Hypotheses

	Hypothesis	Result
H1	Overall restaurant quality perception is positively related to willingness to travel for patronage.	Accepted
H2	Higher levels of perceived authenticity of the dining experience are positively related to willingness to travel for patronage.	Accepted
H3	Higher levels of perceived service quality are positively related to willingness to travel for patronage.	Rejected
H4	Higher levels of perceived food quality are positively related to willingness to travel for patronage.	Accepted*
H5	Perceived cleanliness of restrooms is positively related to willingness to travel for patronage.	Rejected
H6	Higher levels of perceived uniqueness of the restaurant are positively related to willingness to travel for patronage.	Rejected
H7	Larger food portion sizes are positively related to willingness to travel for patronage.	Rejected
H8	The presence of organic menu options at a restaurant is positively related to willingness to travel for patronage.	Rejected
H9	The presence of healthy menu options at a restaurant is positively related to willingness to travel for patronage.	Rejected
H10	The presence of advertised environmental sustainability initiatives of a restaurant is positively related to willingness to travel for patronage.	Rejected
H11	The presence of advertised social sustainability initiatives of a restaurant is positively related to willingness to travel for patronage.	Rejected
H12	The perception of a restaurant as luxurious is positively related to willingness to travel for patronage.	Rejected

Given that we employed one-tailed hypothesis tests, a rejection of the hypothesis is equivalent with an inability to reject the null hypothesis, but not generally with the notion that the opposite of the hypothesized relationship is true. In this case, all rejected hypotheses except H6 were inconclusive.

5 DISCUSSION

An overarching takeaway of our study is that although prior literature indicates that a variety of restaurant attributes impact generic measures such as patron satisfaction, restaurant performance, or patron retention, travel time seems to be a much more restrictive variable to measure dining intention. Since travel time most effectively measures geographic market size for businesses, the main implication of our study is that of the variables we have considered, authenticity and food quality are the only two attributes which are capable of geographically enlarging a restaurant's market. While the other present variables we measured would, based on the extant literature, most likely improve patron satisfaction to some degree, these restaurant characteristics would not on their own be able to significantly enlarge the restaurant's geographic market.

Authenticity as the most significant ($p < 0.001$) restaurant attribute in our model was defined in our questionnaire as a composite variable with two distinct parts: firstly, we asked about the degree to which patrons believed the restaurant's ambience was representing the native culture associated with the reference country. Secondly, we asked about the degree of native culture representation the restaurant managed to uphold with regard to the food offered. For example, in the case of a Mexican restaurant, the participant would have been expected to think of how closely the Mexican restaurant in the United States would resemble a restaurant offering in Mexico. This common measure of authenticity has the limitation that it does not account for the participant's degree of knowledge about the native culture and cuisine associated with the restaurant, at least not in the general population sample that we used. As such, authenticity ratings are likely a highly individual and subjective result of the presence or absence of preconceived signals, such as background music, wall paintings, foreign vs. domestic ownership and wait staff, or food spiciness levels, which may be mentally associated with but in reality disjoint from a genuine authentic dining experience. For a patron with limited or superficial knowledge of a restaurant's native culture and cuisine, utility in regards to authenticity is likely not maximized by using maximum genuine authenticity, but by the presence of the aforementioned and other authenticity signals.

On the other hand, our study also found that uniqueness of the establishment, as the only such predictive variable we observed, decreased the expected acceptable travel time. This finding is not immediately intuitive, given the relatively well-established idea that customers have an inherent need for uniqueness and differentiated products (Wu et al., 2011; Knight & Kim, 2007). However, it can possibly be explained by referring to the secondary implications of a restaurant being unique. Particularly, unique restaurants are likely to expose patrons to less widespread and less familiar cuisines, which may result in some customer segments becoming less willing to explore and experience them. Conversely however, familiarity has also been found to increase purchase intention in a retail context, and similar cognitive processes such as those explored by Dursun et al. (2011) may be responsible. Firstly, familiarity enables consumers to better anchor their quality perceptions, which allows them to more easily determine their own expectations and preferences. Secondly, consumers are more likely to develop and recognize a desire to repeat an experience they have previously had than one they have never engaged in before. This familiarity heuristic likely induces a decision bias in favor of restaurants with a high level of community diffusion. This adversely affects restaurants which provide uncommon, unfamiliar, and often ethnic cuisines.

Another key takeaway of our study is that, surprisingly, we were not able to fully replicate the findings of past studies which focused on outcome variables such as patron satisfaction when utilizing our market size-focused approach. This suggests that economically relevant restaurant quality attributes are significantly less multidimensional than the extant literature might imply. For instance, we find no predictive value of service quality on a restaurant's potential market size, suggesting that patrons are ultimately driven to visit a restaurant by factors other than the servicescape. In reconciliation with the extant literature, we suggest that the impact of service quality on restaurant market size may not be significant in cases where perceived service quality is not extremely poor, but may become a significant deterrent to market size expansion if serious service failure occurs. Our proposed impact of restroom cleanliness on market size mirrors this pattern. Other insignificant predictors may be attributed to their attractiveness to specific population subsets (e.g., health-conscious, environmentally-conscious, luxury-prone individuals). This shows that, while these restaurant features may be attractive value-drivers to parts of the population, they may not significantly predict market size expansion at the population level.

5.1 Managerial implications

There are at least two noteworthy managerial implications of our results. Firstly, restaurant operators will benefit from instilling a sense of authenticity (either objective or subjective) and from maintaining high food quality standards (including taste, appearance, freshness, etc.). These are the key restaurant attributes for which a broad base of potential customers is willing to travel significantly above-baseline distances, thus improvements in these categories are able to significantly increase the potential customer base. Other attributes, while useful in improving various other performance and satisfaction indicators based on the findings of extant literature, are not likely to meaningfully increase the potential customer base. This does not mean that they should be neglected in planning and quality management, but that they are not adequate levers to increase market size.

Secondly, prospective restaurant operators may decide to open their restaurant within geographic proximity of close substitutes, rather than pursuing a blue ocean placement strategy. While this may be accompanied by the known challenges associated with late market entry, higher levels of local familiarity with the respective cuisine and existing quality perception benchmarks among the local consumer base likely outweigh those disadvantages. This can be noted outside the realm of statistical modeling, namely among ethnic restaurants which tend to cluster either formally or informally in specific neighborhoods (Chang & Zolin, 2014; Omholt, 2015).

5.2 Limitations and future research

Despite our best efforts to provide a model free of limitations, there are still several shortcomings worth noting. Firstly, as is often the case in studies which are based on questionnaire responses, self-reporting bias must be considered. Additionally, as we have asked about the power of restaurant attributes to change willingness to travel, we are working with a model of intention rather than behavior. A solution for both of these limitations would be to conduct a follow-up study that tests our model's validity by tracking how restaurants possessing the indicated attributes attract customers from farther away than those restaurants which do not have these attributes. Anonymous cell phone tracking data may provide the most adequate option for validating our model, as geofencing technology would likely be able to track travel time from a person's home (or other place of origin) to the restaurant. An alternative setup would be to ask participants in a follow-up survey to name restaurants they often visit, and estimate travel times there using traffic data distributed through Google Maps or similar software. The latter setup is likely more employable in parts of the world that have highly regulated the sharing of tracking data, such as countries of the European Union.

An additional limitation is that the model was generated using a relatively small sample of only individuals living in the United States of America. Preferences concerning restaurant attributes are likely subject to noteworthy cultural differences, and the model should therefore not be inferred to other countries without first testing whether it is holding valid locally. An obvious solution would be to repeat the study using the same variables in international locations. Increasing the sample size overall is also possible, albeit large increases would likely result in false positives for significant variables, as is common in regression models created from large data sets. Therefore, improving the sample size in a meaningful way comes with significant accuracy tradeoffs that the creators of future studies should be aware of.

Finally, we have left unaddressed the moderating role of restaurant type (e.g., fast food, casual, fine dining) that is cited in the extant literature related to several of our independent variables. Our aim was to build a model that considers the aggregate of all types of restaurants. Since we measured travel time against a generic baseline, controlling for restaurant type would have meant that we would need to conduct individual studies for each restaurant type to see how attribute impact varied across them. While this is not something we wanted to pursue in this rather exploratory study, additional research is necessary to test whether restaurant type significantly impacts our model. We recommend that research be conducted by repeating our study with minor adjustments, but measuring changes in travel time relative to a baseline consisting of only one restaurant type at a time, rather than a generic and cumulated baseline of all restaurant types.

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Appendix 1

How many minutes are you willing to travel to a restaurant you would describe as average or mediocre?
How much farther are you willing to travel if you find the restaurant's atmosphere and cuisine authentic?
How much farther would you travel if the restaurant does a good job at representing the culture its meals come from, such as China for a Chinese restaurant?
How much farther would you travel if the service at the restaurant is friendly and up to my standards?
How much farther would you travel if the food tastes good?
How much farther would you travel if the food appears to be fresh and looks appetizing?
How much farther would you travel if the restrooms at the restaurant are so clean that you would not hesitate to use them?
How much farther would you travel if the restaurant and its cuisine are unique in your area and you can’t think of another restaurant nearby that offers the same kind of food?
How much farther would you travel if the portion size is just right for you?
How much farther would you travel if at this restaurant, portion sizes are big enough so you can take home leftovers if you want to?
How much farther would you travel if the restaurant advertises its ingredients as "organic"?
How much farther would you travel if the restaurant's meals appear healthy?
How much farther are you willing to travel if the restaurant owners seem to care a lot about the environment?
How much farther are you willing to travel if the restaurant makes an effort to use local ingredients and limit food waste?
How much farther are you willing to travel if the restaurant treats and pays its workers fairly?
How much farther are you willing to travel if the restaurant makes an active effort to give back to the local community?
How much farther are you willing to travel if the restaurant appears to be upscale and luxurious?

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Choice overload in consumer services: The mediating role of decision strategy complexity on subjective states and behavioral outcomes

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Abstract:

Purpose*: The contemporary retail landscape is marked by a vast array of products and information, presenting consumers with an increasing number of choices. This phenomenon, known as choice overload, often overwhelms individuals and leads them to abandon their purchase, delay their decision, or opt for simpler choices. This study contributes to the literature on choice overload by focusing on two services (i.e. hotels and telecommunication plans) and exploring the mediating role of decision strategy complexity on subjective states and behavioral outcomes.*
Methods*: This study applies an experimental approach with a 2 (large vs small choice set) by 2 (hotels vs telecommunication programs) factorial design being developed and applied to a sample of 220 Belgians.*
Results*: Results show that the complexity of the strategy used by decision-makers may play a mediating role on the consequences that a choice set size may have in terms of psychological and behavioral responses.*
Implications*: Marketers should try to better understand which decision strategy best fits into their market target in order to fix the choice set accordingly. Moreover, they should also fix a choice architecture, such as a tournament-style choice architecture, that can enable choice set to remain large while reducing the effect of choice overload.*

Keywords: *choice overload, decision strategies, services, experiment-based approach, Belgium*

JEL Classification: *D7, D91, M31*

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1 INTRODUCTION

Traditionally having more options from which to choose has been considered as an advantage for individuals in many disciplines. From an economical perspective, a broader choice set is expected to increase the likelihood for consumers to find the option that best suit their needs and desires, thus maximizing their utility (e.g., Jessup, Todd & Busemeyer, 2009). Psychological-based studies underlined that having more options can increase the consumer's sense of personal control (e.g., Taylor & Brown, 1988). From a marketing perspective, having more options somehow satisfies the needs of consumers who are seeking for autonomy and freedom of choice (Schwartz, 2004); hence, expansive assortments have been portrayed as a competitive tool for suppliers to draw in more customers and to achieve a competitive advantage over their competitors that offer less variety (e.g., Brown, Read & Summers, 2003).

Despite this predominant and well-established view, researchers have also underlined the dark side of large choice sets. Iyengar and Lepper (2000) and Schwartz (2000, 2004) were among the pioneering authors to propose that an excess of options can lead to adverse outcomes, including negative emotions (Tung, Burns & Koenig, 2019), feelings of confusion and anxiety, lower satisfaction, difficulty of making a choice, choice deferral, choice regret (Wang et al., 2021; Turri & Watson, 2023). This phenomenon has been termed choice overload (Diehl & Poynor, 2007; Reutskaja et al., 2022), overchoice effect (Gourville & Soman, 2005), the

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tyranny of choice (Schwartz, 2000) or consumer hyperchoice (Mick, Broniarczyk & Haidt, 2004).

Since Iyengar and Lepper' (2000) study, several studies have been carried out considering different settings and products, mostly in retail-based contexts and regarding fast moving consumer goods. More recently, researchers started to investigate the choice overload phenomenon in the context of services and tourism (e.g., Pan, Zhang & Law, 2013; Park & Jang, 2013, Yuksel & Thai, 2015, Thai & Yuksel, 2017; Sthapit, 2019). Most of those studies have focused on analyzing the antecedents and consequences of choice overload. A meta-analysis by Chernev, Böckenholt and Goodman (2015, p. 333) concluded that "despite the voluminous evidence in support of the paradoxical finding that providing individuals with more options can be detrimental to choice, the question of whether and when large assortments impede choice remains open". According to recent studies, there is a strong need to deepen the knowledge about choice overload, its antecedents and outcomes, and more effort should be devoted to analyzing the phenomenon in the service context where this topic has been just recently approached (e.g., Park & Jang, 2013; Chernev, Bockenholt & Goodman, 2015; Ketron, Spears & Dai, 2016; Mittal, 2016; Thai & Yuksel, 2017). In particular, further research is needed to assess the decision process leading to final choices giving relevant attention to factors/variables moderating the influence of choice overload on consumers' choices (Benoit & Miller, 2017). Chernev et al. (2015) call for studies aimed at investigating the impact of the decision maker's goals and strategies on choice overload as both factors have been found to influence the decision-making process (e.g., Decrop & Kozak, 2014 in the context of tourism). Arguing that that choice overload might vary across products (e.g., Korhonen et al., 2018), a number of authors have also recently called for further studies adopting a cross-sector approach (e.g., Sharma & Nair, 2017; Sthapit, 2018).

This study was conducted to help fill this research gap by presenting and discussing the findings of an experiment aimed at investigating whether consumer responses to choice overload situations in two different types of services (i.e., telecommunication and hotel services) are influenced by the decision strategies on which individuals rely to make their choices. A 2 by 2 factorial design, considering the size of choice set (large vs. small) and the type of offerings (hotels vs. telecommunication programs), was created and implemented with a sample of 220 participants. The findings contribute to the development of theories related to choice overload by showing that the complexity of the strategy used by decision-makers may play a mediating role on the consequences that a choice set's size may have in terms of psychological and behavioral responses.

2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

2.1. The perceptual and behavioral effects of choice overload

Since the last decade, many studies have highlighted the negative effects that consumers facing a choice overload situation can experience when making decisions (e.g., Schwartz, 2004; Kaplan & Reed, 2013). When facing a large number of choice options, consumers might be less motivated and committed in making a decision (Scheibehenne, Greifeneder & Todd, 2010), they could experience preference uncertainty (Dhar, 1997), decide to not make the choice at all (Iyengar & Lepper, 2000), defer it (e.g., Iyengar & Lepper, 2000; Hills, Noguchi & Gibbert, 2013), regret their decision (Gourville & Soman, 2005; Chernev, 3003), reserve an already made decision (Chernev et al., 2015), and/or feel negative emotions (Botti & Iyengar 2006) such as fatigue (Lyu et al., 2021). However, having more choice also shows positive consequences such as increasing consumers' attention, interest, and appreciation (Lyu et al., 2021). For the purpose of this study, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1a,b: Consumers are expected to exhibit higher interest (H1a) and spend more time (H1b) when making a decision with a large choice set compared to a small choice set.

H2a,b: Consumers are predicted to experience greater choice demotivation (H2a) and decision regret (H2b) when selecting from a large choice set compared to a small choice set.

H3: Consumers are anticipated to be more inclined to postpone their decision when faced with a large choice set compared to a small choice set.

2.2. How decision strategies affect choices

A review of existing studies (Inbar, Botti & d Hanko, 2011) leads us to distinguish between three types of factors moderating choice overload: (1) contextual conditions in which the decision is made; (2) characteristics of choosers, and (3) characteristics of the choice set. As far as contextual moderators are concerned, we could refer to the time span by which the choice should be made (e.g., Haynes, 2009). Among chooser-related factors, we may list the existence of predefined preferences and/or of an ideal option within the choice set (Inbar et al., 2011), consumer expectations (Diehl & Poynor, 2010), personality traits and cultural norms (Iyengar, Wells & Shwartz, 2009; Hu et al., 2023), preference uncertainty, perceived decision task difficulty, decision goals and decision strategies (Chernev et al., 2015).

A decision strategy may be defined as "the sequence of mental and effector [actions on the decision environment] operations used to transform an initial state of knowledge into a final goal state of knowledge where the decision maker views the particular decision as solved" (Payne, Betteman & Johonson, 1993, p.9). Strong evidence exists for a significant relationship between decision goals and decision strategies. Depending on the decision goal, the decision maker assesses the costs and benefits of various strategies and chooses the strategy that offers the most favorable accuracy-effort trade-off. The consumer and tourist behavior literature presents decision strategies from different perspectives (for a review, see e.g., Decrop & Kozak 2009). A basic distinction, borrowed from economic theory is between maximizing (where consumers make choices to maximize a utility function, considering time, income, information, and technology constraints) and satisficing (where consumers make an acceptable choice instead of the optimal one, setting cutoff points on key attributes and keeping only alternatives that meet those cutoffs). In the broader cognitive approach, decision strategies include additive rules (equal weights or weighted adding), lexicographic, satisficing, elimination-by-aspects rules, majority of confirming dimensions, frequency of good and/or bad attributes, and the componential context model (Bettman, Luce & Payne, 2008). Consumers are inclined to use straightforward decision strategies or rules, whether due to habitual behavior in routine decisions or to streamline the decision-making process, especially when they aim to save time, energy, and/or money; examples of these types of decision strategies include brand loyalty strategy, brand familiarity, and price- related strategies (e.g., Park & Jang, 2013).

According to Scheibehenne et al. (2010), in experiments on choice overload, the strategies employed by participants have not been comprehensively evaluated and regulated. Additionally, studies investigating the moderating and mediating effects of choice heuristics (such as the satisficing heuristic, where consumers choose the first option that meets their standards, or the elimination-by-aspects strategy, which rapidly eliminates unattractive options) on choice overload have been somewhat overlooked. This underlies the need for further research aimed at running experiments encompassing measures of decision processes rather than focusing on the evaluations of choice outcomes (e.g., Inbar, Botti & Hanko, 2011).

Based on the aforementioned consideration, this study was conducted to examine the following hypotheses :

H4: Consumers are more inclined to utilize a simpler decision strategy when selecting from a large choice set compared to a small choice set.

H5: The complexity of consumers' decision strategies mediates the impact of choice set size on their subjective states and behavioral outcomes.

2.3. The moderating impact of chooser-related factors

A number of individual factors may impact the effects of CS size on subjective states and behavioral outcomes. According to Bettman (1979, p. 46), a decision goal refers to "a specific state whose attainment is related to achieving the desired end state", with the desired end state being called the "goal object." Based on Bettman et al. (1998), four metagoals can be considered when analyzing the choice processing, namely: maximizing decision accuracy (e.g., selecting the destination with the optimal balance of sunny weather and proximity), minimizing cognitive effort (by swiftly choosing a destination), minimizing the experience of negative emotions (e.g., avoiding destinations linked to painful memories), and enhancing the justification of the decision to relevant others (e.g., selecting a venue that delights the children). This study will focus on the goal to minimize cognitive effort only as it appears to be the most relevant as far as choice overload is concerned. Beyond decision goals, prior studies highlighted that two other chooser-related factors, i.e., consumer knowledge/expertise (e.g., Mogilner, Rudnick & Iyengar, 2008) and involvement (e.g., Wright, 1973; Malthora, 1984), can also exert a moderating effect on choice overload; hence, these hypotheses are suggested:

H6a: The goal to minimize cognitive effort moderates the relationship between choice set size and the complexity of consumers' decision strategy. A large choice set is likely to lead to a simpler decision strategy, especially for people willing to minimize the effort they put in the decision-making process.

H6b: Experience moderates the relationship between choice set size and the complexity of consumers' decision strategy. A large choice set is likely to lead to a simpler decision strategy, especially for "novices" lacking experience with the service.

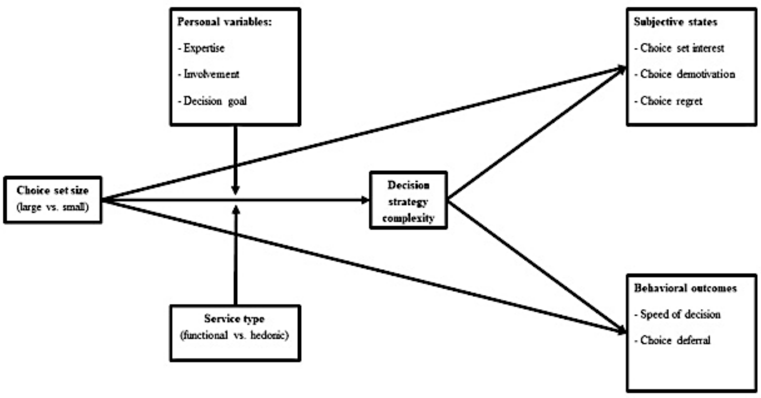
H6C: The level of involvement moderates the relationship between between choice set size and the complexity of consumers' decision strategy. A large choice set is likely to lead to a simpler decision strategy, especially for less involved people.

2.4. The moderating impact of the type of services

Finally, among the choice set- related factors that can moderate the choice overload effect, we can consider, for example, whether items are organized and categorized, whether options are comparable (Inbar et al., 2011), whether a best option exists in the choice set (Inbar et al., 2011); other factors that might moderate the choice overload might be also the choice complexity and decision task difficulty (Chernev et al., 2015), the alignability of attributes (Gourville & Soman, 2005; Polyzos et al.,2024), and product type (e.g., Sela, Berger & Liu, 2009; Korhonen et al., 2018). Since the study conducted by Iyengar and Lepper (2000), several studies have been carried out considering different settings and products, such as chocolates (Chernev, 2003), pens (Shah & Wolford, 2007), or enrolling in pension plans (Iyengar, Huberman & Jiang, 2004), volunteering with a charitable organization (Caroll, White & Pahl, 2011), public services (Jilke, Van Ryzin & Van de Walle, 2015), education (Katz & Assor, 2007), insurance (Sreedharan & Saha, 2021), tourism (e.g., Park & Jang, 2013), agribusiness (Staples et al., 2022), restaurants (Park & Kang, 2022) and hotels (e.g. Guo & Li, 2022). Furthermore, Korhonen et al. (2018) showed that product type (hedonic versus utilitarian/functional) exerts an influence on information overload and choice quality. Despite this, the thrust of the literature on choice overload has primarily concentrated on the retail sector and specifically on fast moving consumer goods; the attention researchers have given to the analysis of the phenomenon in the service sector is definitely modest. Further, almost all the existing literature on choice overload is confined to studies focusing on a single product/service, although it has been shown that product type is a moderator of choice overload (Sela et al., 2009). This study aims to compare functional (i.e., telecommunication programs) and hedonic (i.e., hotels) services. Benoit and Miller (2017) suggest that hedonic products and services tend to be experienced holistically rather than analytically, which may mitigate the overload effect of largest assortments when compared to utilitarian products and services. This provides support to the idea that consumers tend to review larger assortments when their purchase motivation is hedonic rather than when their purchase motivation is utilitarian. Existing studies argue that consumers with hedonic purchase motivations perceive their product preferences as highly unique as these involve non-alignable alternatives, compared to consumers with utilitarian purchase motivations who rather see options as undifferentiated with comparable attributes (Whitley, Trudel & Kurt, 2018). When faced with a larger choice set, individuals are inclined to exert additional effort in employing complex decision strategies, particularly for more differentiated products, rather than for basic undifferentiated services:

H7: The type of service moderates the relationship between choice set size and consumer decision strategies. Individuals presented with a large choice set are expected to be more inclined to employ a complex decision strategy for hedonic services (e.g., hotels) compared to functional services (e.g., telecommunication plans).

