

**JOURNAL OF  
TOURISMOLOGY**

**Journal of Tourismology**  
**Volume: 7 • Number: 1 • June 2021**  
**e-ISSN: 2459-1939 • DOI: 10.26650/jot**

**INDEXING AND ABSTRACTING**  
Türkiye Turizm Dizini  
CAB Abstracts - CABI  
DOAJ  
SOBIAD  
ASOS Index (Social Sciences Index)  
ERIH PLUS  
RePEc IDEAS  
RePEc EconPapers

**Journal of Tourismology**  
Volume: 7 • Number: 1 • June 2021  
e-ISSN: 2459-1939 • DOI: 10.26650/jot

**OWNER**

Prof. Dr. Sayım Yorgun  
Istanbul University, Faculty of Economics, Department of Tourism Management, Istanbul, Turkey

**RESPONSIBLE MANAGER**

Res. Asst. Dr. Merve Aydoğan Çiftçi  
Istanbul University, Faculty of Economics, Department of Tourism Management, Istanbul, Turkey

**CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS**

Department of Tourism Management, The Faculty of Economics, Istanbul University,  
Beyazit, Fatih, Istanbul, Turkey  
Phone: +90 (212) 000 00 00 / 0000  
E-mail: [tourismology@istanbul.edu.tr](mailto:tourismology@istanbul.edu.tr)  
<https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/iuturizmoloji>  
<https://iupress.istanbul.edu.tr/en/journal/jt/home>

**PUBLISHER**

Istanbul University Press  
Istanbul University Central Campus,  
34452 Beyazit, Fatih, Istanbul, Turkey  
Phone: +90 (212) 440 00 00

Authors bear responsibility for the content of their published articles.

The publication language of the journal is English.

This is a scholarly, international, peer-reviewed and open-access journal published biannually  
in June and December.

**Publication Type:** Periodical

## EDITORIAL MANAGEMENT BOARD

### Editors-in-Chief

- Prof. Dr. Fusun Istanbulu Dincer** - Istanbul University, Faculty of Economics, Department of Tourism Management, Istanbul, Turkey - [istanbul@istanbul.edu.tr](mailto:istanbul@istanbul.edu.tr)
- Assoc. Prof. Gurelc Cetin** - Istanbul University, Faculty of Economics, Department of Tourism Management, Istanbul, Turkey - [gurelc@istanbul.edu.tr](mailto:gurelc@istanbul.edu.tr)

### Co-Editors-in-Chief

- Asst. Prof. Dr. Sevinc Goktepe** - Istanbul University, Faculty of Economics, Department of Tourism Management, Istanbul, Turkey - [goktepe@istanbul.edu.tr](mailto:goktepe@istanbul.edu.tr)
- Res. Asst. PhD. Mehmet Altug Sahin** - Istanbul University, Faculty of Economics, Department of Tourism Management, Istanbul, Turkey - [masahin@istanbul.edu.tr](mailto:masahin@istanbul.edu.tr)

### Managing Editor

- Asst. Prof. Dr. Ibrahim Ciftci** - Istanbul University, Faculty of Economics, Department of Tourism Management, Istanbul, Turkey - [ibrahim.ciftci@istanbul.edu.tr](mailto:ibrahim.ciftci@istanbul.edu.tr)

### Editorial Management Board Members

- Asst. Prof. Dr. Sevinc Goktepe** - Istanbul University, Faculty of Economics, Department of Tourism Management, Istanbul, Turkey - [goktepe@istanbul.edu.tr](mailto:goktepe@istanbul.edu.tr)
- Res. Asst. PhD. Mehmet Altug Sahin** - Istanbul University, Faculty of Economics, Department of Tourism Management, Istanbul, Turkey - [masahin@istanbul.edu.tr](mailto:masahin@istanbul.edu.tr)
- Asst. Prof. Dr. Ibrahim Ciftci** - Istanbul University, Faculty of Economics, Department of Tourism Management, Istanbul, Turkey - [ibrahim.ciftci@istanbul.edu.tr](mailto:ibrahim.ciftci@istanbul.edu.tr)
- Res. Asst. Fazil Kaya** - Istanbul University, Faculty of Economics, Department of Tourism Management, Istanbul, Turkey - [fkaya@gumushane.edu.tr](mailto:fkaya@gumushane.edu.tr)

### Honorary Editor

- Prof. Dr. Mehmet Erkan** - Istanbul University, Faculty of Economics, Department of Tourism Management, Istanbul, Turkey - [mehmet.erkan@istanbul.edu.tr](mailto:mehmet.erkan@istanbul.edu.tr)

### Language Editors

- Elizabeth Mary Earl** - Istanbul University, School of Foreign Languages (English), Istanbul, Turkey - [elizabeth.earl@istanbul.edu.tr](mailto:elizabeth.earl@istanbul.edu.tr)
- Alan James Newson** - Istanbul University, School of Foreign Languages (English), Istanbul, Turkey - [alan.newson@istanbul.edu.tr](mailto:alan.newson@istanbul.edu.tr)

### Publicity Manager

- Dr. Hossein Olya** - Oxford Brookes University, Faculty of Business, Tourism Management, Oxford, UK - [holya@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:holya@brookes.ac.uk)

### Editorial Assistants

- Ress. Asst. Dr. Merve Aydogan Ciftci** - Istanbul University, Faculty of Economics, Department of Tourism Management, Istanbul, Turkey - [merve.aydogan@istanbul.edu.tr](mailto:merve.aydogan@istanbul.edu.tr)
- Res. Asst. Mert Ogretmenoğlu** - Istanbul University, Faculty of Economics, Department of Tourism Management, Istanbul, Turkey - [mert.ogretmenoglu@istanbul.edu.tr](mailto:mert.ogretmenoglu@istanbul.edu.tr)
- Res. Asst. Pınar Yalcinkaya** - Istanbul University, Faculty of Economics, Department of Tourism Management, Istanbul, Turkey - [pinaryalcinkaya@istanbul.edu.tr](mailto:pinaryalcinkaya@istanbul.edu.tr)
- Res. Asst. Merve Oz** - Istanbul University, Faculty of Economics, Department of Tourism Management, Istanbul, Turkey - [merve.oz@istanbul.edu.tr](mailto:merve.oz@istanbul.edu.tr)

## EDITORIAL BOARD

- Asst. Prof. Dr. Ali Faizan** - Florida State University, Florida, USA - *fali@fsu.edu*
- PhD. Amir Shani** - Ben-Gurion University of The Negev, Be'er Sheva, Israel - *shaniam@bgu.ac.il*
- PhD. Anil Bilgihan** - Florida Atlantic University, Florida, USA - *fabilgihan@gmail.com*
- Prof. Dr. Arta Antonovica** - Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Madrid, Spain - *arta.antonovica@urjc.es*
- Prof. Dr. Ashish Dahiya** - GD Goenka University, Haryana, India - *drashishdahiya@gmail.com*
- PhD. Bendegul Okumus** - University of Central Florida, Florida, USA - *bendegul.okumus@ucf.edu*
- Prof. Dimitri Ioannides** - Meet Mid Sweden University, Sundsvall, Sweden - *dimitri.ioannides@miun.se*
- Prof. Dogan Gursoy** - Washington State University, Washington, USA - *dgursoy@wsu.edu*
- Prof. Dr. Fatma Fusun Istanbul Dincer** - Istanbul University, Istanbul, Turkey - *fusunid@gmail.com*
- Asst. Prof. Dr. Hamira Zamani-Farahani** - Islamic Azad University Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran - *hzfara@gmail.com*
- Dr. Hossein Olya** - Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, UK - *holya@brookes.ac.uk*
- Prof. Dr. Ismail Kizilirmak** - Istanbul University, Istanbul, Turkey - *ikizilirmak@yahoo.com*
- Titular de Universidad, Javier De Esteban Curiel** - Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Portugal - *javier.deesteban@urjc.es*
- Asst. Prof. Dr. José Antonio C. Santos** - University of the Algarve, Faro, Portugal - *jasantos@ualg.pt*
- Prof. Dr. Mithat Dincer** - Istanbul University, Istanbul, Turkey - *mzdincer@istanbul.edu.tr*
- Prof. Dr. Orhan Akova** - Istanbul University, Istanbul, Turkey - *akovaorhan@hotmail.com*
- Asst. Prof. Dr. Osman Demiroglu** - University of Istanbul Bilgi, Istanbul, Turkey - *demirogluc@yahoo.com*
- Asst. Prof. Dr. Sehnaz Demirkol** - Istanbul University, Istanbul, Turkey - *sdemirkol@istanbul.edu.tr*
- Prof. Dr. Stanislav Ivanov** - Varna University, Varna, Bulgaria - *stanislav.ivanov@vumk.eu*
- Prof. Dr. Suleyman Beyoglu** - Marmara University, Istanbul, Turkey - *sbeyoglu@marmara.edu.tr*

## Table of Contents

---

### ARTICLES

---

#### *Research article*

- Managing Emerging Destinations: the Case of Azerbaijan..... 1**  
O. Cenk Demiroglu, Dieter K. Müller

#### *Research article*

- Foreign Workers Employment in the Hotel Industry: Evidence from  
Five-Star Hotels in Antalya..... 29**  
Barış Erdem, Tuba Türkmenadağ, Erkan Akgöz, Tolga Gök

#### *Research article*

- Does Employability Anxiety Trigger Psychological Distress and Academic Major  
Dissatisfaction? A Study on Tour Guiding Students ..... 55**  
Derya Demirdelen Alrawadieh

#### *Research article*

- A Study on the Use of Tourism as a Soft Power Instrument in  
International Relations..... 73**  
Bahadır İnanç Özkan, Yasin Boylu

#### *Research article*

- The Other's Wave: Ethnographic Insights on Three  
"Tsunamis of Tourism" in Barcelona..... 101**  
Marco Romagnoli

#### *Review article*

- Current challenges facing ecotourism development in Iran ..... 123**  
Sarasadat Makian, Farid Hanifezadeh

#### *Research Note*

- Contactless habits in the all-new tourism due to COVID-19:  
A rapid assessment of the views of Russians and Uzbeks ..... 141**  
Aleksandr Gudkov, Deniza Alieva



## Managing Emerging Destinations: the Case of Azerbaijan

O. Cenk Demiroglu<sup>1</sup> , Dieter K. Müller<sup>2</sup> 

### Abstract

This study aims to explore the evolution of governance frameworks in emerging destinations. The literature signals a continuum along which the frameworks move from state-led, formal governance to public-private-partnerships, where more flexible, market-driven systems are in play. In this study, an emerging tourism country, Azerbaijan, is analyzed in terms of its tourism development and institutionalization process. For this purpose, policy documents and six expert interviews were analyzed, followed by a validation process. The results revealed that the country is on the verge of rapid transitions regarding destination governance. Tourism has been prioritized on the political agenda for the past decade, and in the period from the declaration of 2011 as “Year of Tourism” to the COVID-19 pandemic, growth was registered in both supply and demand. Concordantly, institutional transformation has been initiated by launching the national Destination Management Organization (DMO) and three other regional DMOs, with new DMOs underway.

### Keywords

Emerging Destinations, Tourism Development, Destination Governance, Destination Management Organization, Azerbaijan

1 **Correspondence to:** O. Cenk Demiroglu (PhD), Umeå University, Department of Geography, Umeå, Sweden  
E-mail: [cenk.demiroglu@umu.se](mailto:cenk.demiroglu@umu.se) ORCID: 0000-0001-7012-4111

2 Dieter K. Müller (PhD), Umeå University, Department of Geography, Umeå, Sweden. E-mail: [dieter.muller@umu.se](mailto:dieter.muller@umu.se)  
ORCID: 0000-0003-2822-5503

**To cite this article:** Demiroglu, O. C., & Muller, D. K. (2021). Managing Emerging Destinations: the Case of Azerbaijan. *Journal of Tourismology*, 7(1), 1-27. <https://doi.org/10.26650/jot.2021.7.1.0001>



## **Introduction**

Tourism is often referred to as a major remedy for alleviating regional disparities. It is regarded as a “soft” means to (re)balance socioeconomic structures. From an international perspective, inbound tourism would help countries with direct economic contribution through the earnings from visitor exports, and from a national perspective, these visitor exports, along with domestic flows and their consequent ripple effects, could contribute to social and economic sustainability at the local levels. Moreover, tourism can build positive images of destinations, fostering mutual cultural understanding and improving local quality of life through not only increased incomes and jobs but also enhanced infrastructure, facilities and amenities. Nevertheless, tourism is also associated with negative impacts on regions, such as pollution, congestion, inflation, displacement, degeneration and external dependencies, as well as failures to reach sustainability goals due to overexploitation of resources and economic leakages (Sharpley & Telfer, 2015). Ultimately, all these challenges can partly be attributed to a lack of professional institutions capable of managing the regions as destinations – in other words, Destination Management Organizations (DMOs).

