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- Determinants of price to earnings ratio: Evidence from Turkish tourism companies
- The impact of tourist's hygiene-safety perception on their intention to travel during the Covid-19 pandemic in Turkey
- A study on transferring cultural heritage assets in Isparta province to new generations through high school students
- Examination of complaints during the pandemic process: A research on five-star hotels operating in Antalya



### Editor

Prof. Mahmut Demir, Ph.D.  
Isparta University of Applied Sciences, Isparta, Turkey

### Contact

**Address:** Isparta University of Applied Sciences, Tourism Faculty, Eđirdir-  
ISPARTA - TURKEY

**Phone:** +90 (246) 3133447

**Fax:** +90 (246) 3133452

**E-mail:** [editor.jttr@gmail.com](mailto:editor.jttr@gmail.com)

**web:** <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/jttr>

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# Journal of Tourism Theory and Research

## Volume:8, Issue:1, 2022

**Research article**

Determinants of price to earnings ratio: Evidence from Turkish tourism companies

*Ömer İSKENDEROĞLU, Erdinç KARADENİZ*

## Determinants of price to earnings ratio: Evidence from Turkish tourism companies

Ömer İskenderoğlu<sup>1</sup> and Erdiñ Karadeniz<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Prof. Dr., Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Niğde Ö. Halisdemir Uni., Niğde, Turkey, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3407-1259>

<sup>2</sup>Prof. Dr., Faculty of Tourism, Mersin University, Mersin, Turkey. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2658-8490>

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### Abstract

*This study tried to determine firm-specific variables that affect the price-to-earnings ratios of the listed tourism companies at Borsa Istanbul in Turkey over the period 2012q3 - 2020q3. For this purpose, the quarterly financial data of tourism companies were analyzed by using the Generalized Moments Method (GMM). As a result of the analysis, it was determined that a positive relationship existed between Tobin's Q ratio and price-to-earnings ratio, whereas a negative relationship existed between leverage ratio as well as stock price volatility and price-to-earnings ratio. It was determined that no statistically significant relationship existed between sales size and price-to-earnings ratio.*

**Keywords:** Price to earnings ratio, Tobin's Q, Leverage, Stock price volatility, Tourism

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### 1. Introduction

In today's capital markets, it is possible to fund the real investments made by companies on a long-term basis at affordable costs and terms. Economic units with surplus funds in these markets (households, companies, government and foreigners) can reliably transfer their funds to economic units with fund deficit (especially companies) can be transferred. Companies provide the financing resources they need by issuing a wide variety of financial instruments such as stocks, bonds and bills in capital markets. Stocks offer their holders the opportunity to get a share of the profits of the company and to earn capital gains in case the value of the stock increases. While individual and institutional investors venture into stocks; they perform basic, technical, sectoral and corporate analyses.

The purpose of these analyses is to obtain the most appropriate return according to the risk undertaken. In investment analysis, primarily financial ratios calculated on financial statements are evaluated. In addition to these ratios, market multipliers (stock market performance ratios) are also used. The price-to-earnings ratio is one of the most used market multipliers in stock trading decisions and it indicates to what extent investors have to pay for the stock in return for the profit per share earned by a company. Shareholders wish to determine the extent to which they make profit in return

for the money they would invest in the stocks they buy or consider buying from the securities exchange markets. It is desirable that the price-to-earnings ratio be high for existing shareholders and low for potential investors. Based on the trust of potential investors in the company, the price of the stock may increase (Asiri and Hameed, 2014; Liem and Basana, 2012).

In this context, company managers should closely monitor the value of stocks in the securities markets, the prices that investors are willing to pay, and the effects of macroeconomic variables and the financial performance of the company in the formation of these prices. The tourism sector is a sector with high demand elasticity and risk and uncertainty. In addition, long-term funding requirements of companies in the tourism sector are also very high, as capital-intensive investments reach large amounts. For this reason, it is of great importance that both investors who are considering investing effectively in the stocks of tourism companies and managers of tourism companies closely monitor the financial performance factors that affect the pricing level of their stocks in the market.

In this research, firm-specific variables that affect the price-to-earnings ratios of listed tourism companies in Borsa Istanbul are examined. Borsa Istanbul (BIST) was established in Turkey in 1985 under the name of Istanbul Stock

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\*Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: [ekaradeniz@mersin.edu.tr](mailto:ekaradeniz@mersin.edu.tr) (E. Karadeniz)

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Exchange. Its name was changed to "Borsa Istanbul" on April 5, 2013. The main purpose and field of activity of Borsa İstanbul are; Within the framework of the provisions of the law and the relevant legislation, the capital market instruments, foreign exchange and precious metals and precious stones, and other contracts, documents and assets deemed appropriate by the Capital Markets Board, can be easily and safely, transparently, effectively, competitively, honest and stable under the conditions of free competition. To create, establish and develop markets, markets, platforms and systems and other organized market places in order to enable them to be bought and sold in the environment, to bring together them in a way to finalize the purchase and sale orders, or to facilitate the collection of these orders, and to determine and announce the prices formed. to manage and/or operate other exchanges or the markets of exchanges and other works written in the articles of association. BIST, as a professional organization, has members consisting of investment and development banks, commercial banks and intermediary institutions, and there are four permanent markets in the Stock Market. These; national market, second national market, new economy market and custody market. In the BIST bond and bills market, there are outright purchases and sales markets, repo-reverse repo market and real estate certificates market. Capital market instruments such as stocks, government bonds and treasury bills, which provide partnership rights or credit rights and are accepted as securities by the Capital Markets Board, can be traded on Borsa Istanbul (<https://borsaistanbul.com/tr/sayfa/471/borsa-istanbul>).

It is noteworthy that there are studies examining the significance of price-to-earnings ratios in the tourism sector, fluctuation and the differences between the financial performance of tourism companies with low and high price-to-earnings ratios as well as the use of social media (Akmese et al., 2016; Bhamornsathit and Katawadee, 2016; Karadeniz and Koşan, 2021; Kim and Ayoun, 2005; Singh and Schmidgall, 2002). However, the studies examining the firm-specific variables affecting the price-to-earnings ratios of tourism companies are quite limited (Barrows and Naka, 1994; Chen, 2007; Chen et al., 2012; Chiu, 2020; Demir and Ersan, 2018; Hadi et al., 2020). The study consists of four sections. Section 2 describes the data and analysis method. Section 3 presents and discusses the findings. In the final section concludes the paper.

## 2. Data and method

In line with the aim of this study, the impacts of Tobin Q ratio, leverage ratio, firm size and stock price volatility on the price-earnings ratios of companies are analyzed by considering the variables used in previously conducted studies in the literature. The quarterly financial data obtained from nine listed tourism companies in Borsa Istanbul over the period 2012Q3 – 2020Q3 are available at the website of the Public Disclosure Platform. The model established in the analysis and the variables included in the model are described as follow:

$$PE_{i,t} = a_i + \beta_1 PE_{i,t-1} + \beta_2 TQ_{i,t} + \beta_3 LEV_{i,t} + \beta_4 SIZE_{i,t} + \beta_5 VOL_{i,t} + \varepsilon_{i,t}$$

Where,

$PE_{i,t}$  = Price to earnings ratio, calculated by the ratio of share price to earnings per share, of the  $i_{th}$  firm for time  $t$ .

$PE_{i,t-1}$  = The one-period lagged value of the price to earnings ratio, as a dependent variable, which is included in the model as required by the GMM method.

$TQ_{i,t}$  = Tobin's Q, measured as (Total Assets + Equity Market Value – Equity Book Value) / Total Assets of the  $i_{th}$  firm for time  $t$ .

$LEV_{i,t}$  = Leverage, calculated by the ratio of total debt to total assets of the  $i_{th}$  firm for time  $t$ .

$SIZE_{i,t}$  = Firm size, calculated as the natural log of sales, of the  $i_{th}$  firm for time  $t$ .

$VOL_{i,t}$  = Volatility in shares' market price, calculated as the standard deviation of the market price of the  $i_{th}$  firm for time  $t$ ,

$\beta$  = Estimation coefficients,

$\varepsilon_{i,t}$  = The error term.

The analysis is conducted using the Generalized Moments Method (GMM). Firstly, the first difference model is transformed using the instrumental variable matrix. Following the transformation, the model is estimated using the generalized least squares (GLS) method (Yerdelen Tatoğlu, 2018). The validity of the prediction results obtained from the GMM method can be analyzed with different post-prediction tests such as the Sargan and autocorrelation tests. With the Sargan test, it is tested whether the instrumental variables used in the models are valid and it is determined whether the main variables are fully reflected (Gujarati, 2004). Second order autocorrelation test (AR2) is performed to determine whether an autocorrelation exists in the results of the dynamic panel data prediction model. It is expected to be statistically insignificant in AR2 test result (Arellano and Bond, 1991). In the GMM studies, the Wald test is performed to determine whether the model estimation is proper (Roodman, 2009).

## 3. Findings

Table 1 reports the descriptive statistics on the variables. The standard deviation value of the PE ratio is considerably higher than its mean value. In this context, it is possible to state that the market pricing of the stocks of tourism companies follows a fluctuating course. TQ, LEV, SIZE values are lower than the mean values of the standard deviation. The volatility in the market prices of the stocks of tourism companies is quite high. As shown in Table 2, a moderate level of correlation coefficient is found between LEV and TQ, and a low level of correlation exists among other independent variables. The estimation results of the performed GMM analysis are presented in Table 3.



Table 1. Descriptive statistics

Variables	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Std. Dev.	Observation
PE	0.771	-13.443	166.750	11.375	
TQ	0.655	0.119	2.189	0.325	
LEV	0.454	0.021	1.290	0.298	297
SIZE	6.231	0.000	8.181	2.063	
VOL	2.124	0.008	296.409	17.507	

Table 2. Correlation coefficients

Variables	TQ	LEV	SIZE
LEV	0.616	1	
SIZE	-0.128	0.031	1
VOL	0.157	0.034	0.049

Table 3. GMM estimations

Variables	Diff GMM
c	-1.069** (0.011)
PE <sub>(t-1)</sub>	-0.080 (0.173)
TQ	2.448* (0.000)
LEV	-1.880* (0.002)
SIZE	0.672 (0.187)
VOL	-0.068*** (0.089)
Wald (prob)	23.50* (0.000)
Sargan F (prob)	27.264 (0.108)
AR2 (prob)	0.128 (0.897)

(\*) and (\*\*) represent significance at 1%, 5%, and %10 levels, respectively.

It is determined that the price-to-earnings ratios of the tourism companies are affected by TQ, LEV and VOL. A positive relationship exists between TQ and PE ratio, whereas a negative relationship exists between LEV, as well as VOL, and PE ratio. No statistically significant relationship exists between SIZE and the PE ratio.

#### 4. Conclusion and discussion

Tourism is a sector with high demand elasticity and risk and uncertainty. In addition, since the fixed capital investments in the sector reach large amounts and the long-term funding requirements of companies are also very high. In this context, both tourism investors who want to invest effectively in the stocks of their companies, as well as tourism financial instruments that affect the market pricing level of company managers' stocks. It is of great importance that they closely monitor performance factors. Capital markets are very important in terms of financing for tourism companies' long-term real investments. As in other companies, while investing in the shares of tourism companies traded in the capital markets, providing partnership rights, profit share return or benefiting from rights such as earning capital gains and participation in management is intended. In the process

of investing in stocks, it is tried to determine the company's future earning power, the stock return and the potential to provide capital gains.

The price-to-earnings ratio, as one of the market performance ratios, is frequently employed in stock trading decisions for both securities analysts and institutional as well as individual investors. The price-to-earnings ratio shows how much the market investors are willing to pay for the earnings per share offered by the companies traded in the market. In this context, the price/earnings ratio clearly indicates whether the stocks of tourism companies are expensive or cheap. It is desirable that the price-to-earnings ratio be high for existing shareholders and low for potential investors. Some studies examine the variables affecting the price-to-earnings ratios for different sectors, whereas there are limited studies that examine the variables affecting the price-to-earnings ratios of tourism companies. Besides, with the authors best knowledge there has been no research study conducted on tourism companies that traded at Borsa Istanbul. In this respect, the research is important in terms of contributing to tourism and finance theory and literature.

The GMM analysis results of nine listed tourism companies in Borsa Istanbul over the period 2012Q3 – 2020Q3 reveals a positive relationship between the price-to-earnings ratios of tourism companies and Tobin's Q ratio. In finance theory, it is accepted that the increase in Tobin's Q performance would allow investors to pay a higher price for stocks with the expectation that the company would achieve growth and gain a competitive advantage in the coming years. As a result of the study, it is found that a negative relationship exists between the price-to-earnings ratio and the leverage ratio. It is possible to claim that tourism companies, which include more debt in their financial structure, are priced lower by investors in the market since they incur higher financial risks. The increase in financial risk for companies leads investors to pay lower prices for companies' stocks. In the study, a negative relationship is revealed between the level of stock price volatility and the price-to-earnings ratio. In this context, it can be asserted that investors are pricing their stocks lower since tourism companies whose prices highly fluctuate are prone to market risk.

