


CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF A TECHNOLOGY-BASED TOURISM PERSPECTIVE: HYBRID GAZE*

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Abstract

Despite the proliferation of technology and social media, the impact of digital visuals on tourism behavior is still a matter of debate. Especially for young people who frequently use technology and its extensions, there is limited knowledge about their interaction with digital visual content and the transformation created by this interaction. At this point, this study, which is based on the tourist gaze theory, conceptually evaluates how technology and digital content affect young people's perceptions of tourism through the literature. The research findings show that young tourists are exposed to intense interaction with content in digital environments and that this interaction develops a hybrid gaze shaped by social media. Furthermore, this significant impact of new generation technologies and virtual content on young individuals prompts a reconsideration of the traditional tourist gaze. It is suggested that young people's tourism and travel experiences evolve in conjunction with their dependence on technology, thereby indicating that new gaze studies aimed at enhancing the understanding of young people's experiences will contribute to the cumulative advancement of the field. In this direction, the hybrid gaze that extends beyond classical theoretical frameworks can serve as a new conceptual guide for a deeper understanding of young people's tourism and leisure experiences.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Technology, Tourist gaze, Hybrid gaze, Tourist experience.



TEKNOLOJİ TABANLI TURİZM PERSPEKTİFİNİN KAVRAMSAL ANALİZİ: HİBRİT BAKIŞ

Öz

Teknoloji ve sosyal medyanın yaygınlaşan kullanımına rağmen, dijital görselliğin turist davranışları üzerindeki etkileri halen merak konusudur. Özellikle teknoloji ve sosyal medya kullanımıyla bilinen genç bireylerin görsel içeriklerle olan etkileşimi ve bu dönüşümün turistik seyahat algılamaları üzerindeki rolü yeterince açıklığa kavuşturulmamıştır. Turist bakışı teorisine dayanan bu araştırmanın amacı, teknoloji ve dijital içeriklerin gençlerin turizm algılamaları üzerindeki etkisini kavramsal bir çerçevede incelemektir.

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Bulgular, gençlerin sanal dünyada yaşadığı görsel tüketimin, yoğun bir etkileşim yarattığı ve bu etkileşimin sosyal medya aracılığıyla hibrit bir bakış açısının gelişimine katkı sağladığını göstermektedir. Ayrıca yeni nesil teknolojiler ve sanal içeriklerin gençler üzerindeki bu güçlü etkisi, turist bakışının yeniden gözden geçirilmesi ihtiyacını doğurmaktadır. Gençlerin turizm ve seyahat deneyimlerinin teknolojiye olan bağımlılıklarıyla evrildiği ve bu nedenle gençlerin deneyimlerini daha iyi anlamaya yönelik yeni bakış çalışmalarının alanın birikimsel ilerleyişine katkı sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir. Bu doğrultuda, klasik bakış teorilerinin ötesine geçerek sunulan hibrit bakış, gençlerin turizm ve boş zaman deneyimlerini derinlemesine anlayabilmek için yeni bir kavramsal rehber olabilir.

Keywords: Teknoloji, Turist bakışı, Hibrit bakış, Turist deneyimi.



Introduction

Tourist gaze theory is one of the most frequently used approaches in tourism research to understand and explain the tourist experience (Polus, 2024). This theory basically argues that tourists experience touristic products in line with the expectations they have previously designed in their minds (Urry, 1992; Urry & Larsen, 2011). The tourist gaze focuses on explaining how individuals perceive and construct objects during tourism experiences. It helps to understand how a tourist's perceptions of tourism destinations and businesses guide their tourist trips (Urry & Larsen, 2011). Media sources such as videos, magazines and movies are the elements that develop this perception (Urry, 2002). Nowadays, technological innovations such as social media platforms, mobile applications, virtual maps, websites, blogs and vlogs are sources of influence on tourists' experience perceptions (Cheng, Wei, & Zhang, 2020). Furthermore, tourism items are made physical, and travelers are guided via virtual, augmented, and mixed reality technologies (Chon & Hao, 2025). Young tourists represent the demographic that engages most frequently with these technology-driven tools (Kim et al., 2016). Because digital content (photographs, videos, and comments) reflects the users' original thoughts. Furthermore, individuals gain from the feedback of other travelers who have previously visited the place and organizations. As a result of that, young people are more interested in and trust social media while making trip plans (Martins et al., 2025).