Figure 1. Conceptual model



3 METHODOLOGY

For this study, an experiment was arranged using a 2x2 factorial design. The experimental conditions included large choice set vs small choice set, and hotels vs telecommunication programs. Participants in the large choice set group were given 20 options to choose from, while those in the small choice set group had 5 options to choose from. Such choice set sizes are in line with ranges that have been used in the literature so far (Sharma & Nair, 2017). In addition, we compared two types of services, i.e. hedonic experiences (hotels) and utilitarian offerings (mobile telecommunication programs). For each type, alternatives were defined by five key attributes. Hotels were described in terms of brand, price, quality rating (star level), location, and customer reviews. Telecommunication plans were delineated by brand, price, the included amount of SMS, calling time, and Internet download data. Participants were initially presented with a scenario outlining a brief stay in Brussels/selecting a new telecommunication plan. They were then asked to choose from 5/20 alternatives described by five attributes in a table. Following this, respondents were instructed to (1) answer a series of 27 items regarding the strategies they would employ when making their choice on 5-point Likert scales, adapted from Decrop & Kozak (2009); (2) make a selection from the choice set (an invisible timer was used to measure decision time); (3) answer questions regarding their interest in the choice set ("I am not interested in any of the offered products"), demotivation towards their choice ("I made a decision because it was necessary"), feelings of choice regret ("If I could, I would have refrained from making a decision"), and willingness to postpone the decision ("If I could, I would have delayed my decision"); (4) respond to questions about their experience and involvement; (5) provide feedback on four items aimed at measuring their goal to minimize cognitive effort in decision-making (adapted from Luce & Payne, 1998); and (6) provide socio-demographic information. Respondents were recruited through mailing and social networks including Facebook and were requested to complete the questionnaire online (before the Covid crisis) using Qualtrics. Overall, 220 valid responses from Belgian consumers were collected. The final sample included 49% males and 51% females, 58% of people younger than 45 and 42% older, and with 11% graduated from primary school, 41% from secondary school, 25% from college and 23% from university. We conducted a range of uni- and multivariate analyses using SPSS 16.0, which included principal component analysis, ANOVA, and regression analyses. Additionally, we utilized Preacher and Hayes' procedure to examine the mediating effect of decision strategies as depicted in Figure 1.

4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Preliminary analyses

First, we carried out a series of factor analyses in order to structure the scales that were used for measuring decision strategies and decision goals. For decision strategies, the initial list of 27 items resulted in 5 factors according to the scree plot's elbow (explained variance = 0.502) following PCA with Varimax rotation. We only considered the first factor for this study, measuring the complexity of decision strategy and including 7 items, as described in Table 1.

Table 1. Reliability analysis for the decision strategy and the decision goal scales.

Decision strategy complexity	**Goal of minimizing cognitive efforts**
α=0.806	α=0.898
• I will look at all relevant products until I find what I want • I will carefully compare all products before making a choice • I will choose a product that shows an acceptable level for all features presented • I will choose a product for which a "poor" feature can be compensated by a "good" feature • I will examine all features of a product before considering the next alternative • I will combine a series of features in order to make the best possible decision • I will choose the product that completely fulfills my needs	• I made the choice that was the easiest to make • I wanted to make a decision that did not make me think too much • I made the decision that took me the least time • I made a choice that was not too complicated

Reliability analysis indicates that this scale has a high Cronbach's alpha of 0.806, which is good. The resulting factor scores were used as an input for further analyses. Second, two reliability analyses were carried out respectively on the four items used to measure the decision goal to minimize cognitive effort and on the three items used to measure involvement. The resulting scales show a very good reliability as proved by Cronbach's alphas of 0.898 and 0.799 respectively (Table 1). The factor scores were used as an input for further analyses.

4.2. The impact of choice set size on subjective states and outcome variables (H1-H3)

Considering subjective states, the ANOVA results reveal that participants exhibited a greater level of interest when faced with a large choice set compared to a small one (F(1, 218)=22.999; p=.000), thus confirming H1a. However, those in the large choice set condition expressed higher levels of choice demotivation (F(1, 218)=10.135; p=.002) and decision regret (F(1, 218)=16.629; p=.000). These results confirm H2a, H2b.
In terms of behavioral outcomes, the analysis indicates that respondents naturally require more time to make a decision when presented with a large choice set (F(1, 218)=13.921; p=.000), confirming H1b. Similarly, they are more inclined to postpone their decision (F(1, 218)=19.443; p=.000), aligning with H3.

4.3. How decision strategies affect choices

In the comparison of decision strategies, participants in the large choice set condition were found to employ complex decision strategies less frequently than those in the small choice set condition (F(1, 218) = 19.056, p = .000), supporting H4. Examining the association between decision strategies, subjective states, and behavioral outcomes (see Table 2), findings reveal that the utilization of complex strategies is positively correlated with interest in the choice set, as it is associated as well with demotivation, feelings of regret, and choice deferral.

Table 2. Correlations between decision strategy and outcome variables.

	Complexity of decision strategy
Choice set interest	0.215 (p=0.001)
Choice demotivation	0.182 (p=0.007)
Choice regret	0.271 (p=0.000)
Speed of decision	0.113 (p=0.093)
Choice deferral	0.144 (p=0.033)

A mediation analysis as suggested by Preacher and Hayes (2008) was further conducted to test whether the complexity of decision strategies was able to explain the above effects. Using Hayes' PROCESS procedure on SPPS, significant partial mediation effects are found for choice interest and choice regret whereas no mediation at all exists for the three other output variables (i.e., choice (de)motivation, decision speed, and choice deferral). More specifically, choice interest is both explained by the direct effect of the choice set size (ß=0,633) and by the indirect use of a complex decision strategy (ß=0,164) in the decision-making process. In the same way, choice regret is both a direct function of the choice set size (ß=0,556) and an indirect function of decision strategy complexity (ß=0,288). The complexity of the decision strategy thus appears to play some role in choice overload settings.

4.4. Moderating influence of service type and personal variables

It took significantly more time (70 vs. 54 seconds on average) for people to choose a hotel than a telecom program (F=3.841, p=0.051) suggesting that consumers of hotels could use complex strategies to a larger extent than users of telecom programs. However, this difference does not appear to be significant (F(1, 218)=2.455, p=.119). Moreover, following Hayes' PROCESS procedure on SPSS, Service type does not appear to be a significant moderator on the relationship between choice set condition and the complexity of decision strategies (F(2, 219)=0.026, p=.872), which contradicts H7.
In contrast, the results indicate that consumers' level of involvement and decision goals play a significant moderating role among personal variables, supporting H6a and H6c. On the one hand, strongly involved consumers tend to use complex DS to a larger extent than weakly involved people, especially when the choice set is small (F(2, 219)=4.084; p=.044). On the other hand, consumers look to minimize their cognitive efforts to a larger extent in overload situations. Such a decision goal moderates the relationship between CS condition and the decision strategy. Individuals in the extended choice set condition tend to utilize complex decision strategies to a lesser extent, particularly when their objective is to minimize cognitive efforts (F(2, 219)= 14.673, p=.000). Finally, as far as expertise is concerned, we see that the complexity of decision strategy is higher for expert consumers than for "novices" (F(1, 218)= 4.671, p=0.032); however, this variable does not seem to influence how choice set size impacts the utilization of complex strategies (F(2, 219)= 3.031, p=.083). This is in opposition with H6b.
Considering socio-demographics, education level positively influences the complexity of the decision strategies used and moderates the effect of CS size on DS. Higher educated people tend to use complex DS to a larger extent than lower educated consumers, especially when the choice set decreases.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Our research indicates that a large choice set increases consumers' interest in making a decision. However, it also leads to higher levels of choice demotivation and regret. Additionally, individuals selecting from larger choice sets tend to employ complex decision strategies to a lesser extent. This is because such complex strategies are positively associated with interest in making a choice, but also with choice demotivation, regret, and deferral. Furthermore, the complexity of decision strategy appears to partially mediate the effect of the size of choice set on choice interest and choice regret. Finally, our results do not provide evidence about the fact that service type (hedonic vs utilitarian) might affect the extent to which the choice overload situation can influence consumer choices (Benoit & Miller, 2017; Korhonen et al., 2018). These conclusions are useful for both researchers and practitioners.
From a theoretical perspective, this study helps answer the recent calls for further research to deepen our understanding about the decision process and related decision strategies/heuristics that consumers put into action to

mitigate choice overload (Benoit & Miller, 2017). This research supports the idea that decision strategies may play a significant role in the phenomenon of choice overload. It suggests that individuals tend to employ simpler strategies when faced with a wide array of choices. Conversely, they are more inclined to put in greater effort and use complex strategies when presented with a limited selection of alternatives. Furthermore, our findings show that the goal to minimize cognitive effort and the level of involvement moderate the effect of CS size on DS. As far as socio-demographics are concerned, individuals characterized by a higher level of education use complex DS to a larger extent than less educated consumers, especially when the choice set decreases.

From a managerial point of view, our results suggest that marketers should try to better understand which decision strategy best fits their target market and customize their choice set accordingly. Further, marketers should attempt to benefit from the advantages (i.e., choice interest) and to avoid the disadvantages (i.e., choice regret, deferral, etc.) of large choice sets. Therefore, it is recommended to implement effective choice architectures, such as a tournament-style approach, in order to maintain a large choice set while mitigating the impact of choice overload. This involves organizing options into subgroups, with final selections made from each subgroup to arrive at a decision (Besedeš et al., 2015). Specifically, hotel and telecom managers should consider reducing the size of their offerings and assisting consumers in making final decisions when faced with numerous options. For instance, utilizing filtering technologies can be beneficial (Turri & Watson, 2022). This is particularly crucial in online contexts where consumers can easily feel overwhelmed by the abundance of choices available. Hence, for example, hotel marketers should not offer too many room arrangements/prices to their prospect customers visiting their own booking engine. In fact, this could drive these customers either to book the same accommodation in a different distribution channel (e.g., over an online travel agency) that does not overwhelm customers with a high number of offerings, or to switch to a totally different accommodation. By the way, alternative strategies need to be found for all those circumstances in which marketers would prefer to keep on providing their (actual and/or prospect) customers with a potential wide product/service portfolio. For example, one option could be to sequence the offerings presented (thus reducing the perceived size of the assortment without reducing the objective one), and/or to provide their websites with recommendation agents and price comparison tools so that consumers are helped to set up their own preferences and trade-offs (thus helping them to avoid experiencing a choice overload situation) (Yun & Duff, 2017; Nagar, 2016). In this vein, hotel managers could prevent choice overload by outfitting their official websites with filtering tools (price, arrangement, etc) that allow customers to reduce the number of options to review/evaluate.

While this study contributes to addressing a gap in the service literature concerning choice overload and offers implications for practitioners, there are still limitations that should be acknowledged. First, data were collected in one single country (i.e., Belgium) and consider just two different types of services. These circumstances render our findings hardly generalizable to consumers of different nationalities/culture and for other service types. Additional studies could adopt a cross-cultural (Reutskaja et al., 2022) and cross-sectorial approach (widening the variety of service types) in an attempt to further validate and generalize our findings. Third, similarly to other existing works (Tang, Hsieh & Chiu, 2017), this study did not replicate real-world store environments or reflect genuine purchase behaviors. Even if they were motivated to participate to our study, consumers could have experienced a certain level of "time pressure" when asked to take part in the experiment when compared to a real decision-making situation (a context wherein they would have probably more time to make their decisions). Future research could run experiments in real-buying contexts. This study also fails to recognize that regret has two distinct, even if interrelated, components (affective and cognitive), each of which describing distinct consequences of regret (Buchanan et al., 2016). Finally, the mediating effect of decision strategy was only partially validated and a limited array of variables/factors able to moderate the influence of CS and DS was tested. Future studies should be carried out to explore other potential mediators that have being found to exert an influence over this relationship, including emotions, accountability, and personality traits (Tang et al., 2017); in relation to the latter point, for instance, Hu et al. (2022) demonstrate that individuals with high anxiety traits are more prone to delaying choices when confronted with a larger choice set in contrast to individuals with low anxiety.

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Reliability generalization meta-analysis of the food neophobia scale: Turkish sample

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Abstract:

Purpose: *The Food Neophobia Scale developed by Pliner and Hobden (1992) has been widely utilized globally and in Turkey for many years to measure people's fear of new foods. This study aims to determine the mean value by conducting a reliability generalization meta-analysis for the reported reliability coefficients of individual studies in Turkey's tourism field, which employed Pliner and Hobden's scale to investigate food neophobia. Additionally, this study explores variations in the mean value among subgroups.*
Methods: *A reliability generalization meta-analysis based on a random-effects model was conducted to examine the heterogeneity of reliability coefficients in the study, along with heterogeneity analyses and moderator analyses.*
Results: *Based on the analysis of 48 independent samples (N= 23306), the transformed mean Cronbach's alpha value was estimated to be .827 (95% CI [.796-.853]) and found to be significant. The Q-test and I2 values reveal significant heterogeneity between alpha coefficients, indicating a notable variation in the measurement reliability across samples. Moderator analyses using analog to the ANOVA and meta-regression analyses showed that reliability coefficients differed according to the variables of publication type, sample type, and proportion of women in the sample.*
Implications: *The results offer valuable insight for researchers seeking to select appropriate scales for investigating food neophobia.*

Keywords: *food neophobia, reliability generalization, meta-analysis*

JEL Classification: *L66, L83, Z33*

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1 INTRODUCTION

Food, a necessary component for the survival of all living organisms, has been studied by numerous academic disciplines (Rabadán & Bernabéu, 2022). Nutrition, the fundamental requirement for all living organisms, strives to safeguard and enhance well-being by deliberately consuming essential nutrients. Eating habits are formed through the repetition of nutritional behavior, which occurs multiple times daily. The resulting repetition of these activities leads to the development of habits, providing an individual with a sense of security and comfort from the familiar, perceived as low risk. Pliner et al. (1993) reported that participants rated familiar foods as more palatable, which influenced their motivation to taste the food. Conversely, food neophobia (FN), which refers to individuals' reluctance or fear to try new foods, involves attitudes and behaviors toward tasting or avoiding novel foods. Fallon and Rozin's (1983) classification form the underpinnings of this phenomenon. This classification focuses on the potential hazards related to negative emotions such as dislike, disgust, and fear. Eating and drinking preferences serve as key elements of daily life, functioning as a marker of an individual's identity. It is therefore crucial for marketers, food producers, and all tourism industry stakeholders to comprehend why certain foods are readily accepted or rejected.

Although FN has been widely studied, the specific mechanisms for it remain unclear (Lafraire et al., 2016). Accurately measuring the various aspects of FN and willingness to try new foods requires using appropriate scales (Rabadán & Bernabéu, 2022). Various scales have been developed to assess these different aspects, highlighting the need for standardized methods of measurement. Damsbo-

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Svendsen and colleagues (2017) investigated 13 scales that measured FN through participants' interest in trying novel foods. The scales consist of 6 to 35 items, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.80 to 0.92. Participant responses were collected using a 3-7 Likert rating. In scale development studies, the sample size has been reported to range from 133 (Pliner et al., 1993) to 16,644 (Kaiser et al., 2012) and includes individuals from various age groups, including children (Rubio et al., 2008), young adults (Raudenbush et al., 1995), and adults (Frank, 1994), with ages ranging from 2 to 65 years.

FN has been extensively researched for over 40 years due to its impact on food quality and variety. In 1992, Pliner and Hobden introduced an instrument to measure FN in individuals, viewing avoidance of new foods as a personality trait. The Food Neophobia Scale (FNS) is a unidimensional scale comprising 10 items. The scale yields scores ranging from 10-70, wherein high scores indicate neophobia or fear of new foods, while low scores indicate food neophilia or openness to try new foods. This scale, which was validated with a sample of undergraduate psychology students in Canada, has been applied to many different groups in the following years: children (Skinner, 2002), families (Koivisto, 1997), consumers from different geographies (Murray, 2001), obese (Monneuse et al., 2008), pregnants (Paupério et al., 2014), tourists (Akin et al., 2023; Sivrikaya, 2020) or kitchen staff in hotels (Üngüren & Tekin, 2022).

The FNS is a commonly used tool to measure FN across diverse groups. However, worldwide application of the FNS, which was developed and validated on specific and dissimilar samples, poses various challenges (Ritchey et al., 2003). To address these issues, some researchers have utilized techniques such as modifying certain terms (Elkins & Zickgraf, 2018), removing items from the scale (Sogari et al., 2019), or adjusting the Likert scale utilized (Dönmez & Sevim, 2023).Since its introduction in 1992, FNS has been used in a wide variety of studies. For example, studies assessing the impact of dietary diversity on human health (Costa et al., 2019, Jaeger et al., 2017); studies focusing on new product development or reformulation (Domínguez et al., 2019; Rabadán et al., 2021); sensory analysis studies (Chung et al., 2012, Reverdy et al., 2008); studies examining the impact of socioeconomic characteristics of individual FNS (Meiselman et al., 2010; Nordin et al., 2004). Pliner & Hobden (1992) determined the scale's Cronbach's alpha to be 0.88 in the original study. Jaeger et al. (2017) reported a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.83 in their adult study of 1167 participants in New Zealand. In Italy, Laureati et al. (2018) found a coefficient of 0.87 with 1225 participants. For the overall scale, Siegrist et al. (2013) found coefficients of 0.80 with a sample of 4442 participants, while German and French speakers had coefficients of 0.79 and 0.82, respectively. Bernal-Gil et al. (2020) found Cronbach's alpha to be 0.612 in a study that examined Mexican consumers' (n=160) opinions on ethnic cuisine.

The FNS's Turkish validity and reliability study was conducted with a sample of 444 participants by Uçar et al. (2021). The study resulted in a two-dimensional structure with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.805. In another study where the scale was adapted into Turkish, Duman et al. (2020) used data from 195 adult patients and found the Cronbach's alpha coefficient to be 0.614. In both studies, it was determined that the FNS is valid and reliable in a Turkish sample. Other studies conducted in the Turkish literature reported varied results. Specifically, Konaklıoğlu and Algül (2022) found a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.6 in their study with a sample size of 585 participants, while the highest coefficient was 0.971 in Öztürk's (2019) research.

Previous studies have shown inconsistent reliability coefficients for the FNS. However, there has been no research that explores the generalizability and heterogeneity of the FNS reliability coefficients. It is necessary to investigate this in order to estimate the FNS's overall reliability and to understand the reasons behind the heterogeneity in reliability coefficients across different samples (Sen, 2022). A possible approach for this examination is conducting a meta-analysis of reliability generalization. Meta-analysis is a quantitative method that synthesizes results from previous studies on a specific research topic to draw a single conclusion. In essence, meta-analysis combines findings from multiple studies and presents them as a single result (Aslan et al., 2022). Additionally, meta-analysis studies provide the opportunity to explain possible inconsistent findings in previous research and the moderators that may have caused them, leading to a more harmonious expression of results (Çelik, 2023; Çelik et al., 2023). Meta-analysis studies focused on the reliability values of a specific scale are referred to as reliability generalization meta-analyses (Vacha-Haase, 1998). This meta-analysis examines the variation in reliability values of test measurements across diverse sample sets and levels of heterogeneity (Badenes-Ribera et al., 2023; Sanchez-Meca et al., 2021).

One of the most commonly used scales in FN studies is the FNS (Rabadán & Bernabéu, 2022). The primary aim of this study is to establish the average reliability value of the FNS, designed by Pliner and Hobden (1992), which is extensively applied in the literature for the Turkish sample based on tourism studies. Additionally, this study examines how this value may fluctuate among distinct subgroups through moderator analyses. In this direction, the present study will answer two primary research questions: 1) What is the overall reliability coefficient of the FNS? and 2) Are there any differences in reliability scores among subgroups?

The research will be particularly useful for researchers. Gastronomy tourism and food-related components of the tourist experience are promoted and sought after as distinctive aspects worldwide. There will often be visitors who are hesitant or afraid to experience the food in the destination. Therefore, there will continue to be significant interest in food neophobia research going forward. The selection of scales for these studies is vital for the research's health and quality. In this regard, our findings on FNS will offer significant perspectives for gastronomy and FN researchers.

2 METHODOLOGY

The study aims to establish the reliability generalization of the FNS. The steps outlined in the REGEMA flow diagram (Sanchez-Meca et al., 2021) were followed to guide the writing of the reliability generalization meta-analysis.

2.1. Selection criteria

The dataset used in this study consists of previous research conducted in Turkey that measured FN using the scale developed by Pliner and Hobden in 1992. Table 1 presents the criteria utilized during this process. The timeframe under consideration spans from 1992 to 2023 (October 18, 2023) due to the initial publication of the scale in 1992. This study includes relevant scientific articles and theses written in English and Turkish that focus on the tourism discipline in Turkey. Finally, the meta-analysis only excluded reliability coefficients other than Cronbach's alpha, including omega and test-retest.

Table 1. Selection

Criterion	Inclusion
Time invertal	All publications between 1992-2023
Publication type	Scientific articles and theses
Language	Turkish and English
Compliance	Quantitative studies using the FNS and conducted in Turkey
Discipline	Tourism
Reliability type	Cronbach's alpha

2.2. Search strategies and data extraction

National Thesis Center of Turkey (YOKTEZ), DergiPark, and Google Scholar were utilized to access studies within the research scope. The search term "food neophobia" was used to gather studies. As all the studies had English abstracts, studies conducted in Turkey were also accessible. As of October 18th, 2023, a total of 241 Turkish studies [Google Scholar (n= 176), DergiPark (n= 23), YOKTEZ (n= 42)] were examined.

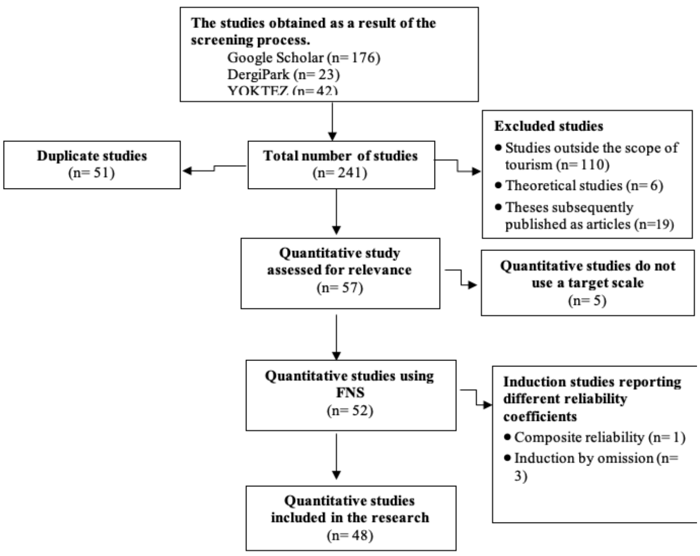

Figure 1. REGEMA flow diagram

As shown in Figure 1 of the REGEMA diagram, the literature review resulted in the elimination of a total of 184 studies. Of these, 51 appeared in the searched databases simultaneously and were removed due to duplicate publications. Additionally, 108 studies fell outside the realm of tourism (e.g., health, food engineering, etc.), while six studies were purely theoretical and did not report alpha values. Finally, 19 studies were identified as theses that were subsequently published as articles. Out of the 57 studies that remained, five did not utilize the relevant scale, one used a coefficient other than Cronbach's alpha as a measure of reliability, and three were eliminated because they did reliability induction by omission (Sanchez-Meca et al., 2021). The researchers who did reliability induction by omission were contacted by e-mail, but no response was received. Subsequently, 48 specific studies that adhered to the research criteria were analyzed.