The price that potential investors will pay for the stock may rise based on the confidence they have in the company. In this context, if investors expect a high profitability and firm value from the company and they think that the company is low financial and market risk, they can pay high prices for the stocks of the company. These obtained results

comply with the findings of Asiri and Hameed (2014), Liem and Basana (2012), and Karadeniz and Koşan (2021). In the study, no statistically significant relationship is found between the natural logarithm of sales, which is included in the analysis as a size criterion and the price-to-earnings ratio. In this context, it is extremely important for managers in tourism companies to use foreign resources in accordance with their asset structure, investment size and cash flow targets. In addition, it is necessary for a more effective and balanced financial performance for managers to take investment and financing decisions in line with sustainable profitability and firm value maximization. Therefore, making managerial decisions that will give the investors both operational and financial confidence in the market positively affects the stock performance of the companies.

The results obtained from the study would be beneficial in terms of contributing to company executives, partners as well as corporate and individual investors operating in the tourism sector. It should be considered that the scope of the analysis is limited to the data of the tourism companies whose stock shares are traded at Borsa Istanbul over the period 2012Q3 – 2020Q3. In future studies, the short and long-term analyses of macroeconomic variables affecting the price-to-earnings ratios or the relationship between price-to-earnings ratio and stock returns in tourism sector companies would contribute to the literature.

#### Author contribution statements

Authors contributed equally to the design and implementation of the research, to the analysis of the results and to the writing of the manuscript.

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All responsibility belongs to the researchers. All parties were involved in the research of their own free will.

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### **Research article**

The impact of tourist's hygiene-safety perception on their intention to travel during the Covid-19 pandemic in Turkey

*Seher KONAK*

## The impact of tourist's hygiene-safety perception on their intention to travel during the Covid-19 pandemic in Turkey

Seher Konak<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Asist., Ph.D., Eskişehir Osmangazi University, Eskişehir, Turkey, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6847-9754>

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### Abstract

*This study examines the effects of tourists' hygiene-safety perceptions and travel concerns on their intention to travel during the Covid-19 pandemic. Study data were collected from Turkish citizens living in Turkey by online survey technique. The obtained data were analyzed with SPSS 22.0 program and Lisrel 8.80. For the construct validity of the scale, exploratory factor analysis was performed and then confirmatory factor analysis was performed. The model proposed in the study was tested with structural equation modeling. The findings show that tourists' perception of hygiene-safety increases travel anxiety related to the pandemic. Also, it was determined that the travel anxiety of the participants about the pandemic negatively affected their intention to travel.*

**Keywords:** Travel anxiety, Perception of hygiene-safety, Intention to travel, Covid-19 pandemic

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### 1. Introduction

Tourists are generally thoughtful about external threats, particularly misdemeanor, chilly weather or disease which may unexpectedly disrupt their travel or holiday (Cohen, 1986). In addition to country-specific risk perceptions, general concerns greatly affect the travel decisions, particularly in times of trouble (Fischhoff et al., 2004). Tourists avoid traveling in health-related crises as well as terrorism, war and similar crises that create security concerns (Chen et al., 2004). In general, tourists view Europe as comparatively safe in terms of health treats while they view Africa as a breeding ground for infection (Lepp & Gibson, 2003). The research of Cossens and Gin (1994) brace this information. They have found out that health risks from poor food and water quality are higher in Africa and Asia than in Europe and Australia.

Health risks arising from pandemics significantly affect the travel decisions of tourists. Due to pandemics hindering travel movements, there is a contraction in tourism demand (Baxter & Bowen, 2004). For example, past outbreaks of coronavirus-induced SARS (2003) and MERS (2003) in a couple of weeks' diseases spread to more than 30 countries in worldwide (Al-Tawfiq, Zumla, & Memish, 2014). Bird flu and swine flu have significantly affected tourism demand. Bird flu originated in Hong Kong, China and other

Asian countries and spread from there to the world (Lee & Chen, 2011). Swine flu was seen in the USA in 2009 and it was easily transmitted from person to person in many countries, slowing down tourism movements (Haque & Haque, 2018).

The Ebola pandemic which occurred in Guinea in 2014 caused a decrease in tourism movements even in destinations other than the countries where it was seen (Mizrachi & Fuchs, 2006). Reports show that hotel and tour bookings have dropped significantly since the beginning of the pandemic, even in some countries that are miles away from Ebola-affected countries (Hughes, 2014).

The infectious disease SARS Covid-19, which first appeared in Wuhan, China in late 2019, has also become a global pandemic in 2020 (WHO, 2020). The Covid-19 epidemic, which is described as perhaps the biggest social crisis of the last 50 years, has both challenged health systems and changed our communication styles by affecting social life. With the spread of the epidemic to many countries of the world with the effect of globalization, countries closed their borders, cities and settlements were quarantined, people were forced to stay at home and reduce their social relations (Çobaner, 2021). In this context, tourism researchers who accept that mankind moveableness is linked to health risks

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\*Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: [skonak@ogu.edu.tr](mailto:skonak@ogu.edu.tr) (S. Konak)

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have investigated the impacts of pandemic on travel behavior (Zenker & Kock, 2020).

Health risk perception (Jonas, Mansfeld, Paz & Potasman, 2011) and general travel risk perception (Mizrachi & Fuchs, 2016) has been examined in current tourism research. However, the relationships between tourists' perception of health risks, travel anxiety and travel intention have not been studied yet much during the Covid-19 pandemic. In this study, the hygiene-security perceptions of tourists during the Covid-19 pandemic and outcome of travel anxiety related to the pandemic on their intention to travel are examined.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a behavior theory designed to explain or predict human behaviors which occur in a specific context (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). The theory was first put forward by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975). But it was later revised by Ajzen (1991). TPB suggests that three factors trigger behavior; personal attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. The theory argues that people's social behaviors in general are under the influence of some factors which arise from certain reasons and occur in a planned way. The theory of planned behavior forms theoretical basis of this research. It is assumed that the behavior and travel intentions of potential tourists during the Covid-19 pandemic are based on the theory of planned behavior.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Risk perception and tourist behavior

Risk has been shown as a big treat for cosmopolitan travelers (Sönmez & Graefe, 1998b). The demand for security is a basic need in human nature, and security concerns seem to discourage traveling to certain places (Kozak, Crofts & Law, 2007). Roehl and Fesenmaier (1992) state that there are seven types of perceived risks in tourism. These are social risk that negatively affects the tourist's social status; financial risk which represents possible currency depreciation, psychological risk that includes the negative outcome of the travel experience, satisfaction risk is the difference between the intended and actual travel experiences, time risk the possibility of losing valuable vacation time devoted to travel, physical risk refers to possible injury or disease and equipment risk refers to the failure of tourism equipment.

As in marketing studies, in tourism studies, the concepts of risk and perceived risk are strongly associated with consumer decisions and travel behavior (Conchar et al., 2004). The available literature shows that the dimensions of perceived health risks and other perceived risks have a significant effect on tourist decisions and behavior. Adopting strategies to delay a trip, change a destination and/or reduce the perceived risk level are some of them (Lo, Cheung & Law, 2011; Sönmez, 1998). For example, Yang and Nair (2014) state that uncertainty, worry, fear and anxiety are associated with perceived risk. Kozak et al. (2007), on the other hand, pointed out that as tourists' travel experience increases, the perceived risk decreases.

These perceived risks have the potential to significantly harm tourism demand, such as after the outbreak of the swine flu pandemic in the UK (Page, Song & Wu, 20). It is also very important to understand the basic human need for safety and security and to make potential visitors feel safe before or during their vacation (Sönmez & Graefe, 1998a). For example, visitors who considered certain destinations to be "at risk" are likely to avoid them in their future travel plans (Kozak, Crofts & Law, 2007). Negative experiences can make potential tourists worry about their future travel options. Assuming that domestic destinations are perceived as safe, it is fair to assume that those who associate high risk with international travel will prefer to vacation at home. The level of perceived risk can also determine the amount of information seeking called the risk reduction strategy, undertaken by the potential tourist (Roehl & Fesenmaier, 1992).

Overseas travel and exotic destinations can often carry higher risks and uncertainties regarding personal health and safety. For example, there may be an increased risk of contracting contagious infections on public transport, on poorly sanitized beaches or through ticks or mosquitoes (Irwin, 2020). Therefore, tourism puts safety at the center of travel and the ongoing risks associated with tourism. This can be explained by the fact that insecurity cases cause a collapse in the destination image with direct economic losses (Boakye, 2012). In the study, the H<sub>1</sub> hypothesis given below has been tested.

H<sub>1</sub>: During the Covid-19 pandemic, tourists' hygiene-security perceptions have a significant effect on travel anxiety.

### 2.2. Coronavirus (Covid-19) and anxiety

On 31 December 2019, the WHO (World Health Organization) inform the first case of coronavirus from Wuhan, China, and then Covid-19 was recognized as a global pandemic (WHO, 2020). The first case in Turkey was reported on March 11, 2020. As of November 05 2021, the total number of infected people in Turkey are 8,150,708 and the total number of deaths are 71,526. As of November 07 2021, total confirmed cases caused by Coronavirus disease worldwide are 249,743,428 and the total number of deaths are 5,047,652 (covid19.tubitak.gov.tr).

This pandemic is deeply affecting every aspect of daily life, from the way people work, live, shop, socialize and plan for the future. While the psychological impact of these changes has been well documented by the media, the mental health of those who suffering from this crisis has been largely neglected (Xiang et al., 2020). Looking at research conducted in the past years, global disease pandemic has shown that people suffering from pandemic-related anxiety have high levels of post-traumatic stress, anxiety and suicidal tendencies (Wu et al., 2009; Yip et al., 2010). Recently, the Covid-19 pandemic has received a different diagnosis called neurophobia-associated coronaphobia or coronavirus anxiety (Asmundson & Taylor, 2020). In this context, the Coronavirus Anxiety Scale (CAS) has been developed by

Lee (2020). Evren et al. (2020) has adapted Lee's scale into Turkish through an online survey of 1023 Turkish participants. In addition, a 5-item Pandemic (COVID-19) Anxiety Travel Scale (PATS) has been developed by Zenker, Braun and Gyimothy (2021). These researchers state that anxiety about Covid-19 is negatively related to intention to travel. In this context, the following H<sub>2</sub> hypothesis has been tested.

H<sub>2</sub>: During the Covid-19 pandemic, travel anxiety has a significant effect on the intention to travel for tourists.

### 2.3. Hygiene-safety perception, travel anxiety and travel intention relations

Tourism is one of the sectors that is quickly affected by many internal and external crises due to its fragile structure based on the security factor. When pandemic occur in certain regions, the effect may remain regional, but the Covid-19 pandemic has had a global impact and tourism activities have declined since 2020 (Gümüş & Hacıevliyagil, 2020). Travel intention emerges as a result of visitors acting with different motives and enables them to visit different destinations through these motives. Travel motivation helps predict tourist behavior because what visitors have in mind significantly influences their future travel (Horng et al., 2012: 816).

Mazursky (1989) pointed out that future travel decision will be influenced both by the scope of past travel experience and by its essence. In general, it can be concluded that personal experience with travel or a destination may affect perceptions of risk or safety, which in turn may affect the likelihood of future travel and the desire to avoid that destination (Sönmez & Graefe, 1998a). For example, study conducted by Karataş (2020), it was determined that there was an average of 85-90% increase in the behaviors of individuals regarding measures such as cleaning, hygiene, mask and gloves after the pandemic and a decrease of 95% in the behaviors of being in crowded places and using public transportation vehicles.

Study conducted by Yang et al. (2020), it was determined that the health status affects the tourism mobility and the demand for tourism decreased due to the spontaneous or the bans imposed by the states on human mobility. In their study, Wen et al. (2020) pointed out that after the pandemic, participants would keep away from visiting touristic areas and would travel alone or in small groups.

"The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a theory model that explains the relationship between consumers' beliefs, attitudes, intentions and behaviors" (Ajzen, 1991). TPB has been applied to help explain the complex travel decision-making process of consumers (Lam & Hsu, 2006). In studies on the theory of planned behavior in the field of tourism, for example, Lam and Hsu (2006) applied TPB to examine the intentions of Taiwanese travelers who chose Hong Kong as a travel destination. They have found that social influence and perceived behavioral control provided a good model fit for Taiwanese travelers. Sparks and Pan (2009)

investigated international travels attitudes of tourists who is traveling abroad from China.

The findings show that social norms and perceived behavioral controls are highly effective in predicting travel intentions. The study also shows that TV shows have a major role in destination preference as a wellspring of information for people of China about a destination. Lai, Yu, and Kuo (2010) examined tourists' perception of service improvement and the relationship of these elements with their intention to revisit the theme park with the Planned Behavior Model. Research findings show that interactive justice, attitudes and subjective norms are effective in revisiting theme parks. Therefore, it is thought that Planned Behavior theory provides an important basis for understanding tourists' travel intentions and forms the theoretical basis of the research presented in this article.