This study aims to explore the evolution of governance frameworks in emerging destinations at both the national and the subnational scales. The case study country is Azerbaijan. Fieldwork was done in 2019. The empirical and documentary findings are discussed in relation to a literature review on destination management concepts and issues.

## **Literature Review: Destinations and Destination Management**

A destination refers to a visitor’s point of arrival. Pioneering research (Gilbert, 1939; Barrett, 1958; Christaller, 1964; Stansfield, 1972; Plog, 1974) has conceptualized a destination as both a geographical location and a product. These studies also led to the formation of Butler’s (1980) Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) model (Butler, 2006). According to the TALC, a tourism destination goes through various development stages over time, eventually leading to a progression from decline to rejuvenation of visitor flows analogous to a commercial product life cycle model (Vernon & Wells, 1966). Butler (2011), three decades after his introduction of the “tourism areas” concept, concretized a “tourism destination” as a geographical place of any scale, composed of multiple stakeholders and resources on the supply side.

Meanwhile, following increased debates over the destination concept among experts since the turn of the century, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) stepped in to publish a comprehensive report on destination management in 2007. This was a critical step for the diffusion of tourism professionalism at the macro level, as UNWTO is the highest-level institution to promote the acknowledgement of



destination conceptualizations and their managerial implications among its member states. The report defined a (local) destination as “a physical space in which a tourist spends at least one overnight” and one that “includes tourism products such as support services and attractions and tourist resources within one day’s return travel time” (UNWTO, 2007: 1). As of 2019, the most up-to-date validated definition of a destination, as approved by the Executive Council of the UNWTO (2019), also includes the concept of tourism value chains that refer to simultaneously or sequentially offered products and services on the supply side.

There is increasing debate on the conventional TALC model, as it asserts a linear and aggregated development pattern on destinations. From the trending perspectives of Evolutionary Economic Geography (EEG) and Relational Economic Geography (REG), more emphasis is put on the historical embeddedness of the regions, the intra- and interplay of stakeholder and actor networks as well as the surrounding powers (Sanz-Ibáñez & Anton Clavé, 2014; Brouder et al., 2016). Proponents of the St. Gallen Model for Destination Management (SGDM), on the other hand, propose a semantic and practical “revolution” where a destination is composed of Strategic Business Areas (SBAs) defined per homogeneous market segment. Following consensus reached through the biennial Advances in Destination Management fora since 2012 (Laesser & Beritelli, 2013; Reinhold et al., 2015; 2018), a mutually agreed upon definition of a tourism destination is a “market-oriented productive system,” which highlights the momentary “co-production” of touristic experiences by both supply and demand actors (Reinhold et al., 2015: 138).

All three definitions above embrace various characteristics for tourism destinations. What they all have in common is an umbrella concept that encompasses all elements of the tourism product. Indeed, various scholars (Buhalis, 2000; Murphy et al., 2000) refer to destinations as amalgams, implying that they form synergies that are larger than – more valuable in principle – and different from the sum of their components. In this regard, Buhalis (2000) suggests the 6A’s (Attractions-Accessibility-Amenities-Availability-Activity-Ancillary Services) model to summarize all products and services that will lead to the overall destination experience.

In addition to the strengths of the 6A’s, there are numerous other variables to increase destination competitiveness. Bornhorst et al. (2010), having reviewed 31 studies that focus on factors affecting destination success and accordingly having interviewed 84 tourism actors (business managers, destination managers, politicians and network leaders) in 25 Canadian destinations, identified the most prominent success factors as product and service offerings, location/accessibility, quality of the visitor experience and community support. These findings highlight the importance of notions of “co-production” and “stakeholder incorporation” in defining destinations. In addition,

destinations should be treated as not only physical spaces and (co-)products but also as multi-layered, dynamic systems as operationalized by the SGDM (Beritelli et al., 2014). That being said, the geographical and often political delimitations of regions still need to be acknowledged, especially when emerging destinations are in question.

As highlighted in the introduction, while destinations' performances are vital for their own sake, they may also have greater development contributions/implications for their wider regions (Sharpley & Telfer, 2015). From an economic point of view, destination development can easily lead to a ripple effect by multiplying incomes and jobs, and consequent tax benefits, into many other sectors relevant to tourism's supply chain. It can also protect and enhance cultural and natural resources, support cultural interaction and peacebuilding, and help the empowerment of socioeconomically disadvantaged groups. However, the development pattern can also result in adverse effects such as economic leakages, import dependencies, inflation, cultural degeneration, tensions between locals and incoming labor migrants and visitors, and environmental degradation. Direction and magnitude of these effects are related to both temporal and spatial (scale) parameters inherent to the destinations. Regarding time, the current TALC stage or the main SBA(s) status is relevant. An early stage implies that while development in the area may be far away from carrying capacity issues, and even greeted with some euphoria among the locals (Doxey, 1975), it would be initially challenged by lack of institutional capacity, putting DMO establishment at the top of a destination development agenda for the sake of much needed coordination (Sainaghi et al., 2019).

The modern tourism industry dates back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the introduction of package tours by the British entrepreneur Thomas Cook. Yet the DMO practice is a far more recent concept, flourishing with a marketing orientation by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, hence the "M" in DMO standing for "marketing" at that point. By the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, "marketing" has been replaced with "management," as the wider managerial role of this organization has been acknowledged for the sake of development, (operative and supportive) management and marketing of destinations (Çetin et al., 2017). While there are still scholarly debates (Pike & Page, 2014; Pearce, 2015) on what the "M" should stand for within a DMO, as recently noted by Reinhold et al. (2019), the UNWTO (2007: 4; 2019: 10) defines destination *management* as "the coordinated management of all the elements that make up a tourism destination." Further, the UNWTO (2019: 12) states that the most up-to-date definition of a DMO is "the leading organizational entity which may encompass the various authorities, stakeholders and professionals and facilitates partnerships towards a collective destination vision." Combined, these definitions refer to the vital need for a "coordinating leadership" that can ensure efficient and effective management practices for the long term sustainability and competitiveness of destinations. It is

expected that collective, professional actions in destinations will lead to a greater shared wisdom, economies of scale, and marketing influence.

When destination introduction or rejuvenation are on the agenda, authorities and/or other involved parties need to give top priority to the DMO establishment process in their strategic approaches (Çetin & Demiroglu, 2017; Sainaghi et al., 2019). These initial conditions may resemble a chicken and egg situation where it is not certain whether it is the destination development or the DMO establishment impetus that causes the other one. However, in many cases, destination development projects end up being based on recommendations from higher level administration and external expertise, thus, sustainability and competitiveness cannot be ensured as the real local actors and stakeholders are usually left out of this co-production and its related maintenance phases. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to initiate destination strategies with the establishment and capacity building of DMOs, in line with the saying, “give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.” Strategic management of destinations is a continuous process, and founding Destination Management Plans (DMPs) need to be updated and implemented as required by various stages of a destination’s – or its SBAs’ – life cycles. Such effort requires the long-term and full-time professional commitment of an onsite organization – the DMO.

DMO establishment requires a sequential process starting from the identification of relevant actors and stakeholders along its tourism value chain to, ultimately, capacity building (Çetin & Demiroglu, 2017; Çetin et al. 2017). It answers the questions of “who?” in pursuit of destination leadership and various roles, “how?” to determine the most suitable governance structure, and “what?” to define functions and activities related to destination management. A DMO finds the best structure to provide a collaboration platform among its actors and stakeholders based on a mutually agreed upon vision. It further encourages active participation and commitment of its building blocks towards this vision through “internal marketing.” Following a DMP, it delegates the tasks among its staff or members, and engages in continuous capacity building activities to support the realization of these tasks.

Based on multiple expert interviews, particularly from winter destinations worldwide (Çetin & Demiroglu, 2017), Çetin et al. (2017) summarized strategies pertaining especially to emerging or rejuvenating destinations under three main categories: development, management and marketing. All these strategies relate to typical activities and functions of a DMO, except for “governance and institutionalization” strategies that are indeed about development of the DMO itself. These strategies, and the DMO activities and functions involved, can also be distinguished in terms of their spatial scale or temporal range (Table 1). In this respect, one can identify their

relevance in terms of a multi-scalar structure where many local/provincial DMOs could cluster to form a regional DMO. Moreover, as these destinations are assumed to be at their exploration/involvement stages, some of the activities could be deemed most urgent in the short term (less than a year), while the rest could extend over the whole life cycle. The range of these activities and functions, however, also depends on how decentralized the political administration system of their parent country is (UNWTO, 2007).

**Table 1**  
*Spatial, Temporal and Thematic Classification of Destination Strategies*

<i>Strategies</i>	<i>Short Term</i>		<i>Long Term</i>	
	<i>Local</i>	<i>Regional</i>	<i>Local</i>	<i>Regional</i>
<i>Destination Development</i>				
Governance and Institutionalization	√	√		
Technical Product and Accessibility	√	√	√	√
Tourism Culture and Human Resources	√		√	
Investment Planning and Facilitation	√		√	√
<i>Destination Management</i>				
Product Improvement			√	√
Diversification and Event Management	√	√	√	√
Sustainability			√	√
Funding	√	√	√	√
<i>Destination Marketing</i>				
Market Development			√	
Distribution Channels				√
Collaboration	√	√	√	√
Digital Marketing		√		√
Branding	√	√	√	√

Source: adapted from Çetin & Demiroglu 2017, Çetin et al. 2017

It is not the aim of this study to elaborate on these strategies (see Çetin & Demiroglu, 2017 for details). However, the funding strategy in particular needs to be highlighted as it is a vital function of the DMO, firstly, for its own existence. It is not uncommon that many DMO initiatives face dissolution due to lack of regular income or dispute about the sources of income. Several options are available for DMOs to finance themselves, and thus, their destinations’ competitiveness (UNWTO, 2007). A DMO’s budget can be financed both publicly and privately. Public subsidies are usually most common, especially for covering overhead costs. A DMO can lead or partner in events and attractions and receive its fair share from attendance or sponsorship revenues. Card systems and related mobile applications that combine various attraction, event and transport uses under discounted prices can also generate revenues for the DMO. Likewise, the DMO can run a central promotion and booking system, thus receiving commissions and advertisement fees. In the event where a public-private partnership (PPP) governs the DMO, additional revenue can be obtained through membership from private and civil stakeholders. Such contributions

can also be received indirectly, for example through taxation of tourist overnight stays or private establishments' annual earnings. A DMO should pay utmost attention to its funding activities so that, as a non-profit organization, it does not conflict with the primary commercial activities of its stakeholders and earmarks its earnings in the best way to serve its destination's overall competitiveness and sustainability.

In the Nordic countries, for instance, the public sector initiated the establishment of PPP-based DMOs, often organized as companies or economic associations, in response to criticism from the tourism industry that asked for intensified promotion in a time of increased competition by the turn of the century. Usually, the local tourism industry governed these companies/associations by controlling the boards, but, predominantly, municipalities continued to provide funding. A criticism of this structure has been that public money was transferred to the private sector without public insight (Müller, 2006). Moreover, the structure also meant that single board members gained disproportionate power over strategic decision-making, which sometimes resulted in suboptimal decisions favoring single stakeholders' business interests rather than the development of the destination. At the same time, the quasi-privatization of destination development and marketing also reduced the role of the public sector to funding. Furthermore, the amalgamation of previously municipality-based DMOs into larger destinations comprising several municipalities strengthened market visibility and enabled destinations to develop competitive products. However, the development also meant that municipalities increasingly lost control over and interest in tourism development. The rather passive role even hampered any will to increase public funding. Particularly in peripheral areas, European Union Structural Funds offered the option to supplement municipal funding (Müller & Åkerlund, 2013). Even though EU-money enabled numerous projects and new initiatives, it did not represent funding for running costs. Additionally, the project-based organization constantly required new thematic orientations in order to satisfy the funding agency's ambition to support innovation rather than ongoing operation. The need for constant change also caused fatigue among participating stakeholders, and furthermore, the resulting organizational constructs are complex and have limited transparency. The lack of public leadership also meant that conflict among industry stakeholders occurred. For example, in the case of the mountain resort of Hemavan, the largest stakeholder did not cooperate with the local DMO since board representation did not reflect the dominant position of the company, leading to decisions that were not in line with the company's strategic orientation (Müller, 2019). Similarly, in a Finnish case, dissatisfaction with industry leadership of destination development caused a backlash and a return to DMOs governed by the municipality (Åberg & Svells, 2018).