2.3. Procedure and coding

The study determined Cronbach's alpha values for 48 samples within the final data set. To identify possible factors influencing the change in alpha values, moderator variables were selected based on previous research (Aslan et al., 2022; Çelik, 2023; Sen, 2022; Yörük & Sen, 2022), and the data was coded using Microsoft Excel. Summary information regarding the coded variables is presented in Table 2.

To ensure inter-coder reliability, the second researcher checked the coding conducted by the first researcher of the study. Differences in coding emerged across the three studies. As in previous similar studies (Çelik et al., 2023; Polat & Koseoglu, 2022), the researchers deliberated on these discrepancies and reached a consensus, bringing the process to completion.

Table 2. Variables and coding criteria based on the coding process

Variable	Type	Coding criteria
Study ID	Categorical	The number assigned to the study
Year of publication	Continuous	Year of publication
Publication type	Categorical	Thesis, Article
Sample size	Continuous	Sample size in the study
Cronbach's alpha coefficient	Continuous	Alpha value determined in the study
Number of items	Continuous	Number of items in the scale used
Sample type	Categorical	Students, tourists, locals
Scale mean	Continuous	The average score obtained from the scale
Method of application of the scale	Categorical	Online, face to face, hybrid
Percentage of female participants	Continuous	The proportion of female participants in the sample

2.4. Statistical analyses

Since reliability coefficients in individual studies typically exhibit a skewed distribution (Semma et al., 2019), alpha coefficients require transformation in computing the average reliability value. The Bonett Transformation Formula (2002) ($T= \ln(1-|\alpha|)$) was deployed for this purpose. The Bonett transformation normalizes the skewed distribution of alpha coefficients and balances their variances. In order to interpret the obtained results, it is necessary to convert the obtained value back to alpha values (Çelik, 2023). The meta-analysis literature utilizes either the fixed-effect model or the random-effects model (REM) to calculate the average effect size (Borenstein et al., 2021). REM offers more precise confidence intervals compared to other models, making its assumptions more realistic in social sciences than the fixed-effect model (Sen, 2022).

Heterogeneity among alpha coefficients was assessed using Q statistics and I2 values. Significant Q statistics and I2 values over 75% suggest the presence of heterogeneity (Özdemir et. al, 2020). Additionally, PI values were also included to assess heterogeneity. The PI allows for future research to have an idea of the true range of effects to expect and presents heterogeneity using the same metric as the original effect size measure (IntHout et al., 2016; Morris,

2023; Nunez-Nunez et al., 2022). By analog to the ANOVA, the effect of categorical moderator variables on the heterogeneity of reliability estimates was examined. The moderator variables include publication type (thesis, article), sample type (students, tourists, locals), and the way the scale is administered (online, face-to-face, mixed). The study also employs a meta-regression approach to investigate the impacts of continuous variables such as publication year, sample size, number of items, scale mean, and gender-female ratio (%). Finally, the R2 estimates were utilized to clarify the amount of variation contributed by the moderator variables (Yörük & Sen, 2022).
Given the inclusion of only published and accessible studies in the analysis, unreported reliability coefficients may have adverse effects on the present meta-analysis results (Sen, 2022). Therefore, it is crucial to examine the potential for publication bias. To investigate this, the trim-fill method developed by Duval and Tweedie (2000), which involves creating a funnel plot, was initially used. This method estimates the potential number of missing studies in the meta-analysis and their effects on the findings (Guzeller & Celiker, 2020). The symmetrical distribution of publications in the funnel plot exhibits no publication bias. If any missing studies are found, they will be placed in the appropriate locations (to the right or left) on the graph to create a symmetrical appearance (Çelik, 2023) and to demonstrate the impact of missing studies on the results. Other methods have been employed to explore publication bias, including Rosenthal's (1979) and Rosenberg's (2005) fail-safe N, Egger's regression test, and Begg and Mazumdar's (1994) rank correlation test. All statistical analyses were conducted using the metaphor package in the R software and the MAJOR module in Jamovi

3 FINDINGS

3.1. Overview of individual studies
Although the scale, which was validated in the study, was developed in 1992, it was not utilized in studies regarding tourism in Turkey until 2016. Nonetheless, it is apparent that the attention given to the scale and the topic of food neophobia has recently heightened, particularly in 2021 (refer to Figure 2).

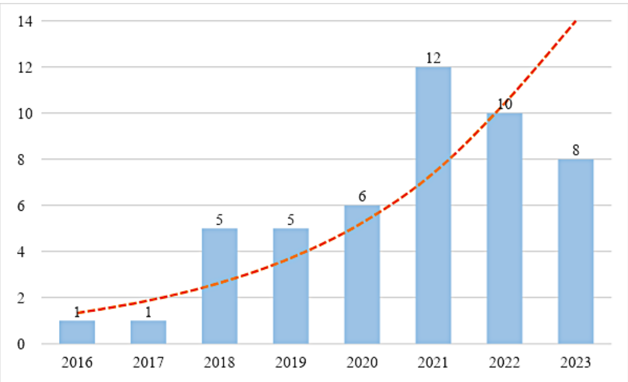

Figure 2. Distribution of individual studies by year

Table 3 displays additional characteristics of the studies. The majority of studies (62.5%) utilized a 10-item scale consistent with the original scale. Raw alpha values ranged from ,60 to ,97 (M= ,80; sd=,09). Additionally, the sample size fluctuated between 205 and 1286 (M= 458.5; sd= 197.6; median= 412.5).

Table 3. General characteristics of the studies included in the data set

	Number of studies (k)	*%*
Publication type		
Thesis	25	52,1
Article	23	47,9
Number of items		
10 items	30	62,5
<10	18	37,5
Sample type		
Tourist	24	50
Locals	16	33,3
Student	8	16,7
Method of application of the scale		
Face to face	32	66,7
Online	10	20,8
Mix	6	12,5
	Mean (M)	*Standard deviation (sd)*
Percentage of female participants	54,22	10,40
Sample size	485,5	197,6
Raw alpha value	0,80	0,09

3.2. Reliability generalization and heterogeneity
The study utilized Bonett's (2002) formula with REM to perform analyses with alpha values. Results showed a statistically significant transformed alpha value of ,827 (95% Confidence Interval (CI) [,796-,853]) with a p-value < ,001. High heterogeneity was observed in the reliability estimates as indicated by the Q statistic (Q(47) = 3735.6794; p < ,0001) and the I2 value (98.6%). In addition, the 95% PI interval was wide (.454-945), indicating significant uncertainty regarding the expected reliability in future studies using the FNS.

3.3. Assessment of publication bias
Numerous methods were employed to detect any publication bias. Initially, the funnel plot (Figure 3) was assessed, and it was found that the symmetry was somewhat distorted, indicating the possible omission of some studies on the right side. To address this issue, the trim-and-fill method developed by Duval and Tweedie (2000) was employed, which resulted in the addition of 11 studies on the right side of the graph. The newly calculated mean reliability estimate, inclusive of these additional studies, was found to be statistically significant (p<0.001) at 0.858 with a 95% CI of [0.831 - 0.880]. Upon comparison with the previous reliability estimate obtained prior to the implementation of the trim-and-fill method, there was a slight difference of 0.031.

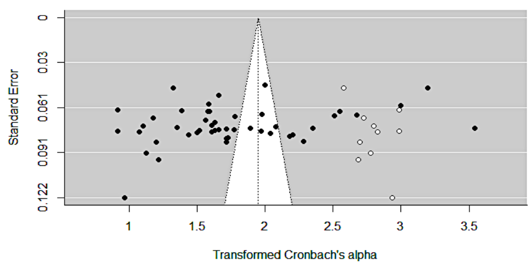

Figure 3. Funnel plot obtained by applying the trim-and-fill method

In addition, the Egger regression test yielded an insignificant t-value (t[46] = -1.5256; p=0.134). Furthermore, according to the Begg and Mazumdar (1994) rank correlation test, the Kendall's Tau value between alpha coefficient values and standard errors is both negative and insignificant (τ = -0.059; p = 0.557). These statistically insignificant p-values demonstrate the absence of publication bias. Finally, upon analyzing Rosenthal's (1979) and Rosenberg's safe N values, 545,806 and 409,328 studies are required, respectively, for the average alpha value to become statistically insignificant (p > .05). These values are more significant than 5k+10 (Sen, 2022) (=240), indicating no publication bias. When considering the results as a whole, it is evident that the research poses no risk of publication bias.

3.4. Relationship between the moderating variables and reliability estimate

In the study, moderator variable analyses were conducted to explain heterogeneity. In this analysis, alpha value is the dependent variable, categorical (type of publication, type of sample, type of application of the scale) and continuous (year of publication, sample size, number of items, scale means, gender-female ratio (%)) variables are independent variables. Continuous variables were analyzed using meta-regression analysis, while categorical variables were analyzed using an analog to the ANOVA.

Table 4. Moderator analysis results for categorical variables (Analog to the ANOVA)

Variable	Category	k	N	α+	%95 CI	ANOVA results
Publication type	Article	23	9935	,775	,736 - ,814	*F* (1, 46) = 4,1709, ***p*= ,047***
	Thesis	25	13371	,829	,793 - ,866	R^2= 6,73
						Qw (46) = 2682,5865 *p*<,0001
Sample type	Tourist	24	12917	,807	,770 - ,844	*F* (2, 45) = 3,4086, ***p*= ,042***
	Locals	16	7632	,834	,789 - ,879	R^2= 9,31
	Student	8	2757	,731	,665 - ,797	*Qw* (45) = 3580,7556 *p*<,0001
Method of application of the scale	Face to face	32	16228	,815	,754 - ,876	*F* (2, 45) = ,5499, *p*= ,58
	Online	10	3922	,765	,685 - ,845	R^2= 0
	Mix	6	3156	,807	,773 - ,841	*Qw* (45) = 3543,3197 *p*<,0001

Note: k: number of studies; N: total sample size; α+: mean alpha value; CI: confidence interval; F: Knapp-Hartung statistic testing the significance of the moderator variable; Qw: statistic testing the significance of the model; R2: proportion of variance explained by the moderator variable.

No statistically significant difference was found among the subcategories in the way the scale was applied, in terms of categorical variables (Table 4) (p>0.05). However, the reliability estimates were significantly affected by the type of publication (thesis & article) (p=0.047; R2=6.73) and the type of sample (tourist & locals & students) (p=0.042; R2=9.31). These results indicate that alpha values vary within the subcategories and account for the significant heterogeneity observed in the alpha coefficient estimates. In regard to publication type, the mean reliability estimate (,829) for thesis studies (k=25) surpasses the mean reliability estimate (,775) of article studies (k=23). The average reliability estimate calculated based on sample type presents a higher value for the local people sample (,834) compared with the tourist sample (,807), while the student sample has the lowest value (,731).

Table 5 displays the moderator analyses for continuous variables. The results indicate that year of publication (p= ,52), sample size (p= ,24), number of items (p= ,27), and scale mean (p= ,80) do not serve as significant predictors. However, the proportion of women in the sample is statistically significant at a 10% level (p= ,08). It was observed that as the proportion of women in the sample increases, the reliability value decreases by 0.0024.

Table 5. Results of Moderating Test of Brand Awareness in the Social Media Marketing and Brand Loyalty Relationship

Variable	k	b_j	SE	%95 CI	F	p	Qe	R^2
Year of publication	48	,005	,0078	-20,744 – 42,655	,416	,52	4044,188	0
Sample size	48	,000	,000	-,0001 - ,0002	1,372	,24	3955,1826	,05
Number of items	48	,0064	,0059	-,0054 - ,0182	1,207	,27	3654,8237	,01
Scale mean	39	-,0093	,0380	-,0863 - ,0678	,0593	,80	3457.6811	0
Gender (female rate %)	47	-,0024	,0013	-,005 - ,0003	3,167	**,08****	4046,5842	4,74

Note: k: number of studies; bj= unstandardized regression coefficient; SE= standard error; CI: confidence interval; F = Knapp-Hartung statistic testing the significance of the moderator variable; Qe= heterogeneity statistic; R2 = explained variance ratio.

Finally, a weighted multiple meta-regression model was constructed to explicate the calculated heterogeneity in reliability estimates. The resulting final predictor model incorporated three moderator variables: the type of publication, the sample type, and the percentage of females in the study population. The complete model (Qe= 2578.8330; p< ,0001) and the Knapp-Hartung statistic, which tests the significance of the moderator variables (F(1, 42)= 2.705; p= ,04), were both statistically significant. The constructed model explains 13.24% of the total variance. The findings demonstrate that variables beyond the three predictors exert a significant impact on the alteration of alpha values.

4 DISCUSSION

The purpose of this reliability generalization meta-analysis is to acquire the overall reliability of the FNS created by Pliner and Hobden (1992) in the field of tourism within the Turkish sample. Furthermore, the study aims to analyze moderator variables that aid in comprehending the inconsistencies among studies. To achieve this objective, individual studies were analyzed which utilized the target scale and reported the alpha coefficient. Given the heterogeneity of alpha values in these studies (ranging from .60 to .97), it is necessary to determine an average alpha value. The combined reliability coefficient, obtained from a total of 48 independent samples, was found to be .827, which is lower than the value (.88) reported in the original study conducted by Pliner and Hobden in 1992. The inclusion of local populations and students (50%) in the analyzed studies, as well as cultural disparities based on these groups, may have played a role in this outcome.

Based on the mean value obtained in this study, the overall estimate of Cronbach's alpha falls within rational limits, surpassing the recommended threshold of >.70 for exploratory and >.80 for general research (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Nonetheless, this average value is not appropriate for clinical research (> .90) (Badenes-Ribera et al., 2023). However, the scale's reliability values (PI) may range from ,454 to ,945 in future studies. This indicates that the assessed scale may not be very stable and may exhibit significant heterogeneity. Moreover, this value could vary depending on the sample's average age, gender, or experience and may fall below the lowest reasonable threshold of .70. Thus, it may be inappropriate for both exploratory and general research as well as clinical applications. Therefore, researchers investigating FN should consider the variables identified in this study that impact heterogeneity, while utilizing the Pliner and Hobden (1992) scale. Additionally, attention should be given to the sampling methods employed in order to achieve more reliable coefficients of reliability.

High heterogeneity was observed across the studies (I2= 98.6%). Consequently, reliability coefficients obtained from the FNS scale vary depending on the samples and cannot be generalized. Therefore, researchers should not use reliability induction for this scale. Moreover, it is crucial to report reliability after all measurements as it is a result of measurements rather than a test characteristic (Bademci, 2004).

Moderator analyses revealed three factors (publication type, sample type, and proportion of women) that may account for the heterogeneity in reliability coefficients. It is important to note that the mentioned variables should be considered when interpreting reliability coefficients. Examination of publication type demonstrated higher reliability estimates in thesis studies. This may be due to researchers being more meticulous during data collection or adhering more closely to sampling rules. More specifically, thesis studies may have excluded convenience sampling groups, such as undergraduate students who lacked motivation to consistently respond to self-report questionnaires (Phillips et al., 2016). In fact, the lowest reliability coefficient was identified among the sample of students. However, despite a variance in the reliability coefficients for thesis and article research, both values remain within acceptable limits.

Interestingly, the reliability of the scale decreases as the percentage of women in the sample increases. It is worth noting that this result was observed at a reliability level of 10%. The reduction in the reliability coefficient as the proportion of women increases might suggest that the FNS is more suitable for men, or at least for populations with a significant male presence. When examining sex ratio, lower alpha estimates among women indicate a higher level of measurement error (Shou & Olney, 2020). One possible explanation is that greater disgust sensitivity in women results in higher neophobia costs (Çınar et al., 2021). This may introduce additional measurement error among women, thereby leading to a lower alpha coefficient (Shou & Olney, 2020). While there are various psychometric studies on the scale in the literature (Fernández-Ruiz et al., 2013; Ritchey et al., 2003; Zhao et al., 2020), no research has examined the measurement invariance of the scale across genders, to the best of the researchers' knowledge. Conducting such a study could offer further evidence to endorse the use of the scale in female populations in future research (Vassar, 2008).

The final multiple meta-regression model developed to account for the heterogeneity in reliability estimates explicated 13.24% of the total variance. Hence, reckoning other factors that may account for this heterogeneity is imperative. The study selected moderator variables based on the descriptive information provided in individual studies. However, the potential effects of values such as the average age of the sample or the standard deviation of the scale mean, which could act as moderators, on heterogeneity could not be examined due to their absence in the studies. Hence, future research is recommended to investigate new moderator variables and discern their influences.

4.1. Limitations

Despite its significant contributions, this study has limitations. Firstly, it should be noted that this study has only included studies conducted in Turkey. However, future studies that consider all relevant literature will allow for a more comprehensive determination of the Cronbach's alpha value and facilitate cross-cultural comparisons. Secondly, although a rigorous data collection process was implemented, there is a possibility that some studies were not included. Therefore, to replicate the study, other databases like Scopus, Web of Science, and EBSCO must be included. Furthermore, the limited representativeness of the study may be attributed to the exclusion of studies with low alpha values from publication. As a result, the Cronbach's alpha values obtained are restricted to the literature review's scope. Additionally, missing demographic data in some studies has emerged as another limitation of this research. This may have led to an inability to investigate possible moderators of heterogeneity. One potential limitation of the study could be the implementation of Bonett's transformation for standardizing alpha values. Subsequent research could aid in improving our comprehension of the pertinent variables involved in achieving reliability across studies by utilizing alternative transformation techniques (such as Hakstian-Whalen or Fisher Z) or examining other measures of reliability (such as test-retest reliability).

5 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that the FNS maintains acceptable values, on average. However, it is important for future studies utilizing this scale to remain vigilant and implement measures to prevent potential factors that may decrease reliability, such as the composition of the student sample or the proportion of women involved. Additionally, researchers utilizing the scale should consider generating their own estimates of reliability based on their individual data rather than relying on induction.

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Complying winery marketing strategies based on attitudes and perceptions towards winery terroir

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Abstract:

Purpose: *This study explores winery visitors' attitudes towards terroir significance as well as perceptions of terroir for marketing communication and as a competitive advantage for wineries, and uses these as a basis to examine intergenerational cohort differences.*
Methods:*An online questionnaire was distributed using criteria for inclusion and employing a non-probability sampling frame. Over a seven-month period, 1174 questionnaires from members of four different generational cohorts were obtained and statistically analyzed. Descriptive statistics, factor, reliability analysis and One-way ANOVA were used.*
Results: *On a 7-point Likert scale, cohorts in all cases, somewhat agree with the statements regarding winery and wine terroir. Cohort differences towards the three dimensions "Attitudes towards terroir significance", "Terroir as a competitive advantage" and "Terroir for marketing communication". were detected for the first and last dimension, whereas Baby Boomers and Generation Y had more positive attitudes and perceptions than Generation X and Generation Z.*
Implications: *Acknowledging actual and potential wine tourists' attitudes towards terroir significance and perception of terroir as a competitive advantage tool and for marketing communication, wineries may implement effective marketing strategies in order to survive and thrive in the current competitive wine tourism market.*

Keywords: *wine terroir, marketing communication, competitive advantage, generational cohorts, generational cohort differences*

JEL Classification: *L66, M3, M31*

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1 INTRODUCTION

The wine market has undergone significant fluctuations during the last decades, the number of competitors has increased (Vrontis et al., 2011) and wineries strive to improve their marketing strategies. This has led wineries to ameliorate their marketing strategies, e.g., reinforcing the connection between territory and wine (Giacomarra et al., 2020) and communicating this link to potential and actual consumers (Charters et al., 2017; Riviezzo et al., 2017; Warman & Lewis, 2019).

Wine tourism has become widespread worldwide from the mid 90's (Carrà et al., 2016). Brown and Getz (2005, p. 266) state "Wine tourism is a form of special-interest travel based on the desire to visit wine-producing regions or in which travelers are induced to visit wine-producing regions, and wineries in particular, while traveling for other reasons". Moreover, academics showed that wine tourism is combined with other activities (Brown & Getz, 2005; Gomez & Molina, 2012), and is carried out by "wine lovers" (Connolly, 2019).

Part of wine tourism is visiting a winery; thus, the winery as other tourist destinations strive to attract new visitors and retain old ones. Therefore, the intense competition in the wine tourism industry exposes that wineries have to showcase their competitive advantage to attract wine tourists. One of the strategies implemented by wineries is to communicate their terroir, i.e., reinforcing the connection between territory and their produced wine (Charters et al., 2017; Riviezzo et al., 2017; Warman & Lewis, 2019). Carrà et al. (2016) state that wine tourists are motivated to visit a winery when they are offered services and products linked to the territory (amongst other factors).

Terroir as academics point out is a complex construct that encompasses both the "physical" and "natural" environment of the vitivini production (e.g., soil, climate, and landscape), as well as the "human factor", in the broader sense, such as historical and sociocultural factors (e.g., Laville 1993; Patterson & Buechsenstein, 2018; Capitello et al.,2021).

While there are many studies on wine terroir, in their majority they either focus on the concept of wine terroir or its significance from the winery's perspective (e.g., Castelló, 2021; Riviezzo, et al. 2017). Likewise, a shortage of studies exist that explore wine tourists' perception of terroir and those that have been found examine specific elements of it (e.g., Santos et al., 2021; Coroș et al., 2019), Similarly, there is a lack of studies that investigate attitudes towards winery/ wine terroir (as a holistic concept), with only one study found (Capitello et al., 2016). Lastly, to the best of our knowledge, no study exists that examine wine tourist's perceptions of wine/ winery terroir as competitive advantage or marketing communication element from the wine tourists' perspective.

Demographic characteristics and specifically age have been reported to influence destination choices (e.g., Tomić & Božić, 2015; Weigert et al., 2022). Within this context, generational cohorts are becoming increasingly important in tourism research (e.g., Weigert et al., 2022; Kamenidou et al., 2018; Silva et al., 2021; Garibaldi et al., 2022), including studies on wine tourism (Thach et al., 2021; Charters & Fountain, 2006; LaTour et al., 2021; Taylor et al., 2010). This is due to the fact that cohorts incorporate people within a specific birth year range (age), at the same place, experiencing the same significant life events that shape their behavior (e.g., Wey Smola & Sutton, 2002).

In terms of generational cohort behavior and wine terroir tourism few studies were detected (Capitello et al., 2021; Carmichael & Senese, 2011). Similarly, a handful of studies refer to wine tourism and generational cohort differences (e.g., Charters & Fountain, 2006; LaTour et al., 2021; Taylor et al., 2010), with no study to the best of our knowledge, that combines wine terroir, wine tourism, and generational cohort differences. Additionally, to the best of our knowledge no study examines generational cohort attitudes and perceptions towards terroir as a winery's competitive advantage or communication element.