Yousaf et al. (2018) state that the internet and social media are among the leading factors that have changed the lifestyles and habits of global societies. Moreover, the authors emphasize that social media and its content are also involved in the transformation of young tourists' expectations and motivations. In addition, young individuals transfer their tourism experiences to digital content and share them on social media to influence the decisions of other tourists (Dionysopoulou & Mylonakis, 2013). In this respect, it can be said that the impact of user-based content on the expectations and behaviors of young tourists is increasing. Therefore, it becomes an important research area to examine how technological developments and social media content affect tourist gazes.

Despite a noticeable increase in research aimed at analyzing tourist preferences across age demographics in recent years (Dresler, 2024), there remains a significant gap in scholarly investigations that specifically address the perspectives and motivations of young tourists in diverse geographical contexts. A review of research on tourist experiences reveals that knowledge on the behavior of adults is

extensive (Wang et al., 2023; Yan et al., 2024). However, knowledge on the behavioral characteristics of youth tourism is limited. Moreover, despite being widespread users, the role of social media on youth tourism behavior has not been sufficiently clarified (Samarathunga & Cheng, 2021). Thus, this study seeks to examine the influence of technology and social media on the travel perceptions of young individuals and how this interaction effectively reshapes their gaze. So the purpose of social media in all stages of young tourists' travel experiences has been investigated using current academic studies, and its intersections with Urry's theory have been assessed, resulting in a conceptual contribution to the field. To facilitate this exploration, Urry's (1990) concept of the tourist gaze, which pertains to how tourists perceive and assess the regions they visit, serves as an appropriate theoretical framework for gaining deeper insights into the experiences of young tourists.

A. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Definitions and Components of Experience

The concept of experience, first articulated by marketers in 1982, has attracted a great deal of attention from researchers since then and its true nature has only recently been understood. Marketers have referred to experience as an important component of human life and a fundamental area of research for many disciplines. Similarly, scholars in the social sciences have focused their attention on the concept of experience, contributing significantly to the advancement of the literature (Jain et al., 2017).

Experience is generally conceptualized as an individual's conscious awareness in response to a specific situation. Additionally, it is characterized as the interaction between an object and the consumer, as well as the value generated through this engagement (Poulsson & Kale, 2004). While experience is often viewed as a reflection of personal reactions and emotional responses, it can also be interpreted as a continuous narrative comprising fantasies, emotions, and forms of entertainment from another perspective (Otto & Ritchie, 1996). Table 1 shows the definitions of the concept of experience from some important studies in the literature.

Pekovic and Rolland (2020) conducted a comprehensive re-evaluation of the concept of customer experience, proposing a multidimensional framework that encompasses emotional, cognitive, sensory, social, behavioral, and technological dimensions. Emotional experiences encapsulate the unique feelings that consumers associate with products, while the interaction between cognitive and emotional processes serves to enhance the overall experience (Mortari, 2015). Sensory experiences refer to an individual's feelings such as aesthetics and pleasure. Businesses try to create an emotional bond between the organization and the customer by appealing to their customers' senses of sight, hearing and touch (Gentile et al., 2007). Individuals' sense of belonging to any group is evaluated within social experiences (Taşpınar & Batıbeki, 2020). Factors affecting the lifestyle and habits of consumers indicate behavioral experiences. The use and sharing of products by famous individuals can be shown as an example of behavioral experiences (Wei & Lu, 2013). Finally, the technological dimension of experience focuses on enhancing communication between businesses and consumers, as well as extending customer experiences to broader audiences. Technological enhancements, such as online platforms, digital channels, and organizational social media, facilitate improved purchasing behaviors among consumers.

Moreover, these technologies provide supportive services in the realms of product search and selection (Verhoef et al., 2015). For example, virtual and mixed reality systems provide an experience that embodies tourism products by providing sensations such as sound, smell and touch, and this accelerates the purchasing process of tourists (Beck., Rainoldi & Egger, 2019).