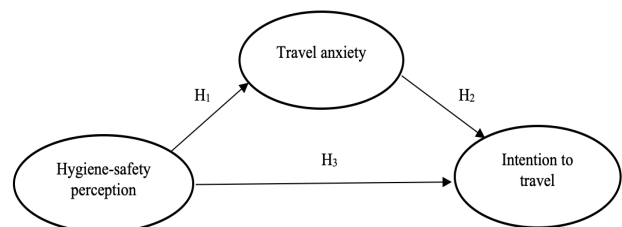
With the Covid-19 pandemic, the perception of health risk has changed, contractions have occurred in the economy and consumption capacities have changed, affecting costs. In this process, experienced fear, risks and uncertainties have affected consumer behavior that the demand for touristic travel will decrease has come to the fore (Aydın & Doğan, 2020). In this context, the following hypothesis has been tested.

H<sub>3</sub>: During the Covid-19 pandemic, the perception of hygiene and safety for tourists has a significant effect on the intention to travel.

### 3. Methodology

This study aims to examine the effect of tourists' hygiene-security perception and travel anxiety on their intention to travel during the Covid-19 pandemic. For this reason, the research model has been created in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Research model



#### 3.1. Study design and sample

The research population consists of Turkish citizens living in Ankara and Eskişehir provinces in Turkey. This study adopts convenient sample method. The questionnaire was firstly distributed to the researcher's personal network on Facebook and WhatsApp. Participants could forward the survey to their friends and families in Turkey from March 18 to April 19, 2021. While determining the sample, it was aimed to reach 384 samples representing the universe (Altunışık et al., 2007:127) with a sample error margin of 0.05 at the 95% confidence interval. A total of 384 valid questionnaires were obtained.

### 3.2. Data collection

As a sampling method, data were collected by convenience sampling method. Due to social distance rules during the pandemic, therefore, online survey technique was used in the data collection process. The questionnaire form used in the study consists of four sections. In the first section the questionnaire, there are 4 statements to measure the hygiene-safety perception of the participants, in the second section 5 statements to measure travel anxiety and in the third section 5 statements graded on a 5-point Likert scale to measure travel intention (1=I strongly disagree, 5= Absolutely I agree). In the last part of the questionnaire, there are 8 questions aiming to determine the personal information of the participants. In order to measure the perception of hygiene-safety, the scale by Çetinkaya et al. (2020) adapted to Turkish which they tested for validity and reliability was used. To measure travel anxiety, the Pandemic Anxiety Travel scale which is developed by Zenker, Braun and Gyimothy (2021) was translated from English to Turkish and used.

To measure the intention to travel (5 items) the scale which is used by Şengel et al. (2020) in their study is used. Validity and reliability analyzes of the scales were performed respectively. During the data collection process, a total of 389 questionnaires were obtained, five incomplete

and unanswered questionnaires were excluded from the analysis. Analyzes were carried out on 384 valid questionnaires. Cronbach alpha values of the scales were checked for reliability analysis. Accordingly, the total reliability of the scale is 0.713 ( $0.60 \leq \alpha < 0.80$ ), which is interpreted as being quite reliable (Akgül & Çevik, 2005: 435-436).

### 3.3. Data analysis

Frequency analysis in descriptive statistics, exploratory factor analysis for construct validity of the scale and Cronbach's alpha analysis for reliability were performed using SPSS program to determine the personal characteristics of the participants. Lisrel program was used for confirmatory factor analysis and SEM (Structural Equation Modeling). SEM was used to explore the model created in the research and the interactions between the variables.

## 4. Findings

In this section, first of all, the data obtained were interpreted by tabulating through descriptive statistics. Then, the results of the validity and reliability analysis of the statements in the scale were examined. Table 1 provides statistical information about the demographic characteristics of the participants.

Table 1. Statistics on demographic characteristics (N=384)

Variables	Groups	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Female	160	41,7
	Male	224	58,3
Age	From 18 to 24	35	9,1
	From 25 to 34	138	35,9
	From 35 to 44	147	38,3
	From 45 to 54	50	13,0
	55 years and older	14	3,6
Education status	High school and below	26	6,8
	Associate degree	60	15,6
	Undergraduate	188	49,0
	Graduate	66	17,2
	PhD graduate	44	11,5
Marital status	Single	150	39,1
	Married	234	60,9
Income	2400 TL and below	40	10,4
	2401-4800 TL	50	13,0
	4801-7200 TL	132	34,4
	7201-9600 TL	75	19,5
	9601 TL and above	87	22,7
Did you participate in touristic activities abroad before the pandemic?	Yes	178	46,4
	No	206	53,6
Do you participate in touristic activities abroad after the restrictions related to pandemic are lifted?	Yes	214	55,7
	No	170	44,3
With whom do you usually go on a trip?	Spouse/lover	65	16,9
	Friend(s)	82	21,4
	Child(ren)	8	2,1
	Alone	48	12,5
	Spouse and children	181	47,1

According to Table 1, 58.3% (224) of the participants are men and 41.7% (160) are women. 38.3% (147) of the participants are in the 35-44 age range. When their educational

status is examined, it is seen that they are mostly university graduates (49%). Considering the marital status of the participants, 60.9% (234) were married and 39.1% (150) were



single. Participants were asked about their income status. According to the income level, 34.4% of the participants were determined to be in the 4801-7200 TL income range. Did you participate in touristic activities abroad before the pandemic? (before 11 March 2020) were asked to participants. According to this, the rate of those who say yes is 44,6% and who say no is 53.6%. Do you participate in touristic activities after the restrictions related to pandemic are lifted? were asked to participants. According to this, the rate of those who say yes is 55.7%.

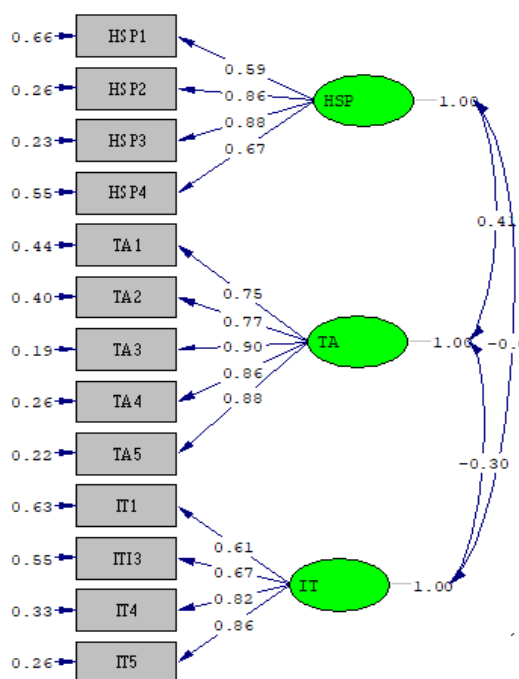
4.1. Explanatory and confirmatory factor analysis

At this stage of the analysis, firstly explanatory factor analysis and then confirmatory factor analysis were performed on the statements in the scale. Before interpreting the exploratory factor analysis, whether the data was suitable for factor analysis or not, the results of the KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) and Bartlett's tests were examined (KMO=0.853-Bartlett's=p<0.000) and it was determined that it was suitable for factor analysis at two values.

Table 2. Results of the explanatory factor analysis (EFA)

Factors	Items	Loadings	Explained variance	Cronbach's Alpha	Mean and Std. Deviation
Hygiene-safety perception			19,372	0.83	4,72 (0.58)
	HSP1	0.67			
	HSP2	0.89			
	HSP3	0.87			
Travel anxiety			27,250	0.91	4,18 (0.92)
	HSP4	0.71			
	TA1	0.78			
	TA2	0.78			
	TA3	0.86			
Intention to travel			23,595	0.86	3,39 (1.04)
	TA4	0.87			
	TA5	0.86			
	IT1	0.82			
	IT2	0.73			
Total			70,217	0,71	4,10 (0.85)
	IT3	0.85			
	IT4	0.83			
KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin)		,853			
Bartlett's test chi-square		3294,872			
p		,000			

Figure 2. Confirmatory factor analysis findings



When the findings in Table 2 are examined, it is seen that three factors were determined in accordance with the research model and the literature. This 3-factor structure explains 70.217% of the total variance. Confirmatory factor analysis was performed on the structures that emerged after the explanatory factor analysis. In the confirmatory factor analysis, 1 (IT2) expression with a low load was excluded from the scale (Figure 2). In Figure 2, the findings of confirmatory factor analysis related to the model used in the research are given. In order to determine the accuracy of the proposed model fit values and standard fit criteria were examined (Table 3). Table 3 shows the evaluation of the model in terms of nine standard compliance criteria (Çelik & Yılmaz, 2016). Accordingly, “x2/sd”, “RMSEA”, “NNFI”, “CFI”, “GFI” values for the proposed model show acceptable fit. “NFI”, “IFI”, “RFI”, “AGFI” and “CFI” show good compatibility.

4.2. Path analysis

Structural equation modeling was performed in order to examine the relationships between the factors in the research model. In the model, “hygiene-safety perception” as the ex-trinsic latent variable “pandemic travel anxiety” and “travel intention” as the internal latent variable are located (Fig. 3).

Chi-Square=166.40, df=62, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.06

Table 3. Fit values of the proposed model and standard fit criteria

Fit Criteria	Good fit	Acceptable fit	Model Value	Fit
$\chi^2 / sd$	$0 \leq \chi^2 / sd \leq 2$	$2 \leq \chi^2 / sd \leq 3$	2,68	Acceptable
RMSEA	$0 \leq RMSEA \leq 0,05$	$0,05 < RMSEA \leq 0,10$	0,066	Acceptable
NFI	$0,95 < NFI < 1$	$0,90 \leq NFI \leq 0,95$	0,96	Good fit
IFI	$0,95 \leq IFI \leq 1$	$0,90 \leq IFI \leq 0,95$	0,98	Good fit
RFI	$0,90 \leq RFI < 1$	$0,90 \leq RFI \leq 0,95$	0,96	Good fit
CFI	$0,95 \leq CFI \leq 1$	$0,90 \leq CFI \leq 0,95$	0,98	Good fit
GFI	$0,95 \leq GFI \leq 1$	$0,90 < GFI \leq 0,95$	0,94	Acceptable
AGFI	$0,90 \leq AGFI \leq 1$	$0,85 \leq AGFI \leq 0,90$	0,91	Good fit
NNFI	$0,97 < NNFI \leq 1,00$	$0,95 \leq NNFI \leq 0,97$	0,97	Acceptable

Figure 3. Structural equation modeling findings

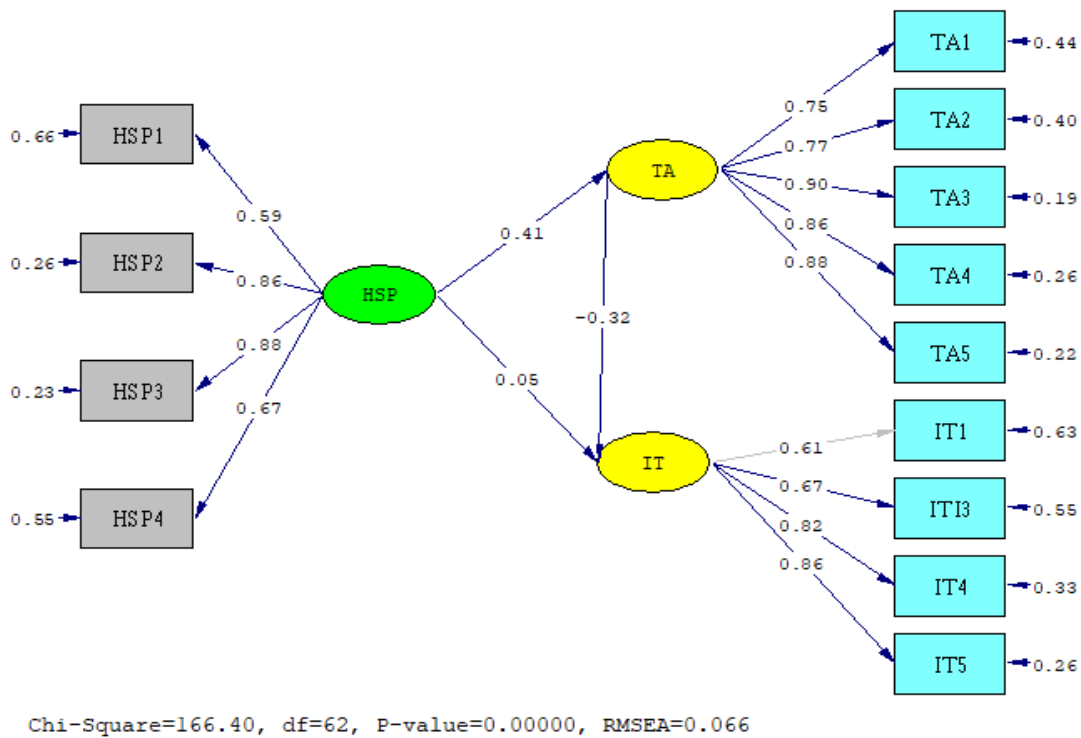


Table 4. Structural validity and explained variance

Factors	Standard Loads	t-value	R <sup>2</sup>	Factor Reliability	Explained Variance (AVE)
Hygiene-Safety Perception (HSP)	0.59	12.87***	0,3481	0,84	0,58
	0.86	7.90***	0,7396		
	0.88	6.91***	0,7744		
	0.67	12.33***	0,4489		
Travel Anxiety (TA)	0.75	12.55***	0,5625	0,92	0,70
	0.77	12.32***	0,5929		
	0.90	9.34***	0,8100		
	0.86	10.76***	0,7396		
	0.88	10.14***	0,7744		
Intention to Travel (IT)	0.61	12.49***	0,3721	0,83	0,56
	0.67	11.96***	0,4489		
	0.82	8.76***	0,6724		
	0.86	7.06***	0,7396		
Hypotheses			Result		
H <sub>1</sub> : HSP → TA	0.41	7.26***	Supported		
H <sub>2</sub> : TA → IT	-0.32	-4.74***	Supported		
H <sub>3</sub> : HSP → IT	0.05	<b>0.86</b>	Rejected		

As a result of the structural equation modeling in Figure 3, the proposed model was accepted. The construct validity of the model and the explained variance values are given in Table 4. When Table 4 is examined, it is seen that the hypothesis H<sub>1</sub> and H<sub>2</sub>, which are among the hypotheses established within the scope of the research, are supported and the H<sub>3</sub> hypothesis is rejected.