Therefore, the identified gaps in the literature that refer to the "terroir" as a notion totality and not towards specific elements of it are the following. 1. There is a lack of studies on terroir and self- assessed knowledge of the concept of terroir from the wine tourist's perspective. 2. There is a lack of studies that investigate attitudes towards terroir and its significance from the wine tourist's perspective. 3. No study exists (to the best of our knowledge) that examines wine tourists' perceptions of terroir as a winery's competitive advantage element. 4. No study exists (to the best of our knowledge) that examine wine tourist's perceptions of terroir for wineries marketing communication. 5. Wine tourists as members of multiple generational cohorts and wine terroir is understudied. 6. No study (to the best of our knowledge) examines generational cohort attitudes and perceptions

towards terroir as a winery's competitive advantage or for marketing communication. 7. No study (to the best of our knowledge) examines generational cohort differences regarding wine terroir significance and perception of terroir as a winery's competitive advantage or for marketing communication.
Given the lack of studies related to attitudes and perceptions of terroir, this study explores generational cohort attitudes and perceptions towards winery terroir from wine consumers and winery visitors (actual or potential). Specifically, the following objectives (OB) are addressed:

OB1: Whether wine tourists from different generational cohorts know what wine/winery terroir is (self-assessed knowledge)

OB2: Generational cohorts' attitudes towards wine/winery terroir

OB3: Generational cohorts' perceptions of wine/winery terroir as a competitive advantage of a winery

OB4: Generational cohorts' perceptions of winery terroir for marketing communication

OB5: Generational cohort differences based on the above variables (attitudes and perceptions).

This research paper makes a theoretical contribution to academia by decreasing the abovementioned identified seven gaps in literature. Additionally, it adds to the extant literature by providing information from four different cohorts and examining their differences in attitudes and perception as regards winery/wine terroir, an issue that has been understudied from the wine tourists' point of view. Moreover, on practical basis it offers with knowledge from wine tourists from various generational cohorts in order for wineries to implement the appropriate marketing strategies targeting each cohort.
In order to fulfill the above aim and objectives of the study, it draws data from the Greek generational cohorts who are wine consumers and have visited or are planning to visit a winery in the short run (next six months).
While academics agree on the importance of cohorts in consumer research, there is no general agreement on the years and names of the cohorts. Therefore, today and after the year of 1900 the cohorts that exist and have a considerable number of members are the GI Generation (1901-1924; McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2009), the Silent Generation (1925 -1945; McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2009), the Baby Boomer Generation (1946-1964; McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2009), Generation X (1965-1977; Wey Smola & Sutton, 2002), Generation Y or Millennials (1978 and 1994; Williams & Page, 2011), and Generation Z (1995 and 2009; McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2009). This research uses the above dates on cohorts since the generational cohort theory for Greek studies is still in its infancy and specific dates for the Greek cohorts based on life-changing events have not yet been published (to the best of our knowledge).
This paper continues with the geographical framework of the study and the literature review, followed by the methodology of the research. It then highlights the results of the data analysis, the discussion, and the theoretical managerial and marketing implications. Lastly, the conclusion, limitations, and direction for future research are presented.

1.1 Geographical framework of study

This research focuses on Greece, a country with a wine making tradition from antiquity (Sykalia et al., 2023; Skalkos et al., 2022). According to the International Organization of Vine and Wine (2023) for the year 2022, as regards vineyard surface area, 95922 ha is reported in use, ranking Greece as 20th in the world. Greece also ranks 19th in wine production (2084000 hl) and 24th in wine consumption for the same year, as the same organization states. Although, Greece has a long history in wine production, wine tourism only began to develop in the mid 90's (Velissariou et al., 2009), with "cruise packages", with internet sites promoting wine tourism, and wine trails (Hall & Mitchell, 2000). The same authors point out that while many Greek wineries exist throughout the country, due to the country's geography they are difficult to visit (Hall & Mitchell, 2000).
According to the Greek Law 4582/2018 - Official Gazette 208/A/11-12-2018 "Wine tourism is the special form of tourism which concerns the provision of reception, guided tours, hospitality, and catering services in areas functionally integrated with winemaking or wine-producing facilities (vineyards). These services are offered in combination with activities related to viticulture and wine production". In accordance to the same law, it is classified under agritourism, being one of its subcategories. It is also noted that in Greece in order for a winery to be able to accept visitors (Law 4276/2014 (Government Gazette 155/A΄/30-07-2014), as amended by article 138 of Law 4495/2017 (Official Gazette 167/A΄/3-11-2017), it should have the Visiting Winery Badge (sign) which is provided by the Ministry of Tourism.
José Antonio Vidal, president of GWTO, in his interview with the Athens-Macedonian News Agency (AMNA, 2023), stated "Greece is one of the most promising emerging wine tourism destinations because of what the country itself represents in terms of culture and nature". In many parts of the country, efforts are undertaken to develop wine tourism combining or associating it with the cultural and historical tourist attractions. For example, Karagiannis and Metaxas (2020) report that the last decade in the region of Peloponnese different actions have been implemented to bust wine tourism, such as "wine trails" where wineries partook in a "tourist cluster connecting archeological sites, wineries with stunning landscape, and unique local wines with characteristic terroir" (p.12).
According to López (2022) regarding the "number of wine tours and tastings listed on Tripadvisor in selected European countries" (February 2022), Greece is 5th in ranking with 514 wine tours, whereas Italy (1st place) has 2000 wine tours. France, Spain and Portugal also precedes Greece in the ranking order. The same author states that Greece is ranked 6th for wine tourism worldwide (for the year 2021) with index score 5.24/10 (index score is based on a series of elements- factors).
This research focuses on wine tourists (actual or potential) that have visited or has intention to visit wineries in the Prefecture (or regional unit) of Drama, Greece. Drama regional unit (prefecture) of Greece, is located in the Eastern Macedonia and Thrace region and has a long history of wine

production, systematically though, after the late 70's (Karapetsas et al., 2023). Today, in the regional unit of Drama, eleven wineries function which cultivate twenty-seven grape varieties and produce about 3 million bottles (Karapetsas et al., 2023). Additionally, Drama has special events connected to wines and wine production, such as the "Drama Wine Trail" and "Dramaoinognosia" (Drama oino-knowledge) a wine festival, inextricably linked to the god Dionysus and the land of Drama (Plakidis, 2023).

2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

The literature review presented is a selection of articles that are as closely related as possible to the aim and objectives of this study, since the overview of literature did not detect articles that directly relate to them.

The International Organization of Vine and Wine (OIV, 2010), define Vitivinicultural "terroir" as follows: ""Vitivinicultural "terroir" is a concept which refers to an area in which collective knowledge of the interactions between the identifiable physical and biological environment and applied vitivinicultural practices develops, providing distinctive characteristics for the products originating from that area. "Terroir" includes specific soil, topography, climate, landscape characteristics and biodiversity features" (OIV, 2010). Besides this definition, many academics have provided with wine terroir definition (e.g. Dubos, 1984; Vaudour, 2002; Laville, 1990, 1993).

Extant research (e.g., White, 2020; Meinert, 2018; van Leeuwen et al., 2017; Van Leeuwen et al., 2010; Moran, 2001; Patterson & Buechsenstein, 2018; Vaudour, 2002), have shown that wine terroir is a multi-factor construct. Wine terroir embraces the physical and natural environment of the wine production, the human factor, and also historical-heritage and sociocultural elements (e.g., Dubos, 1984; Laville, 1990, 1993; Patterson & Buechsenstein, 2018; Vaudour, 2002, 2003; Capitello et al., 2021; Charters et al., 2017; Castelló, 2021; Barham, 2003). For example, van Leeuwen et al. (2017) consider terroir as "a cultivated ecosystem" in which grapevines interact with physical and natural elements of the environment and specifically with its soil and climate. In their article they focus on the natural and physical aspects of terroir and specifically "Air and soil temperature", "Vine water status" and "Vine nitrogen status". Several studies refer to wine terroir investigating different aspects such as the concept of wine terroir, the elements that shape it, and perceived importance for marketing communication practices. Though, these are mainly from the winery's point of view (Castelló, 2021; Riviezzo, et al. 2017; Cross et al., 2011; Moran, 2001; Patterson & Buechsenstein, 2018; Spielmann & Gélinas-Chebat, 2012; Van Leeuwen & Seguin, 2006; Vaudour, 2002), while other study residents' commitment in consideration to terroir for winegrowing and place of residence (e.g., Capitello et al., 2021). Additionally, some focus on specific terroir elements, such as toponymy (e.g., Anagnostou & Tsiakis, 2023; Tsiakis et al., 2022). For example, Riviezzo et al. (2017) investigated the concept of terroir, the perceptions that wine producers hold as concerns terroir, and its potential for use in their marketing strategies in order to highlight the local identity and cultural heritage. The research was undergone using wineries as case studies in Italy (N-11) and France (N=15) by employing qualitative research.

As regards the concept of terroir from the consumers point of view, fewer studies explore this concept (e.g., Mamalis et al., 2023a; Couder & Valette-Florence, 2020a, 2020b; Spielmann & Gélinas-Chebat, 2012). Specifically, Mamalis et al. (2023a) examined if Greek wine consumers (N=366) know what wine terroir is. After providing with the definition, they asked from participant to state which of the 17 elements presented incorporate this notion. They also examined gender difference on this basis. They found that Greek wine consumers lack knowledge of terroir and its elements, while gender differences in four cases were found. Couder and Valette-Florence (2020a) explored how consumers perceive (N=12; France) a wine's terroir of origin (ToO), employing a projective qualitative methodology (Album online). Five clusters of associations were extracted from the analysis. The first cluster was the "Symbolic traditions anchored in ToO" with main concepts incorporated being "Cultural traditions", "Wine traditions" and "ToO memories (association of symbolic representations, thoughts)". The second cluster was the "Wine culture, anchored in the ToO" with main concepts incorporated being "Landscape, Producers, Culture" (all related to personal memories). The third cluster was the "Social symbolic dimension" with main concepts incorporated being connected to family and friends such as "Friendliness", "Sharing friendship", "Family transmission" and "Family". The fourth cluster was the "Memories dimension", including concepts such as "Walks", "Shared drunkenness", "Nostalgia" and "Recklessness". The last dimension was "Enchantment dimension" that incorporated concepts such as "Utopian place", "Timelessness", and "Art de vivre". Also, Couder and Valette-Florence (2020b) investigated the perception of terroir of origin (ToO) in the minds of French wine consumers (N=123) and found four association clusters "ToO Knowledge", "ToO Memories", "Product evocation" and "Human dimension". Spielmann and Gélinas-Chebat (2012) explored in France how producers, vendors, and wine consumers define wine terroir referring to the French wine industry and found that each group defines it differently based on their involvement.

Other consumer studies refer to specific terroir elements, mainly those related to geographic identification schemes (Espejel et al., 2011; Espejel & Fandos, 2009; Ribeiro & Santos, 2007), and authenticity (e.g., Spielmann & Charters, 2013). For example, Spielmann & Charters (2013) examined the concept of terroir in France by focusing on issues of "origin", "typicity" and "legality" and examining their perceptions towards the nature of terroir and its association with authenticity. They employed an online questionnaire towards both people that worked in the wine industry (N=290) and consumers who did not work in the wine industry (N=421). They found that the terroir concept incorporates three dimensions related to authenticity: "product", "internalized" and "institutional" authenticity, with all three being positively correlated. Batat (2013) with qualitative research examined the significance and the dimensions (symbolic and functional) of terroir products among French consumers (N=30) but did not refer to wine or wine tourism.

Moreover, there is an abundant number of studies referring to wine tourism (e.g., Nella & Christou, 2014; Charters & Ali-Knight, 2002). Though, studies that relate (and do not have only a simple reference) to “terroir wine tourism” or “wine terroir tourism” returned a small number of studies (N<60) almost all in the last decade, revealing that it is a uprising issue (Kastenholz et al., 2021; Kruger & Viljoen, 2021; Holland et al., 2014; Peršurić et al., 2019; Malerba et al., 2023; Marlowe & Bauman, 2019; Bruwer & Alant, 2009; Marlowe, 2016; Capitello et al., 2021).

Likewise, there is a shortage of studies that explore wine tourists’ perception of terroir (Capitello et al., 2013; Harrington et al., 2019; Santos et al., 2021; Coroș et al., 2019), most of which refer to the wineries point of view or focus on a specific element of terroir (e.g., Pelet et al., 2020). Example is the study by Malerba et al. (2023) who explored from the wineries’ managers (N=29; Portugal) perspective the way wine estates and wineries cater to families with children, examining the “supplier side of inclusive wine terroir experiences”.

Similarly, there is a lack of studies that investigate attitudes towards winery/ wine terroir, with only two studies found (Lenglet, 2014; Capitello et al., 2016), but the first does not relate to wine, wine tourism or tourism in general, but rather examines “terroir food product consumption behavior”. Capitello et al. (2016, p.517) examined if terroir impacts on consumers’ wine choice, and specifically by the terroir elements displayed on a wine label, verifying the heterogeneity of consumer’s evaluation process”. They targeted the Generation Y cohort (N=982; Italy), and through an online questionnaire applying a Discrete Choice Experiment, they identified seven latent classes (using Latent Class Choice Models). Their findings reveal that for the majority of the Generation Y cohort the terroir is significant, although it varies according to interpretation and the cues associated with it.

There are also a few studies that focus on wine terroir tourism. For example, Kastenholz et al. (2021) examined wine terroir experiences as reported by visitors’ data in Central Portugal via 137 comments reported on Tripadvisor. They found that the role of wine, tangible cultural heritage, and natural landscapes in providing emotionally gratifying, memorable and recommendable wine terroir experiences is significant. Though, this study did not incorporate the generational cohort theory nor cohort differences. Holland et al. (2014) developed a conceptual framework for terroir tourism by reviewing the relevant literature and using as a case study a wine region in Ontario Canada. Finally, the article most closely related to our research is that of Peršurić et al. (2019), who explored terroir for wine tourism by winemakers (N=34; Istria, Croatia) and visitors (N=107) and found that Istria’s terroir was recognizable by tourists and as regards the viticulture and viticulture terroir, its added value “reflected land, soil, climate and vineyards in which autochthonous wine grapes were grown” (p. 330), and that Istria’s wine terroir dimensions contained the product, the natural dimensions, and the activities (Peršurić et al. p.331).

Even fewer studies were returned that focus on wine terroir tourism and generational cohorts’ behaviour (Capitello et al., 2021; Carmichael & Senese, 2011). Similarly, a handful of studies refer to wine tourism and generational cohort differences (e.g., Charters & Fountain, 2006; LaTour et al., 2021; Taylor et al., 2010), with no study to the best of our knowledge, that combines wine terroir, wine tourists, and generational cohort differences.

While these subjects studied are crucial to winery stakeholders for marketing activities, though, they do not deal with the issues that this study focuses on. Therefore, since we have not found studies that deal directly with the focus of this paper (i.e., generational cohort differences based on attitudes towards terroir significance, perceptions of terroir in marketplace competition and winery’s marketing), here too, a number of studies were selected that fit as closely as possible the context of this study (descending order of publication date).

Mamalis et al. (2023b) examined if wine consumers consider terroir elements important when choosing a wine. Data was collected from Greece (N=366) from four different generational cohorts (Generation Z, Generation Y, Generation X, and Baby Boomers). Participants were presented with different variables (N=44) that affect wine choice, including elements of terroir, and asked to name the importance of each when choosing a wine. They found that “taste”, “smell”, “price”, “aroma”, “authenticity” and “clarity and color of wine” were the main variables that effect their wine choice. One-way Anova based on extracted dimensions: “Core terroir”, “Product outcome”, “Human terroir and gastronomy” and “Communication terroir” did not reveal Generational cohort differences.

Deng et al. (2022) explored social media users’ responses (China; N= 24,458 online comments) towards top wine influencers (N= 30) endorsed short wine videos (N=81) on the platform – Douyin, relying on message interpretation process (MIP) framework. Their aim was to identify segmentation differences from two generational cohorts (Generation Z: N=1547; Generation Y: N=3354). They found that “Gen Z was more likely to comment on emotional, internalization and drinking intent subjects, while Gen Y was prone to asking more product, logical and skepticism-related questions. Gen Z cohort involved more themes about alcohol drinking intent, whereas Gen Y contributed more to skepticism” (Deng et al., 2022, p.694). Bauman et al. (2020) studied generational differences with 276 participants from Texas, USA, in consumer Web 2.0 information source adoption for wine purchasing decisions, particularly social media and internet-based sources. The sample per cohort was Generation Y=87; Generation X=87; and Baby Boomers=102. They realized that younger consumers, specifically the Generation Y and Generation X consumers, prefer to use Web 2.0 information sources, such as wine blogs, wine applications, their contacts’ recommendations and wine experts on social media, while older ones use their own wine knowledge. They also found that Generation X acts as a bridge between Generation Y and Baby Boomers with reference to trust on sources for wine information. Charters and Fountain (2006) explored the perceptions and experiences of different cohorts as visitors to winery cellar doors in Western Australia using observation technique and specifically with 24 mystery shoppers sent in four groups. They found that Baby Boomers are more interested in the product than the members of the Generation Y and Generation X cohort. On the other hand, the Generation Y and Generation X cohorts were more interested in the overall experience and service provided as compared to Baby

Boomers. Taylor et al. (2010) explored in the USA, 315 wine consumers environmental concerns and attitudes about wine regions (Generation Y/Millennials: 64; Generation X: 63, Baby Boomers: 180; other: 8). Results revealed for the dependent variable "protect", Baby Boomers had stronger beliefs that wine tourism must protect the cultural environment as compared to the Generation Y/Millennials, while as for the variable "development", Baby Boomers "reported stronger beliefs that proper wine tourism development requires wildlife and natural habitats be protected at all times" as compared to the Generation Y/Millennials.

Based on the above-mentioned analysis, in the wine/winery terroir setting, it is possible that from the wine tourist's perspective, terroir is significant for wineries, is a competitive advantage tool and can be used for marketing activities. Accordingly, based on the overview of the previous studies, this study hypotheses has as follows:

H1: There will be significant differences in attitudes towards wine/winery terroir significance among generational cohorts.

H2: There will be significant differences in perceptions of terroir and wine/winery competitive advantage and competitiveness among generational cohorts.

H3: There will be significant differences in perceptions of terroir for wine/winery marketing communication among generational cohorts.

3 METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire was developed especially for this purpose based on previous literature (e.g., Cohen & Ben-Nun, 2009; Capitello et al., 2021; Castelló, 2021; Charters et al., 2017; LaTour et al., 2021; Taylor et al., 2010; Patterson & Buechsenstein, 2018; Spielmann & Gélinas-Chebat, 2012; Van Leeuwen & Seguin, 2006) as well as qualitative research (N=20; 5 per cohort). The questionnaire consisted of three different sections. The first section was related to wine consumption and previous visit to wineries in the area of Drama, as well as intention to visit a winery in the specific area in the short run (up to the next six months). These questions were the control questions (yes-no). If the first (wine consumption) and last question (intention to visit a winery) were answered as "no" then the questionnaire was discarded. The reason for targeting actual or potential wine tourists is that wine tourism as Connolly (2019) points out is carried out by "wine lovers", and for so, they tend to be more involved in wine information search, and thus probably have more knowledge about wines and their terroir. The second section referred to wine terroir and wine tourists' (actual or potential in the short run) attitudes and perceptions towards it. Lastly the third section contained the socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of the participants. The questions and results directly related to the aim and objectives to this study will be the only ones presented.

As regards the second section, referring to wine terroir, preceding the questions, self-assessed knowledge of terroir, followed by the definition, concept, and the elements of wine terroir were presented. Subsequently, there was a question asking if participants understood the concept of terroir and its elements (control question). If this question was negatively answered, then again, the questionnaire was discarded, if yes, the participants' answers were taken into account. Regarding the terroir questions, the first question required participants to state their attitude (7-point Likert scale) towards the statements referring to wine terroir significance, the second question required to indicate their degree of agreement (7-point Likert scale) towards statements referring to terroir and winery's competitive advantage/ competitiveness (11 statements), while the third question required participants to state their degree of agreement (7-point Likert scale) towards statements referring to terroir and winery marketing communication (5 statements). A pilot test was conducted with 164 participants excluded from the final sample. The pilot test resulted in minor grammar and syntax corrections. The questionnaire was distributed online, employing a non-probability (criteria) sampling frame, and over a seven-month period, 1708 questionnaires were obtained from which 1174 were statistically analyzed. The remainder did not meet the criteria for inclusion. Analysis with the SPSS ver.29 statistical program included firstly descriptive statistics, i.e., frequencies, percentages, and mean values (MV). Additionally, it included reliability assessment of the questionnaire, factor analysis, and One-way ANOVA. The latter was used to explore existing generational cohort differences between the three beforementioned questions-issues. In the case that statistical differences were observed across cohorts, then the Tukey's B test was used to explore from where these specific differences originate.

4 FINDINGS

4.1 Sample profile

Based on the above procedure and analysis, the sample's profile is as follows. Male subjects (52.8%) were slightly overrepresented compared with female subjects (47.2%). Also, the Generation X (33.7%) and Generation Y (32.9%) cohort was overrepresented. Additionally, most participants were married (52.3%), lived in the city (76.3%), and had at least a university degree (48.6%). Moreover, most participants received a monthly salary (63.6%), and as to net monthly family income, the majority ranged between 1000.01-2000.00€, as it was reported by 38.3% of the sample (Table 1).

4.2 Wine consumer behavior

Of the total 1174 questionnaires analyzed in the study, 58.4% (N=686) had visited a winery in the Drama region while the rest have it in their program for the near future (next six months). As to wine self-assessed knowledge, 35.7% had little or no knowledge, 43.1% some knowledge and the rest (21.3%) had advanced wine knowledge. As to wine/winery terroir self-assessed knowledge (Objective No.1) the vast majority of the sample had little or no knowledge (92.3%). As for significant factors for visiting a winery (7-point Likert type scale), the three most significant were: "The winery offers tour of the winery (processing-production area, cellars, etc.)" (MV= 5.69), "The winery offers a vineyard tour"

(MV=5.45), and "The winery is easily accessible" (MV=5.36).

Table 1: Participants

Participants profile	N	%
Gender		
Male	620	52.8
Female	554	47.2
Cohort		
Generation Z	270	23.0
Generation Y	386	32.9
Generation X	396	33.7
Baby Boomers	122	10.4
Marital status		
Single	442	37.6
Married	614	52.3
Divorced	96	8.2
Widowed	22	1.9
Education		
Primary education	16	1.4
Secondary education	236	20.1
Postsecondary education	202	17.2
University student	150	12.8
Graduate	400	34.1
Postgraduate	170	14.5
Profession		
Salaried (Employee public-private, on pension, on unemployment fund for at least 6 months)	746	63.6
Businessman	194	16.5
Worker	6	0.5
University student	156	13.3
Dependent (housekeeper, unemployed)	72	6.1
Area of residence		
City	896	76.3
Town	104	8.9
Village	174	14.8
Net Monthly Family Income (in euros)		
≤ 600,00	146	12.4
600,01-1000,00	310	26.4
1000,01- 2000,00	450	38.3
2000.01-3000	180	15.3
3000.01 +	88	7.5

Source: The authors

4.3 Attitudes towards winery terroir significance

Table 2 presents participants attitudes in MV towards terroir and its significance for the winery from the wine tourists' perspective (Objective No.2) by generational (Gen) cohort and total sample (TS). Results reveal that in most cases the lowest MV derive from the Generation Z cohort who expressed the most negative attitudes, followed (in most cases) by the Generation X cohort. Moreover, the most positive attitudes towards terroir originated from the Baby Boomers, followed by the Generation Y cohort. It is pointed out that in all cases no MV>5.50 or MV<4.50, thus there is a concentration around the 5th point of the 7-point Likert scale, implying that the participants somewhat agree to these statements. The most positive attitude is attributed to the statement "It is beneficial for the wineries to showcase their terroir" and specifically from the Baby Boomer cohort (MV=5.49). On the other hand, the lowest MV is attributed to the statement "It is essential for wineries to showcase their terroir for the survival of a winery and its wines in the marketplace", and specifically from the Generation Z cohort (MV=4.63).