Setting up a governance framework for destinations or, more realistically, relating destinations to existing frameworks, requires an initial situational analysis. Taking

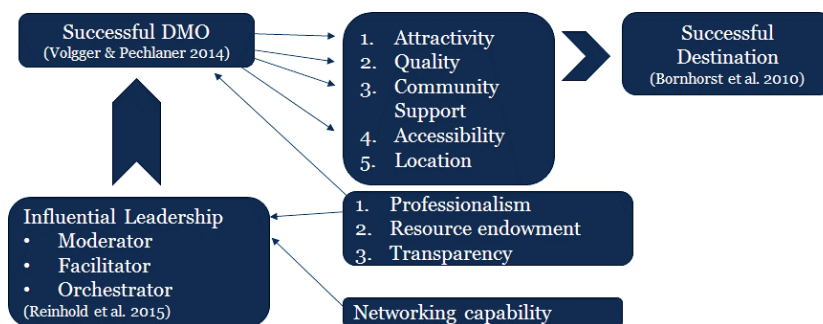
ski tourism as an example, the framework can be situated on a continuum between a “community model” and a “corporate model” (Flagestad & Hope, 2001). In regions that are historically locked into long-existing political and economic structures with a strong state culture (Halkier et al., 2019), the DMO may enjoy an abundance of financial and logistical resources but also find it difficult to professionalize itself, risking its own, and consequently, the destination’s success and hindering itself from transitioning into the new paradigms, such as that of SGDM (Beritelli et al., 2014). In the three Western Siberian regions of Russia, namely Tomsk, Kemerovo Oblasts and Altai Krai, Halkier et al. (2019) concluded that while tourism development has become quite visible in the area, it is still led by state intervention and the alternative interests of extractive industries, and noted that “public tourism governance still sits somewhat uneasily between state control and the market economy.”

The UNWTO (2007) mentions that within a public sector-dominated model, a long-term strategic approach with foci on destination awareness creation, business support and assurance and public realm management efforts may provide a major advantage, but the slow bureaucracy and lack of a business mindset could create problems. Within a corporate model, result-oriented approaches could lead to customer satisfaction and sales success in the short term, but a general lack of interest in the public good and a relative lack of resources may pose issues in the long term. Moreover, the state’s mistrust of the private sector and the private sector’s frustration with the public sector are also major concerns. According to Flagestad (Demiroglu, 2015), the corporate model may perform better in terms of customer satisfaction and economic performance while the public sector could be a better guardian of social and environmental sustainability. In the light of these parameters, as an interim solution for emerging destinations, focus may be on a DMO situated within a community model but gradually transforming into a PPP, for which numerous engagement formulas exist (UNWTO, 2007).

A recent suggestion of DMO business models comes from Reinhold et al. (2019) who depart from a normative model, based on scale (national, regional, local), activities, functions and competencies, governance structure, and revenue streams and funding of a DMO and how value is captured from and created for the actors through the DMO’s activities. Accordingly, the Destination Factory model focuses on product and service supply activities of the normative model in a monopolistic manner and usually finances itself via taxes while lagging behind in terms of stakeholder coordination. The Destination Service Center model is much like the first one, as it also requires a relatively simple process for configuration. It aims to accommodate its stakeholder networks through standard processes, but it is never as formally powerful as the Destination Factory when it comes to development leadership and funding access. Likewise, the Value Enabler also has little control over the destination but

is focused on liberating the synergies among its stakeholders and thereby creating value. The last model, Value Orchestrator, on the other hand, again has a hierarchical structure, but is more concerned with its stakeholders and is based on one-to-one rather than collective relationships.

While there are numerous modelling attempts to explain how DMOs are formed and function, result-oriented approaches can help identify what might be the ideal DMO. Eventually, the ideal DMO is expected to influence the determinants of destination success, previously identified by Bornhorst et al. (2010) as product and service offerings, location/accessibility, quality of the visitor experience, and community support. In addition, the authors note that unique success factors for a DMO are supplier relations, effective management, strategic management, and being result oriented – all dependent on funding and personnel. These findings are also supported by Volgger and Pechlaner (2014), who empirically show that the much-needed networking capability is indeed a matter of authority that results from power and acceptance. This then points to an influential leadership that establishes a “moderating,” “facilitating” and “orchestrating” soft power (Reinhold et al., 2015), which brings a balance to the determinants of DMO, thus destination success (Figure 1). Similarly, the UNWTO (2019) has identified strategic leadership, along with effective execution and efficient governance, as a key performance area for DMOs.



**Figure 1.** Determinants of DMO and Destination Success

Source: Authors based on Bornhorst et al., 2010; Volgger & Pechlaner, 2014; Reinhold et al., 2015

Successful tourism development calls for well designated destination governance frameworks and management practices in order for regions to make the best out of their resources in a highly competitive market. Although an “existential crisis” for DMOs has been recently stressed by several scholars and experts (Pike, 2016; Laesser, 2019; Reinhold et al., 2019; Spinks, 2019), one can still find new initiatives from around the world, especially in emerging tourism countries and regions. Below,



the case of Azerbaijan is presented, following analyses of policy documents, statistics and expert interviews, and a validation process.

## **Methods**

Before completing fieldwork for the case study country, desk research, mainly based on policy documents (Administrative Department of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2013; Arnegger & Mayer, 2015; COMCEC Coordination Office, 2018a; b; Ministry of Agriculture, 2019; Ministry of Economy, 2017; 2019; State Housing Development Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2016; State Tourism Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2020), academic and grey literature (Altman, 2010; Elliott, 2019; Heikkilä et al., 2014; Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2018; Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources and the National Academy of Sciences, 2013; Seyidov & Adomaitienė, 2016; Soltanova, 2015) and statistics (SESRIC, 2019; State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2019; WTTC, 2019; UNESCO, 2019; 2020), was carried out.

For the purpose of a deeper understanding of general tourism development and subsequent destination management efforts in the case study country, an interview guide (see Appendix) consisting of ten questions was finalized, following discussions with Azerbaijani tourism authorities regarding a pool of relevant questions based on the literature review and the document analysis. The first two questions sought information on the past and expected contribution of tourism to socioeconomic development, as well as the internal (resources, operational management, marketing, human resources, finances, infrastructure, etc.) and external (economic, social, natural, political, legal, technological, competitive, etc.) factors positively or negatively affecting the contribution. The next section involved five questions that clarified respondents' personal and institutional understanding of the destination concept and DMO definition, actors and functions, and also looked for scholarly unpublished information on legal and political frameworks affecting the governance of destinations, in particular the establishment and running of DMOs. At the end of this section, the respondents were asked to provide global examples of DMOs that they perceive as successful. In the final round, three more questions were posed to find out about potential destinations in relatively less developed regions and ways to retain any future benefits at the local level. Prior to the interviews, all interviewees were provided with consent forms for their permission for audio recording.

Thanks to the parent project (see Acknowledgement) of this study, cooperation with the highest level tourism authority, namely, the State Tourism Agency (STA) of the Republic of Azerbaijan, enabled the researchers to interview key experts in a short period of time in June 2019. Careful attention was given to having diverse backgrounds representing the public and the private sectors and academia. In the



end, six experts became the subjects of face-to-face interviews (Table 2), following the formal referrals of the STA. Finally, two of these experts, STO and DM1, and the STA-affiliated coordinator of the parent project gathered at a roundtable meeting in September 2019 in order to validate researchers' interpretations of the findings.

**Table 2**

*List of Interview Participants*

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Alias</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Language</i>	<i>Duration</i>
Senior Tourism Officer	STO	11.06.2019	Azerbaijani/Turkish	01:18:33
DMO Expert 1	DM1	11.06.2019	English	01:31:20
DMO Expert 2	DM2	13.06.2019	English	01:07:28
Tourism Scholar	TS	11.06.2019	Azerbaijani/Turkish	00:37:23
Travel Agent 1	TA1	12.06.2019	Azerbaijani/Turkish	01:42:19
Travel Agent 2	TA2	13.06.2019	Azerbaijani/Turkish	ca 1 hour

## Results

The Republic of Azerbaijan is situated at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, bordering the Caspian Sea, Russia, Georgia, Armenia, Turkey and Iran. Following its independence from the USSR in 1991, Azerbaijan has taken important steps in its socioeconomic development. After the “economic chaos and regression” period arising from political instability, military conflicts and post-Soviet economic transition shocks in the first four years of the republic, major reforms started to take place. From the second half of the 1990s and onwards, more systematic policies and programs were put in place to restore stability and foster socioeconomic development (Administrative Department of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2013).

The liberalization era at the turn of the century also included the State Programme of Tourism Development during the years 2002-2005 (Soltanova, 2015). Within the last decade, major high-level policy focus has turned towards diversification of the economic mix beyond the main revenue-generating oil industry, as well as spatially into the regions and rural areas beyond Baku. The economic dominance of the mining and quarrying industry has been reduced in the recent years, in line with oil prices falling globally. Today there is a strong political will for strengthening an oil-independent national economy. In the current and future overall economic and regional development plans and programs (Ministry of Economy, 2017; 2019), tourism is primarily highlighted in this respect. An individual State Programme on Tourism Development for the period 2010-2014 was already launched a decade ago (Soltanova, 2015), with 2011 declared the Year of Tourism by the Presidency. Furthermore, the Ministry of Economy notes in their Strategic Plan for 2017-2020 that, “the investment incentive mechanism for promoting private investment will be focused not only in non-oil sector, but also on priority service areas, especially on the development of tourism” (2017: 13). The main State Program on Socioeconomic Development of Regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2019-2023 (Ministry

of Economy, 2019), has also identified development of various tourism types and improvement of service quality as a major objective, including action plans for each region.

Despite its relatively small area (ranked 111<sup>th</sup> in the world), Azerbaijan offers diverse resources to be mobilized for tourism development, thanks to its rich physiography and sociocultural accumulation over the centuries. In the introduction to the fifth edition of his popular guidebook, Elliott (2019) names among the unique selling propositions (USPs) of the “fascinating” Azerbaijan its oil; caviar and carpets; the “bizarre” mud volcanoes; the “land of fire” designation resulting from ancient Zoroastrianism and the natural flames ignited by abundant underground gases; beaches of the Caspian and snow-capped hills of the Caucasus; the melting pot of local, Russian and Iranian worlds; the capital Baku with its well-preserved old city as well as luxurious modern face; and not least, the rural landscape starting just a couple of hours driving distance beyond the capital. Throughout the country, one can dramatically experience different climatic conditions via landscapes rising from below the sea level to glaciated peaks above 4,000 m, and complemented by rich flora and fauna. According to the *Red Book* by the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources and the National Academy of Sciences (2013), 286 plant, 14 mushroom and 266 animal species have been documented for protection status, adding to the natural appeal of the country.

In the area of rural development, the “From City to Village” project has recently been launched to be undertaken by the State Agro Trade Company and supported by the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources and the State Tourism Agency. The project’s purpose is developing “agroecotourism” that will lead to further improvement of social welfare in villages, introduction of new job opportunities and alternative sales channels, and diversification of income for rural residents and small and medium-sized farms, as well as support for their family businesses (Ministry of Agriculture, 2019). In 2012, a similar project was also implemented by a joint initiative of two NGOs, one Azerbaijani and one Finnish, and Turku University of Applied Sciences, albeit on a smaller scale and with a focus on three villages, where capacity building for rural entrepreneurship on a PPP basis was the major aim (Heikkilä et al., 2014). According to DM2, such projects enable the farmers and their associates to engage in a business that is seasonally complementary to their agricultural activities, mutually adding value to the local supply chains of both sectors.

Regarding cultural aspects, Azerbaijan has inherited critical sections of the Great Silk Road with its ancient remains, as well as modern advantages such as busy rail and road networks. Today the country is among the 34 member states of the

UNWTO's Silk Road Initiative that collaboratively aims for developing, managing and marketing heritage tourism along the route. In addition to the Silk Road, Azerbaijan is home to three inscribed and ten tentative sites on the World Heritage List (UNESCO, 2020). In terms of intangible cultural heritage, the country has 13 inscribed and five nominated (two ongoing and three backlogged) types of arts, sports, gastronomy, literature and traditions on the UNESCO (2019) list. Given its cultural intersections and the climatic diversity available for livestock cultivation, the local cuisines are also very attractive along with a style of service rooted in traditional hospitality (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2018). Other efforts to develop cultural tourism include (potential) initiatives to capitalize on historical Western interests, such as Alexandre Dumas's trip to the Caucasus and the German heritage of the Danube Schwabians (Altman, 2010).