Table 1. Summary of definitions of experience

Thorne (1963)	The experience is considered one of the most exciting, rich and nourishing points of people's lives.
Maslow (1968)	Experiences are feelings in which an individual transcends ordinary reality and perceives existence or reality purely.
Hirschmann and Holbrook (1982)	Experience is the connection between a person and a product. It is the fantasy and emotions that comprise the consumer's behavior.
Mannell (1984)	Experience is an individual and unique situation that shows that quality rather than quantity should be given importance in the free time of life.
Csikszentmihalyi (1990)	Experience is a motivating and focused state of consciousness.
Denzin (1992)	The experience provides an opportunity for a person to define his/her own self by getting away from his/her daily life.
Arnold and Price (1993)	Experiences are situations characterized by high levels of emotional intensity.
Merriam-Webster (1993)	Experience is the way in which one is affected by a situation or information in question, through direct observation or participation.
Carlson (1997)	Experience is a continuous flow of thoughts and feelings that occur in moments of consciousness.
O'Sullivan and Spangler (1998)	Experience is a concept that refers to physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual engagement that includes participation in consumption.
Pine and Gilmore (1998)	Experience is a process that the customer finds unique, memorable, sustainable over time and wants to repeat and improve.
Gupta and Vajic, (1999)	Experience is a sensation or acquisition of knowledge resulting from the interaction of the consumer with different elements generated through a service provider.
Schmitt (1999)	Experiences are special events that are not spontaneous, that occur in response to some stages, and that the person chooses to be her own.
McLellan (2000)	Experiences are functional, targeted, engaging, impressive and memorable.
Lewis and Chambers (2000)	Experience is the result that the factors of the purchased environment, goods and services create in the individual as a combination.
Berry et al., (2002)	Experience is the organization of the clues obtained by the individual during the purchase in his/her own mind.
Uriely (2005)	Experience is an unclear and diverse phenomenon created by the consumer himself/herself.
Anderson (2007)	Experience has a structure that emerges when the production and consumption sides meet.
Oh et al., (2007)	Experience is enjoyable, interesting and unforgettable encounters from the consumer's perspective.
Mossberg, (2007)	Experience is a combination formed by the coming together of different elements belonging to the individual such as emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual.
Titz (2007)	Experience is not a single form of consumption, but also includes consumer behavior in the context of experimental consumption and tourism.
Lashley (2008)	Experience is considered from the perspective of creating the relationships that arise between the place that accepts tourists and the guest.

Source: Walls et al., (2011)

2. Definitions of Tourism Experience

The tourist experience encompasses the social and psychological responses that individuals exhibit towards tourism destinations during or subsequent to their vacations. These experiences represent a composite of symbolic elements that significantly influence visitor satisfaction by eliciting emotional

responses from tourists (Godovykh & Tasci, 2020). Today, tourists seek experiences that include excitement and active participation. This preference reveals an experiential perception that includes not only satisfaction but also the integration of various elements in tourism experiences (Campos et al., 2018). Similarly, touristic experience is a multifaceted interaction with tourism destinations and businesses that remain in one's memory for a long time (Aho, 2001). This experiential process is fundamentally shaped by the interactions between tourists and service providers, thereby generating distinct values for each individual (Jorgenson et al., 2019). In the end creating and providing experiences for customers is a hard and time-consuming task in the tourism industry. It demands continual research by service providers to produce products and improve tourist experiences (Larsen, 2007).

Pine and Gilmore (2011) evaluate the phenomenon of experience under two dimensions: customer participation and environmental relations. Accordingly, customer participation is divided into two as active and passive. First of all, in active participation, the individual directly participates in the activity or action. In these activities, the person's participation is at the forefront of the factors that determine the perception of empirical experience. Skiing, playing games or surfing are among the experiences that require direct participation. The person makes a long-term evaluation by taking part in the field of experience. Depending on the nature of the experience, a sensory, emotional or cognitive evaluation may be in question. In passive participation, the person makes an evaluation. The individual takes part in the field of activity, observes the environment but does not actually take part in an application. In clear terms, the person is present in the field of experience but does not take a direct action. In passive participation, the person makes an evaluation on the external environment and atmosphere. The aesthetic values in a sound, light or film show in a concert area are experiences in which passive participation is shown. As another dimension of experience, environmental relations are considered in two extreme dimensions as absorption and immersion. The individual's observation of objects around him without any participation explains the experience of absorption. While watching a football match, the individual perceives the atmosphere but is there as a spectator. In the experience of absorption, the person's sensory perceptions come to the fore rather than taking action. However, immersion experiences are more reactive. In this type of experience, the person is included in the atmosphere and is in close contact with the objects. Someone who is skiing or actively participating in a concert leaves the status of an observer and immerses himself in the experience as an active participant (Frochot, Elliot & Kreziak, 2017).