## 5. Conclusion

Health is an important risk factor that affects tourists' travel intentions and behaviors. For the last two years, the world has been struggling with Covid-19. This pandemic has deeply affected the tourism industry and is causing significant changes in the travel behavior of potential tourists.

In the study, the effects of tourists' hygiene-safety perceptions and travel anxiety on their intention to travel were examined through structural equation modeling. In this context, three hypotheses have been established. Accordingly, a positive and significant relationship has been found between hygiene-safety perception and travel anxiety. It has been observed that the travel anxiety of the participants related to Covid-19 was affected by the risk perception related to hygiene and safety. In other words, as the perception of risk regarding hygiene and safety increases travel anxiety also increases positively (See. Hajibaba et al., 2015). A negative and significant relationship has been found between travel anxiety related to the pandemic and intention to travel. In other words, as tourists' travel concerns increase, their intention to travel decreases. There are studies in the literature that support this finding (Kozak et al., 2007; Zenker & Kock, 2020). Şengel et al. (2020) study also shows that death anxiety related to Covid-19 negatively affects the intention to travel after the pandemic. On the other hand, in this study, there is no statistically significant effect of tourists' hygiene-safety perception on their intention to travel. Similarly, in the study by Luo and Lam (2020) no direct relationship was found between fear of Covid-19 and travel intention. In conclusion, H<sub>1</sub> and H<sub>2</sub> are supported but H<sub>3</sub> is not supported.

In this study, the effects of hygiene-safety perception and travel anxiety on potential tourists' intention to travel during the Covid-19 pandemic were examined. This research is considered important in terms of illuminating the psychological processes underlying tourist behavior during the Covid-19 pandemic, which is a health-related crisis and a better understanding of crisis-resistant tourists. More than half of the participants (N=55,7%) stated that they would like to participate in overseas trips after the restrictions related to pandemic are lifted. This finding shows that potential tourists are risk averse.

### 5.1. Theoretical implications and suggestions

In this study, the effect of hygiene-security perceptions of Turkish citizens on travel anxiety and travel intentions during the Covid-19 process has been examined. In the context of planned behavior theory, it has been determined that

as tourists' hygiene-safety perceptions increase, their travel anxiety increases. Also, as the travel anxiety caused by the pandemic increases, it is seen that there is a decrease in the intention to travel. Accordingly, we can say that tourists act in a planned manner while making their travel decision. As Nazneen et al. (2020) stated, hygiene-safety perception is an important factor in travel decision. For this reason, in order to increase tourism demand again, the government and businesses in the tourism sector should ensure the safety and hygiene of touristic accommodation, food and beverage and public transportation vehicles. It is thought that this research will contribute to the current tourism literature, as it is one of the few studies examining the effect of tourists on travel intentions during the Covid-19 process. For example, in the study of Godovykh, Pizam, and Bahja (2021), four main factor groups (individual factors, cognitive factors, affective and contextual factors) affecting the perception of health risk in tourism are mentioned. They suggested that the conceptual model presented in the study can be used as a framework to investigate the effects on the behavioral intentions of tourists.

Demir et al. (2021) showed that hotel managers anxiety increased according to the findings of face-to-face interviews which is done to them during the Covid-19 pandemic. In the study it is stated that the anxiety of hotel managers turns into fear, especially in April, May and June, when the pandemic is felt severely. Chua et al. (2021) in their research, which examined the factors of loyalty to the destination of US tourists in the Covid-19 pandemic and their intention to return to European and Asian destinations after the pandemic, is shown that US tourists rely on available information and coronavirus measures when making international travel decisions to reduce travel risk and uncertainty due to the pandemic.

This study is theoretically based on the theory of planned behavior in explaining the travel behavior of tourists during the pandemic. The Pandemic Travel Anxiety Scale which is developed by Zenker et al. (2021), was applied to the sample of Turkey and this scale was thought to be helpful in explaining tourist behavior while the pandemic continues. This study provides some theoretical contributions. The research results show that when hygiene-safety perception increases, people's travel anxiety increases. When travel anxiety caused by the Covid-19 decreases, intention to travel increases. These results contribute to the tourism literature regarding tourist behavior.

The results of this study provide guidance for decision makers and service marketers in the tourism industry. Tourism practitioners should measure risk perceptions for consumers who intend to travel after the pandemic restrictions are lifted and marketing techniques should develop accordingly. Tourism practitioners should investigate the factors affecting the intention to travel post-pandemic. Based on these research findings, surveys, interviews, etc. should use the techniques. It is very important for travel and tourism

companies to consistently implement hygiene and safety measures to increase tourists' perception of security (social distancing rules, mask, hand sanitizer etc).

### 5.2. Limitations and future research

The research has two limitations. The first is that it is limited to two cities in Turkey. The second is that the data was collected online. This is because of the necessity to comply with social distancing rules resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. The research was done between 18.03.2021 and 19.04.2021 in the Pandemic environment.

Future research can examine the relationships between different types of risks perceived in tourism and tourists' travel behavior and travel intention. This research scale can be retested in different cultural contexts. Since the effect of Covid-19 on touristic travel behavior is not fully known, longitudinal studies are required. New research can make comparisons by examining the travel intentions of tourists before and after the pandemic.

### Author contribution statements

S. Konak contributed to the design and implementation of the research, to the analysis of the results and to the writing of the manuscript.

### Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

### Ethics committee approval

All responsibility belongs to the researcher. All parties were involved in the research of their own free will.

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### **Research article**

A study on transferring cultural heritage assets in Isparta province to new generations through high school students

*Feyza USTA, Bedia Ümmü GAFAR*

## A study on transferring cultural heritage assets in Isparta province to new generations through high school students

Feyza Usta<sup>1</sup> and Bedia Ümmü Gafar<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Tourism, Isparta University of Applied Sciences, Isparta, Turkey, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9319-8014>

<sup>2</sup>Lecturer, Faculty of Tourism, Isparta University of Applied Sciences, Isparta, Turkey, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3544-3042>

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### Abstract

The conservation of cultural heritage is directly proportional to the success of cultural transfer. For this purpose, in this study, sustainability is aimed by introducing the cultural heritage assets in Isparta to the students studying in the field of foreign language in high school, raising awareness and transferring these values to new generations. Before the trip, interviews were made with 33 students selected from high schools studying in the field of foreign language in Isparta, which was selected in the research, and their preliminary information about the cultural heritage assets in Isparta was asked and cultural heritages were introduced with a presentation. In this context, Dundar Bey Madrasa, Adada Ancient City, Aya Stefanos Church, Men's Temple, Egirdir Castle, Pisidia Antiokheia Ancient City and Saint Paul's Road and apple gardens in Isparta province were introduced and the civilizations that lived in these areas were expressed accompanied by a guide with Turkish and English explanations. Before the trip, students had little knowledge about tangible and intangible cultural heritage assets; after the trip, it was seen that their knowledge on the subject increased; the students stated that they would share the information they gained with their environment and that they would evaluate the guidance profession in their university department preferences.

**Keywords:** Cultural heritage, Tourism, Conservation, Transfer, Tour guiding, Isparta

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### 1. Introduction

Cultural heritage is set of values that are tangible or intangible knowledge of a society that comes from past generation, maintained at the moment and bestowed to future. Heritage indicates everything we assume has been come down to us from the past (Lowenthal, 2005). In this context, since there is a common history of humanity; cultural heritage products, on the one hand, represent the civilization they belong to, and on the other hand, they have a universal value as complementary parts of the common accumulation of all humanity. It connects the past with the present; creates a foundation for the culture and the world lived in, and enriches human lives while providing a solid reference in the creation of the future. However, as a result of the rapid changes in the social, economic and cultural dimensions of the world, national and local values are losing their importance and value day by day. Arguing that each society

has its own challenges, the growing culture with the community itself (Syah, Nuradi, & Nasution, 2017).

Cultural values have become less transferable to the next generation because of the bilateral relations that become technological, accelerated and young people, who use all the opportunities that technology offers them to the fullest, have less communication with their families. Therefore, it makes a gap between traditional culture and young people and leads to evanish of the culture. All over the world cries out the disappearance of societies, forms of life, values, identities, roots, languages and so forth (Berliner, 2013). Within this scope, it is significant to deal with the concept of cultural heritage and this forms the subject of this research. In the study, it is aimed to raise awareness of students about conserving our cultural heritage and to contribute to the transfer of our values to future generations in a sustainable way. In this context, first of all, the concept of cultural tourism is

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\*Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: [bediagafar@isparta.edu.tr](mailto:bediagafar@isparta.edu.tr) (B.Ü. Gafar)

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explained then cultural heritage assets in Isparta the method, findings, results and suggestions of the study are presented.

## 2. The concept of cultural heritage

Frankly enough when we are trying to understand the nature and essence of the term "cultural heritage" it is necessary to consider the two constituent elements which forms it: "culture" and "heritage". Culture is a French word of Latin origin used by Voltaire in the XVIII century to mean the formation, development, and exaltation of human intelligence and today the definitions are up to 200 (Baykara, 2003). For to TDK (2022), culture is described as; "*all the material and spiritual values created in the historical and social development process and the tools used in creating them and transmitting them to the next generations, showing the extent of human dominance over their natural and social environment, culture, crop*" and "*the whole of the works of thought and art specific to a society or community of people.*" From these descriptions it can be pointed out that culture is the whole of human knowledge, belief and behavior and all kinds of material and spiritual creations that are parts of this whole.

Heritage is defined as 'property that is or may be inherited; an inheritance', 'valued things such as historic buildings that have been passed down from previous generations', and 'relating to things of historic or cultural value that are worthy of preservation' in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Heritage is, first and foremost, a process that shouldn't be given tight definition. As it is susceptible to change and is actually changing (Loulanski, 2006). Heritage is something that can be passed from one generation to the next, something that can be conserved or inherited, and something that has historic or cultural value (Harrison, 2012). Therefore, heritage enables living societies with a feeling of continuity with previous generations (Deacon, 2003).

The term cultural heritage as denoted by UNESCO (2022a) is that both tangible and intangible contributions of a society that is inherited from previous generations, preserved at present and bestowed on future generations. As heritage is the contemporary use of the past, and its meanings are defined in the present, then we create the heritage that we require and manage it for a range of purposes defined by the needs and demands of our present societies (Graham, 2002). It is a dynamic process and is reinterpreted over time according to the requirements of the age. Through this, the significance of cultural heritage as symbolic of the culture and those aspects of it which a society views as valuable is recognized (Blake, 2000). There are many different factors that affects its formation and selection as a cultural heritage. That is, the cultural heritage is not merely formed by a few select objects singled out by national legislation (Prot & O'Keefe, 1992). Whereas primarily the historic and artistic values were the only criteria; the cultural value, its value of identity and the capacity of the object to interact with memory have been added and cultural heritage has been di-

vided into categories like tangible, movable, immovable, underwater, intangible and natural by UNESCO, ICOMOS and international organisation practices (Vecco, 2010).

### 2.1. Cultural heritage assets in Isparta

Since the aim of this study is to transfer the cultural heritage assets in Isparta to new generations; in this context, cultural heritage sites in the province: Dundar Bey Madrasa, Adada Antique City, Aya Stefanos Church, Men's Temple, Egirdir Castle, Kutlubey Ulu Mosque, Pisidia Antiokheia Ancient City and Saint Paul Road were toured accompanied by a guide.

### 2.2. Dundar Bey madrasa

Dundarbey Madrasa was built in 1237 by the Seljuk Sultan II. It was built as an inn during the time of Gıyaseddin Keyhusrev, then it was converted into a madrasah by Hamidoğlu Dundar Bey in 1301. The madrasah has two floors and has 30 cells. It has found fame with the extraordinary ornament of its large outer door and the superiority of its architectural value. When entering through the outer door, a second door is passed after the small entrance hall, and the courtyard with a fountain in the middle is entered. The second floor is reached by a 12-step staircase. The madrasa has 11 rooms, 6 of which are on the right and 5 on the left of the courtyard. Its inscriptions were engraved around the big door with the Seljuk slug (Türkiye Kültür Portalı, 2022a).