As a complement to the rich diversity of Azerbaijan's cultural and natural resources, there are national policies that focus on improving infra- and superstructure to boost tourism development. So far, major measures have been taken to modernize accessibility, with a state-of-the-art international airport in Baku and improved road conditions on the main axes. These developments have been coupled with giant international projects such as the completion of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars Railway along the "Iron Silk Road" in 2017, and its further local extension plans such as the Baku-Qabala high speed train connection, where the vibrant tourism industry of Qabala is a major *raison d'être*. It should be noted, however, that while low oil prices heighten the need for an oil-independent economy, they also jeopardize the large financial resources needed to realize such mega projects and events. Furthermore, despite these physical improvements, industry professionals (TA1) note the high costs of bus charters to the peripheries – one of the reasons that leads to the confinement of incoming trips to Baku. On the other hand, train prices are more affordable, but equipment and service quality are a major impediment. That being said, industry representatives are looking forward to further improvements in rail service, as the Iron Silk Road is regarded as a great opportunity for cooperation with Turkey and Georgia and further to Central Asia.

The number of high-end accommodation establishments increased especially after the extension of the "Contract of the Century" in 2017, as business tourism activity, led by the refreshed petroleum industry, intensified (TS). In addition, the City of Baku was positioned as a luxury destination where landmark buildings as well as high quality shopping and recreation areas were built and many fine dining restaurants opened, much like the early stages of the Dubai model (STO). All these investments were also justified by hosting mega events attracting large visitor flows with high spending. These included the Eurovision Song Contest (2012), the 2015 European Games, the 2017 Islamic Solidarity Games, Formula 1 Grand Prix (held on an actual

street circuit, as in Monte Carlo, since 2016), and the UEFA Champions League Final (2019). Because of these events, Azerbaijan ranked among the OIC countries with the highest per arrival spending (SESRIC, 2019). Moreover, locals could also benefit from these facilities and amenities, e.g., through upgrading of public transport services prior to the 2015 European Games (TS).

Despite these accomplishments, there are also some shortcomings, which the authorities plan to take action on. Following a decision on the deregulation of accommodation and travel trade establishments, the number of these businesses increased exponentially but without sufficient competent human resources to support this growth. Moreover, most of these initiatives are concentrated in Baku and its surrounding Absheron region. They are also concentrated in Ganja, the second largest city in the country, though less so. There are also some home/room rental businesses in the rural areas, while there are some populated areas with limited accommodation, such as Neftchala in the Aran region. To break this pattern, the government provides incentives for investments outside these concentration areas, yet the incentive scheme is considered limited with some tax and customs benefits only. Therefore, the authorities are also in search of applicable and useful incentive mechanisms. Physical development for tourism is also mainly limited to Baku and its periphery. There is impetus to spread these improvements in the emerging destinations of the Caucasus, where, for instance, a modern mountain and ski resort, Shahdag, was opened in 2012. Overall, there are some hygiene (e.g., WC) and signage issues that are on the agenda to be resolved. Preservation of the natural heritage is usually well planned under the national park system, but then intra-park road conditions are reported to be poor, and limited visitor capacity impedes tourism development, which in turn could have funded further protection of the natural heritage. In the area of cultural heritage, many assets are idle and even in danger.

Key tourism statistics on Azerbaijan (State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2019) illuminate recent trends and challenges (excluding the COVID-19 pandemic and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict that escalated after the fieldwork). An increase in the number of travel trade establishments is well observed (TA1), but their recruitment performance is not parallel, partly confirming the claim (TA1, TA2) that many staff quit their agencies to start their own businesses, indicating a growth based on mitosis rather than genesis. The total number of employees exceeded 2,000 in 2018. According to the WTTC (2019), the total number of jobs created by the travel and tourism industry, including indirect and induced effects, was 596,500 in the same year, constituting 11.8% of total employment in the country. This figure is expected to rise to 795,800 by 2029.

Looking at top tourist senders with at least 50,000 arrivals per year, the inbound market composition of Azerbaijan is mostly based on arrivals from the four countries

with strong social and historical ties and physical proximity: Russia, Georgia, Turkey and Iran. These flows, especially from Georgia and Iran, are also due to substantial cross-border tourism, explaining the high amounts of arrivals via rail and roads. Generally, the main purposes of visits are leisure, business and VFR, with the leisure market increasing its significance over the years. In line with the political will for tourism development, the government has been easing visa restrictions since 2016. Combined with a major devaluation of the national currency during the same period, arrivals from two GCC countries, the UAE and Saudi Arabia (a similar trend holds also for Qatar and Bahrain), and Iraq have skyrocketed from almost non-existent figures. These markets are attracted by Baku's luxury offerings as well as alternative tourism activities such as falconry in the rural areas. Some leakage is reported in the area of falconry, as local operators specialized in this activity are not common in rural regions of Azerbaijan and there is some growing competition from Kazakhstan (TA1). Nonetheless, in 2019, the country registered an all-time high number of arrivals of 3.2 million. The pre-COVID-19 goal for the year 2023 was to exceed 5 million arrivals by further developing Russian and GCC markets, as well as penetrating conventional and emerging global markets such as Germany, the UK, India, China and South Korea, with a focus on increasing receipts per tourist (STO).

Georgia is considered the main competitor to Azerbaijan, especially due to price advantage and partly to service quality. Yet the neighbor also provides an opportunity, as the two countries are bundled, especially for long-haul tourists. Once the Iron Silk Road reaches its full capacity, it is hoped that this package can be extended to include Turkey. However, such development is also thought to be triggering outbound tourism, resulting in an increased import cost, which is already relatively high in terms of the tourism expenditures (SESRIC, 2019). Conversely, domestic tourism, with the exception of the VFR market, is still not that strong, with some limited flows to beach and mountain resort areas. Otherwise, most domestic tourism activities are family picnics and F&B visits, with the need for relaxation as the main push and a "nice/unpolluted environment" as the main pull factor (Seyidov & Adomaitienė, 2016).

Accommodation statistics reveal some interesting findings as well. First of all, the number of foreign guests hosted at hotels and the like is not anywhere near the number of foreign arrivals, although this number has been catching up slowly over the years. This could be due to alternative accommodations, such as rental homes, a large share of transit passengers or excursionists, or, simply, unregistered stays. A second striking figure then is the very low bed occupancies, which were 17.6% in 2018 despite an increasing trend, while some high occupancies (DM2) are reported for the emerging northern destinations. This pattern could also be a consequence of a lack of registration, or otherwise an oversupply problem, indicating a higher-level policy and planning issue.

In line with the rapid growth of the tourism sector in Azerbaijan, there have also been many changes taking place in the course of political decisions and actions regarding destination management. The need for the establishment of DMOs for the sake of institutionalized stakeholder coordination was already a main recommendation in the final report of the *Azerbaijan's Competitiveness as a Destination for International Tourists* project (Arnegger & Mayer, 2015). Later, according to the *Strategic Roadmap for Development of a Specialized Tourism Industry in the Republic of Azerbaijan* document (State Housing Development Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2016), the initiation of coordinated activities among different stakeholders in the tourism sector was highlighted as a strategic aim. The strategy had already made establishment of the National Tourism Promotion Board (NTPB) a top priority, with a primary aim of contributing to the development of the City of Baku as a tourism destination. Shortly after, the NTPB was established in February 2017. The same document also acknowledged the lack of Tourism Information Centres (TIC) throughout the country as a major weakness. Another important step taken was the realization of Tourism and Recreation Zones (TRZ), whose sample regulations had already been on the agenda since 2008. According to the new strategy document, TRZs are an effective way of identifying and managing regions through specific actions tailored to their geographical uniqueness and tourism clusters. For this purpose, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism was commissioned to establish a management structure for the TRZs, taking into account all actors, including but not limited to government agencies, local municipalities, business entities and land owners. Consequently, first TRZs have been created in the Khizi-Khachmaz, Quba and Qusar regions – all located in the north.

In 2018, the tourism division of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism was transformed into the State Tourism Agency (STA). The STA strongly follows the vision to apply the DMO concept for a more inclusive and competitive tourism sector. As a first step, the short-lived NTPB was converted to the Azerbaijan Tourism Board (ATB) as a public legal entity (PLE), holding expatriate experts in some key positions. The establishment of three pilot DMOs through a smooth transition from the existing TICs in Baku and two other regions of the north (centered around Shaki and Quba-Qusar) has been initiated, inspired by similar recent regional transformation efforts in Georgia (COMCEC Coordination Office, 2018a).

Prior to the recent institutional reforms, destination management and overall tourism policy implementation have been undertaken by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism since 2006. At the subnational level, efforts were realized through the basic promotional activities of a few TICs as well as the representation of the Ministry under the Presidency's Local Executive Authorities (LEAs) for each district (rayon) and city government. Such regional frameworks had a strong top-down structure

with no independent budget for the LEA offices. Among the lessons learned from this structure, COMCEC Coordination Office (2018b) highlights the needs for a PPP structure, regional capacity building, partial decentralization and an underlying legislation.

Today, ATB is regarded as the national DMO, as it is mostly involved with marketing and product development activities, while STA is focused on policy and planning issues. Formerly, the Ministry was part of a horizontally communicating interministerial council to discuss relevant tourism issues. Today, it is the STA's task to communicate development issues to the government via Presidential channels. On the other hand, as a PLE, the ATB functions more efficiently for business tasks in the dynamic tourism market (DM1).

Among the interviewees in this study are two of ATB's experts (DM1, DM2) who have been acting as mentors and coaches to the two pilot DMO projects in the north. They mention three priorities at this stage: creating a regional hub to generate and apply ideas, capacity building, especially regarding human resources of all local stakeholders, and marketing. The initial step has been focused on community engagement and tourism industry awareness of the DMO concept. Already some remigration, or at least the prevention of outmigration, has been achieved, as people realize the benefits of a professionally-managed tourism destination. As of 2019, each DMO had around five staff, most of whom were already experienced at the TICs. These key staff are considered sufficiently competent (DM1, DM2). The DMOs, which were officially launched as of late 2019, currently perform like Value Orchestrators (Reinhold et al. 2019), as they mostly deal with internal marketing and engagement on a one-to-one basis. Unlike the business-to-consumer nature of the TICs, the focus is business-to-business communications. In the near future, this communication model will switch to a platform where all stakeholders cooperate to create and implement their DMPs. The establishment of advisory boards is also on the agenda. There is even some inter-DMO learning culture established and it is not solely based on product homogeneity. For instance, Shaki, with a USP on handicrafts, is able to exchange knowledge and skills with Quba, known for authentic food, in a technical manner, e.g. regarding marketing tactics.

Another important step in DMO development is an inventory and assessment of resources that will help build a competitive tourism product. This is coupled with a needs assessment in terms of accessibility, infra- and superstructure and the cost of associated investments and type of potential investors. Indeed, while this process helps the DMOs to realize their own regional potentials, it can also highlight potential capacity imbalances, whereby strong clusters call for new DMO development and destination delineation. Conversely, some regions may opt out of the DMO umbrella,



despite their limited competitiveness, due to conflicts over power relations. In any case, a regionalization process needs to be adapted to the country's political administration system and legislation for practical reasons. As of 2019, the pilot DMOs were informally present, existing on their preceding TIC statuses, where the business model has been modified by redefining the job descriptions according to DMO functions and extending the geographical domains beyond single districts. The formality helps ensure funding from the central budget and encourages much-needed communications with higher-level authorities at these early destination life cycle stages. Engagement of the LEAs is also a critical factor here as it may shorten the lobbying procedures without extending to a higher level. The case of Quba is a good example here, where cooperation with the Ministry of Culture was needed to organize a culinary festival, and this was established smoothly under the care of the relevant LEA office. In the near future, the DMO structure is expected to still be based on TIC status, but with the TICs reporting to the ATB instead of the STA, with a PLE designation, so that collaboration can be achieved more efficiently and effectively. Moreover, trademarking the DMOs is another idea for building identity. Once this roadmap is more certain, more DMOs could be created based on existing TICs.