3. Youth Tourism and Social Media

Youth tourism stands out as one of the fastest growing markets in the tourism industry with its search for interaction-oriented experiences. In the literature, young tourists are considered as people traveling between the ages of 15-29 (Polat, 2017) and 15-24 (Yılmaz, 2018). Young people differ from other demographic market groups with their commitment to technology and their use of social media. This is because social and digital platforms have an impact on young people's travel planning, sharing their experiences and creating interactions (Dionysopoulou & Mylonakis, 2013).

Social media networks are digital platforms that allow people to create and share written, visual and audio content by creating individual accounts (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014). This rich content contributes to the interaction between social media users in terms of information, evaluation and experience. Social media are also virtual marketplaces that allow to fulfill needs faster and at a lower cost (Kumar et al., 2015). In the tourism industry, social media networks enable the sharing of travel experiences as well as communication between businesses and their potential markets (De las Heras-Pedrosa et al., 2020). Especially video content increases the effectiveness of this communication. Young people share all the details of their tourist trips with other tourists through vlogs (Bizirgianni & Dionysopoulou, 2013). YouTube and Instagram are among the social networks that serve the exchange of information among tourists by reaching large masses of these vlog contents (Lozano-Blasco et al., 2023).

Recently, young travelers have shown more interest in new social media applications and content rather than traditional digital content or social networks. In this context, video content comes to the forefront with its role in creating interaction and conveying young people's experiences and thoughts about tourism regions and businesses to large audiences. Since these contents contain instant reactions and emotions of users, they can produce more impact than written sources (Zhou et al., 2023). This also contributes to the fact that user-based visual content is perceived as more trustworthy by young individuals and is more likely to be taken into account in their travel planning. For young tourists today, vlogs are one of the most important sources for planning touristic travel and showcasing experiences (Yamagishi et al., 2024).

4. Theoretical Foundations of Tourist Gaze Theory

Drawing on Michel Foucault's work on the medical gaze, John Urry developed the concept of the "tourist gaze" to explain tourists' experiences and their interactions with the people and places they encounter while traveling (Hollinshead, 1999; Samarathunga & Cheng, 2021). In the theory, Urry (1990) tries to explain how tourists make sense of and interact with the objects around them during their experiences. According to the theory, individuals plan their vacations based on the content of various media elements and their past travel experiences, and a visual comparison is made between the objects and the expectations developed beforehand during tourism experiences. The focus of the theory is on visual consumption, which determines tourists' overall holiday experience perceptions and behaviors. It argues that individuals make holiday comparisons based on the visual content they have been previously exposed to during their travel experiences (Urry, 1992).

Visual elements such as photographs, postcards, and films play a crucial role in helping tourists make sense of the places they visit. Together, these phenomena create unique tourism experiences. Additionally, the tourist gaze is a form of visual consumption occurring during travel, reflected in the services, facilities, and attractions that differentiate a destination from daily life (Xie et al., 2024). Urry and Larsen (2011) emphasize how modern social media has revolutionized this experience. Tourists no longer passively observe visual elements; They actively share these visuals, thereby shaping their experiences. Web 2.0 and social media platforms allow tourists to share their travel encounters, demonstrating how these experiences have evolved into social and cultural productions (Urry & Larsen,

2011). Therefore, these developments have accelerated young people's ability to transform their travel experiences into content and transfer them to social networks (Chatzigeorgiou, 2017; Vitelar, 2013). Young people are independent travelers between the ages of 18-26 and frequently use technology at all stages of their tourism experiences.

Photographs and other visuals have an impact on the construction of the tourist gaze. Photography is an important field in the design, marketing and sharing of touristic experiences (Urry, 2002). In particular, the effectiveness of digital photography allows tourists' perceptions of their experiences to be both shaped and documented, moving the tourist gaze into a more global atmosphere (Larsen & Sandbye, 2014). This visual content is transferred to social networks, leading to social interaction and virtual connection between people (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014). Therefore, technology and social media can be considered as the most fundamental innovations that have transformed the global tourist gaze.