### 2.3. Adada ancient city

The name of Isparta Adada Ancient City was first mentioned in Artemidoros. Kent was first founded in 1888 by G. Hirschfeld and also by W.M. It was discovered by Ramsey. Although the exact date of establishment of the city is not known, II. It is mentioned in the text of an agreement made between Termesos and Adada in the century. Considering that coins were minted in the city in the 1st century BC, it is thought that the city was founded before this date. During the Roman Imperial Period, especially the periods of Emperor Traianus, Hadrianus and Antonius Pius were the brightest periods of Adada. The city is located on the ancient road leading to the ancient city of Pednelissos (Kozan) and Perge (Aksu) via Antiokheia (Yalvaç), Neapolis (Şarkikaraağaç), Timbiriada (Aksu), Adada (Karabavlu) following the western shore of Caralis (Beyşehir) Lake. In the city, there is an ancient road with a stone floor, the Temple of Traianus from the Roman Imperial Age, the Temple of Emperors, the Temple of Emperors and Zeus Megistos-Serapis, and the Temple of Emperors and Aphrodite under the Yeniköy road.

There is also a forum, basilica, acropolis, monumental fountain, administrative building, open-air meeting place, theater and grave monument. The acropolis in the rocky area located in the section between the city plain and the valley was built for defense purposes. The acropolis is surrounded

by fortifications and towers. In the western part of the acropolis, there is an open-air meeting place of the city. The forum and basilica, which later became the shopping and administrative center of the city, were built in front of the meeting place. The island forum occupies an area of 32x45m. There is a large cistern in the middle of the forum, the floor of which is covered with smooth stones. There is a street in the west of the forum, and stoats (columned gallery) on the other two sides. There is a basilica in the east-west direction to the north of the forum. There is a monumental fountain in the southeast part of the forum (Türkiye Kültür Portalı, 2022b).

#### 2.4. Aya Stefanos church

The church which is located in Yeşilada, Eğirdir and extends in the east-west direction, has a rectangular plan and has three naves and an apse. It was built in the second half of the XIX. century. The side walls were built with rubble stone. The roof is a gable roof and the inside is plastered with mortar. The roof, which rests on wooden pillars with plaster on the outside, is covered with Turkish style tiles. There is a half-round apse protruding outwards on the eastern wall of the building. The illumination of the apse is done with one window at the bottom, two windows at the second-floor level above, and a round window at the top. The windowsills are surrounded by white marble blocks. Plaster decorations were poured inside. The church was included in the scope of restoration within the scope of the Lakes Region Research Project, then the roof covering was renewed, the outer walls were made, and the interior wooden parts were renewed (Türkiye Kültür Portalı, 2022c).

#### 2.5. Egirdir castle

Egirdir Castle is located on the peninsula extending to Lake Egirdir. There are residences on the fortification walls extending along the peninsula in the north-south direction. The exact date of construction of Egirdir Castle, which consists of an inner and an outer castle, is not known. Its ruins today are from the Byzantine period. The castle walls, which were repaired at various times, were built as a row of bricks and stones. The outer cover is inside the rubble fill. It was damaged during Timur's invasion of Egirdir, and it was repaired during the Hamidoğulları and Ottoman periods (T.C. Isparta İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü, 2022a).

#### 2.6. Men's temple

The Sanctuary was built in the name of "The Moon God Men" and its history dates back to the 4th century BC. The hills and skirts of the area consist of many structures. On the highest hill to the south is the Temple of Men. The temple was built on a platform with multiple stairs. There is a Temenos Wall surrounding the temple. There are some ruins of houses in the north and east of the Sanctuary of Men, and the remains of a stadium in the northernmost part. In addition, a little further to the east, on a certain elevation, there is the remains of a small temple and an andron. On the northern side of the sanctuary, there is also the remains of the Byzantine Church (Türkiye Kültür Portalı, 2022d).

#### 2.7. Pisidia Antiokheia ancient city

Pisidia Antiokheia Ancient City was established on a sloping and partially rocky land. Antiochos (Hisarardı) road passes from its north and west, and Antiochos River flows from its southeast. In the city, which can be defined as having a trapezoidal plan, there are building remains from the Roman and Byzantine Periods. The main entrance to the city is located in the west. There are ruins of structures such as Aqueducts, Nympheum, Turkish Bath and Palestra in the north of the city. In the centre, there is the Theatre, the Tiberius Field, the Propylon and the Temple of Augustus. There are also the remains of a Byzantine church near the Tiberius site and the remains of a basilica to the west. The aqueducts of the city can be seen partially standing in the northeast direction (Isparta İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü, 2022b).

### 3. Method

In line with the purpose of the study, a trip to the cultural heritage assets in Isparta was carried out with the students, and the civilizations that lived in Isparta, and the tangible and intangible cultural heritage items were signified. On the other hand, a content consisting of the visuals of destroyed cultural assets both in Turkey and in the world was prepared to be shown to the students before the trip, and it was tried to give the students information about the subject. In order to evaluate the awareness of students about destruction in tourism within the scope of the displayed content and the trip, the interview technique, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in the study, and a semi-structured interview form was created as a result of examining the studies on the subject and receiving expert opinions.

The interview form was approved by the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of Isparta University of Applied Sciences, with meeting number 55 and decision number 01 dated 03.06.2021. There are two separate interview forms, before and after the trip. The pre-trip interview form consists of 11 questions and the post-trip interview form consists of 8 questions. The population of the study consists of totally 33 high school students from 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades who are volunteer to participate in the trip, curious about tourism guidance as a profession, living in Isparta and studying in the language field to raise their awareness.

In the study, sampling and purposeful sampling method were used. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with the participants before and after the trip. On 25.11. 2021, the day before the trip, the students were asked pre-trip interview questions and the content prepared on the cultural heritage assets of Isparta was shown on the same day. On 26.11. 2021, a trip was held in Isparta and on the same day, interview questions were asked to the students after the trip. The study was carried out especially among students selected from foreign language departments of high schools to increase awareness and to measure their attitudes towards the guidance profession.

3.1. Research ethics

The study was carried out within the scope of the project titled "Introducing Isparta Cultural Heritage Items and Sites through High School and Disabled Students and Raising Community Awareness" of the Tourism Guidance Department student, which I supervised, supported by the TUBITAK 2209-A University Students Research Projects Support Program. The interview form used in the research part of the study was approved by the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of Isparta University of Applied Sciences, with meeting number 55 and decision number 01 dated 03.06.2021.

4. Findings

In the study, the results of the content analysis of the findings obtained from the interviews with the participants were presented with the help of explanations about the main theme, sub-themes and codes. As a result of the analyzes, three main themes were determined before the trip, namely "cultural heritage awareness in Isparta", "advertisement of Isparta cultural heritage" and "opinions about tourist guidance". After the trip, three main themes were determined as "the contribution of the trip to the awareness of Isparta cultural heritage", "opinions about the benefit of the trip" and "opinions about the tourist guide profession" and there are six main themes in total. The most frequently repeated codes among the themes are presented in tables. The main themes before and after the trip were presented under separate headings and the findings were included under these headings. Table 1 presents information on the individual characteristics of the participants.

Table 1. Individual characteristics of the participants

Gender	Number	Percent (%)
Female	24	79
Male	9	21
Age	Number	Percent (%)
17	15	46
18	18	54

79% of the participants are female and 21% are male. 54% of the students are at the age of 18; 46% are 17 years old.

4.1. Findings related to the main themes before the trip

The main theme was determined within the scope of the content analysis results of the findings obtained from the pre-trip interviews. Findings related to the main theme of cultural heritage awareness in Isparta were divided into 5 separate sub-themes as a result of the detailed analysis of the participant's views, and the most frequently repeated codes are presented in Table 2.

While almost all of the participants stated that they do not know about the cultural heritage assets in Isparta, for example participant 21: "I have never visited any historical ruin in Isparta.", those who are aware of it expressed like

Participant 2: "Rose gardens and lavenders come to my mind when you say cultural heritage" or visits to Egirdir Participant 14: "I went to Egirdir with my family."; half of the participants stated that they didn't know any tradition in Isparta the ones who answered like Participant 30: "Isparta was bound to traditions beforehand, now only weddings."

Table 2. Findings related to the main theme of "cultural heritage awareness in Isparta"

Sub themes	Codes	F
Awareness of cultural heritage assets	No, I don't know	15
	Yes, I know	18
	If yes...	
	Rose Gardens	11
	Carpet and kilim weaving	9
	Lavenders	3
Awareness of cultural assets of Isparta	No, I don't know	28
	Yes, I know	5
	If yes...	
	Egirdir Castle	6
	Rose gardens	6
	Lavenders	6
	Yazılı canyon	4
	Carpet weaving	3
	Lake Egirdir	3
	Ethnography Museum	2
	Aya Stefanos Church	1
	Ertokus Bey Madrasa	1
Gökçay	1	
Ulu mosque	1	
Awareness of civilizations that lived in Isparta	No, I don't know	22
	Yes, I know	11
	If yes...	
	Hamitogulları	7
	Seljuks	3
	Ottoman	2
	Ancient Greek Civilization	1
Lydians	1	
Byzantine	1	
Opportunity to visit the ruins in Isparta	No, I don't know	20
	Yes, I know	13
	If yes...	
	With my family	8
With Tour	5	
Views on traditions and customs of Isparta	No, I don't know	16
	Yes, I know	17
	If yes...	
	Bound to wedding tradition	12
	Bound to the rose crafting culture	8
	Bound to the food culture	5
Not as much as before	3	

The advertisement of Isparta cultural heritage was divided into 2 separate sub-themes as a result of the detailed analysis of the participant's views, and the most frequently repeated codes are presented in Table 3.

While the participants agree that Isparta is not advertised enough, such as Participant 11: "Important but not advertised"; most of them pointed out that it is vital to make advertisement for the economy and for future like Participant 9: "Yes, it is important for tourism and economy" and Participant 5: "It is important for economy but it is not advertised enough".

Table 3. Findings related to the main theme of “the advertisement of Isparta cultural heritage”

Sub themes	Codes	F
Opinions on advertisement situation of Isparta	Not well known	33
Importance of advertisement of Isparta	No, it isn't	2
	Yes, it is important	31
	If yes...	
	It is important for future	14
	It is important in regards to economy	10

The main theme of opinions about the tourist guidance was divided into two separate sub-themes as a result of the detailed analysis of the participant opinions, and the most frequently repeated codes are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Findings related to the main theme “opinions about tourist guidance”

Sub themes	Codes	F
Opinions on university department preference	I don't know	4
	English Teaching	17
	English Language and Literature	4
	Translation and interpreting	4
	Translation Studies	2
	French Language and Literature	1
	Tourism Guidance	1
Views on the tourist guidance job	An enjoyable and funny job	12
	I can do this as extra job	10
	It requires socialness	5
	No permanent but seasonal job	3
	Economically important and good job	1
	A difficult job	2

When the participants were asked their opinions about their university department preferences; most of them remarked that they would choose the department of English

Teaching such as Participant 23: *"I want to be an English teacher that is why I chose this department"*; almost half of them evaluated tourist guidance profession as enjoyable but difficult like Participant 17: *"Tourist guidance is a difficult job. I don't think"* or Participant 29: *"I want to be because I am a sociable person"*.

#### 4.2. Findings related to the main themes after the trip

Three main themes were determined within the scope of the content analysis results of the findings obtained from the post-trip interviews. The main theme of the trip's contribution to Isparta cultural heritage awareness was divided into five separate sub-themes as a result of the detailed analysis of the participants' views, and the most frequently repeated codes are presented in Table 5.

After the trip, almost all the participants had the idea about cultural heritage assets, civilizations in Isparta such as Participant 9: *"I didn't know civilizations lived there before the trip."*, or Participant 16: *"I saw ancient city for the first*

*time in Isparta."*, or Participant 23: *"I like Saint Paul's road. I didn't know Isparta is a transit point of Christianity."* and were aware of the transfer of cultural heritage to new generations like Participant 32: *"Our past creates our future, so it is important to know and conserve our cultural heritages."* However, as understood from the answers, since the trip could not be made on the planned dates due to the corona virus, the intangible cultural heritage assets of Isparta were not shown on site and the contribution was limited on this trip.