Branding and wider marketing activities are still at the end of the agenda as the major focus is on product development and experimenting with the organic evolution of the regions as destinations in the eyes of consumers. (For the time being, all marketing activities are directly coordinated by the ATB, except for Baku where the well-developed products are marketed by the Salam Baku DMO, which is also capable of self-funding activities such as sales of BakuCard). A similar approach is also being pursued for transformation to a PPP structure, where action groups form organically around the annually budgeted items of the DMP – much like the specialized SBA teams of the SGDM. Over time, these groups could be formalized into DMO committees. The STA has already taken the first step to organize regional workshops in the destinations to identify issues and opportunities in tourism development and to map the associated multistakeholder teams, including the NGOs.

Most experts (DM1, DM2, TA1, TA2) think that an ideal DMO needs to be autonomous with strong funding, and that, in mature destinations, its main activity should be marketing. However, when it comes to emerging destinations, as mentioned above, leadership of public agencies seems essential. At this stage, specific to Azerbaijan, a founding regional DMO should involve the LEA with its representatives from the governmental agencies of agriculture, environment, urban planning, culture, statistics, etc., as well as the municipalities, private sector (including successful businesses from outside the tourism industry) and civil society. A parallel framework to destination governance here is considered as the protected cultural and natural



areas that are administered by the Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, respectively. These areas possess significant potential for tourist attraction, but are more motivated to maintain preservation rather than generate visitor business. Travel professionals (TA1) note the contribution of the critical coordination role played by DMOs in packaging their products and urge them to act more as investment agencies for entrepreneurs. They also suggest allocating a share of tourism's value added tax revenues to fund DMOs for more effective earmarking.

## **Discussion and Conclusions**

Azerbaijan is a young, developing country with its tourism industry in an emerging state from an international perspective. It has the economic tradition to follow a growth strategy based on its rich extractive industries, but nowadays a shift towards a more diversified economic mix is on the agenda, especially now that the oil prices are on a decline. Moreover, at the time of writing, tourism has once again been put on the agenda for the development of the Nagorno-Karabakh region as a destination (State Tourism Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2020) following Azerbaijan's regaining control of the area after decades of military and political conflicts. Such a roadmap may also be likely to boost much-needed domestic tourism at a time when it has become more vital than ever in the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequent international travel restrictions.

According to the literature review, it is apparent that there is no one-size-fits-all formula for destination management. However, both the conceptual underpinnings and the practical failure and success stories help develop strategies and actions customized for emerging destinations. Based on the field findings, at a first glance, it can be concluded that Azerbaijan has been going through significant transitions that pave the way to more regionalized destination and DMO development, mainly modelled after the UNWTO (2007; 2019) guidelines. A national DMO and some regional DMOs have already been put into effect through the efforts of the central government (Figure 2).

Although its macro efforts towards tourism development have intensified only within the last decade, Azerbaijan already finds itself at the forefront of destination management in the modern sense. The STA, together with the ATB, have been brave enough to introduce the "destination" and "DMO" concepts to public and private actors in the tourism sector, who may have had long lasting doubts about these visions should they not have been communicated well.



Figure 2. Azerbaijan Regional DMO Zones

The challenges of the STA and the ATB in identifying subnational destinations and establishing regional DMOs continue, as a few more steps remain to complete the development and transformation in a sustainable way. For the time being, each newly established DMO in the north is based on an existing TIC of a single district that now informally represents mutual districts under one trademark. In the near future, these DMOs are to be converted to PLEs so that they enjoy a more flexible status (as the ATB does) for the sake of efficiency and effectiveness in the dynamic tourism market. In the medium term, as the destinations mature over their life cycles however, this structure will need to evolve to a real PPP. This also means there is a need for a legal foundation set by making regulations in this respect, as recently mentioned by the COMCEC Coordination Office (2018b) report. A PPP-based DMO will gradually shift its focus from the supportive functions of needs assessments, product development, internal marketing and capacity building to primary activities such as management at the operational level and marketing in a more dedicated and professional way.

Last but not least, a critical step in transforming the regional DMOs of Azerbaijan has to do with the challenge of having them recognized as authorities. As previously

discussed and as depicted in Figure 1, the literature points to the DMO needing a strong networking capability in order to lead the destination to success and its need for power and acceptance in order to establish that capability. Likewise, the recent resolutions of the Turkish Tourism Council (Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2017: 8) suggests that “DMOs should be recognized as authorized agents for running destination related marketing communications, and such recognition should be declared on all tourism platforms.” During the interviews, while a certain degree of autonomy was suggested for destination management, regional representation of the central government was also deemed appropriate to ensure state support at the local level. Regarding the latter need, the participants referred to the LEA branches of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, which today functions only within the culture sphere. Therefore, the STA could consider the idea of re-institutionalizing branch offices under the LEAs. These branch offices could then become stakeholders to the TIC-based DMOs (and later the PPP-based DMOs) and contribute to their power and acceptance, which in return would strengthen the networking capability leading to DMO and destination success. As the governance framework (Figure 3) evolves towards a PPP base, sources of funding would also need to be diversified in order to avoid single source dependency and to develop a right value capture-creation balance (Reinhold et al., 2019). While questions remain over legitimacy of DMOs for such undertakings (Pike, 2016; Laesser, 2019; Reinhold et al., 2019; Spinks, 2019), these seem true more for developed destinations, and the framework described here could still be a suitable alternative for emerging destinations like Azerbaijan.

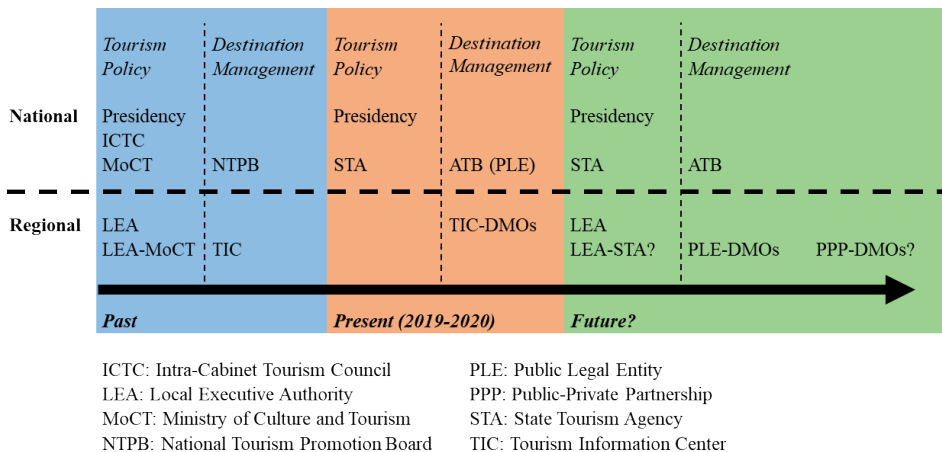


Figure 3. Evolution of Destination Governance Frameworks in Azerbaijan

This study has revealed the most recent developments regarding the tourism sector and destination governance in Azerbaijan. In doing so, it has based its findings on

state-of-the-art literature on destination development and management concepts and practices. Evidence shows that state-led and professionalized destination management approaches are evolving in the relatively short, but rapid, emergence of Azerbaijan and its regions as tourism destinations. Future research should move beyond the spatial and cross-sectional limitations of this study and deliver follow-up investigations, especially regarding the degree of involvement of private and local community stakeholders in governance as destinations and/or their SBAs move long their life cycles. Other countries and regions that may be categorized as neonates in tourism development should also be examined for comparative analyses related to the challenges of the almost synchronous destination and DMO (re-)creations.

---

**Peer-review:** Externally peer-reviewed.

**Conflict of Interest:** The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

**Grant Support:** This study is part of the “Destination Management Organization: Conceptual Framework for Azerbaijan, Cameroon and Iran” project (2018-AZETOURI-545) funded by The Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC).

**Authors Contributions:** Conception/Design of study: O.C.D., D.K.M.; Data Acquisition: O.C.D.; Data Analysis/Interpretation: O.C.D., D.K.M.; Drafting Manuscript: O.C.D.; Critical Revision of Manuscript: D.K.M.; Final Approval and Accountability: O.C.D., D.K.M.

---

## References

- Åberg, K. G. & Svells, K. (2018). Destination development in Ostrobothnia: great expectations of less involvement. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 18(1), 7-23.
- Administrative Department of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan (2013). *Economy*. Retrieved from <http://files.preslib.az/projects/azerbaijan/eng/gl4.pdf> 10.12.2020
- Altman, G. (2010). Tourism in Azerbaijan-Expedition into an Unknown Environment. *Impact Azerbaijan*, 8, 10.
- Arnegger, J. and Mayer, M. (2015). *Azerbaijan's competitiveness as a destination for international tourists*. Baku and Greifswald: Azerbaijan Tourism and Management University and Ernst-Moritz-Arndt Universität Greifswald.
- Barrett, J. A. (1958). *The Seaside Resort Towns of England and Wales*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of London.
- Beritelli, P., Bieger, T. & Laesser, C. (2014). The new frontiers of destination management applying variable geometry as a function-based approach. *Journal of Travel Research*, 53(4), 403-417.
- Bornhorst, T., Brent-Ritchie, J. R., & Sheehan, L. (2010). Determinants of tourism success for DMOs & destinations: An empirical examination of stakeholders' perspectives. *Tourism Management*, 31, 572-589.
- Brouder, P., Clavé, S. A., Gill, A. & Ioannides, D. (Eds.) (2016). *Tourism Destination Evolution*. Routledge.
- Buhalis, D. (2000). Marketing the competitive destination of the future. *Tourism Management*, 21(1), 97-116.
- Butler, R. (2006). *The Tourism Area Life Cycle: Applications and modifications*. Channel View.
- Butler, R. (2011). *Tourism Area Life Cycle: Contemporary Tourism Reviews*. Goodfellow.

- COMCEC Coordination Office (2018a). *Destination Marketing Strategies in the Islamic Countries*. Ankara: COMCEC Coordination Office.
- COMCEC Coordination Office (2018b). *Destination Development and Institutionalization Strategies In the OIC Member Countries*. Ankara: COMCEC Coordination Office.
- Çetin, G. & Demiroglu, O. C. (2017). Future of winter tourism in Turkey: Destination strategies for the Erzurum-Erzincan-Kars Winter Tourism Corridor (WTC). In M. Vieru & M. Falk (Eds.), *The 1st Workshop on the Future of Winter Tourism (FWT2017) – Collection of Papers* (pp. 36-53). University of Lapland.
- Çetin, G., Demiroglu, O. C., İstanbullu-Dinçer, F. & Dinçer, M. Z. (2017). Destinasyon stratejileri: geliştirme, yönetim, pazarlama. In M. Tuna (Ed.), 3. Turizm Şûrası tebliğler kitabı (pp. 322-331). Ankara: T. C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı.
- Christaller, W. (1964). Some considerations of tourism location in Europe: The peripheral regions-under-developed countries-recreation areas. *Papers of the Regional Science Association*, 12(1): 95-105.
- Demiroglu, O. C. (2015). *Kayak Turizmi Forumu'ndan Kayak Turizmi Politikasına Notlar*. Istanbul Policy Center.
- Doxey, G. (1975). A Causation Theory of Visitor–Resident Irritants: Methodology and Research Inferences. The Impact of Tourism. In *the Sixth Annual Conference Proceedings*, (pp.195-198). San Diego: The Travel Research Association.
- Elliott, M (2019). *Azerbaijan: The Mark Elliott Guide*. Teas Press.
- Flagestad, A. & Hope, C. A. (2001). Strategic success in winter sports destinations: A sustainable value creation perspective. *Tourism Management*, 22(5), 445-461.
- Gilbert, E. W. (1939). The growth of inland and seaside health resorts in England. *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, 55, 16–35.
- Halkier, H., Müller, D.K., Goncharova, N.A., Kiriyanova, L., Kolupanova, I.A., Yumatov, K.V. & Yakimova N.S. (2019). Destination development in Western Siberia: tourism governance and evolutionary economic geography. *Tourism Geographies*, 21(2), 261-283.
- Heikkilä J., Kääriä, J. & Poladova, A. (2014). Need for Service Design Development for Sustainable Rural Tourism in Azerbaijan. *Baltic Journal of European Studies*, 4(2), 1-16.
- Laesser, C. & Beritelli, P. (2013). St. Gallen consensus on destination management. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 2(1), 46-49
- Laesser, C. (2019). “The future of DMOs - is it in the past?” Retrieved from <https://www.christianlaesser.net/2019/10/the-future-of-dmos-is-it-in-past.html>
- Ministry of Agriculture (2019). “Azerbaycanda “şeherden kende” aqroekoturizm layihesine start verilib.” Retrieved from <https://www.agro.gov.az/az/news/azerbaycanda-seherden-kende-aqroekoturizm-layihesine-start-verilib> 4.11.2020
- Ministry of Culture and Tourism (2018). *Azerbaijani Cuisine*. Baku.
- Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources and the National Academy of Sciences (2013). “Red Book”. Retrieved from <http://redbook.az> 4.11.2020
- Ministry of Economy (2017). *Strategic Plan for 2017-2020 of the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Azerbaijan*. Baku.
- Ministry of Economy (2019). *State Program on the Social and Economic Development of Regions – 2019-2023*. Baku.