When the literature is examined, it is seen that scholars in different fields have addressed the tourist gaze theory. Research has shown that the tourist gaze approach encompasses not only tourist perceptions but also the elements that enhance and influence the experience. These approaches include animal gaze (Tomassini & Bertella, 2024), liminal gaze (Duffy, 2019), mutual gaze (Stawarska, 2006), male gaze (Pritchard & Morgan, 2000), transitional gaze (Samarathunga et al., 2020), local gaze (Wassler & Kirillova, 2019), second gaze (Grosvenor, 2007), distracted gaze (Ayeh, 2018), love gaze (Bolmont et al., 2014), bifocal gaze (Wilkins, 2021), insta-gaze (Oh, 2022), and intratourist gaze (Schwarz, 2018). Scientists have contributed to the enrichment of gaze literature by approaching the subject from different perspectives. Each gaze approach has sought to explain the experiences of the individual from before his or her identity as a tourist to after the travel experience. How is tourist's experience intrinsically designed? What influenced the realization of the experience in tourism destinations? What memories remain in the tourist's mind after the experience evoke and guide their future behavior? The studies of the gaze has essentially sought answers to these questions.

Lin and Fu (2021) conducted a comprehensive review of gaze studies in the field of tourism. Accordingly, the relationship between tourists and local people was analyzed from three different perspectives. First, the subject of tourist-initiated gaze is the tourist himself/herself. These gaze studies focus on how tourists make sense of other tourists and local people. These studies often examine a tourist's interactions with parties such as local residents and business employees during their vacation. How these parties enrich or influence the tourist's experience (Urry, 1990; Holloway et al., 2011). In this perspective, tourists and local people establish good relationships and a tourism process in which both parties are satisfied. The second host-initiated local gaze is an explanation of visitors and their interactions by local residents in tourism areas. This perspective examines the relationship between locals and tourists by addressing elements such as adaptation, resistance and reaction (Stone & Nyaupane, 2019). The last perspective can be considered as a component of the first two approaches. The relationship between tourists and host residents is mutual. It emphasizes concepts such as cooperation, solidarity, harmony, respect and interaction (Sroyetch, 2016). The reverse gaze, on the other hand, suggests that fake experiences or information shown in tourists' photos can lead to problems (Ilacqua, 2024; Polus,

2024). Each of these gaze has its own implications for the relationship between tourists and other stakeholders.

Samarathunga and Cheng (2021) examined 105 academic research conducted in the field of tourist gaze, including books, book chapters, articles and papers. This literature review aims to provide a portrait of the developments in the field of tourist gaze. Accordingly, it is thought that the studies are mostly carried out by utilizing qualitative methodologies. According to the authors, the studies are mostly sociologically oriented. It is stated that scientists from different disciplines have made significant contributions to the development of the field. It is stated that approaches such as second gaze, third gaze, e-mediated gaze, GoPro gaze, local gaze, host gaze, and reverse gaze, which have been put forward in recent studies, have made significant contributions to the advancement of tourist gaze literature.

B. METHOD

This study explores how new generation technology and social media content shape the tourist perspective, particularly among young people, through an analysis of scientific articles. To achieve this, secondary data was gathered utilizing the literature review technique, which allows researchers to derive insights from existing studies on a particular topic (Yıldırğan & Batman, 2023). In this context, a literature review was conducted on different scientific works such as articles, papers, books and theses in order to develop a comprehensive perspective on the subject. The keyword “tourist gaze” was selected and queries were made in different databases. In cases where some works could not be accessed, cooperation and assistance were provided with different universities. As a result, all the works examined were written in English.

C. OVERALL DISCUSSION and EVALUATION

Despite being a frequently used resource to explain tourism experiences, there are some negative discourses about tourist gaze theory. For example, Perkins and Thorns (2001) see the theory as limited, arguing that visual objects convey the designed experiences of tourism businesses and regions. In other words, the authors criticize the theory on the grounds that individuals follow desired experiences. They argue that promoters and marketers in tourism regions or tourism businesses convey unreal experiences of their touristic products. However, it is thought that developments in any field of human life are reflected in the tourism industry. This argument is supported when the video content of the users is taken into consideration. Vlogs are recognized as reliable and credible sources. Vlogs are considered to be more realistic objects as they directly convey the real experiences of tourists. Moreover, the representations of these contents are considered to directly reflect tourism experiences (Chakravarty et al., 2021; Dewantara et al., 2023; Qeidari et al., 2024). Hence, it can be said that the authors' criticism of visual representations is relatively limited.