Table 5. Findings related to the main theme "contribution of the trip to the awareness of Isparta cultural heritage"

Sub themes	Codes	F
Awareness of cultural heritage assets	No, I do not know	5
	Yes, I know	28
	If yes	
	Christianity spread along the Way of St. Paul	12
	Egirdir Castle	6
	Dundar Bey Madrasa	4
	Ertokus Bey Madrasa	4
	Egirdir is the capital of apples	4
	Aya Stefanos Church	3
	Awareness of civilizations that lived in Isparta	No, I do not know
Yes, I know		31
If yes...		
Phrygia		13
Lydia		9
Greeks		7
Seljuks		7
Hamitogullari		6
Romans		2
Hellens		1
The opportunity to visit of the ruins of Isparta	Yes, I know	31
	St. Paul's Road	19
	Egirdir Castle	7
	Aya Stefanos Church	6
	Ertokus Bey Madrasa	5
	Dundar Bey Madrasa	2
	Seljuk Ruins	1
Opinions on traditions and customs of Isparta	No, I do not know	31
	Yes, I know	2
	If yes...	
	Apple	2
	Rose	2
	Lavender	2
Transferring our cultural heritage to future generations	No, it isn't	5
	Yes, it is important	29
	If yes...	
	Our past makes us who we are	12
	The past creates the future	5
	It is important for tourism and economy	3
	To change the perspectives of young people	3
	For the spread of culture	2

The main theme of the opinions on the benefit of the trip was divided into two separate sub-themes as a result of the detailed analysis of the participants' views, and the most frequently repeated codes are presented in Table 6.

All participants are agreed on the benefit of trip like Participant 6: *‘I learned new things about Isparta so this trip is beneficial for me.’* or Participant 27: *‘It is helpful and I will choose tourist guidance department in my university preferences.’* and stated that they would share with their environment such as Participant 31: *‘I didn’t know Aya Stefanos Church in Egirdir, I will visit there with my family again.’* or Participant 13: *‘I will share it with my environment and may be visit again.’*

Table 6. Findings related to the main theme “opinions on the benefit of the trip”

Sub Themes	Codes	F
Opinions on the benefit of the Trip	I think it is helpful	33
Sharing the Trip with people in your environment	Yes, I will No, I won’t share	30 3

The main theme of opinions on the tourist guidance job is given under a sub-theme as a result of the detailed analysis of the participant opinions, and the most frequently repeated codes are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Findings related to the main theme “opinions on the tourist guidance job”

Sub themes	Codes	F
Views on the tourist guidance job	No	12
	Yes	21
	If yes...	
	I want to do this job	8
	Second line in university preference	6
	Leaning towards the job after the trip	5
	Outperformed my previous review	1
It is a difficult job, but I will choose it	1	

The number of the participants that would pay regard to tourist guidance profession has increased after the trip like Participant 11: *‘After this trip I may think it because it is a funny job.’*, or Participant 8: *‘I had prejudices but now I like it and I may choose.’* or Participant 2: *‘I like wandering so I will choose.’* and twelve of the participants were determined to which profession to choose and did not change their opinions such as Participant 25: *‘No, I want to be English teacher.’* or Participant 19: *‘It is a difficult and seasonal job for Isparta so, I don’t think.’*

## 5. Conclusion and discussion

Introducing our cultural assets and transferring them to younger generations is an important issue both in terms of social, tourism and economic aspects. These fields are all intermingled one another. So by forbidding culture from our conversations, we economists deprive ourselves from any insight into the role that values play in the economy (Kalmer, 1996). Although the lack of awareness of young people about traditional culture in the transmission between generations does not seem to be a concrete problem today, cultural

heritage will disappear to a large extent in the coming years, as a generation grows away from traditional culture. In order to avoid this situation, educational practices that bring young people together with tangible and intangible cultural heritage should be adopted. This study, which was conducted with a group of 33 high school students, actually reveals the problems that may be experienced in the future. In this context, it has been tried to contribute to the awareness of the new generation, so that our cultural assets can be transferred to future generations in a sustainable way.

It was observed that the students did not know the concepts of cultural heritage, tangible and intangible cultural heritage before the trip, and that they had partial knowledge of these concepts after they were explained. It is noteworthy that fifteen students, in particular, have no knowledge of the subject. When the findings in the theme of cultural heritage assets related to the questions that are common in the interview questions before and after the trip are compared; it is seen that the students mostly agree on the importance of protecting the cultural heritage, advertising it more and transferring it to the next generations. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that after the trip, the students expressed more opinions about why cultural assets are important and the number of repeated codes was higher than before the trip. Another finding which is considered important is that after the trip; the awareness of students is increased because there are so many cultural heritage assets and so many civilizations live in Isparta.

Students who agree that Isparta is not sufficiently advertised; they stated that they would do their duty for this and if necessary, they would choose the guidance profession. While there were twenty-eight students who were not aware of the cultural heritage assets in Isparta before the trip; after the trip, it is indicated that this number is six and they stated more about cultural assets than before the trip. In addition, it is seen that there is a change in the attitudes of the students towards the guidance profession. While the number of students considering the profession of guidance before the trip was twelve; after the trip, it is seen that this number has increased to twenty-one.

When the significant findings related to the main theme of the benefit of the trip are examined, it is seen that the students agree that the trip is beneficial in having information about the subject. The students stated that they had knowledge about the subject, that they were happy to participate in the trip and that they would tell their surroundings about what they saw during the trip. On the other hand, another substantial finding that shows that the students have knowledge about the subject can be shown as giving longer answers to all the questions after the trip. However, it would be appropriate to point out that the limitation of this study is that since this study could not be carried out on the due date due to the corona virus, the students could not see the examples of our intangible cultural heritage in situ. The apple garden, which is the symbol of Isparta, was visited in the trip

and many of the students who are residents of Isparta stated that they had experienced apple picking for the first time.

As a result of the findings obtained from the study, suggestions that are thought to contribute to the sector and the literature are presented:

- On the transfer of cultural heritage assets to young generations; it is seen that there are informative conferences, seminars, training, etc. that draw attention to the importance of doing activities and especially raising awareness of young people on this issue (Delors, 1996). It would be beneficial for local administrative, universities, secondary and primary schools to work together to raise awareness of the youth on the importance of our cultural heritage.

- It will be more remarkable in terms of raising awareness of the issue, by participating in the places where the ceremonies, festivals, traditions, etc. from our tangible and intangible cultural heritage take place, together with the youth, and informing about our values in-situ.

- It is an undeniable fact that in our country, which is rich in cultural heritage, it contributes to the economy of the region where it is located by increasing the advertisement of cultural heritage assets. The greatest power in ensuring the continuity of this has a lot on the youth; young people should be included in this process in some way (UNESCO, 2022b).

- It is seen that the technical trips in primary and secondary education should be carried out with a guide, and it is understood from the study that the attitudes of the students who receive education in the field towards the tourist guidance profession will change.

#### Author contribution statements

Authors contributed equally to the design and implementation of the research, to the analysis of the results and to the writing of the manuscript.

#### Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

#### Ethics committee approval

This research has Ethics Committee Approval from Isparta University of Applied Sciences with 03/06/2021 date and 55-1 number. All responsibility belongs to the researcher. All parties were involved in the research of their own free will.

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### **Research article**

Examination of complaints during the pandemic process: A research on five-star hotels operating in Antalya

*Hazal Ezgi ÇELEBİ, Ali DALGIÇ*



## Examination of complaints during the pandemic process: A research on five-star hotels operating in Antalya

Hazal Ezgi Çelebi<sup>1</sup> and Ali Dalgıç<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Res. Asst., Faculty of Tourism, Isparta University of Applied Sciences, Isparta, Turkey, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4028-547X>

<sup>2</sup>Asst. Prof., Faculty of Tourism, Isparta University of Applied Sciences, Isparta, Turkey, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5575-4825>

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### Abstract

Hotel businesses, which have obtained a safe tourism certificate by performing these mandatory practices, have made efforts to meet the expectations of their guests and to satisfy them. Understanding the elements that do not satisfy the guests and underlie the issues that cause complaints is thus important. In this regard, this study aims to identify the complaint elements based on comments. To that end, it analyzes the comments on the "TripAdvisor" site from 01.05.2020 to 01.01.2021 made by the guests of five-star hotel businesses that continue their activities in the coastal areas of Antalya province by obtaining a "safe tourism certificate". A total of 5.949 comments are examined using the descriptive analysis method. The complaints are grouped under four categories as "guest-related", "management-related", "cleaning-related" and "service-related". Considering these complaints, this study suggests that the legal authorities need to perform more inspections and that the hotel managers need to frequently supervise the practices in the hotel.

**Keywords:** Complaint behavior, Complaint factors, Safe tourism, Tripadvisor

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### 1. Introduction

The spread of Covid-19 all over the world since 2020, has hit many sectors. The tourism sector has been one of the most affected sectors due to the closure of borders, the ban on flights and other restrictions in everyday life caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. From the perspective of the tourism sector, which already suffers from flexible demands, most of the year 2020 could be considered lost revenue. During the Covid-19 outbreak in 2020, when the number of cases decreased, the measures taken were eased; efforts were made to revitalize domestic tourism. In this period, one of the key measures taken for the hotel businesses to continue providing their services is the requirement of obtaining a "safe tourism certificate". Through the requirement of safe tourism certificate, hotel businesses attempted to increase the satisfaction levels of their guests by offering safe holiday services to them during the pandemic period. It can be argued that the greatest expectation of the guests during the pandemic period is "safety" in terms of health.

With the safe tourism certificate being made mandatory, hotel businesses now undergo "mandatory practices" (procedures and protocols regarding the hygiene of the facilities,

social distance and disinfectant, training and follow-up of staff, information signs for staff and guests, ventilation, necessary measurements for staff and guests, etc.), "practices related to check-in process" (informing guests about the measures taken and other measures to reduce physical contact between the staff and guests) and "precautions and practices for staff" (providing them protective equipment and explaining how to use, training staff and providing them psychological support, informing them about the social distance rule), "arrangements in public areas" (bedrooms, kitchens, food and beverage units, swimming pools and beaches, fitness centers and SPA, animation centers and some measures for mini club), "security", "hotel vehicles", "staff accommodation units and lodgings", "waste management", "purchasing, acceptance and storage", "regulations on sign boards, logo, certificate and QR code" (TGA, 2020).

There are many regulations that hotel businesses must follow for the health of their guests before and after obtaining a safe tourism certificate. It can be said that individuals, who spend their holidays in hotel businesses that obtain a safe tourism certificate, desire to feel safer than other seasons and have higher expectations in terms of health and

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\*Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: [alidalgic@isparta.edu.tr](mailto:alidalgic@isparta.edu.tr) (A. Dalgıç)

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safety. It is not surprising that guests whose expectations are not met or who do not meet the promised service standards leave the facilities unsatisfied. Dissatisfied guests are likely to follow the complaint path. Complaining guests expect facilities to compensate this; making good use of this also means an opportunity for facilities to organize their activities.

This study examines the comments on the “TripAdvisor” site by the guests of the five-star hotel businesses that operate in the coastal regions of Antalya with the “safe tourism certificate”. The aim of this study is to reveal the complaint elements through comments. This study is of particular importance in that it determines the issues that hotel businesses should pay attention and evaluates the complaint elements. This study thus presents the theoretical framework including related studies. Afterwards, it offers information on the participants, the data collection and analysis process, and the analysis method used under the “methodology” section. The “findings” section presents some remarks on the analysis and complaint elements. This study concludes with the “conclusion” section, which includes the theoretical and practical implications.

## 2. Theoretical framework

Customer satisfaction is essential for businesses operating in all sectors. To achieve customer satisfaction, the products or services offered must meet or exceed customer expectations (Oliver, 1987). The main purpose of ensuring customer satisfaction is perhaps to create loyal customers. With loyal customers, it may be possible for businesses to achieve their goals such as providing competitive advantage, increasing profitability, and becoming a market leader. Nowadays, various factors including the increase in the number of businesses, the awareness of consumers, and the increasing uncertainty of the environment continue to trigger competition. That said, it is critical for businesses to fully deliver the product or service they promise and to meet the expectations of consumers under difficult market conditions. Satisfaction levels may also be affected when consumers focus on the difference between the product or service offered and the price incurred, or compare their past experiences with the current experience (Boote, 1998). Consumers who are not satisfied with the product or service are likely to follow the “complaint” path. Complaint can be defined as the cognitive and emotional struggle that consumers engage in during the process (before, during and/or after consumption), to show their dissatisfaction or to get back the price they have incurred (Dalgıç, Güler & Birdir, 2016).

Customer complaints are important opportunities for businesses to regulate their operational activities, increase the quality of the products or services they offer, and take precautions against future problems that may arise. Consumers can seek compensation by showing their complaints through different behaviors. Proposing the first complaint model for consumers, Hirschman differentiated between complaint behaviors: “loyalty (no action)”, “voice” and

“exit”. “Voice” refers to the situation of seeking compensation; “exit” is when consumers do not revisit the business and seek different ones (Ro & Mattila, 2008). In another complaint behavior model, Day and Landon, put forth another classification as “public action” (voicing and/or complaining to third parties) and “private action” (negative word of mouth and/or exit) (Ro & Mattila, 2008). Also, Singh (1988) classified consumer behaviors as “voice responses”, “private responses” (abandonment and/or negative word of mouth) and “third party responses” (complaining to private and/or public institutions).