- Müller D. K. (2006). Unplanned Development of Literary Tourism in Two Municipalities in Rural Sweden. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 6(3), 214-228.
- Müller, D. K. & Åkerlund, U. (2013). Developing destinations in the Northern periphery. In Å. Mariussen & S. Virkkala (Eds.), *Learning Transnational Learning* (pp. 311-325). Routledge.
- Müller, D. K. (2019). An Evolutionary Economic Geography perspective on tourism development in a remote ski resort: The case of Tärnaby/Hemavan in the Swedish mountains. In R. Koster & D. Carson (Eds.), *Perspectives on Rural Tourism Geographies: Case Studies from Developed Nations on the Exotic, the Fringe and the Boring Bits in Between* (pp. 137-157). Springer.
- Murphy, P., Pritchard, M. P. & Smith, B. (2000). The destination product and its impact on traveller perceptions. *Tourism Management*, 21: 43-52.
- Pearce, D. G. (2015). Destination management in New Zealand: Structures and functions. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 4(1), 1-12.
- Pechlaner, H., Thees, H., W. Manske-Wang & A. Scuttari (2019). Local service industry and tourism development through the global trade and infrastructure project of the New Silk Road – the example of Georgia. *The Service Industries Journal*, doi: 10.1080/02642069.2019.1623204
- Pike, S. & Page, S. J. (2014). Destination Marketing Organizations and Destination Marketing: A Narrative Analysis of the Literature. *Tourism Management*, 41, 202-227.
- Pike, S. (2016). *Destination Marketing*. Routledge.
- Plog, S. C. (1974). Why destination areas rise and fall in popularity. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 14(4), 55-58.
- Reinhold, S., Beritelli, P. & Grünig, R. (2019). A business model typology for destination management organizations. *Tourism Review*, 74, 1135-1152.
- Reinhold, S., Laesser, C. & Beritelli, P. (2015). 2014 St. Gallen Consensus on destination management. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 4, 137-142.
- Reinhold, S., Laesser, C. & Beritelli, P. (2018). The 2016 St. Gallen consensus on advances in destination management. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 8, 426-431.
- Sainaghi, R., De Carlo, M. & d'Angella, F. (2019). Development of a Tourism Destination: Exploring the Role of Destination Capabilities. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 43(4).
- Sanz-Ibáñez, C. & Anton Clavé, A. C. (2014). The evolution of destinations: towards an evolutionary and relational economic geography approach. *Tourism Geographies*, 16(4), 563-579.
- SESRIC (2019). "OIC Statistics Database (OICStat)." Retrieved from <http://www.sesric.org/oicstat.php> 10.12.2020
- Seyidov, J. & Adomaitienė, R. (2016). Factors Influencing Local Tourists' Decision-Making on Choosing a Destination: A Case of Azerbaijan. *Ekonomika*, 95(3), 112-127.
- Sharpley, R. & Telfer, D. J. (2015). *Tourism and Development: Concepts and Issues*. Channel View.
- Soltanova, H. (2015). *Azərbaycan Respublikasında turizm və onun inkişafı*. Baku: AZTu.
- Spinks, R. (2019). "Fight to Save U.S. Tourism Marketing Dollars Tracks Politicians' Threats." Retrieved from <https://skift.com/2019/08/28/fight-to-save-u-s-tourism-marketing-dollars-tracks-politicians-threats/> 4.11.2020
- Stansfield, C. A. (1972). The development of modern seaside resorts. *Parks and Recreation*, 5(10), 14-46.



- State Housing Development Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan (2016). "Azərbaycan Respublikasında ixtisaslaşmış turizm sənayesinin inkişafına dair Strateji Yol Xəritəsi." Retrieved from [https://mida.gov.az/documents/Turizm\\_s%C9%99nayesinin\\_inki%C5%9Faf%C4%B1na\\_dair\\_strateji\\_yol\\_xeritesi.pdf](https://mida.gov.az/documents/Turizm_s%C9%99nayesinin_inki%C5%9Faf%C4%B1na_dair_strateji_yol_xeritesi.pdf) 4.11.2020
- State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan (2019). "Tourism." Retrieved from <https://www.stat.gov.az/source/tourism/?lang=en> 9.12.2020
- State Tourism Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan (2020). "Qarabağ regionu üzrə bələdçi hazırlığı üçün vebinarlara start verilir." Retrieved from <https://sta.gov.az/news/qarabag-regionu-uzre-beledchi-hazirliqi-uchun-vebinarlara-start-verilir> 4.11.2020
- Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism (2017). "3. Turizm Şurası – Turizmde Örgütlenme ve Destinasyon Yönetimi Komisyonu Raporu." Retrieved from <https://turizmsurasi.ktb.gov.tr/Eklenti/57384,turizmdeorgutlenmedestinasionyonetimikomisyoneraporupdf.pdf?0> 4.11.2020
- UNESCO (2020). "Azerbaijan." Retrieved from <https://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/az> 4.11.2020
- UNESCO (2019). "Azerbaijan – intangible heritage." Retrieved from <https://ich.unesco.org/en/state/azerbaijan-AZ?info=elements-on-the-lists> 4.11.2020
- UNWTO (2007). *A Practical Guide to Tourism Destination Management*. Madrid.
- UNWTO (2019). "UNWTO Guidelines for Institutional Strengthening of Destination Management Organizations (DMOs): Preparing DMOs for new challenges." Retrieved from <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284420841> 4.11.2020
- Vernon, R. & Wells, L. T. (1966). The product life cycle hypothesis in a new international environment. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 81(2), 190-207.
- Volgger, M. & Pechlaner, H. (2014). Requirements for destination management organizations in destination governance: Understanding DMO success. *Tourism Management*, 41, 64-75.
- WTTC (2019). "Azerbaijan." Retrieved from <https://www.wttc.org/economic-impact/country-analysis/country-reports/> 4.11.2020

## Appendix: Interview Protocol

### INTERVIEW INFORMATION

#### Introduction

The “Destination Management Organization: Conceptual Framework for Azerbaijan, Cameroon and Iran” project, funded by COMCEC, seeks to (re)structure governance frameworks for a regionalized destination management practice, particularly for the less-developed remote areas, in the three study countries. For this purpose, we are aiming to learn deeply about tourism development and management in the respective countries as a basis for co-formulation of strategies and actions plans.

#### Interview Guide

This interview is intended to acquire the best of your knowledge, experience and foresight about destination management in your country. It has been categorized into three sections; Tourism and Regional Development, Destination Management, and Remote Destinations. In addition, there will be a section about your professional background and involvement with tourism development and management as well as a final moment to include any additional comments you may have. The interview is expected to last one to two hours. You will be provided with further clarifications on the questions if needed during the interview.

#### *Section 1: TOURISM and REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT*

1- How has tourism – international and domestic – contributed (or not) to socioeconomic development in your country? What are your future expectations for tourism’s contribution to and within the country?

2- What are the internal and external factors affecting tourism development in your country positively or negatively? See below for a categorical list:



Internal Factors	External Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Product</li> <li>• Management</li> <li>• Marketing</li> <li>• Operations</li> <li>• Human resources                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finances</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Infrastructure                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic</li> <li>• Social</li> <li>• Cultural</li> <li>• Demographic                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural</li> <li>• Political</li> <li>• Legal</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Technological</li> <li>• Competitive                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

*Section 2: DESTINATION MANAGEMENT*

3- How would you define a “tourism destination”?

4- How would you define a “Destination Management Organization (DMO)”?  
What activities should a DMO engage with?

5- Who are the actors (public, private, NGO, public-private partnership) involved in the management of destinations in your country? How has this actor framework evolved in the past and what future changes would you anticipate?

6- What are the legal and political frameworks affecting the governance of destinations in your country, in particular the establishment and running of DMOs?

7- Could you give concrete example(s) of DMO(s) that you perceive as (partly) successful in your country or elsewhere? What do you think are the main drivers, e.g., human resources, funding, accountability, executive power etc., behind the success?

*Section 3: REMOTE DESTINATIONS*

8- Where and what are the (potential) remote destinations in your country? What (potentially) makes them attractive and “remote”?

9- To what degree could tourism contribute to the development of these destinations and their surrounding regions? How could local retainment of potential benefits be ensured?

10- How do you think more specialized DMOs could be formed for management of the less-developed, remote destinations? What should their areas of activity be?





## Foreign Workers Employment in the Hotel Industry: Evidence from Five-Star Hotels in Antalya

Barış Erdem<sup>1</sup> , Tuba Türkmen dağ<sup>2</sup> , Erkan Akgöz<sup>3</sup> , Tolga Gök<sup>4</sup> 

### Abstract

The purpose of this research is to reveal the reasons that prompt hotel managers to employ foreign workers. In this study which used qualitative research method, the managers of 18 five-star hotels operating in Antalya were selected as the sample. Opinions of the managers were collected through semi-structured interview forms via making face-to-face interviews and e-mails. According to prominent findings of the research; it was determined that the most employed foreign workers in hotels within the scope of the sample consisted of "Kyrgyz", "Ukrainian" and "Russians", and that the majority of foreign workers served at the "food and beverage department" in the hotels and were employed as "seasonal". On the other hand, it was determined that the most important reason for the hotel managers to employ foreign workers was that they know "foreign languages". However; hotel managers indicated "long bureaucratic procedures in the process of obtaining a work permit" as the main problem they face during the process of employing foreign workers.

### Keywords

Tourism, Employment, Foreign worker employment, Hotel enterprises, Qualitative research method

1 **Correspondence to:** Barış Erdem (Prof. Dr.), Balıkesir University, Faculty of Tourism, Department of Recreation Management, Balıkesir, Turkey. E-mail: berdem2110@gmail.com ORCID: 0000-0003-1560-2883

2 Tuba Türkmen dağ (Res. Asst. Dr.), Atatürk University, Faculty of Tourism, Department of Recreation Management, Erzurum, Turkey. E-mail: tuba.gezen@hotmail.com ORCID: 0000-0003-1528-2883

3 Erkan Akgöz (Assoc. Prof. Dr.), Selçuk University, Beyşehir Ali Akkanat Tourism Faculty, Department of Tourism Management, Konya, Turkey. E-mail: eakgoz@hotmail.com ORCID: 0000-0001-6723-0271

4 Tolga Gök (Asst. Prof. Dr.), Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University, The School of Tourism and Hotel Management, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan / Selçuk University, Silifke-Taşucu Vocational School, Hotel, Restaurant and Catering Services Department, Mersin, Turkey. E-mail: tolga.gok@manas.edu.kg ORCID: 0000-0002-9252-9504

**To cite this article:** Erdem, B., Turkmendag, T., Akgoz, E., & Gok, T. (2021). Foreign Workers Employment in the Hotel Industry: Evidence from Five-Star Hotels in Antalya. *Journal of Tourismology*, 7(1), 29-53. <https://doi.org/10.26650/jot.2021.7.1.0002>



## Introduction

In addition to the foreign currency inflow that tourism provides to the economies of the country, the most important real effect it creates on the economy is employment (Yıldız, 2011). According to 2020 report of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), approximately 330 million jobs were direct, indirect and stimulated employed in the tourism sector worldwide in 2019 (WTTC, 2020). It is estimated that approximately 413 million 556 thousand people will be employed in jobs related to travel and tourism in 2028, and this number will constitute 11.6% of the total employment in the world (WTTC World, 2018). Despite these positive predictions, it is asserted that employment in the tourism sector has a bad image when compared to other sectors resulting from the lack of clear career plans, and as a result, that the decrease in the access of young employees into the labor market causes problems in the tourism sector (Prasirtsuk, 1993). Tourism jobs require irregular working hours, limited number of countries actively encourage a career in the tourism sector, and the tourism profession is not considered a prestigious employment option. In this context, it is stated that as the demand for labor continues to increase in the tourism sector, it will be increasingly difficult for employers to find a sufficient workforce. As a result of all this, it is expressed that employers in the tourism sector are mostly relying on marginal employees, particularly women, young people, students, ethnic minorities and foreign workers as the solution of this workforce problem that they have experienced in recent years (Joppe, 2012). The unique characteristics of the tourism sector, such as, the labor-intensive structure and seasonality (Hacıoğlu, 2008), can affect the career planning of employees. As a result of these effects, high employee turnover rate can be seen in tourism enterprises (Atef & Al Balushi, 2017). This problem deeply affects the tourism sector, especially in terms of a qualified workforce. Due to the expectations regarding the mentioned issues (salary, prestige, working conditions, concern for the future, etc.) (Erdem & Tokmak, 2015), it is thought that local and qualified employees may not prefer the tourism sector or leave the sector completely after a while. On the other hand, it is thought that foreign employees living in underdeveloped or developing countries also seek job and career opportunities in different countries with similar concerns and expectations may cause a global dynamism in the labor market.