Based on the information in the literature, the concept of “hybrid gaze” is developing. This view acknowledges the influence of visual elements in tourist experiences, but argues that the interaction developed in social media is more dominant in tourism experience design. Beyond the classical gaze theory, this approach focuses on the impact of content displayed in digital environments on tourists. However, the hybrid gaze states that not only visual consumption but also social interactions shape

tourists' experience perceptions. Different elements such as ratings, comments and likes on content on social media are thought to guide tourists' experiences (De las Heras-Pedrosa et al., 2020). In this context, tourism goes beyond visual consumption and becomes an experience area shaped by a multifaceted interaction.

Technological advances are transforming expectations and behaviors in the tourism industry (Strain, 1996). In this respect, the hybrid gaze can be an extension of this transformation. For example, the evolving interaction between users and their virtual audiences regarding content is a result of advances in the world of technology. These are not only determining tourism behavior but also becoming a channel for information flows. The content offered on digital platforms such as YouTube, Instagram and Facebook allows for the development of intense interaction in tourist travel planning and evaluation processes (Lozano-Blasco et al., 2023). Digital media resources are becoming a tool that allows the individual to be accepted in the social environment rather than just being.

Bourdieu's (1977) notion of habitus provides a significant theoretical framework for understanding the desires and expectations of young tourists, as shaped by social media dynamics. According to Bourdieu, habitus embodies the cumulative lifestyles of individuals shaped by their social environments and structures. The habitus will continue to grow and take shape as young people integrate unwritten norms and values in social media. Virtual groups in digital environments contribute to the social and cultural development of young people as well as the shaping of their behavioral planes. As a result, social networks become the channels through which tourism phenomena are born and shaped (Burgess et al., 2009).

In conclusion, the hybrid gaze approach can be taken into account to understand and explain the changing nature of tourism behavior. The hybrid gaze advocates the interaction power of content on social networks as opposed to the expectation design of visual objects. It is thought that cooperation and approaches of different disciplines will produce more success in the perception and interpretation processes of touristic experience for young people (Zhou et al., 2023). This requirement implies that more gazes are needed to understand the changing nature of tourism due to technology, social media and other elements. It is important to develop different gazes to answer questions about the phenomenon of tourist experience.

Another area where research needs to clarify is the role of tourists' previous experiences on their visual content. Individuals' personal characteristics and photographic skills can be effective in the formation of the content they submit to social networks (Lindsay & Sawyer, 2025). However, it has not yet been clarified how tourists' experiences construct their subsequent tourism content. It is curious what prior travel knowledge develops these contents. Today, how tourism destinations and products are understood and perceived is an area that needs to be revisited (Qeidari et al., 2024). In this respect, the hybrid gaze can contribute to the advancement of tourism experience literature by revealing the role of technology in this process.

How and to what extent young people use technology in the selection of tourism destinations is also an emerging area of research. Technology and its extensions can enable tourists to develop

meaningful connections with local people and have authentic experiences. It can help them get to know local communities closely and directly transmit their way of life to other tourists (Duffy, 2019). In this respect, technology and communication tools directly affect the quality of experience at many stages of the touristic travel process (Canavan, 2020). Instagram and other user-based content networks have become marketing channels that influence tourism behavior as a result of this situation (Gumpo et al., 2020). In this respect, it is necessary to observe the behavioral and demographic characteristics of young tourists. Based on their use of technology, young people's approaches to tourism can be revealed (Leonard, 2019). Therefore, the reflections of young individuals and their relationships established through tools such as technology and social media on tourism are a hybrid gaze. This gaze can be a guide to explain the experience processes of youth tourism. Also this gap points to the need for tourism academics to work in an integrated manner among each other and with scholars from other disciplines. This approach may not only reveal the global understanding of tourism, but also allow us to predict the future of tourism.