In another classification of complaint behaviors, Susskind (2004) distinguished between “face to face” (employees and/or managers) and “written complaints” (complaint cards, mail, Internet, etc.). Lovelock and Wirtz (2007) grouped the complaint behaviors under three categories as “loyalty (no action)”, “indirect response” (negative word of mouth and/or exit) and “direct response” (complaint to business and/or complaint to third parties). Similarly, Kim, Wang, and Mattila (2010) examined consumer complaint behaviors in four categories: “loyalty (no action)”, “negative word of mouth”, “complaining to third parties” and “voice”. Further, Berry, Tanford, Montgomery, and Green (2018) found that complaining behaviors are often exhibited as “voice response after the event”, “talking to managers” and “negative word of mouth”. Berry et al. (2018) further stated that consumers often write about their negative experiences on social media and websites on the Internet.

Recent research on the complaint elements in hotel businesses show that complaints related to cleaning are the most notable complaints (Ayyıldız Yazıcı & Baykal, 2020; Davras & Durgun, 2021; Doğancılı, Karaçar & Ak, 2019; Efendi, 2021; Geranaz & Yetgin, 2021; Keskin, Bilgiç & Yazıcı Ayyıldız, 2021; Kızıldemir, Ibiş & Çöp, 2019; Zengin & Haliloğlu, 2020). Cleaning-related complaints are followed by those on the food and beverage units. In particular, the guests complained about the lack of product variety, product quality, delay in the food service, and food being tasteless (Ayyıldız Yazıcı & Baykal, 2020; Doğancılı et al., 2019; Efendi, 2021; Geranaz & Yetgin, 2021; Güllü & Akçay, 2021; Keskin et al., 2021; Kızıldemir et al., 2019; Zengin & Haliloğlu, 2020). Lastly, after cleaning and food and beverage, the most complained element is about staff. The highest number of complaints in this category are made on the attitudes and behaviors of staff (Ayyıldız Yazıcı & Baykal, 2020; Doğancılı et al., 2019; Güllü & Akçay, 2021; Kızıldemir et al., 2019; Zengin & Haliloğlu, 2020).

Examining the customer comments made on the Internet for the five-star hotel businesses operating in Afyonkarahisar, Kızıldemir et al. (2019) aimed to determine the complaint elements. They looked into 2.868 comments and analyzed 1.004 of them using content analysis technique, which is one of the qualitative research methods. They concluded that the highest number of complaints about hotel businesses are about rooms (dirtiness and sound-noise, etc.), food and beverage (lack of variety, low quality, and hygiene,

etc.), service quality (poor service and Internet connection problem, etc.), staff (behavior, attitude, communication, and indifference, etc.) and cleanliness (pool and towels). They argued that five-star hotels operating in Afyonkarahisar need to increase the variety of breakfast and other meals, value food quality and pay attention to hygiene. In another study, Doğancılı et al. (2019) examined the positive and negative comments of hotel businesses in the Lakes Region on TripAdvisor. They revealed that the most discussed positive elements included staff, cleaning and food, while the negative elements included cleaning, staff, and food.

Ayyıldız Yazıcı and Baykal (2020), in their study, aimed to categorize the online complaints made by hotel guests and to determine the most common complaints by the nationality and travel type of hotel guests. They analyzed 424 complaint comments on the “TripAdvisor” website about 15 five-star hotels operating in Kuşadası by content analysis. They ascertained that e-complaints made by hotel guests about hotel businesses could be categorized under 11 headings. The categories that had the highest number of complaints are respectively as follows: general (over crowdedness, service quality, maintenance of equipment in common areas and price-benefit balance, etc.), food and beverage (food taste and variety, beverage and food quality, etc.), cleaning (room cleaning, cleaning of common areas and sea and beach maintenance etc.), staff (attitude and competence etc.) and room (lack of room equipment and materials, maintenance of equipment in rooms and comfort etc.). They concluded that the highest number of complaints were made on the attitude of the staff, food taste and variety, and room cleaning, respectively.

Zengin and Haliloğlu (2020) examined e-complaints about hotel businesses to group the complaints into dimensions, to find the elements that are common in complaints and to bring solutions to them, and to determine the response rates of the businesses to these complaints. They identified eight main and 48 sub-categories based on 305 e-complaints about hotel businesses in Sakarya on the websites of Şikayetvar and TripAdvisor using the qualitative analysis method. The researchers analyzed hotel businesses by the number of stars and ascertained that the majority of the complaints were made on five-star hotels. Most complaints in the main complaint category were about the facilities of the hotel, management policy whereas price practices, staff behavior and attitudes were the most common complaints in the sub-categories. They further reported that the complaints about rooms, restaurants and food and beverage were primarily related to cleanliness and hygiene. Lastly, they focused on the issues about which hotel businesses receive the most complaints and emphasized the need to overcome these complaints. They suggested that following up e-complaints and developing quick suggestions to customers would help hotel businesses increase the prestige of the business as well as achieve customer satisfaction.

Kırıcı Tekeli and Tekeli (2021) intended to evaluate the e-complaints aimed at increasing the service quality of the

hotels operating in Sarıkamış district of the city of Kars. They assessed a total of 127 customer comments on “TripAdvisor”, one of the important travel websites. The researchers determined that the complaints of tourists were about concrete aspects (crowded lobby, need for restoration, lack of repair and maintenance of rooms, etc.), reliability (poor food quality and poor service delivery, etc.), prompt service (failure to deal with problems promptly, lack of solution and lack of staff indifference, etc.), trust (lack of staff communication and training) and empathy (lack of behaviors aiming customer satisfaction and behavior disorder towards children). In another study, Avcı and Bardakoğlu (2021) explored the negative holiday experiences of domestic tourists who purchased services from hotel businesses during the Covid-19 pandemic. They analyzed 5.108 online reviews on TripAdvisor, covering the 2020 (January-December) pandemic period, using the content analysis technique. They first divided the data into two main dimensions as positive (4.401) and negative (707). Then, the negative comments were examined considering the main purpose of this study and the findings were gathered under six themes: non-compliance with the pandemic rules by the business, non-compliance with the pandemic rules by the guests, reducing the service quality by using the pandemic rules as an excuse, increase in service prices due to the pandemic, ignoring the complaints by the business and impact of the pandemic period on employee behavior.

The findings from the thorough examination of real consumer comments show that the aspects that consumers pay the most attention were as follows: Contactless check-in and check-out processes committed by hotel businesses via the TripAdvisor website, leaving the room empty between guests for 24 hours after check-out, disinfection of towels and sheets by washing them on high temperatures, offering disposable and packaged hygiene kits in the rooms, the mandatory mask-wearing rule in common areas, social distance marking of the hotel floors, availability of disinfectants at various points of the facility, performing frequent disinfections, directing the staff to wash their hands, temperature testing of staff. In the light of the findings, the researchers suggested that it is necessary to consider the consumer comments that describe their experiences as negative, to develop solutions-oriented behaviors, and made further suggestions on the survival of the businesses.

Efendi (2021) probed into the complaints received by small-scale hotel businesses on the Internet. He used the complaints made on the “TripAdvisor” for 85 small-scale hotel businesses in Çeşme, one of the tourist destinations in Turkey. Analyzing 120 comments, he reported the most complained issues as follows: cleaning of rooms and public areas, old, small, and useless bathrooms, poor quality and worn furniture in the rooms and lack of variety of products used in food and beverage areas. In conclusion, Efendi (2021), suggested that the facility managers should pay attention to the cleanliness of the common areas and rooms, and that useless material should be renewed. In another

study, Keskin et al. (2021) categorized the online complaints made by the guests about the five-star hotel businesses operating in the Covid-19 process in Kuşadası to determine the most common aspects of the complaints. To that end, they analyzed 306 e-complaint comments on the “TripAdvisor” website on a total of 11 five-star hotels operating in Kuşadası by content analysis. They found that the most common complaints were about the rooms (cleanliness, worn and small bathrooms, old furniture and broken electronic equipment, etc.), food and beverage (product quality, delayed service and variety, etc.) and overall aspects of the hotel (cleaning of common areas, elevators and room service, etc.). They concluded that hotels should prioritize the cleanliness of the rooms, food and beverage quality and hygiene.

Güllü and Akçay (2021), in order to contribute to the awareness of hotel businesses about e-complaints during the Covid-19 pandemic, categorized the e-complaints made by the guests of the hotel businesses operating on a global scale to determine the e-complaints of the hotel guests in the Covid-19 process. They focused on 366 e-complaint comments of hotel guests in Antalya, Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir, Muğla on the top 10 hotels in the Hospitality ON-2019 list operating in Turkey on the TripAdvisor website and analyzed these comments by content analysis. They then classified the e-complaints of hotel guests into six main categories and 26 sub-categories as general, restaurant and food and beverage, rooms, front desk, service quality and management.

The most common e-complaints were in the categories of “general” (staff generally being tired and indifferent, hotels being dirty, lack of precautions taken specifically for the pandemic, poor cleaning), “restaurant, and food and beverage” (poor-quality food and poor ingredients, slow service, the indifference of the staff, lack of even most basic utensils like cutlery, etc.), “rooms” (the furniture in the rooms in bad condition, moldy and inoperable furniture, bad smells in rooms due to poor cleaning), “front desk” (rude staff, and rude attitudes and behaviors, slow check-in, etc.), “service quality” (slow room service and poor customer service, general technical problems in devices such as air conditioners, entertainment services not being offered) and “management” (indifference of the management towards guests, unannounced room changes). The researchers concluded that hotel businesses that provide services already with various difficulties during the pandemic process need to keep up with the changes to survive. They suggested that these businesses should strictly implement certain measures such as cleaning, hygiene and social distance for the Covid-19 pandemic, and also that hotel business should adopt policies to eliminate their shortcomings mentioned in all e-complaints.

Davras and Durgun (2021) investigated the dimensional structure of the measures taken against the pandemic in hotel businesses to understand whether these measures contribute to the satisfaction and dissatisfaction of the tourists. They examined 1.418 online reviews through content analysis on TripAdvisor from June to August 2020, and identified 10

main categories and 28 sub-categories. They concluded that while the tourists had high perceptions of safety regarding the measures taken on disinfection, hygiene and temperature measurement, their perceptions were low on social distance and mask use. In conclusion, they suggested that the hotels should establish an online customer complaint tracking system and the first step in this regard is to try to gain the trust of existing guests and get online positive feedback from them.

Geranaz and Yetgin (2021) revealed the expectations of the guests about the five-star SPA hotels serving in Sapanca and determined the factors affecting satisfaction in SPA hotels. For this purpose, they reviewed a total of 485 positive and negative comments made on the Tripadvisor.com website, and analyzed the comments using the content analysis method; they were gathered these comments under nine main themes and 54 sub-themes: the physical conditions of the rooms (defective-insufficient furniture in the rooms), the facilities of the hotel (lack of the measures against Covid-19), the location of the hotel, the food and beverage (insufficient and poor food varieties), SPA (lack of Spa services and insufficient hygiene in the Spa area), human resources (indifference and insufficient number of staff), housekeeping (dirty rooms, rooms not adequately cleaned, dirty room toilets, dust in common areas), hotel (crowd and noise) and prices. The researchers found that it is of great importance for SPA hotels to provide a suitable atmosphere for rest and relaxation, to offer successful SPA services, food and beverage services, to keep an eye on staff's attitude, to present various activities, to take measures against the Covid-19, to prioritize hygiene in common areas, to consider the occupancy in taking reservations.

### 3. Methodology

The aim of this research is to reveal the complaints of customers who stay in five-star businesses with a safe tourism certificate operating in coastal areas in Antalya during the pandemic process. The safe tourism certificate was introduced for hotel businesses operating during the pandemic process. This certificate involves certain practices mandatory for hotel businesses. Based on the customer complaints, this study also determines the extent to which these practices are followed.

With changes in the tourist profile, the development of technology day by day, and the ease of access to information sources, tourists have become more conscious. The widespread use of technological devices also led guests to share their complaints on hotel businesses online more and more every day. These e-complaints further mentioned the recent experiences in the practices on the Covid-19 outbreak and the measures taken by the countries. For this reason, it is important to classify the e-complaints made by the guests of hotel businesses operating on a global scale and to uncover the e-complaints made by them during the Covid-19 process. Thus, this study addresses “customer complaints” as a single variable. It presents categories for customer complaints and

offers examples of customer complaints. To that end, the complaints only on the “TripAdvisor” website were evaluated.

This study performs a complete count to examine the complaints on the five-star coastal hotels operating in Antalya between 01.05.2020 and 01.01.2021 on the TripAdvisor site. The population consists of five-star coastal hotels with a safe tourism certificate operating in the province of Antalya. This study reveals that there are 161 five-star hotels with a safe tourism certificate in Antalya within the specified date range (TGA, 2020). Following the identification of the hotels, all the comments of the guests staying in these hotels (1=very bad, 2=bad, 3=average, 4=good and 5=very good) on www.tripadvisor.com were examined. A total of 5,949 comments were analyzed using the descriptive analysis method. Through the descriptive analysis method, this study identifies the practices that are specified as a requirement of the safe tourism certificate but that the guest’s complaint about not being performed. This study further offers detailed information on the themes and sub-categories through descriptive analysis.