Table 2: Attitudes towards winery terroir significance (mean values)

Statements	Gen Z	Gen Y	Gen X	BB	TS
1. I consider that terroir is very important for wine making and its winery.	4.69	5.06	4.91	5.15	4.93
2. It is good for the wineries to showcase their terroir	4.67	4.98	4.98	5.13	4.93
3. It is essential for wineries to showcase their terroir for the survival of a winery and its wines in the marketplace	4.63	4.83	4.77	5.28	4.81
4. It is beneficial for the wineries to showcase their terroir	4.98	5.35	5.08	5.49	5.19
5. I consider that the elements that consist of the terroir are very important for the winery and the quality of a winery's wines	4.84	5.20	5.09	5.34	5.09
6. The elements of the wine terroir is for me the wine consumer an indicator of the quality of the wines and subsequently for the quality of the winery.	4.98	5.24	5.01	5.31	5.11
7. I look for wines and wineries that showcase their terroir elements	4.82	4.99	4.80	5.05	4.89

Source: The authors; Gen Z= Generation Z, Gen Y= Generation Y, Gen X= Generation X, BB= Baby Boomers

Table 3 presents participants perception (MV) towards terroir for winery's competitive advantage/ competitiveness in the marketplace (Objective No.3) per generational (Gen) cohort and total sample (TS). In all cases no MV>5.50 or MV<4.00, thus there is a concentration around the 4th and 5th point of the 7-point Likert scale, implying that the participants either "neither agree nor disagree" or "somewhat agree" towards these statements. Also, in most cases the lowest MV are drawn from the Generation Z cohort who express the most negative perceptions, followed (in most cases) by the Generation X cohort. Moreover, the most positive perceptions towards wine terroir as competitive advantage and competition purposes originate from the Baby Boomers, followed by the Generation Y cohort. Also, the highest MV is attributed to the statement "Displaying the elements that consist of their wine terroir aids wineries reach the global market easier than their competitors" and specifically from the Baby Boomer cohort (MV=5.34). On the other hand, the lowest MV is attributed to the statement "The elements of wine terroir prioritize to their customer since they provide with detail information of the production of wines (e.g., climate, culture, human interventions) giving them a competitive advantage compared to the wineries that do not display their terroir", and specifically, it originates from the Generation Z cohort (MV=4.20).

4.4 Terroir for winery marketing

Regarding participants perception towards terroir for winery marketing communication (Objective No.4) per generational (Gen) cohort and total sample (TS), it is observed that in all cases no MV>5.50 or MV<4.50 (Table 4). Thus, there is a concentration around the 5th point of the 7-point Likert scale, implying that the participants "somewhat agree" towards these statements. In all cases the lowest MV derive from the Generation Z cohort followed (in all cases) by the Generation X cohort. Moreover, the strongest perceptions towards wine terroir for marketing purposes originate from the Baby Boomers, followed by the Generation Y cohort.

Table 3: Perceptions of winery terroir as a competitive advantage (mean values)

Terroir as a competitive advantage	Gen Z	Gen Y	Gen X	BB	TS
1. Wine terroir elements force wineries to operate in a context of healthy competition since buyers have information of the wine production environment (natural, physical, human)	4.67	4.92	4.82	4.90	4.83
2. Wineries that are competitive display the elements of their wine terroir	4.57	4.83	4.78	4.75	4.75
3. The elements of wine terroir prioritize to their customer since they provide with detail information of the production of wines (e.g., climate, culture, human interventions) giving them a competitive advantage compared to the wineries that do not display their terroir	4.20	4.39	4.33	4.41	4.33
4. Wine terroir is a comparative advantage for the wineries against their competitors	4.81	4.96	4.85	5.16	4.91
5. Displaying the elements that consist of their wine terroir aids wineries to differentiate themselves from the competition	4.84	4.91	4.81	5.25	4.90
6. Displaying the elements that consist of their wine terroir aids wineries retain their customers, therefore terroir is a competitive advantage tool for wineries	4.84	4.98	4.75	5.02	4.88
7. Displaying the elements that consist of their wine terroir aids wineries create loyal customers, therefore terroir is a competitive advantage tool for wineries	5.10	4.94	4.87	5.11	4.97
8. Displaying the elements that consist of their wine terroir aids consumers to build trust in the wineries, therefore terroir is a competitive advantage tool for wineries	5.16	4.98	4.88	5.16	5.01
9. Wine terroir elements help wineries reach customers easier, therefore terroir is a competitive advantage tool for wineries	4.90	4.87	4.75	4.74	4.82
10. Displaying the elements that consist of their wine terroir aids wineries reach the global market easier that their competitors	5.04	5.14	4.90	5.34	5.06
11. The adoption of wine terroir elements is very important for the survival of a winery and its wines in the national marketplace	4.71	4.90	4.70	5.03	4.80

Source: The authors; Gen Z= Generation Z, Gen Y= Generation Y, Gen X= Generation X, BB= Baby Boomers

The strongest perception is attributed to the statement "The ability to display the wine products or the winery with photos and videos, focusing on the elements of wine terroir are important marketing communications techniques for wineries and its wines" and specifically from the Baby Boomer cohort (MV=5.43). Opposing, the lowest MV is attributed to the statement "The communication of the elements of wine terroir is necessary for the marketing of a winery and its wines", originating from the Generation Z cohort (MV=4.76).

Table 4: Perceptions of winery terroir for marketing communication purposes (MV)

Marketing	Gen Z	Gen Y	Gen X	BB	TS
1. The communication of the elements of wine terroir is necessary for the marketing of a winery and its wines	4.76	5.04	4.92	5.03	4.94
2. By communicating the elements of wine terroir, the image of the winery and its wines is enhanced	5.01	5.19	5.03	5.41	5.12
3. The ability to display the wine products or the winery with photos and videos, focusing on the elements of wine terroir are important marketing communications techniques for wineries and its wines	4.95	5.21	5.03	5.43	5.11
4. Posting videos of the winery, its wine products and communicating the elements of wine terroir is an efficient Marketing strategy of the wineries.	5.05	5.28	5.20	5.39	5.21
5. I consider that wine and winery marketing should focus on the elements that compose their terroir and communicate it effectively to consumers	5.04	5.28	5.18	5.28	5.19

Source: The authors; Gen Z= Generation Z, Gen Y= Generation Y, Gen X= Generation X, BB= Baby Boomers

4.5 Factor analysis

For each question an exploratory factor analysis was implemented with varimax rotation in order to decrease the variables for further analyses. In this procedure each question resulted in one factor. Table 5 presents the indices per factor (Eigenvalues>1.0).

Table 5: Dimensions of the terroir attitudes and perceptions

Dimension Names	KMO	BTS	df	p	TVE (%)	No of items	Range of loadings	Cronbach α	MFS	Std
Attitudes towards terroir significance	.914	6853.306	21	<0.001	72.8	7	.808-.889	.937	4.99	1.23
Terroir for competitive advantage	.952	12225.565	55	<0.001	70.4	11	.710-.878	.957	4.84	1.31
Terroir for marketing communication	.875	5266.996	10	<0.001	80.3	5	.882-.919	.938	5.11	1.39

Source: The authors; Gen Z= Generation Z, Gen Y= Generation Y, Gen X= Generation X, BB= Baby Boomers; KMO= Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) test; BTS= Bartlett's test of Sphericity; df=degree of freedom; p=probability value; TVE= total variance explained; MFS= mean factor score; and Std= standard

4.6 ANOVA analysis and multiple comparison of means

The 5th objective of this study is to examine generational cohorts' differences regarding attitudes towards terroir significance and perception of terroir as a wine/winery's competitive advantage and for marketing communication (hypotheses: H1, H2, and H3). To test these three hypotheses, One-Way ANOVA was used (Table 6) whereas the three terroir-related dimensions were the dependent variables, and the generational cohorts were the independent variable.

Table 6: ANOVA tests between terroir attitudes and perceptions and generational cohorts

ANOVA		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Attitudes towards terroir significance	Between Groups	22.691	3	7.564	4.519	.004
	Within Groups	1958.352	1170	1.674		
	Total	1981.044	1173			
Terroir for competitive advantage	Between Groups	6.120	3	2.040	1.192	.312
	Within Groups	2003.147	1170	1.712		
	Total	2009.267	1173			
Terroir for marketing communication	Between Groups	14.598	3	4.866	2.494	.049
	Within Groups	2282.400	1170	1.951		
	Total	2296.998	1173			

Source: The authors

Concerning the first hypothesis, the One-Way ANOVA test revealed significant differences between the generational cohorts and attitudes towards terroir importance [$F(3,1170) = 7.564$, $p < 0.005$]. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected. As regards the second hypothesis, the One-Way ANOVA test did not unveil significant differences between the generational cohorts and perception of terroir as a wine/winery's competitive advantage [$F(3,1170) = 2.040$, $p > 0.05$]. Henceforth, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. Lastly, referring to the third hypothesis, One-Way ANOVA also revealed significant differences between the generational cohorts and perception of terroir for marketing communication [$F(3,1170) = 4.866$, $p < 0.05$]. As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected.

As the analysis of this study reveal that in two cases (attitudes towards terroir significance and terroir for marketing communication), the null hypothesis is rejected, at least two cohorts differ in their perceptions. Therefore, multiple comparisons of means were conducted to investigate in-depth which generational cohort differs from others (Table 7) using the post hoc Tuckey B comparisons test. In Table 7, each row with different letters beside the MV exposes significant differences, starting with "a" for the highest mean score. Therefore, numbers with the same letters in a row reveal no statistical differences (i.e., perception towards terroir for competitive advantage).

Table 7: Tuckey B test between terroir attitudes and perceptions and generational cohorts

Dimensions measured	Gen Z	Gen Y	Gen X	BB
Attitudes towards terroir significance	4.80b	5.09ab	4.95b	5.25a
Terroir for competitive advantage	4.80a	4.89a	4.83a	4.99a
Terroir for marketing communication	4.96b	5.20ab	5.07b	5.31a

Source: the authors; Gen Z= Generation Z, Gen Y= Generation Y, Gen X= Generation X, BB= Baby Boomers

In respect of the first construct referring to attitudes towards terroir importance for aa winery Tuckey's B test indicated that the MV for the oldest cohort, i.e., Baby Boomers is significantly higher as compared to the younger cohorts. It also reveals that the youngest cohort (Generation Z) has the most negative attitude as compared to the other cohorts. As for the third construct, the findings suggest again that the oldest generational cohort holds the most favorable perception regarding terroir for marketing communication. On the other hand, the youngest generational cohort (Generation Z) has the most negative one.

It is also evident that the Baby Boomers and the Generation Y cohort as a entirety hold the same attitudes and perceptions towards the two dimensions examined. Likewise, the Generation X cohort and the Generation Z cohort have the same attitudes and perceptions towards the two dimensions examined and do not express cohort differences. In both cases the descending order from most positive to most negative attitudes and perceptions is as follows: Baby Boomers, Generation Y, Generation X and lastly, the Generation Z cohort.

5 DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study has provided interesting results that relate to the goals that were set. Specifically, this research focuses on five specific objectives. The first objective is to explore self-assessed knowledge of the concept of wine/winery terroir by wine consumers who have visited or is in their near intention to visit a winery in the prefecture of Drama, Greece. Results of the study revealed that 78.1% do not have adequate knowledge of what wine /winery terroir is (they have no knowledge, up to, some/limited knowledge). This finding is in line with the findings of Mamalis et al. (2023a) who found in their study that 76.5% of the respondents have limited knowledge of what terroir is. As to other studies, any comparison is with caution since previous studies explored how consumers and winery tourists define terroir (Spielmann & Gélinas-Chebat, 2012) and did not address self-assessed terroir knowledge.

The second objective of the study was to examine generational cohorts' attitudes towards wine terroir significance (seven statements). Results reveal that for all statements the mean values ranged from 4.63-5.49 on a 7-point Likert scale revealing that participants "somewhat agree" to the seven statements presented. Our findings are not comparable to other since we did not find previous research regarding winery visitors' attitudes towards its terroir (as a whole and not per elements of it).

The third objective of the study was to examine generational cohorts' perceptions of winery terroir as a competitive advantage of a winery (eleven statements). Results revealed that cohorts' perceptions in mean values ranged from 4.20-5.34 on a 7-point Likert scale, indicating that participants "neither agree nor disagree" or "somewhat agree" to the eleven statements presented. However, these findings cannot be compared to previous ones, since we did not find other research referring to generational cohort winery visitors' perceptions of winery terroir as a competitive advantage of a winery. The research we found was related to perception of terroir from the producer's/winery's point of view or residents' commitment (e.g., Capitello et al., 2021) which is out of the focus of this study. Research referring to wine terroir and visitors has to do with terroir experience (e.g., Kastenholz et al., 2021, 2023) and these did not deal with generational cohorts. For example, the study by Kastenholz et al. (2021) examined wine terroir experiences via 137 comments (Tripadvisor) and found that tangible cultural heritage and natural landscapes are significant in providing memorable and recommendable wine terroir experiences.

The fourth objective of the study was to examine generational cohorts' perceptions of winery terroir as a marketing communication tool (five statements). Results revealed that cohorts' perceptions in mean values ranged from 4.76-5.43 on a 7-point Likert scale, meaning that cohorts "somewhat" agree that wine/winery terroir can be used for marketing communication purposes. Still, we cannot compare the findings of this study with similar ones, since we did not find prior research exploring this issue. The research we found was related to perception of terroir as a marketing communication tool from the producers/winery perspective or discusses the concept of terroir for communicative reasons (Tsiakis et al., 2022a, 2022b; Castelló, 2021; Riviezzo et al., 2017) which is out of the focus of this study. Other research we found was referring to wine terroir and marketing communication focus on specific aspects of terroir, such as natural or cultural environment, authenticity, etc., (e.g., Mingione et al., 2019; Bruwer & Rueger-Muck, 2019), while our research discusses it as a total concept.

Lastly, the 5th objective of the study was to examine any generational cohort differences based on attitudes towards wine/winery terroir significance, perceptions of terroir as a competitive advantage and perceptions of terroir for marketing communication. Of the three issues-dimensions examined, cohort differences were observed for the dimension referring to attitudes towards terroir significance and the perception of terroir for marketing communication. On the other hand, no differences were observed between cohorts for the dimension regarding terroir as a competitive advantage of a winery. It also revealed that two sets of cohorts had similar attitudes and perceptions, i.e., Baby Boomers with Generation Y, and Generation Z with Generation X (thus expressing no statistical differences). In all cases Baby Boomers had the strongest positive/ favourable attitudes and perceptions and Generation Z the weakest/negative ones.

As beforementioned these findings cannot be compared to previous ones, since to our knowledge, no study explores wine generational cohorts' attitudes towards terroir significance or perceptions of terroir as a competitive advantage for wineries and perceptions of terroir as a marketing tool for wineries. For example, the study by Kastenholz et al. (2021) examined wine terroir experiences and not attitudes or perceptions and did not incorporate the generational cohort theory nor generational differences.

5.1 Theoretical implications

As Marlowe and Bauman (2019) note, terroir is an understudied topic, even though it is highly significant for the wine and wine tourism competitive market. Moreover, Thach et al. (2021) point out that as the study of generational cohorts and wine related issues are understudied, wine consumer behavior in relation to generational cohorts is a fruitful area for research. As such, seven gaps were identified in the overview of academic literature whereas this study contributed to decrease. These seven gaps as mentioned were lack of studies from the winery tourists' perspective regarding terroir and: self- assessed knowledge of the concept of terroir (1st gap); attitudes towards terroir and its significance (2nd); perceptions of terroir as a winery's competitive advantage element (3rd); and perceptions of terroir for wineries marketing communication (4th). Additional gaps identified were lack of studies that deal with multiple generational cohorts and wine terroir (5th); generational cohort attitudes and perceptions towards terroir as a winery's competitive advantage for marketing communication (6th) and generational cohort differences regarding wine terroir significance and perception of terroir as a winery's competitive advantage or for marketing communication (7th gap). Specifically, the 1st objective of this study (measurement of self-assessed knowledge of wine terroir from wine tourists from different generational cohorts) decreases the first gap and fifth abovementioned gaps in the literature. The second objective (exploring generational cohorts' attitudes towards wine/winery terroir significance) decreases the second, fifth, and partially the sixth gap identified in the literature. The third objective of this study (exploring generational cohorts' perceptions of wine/winery terroir as a competitive advantage of a winery) decreases the third, fifth, and partially the sixth gap identified in the literature. The fourth objective of this study (examining generational cohorts' perceptions of winery terroir for marketing communication) decreases the fourth, fifth, and partially the sixth gap identified in the literature. Lastly, the fifth objective of this study was to examine generational cohort differences based on the attitudes and perceptions, thus decreasing gaps 2-7, that were detected in academic literature.

Also, on a theoretical basis this study complements previous research by providing information from the wine consumer tourists' (actual and potential) perspective concerning winery/wine terroir, as a total concept and not on specific facets of it. Wine terroir marketing is an uprising issue and winery visitors (actual and potential) need to understand the concept, its elements, and its significance on different levels, such as for the winery's product, being a competitive advantage for the wine and the winery, and for marketing communication in order for their favorable winery and its products to survive and thrive in the competitive wine market. Additionally, it applies the generational cohort theory and based on this provides with insight on generational cohort attitudes and perceptions of wine terroir. This insight is important as previous research points out (Inglehart, 1997). Lastly it enriched the body of marketing knowledge in the wine tourists' field by providing understanding with generational cohort differences based on their attitudes and perceptions of terroir. As to our knowledge these issues have either been under-researched or not researched at all.

5.2 Managerial implications

In practical terms, this study provides with knowledge from wine tourists from four generational cohorts as regards attitudes and perceptions towards winery/wine terroir. This information is of value for winery managers and marketing staff in order to implement marketing strategies adjusted when targeting specific generational cohorts.

First, the results of this study show that it is necessary to educate cohorts about the characteristics of wine and wine terroir, using different means depending on the cohort. For example, wineries can develop a YouTube channel informing potential customers about what wine terroir is, its elements, and its significance in wine production and the characteristics of the final product. The use of influencers referring to wines and its terroir can target the Generation Z cohort, since previous research (Deng et al., 2022; Thach et al., 2021) has found that this cohort is persuaded by influencer marketing. Moreover, Instagram and Snapchat can also be used targeting this cohort, since compared to other cohorts they use both more often, whereas the older ones use Facebook (Thach et al., 2021). Also, Bauman et al. (2020) pinpointed that the Generation Y and Generation X as compared to Baby Boomers use Web 2.0 information sources, especially their contacts' recommendations on social media and wine blogs.

Moreover, wineries that accept visitors can educate cohorts based on their perceptions and attitudes towards terroir and explaining its significance in the stages of production and selling process by different approaches. For example, Generation X and Baby Boomers should be approached from the winemakers themselves and showcasing through wine tasting the impact of different aspects of the winery terroir, such as soil, cultivation procedure, varieties, microclimate, etc. Rachão et al. (2023) found in their study that Generation X and Baby Boomers desire to interact directly with the wine producers, while Rachão et al. (2023) and Stergiou (2018) found that Generation Z desires experiences from the winery visit. Therefore, experiences combined with terroir education and new technology that is entertaining (Rachão et al., 2023) would provide in this sense for the youngest cohort memorable tourist experiences (Stergiou, 2018), positive attitudes and perception towards terroir.

Lastly, this paper provides with social, environmental and economic implications which are interconnected to the managerial implications, and how winery managers and wine producing areas' officials will use terroir for attracting tourists. As regards the social implications of terroir, it is focused on the "human" factor of terroir which encompasses the history, the culture and the human interventions in the production stage, as well as the concept of origin (e.g., Vaudour, 2002, 2003; Capitello et al., 2021; Charters et al., 2017; Castelló, 2021; Polyzos et al., 2024). These elements of terroir can be used successfully as a marketing communication tool, especially as Greece has a strong historical and cultural background that can be associated with wine tourism destinations (Athens-Macedonian News Agency (2023). As regards the environmental implications, these are focused on the human factor of terroir and specifically on the sustainable production process (e.g., Mastroberardino et al., 2020), production of organic (Marlowe & Bauman, 2019; Tsiakis et al., 2022b) and natural wines (Teil, 2012; Ding et al., 2023). These production practices of the human terroir element can be communicated by the managers. The elements of terroir and the communication of terroir by the winery managers will aid wineries and their products to build a "quality premium" and a higher reputation (Belletti,1999). Therefore, the marketing and communication of wine terroir rises economic benefits for the wine production area attracting not only wine consumer tourists but non-wine consumer tourists too.

6 CONLUSIONS

This research has provided a number of insights into the attitudes and perceptions of wine consumers of four generational cohorts in Greece who are winery tourists or intend to be one in the near future. It also identified similarities and differences in wine terroir attitudes and perceptions. As Thach et al. (2021) note, the literature on wine consumer behavior in relation to generational cohorts indicates that this is a fruitful area for research. Stergiou (2018) also points out that the future of wine tourism is placed on the younger generational cohorts and therefore it is imperative for wineries to gain knowledge of their attitudes and behavior. In total, by addressing five specific objectives it decreases the seven gaps identified in literature as abovementioned.

This study has several limitations. The first limitation relates to the sample size. While the total sample size analyzed statistically was 1174 participants when breaking the sample per cohort, it reveals that the sample size per cohort is small ranging from 122 (Baby Boomers) to 396 (Generation X). The second limitation originates from the data collection method, incorporating online nonprobability sampling and targeting wine consumers that have visited or intend to visit a winery. This limitation consequently led to the lack of generalization of findings, though it provides the basis for future research, i.e., employing a stratified sampling non-online method and targeting also non winery visitors and non-wine consumers. A third limitation of the study is that it is focused on visitors towards one specific country and region, namely the Drama region of Greece. Therefore, future research that connect generational cohorts with wine terroir attitudes and perceptions from different wine producing areas of the country and from other wine producing countries would be of interest. Lastly, another limitation is that it did not address issues such as wine consumption habits or self-assessed knowledge of the specific terroir facets. As noted, subsequent research could address these limitations individually and design them in such a way as to minimize them. Additionally, following research could focus only on qualitative research and gain deep insights into the cohorts' attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors towards wine and winery terroir through various qualitative methods.

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RESEARCH NOTE

End-of-life hospitality? A preamble for supply-side notions of suicide tourism

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Abstract:

Purpose: *Suicide tourism has existed for several decades in countries such as Switzerland, allowing inbound tourists to seek death with dignity. The growth of suicide tourism has not gone unnoticed, with an emerging body of work unpacking this phenomenon, its underpinning factors, and its controversies. At present, most work surrounding suicide tourism is located within a demand-driven perspective, with very little known about how end-of-life hospitality should be conceptualized.*
Methods: *Using the case of global destinations where recent policy changes have allowed for euthanasia, this article presents different dimensions for end-of-life hospitality, to guide current and future research directions toward a more nuanced understanding of the supply-side perspectives associated with suicide tourism.*
Results: *A conceptual framework on end-of-life hospitality is proposed, where different stakeholders and decisions related to such an undertaking are identified and discussed.*
Implications: *End-of-life hospitality necessitates a timely and coordinated approach to its undertaking, as there is still a significant variation of medically assisted dying globally. Having an integrated and systematic framing of the issues and stakeholders mitigates the likelihood of misuses and abuses of end-of-life experiences and enables all participants to have the necessary assurances to make informed decisions.*

Keywords: *end-of-life travel, death tourism, euthanasia, assisted dying and tourism*

JEL Classification: *J2, Z32, J10*

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1 INTRODUCTION

The notion of suicide tourism (or euthanasia tourism) has been in existence since countries such as Switzerland approved legislation for tourists to access physician-assisted dying across international borders more than three decades ago (Gauthier et al., 2015; Wakefield, 2021). In addition, end-of-life travel with the desire to end suffering as the primary motivation has also been in existence for a long time, albeit oftentimes in contradiction with human emotions (Mehtab et al., 2021; Yayla & Altan, 2020).