Conclusion

This scientific research focuses on a review of the tourism literature and examines studies in the field of tourist gaze. This provides a conceptual overview of recent developments and advances in gaze theory that have pioneered tourism experience studies (See also Liu et al., 2024). While previous research has been more concerned with the development of tourist gaze theory, this study looks at the issue from the perspective of youth tourism. In this way, the study draws a picture of research on tourist gaze theory and at the same time enriches knowledge on youth tourism.

The unique contribution of this study to the literature is to propose a new gaze to tourism that explains the impact of digitalization. In fact, young tourists are influenced by social media from their travel planning to their perception of the post-vacation experience. This hybrid gaze offers a valuable insight into how technology, social media and visual content play a role in youth tourism behavior. Because technology has made it both easier and more difficult to learn about tourist behavior, choices, and preferences (Sousa et al., 2024). This difference is clearly seen when the tourist behavior of the new generation, especially those with intense social media technology and internet addiction, is examined (Sfodera et al., 2024). Modern young tourists are observed to construct their travel experiences not only within physical spaces but also across digital environments, transcending local contexts through platforms such as virtual reality and social media (Pencarelli et al., 2020). Consequently, the tourist gaze is redefined, influenced not only by the physical attributes of destinations but also by the digital landscapes where visual content is shared. This research helps develop a deeper understanding of how tourists assess their experiences, taking into account both their physical surroundings and the digital tools available to them, thus gently reshaping the dynamics of the tourism sector.

This study also examines the theoretical foundation of tourist gaze studies and identifies future research areas and gaps. It is seen that the tourist (Shang et al., 2022) or host (Moufakkir, 2011) perspective is predominant in tourist gaze studies. However, considering the tourist groups that establish close ties with tourism businesses that integrate with local people, the mutual gaze produces more discourse. Considering the dynamic, adventurous and responsible behavioral characteristics of young tourists, it

can be assumed that research interest in mutual gaze in tourism studies will increase. In particular, the predominance of visual consumption and interactions from the beginning to the end of tourist trips increases the importance of enriching mutual and hybrid gaze studies. These efforts can enrich our explanatory power for tourism experiences by demonstrating the role of technology in changing tourist behavior (Qeidari et al., 2024).

Another point emphasized by the research is the need for quantitative methods in tourism studies. Qualitative studies on tourists' perceptions of their experiences have attracted attention (Samarathunga & Cheng, 2021). However, quantitative research is needed to explain issues such as the diversity of factors that have an impact on tourism experiences and their impact strength. In addition, empirical studies are emerging as a research area to explain how visual interactions prevent tourism experiences by utilizing new generation technologies such as mixed and augmented reality. Addressing the gaps in this field will contribute to the advancement of the tourism literature, and therefore a call for tourism academics is made. The attractiveness of visual content and the increasing interactivity of social media are likely to dominate tourism studies (Fan et al., 2022).

The study has some methodological limitations. It was carried out conceptually. This may limit the ability to follow advances in the field of tourism and draw comprehensive conclusions. In addition, the studies analyzed were written in English. For a clearer picture of the development of tourist gaze studies, it would be valuable to examine works from other languages and fields of science. The ongoing incompleteness of the methodological and theoretical frameworks surrounding gaze studies further indicates an area for improvement within this research. Consequently, a call is made for tourism scholars to amplify their contributions to this emerging discourse. Furthermore, the elucidation of certain issues raised in this study contributes to a deeper comprehension of prevailing trends within the literature.

Future research can empirically examine how the content added by young tourists on social networks influences their followers' tourism planning and perceptions. Academics can reveal how the content shared on different platforms attracts young people and how it results in their behavior. In addition, the impact of visual content, such as mixed reality on tourists' choice of vacation destination can be investigated. Determining whether vlogs or augmented and mixed reality systems produce more impact and directions for young tourists will contribute to filling an important gap in tourism literature. In addition, research groups can be developed to draw comprehensive conclusions about youth tourism. Some predetermined visual content and content developed by influencers can be shown to a group to see which one is effective and what kind of interaction emerges. In addition, the roles of real images of tourism regions and products and content produced by artificial intelligence should also be examined on young people. How the transformation of these contents in social networks contributes to the acceptance of young people in social norms can also be discussed.

Ethics Committee Consent

The authors declare that this study does not contain any studies with human participants and/or animals performed by any authors

Contribution Rate Declaration

The authors declare that they have contributed equally to the article.

Conflict of Interest

The authors of this publication declare they have no conflict of interest.



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