The borders between businesses disappear with globalization which is one of the developments having an important effect on employment in tourism (Baum, 2006). Particularly in recent years, it is thought that tourism enterprises were able to decide on employing foreign workers to eliminate qualified labor shortages, and that the globalization has deeply affected today's tourism businesses at this point. According to the report of the International Labor Office, the integration and interaction between states, societies, economies and cultures in different regions continue to increase as

the world goes through the globalization process. The development of technology allows for faster transport of capital, goods, services, information and ideas from one country or continent to the other (International Labor Office, 2010). In addition to the rapid growth of international tourism, this increases the foreign workers' mobility at global level (Joppe, 2012), and makes the employment of foreign workers in the tourism field an interesting topic.

Especially in the service sector, while a wide range of job opportunities emerge that do not require special education or qualifications, the social status and salaries associated with these jobs do not quite appeal to the local workforce in the same way. Local workforce have little or no motivation to accept low wages, unstable working conditions and a few career prospects these jobs can offer. Therefore, employers turn to foreign workers in order to overcome the shortcomings in this part of the labor market (Jandl et al., 2009, p. 25). As a matter of fact, Ravichandran et al. (2017) found in their study which they conducted in the United States that one of the reasons for using foreign workers, especially in food services and accommodation businesses, was to employ foreign workers in low-skilled and unqualified positions since there were not a sufficient number of local workers applying for such jobs. Similarly, it is stated that the rate of foreign workers increases rapidly in the total employment created by the tourism industry, especially in hotels and restaurants worldwide. Among the most important reasons for the increase of this rate, is shown that the foreign workforce is willing to work in mediocre and low-paying jobs in poor working conditions that local workers do not prefer to (Jandl et al., 2009; Janta et al., 2011a; Joppe, 2012; Zopiatis et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2016; Choi et al., 2017). Contrary to all of this, it is also stated that foreign workers have the knowledge and skills required by the job in many cases, contribute to improvement of business processes with the innovative ideas they bring to the organization, make their colleagues competent in the business, and help to expand the business by sharing their connections in supplier and customer relations during the process of getting into new international markets (Department for Business Innovation & Skills, 2015). It is even asserted that foreign workers are generally preferred by the employers for some reasons such as being distinguished individuals and assuming physically challenging works in the business (Sadi & Henderson, 2005).

When we consider the subject from Turkey's perspective, it is witnessed that the number of foreign worker employed in the tourism sector has gradually increased in recent years. According to 2018 report of WTTC, for the year 2017, it is stated that the total employment in tourism of Turkey is approximately 2.093.500, and that this number constitutes 7.4% of the total employment in Turkey (WTTC Turkey, 2018). In 2019, the total employment in the travel and tourism sector was 2.643.800, and this constitutes 9.4% of the total employment (WTTC Turkey, 2020).

On the other hand, no comprehensive research and tangible data could be found regarding the proportion of foreign worker employment among the total employment in the tourism sector in Turkey. However, we attempted to form an opinion based on the data included in the report prepared by the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services (2018), which is generally related to foreign worker employment in Turkey. According to this report, a total of 24.416 foreign workers were granted a work permit in 2018 in the sectors associated with tourism (accommodation, food and beverage service activity, travel agency, tour operator, and other reservation services, sport, entertainment and recreation activities) in Turkey.

Despite the fact that foreign workers have an important place in the labor market for the tourism sector (Duncan et al., 2013); the reasons for employing foreign workers in the sector, the areas of tourism sector in which they are mostly needed, and the problems arising from foreign labor employment in tourism enterprises have been relatively less addressed. Extensive studies related to workforce and employment studies are often found in reports published by international organizations, such as the International Labor Organization (ILO), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC). It is witnessed that academic studies are generally prepared based on the data presented in the reports published by these mentioned international organizations, that these studies are limited to an assessment created by utilizing secondary sources, and that studies conducted by qualitative methods through the evaluation of primary data are rare.

For Turkey in particular, a quite limited number of studies have been available on foreign worker employment in the relevant literature. Although Turkey has a large number of tourism education institutions at high school, vocational school and bachelor's levels along with a young population, the research for reasons that prompt hotel managers in Turkey to employ foreign workers in recent years is considered to be a topic worth checking out. In this context, the reasons that prompt hotel managers in Turkey to employ foreign workers are focused on in this study, and solutions are the aim to be developed based on the findings obtained.

### **Literature Review**

By reviewing the literature, it is observed that some researchers, although limited, have conducted studies on the employment of foreign workers in tourism in recent years (Ergün, 2012; Joppe, 2012; Janta et al., 2012; Eranza & Razli, 2013; Zopiatis et al., 2014; Markova et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2016; Vettori, 2017; Ravichandran et al., 2017; Choi et al., 2017; Ekiz-Gökmen, 2018; Yılmaz & Arı, 2018; Benli et al., 2019).

Despite its complexity and challenges, there is little doubt that tourism employment is an important component and driver of human mobility (Janta et al., 2011a, p. 1007).

The main reason behind the individual decisions of migrants on migration is the lack of good job opportunities in their own countries. In developing countries, sufficient employment can not be provided to meet the business needs of people who are ready to join the workforce each year. Therefore, migration can be seen as a tool to provide economic security (International Labor Office, 2010). There are several reasons why individuals migrate in order to have a better life and new opportunities. Zopiatis et al. (2014, p. 112) group in their research these reasons under push and pull factors related to migrant labor in Cyprus. Push factors are the reasons that make individuals abandon their origin to live a better life. These factors are divided into three groups as economic (such as lack of employment), social (such as lack of religious tolerance) and political (such as war and terrorism). In pull factors, the attitudes that individuals perceive as their existence guide them to migrate to a specific goal. The pull factors are also divided into three as economic (such as enhanced employment opportunities), social (such as educational opportunities and religious tolerance) and political (such as freedom).

The factors affecting the decision to migrate include high unemployment rates, distance, age, education, income and presence of relatives and acquaintances in the places to migrate. High unemployment rates in the place of residence force the person to migrate. With the increase of distance, the cost of migration increases both in monetary and psychological (such as moving away from the circle of friends and relatives) aspects. Immigrants are mostly young. A young person will have the possibility to experience the benefits of migration for a longer period than an older person. In addition, the psychological cost of migration for the elderly is higher than for young people. Migrants are mostly more educated than other groups. Migrants must have income that can afford the monetary cost of the migration. The presence of relatives and acquaintances is also an important factor in the decision to migrate (Tansel, 2012). Immigrants, women, ethnicity, race, youth, social class and other marginalized social groups often accept to work in precarious working conditions and low wages. High proportions of skilled and educated women and migrants are under-employed, relevant to their qualifications, and worldwide educational levels of the labour force are improving, un/under employment is a higher risk to the uneducated than the educated migrant (Robinson et al., 2019).

Foreign worker employment has emerged in recent years as a cost-reducing human resources strategy in different sectors such as agriculture, hospitality and food (Ravichandran et al. 2017). Besides, foreign workers in the hospitality industry are potentially considered important in the employment and recruitment process of businesses for reasons such as foreign language skills, contributing to increasing intercultural knowledge and being an important source of social support. It is also stated that foreign workers can be a source of innovation in terms of business by

bringing new ideas from outside to organizations, and that organizations can benefit from this cultural diversity if properly managed (Janta et al., 2011b; Markova et al., 2016). As a matter of fact, Ravichandran et al. (2017) found in their study they conducted in the United States that one of the reasons for using foreign workers, especially in food services and accommodation businesses, was to employ foreign workers in low-skilled and unqualified positions since there were no sufficient number of local workers applying for such jobs.

In addition to the advantages of foreign worker employment for the host country and businesses in the tourism sector, foreign workers can also provide some benefits from the sector. The work of foreign workers in positions requiring intensive contact with customers plays an important role in the development of linguistic and cultural competence. This is important in terms of facilitating adaptation to the host country that provides employment and the integration of foreign workers into a new society. Moreover, tourism employment differs from low-wage working environments in the other sectors. As the social, personal and professional lives and working environments of foreign workers are connected to each other, foreign workers get the chance to integrate into a wider society thanks to tourism (Janta et al., 2011b).

Besides all these advantages, there are some social, cultural and economic disadvantages of foreign employment in the tourism sector. Foreign workers may experience dissatisfaction and thus cause high labour turnover due to problems in adapting to the host country or business. From the perspective of human resources departments of businesses, training and new recruitment costs show up to minimize incompatibility and the problems arising from that. At this point, the problem of reduced savings is faced which arises from employing foreign workers with low wages. For this reason, human resources managers should pay attention to the socio-cultural harmony of foreign workers in order to reduce the labour turnover rate (Kim et al., 2016). Moreover, foreign workers can also be seen as the source of some problems particularly because they are perceived as a burden for sharing the resources of the host society, creating competition for the job or are not integrating into the host society (Janta et al., 2011b). At the same time, it is also suggested that the employment of foreign workers may affect the quality of services provided as well as the problems created in managing different groups of individuals (Zopiatis et al., 2014).

The research questions were formed in line with the reasons for the temporary or permanent migration of foreign employees to work, the advantages and disadvantages of the employment of foreign employees to businesses, the difficulties experienced by foreign employees in this process, the advantages and expectations they will provide. Also in the report “Work Permits of Foreigners” prepared by the Republic



of Turkey Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services and published in 2018, it is seen that the largest number of foreign workers are employed in the *accommodation sector* among the 99 sectors in Turkey. Between 2014-2017, the accommodation sector in Turkey was the second sector in which the foreign workers were employed consistently. Sports, entertainment and recreation activities” between 2014-2015, ranked ninth in 2014 and eighth in 2015 among all the sectors in Turkey. Food and beverage services ranked eleventh in 2016, ninth in 2017 and eighth in 2018 among all the sectors in Turkey (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Labor and Social Security 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017; Republic of Turkey Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services 2018). Based on this data, it is possible to say that tourism related sectors, particularly the accommodation sector, have a significant place in foreign worker employment in Turkey. This makes the subject of ‘foreign worker employment in the tourism sector in Turkey’ meaningful to be addressed academically. The purpose of this study carried out in this sense was determined as “To reveal the reasons that prompt the managers of five-star hotel businesses operating in Antalya to employ foreign workers”. In this context, the research questions (RQ) are as follows.

### ***Research Questions***

**RQ 1:** What is the profile of foreign workers employed in hotel enterprises?

**RQ 2:** What are the criteria taken into consideration in the selection of foreign workers in hotel enterprises?

**RQ 3:** Why is it necessary to employ foreign workers in hotel enterprises?

**RQ 4:** What are the problems arising from the employment of foreign workers in hotel enterprises?

**RQ 5:** Is there any problem of finding employees in tourism? If so, where this problem arises from?

**RQ 6:** What are the prominent features of foreign workers employed in hotel businesses compared to local workers?

### **Method**

In the qualitative research method, it is possible to explain the problem investigated in its natural environment without much interruption and to get richer and descriptive results. It is very important to get the perceptions, thoughts and their own expressions of the participants (Bayyurt & Seggie, 2017). Qualitative research dealing with the social aspect of the World and it is a method that examines individuals’ lifestyles, behaviors, stories, organizational structures, social change, perceptions and events in

a realistic and holistic manner in the natural environment (Karagöz, 2017). Besides, in qualitative research, in addition to non-verbal communication, the researcher has the opportunity to expand his understanding through verbal communication, to process information immediately, to clarify and summarize data, to check the accuracy of the respondents' interpretation, and to search for unusual or unexpected answers (Merriam, 2009). For these reason, qualitative research method was used in this study and the research focuses on the reasons that lead hotel managers to employ foreign workers.