It should be emphasized that suicide tourism occurs across two main forms - euthanasia (self-induced death), and assisted suicide (where a physician, family member, or friend administers the potion). While scholars have sought to unpack motivations, enablers, and barriers to suicide tourism (see for instance Miller & Gonzalez, 2013; Goh et al., 2022; Wen et al., 2019; Yu et al., 2019), little is known about end-of-life hospitality within extant literature. This is because extant literature has mostly framed this tourism phenomenon from a demand-driven perspective, through lenses such as market segmentation and consumer behaviour (Carrigan, 2023; Testoni & Arnau, 2023; Wen, Goh & Yu, 2023). This is despite other scholars postulating that there are other 'voices' from a supply-side perspective that should be given adequate attention, such as those from physicians or local tour operators (Xu et al., 2023). Given the increasing number of countries and regions contemplating or legalizing euthanasia or assisted suicide, the potential for suicide tourism is likely to also expand its market share (Ladki et al., 2016; Mondal & Bhowmik, 2018; Mroz et al., 2020). End-of-life hospitality deserves more attention from scholars to ensure it is carefully managed to address the needs of all parties involved.

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2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Suicide tourism is characterized by the movement of tourists to a destination to end one's life (Christou, 2021; Yu et al., 2020). Such mobilities can occur in different forms, either assisted by a physician or where the individual self-administers the medically approved drug (Huxtable, 2009; Zhi et al., 2019). Suicide tourism at present only occurs in select destinations such as Switzerland and Belgium, though the market is argued to be under-regulated, and heavily skewed in a demand-driven model (Hurst & Mauron, 2017; Sperling, 2022). Proponents of suicide tourism postulated that such practices offer an individual a volitional choice of dying with dignity and reduce the poor quality of life due to terminal illness (Richards, 2017). Yet, opponents of suicide tourism assert that life is a gift and should be terminated by natural means (Padubidri et al., 2022). Yang et al. (2023) further argue that suicide tourism, for ethical, moral, and legal reasons, should also not be considered tourism at all, disputing that there is hardly a pleasure component in such trips.

Amidst this backdrop, data suggests that such a business model is profitable, with tourists travelling to Switzerland to participate in suicide tourism where euthanasia may be deemed illegal in their home countries (Haesen, 2018). The case of 104-year-old Australian scientist David Goodall who was one such tourist is a prominent example (Westcott, 2018). Organizations such as Dignitas and Exit International are among the pro-euthanasia stakeholders who support individuals with the travel arrangements associated with suicide tourism. However, there is certainly a moral question to be addressed here - should there be a formalized industry for suicide tourism? And to what extent should suicide tourism stakeholders on the supply side morally benefit from such mobilities?

There is a paucity of information related to end-of-life hospitality from a supply-side perspective (Pratt et al., 2019). It is necessary to illuminate the unique forms of hospitality that differ from other sectors of tourism, and how such practices and responsibilities are borne within destinations that have only recently legislated voluntary assisted dying laws, such as Australia, New Zealand, and Spain (McKenna, 2021, Wittenberg-Cox, 2022).

3 THE CASE FOR END-OF-LIFE HOSPITALITY

As legal regulations demonstrate greater acceptance of euthanasia and assisted suicide, then correspondingly, destinations may also choose to offer end-of-life hospitality to both domestic and international markets. Despite the confusion surrounding the term suicide tourism (whether involving euthanasia or assisted suicide), tourists and their carers are still engaging in various forms of hospitality such as accommodation, food and beverage, and in some cases, healthcare providers. These elements of the supply-side perspective are highly implicit and marginalized amidst the dominant demand-centric perspectives within extant literature.

Because suicide tourism is associated with cross-border mobility, barriers exist as to how tourists from source countries undertake such complex, and high-involvement decisions. Legality differences, costs, insurance, and other associated destination-specific processes vary significantly from leisure travel choice, and hence often require the use of specialized agencies to undertake the risks and preparation needed for suicide tourism formalities. However, what is not yet fully identified is the range of stakeholders that perform the supply-side roles within suicide tourism. Then, prompted by the current body of knowledge (or the lack thereof), this research note proposes different dimensions (see Figure 1) to overcome the barriers as identified by other scholars (Goh et al., 2022; Wen et al., 2019) for emerging suicide tourism destinations around the world. Table 1 illustrates the fragmented lenses in which end-of-life hospitality is drawn from and calls for an integrated model as depicted in Figure 1.

Table 1: Dimensions of end-of-life hospitality and corresponding

End-of-life agencies	Willson *et al.* (2023)
Finances	Miller & Gonzalez (2013)
Transport	Wen *et al.* (2023); Yu *et al.* (2020)
Accommodation	Mondal & Bhowmik (2018)
Food and beverage	Stevenson (2016)
Places of interest	Pratt *et al.* (2019)
Counselling services	Zhi *et al.* (2019)
Travel insurance	Connolly *et al.* (2017)
Place of death	Christou (2021)
Funeral services	Pratt *et al.* (2019)
Procedures and paperwork	Gauthier *et al.* (2021); Mondal & Bhowmik (2018)

From Figure 1, the range of decisions that a suicide tourist must make illustrates the complexity of the task, as well as the highly dynamic spaces occurring between each of the sub-sectors, and the inter-dependency one stakeholder has on another.

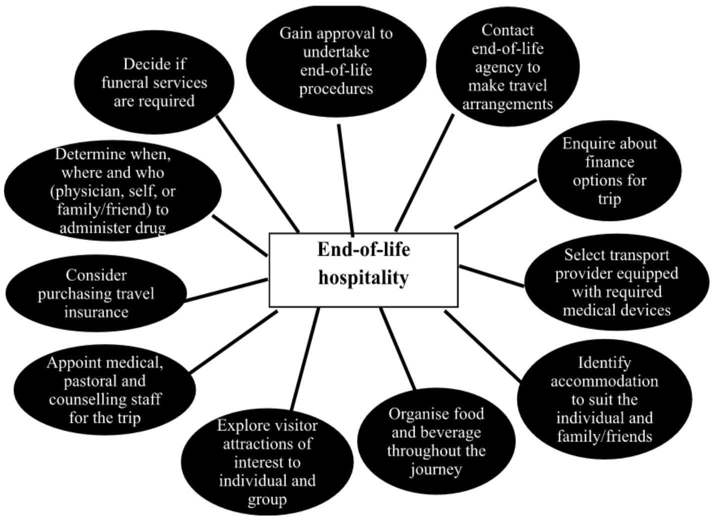

Figure 1: Dimensions of end-of-life hospitality

In some ways, the dimensions resemble a tourism supply chain in terms of its composition. However, other aspects such as pastoral care and health and well-being do not usually form leisure or business travel decision-making, thus highlighting the need for further clarification and scrutiny in this field, as alluded to by other scholars previously (Richards, 2017; Sperling, 2022). The inter-dependence on tourism and non-tourism sectors within end-of-life hospitality calls for greater alignment and dialogues among these stakeholder groups, if there will be a concerted strategy to develop such a landscape in the future. Figure 1 provides a base in which future health-oriented tourism destinations seeking to deliver end-of-life hospitality can formulate boutique, or niche services to develop a credible, and strong destination image that their visitors' needs are met. Importantly, there are decisions to be made as to whether to integrate specific health/medical/wellness facilities into a composite tourism entity or outsource these to those with the needed specialization. However, there is merit in having a 'one-stop-shop' approach, as it can help ease visitor concerns in what is a high-involvement decision (Yu et al., 2020).

Yet, these developments are not without their ethical and moral responsibilities. In a post-COVID-19 landscape, individuals have paid greater attention to their health and wellbeing and are likely to spend more in looking after their next of kin. This can give rise to unscrupulous operators seeking to capitalise on this growing end-of-life hospitality market, especially where more and more countries are allowing cross-border travel to occur (Wittenburg-Cox, 2022). Unpleasant experiences can result in costly lawsuits and tarnish the destination image for the country/city where the end-of-life hospitality was to be experienced.

4 CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE STUDIES

In conclusion, this research note sought to initiate conversations around how end-of-life hospitality can be conceptualized, especially for destinations that have recently approved assisted dying laws. Tour operators watching with interest can identify the range of stakeholders needed and reflect on possible destinations that can facilitate the necessary environments to support end-of-life hospitality for interested parties. The visual depiction of end-of-life hospitality dimensions serves as a starting point then to address current gaps in knowledge that have painted suicide tourism to be a mostly user-centric sector, with implicit mention of the role of tour operators and other ancillary services (Goh et al., 2021).

At a theoretical level, this research note opens a wider conversation as to who should be able to provide more nuanced insights to offering end-of-life hospitality. These are needed conversations to trigger further investigations into a unique form of hospitality services where the 'tourist' may not return home. It extends health/medical hospitality, especially in a palliative care environment. Scholars can reconceptualize health/medical hospitality from various perspectives, other than that of a willingness-to-pay landscape.

At a practical level, the research note calls for clearer governance of end-of-life hospitality when global mobility is now more accessible to a wider international audience. Stakeholders should be licenced in some manner to ensure that they have the necessary skills and expertise to handle complex and ethical processes in a trustworthy manner. This prevents abuses of the end-of-life hospitality system in what is currently an under-regulated industry.

This research note is not without its limitations. Empirical data are needed to validate its propositions and test which stakeholders are most influential in shaping end-of-life hospitality. In addition, destinations may reveal similar or different cultural connotations of end-of-life hospitality (Yu et al., 2020).

Future studies may wish to examine in-depth attitudes and perceptions across demographic variables such as age, gender, income, and education levels, and how these may have an impact on end-of-life hospitality consumption and service design. Other scholars may also explore the impact of COVID-19 on end-of-life hospitality intentions, and whether new contactless innovations such as the 'Sarco' suicide pod, provide a quicker and more dignified offering of suicide tourism (Mark, 2021).

All the same, the evolving landscape of assisted dying laws around the world necessitates a timely introspection of which stakeholders need to be involved, and what forms of collaboration are needed to provide a professional, and customized approach to end-of-life hospitality.

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Religious tourism and life satisfaction: the role of motivation, perceived value and social cohesion

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Abstract:

Purpose: *This study aimed to explore the relationships between religious tourism motivation (RTM), tourist perceived value (TPV), social cohesion (SC), life satisfaction (LS), and fear induced by COVID-19 (FC). The focus was on understanding how these factors interacted during the Dongshan Welcomes the Buddha parade, particularly in the context of the ongoing pandemic. Dongshan is a small town in Tainan, Taiwan.*
Methods: *Data collection with a snowball sample occurred from 23-12-2023, to 10-1-2024, yielding 304 responses. The survey assessed participant experiences and adaptations during the modified event. The relationships among RTM, TPV, SC, LS, and FC were analyzed using quantitative methods, with particular attention to the direct and indirect effects of RTM on TPV and SC, and their subsequent impact on LS.*
Results: *RTM significantly enhances TPV and SC directly and indirectly through TPV, positively influencing both SC and LS, with SC also positively contributing to LS. Interestingly, while fear negatively impacts LS, it does not significantly moderate the relationships between TPV and LS, nor SC and LS. This suggests that the direct and indirect effects of RTM and TPV are robust, even in the presence of pandemic-induced fear.*
Implications: *This study makes several theoretical and practical contributions religious tourism. It confirms the significant role of RTM in enhancing perceived value and social cohesion, and it establishes the importance of perceived value in fostering social cohesion and life satisfaction. Moreover, it highlights the resilience of these relationships despite external disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings offer valuable insights for managers and organizers of religious tourism events, emphasizing the need to enhance participant motivation and perceived value to boost social cohesion and life satisfaction, even amidst external challenges.*

Keywords: *religious tourism, religious tourism motivation, tourist perceived value, social cohesion, life satisfaction, fear*

JEL Classification: *Z12, A13, L83*

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1 INTRODUCTION

Religious tourism is immensely significant for individuals and communities globally (Tsai, 2021). It provides profound spiritual and emotional experiences, enabling participants to deepen their faith, find solace, and partake in meaningful rituals and practices. Beyond the spiritual aspects, religious tourism is crucial for preserving and promoting cultural heritage. Pilgrimages and religious festivals often encompass

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ancient traditions, art, music, and architecture that are vital to a community's identity. Economically, religious tourism can drive local development, generate income, create jobs, and improve infrastructure in host regions (Tkaczynski & Arli, 2018). Socially, it promotes community cohesion and intercultural dialogue by bringing together people from diverse backgrounds in shared acts of devotion and celebration (Collins-Kreiner, 2019). This convergence not only strengthens communal bonds but also fosters understanding and tolerance among different cultures and religions. Overall, religious tourism is a multifaceted phenomenon that enriches spiritual lives, sustains cultural heritage, boosts local economies, and enhances social cohesion, making it an essential area of study and practice.

Religious tourism, a branch of cultural tourism, has garnered considerable interest for its ability to provide deep spiritual and cultural experiences. Events such as "Dongshan Welcomes the Buddha" in Dongshan, Tainan, Taiwan, with their rich historical roots and cultural significance, illustrate how religious tourism can strengthen community bonds and enhance individual well-being. This annual event, featuring a five-hour, 14.6-kilometer pilgrimage, draws a diverse group of participants, underscoring its value as both a spiritual journey and a cultural tradition.

Despite the increasing interest in religious tourism, there is limited research on the factors that contribute to the perceived value and satisfaction of participants in such events. Existing studies have primarily focused on the general motivations and experiences of tourists without delving into the specific dynamics of religious events. This has left a significant gap in our understanding of how religious tourism motivation (RTM) specifically influences tourist perceived value (TPV) and social cohesion (SC), and how these factors collectively impact life satisfaction (LS).

Moreover, the impact of external disruptions, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, on religious tourism experiences remains underexplored (Hsu et al., 2021). The pandemic has introduced unprecedented challenges and fears that could potentially alter the experiences and satisfaction levels of religious tourists. However, there is a paucity of research examining how these external fears and uncertainties interact with established motivational and satisfaction constructs in religious tourism.

This gap in the literature calls for a deeper understanding of how RTM, TPV, SC, and LS interact, particularly in the context of a global health crisis. Investigating these intricate relationships is crucial for enhancing the management and organization of religious tourism events. By examining how motivations drive perceived value and social cohesion, and how these, in turn, influence life satisfaction, we can develop strategies to improve participant experiences. Additionally, exploring the moderating role of fear induced by COVID-19 can provide insights into the resilience and adaptability of religious tourism in the face of external challenges. This knowledge is vital for stakeholders aiming to sustain and enrich religious tourism in turbulent times, ensuring that these events continue to provide meaningful and satisfying experiences for participants.

The study aimed to explore several key aspects of religious tourism, particularly in the context of the "Dongshan Welcomes the Buddha" event. One of the primary objectives was to investigate the role of RTM in enhancing TPV and SC. Understanding this relationship is crucial as it sheds light on how motivational factors drive perceived value and social cohesion among tourists participating in religious events.

Additionally, the study examined the impact of TPV on SC and LS among participants. This objective is important because it highlights the downstream effects of perceived value on social cohesion and overall life satisfaction, providing a holistic view of the tourist experience in religious tourism contexts.

The contribution of SC to LS was another focus of the research. By exploring this relationship, the study aimed to demonstrate the positive impact of social cohesion on life satisfaction, emphasizing the importance of community and connectedness in enhancing the well-being of religious tourists.

Furthermore, the study assessed the moderating effect of fear induced by COVID-19 (FC) on the relationships between TPV, SC, and LS. This aspect of the research is particularly relevant given the ongoing pandemic, as it explores how external fears and uncertainties influence the established relationships between perceived value, social cohesion, and life satisfaction.

Finally, the study sought to provide theoretical and practical insights for improving the management of religious tourism events, especially in the face of external disruptions like the COVID-19 pandemic. By addressing these objectives, the study aims to fill existing research gaps and offer comprehensive insights into the dynamics of religious tourism. The findings contribute to academic knowledge by expanding current models of tourist satisfaction and motivation in the context of religious tourism. Moreover, they provide practical applications for event organizers and managers, helping them enhance participant experiences and satisfaction, even amid challenging circumstances.

This paper makes several important contributions. Firstly, it advances the theoretical understanding of how augmented reality (AR) can enhance the spiritual and cultural aspects of religious tourism. Secondly, by using a mixed methods approach, the research provides comprehensive insights into participants' experiences, combining quantitative data with qualitative narratives for a holistic view. Thirdly, the findings offer practical implications for tourism managers and policymakers, providing evidence-based recommendations for integrating AR into religious tourism events to boost participant engagement and satisfaction. Lastly, this study contributes to the broader knowledge of sustainable tourism practices, demonstrating how technological innovations can be used to preserve and promote cultural heritage in a rapidly changing world.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

2.1. Religious tourism in Taiwan

Taiwan is a polytheistic society with a wide array of religious beliefs, including Buddhism, Taoism, Christianity (Tsai, 2021), folk beliefs (Chou & Liu, 2023), Islam (Nugraha et al., 2022), and indigenous tribal beliefs (Wu, 2021). This diverse religious landscape fosters a vibrant setting for religious tourism, attracting both devout pilgrims and secular tourists to numerous sacred sites throughout the island.

Yeh et al. (2009) analyze pilgrimage sites in Taiwan as complex tourism destinations serving both religious devotees and casual vacationers. Their research on 427 pilgrims visiting the Da-Lin temple, dedicated to the goddess Mazu, uncovered diverse levels of devotion among attendees. Around 25% of participants demonstrated deep belief, while 40% reported low levels of self-assessed devotion. Factor analysis revealed that the primary motivation for visiting these sites was 'having a holiday,' suggesting that the appeal of pilgrimage sites extends beyond strictly religious purposes.

Tsai (2021) explores the pivotal role of religious tourism in Taiwan's tourism development, emphasizing the diverse motivations of visitors to religious sites. Her research on the Welcome Royal Lord Festival in Donggang, Tainan, Taiwan, identified four distinct tourist groups in a polytheistic setting: "Sacred Pilgrims," "Believers," "Experience Companions," and "Secular Polytheists." These groups varied in their satisfaction levels, participation behaviors, perceptions of cultural authenticity, and attachment to sacred sites. The study highlights potential conflicts between tourism development and religious sustainability, recommending event management strategies that balance cultural preservation with tourism attraction.

Wu (2021) examines tourism governance and its effects on indigenous communities through a case study of Nanao Township in Yilan County, Taiwan. The study underscores the significance of resource allocation, regulatory authority, and community networks in tourism development. In-depth interviews revealed that indigenous areas receive more national financial resources than nonindigenous areas. However, effective resource distribution depends on consensus reached through meeting and discussion platforms among tribes. The study highlights that sustainable tourism in indigenous communities requires respect for traditional wisdom and greater stakeholder agreement for successful participatory co-management.

These studies collectively highlight the complexity of religious tourism in Taiwan, where religious sites cater to both spiritual and recreational needs, attracting visitors with varied motivations. The findings stress the need to balance tourism development with the preservation of religious and cultural integrity, ensuring that the benefits of tourism are distributed fairly among local communities.

2.2. Religious tourism motivation

Religious tourism involves a variety of motivations, indicating that many visitors to religious sites are neither entirely secular tourists nor solely pilgrims. Instead, they fall somewhere in between, driven by a mix of motives such as worship, learning about religious rituals, and seeking cultural or adventurous experiences (Terzidou et al., 2018). Tourist motivation is complex, involving multiple needs that are addressed within a single trip (Kim et al., 2020; Yeh et al., 2009). Visitors to religious sites often have diverse reasons for their visits, ranging from religious pilgrimage to cultural or adventurous tourism (Ebadi, 2014; Kelly, 2012).

The line between pilgrims and secular tourists has become increasingly blurred. The term "pilgrim" now encompasses motivations for travel that include both religious and non-religious reasons (Lochrie et al., 2019; Rashid, 2018). This expanded definition reflects the intricate nature of contemporary religious tourism, where motivations defy simple categorization. For example, some visitors may seek spiritual enrichment, while others are motivated by a curiosity to explore cultural heritage or enjoy distinctive experiences.

Studies by Yeh et al. (2009) and Tsai (2021) established classifications of tourists visiting pilgrimage sites. These research efforts confirmed that tourist attitudes and behaviors along the pilgrim-tourist spectrum are heavily influenced by their religious affiliations and beliefs. Yeh et al. (2009) highlighted factors such as social interaction, intellectual curiosity, and experiential learning as significant motivators for engaging in religious pilgrimages. Likewise, Tsai (2021) underscored that visitors' self-perception and motivations for travel frequently shape their overall experiences and levels of satisfaction.

Cultural factors are also influential in shaping secular-religious motivations. Tsai et al. (2002) discovered that cultural considerations strongly affect visitors' reasons for visiting religious sites such as the Vatican. For many, these visits are not solely driven by religious devotion but also by a desire to immerse themselves in the rich cultural and historical settings of these locations. This dual motivation often leads to return visits, as individuals seek both spiritual and cultural enrichment.

In summary, motivation for religious tourism involves a complex interaction of religious, cultural, and individual factors. Whether guided by faith, curiosity, or a quest for cultural enrichment, religious tourists embody a range of motivations that blur distinctions between pilgrimage and tourism. This fusion of motivations leads to a hybrid experience that enhances both the secular and spiritual dimensions of travel. Understanding this intricate motivational landscape is essential for effectively managing and promoting religious tourism destinations, ensuring they meet the diverse needs of their visitors. By recognizing the multifaceted nature of tourist motivations, destination managers can design more inclusive and compelling experiences that resonate with a wide audience.

2.3. Tourist perceived value

Perceived value, a fundamental concept in marketing, is crucial for understanding consumer behavior within relationship marketing contexts (Zietsman et al., 2020). Recently, it has garnered significant attention in tourism and hospitality research. Scholars have identified two primary approaches to conceptualize perceived value. The first approach considers perceived value as a balance between total perceived benefits and total perceived sacrifices made by customers (Lin et al., 2020). In religious tourism, perceived value is particularly influenced by religious factors, which play a pivotal role in shaping tourists' consumption experiences (Eid & El-Gohary, 2015; Prayag, 2020). Religious affiliations significantly impact tourists' perceptions of value (Jamal & Sharifuddin, 2015; Schweinsberg, 2023), which are highly subjective. As tourists visit various religious sites, they discern different types of value, thereby adding complexity to the exploration of perceived value in religious tourism.

Yu et al. (2021) explored the connection between tourist perceived value and life satisfaction in religious tourism, an area that had been less studied previously. Their research focused on Buddhist temple tours in China and found a positive relationship between tourist perceived value and life satisfaction, with tourist satisfaction serving as a mediator in this relationship. They developed a scale to assess Buddhist tourist perceived value, encompassing seven dimensions: quality, price, emotional value, social value, educational value, physical attributes, and non-physical attributes. This comprehensive approach underscores the diverse aspects of perceived value within religious tourism.

Koburtay and Syed (2021) investigated the impact of adherence to religious guidelines and the availability of spiritual amenities on psychological well-being and guest satisfaction in 5-star hotels in Jordan. Their mixed-method study revealed that the presence of spiritual facilities contributes positively to both employee well-being and guest satisfaction, whereas non-compliance with religious regulations has a negative effect on these factors. This research expands the understanding of perceived value by incorporating the well-being of employees and guests within a Middle Eastern cultural context.