**4. Findings**

The sub-categories of guest-related complaints are as follows: “violation of the mandatory mask requirement”, “violation of the social distance rule”, “violation of maintaining distance in food queues” and “violation of the mandatory mask-wearing rule in the restaurant”. Violation of the mandatory mask requirement (f= 106; 40.5%) and violation of the social distance rule (f= 77; 29.4%) by the guests were the most frequent complaints. Table 1 presents the items of complaints related to the guests.

Table 1. Guests-related complaints

Items	f	%
Violation of the mandatory mask requirement	106	40,5
Violation of the social distance rule	77	29,4
Violation of maintaining distance in food queues	52	19,8
Violation of the mandatory mask-wearing rule in the restaurant	27	10,3
Total	262	100,0

Some of the complaints related to the guests are as follows:

*...we visited the hotel during the pandemic period and it was overcrowded; social distance rules were not followed at all; masks were not worn...*

*...social distance rules were not followed. Because the hotel was very crowded...*

*...the warning to wear masks made by your team is for show only. Guests wear a mask at the hotel entrance and restaurant entrance and then take off their masks in closed areas 1 meter ahead. We asked many people of your team*

*why they don't warn other guests to wear a mask indoors, they told us: “tourists don't want to wear masks, and warnings cause their dissatisfaction” ...*

*...not even five out of 100 people wear a mask...*

*...masks are provided at the entrance to restaurants and I first thought this was a very good practice. Then I saw that almost 95% of foreign tourists did not wear their masks while putting food on their plates, and only Turkish guests wear a mask, and there is no warning on this. While we are putting food on our plates, there was a large crowd and we had to eat next to foreigners...*

Among the complaints on the management, the most common ones were “low number of staff”, “over-capacity”, “long food queues”, “too crowded restaurants”, “insufficient warnings to those who do not wear a mask” and “staff working without masks”. Notably, the guests most frequently mentioned the low number of staff (f= 124; 29.0%) and over-capacity (f= 98; 22.9%). In addition, long food queues (f= 54; 12.6%), too crowded restaurants (f= 41; 9.7%) and insufficient warnings to those who do not wear a mask (f= 23; 5.5%) were among the most common complaints. Table 2 presents the complaints related to the management.

Table 2. Management-related complaints

Items	f	%
Low number of staff	124	29,0
Over-capacity (over 50%)	98	22,9
Long food queues	54	12,6
Too crowded restaurants	41	9,7
Insufficient warnings to those who do not wear a mask	23	5,5
Staff working without masks	16	3,7
Empty disinfectant boxes	14	3,3
Lack of thermometers in units	13	3,0
Overcrowded pools	12	2,8
Too many people without a mask on the elevators	10	2,3
Cancellation of hotel activities	9	2,1
Sunbeds not being disinfected	8	1,9
Inappropriate distance between dining tables	3	0,7
Closed snack areas	2	0,5
Total	427	100,0

Some of the comments on the complaints related to the management are as follows:

*...no social distancing is followed; it is overcrowded. When you ask, they tell that the hotel is only 80 percent full...*

*...the only thing is that they should hire more staff, because staff serve everywhere and they are obviously very tired, which frankly upsets me...*

*...when we called the hotel to ask about pandemic rules, they said that the hotel was at 50% capacity, but when we were in the reception, this increased to 70%; then we entered the hotel and it was running at full capacity...*

*...despite everything, we did not care anything in the slightest, but there were queues at the open buffets at the*

restaurant. It was almost impossible to find a place outside. Social distancing and mask rules were never followed...

...to give an example, I counted how many people were in food queues and there were 17 people. Let me give you another example so that you can understand the crowd in the hotel; on the day we checked in, it took 20 minutes for us to find a sunbed near the pool...

...we did not want to get our room cleaned every day because we saw the staff cleaning without a mask...

...the disinfectant boxes in the elevator and in the social areas were usually empty...

The cleaning-related complaints were categorized as “poor cleaning of rooms”, “dirty/uncleaned washbasins in common areas”, “dirty/uncleaned pool”, “dirty/uncleaned dining tables”, “dirty/uncleaned lobby” and “dirty/uncleaned utensils”. The most common complaints were “poor cleaning of rooms” ( $f= 72$ ; 48.0%), “dirty/uncleaned washbasins in common areas” ( $f= 22$ ; 14.7%) and “dirty/uncleaned pool” ( $f= 20$ ; 13.3%). Table 3 presents the complaints related to cleaning.

Table 3. Cleaning-related complaints

Items	f	%
Poor cleaning of rooms	72	48,0
Dirty/uncleaned washbasins in common areas	22	14,7
Dirty/uncleaned pool	20	13,3
Dirty/uncleaned dining tables	14	9,3
Dirty/uncleaned lobby	12	8,0
Dirty/uncleaned utensils	10	6,7
Total	150	100,0

Some of the complaints on cleaning are as follows:

...cleaning of the rooms is skipped. During the day, the staff only empty the bins. Supplies in the rooms are not replenished and you constantly need to call the reception and ask for this. When you tell the staff that I need supplies, you may encounter a harsh and inappropriate attitude. I do not recommend you to choose this hotel with poor cleaning services amidst this pandemic...

... the toilets in common areas smelled very bad. There was no soap in the toilets to wash our hands...

...the pool is filthy, hair sticks to your hands when you take a dip in the pool. The bottom of the pool is full of sand...

...staff serve food on the tables before they clean them, and if this is the case during a pandemic, I cannot imagine what it would be like otherwise...

The service-related complaints included “insufficient variety of food”, “unsavory food”, “long wait times for ordering food and beverage”, “insufficient number of sunbeds” and “poor quality of drinks”. It appears that the guests often complained about the lack of food options ( $f= 96$ ; 41.0%) and unsavory food ( $f= 58$ ; 24.8%). Table 4 presents the complaints related to the service.

Table 4. Service-related complaints

Items	f	%
Insufficient variety of food	96	41,0
Unsavoring food	58	24,8
Long wait times for ordering food and beverage	30	12,8
Insufficient number of sunbeds	30	12,8
Poor quality of drinks	20	8,6
Total	234	100,0

Some of the complaints related to the service are as follows:

...the variety of food in restaurants is way too much reduced, a complete disappointment...

...we went outside the hotel to eat last night because we had to eat cold and tasty food for the first two days at the hotel...

...it was very difficult to find sunbeds, as people left their towels to keep them and we spent two hours to find sunbeds.

## 5. Conclusion

This study examined the comments on the “TripAdvisor” site of the guests staying in five-star coastal hotels with “safe tourism certificate” operating in Antalya. The complaint elements were grouped under four categories: “guest-related complaints”, “management-related complaints”, “cleaning-related complaints” and “service-related complaints”. The category of guest-related complaints included “violation of the mandatory mask requirement”, “violation of the social distance rule”, “violation of maintaining distance in food queues” and “violation of the mandatory mask-wearing rule in the restaurant”. Foremost among the management-related complaints were “low number of staff” and “over-capacity”. The category of cleaning-related complaints included “poor cleaning of rooms”, “dirty/uncleaned washbasins in common areas”, “dirty/uncleaned pool”, “dirty/uncleaned dining tables”, “dirty/uncleaned lobby” and “dirty/uncleaned utensils”. Lastly, the complaints such as “insufficient variety of food”, “unsavory food”, “long wait times for ordering food and beverage”, “insufficient number of sunbeds” and “poor quality of drinks” were among the service-related complaints.

### 5.1. Theoretical implications

It is remarkable that there are similarities and differences between the results of this study and the results of the relevant research in the related literature. In particular, the complaints about “cleaning” and “service” are supported by previous research. “Poor cleaning of rooms”, which is foremost among the complaints related to cleaning, was also reported by Kızıldemir et al. (2019), Ayyıldız Yazıcı and Baykal (2020), Efendi (2021), Geranaz and Yetgin (2021), and Keskin et al. (2021). In addition, the complaint about the “cleaning of common areas” is similarly reported by Ayyıldız Yazıcı and Baykal (2020), Zengin and Haliloğlu (2020), and Efendi (2021). “Cleaning”, which was valued by

the guests before the pandemic, appears to be an important factor for the satisfaction of the guests during the pandemic period.

When this is not met, guests may exhibit the following complaint behaviors: “voice” (Hirschman, 1970; Day & London, 1977; Singh, 1988; Kim et al., 2010; Berry et al., 2018), “negative word of mouth” (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2007; Kim et al., 2010; Berry et al., 2018), “written complaint” (Susskind, 2004) and “making complaints on websites on the Internet” (Berry et al., 2018). Failure to comply with the rules regarding cleaning and to show the solution-oriented behaviors to customers during the pandemic process will further increase complaints (Avcı & Bardakoğlu, 2021; Güllü & Akçay, 2021).

The factors such as “insufficient variety of food”, “unsatisfactory food” and “long wait times for ordering food and beverage”, which were valued by the guests before the pandemic period, were frequently mentioned in the category of service-related complaints as well. These findings are congruent with the results of studies by Kızıldemir et al. (2019), Ayyıldız Yazıcı and Baykal (2020), Geranaz and Yetgin (2021), Güllü and Akçay (2021), and Keskin et al. (2021). To achieve the satisfaction of the guests, the service-related factors must be kept at a level that will meet the expectations. Failure to meet expectations in the service may result in complaints where guests refer to the measures that must be taken during the pandemic period. As stated by Berry et al. (2018), this may result in the loss of customers and a negative perceived image of the business due to negative comments and complaints on the websites on the Internet. This study reveals that in this pandemic period, the perceptions of the customers on crowdedness also affect their satisfaction. Over-capacity (over 50%) appears to be one of the most frequent complaints among “management-related complaints”. This finding is supported by Ayyıldız Yazıcı and Baykal (2020) and Geranaz and Yetgin (2021). The guests were also dissatisfied by the increased risk of exposure to the virus in crowded areas and the failure to comply with the mandatory and promised capacity limitation. Further, the use of masks, an integral part of our lives with the pandemic period, is another factor frequently complained by the guests. Although this has not been mentioned in the research conducted in the relevant literature, the “use of mask” is a critical expectation of the guests.

The “safety” element, which is at the core of tourism, has become one of the key variables affecting customer satisfaction due to the importance attached to health in this period. In addition, violation of social distance was one of the most common complaints. Many complaints were made on “social distance” in different units of hotel businesses. In the related literature, the findings on “social distance” were reported by Davras and Durgun (2021). Overall, it can be said that cleaning, mask, and social distance, which have become indispensable to our daily life, are important factors in the expectations of the guests and may cause complaints if these expectations are not met.

## 5.2. Practical implications

The Covid-19 outbreak has enforced various new mandatory rules. These rules have led to changes in the operational activities of businesses. One of the fundamental changes has been experienced in the tourism sector. Hotel businesses now require a “safe tourism certificate” to continue their activities. This certificate specifies the set of rules that must be put into practice for the “health safety” of guests in hotel businesses. The security element, which is at the core of tourism, has gained a new significance in this period. During the outbreak, “health safety”, a key factor foremost among the guests’ expectations, may lead to dissatisfaction if it is not met by the hotel businesses. Dissatisfied guests may exhibit complaint behaviors. This study looked into the reviews of five-star coastal hotels in Antalya, one of the most important cities of the tourism sector. The findings show that there were many “guest-related”, “management-related”, “cleaning-related” and “service-related” complaints. The management, managers of hotel businesses and hotel staff have critical roles to play in this regard.

The analyses of the complaints highlight that the hotels run at overcapacity, that there are insufficient measures related to mask and social distance, and that cleaning is not performed. Needless to say, that, businesses with the safe tourism certificate have obtained such certificate because they have committed to implement the specified practices along with many other ones. However, this study reveals that, based on the complaint categories and expressions, many practices are implemented only for show in order to be eligible to obtain this certificate. Therefore, legal authorities need to step in and tighten control mechanisms. Further, legal authorities should inspect not only hotel businesses but also those that have obtained a “safe tourism certificate”. Through inspection, it can be ensured that more businesses implement these mandatory practices. The guests, who felt that their health was at risk, made complaints. The managers of hotel business need to resolve these complaints in the short term. Compensating the shortcomings in the businesses and inspecting the practices frequently can enhance customer satisfaction. Most of these complaints were related to administrative aspects. It would be wrong not to follow the mandatory rules during the outbreak and to try to find ways to evade them. It is clear that fewer staff and over-capacity mean a decrease in service quality. This may also cause customer loss, as well as adversely affect the business in creating competitive advantage and profitability through negative word of mouth communication.

## 5.3. Limitations

The most important limitation of this research is that this study only focused on the complaints between certain dates (01.05.2020-01.01.2021). While the outbreak continues to spread, the evaluation of customer complaints made until today can contribute to comprehensive information in this regard. Another limitation is that this study included only coastal hotels in the Antalya region. It is also important to



evaluate customer complaints on hotels and city hotels located in different regions.

#### Author contribution statements

Authors contributed equally to the design and implementation of the research, to the analysis of the results and to the writing of the manuscript.

#### Disclosure statement

No potential competing interest was reported by the authors.

#### Ethics committee approval

All responsibility belongs to the researchers. All parties were involved in the research of their own free will.

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