Buzinde (2020) utilized self-determination theory (SDT) to investigate the well-being effects of spiritual tourism. Through an autoethnographic examination of a yoga/meditation retreat in India, Buzinde connected experiential and self-reflective aspects of spiritual tourism to larger social outcomes such as well-being. This perspective highlights the significance of intrinsic motivations and personal development in influencing perceived value in religious tourism.

Dinh et al. (2022) examined how religiosity influences consumer behavior among Catholics in Vietnam. They discovered that life satisfaction acts as a mediator between religious commitments and customer loyalty. Moreover, ethical considerations amplify the effect of intrinsic religiosity on consumer loyalty. This study provides a sociological insight into how religious commitments shape consumer behavior and perceived value within the context of religious tourism.

To sum up, perceived value in religious tourism is intricate and multifaceted, shaped by factors such as religious commitments, personal experiences, and cultural contexts. Recognizing and comprehending these diverse dimensions is essential for successfully managing and promoting religious tourism destinations, thereby meeting the diverse needs and expectations of tourists.

2.4. Social cohesion

Social cohesion refers to the degree of connectedness and solidarity among groups within society (Mouratidis & Poortinga, 2020; Ramírez-Hurtado et al., 2022). It closely relates to social capital, encompassing aspects of social organization such as trust, norms, and networks that facilitate coordinated action and enhance societal effectiveness. Clarke et al. (2023) elaborate on this concept by defining social cohesion as the collective reasons why individuals choose to remain in a specific community, emphasizing its significance in urban greenspaces (Ma et al., 2023; Rasul & Hoque, 2020). Their analysis underscores that factors promoting social cohesion include crime reduction, enhanced maintenance, provision of physical spaces, and amenities for social gatherings, with considerations of safety, accessibility, and inclusivity playing pivotal roles.

The relationship between religion and social cohesion is complex. Laliotis and Minos (2022) explored this connection within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in Western Germany, revealing that predominantly Catholic regions, characterized by strong family and social bonds, faced higher rates of infections and deaths during the early stages of the pandemic. This suggests that religious affiliation, influencing social interactions, can significantly impact social cohesion (Lee, 2020). Their research indicates that Catholics tend to have more frequent and close interactions with family and friends compared to non-Catholics, illustrating the role of religious communities in fostering social cohesion. This heightened social interaction partly explains the increased COVID-19 incidence in areas dominated by Catholics, highlighting the intricate interplay among religious practices, social cohesion, and public health outcomes.

Mouratidis and Poortinga (2020) investigate the relationship between urban vitality, the built environment, and social cohesion. They observe that compact urban forms characterized by higher density and mixed land use can enhance urban vitality but are negatively linked to social cohesion. In contrast, urban vitality shows a positive association with social cohesion in comparable urban settings, indicating that local efforts to encourage walking and social interaction can bolster social cohesion (Sorakunnas, 2022). This highlights that both religious practices and urban design impact social cohesion, with their effects contingent on the context and specific attributes of the environment.

Social cohesion, characterized by connectedness and solidarity within society, is shaped by both religious practices and urban design. Religion, especially in communities where social bonds are strong, can contribute positively to social cohesion but may present challenges during events like pandemics. Urban design and the vibrancy of neighborhoods also have substantial impacts, influencing how cities are structured and administered to promote social cohesion and overall well-being.

2.5. Life satisfaction

Life satisfaction within the domain of religious tourism is deeply influenced by several factors (Houge Mackenzie et al., 2023), including perceived value, spiritual enrichment, and cultural contexts. Research highlights that spiritual tourism, grounded in Self-Determination Theory (SDT), significantly contributes to the well-being of tourists. Buzinde (2020) exemplifies this through an autoethnographic exploration of a yoga and meditation retreat in Rishikesh, India, demonstrating that such experiences promote personal development, introspection, and a sense of community. These aspects align with SDT's principles of fulfilling intrinsic psychological needs like autonomy and connection, thereby enhancing overall psychological well-being and life satisfaction.

Moreover, religiosity significantly influences life satisfaction within the realm of religious tourism. Dinh et al. (2022) examine how Catholic affiliations in Vietnam affect ethical decision-making and customer loyalty, thereby bolstering life satisfaction through a sense of purpose and moral grounding. This research underscores that religious commitments not only shape individual behaviors but also contribute positively to overall life satisfaction by offering ethical frameworks and enhancing personal fulfillment.

In the field of Buddhist tourism, Yu et al. (2021) examine the connection between tourist perceived value, satisfaction, and life satisfaction. They identify seven dimensions of perceived value for Buddhist tourists and observe a positive relationship between perceived value and life satisfaction, mediated by tourist satisfaction. This indicates that enhancing cultural and spiritual experiences at Buddhist temples not only improves tourists' immediate satisfaction but also contributes to their overall life satisfaction by fulfilling profound spiritual and cultural desires.

Furthermore, the inclusion of spiritual amenities and adherence to religious protocols in hospitality settings, as examined by Koburtay and Syed (2021), have a substantial impact on the well-being of hotel workers and the happiness of guests. This study suggests that establishing supportive and spiritually enriching environments enhances life satisfaction among both employees and guests. These findings highlight the significance of incorporating spiritual aspects into tourism operations to promote well-being and satisfaction among participants (Mirehie & Gibson, 2020).

In summary, life satisfaction in religious tourism is closely tied to perceived value, spiritual enrichment, and cultural factors. Appreciating these dynamics can guide the formulation of tourism strategies that address tourists' immediate needs while also promoting their long-term well-being and life satisfaction. By prioritizing spiritual experiences, respecting cultural contexts, and fostering personal development, religious tourism has the potential to significantly enhance overall life satisfaction among tourists globally.

2.6. Fear induced by COVID-19

The anxiety triggered by COVID-19 has significantly disrupted religious gatherings worldwide, underscoring the need for effective crisis management strategies (Yeh, 2021). Hsu et al. (2021) emphasize the critical role of non-pharmaceutical interventions in controlling COVID-19 during large religious gatherings, recommending measures such as social distancing and hygiene protocols to reduce transmission risks.

Laliotis and Minos (2022) investigate how religious interactions in Western Germany have influenced COVID-19 incidence, highlighting elevated transmission rates linked to close and prolonged contact during religious practices. This underscores the challenge of balancing spiritual needs with public health imperatives. Yeh (2021) discusses strategies for revitalizing tourism post-COVID-19, advocating phased reopening and adaptable measures to sustain religious tourism while addressing ongoing concerns and restrictions. Managing COVID-19 fears in religious settings demands coordinated crisis management, rigorous health protocols, and flexible strategies to ensure safety, rebuild confidence, and facilitate the gradual recovery of religious tourism globally.

2.7. Hypothesis development

RTM plays a pivotal role in enhancing TPV and SC within religious tourism contexts. Studies by Eid and El-Gohary (2015) and Terzidou et al. (2018) have consistently shown that individuals driven by strong religious motives perceive greater value in their tourism experiences. This perception stems from the fulfillment of spiritual needs, cultural enrichment, and the unique emotional and social benefits derived from participating in religious activities. Moreover, heightened RTM fosters a sense of shared purpose and community among participants, thereby strengthening social cohesion during religious events. This cohesion is evident through shared rituals, collective identities, and mutual support among participants, all of which contribute to a more fulfilling and satisfying tourism experience. Therefore, the study proposes:

H1: Attendees' religious tourism motivation (RTM) positively contributes to their tourist perceived value (TPV).

H2: Attendees' religious tourism motivation (RTM) positively contributes to social cohesion (SC).

TPV significantly influences both SC and LS among religious tourists. Research by Zietsman et al. (2020) and Mouratidis & Poortinga (2020) underscores that tourists who perceive higher value in their religious tourism experiences are more likely to engage actively with the local community, participate in communal activities, and build stronger interpersonal relationships. This sense of belonging and connectedness enhances social cohesion, as participants feel integrated into a supportive network of like-minded individuals. Moreover, TPV correlates positively with life satisfaction, as tourists derive greater joy, meaning, and fulfillment from their enriched cultural and spiritual encounters during religious journeys. Therefore, the study proposes:

H3: Tourist perceived value (TPV) positively contributes to social cohesion (SC).

H4: Tourist perceived value (TPV) positively contributes to life satisfaction (LS).

SC within religious tourism settings positively impacts LS among participants. As highlighted by Mouratidis & Poortinga (2020) and Clarke et al. (2023), cohesive social interactions foster a sense of belonging and emotional well-being among tourists. Engaging in shared rituals, mutual support, and collective celebrations strengthens interpersonal bonds and enhances the overall satisfaction derived from religious tourism experiences. Participants feel more content and fulfilled when they perceive themselves as part of a supportive community that shares similar values and beliefs, thereby reinforcing their positive perceptions of life satisfaction. Therefore, the study proposes:

H5: Social cohesion (SC) positively contributes to life satisfaction (LS).

FC serves as a significant moderator that diminishes the positive effects of TPV and SC on LS in religious tourism. Recent studies (Hsu et al., 2021; Laliotis & Minos, 2022) have documented how the fear of pandemic-related risks and uncertainties detracts from tourists' perceived value in their experiences. Concerns over health and safety measures during religious gatherings undermine the emotional and social benefits typically associated with religious tourism, thereby reducing overall life satisfaction. Similarly, heightened fear levels inhibit social cohesion by limiting physical interactions, communal activities, and the formation of close-knit relationships among participants, which are crucial for enhancing satisfaction within religious tourism contexts. Therefore, the study proposes:

H6: Fear induced by COVID-19 (FC) negatively moderates the relationship between tourist perceived value (TPV) and life satisfaction (LS).

H7: Fear induced by COVID-19 (FC) negatively moderates the relationship between social cohesion (SC) and life satisfaction (LS).

The hypotheses are presented in Figure 1:

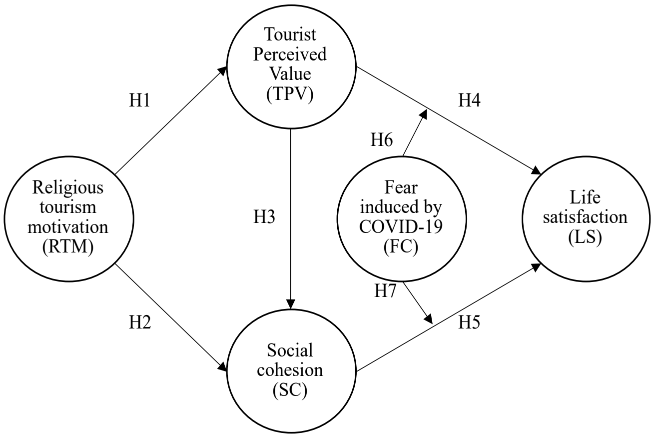

Figure 1: Research Model

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1. Dongshan welcomes the Buddha

The event "Dongshan Welcomes the Buddha," held on the 23rd day of the 12th lunar month, has a history dating back over 160 years, originating around 1844. This tradition begins with a five-hour, 14.6-kilometer pilgrimage that commences early in the morning from Dongshan Bixuan Temple (see Figure 2). The Guanyin Buddha of Bixuan Temple, also known as the Second Mother, was initially housed at Huoshan Biyun Temple. In 1832, during a rebellion led by Zhang Bing in Baihe, Huoshan Biyun Temple was destroyed. Fleeing the turmoil, the monks of the temple carried the revered Second Mother overnight. In 1844, upon invitation by Dongshan residents, the Second Mother was relocated to Dongshan, where a temporary shrine was erected. Subsequently, with contributions from local residents of Dongshan and parts of Baihe Town, Bixuan Temple was constructed. Annually on the 23rd day of the 12th lunar month, the community respectfully accompanies the Buddha back to Biyun Temple to celebrate the Lunar New Year. Late on the 9th day of the first lunar month, they return her to Dongshan Bixuan Temple in the event known as "Dongshan Welcomes the Buddha."

Following divine guidance, the people of Dongshan moved the Second Mother to Dongshan Bixuan Temple to honor the blessings of the Guanyin Buddha. In reverence, they escort her back to Biyun Temple every year to reunite with the Guanyin Buddha for the New Year, bringing her back to Dongshan on the 10th day of the first lunar month. The pilgrimage route follows ancient paths, offering views of unique agricultural produce and the tranquil atmosphere of mountain homesteads. Despite the absence of elaborate ceremonial processions, this sincere journey from the plains to the mountains is quietly undertaken by the people of Dongshan.

Midway through the pilgrimage, meals are provided at Baoan Temple and Sheng'an Temple, with vegetarian options available upon arrival at Biyun Temple. For those unable to navigate the steep terrain, shuttle buses are provided by the temple. After dining at Biyun Temple, shuttle buses transport devotees back to Dongshan Bixuan Temple. This annual event, maintaining its original temple fair format across generations, continues to hold significant cultural and spiritual value for the community of Dongshan.

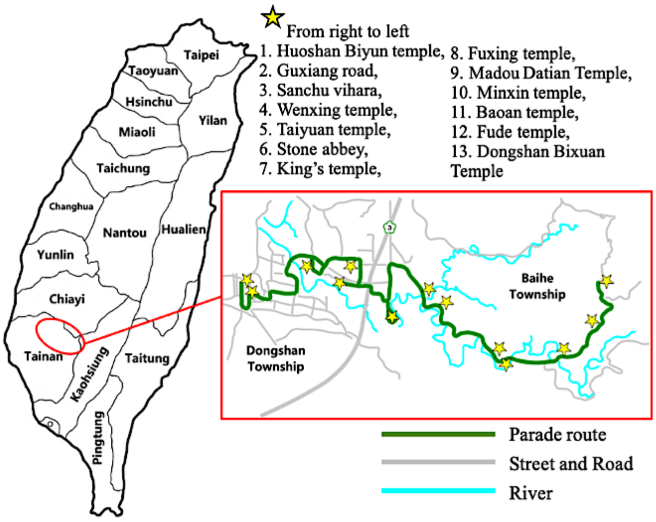

Figure 2: Dongshan Welcomes the Buddha parade route

3.2. Data collection

The research focused on the Dongshan Welcomes the Buddha procession, typically drawing thousands of participants, but limited to 200 during the COVID-19 pandemic. Data collection took place from December 23, 2023, to January 10, 2024, immediately after restrictions were lifted. Using convenient sampling and a snowball method, 104 questionnaires were distributed onsite, supplemented by a QR code for remote participation from past attendees. This approach aimed to gather diverse perspectives and extend the survey's reach beyond immediate participants. By the study's completion, 304 responses were collected, providing insights into participant experiences and adjustments made during the adapted event.

The data was collected immediately after COVID-19 restrictions had just been lifted, which was a deliberate choice to observe post-pandemic behavior among believers. This timing was selected to capture the immediate reactions and adaptations of participants in a newly unrestricted environment. The paper acknowledges this timing as a possible limitation, as the recent lifting of restrictions may have influenced the behaviors and responses of the participants.

The data collection method successfully captured the intricacies of participant experiences amid pandemic limitations. It enabled a thorough exploration of how religious gatherings adjust in such conditions, offering valuable insights into participant interactions and the event's societal importance during the recovery period.

3.3. Measurement

In the field of tourism, religious tourism holds a prominent and profoundly meaningful position, involving journeys driven by spiritual motivations. This paper delves into key concepts such as Religious Tourism Motivation (RTM), Tourist Perceived Value (TPV), Social Cohesion (SC), Life Satisfaction (LS), and Fear induced by COVID-19 (FC), examining their measurement components and hypotheses within the framework of religious tourism.

RTM serves as a foundational concept encompassing the various motivations that drive individuals to engage in religious tourism. It is evaluated using indicators that explore spiritual exploration, pilgrimage, cultural immersion, and religious experiences, drawing from established methodologies in the field (Terzidou, Scarles, & Saunders, 2018).

TPV, another critical construct, evaluates tourists' assessments of the benefits they receive compared to the sacrifices made during their religious tourism experiences. TPV includes dimensions such as quality, emotional value, social value, and price value, which are essential for understanding tourists' levels of satisfaction (Yu et al., 2021).

SC reflects the degree of unity and connectedness among participants in religious tourism events. Measured through indicators like community sense, shared experiences, and group solidarity, SC underscores the communal aspects that enhance the overall tourism experience (Mouratidis & Poortinga, 2020).

LS gauges participants' overall assessment of their lives, particularly in the context of their experiences with religious tourism. This construct encompasses general life satisfaction as well as satisfaction derived from participating in religious activities, illustrating the profound impact of these experiences on individuals' well-being (Yeh et al., 2021; Koburtay & Syed, 2021).

FC has emerged as a crucial moderating factor in recent times, influencing participants' perceptions and behaviors in religious tourism. FC assesses the levels of apprehension and concerns arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly concerning health risks and safety during religious gatherings (Hsu et al., 2021; Laliotis & Minos, 2022).

4 DATA ANALYSIS

4.1. Reliability and validity

In order to validate the measurement model used in this study, several reliability and validity assessments were performed.

4.1.1.Factor loadings and multicollinearity

Factor loadings ranged from 0.583 to 0.893. In Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), a factor loading above 0.7 is typically recommended to indicate strong item reliability (Seyfi et al., 2024). While some factor loadings in this study fell below this threshold, they are deemed acceptable in the context of exploratory research. Multicollinearity was evaluated using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values (Gopalan & Khalid, 2024). Most VIF values were below 3, which is generally acceptable, but five VIF values exceeded 3, with the highest reaching 4.698, indicating potential multicollinearity issues among certain predictors.

4.1.2.Model fit

Model fit was evaluated using the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) and the Normed Fit Index (NFI). The SRMR value was 0.068, and the NFI was 0.758, indicating an adequate model fit (Hair Jr et al., 2014). These values suggest that the model adequately represents the observed data.

4.1.3. Common Method Variance

Common Method Variance (CMV) was assessed, and the CMV value was 25.149%. Since this is well below the 50% threshold, it indicates that CMV is not a significant issue in this study (Eichhorn, 2014).

4.1.4. Reliability and validity

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) values. Cronbach's Alpha values ranged from 0.869 to 0.938, and all CR values exceeded 0.9, demonstrating good internal consistency and reliability of the constructs (Nunnally, 1978).

Convergent validity was assessed using Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values. The majority of AVE values exceeded 0.5, indicating strong convergent validity. The exception was the AVE value for Religious Tourism Motivation (RTM), which measured 0.475. While this falls slightly below the ideal threshold of 0.5, it still surpasses 0.36, which is considered acceptable in certain contexts.

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT). According to the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), the square root of the AVE should be greater than the inter-construct correlation. This criterion was met for all constructs except for the correlation between RTM and Social Cohesion (SC), where the square root of AVE (0.689) was less than the correlation (0.738). This indicates a potential issue with discriminant validity for RTM. However, the HTMT values were all below 0.85 (Roemer et al., 2021), indicating good discriminant validity overall.

Despite encountering minor issues, such as the slightly lower AVE for RTM and potential multicollinearity among specific predictors, the overall reliability and validity of the measurement model are considered acceptable. Since most indices meet or surpass acceptable thresholds, the study proceeds with hypothesis testing.

Table 1: Reliability and validity

					FC	LS	RTM	SC	TPV
	α	rho_A	CR	AVE		HTMT			
FC	0.914	0.935	0.935	0.743	**0.862**	0.252	0.155	0.167	0.261
LS	0.901	0.904	0.927	0.717	-0.239	**0.847**	0.562	0.607	0.682
RTM	0.899	0.902	0.916	0.475	-0.134	0.521	**0.689**	0.796	0.757
SC	0.938	0.941	0.951	0.765	-0.158	0.569	0.738	**0.874**	0.844
TPV	0.869	0.881	0.900	0.565	-0.231	0.619	0.676	0.771	**0.751**
					Fronell-Larcker criterion				

Cronbach's Alpha (α), Composite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Bold in diagonal cells (square root of AVE).

4.2. Sample characteristics

This section provides a succinct overview of the demographic profile of participants in the survey conducted during the

Dongshan Welcomes the Buddha event. A total of 304 responses were collected, revealing a notable gender disparity. The majority of respondents were male, comprising 194 individuals (63.8%), while females accounted for 110 respondents (36.2%). This gender distribution likely reflects specific cultural or social dynamics associated with the event. Participants' ages varied widely, representing a diverse spectrum. The largest age groups included adults aged 36-45, with significant numbers in the 21-25, 41-45, and 46-50 ranges. Smaller clusters were observed in the 26-35 and 51-55 brackets, with younger participants aged 11-20 and older participants over 50 also represented.

Occupationally, respondents represented a broad array of fields, highlighting diverse societal roles. The most common occupations included businesspersons, service industry workers, and public servants. Students, freelancers, and individuals in unspecified occupations were also part of the respondent group.

Participants assumed various roles within the event, reflecting their levels of engagement. The largest segment consisted of parade followers, followed by spectators and those involved in carrying the sedan chair. Others included residents along the route, volunteers, leaders of the parade formation, and temple officials.

In summary, the survey respondents of the Dongshan Welcomes the Buddha event exhibited diverse demographic characteristics. They predominantly consisted of males and encompassed various age groups and occupational backgrounds. Their involvement ranged from active participants to observers, providing a comprehensive snapshot of the community engaged in this significant cultural and religious event.

4.3. Hypothesis testing

The data analysis was conducted to test the proposed hypotheses and the result is presented in Table 2 and Figure 3. The analysis supports hypothesis H1 with a significant positive relationship (β=0.676, t=9.310, p=0.000), indicating that higher religious tourism motivation significantly enhances the perceived value among participants. The hypothesis H2 is also supported with a strong positive relationship (β=0.738, t=17.064, p=0.000). The effect of RTM on SC is partially direct (β=0.399, t=2.887, p=0.004) and partially mediated through TPV (β=0.399, t=3.023, p=0.003).

Table 2: Hypothesis testing results

		Total			Direct			Indirect		
		β	t	p	β	t	p	β	t	p
H1	RTM→TPV	0.676	9.310	0.000	0.676	9.310	0.000			
H2	RTM→SC	0.738	17.064	0.000	0.399	2.887	0.004	0.339	3.023	0.003
H3	TPV→SC	0.501	4.047	0.000	0.501	4.047	0.000			
H4	TPV→LS	0.484	6.542	0.000	0.362	3.481	0.001	0.121	2.151	0.032
H5	SC→LS	0.242	2.639	0.008	0.242	2.639	0.008			
	FC→LS	-0.157	2.727	0.007	-0.157	2.727	0.007			
H6	moderation	-0.003	0.029	0.977	-0.003	0.029	0.977			
H7	moderation	0.157	1.511	0.131	0.157	1.511	0.131			
	RTM→LS	0.424	9.580	0.000				0.424	9.580	0.000

This indicates that RTM enhances social cohesion directly and indirectly by increasing the perceived value. The analysis confirms hypothesis H3 proposing a significant positive effect (β=0.501, t=4.047, p=0.000), suggesting that higher perceived value fosters stronger social cohesion among participants. The hypothesis H4 is supported (β=0.484, t=6.542, p=0.000), with both direct (β=0.362, t=3.481, p=0.001) and mediated effects through SC (β=0.121, t=2.151, p=0.032). This implies that higher perceived value enhances life satisfaction, both directly and indirectly by strengthening social cohesion. The results confirm this hypothesis H5 with a significant positive relationship (β=0.242, t=2.639, p=0.008), indicating that enhanced social cohesion leads to increased life satisfaction among participants.

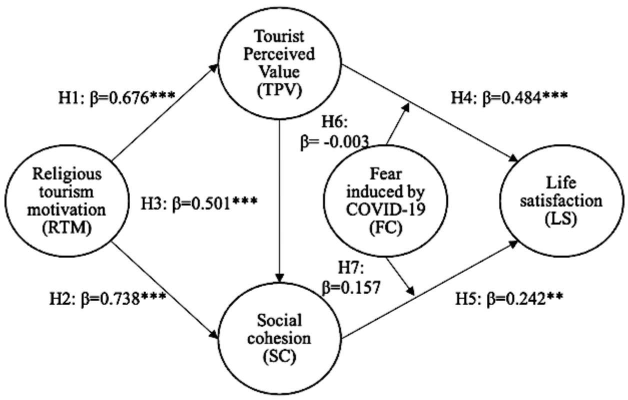

Figure 3: Hypothesis testing results

The hypothesis H6 is not supported (β=-0.003, t=0.029, p=0.977). The slope diagram shows parallel regression slopes for low, medium, and high FC, indicating that the level of fear induced by COVID-19 does not significantly affect the relationship between perceived value and life satisfaction. This may be due to the COVID-19 period having passed, reducing the fear's impact on this relationship.

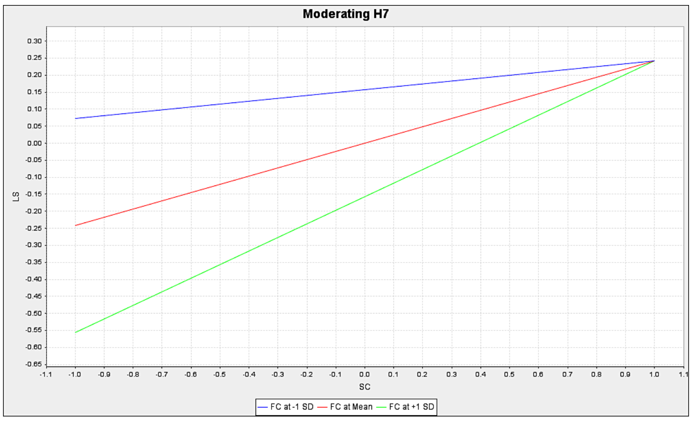

Figure 4: Slop diagram for H7

Additional findings include a significant negative effect of FC on LS (β=-0.157, t=2.727, p=0.007) and a strong positive relationship between RTM and LS (β=0.424, t=9.580, p=0.000) through sequential mediation. These results highlight that, although fear can reduce life satisfaction, strong religious tourism motivation and perceived value can enhance both social cohesion and life satisfaction.

4.4. Discussion

The findings provide comprehensive insights into the relationships among RTM, TPV, SC, LS, and FC, with both theoretical and practical implications for religious tourism events, particularly in the context of disruptions like the COVID-19 pandemic.

TPV moderately mediates the relationship between RTM and SC, with the direct impact (β=0.399, p=0.000) almost equal to the mediated effect (β=0.339, p=0.003), suggesting that perceived value plays a significant role in translating religious motivation into social cohesion. SC serves as a small mediator for the relationship between TPV and LS, with the direct impact (β=0.362, p=0.001) almost equal to the mediated effect (β=0.121, p=0.032), indicating that social cohesion slightly enhances the effect of perceived value on life satisfaction. The significant impact of FC on LS (p=0.007) suggests that life satisfaction is gradually improving as the pandemic recedes, although fear still negatively affects it. The moderators had no significant effects on both TPV to LS and SC to LS relationships. However, the slope analysis suggests that higher fear levels might enhance the positive impact of social cohesion on life satisfaction, implying that social cohesion becomes more important in times of increased fear.

This study provides valuable insights into the dynamics of religious tourism. It highlights the significant roles of RTM, TPV, and SC in enhancing life satisfaction among participants and underscores the importance of perceived value and social cohesion in fostering positive experiences. The findings suggest that while fear induced by COVID-19 negatively impacts life satisfaction, its moderating effect on the relationships between TPV, SC, and LS is limited. These insights are crucial for stakeholders aiming to improve the management and organization of religious tourism events, ensuring they remain meaningful and satisfying even amidst external challenges.

5 CONCLUSION

The study aimed to explore the intricate connections between Religious Tourism Motivation (RTM), Tourist Perceived Value (TPV), Social Cohesion (SC), Life Satisfaction (LS), and Fear induced by COVID-19 (FC). The findings illuminate that RTM exerts a positive influence on TPV and SC, both directly and indirectly through TPV. TPV, in turn, plays a significant role by positively impacting SC and LS, while SC further enhances LS. It is noteworthy that FC adversely affects LS, indicating a negative impact of pandemic-induced fear on overall life satisfaction within religious tourism contexts. Importantly, FC does not significantly moderate the relationships between TPV and LS, nor SC and LS, suggesting that the robust effects of RTM and TPV on life satisfaction endure despite the challenges posed by the ongoing pandemic. These findings underscore the resilience of intrinsic motivations and perceived value in sustaining positive tourist experiences and satisfaction levels in religious tourism, even amidst global health concerns.

5.1. Theoretical contribution

This study makes several theoretical contributions to the field of religious tourism. Firstly, it confirms the significant role of RTM in enhancing perceived value and social cohesion, enriching our understanding of motivational drivers in religious tourism. By demonstrating the direct and indirect effects of RTM on TPV and SC, this research provides a deeper insight into the mechanisms through which motivation influences participant experiences. Secondly, it establishes the importance of perceived value in fostering social cohesion and life satisfaction, thereby extending existing models of tourist satisfaction to the religious tourism context. This finding emphasizes the need to consider TPV as a critical factor in enhancing participant well-being and community feeling. Thirdly, the findings highlight the resilience of these relationships despite external disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic, providing insights into the stability of motivational and satisfaction constructs in turbulent times. This underscores the robustness of the motivational drivers and perceived value in maintaining participant satisfaction and social cohesion even under significant external stress.

5.2. Managerial implications

The findings offer several practical implications for managers and organizers of religious tourism events. To enhance participant satisfaction and social cohesion, efforts should be made to boost religious tourism motivation and perceived value through enriched and meaningful experiences. For instance, incorporating culturally and spiritually significant activities that resonate with participants can elevate their perceived value and motivation. Since the study shows that perceived value significantly influences social cohesion and life satisfaction, event organizers should focus on creating high-value experiences that resonate deeply with participants. Additionally, understanding that fear from external factors like COVID-19 can diminish life satisfaction, measures to mitigate such fears and reassure participants can further enhance their overall experience and satisfaction. This could involve implementing stringent health and safety protocols, providing transparent communication about safety measures, and offering psychological support services to address participants' concerns. By addressing these aspects, managers can ensure a more fulfilling and cohesive experience for participants, ultimately leading to higher life satisfaction and a stronger sense of community.

Overall, this study not only contributes to the theoretical understanding of religious tourism motivations and their impacts but also provides actionable insights for practitioners to enhance the management and organization of religious tourism events.

5.3. Research limitations

While this study provides valuable insights into the dynamics of religious tourism, it is essential to recognize several limitations that may affect the interpretation and broader applicability of its findings. One notable limitation is the reliance on convenience and snowball sampling methods, which might constrain the generalizability of the results. Participants recruited through these methods may not fully represent the diverse population of religious tourism participants, potentially biasing the findings towards specific demographics or characteristics prevalent in the sampled group.

Furthermore, while the study's sample size was considered adequate, it may not capture the full spectrum of diversity within religious tourism. This limitation could impact the breadth and depth of the conclusions drawn from the study.

Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data introduces the potential for response biases, where participants may answer in ways they perceive as socially desirable or aligning with perceived expectations rather than reflecting their true experiences.

To mitigate these limitations, future research efforts could employ more rigorous sampling techniques, such as stratified or random sampling, to ensure a more representative and diverse participant pool. Increasing sample diversity across various demographic, cultural, and geographical dimensions could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how different groups experience and perceive religious tourism.

In addition, longitudinal studies could offer valuable insights into how factors influencing life satisfaction in religious tourism evolve over time. Such an approach would enable researchers to capture changes in perceptions, behaviors, and experiences across different stages of religious tourism participation, enhancing the study's depth and longitudinal validity.

Moreover, expanding the scope of investigation to include other moderating variables beyond fear induced by COVID-19 could enrich the study's findings and applicability. Exploring factors such as socio-economic status, cultural norms, and personal motivations could offer a more nuanced understanding of the complex dynamics influencing life satisfaction within religious tourism contexts.

Addressing these avenues for future research could significantly contribute to advancing knowledge in this field and inform more effective strategies for enhancing the overall tourist experience in religious settings.

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BOOK REVIEW

Post-Disaster and Post-Conflict Tourism

Maximiliano E. Korstanje, Hugues Seraphin & Vanessa Gowreesunkar (eds). Palm Bay, CRC & Apple Academic Press, 2024.

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Reviewed by **Peter Tarlow**
Texas A&M University, USA

JEL Classification: *H84, Q54, D74*

Biographical note: Dr. Peter E. Tarlow is a world-renowned speaker and expert specializing in the impact of crime and terrorism on the tourism industry, event and tourism risk management, and tourism and economic development. Since 1990, Tarlow has been aiding the tourism community with issues such as travel safety and security, economic development, creative marketing, and creative thought.

1 INTRODUCTION

Post-Disaster and Post-Conflict Tourism is not just another anthology dealing with the post Covid-19 tourism world. This is a book that goes far beyond twenty-first century's greatest challenge and takes us into not only the realm of the what-was but also the realm of what-might-be. It is a look into the apparent and the hidden behind the apparent.

Maximiliano Korstanje, Hugues Seraphin, and Vanessa GB Gowreesunkar are the book's editor. The fact that the book's editors represent three distinct and different parts of the world, give this work not only an international flavor, but helps the reader to understand tourism from a global perspective.

Korstanje, who is one of Latin America's leading academic tourism scholars, sets the book's tone by moving past disaster management to recovery management. One of the important aspects of Post-Disaster and Post-Conflict Tourism is that it combines the best of both the applied world of tourism with the principles and insights of academic. As Korstanje notes: "the present book, explores a third way of filling the gap between the theory product by Academia and the necessities of the sector. The authors who took part in this book are well-versed scholars who worked as experts in post-disaster and post-conflict tourism" (page xiv)

This third-way of viewing tourism recovery and resiliency is essential for a field that is too often divided between the practical and the theoretical, and whose practitioners on both sides of the applied-theoretical divide often fail to communicate effectively with each other. In Post-Disaster and Post-Conflict Tourism the reader will find that the authors took the time to provide clear definitions of even what many believe to be common terminology, and thus assure effective and precise communication. For example, throughout the book we find that terms such as disaster are not only addressed but clearly defined.

Post-Disaster and Post-Conflict Tourism and goes beyond what is now becoming the all too mundane Covid-19 recovery book. Instead, it seeks to address many of the underlying problems within an industry dedicated not merely to travel but also to helping its clients move beyond world, national, and personal disasters. The book helps us to understand how in a world plagued by disasters we can still find the joie-de-vivre that makes life worth living. To accomplish such a goal, readers need to go beyond the superficial and combine capitalism's need for profit with the ethics of an industry that often borders on the verge of economic failure. One of the book's strengths is its ability to address these challenges by examining the ethics of post disaster marketing and expanding its scope to tourism's pre-visit stages. Post-Disaster and Post-Conflict Tourism helps its readers better understand that tourism is such a multilayered industry, and as David Emile Durkheim would have us understand tourism cannot be studied as a series of independent parts but must rather it must be viewed as the complex interlocking system that it is. In reading Post-Disaster and Post-Conflict Tourism we come to understand that not to do so misses the industry's complexity and its influence that reaches every aspect of society. Scholars and practitioners alike will benefit from reading this book and the book's editors are to be congratulated for a job well-done.

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Once again, the editors and authors are to be congratulated for aiding tourism scholars not only now but also in the future to come.

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AIMS

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- Disseminating and promoting research, good practice and innovation in all aspects of marketing in tourism, heritage and services to its prime audience including educators, researchers, post-graduate students, policy makers, and industry practitioners.
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Infringements of professional ethical codes, such as multiple submission, bogus claims of authorship, plagiarism, fraudulent use of data, or the like, will also result in an article being retracted.

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Journal Sections

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The Editorial addresses issues of contemporary interest and provides a detailed introduction and commentary to the articles in the current issue. The editorial may be written by the Editor-in-Chief, the Associate Editor, or by any other member(s) of the Editorial Board. When appropriate, a "Guest Editorial" may be presented. However, the Journal of Tourism, Heritage & Services Marketing does not accept unsolicited editorials.

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For the Research Papers section, the Journal of Tourism, Heritage & Services Marketing invites full-length manuscripts (not longer than 8,000 words and not shorter than 4,500 words) excluding references, from a variety of marketing disciplines; these papers may be either empirical or conceptual, and will be subject to strict double blind peer review (by at least two anonymous referees). The decision for the final acceptance of the paper will be taken unanimously by the Editor and by the Associate Editor. The manuscripts submitted should provide original and/or innovative ideas or approaches or findings that eventually push the frontiers of knowledge. Purely descriptive accounts are not considered suitable for this section. Each paper should have the following structure: a) abstract, b) introduction (including an overall presentation of the issue to be examined and the aims and objectives of the paper), c) main body (including, where appropriate, the review of literature, the development of hypotheses and/or models, research methodology, presentation of findings, and analysis and discussion), d) conclusions (including also, where appropriate, recommendations, practical implications, limitations, and suggestions for further research), e) bibliography, f) acknowledgements, and g) appendices.

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Case Studies should be no longer than 3,500 words and not shorter than 2,000; these articles should be focusing on the detailed and critical presentation/review of real-life cases from the greater marketing sector, and must include – where appropriate – relevant references and bibliography. Case Studies should aim at disseminating information and/or good practices, combined with critical analysis of real examples. Purely descriptive accounts may be considered suitable for this section, provided that are well-justified and of interest to the readers of the Journal of Tourism, Heritage & Services Marketing. Each article should have the following structure: a) abstract, b) introduction (including an overall presentation of the case to be examined and the aims and objectives of the article), c) main body (including, where appropriate, the review of literature, the presentation of the case study, the critical review of the case and relevant discussion), d) conclusions (including also, where appropriate, recommendations, practical implications, and suggestions for further study), e) bibliography, f) acknowledgements, and g) appendices. All Case Studies are subject to blind peer review (by at least two anonymous referees). The decision for the final acceptance of the article will be taken unanimously by the Editor and by the Associate Editor.

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Research Notes should be no longer than 3,000 words and not shorter than 1,000; these papers may be either empirical or conceptual, and will be subject to blind peer review (by at least two anonymous referees). The decision for the final acceptance of the paper will be taken unanimously by the Editor and by the Associate Editor. The manuscripts submitted may present research-in-progress or my focus on the conceptual development of models and approaches that have not been proven yet through primary research. In all cases, the papers should provide original ideas, approaches or preliminary findings that are open to discussion. Purely descriptive accounts may be considered suitable for this section, provided that are well-justified and of interest to the readers of JTHSM. Each paper should have the following structure: a) abstract, b) introduction (including an overall presentation of the issue to be examined and the aims and objectives of the paper), c) main body (including, where appropriate, the review of literature, the development of hypotheses and/or models, research methodology, presentation of findings, and analysis and discussion), d) conclusions (including also, where appropriate, recommendations, practical implications, limitations, and suggestions for further research), e) bibliography, f) acknowledgements, and g) appendices.

BOOK REVIEWS

Book Reviews should be no longer than 1,500 words and not shorter than 1,000; these articles aim at presenting and critically reviewing books from the greater field of tourism, heritage, services and marketing. Most reviews should focus on new publications, but older books are also welcome for presentation. Book Reviews are not subject to blind peer review; the decision for the final acceptance of the article will be taken unanimously by the Editor-in-Chief and by the Book & Conference Reviews Editor. Where appropriate, these articles may include references and bibliography. Books to be reviewed may be assigned to potential authors by the Book & Conference Reviews Editor, though JTHSM is also open to unsolicited suggestions for book reviews from interested parties.

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Industry Viewpoints should be no longer than 1,500 words and not shorter than 500; these articles may have a “commentary” form, and aim at presenting and discussing ideas, views and suggestions by practitioners (marketing industry professionals, marketing planners, policy makers, other marketing stakeholders, etc.). Through these articles, JTHSM provides a platform for the exchange of ideas and for developing closer links between academics and practitioners. Most viewpoints should focus on contemporary issues, but other issues are also welcome for presentation if appropriate. Industry Viewpoints are not subject to blind peer review; the decision for the final acceptance of the article will be taken unanimously by the Editor-in-Chief and by the Associate Editor. These articles may be assigned to potential authors by the editor, though JTHSM is also open to unsolicited contributions from interested parties.

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Feedback regarding the submission of a manuscript (including the 3 anonymous reviewers' comments) will be provided to the author(s) within six weeks of the receipt of the manuscript. Submission of a manuscript will be held to imply that it contains original unpublished work not being considered for publication elsewhere at the same time. If appropriate, author(s) can correct first proofs. Manuscripts submitted to JTHSM, accepted for publication or not, cannot be returned to the author(s).

MANUSCRIPT LENGTH

Full research Papers should be not longer than 8,000 words and not shorter than 4,500 words (excluding references). Research Notes should be no longer than 3,000 words and not shorter than 1,000. Case Studies should be no longer than 3,500 words and not shorter than 2,000. Book Reviews should be no longer than 1,500 words and not shorter than 1,000. Conference Reports should be no longer than 2,000 words and not shorter than 1,000. Industry Viewpoints should be no longer than 1,500 words and not shorter than 500. Manuscripts that do not fully conform to the above word limits (according to the type of the article) will be automatically rejected and should not be entered into the reviewing process.

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All submissions (research papers, research notes, case studies, book reviews, conference reports, industry viewpoints, and forthcoming events) must have a title of no more than 10 words.

Manuscripts should be double-line spaced, and have at least 2,5 cm (one-inch) margin on all four sides. Pages should be numbered consecutively.

The use of footnotes within the text is discouraged – use endnotes instead. Endnotes should be kept to a minimum, be used to provide additional comments and discussion, and should be numbered consecutively in the text and typed on a separate page at the end of the article.

Quotations must be taken accurately from the original source. Alterations to the quotations must be noted. Quotation marks (" ") are to be used to denote direct quotes. Inverted commas (' ') should denote a quote within a quotation. If the quotation is less than 3 lines, then it should be included in the main text enclosed in quotation marks. If the quotation is more than 3 lines, then it should be separated from the main text and indented.

The name(s) of any sponsor(s) of the research contained in the manuscript, or any other acknowledgements, should appear at the very end of the manuscript.

Tables, figures and illustrations are to be included in the text and to be numbered consecutively (in Arabic numbers). Each table, figure or illustration must have a title.

The text should be organized under appropriate section headings, which, ideally, should not be more than 500-700 words apart.

The main body of the text should be written in Times New Roman letters, font size 12.

Section headings should be written in Arial letters, font size 12, and should be marked as follows: primary headings should be centered and typed in bold capitals and underlined; secondary headings should be typed with italic bold capital letters; other headings should be typed in capital letters.

Authors are urged to write as concisely as possible, but not at the expense of clarity.

The preferred software for submission is Microsoft Word.

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Author(s) are responsible for preparing manuscripts which are clearly written in acceptable, scholarly English, and which contain no errors of spelling, grammar, or punctuation. Neither the Editorial Board nor the Publisher is responsible for correcting errors of spelling or grammar.

Where acronyms are used, their full expression should be given initially.

Authors are asked to ensure that there are no libelous implications in their work.

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For submission, manuscripts of research papers, research notes and case studies should be arranged in the following order of presentation:

First page: title, subtitle (if required), author's name and surname, author's ORCID (compulsory for all submissions since volume 5, issue 1, 2019), affiliation, full postal address, telephone number and e-mail address. Respective names, affiliations, emails and addresses of co-author(s) should be clearly indicated. Also, include an abstract of not less than 100 and not more than 150 words and up to 5 keywords that identify article content. Also include a short biography of the author (about 25 words); in the case of co-author(s), the same details should also be included. All correspondence will be sent to the first named author, unless otherwise indicated.

Second page: title, an abstract of not more than 100 words and up to 5 keywords that identify article content. Do not include the author(s) details, affiliation(s), and biographies in this page.

Subsequent pages: the paper should begin on the third page and should not subsequently reveal the title or authors. In these pages should be included the main body of text (including tables, figures and illustrations); list of references; appendixes; and endnotes (numbered consecutively).

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GUIDANCE ON WRITING ABSTRACTS

JTHSM provides the following guidance to help authors write an abstract of maximum value to readers. Authors are encouraged to follow this guidance. An abstract is a concise summary of a larger work, typically written in one paragraph of 100 to 200 words. Its purpose is to help readers quickly discern the purpose and content of the work. Manuscripts submitted to *JTHSM* must include an abstract written in English, of not less than 150 and not more than 200 words. Accuracy, brevity, and clarity are the ABCs of writing a good abstract. Writing style: a) Use a who, what, when, where, why, how, and "so what" approach to addressing the main elements in your abstract; b) Use specific words, phrases, concepts, and keywords from your paper; c) Use precise, clear, descriptive language, and write from an objective rather than evaluative point of view; d) Write concisely, but in complete sentences; e) Use plain language, do not use jargon, and do not use acronyms except for commonly used terms (then define the acronym the first time used); f) Write in the third person; do not use "I" or "we"; g) Use verbs in the active voice. A well-written abstract generally addresses four key elements:

- ***Purpose***: describes the objectives and hypotheses of the research.
- ***Methods***: describes important features of your research design, data, and analysis. This may include the sample size, geographic location, demographics, variables, controls, conditions, tests, descriptions of research design, details of sampling techniques, and data gathering procedures.
- ***Results***: describes the key findings of the study, including experimental, correlational, or theoretical results. It may also provide a brief explanation of the results.
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- *For journal papers:* Tribe, J. (2002). The philosophic practitioner. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 29(2), pp. 338-357.
- *For books and monographs:* Teare, R. & Ingram, H. (1993). *Strategic Management: A Resource-Based Approach for the Hospitality and Tourism Industries*. London: Cassell.
- *For chapters in edited books:* Sigala, M. and Christou, E. (2002). Use of Internet for enhancing tourism and hospitality education: lessons from Europe (pp. 112-123). In K.W. Wober, A.J. Frew and M. Hitz (Eds.) *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism*, Wien: Springer-Verlag.
- *For papers presented in conferences:* Ford, B. (2004). Adoption of innovations on hospitality. *Paper presented at the 22nd EuroCHRIE Conference.* Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey: 3-7 November 2004.
- *For papers published in conference proceedings:* Jackman, F. (2008). Adoption of innovations on hospitality. *Proceedings the 26th EuroCHRIE Conference.* Dubai, United Arab Emirates.
- *For unpublished works:* Gregoriades, M. (2004). The impact of trust in brand loyalty, *Unpublished PhD Thesis.* Chios, Greece: University of the Aegean.
- *For Internet sources (if you know the author)*: Johns, D. (2003) The power of branding in tourism. Http://www.tourismabstracts.org/marketing/papers-authors/id3456. Accessed the 12 th of January 2005, at 14:55. (Note: always state clearly the full URL of your source)
- *For Internet sources (if you do not know the author)*: Tourism supply and demand. Http://www.tourismabstracts.org/marketing/papers-authors/id3456. Accessed the 30 th of January 2004, at 12:35. (Note: always state clearly the full URL of your source)
- *For reports:* Edelstein, L. G. & Benini, C. (1994). *Meetings and Conventions*. Meetings market report (August), 60-82.

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- Final approval of the version to be published; AND
- Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

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When a large multi-author group has conducted the work, the group ideally should decide who will be an author before the work is started and confirm who is an author before submitting the manuscript for publication. All members of the group named as authors should meet all four criteria for authorship, including approval of the final manuscript, and they should be able to take public responsibility for the work and should have full confidence in the accuracy and integrity of the work of other group authors. They will also be expected as individuals to complete conflict-of-interest disclosure forms.

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