### ***Study Sample***

The population of this research consists of hotel managers in Turkey. As for the sample, managers of five-star hotel businesses operating in Antalya province were selected. Five-star hotels were chosen as the sample for reasons such as employing relatively more employees compared to small and medium-sized hotel enterprises, having the majority of total accommodation bed capacity in Antalya and assuming that they operate with a professional management structure.

The sampling method used in this research is snowball sampling and criterion sampling, which are among the most purposeful sampling methods. The criteria used in the determination of the sample were that a foreign worker being employed in the hotel business; that the participant being in a managerial position and the person that the information is taken from is the general manager of the hotel or working as a human resource manager or in a similar position due to being directly responsible for staff recruitment in the hotel business. Furthermore, snowball sampling method was used in order to reach the participant group that meets the specified criteria and support was received from the hotel managers interviewed to reach new participants.

### ***Data Collection Process and Tool***

In the research, the data were collected by interview technique. In order to obtain the data, a semi-structured interview guide created by the researchers was used. In the interview guide, there are four demographic and eleven open-ended questions related to the researched subject in order to obtain descriptive information about the participants. The research data were collected between July and September 2018. In this process, the data were collected by interviewing the participants face-to-face and receiving their thoughts on the subject, and by sending the interview forms to the participants via e-mail to have them filled in. Totally, 18 managers were interviewed and data collection was finished after reaching sufficient number of data and achieving data satisfaction.

### ***Validity and Reliability***

While validity in qualitative research includes the researcher's control for the accuracy of findings through certain processes, qualitative reliability refers to consistency of the researcher's approach in terms of different projects and different researchers (Creswell, 2017). In order to ensure the internal validity of the study, the researchers summarized the data they collected immediately after the data collection process and received the participants' confirmation about the suitability of statements and whether there were any other items they wanted to add. Within the scope of external validity, criterion sampling and snowball sampling methods, which are among the purposeful sampling methods, were used. In order to ensure reliability of the study; all processes related to creation of data collection tool, collection and analysis of data, reporting of the findings and results were confirmed by the researchers, and specialist opinions were asked apart from the researchers.

The way to obtain the measure of reliability in qualitative research is to create an audit trail (decision trail). Audit trail allows other researchers to follow the same process, helps readers understand your decisions, provides a way to create and specify the nature of the study, and provides a tool to evaluate the entire study (Yağar & Dökme, 2018). Therefore, it is possible to state that the processes used in the current research are in accordance with the audit trail.

### ***Analysis of Data***

Content analysis, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in the analysis of data obtained within the scope of the research. In content analysis, the aim is to reach concepts and relationships that can explain the collected data (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). At this stage, firstly, the data obtained from the participants are written in computer environment and organized for analysis. Later, these data are subjected to content analysis and the findings obtained are included. At this stage, coding was carried out based on the responses of participants regarding each research question. After this coding process, certain categories were created and themes that were compatible with the research questions were attained. In order to hide the participants' identity, each participant was coded with the letter "P" and they were assigned a number between 1-18.

### ***Findings***

In the findings of the research, the information describing the participants was included first (Table 1).

**Table 1**  
*Descriptive Features of the Participants*

Participant's Code	Gender	Age	Educational Status	Position	Working Time in the Sector (Year)	Working Time in the Same Hotel Business (Year)
P1	Female	39	Vocational School	Human Resources Manager	12	12
P2	Female	30	Undergraduate	Human Resources Manager	6	3
P3	Female	28	Vocational School	Human Resources Manager	Unnotified	Unnotified
P4	Male	32	Undergraduate	Human Resources Manager	5	2
P5	Male	36	Undergraduate	Human Resources Manager	16	7
P6	Male	53	Undergraduate	Human Resources Manager	Unnotified	Unnotified
P7	Male	37	Undergraduate	Human Resources Manager	14	2
P8	Male	38	Undergraduate	Human Resources Manager	12	12
P9	Male	45	Vocational School	General Manager	18	9
P10	Male	38	Undergraduate	Human Resources Manager	21	11
P11	Male	40	Undergraduate	Human Resources Manager	19	6
P12	Male	Unnotified	Undergraduate	Human Resources Manager	14	8
P13	Female	38	Vocational School	Human Resources Manager	18	3
P14	Female	30	Undergraduate	Chief of Staff	7	4
P15	Male	44	Undergraduate	Human Resources Manager	22	22
P16	Male	52	Vocational School	Human Resources Manager	30	11
P17	Female	24	Undergraduate	Human Resources Personnel	1	6 months
P18	Female	26	Vocational School	Human Resources Personnel	5	4

When the findings in Table 1 are examined; it is seen that the majority of participants are male and human resource managers with bachelor’s degree. It is noteworthy that the majority of these managers have over 12 years of work experience in the tourism industry.

The first question to be answered in the research is “RQ 1: What is the profile of foreign workers employed in hotel businesses?” Findings related to this research question are given in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
*Foreign Worker Profile*

		<b>Nationality</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>Theme</b> <b>Profile of Foreign Workers</b>		Kyrgyzstan	16	Food and Beverage	15
		Ukraine	10	Housekeeping	5
		Russia	10	Animation	8
		Indonesia	4	Kitchen	4
		Tunisia	3	Front Office	9
		Czech Republic	3	Guest Welcoming	1
		Georgia	3	Public Relations	9
		Germany	3	Sales and Marketing	1
		Azerbaijan	2	Spa / Wellness	4
		Kazakhstan	2	Mini Club	1
		Bali	1	<b>Position</b>	<b>n</b>
		People's Republic of China	1	Lower level	18
		Italy	1	Intermediate level	8
		Moldova	1	Mid-level Manager	4
		Uzbekistan	1	Senior Manager	4
		Kenya	1	<b>Employment Status</b>	<b>n</b>
		Tajikistan	1	Seasonal	17
		<b>Total Number of Participants:</b>	<b>18</b>	Full time	7

As is seen in Table 2, the most employed foreign nationals in hotels within the scope of the sample are *Kyrgyz*, *Ukrainians* and *Russians*. The reasons that these foreign workers are preferred from the above mentioned countries; two participants gave the answer as *foreign language knowledge*, one participant as *being fit for the guest profile*, one as *having difficulty in finding Turkish staff for animation*, one as *having difficulty in finding Turkish staff* and one participant responded as to the *cost*. It was determined that the employment of foreign workers was mostly *seasonal*. In this context, it can be said that the employment of foreign workers in the hotels is mostly in the summer season, since tourism in Antalya is largely seasonal. Besides, it is observed that food-beverage and animation departments stand out among the departments which the foreign workers are employed. The food and beverage department is one of the departments that hotels employ the highest number of workers. The fact that the animation department was specified as the second important option in the question may be due to foreign language knowledge of foreign workers or the difficulty of managers in finding Turkish personnel for the animation department. On the other side, it is determined that almost all the foreign workers are employed at lower levels of the hotels. It is thought that such a result is due to the fact that these workers are generally composed of individuals in the young age group and are mostly employed seasonally.

Participants stated that they generally prefer younger employees in foreign worker employment, that there is no discrimination in terms of gender and generally female or male workers are employed equally. It is possible to explain why foreign workers

are mostly young people is because of the dynamic structure of tourism sector. Similarly, Tansel (2012) emphasizes that age is an important factor in the decision to migrate and that migrants are mostly young people. Regarding the education level of workers, the participants stated that most of the foreign workers are preferred from those who have finished or are studying at undergraduate level. A small number of participants stated that they employ foreign workers with high school education.

Some participants’ statements within the scope of the first research question are as follows:

*P1, We generally employ in half by gender; but undergraduate students or graduates in education levels, (...) For example, we generally assign lower-level in the F&B department, but mid-level in departments such as animation and guest relation.*

*P2, As a business, we prefer to work with young people at first regardless of gender, and consider a long-term work for the upcoming years. University education is one of our preferences as we think for the future. We employ 85% seasonal contracted workers and provide 15% permanent employment.*

*P10, On the average; 35-40 years in housekeeping, 20-21 years in F&B, 20-23 years in Guest relations. Mostly in temporary status. However, our hotel guest relations manager works in permanent status. Besides, as of this year, we would like to employ foreign managers especially for mid-level around 20%. The reason is that we think it will be easier to manage the newly introduced foreign personnel.*

The second question to be answered within the scope of the research is “RQ 2: What are the criteria taken into consideration in the selection of foreign workers in hotel enterprises?” The codes and categories regarding the theme of criteria sought in the selection of the foreign worker are given in Table 3.

**Table 3**  
*Criteria for Foreign Worker Selection*

	<b>Bureaucratic / Economic</b>		<b>Personal characteristics</b>		
		<b>n</b>		<b>n</b>	
<b>Theme in Selection of Foreign Workers</b>	Having the conditions to get a work visa	2	Age	1	
	Work time	1	Family life	2	
	Cost	1	Physical appearance	5	
	<b>Background</b>	<b>n</b>	Reliability	1	
	Education	3	<b>Adaptation</b>	<b>n</b>	
	Foreign language knowledge	11	Proximity to Turkish culture	1	
	Professional experience / knowledge	12	Social life	1	
	Turkish knowledge	5	Country culture	1	
	Reference	1	Continuity	1	
	Guest relationships	1	Employer’s expectations	1	
	<b>Total Number of Participants: 18</b>				

According to the findings in Table 3; *vocational experience/knowledge, foreign language knowledge and Turkish knowledge* stand out among the basic criteria that the majority of participants seek for in the employment of foreign workers. In addition,

*physical appearance* of foreign workers is among the important features that hotel managers seek for in selecting workers. Some participants' statements regarding the theme of "criteria sought in the selection of foreign workers" are as follows:

*P3, Education, age, physiological structure, experience, family and social life, and the language is a must.*

*P5, We pay attention to speaking Turkish with foreign language knowledge, profession and human love. Because tourism is a service sector, and the one who doesn't like people and the profession can not be successful.*

*P17, Having sufficient knowledge about the current job and knowing enough Turkish to communicate is among our essential criteria.*

The third question asked for answers within the scope of the research is "RQ 3: Why is it necessary to employ foreign workers in hotel enterprises?". Themes, categories and codes created according to answers given by the participants to this question are shown in Table 4. The question was directed to the participants in order to cover their opinions and thoughts about their needs in the future and in the current time frame.

**Table 4**  
*Reasons for Employment of Foreign Workers*

	Reasons Related to Business / Industry	Currently	In the Future	
		n	n	
<b>Theme</b> <b>Reasons for the Employment of Foreign Workers</b>	The concerns of local worker due to structure of the sector		1	
	Economic and cultural structure of tourism		1	
	Not encouraging local workers		1	
	Eligibility for seasonal work	2		
	The need for qualified workers	5	1	
	Working for suitable wages	1		
	Working hours	3	2	
	Cultural exchange	1		
	Productivity	2		
	Experience	1		
	Stability	2	2	
	<b>Guest Related Reasons</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>n</b>	
	Providing better service to guests from their own nationalities	1	1	
	Communication power with guests of their own nationality	2		
	Guest satisfaction	2	1	
	Guest profile	4		
	<b>Workers' Characteristics</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>n</b>	
	Strict compliance with business rules / business discipline	1	2	
	Their external appearance / being presentable	2	3	
	Professional skills / tendencies	1	2	
	Having career goals	1	1	
	Strong social aspects		2	
	Knowing a foreign language	13	9	
	Demographic structures	2		
	Ability	1		
	<b>Total Number of Participants: 18</b>			

As is seen in Table 4, the most important reason for the employment of foreign workers is that these employees know the foreign language which is demanded especially in accordance with the existing customer profiles of the business. Some of the participants also describe foreign workers as qualified personnel. Moreover, other important issues among the reasons for participants to employ foreign workers are that their working hours provide advantages for businesses compared to local employees, that they have some professional qualifications sought in accordance with the structure of jobs in the tourism sector, and that local workers who have such features do not prefer the sector or are not sustainable. One participant stated that the idea of employing foreign workers may be negatively affected in the future for the increase in costs due to exchange rate difference. Some participants' answers to the third research question are as follows:

*PI, We generally consider their physical properties. But we also prioritise some features of the persons according to departments they will work for. For example, the person who will work*



*in animation should definitely have a good knowledge of foreign language and a strong social aspect. However, we also care about having minimum knowledge about the department he/she will work for.*

*P10, The fact that the foreign language being Russian and the predominant Russian guest profile has led to qualified personnel shortage in the sector as the Turkish employees moved away from the sector. This is not only ours, but also the general problem of Turkish tourism. The fact that tourism is seasonal especially in Antalya steers Turkish employees to other sectors. This is especially evident for married workers. Foreign staff do not instantly leave or discontinue the job in high season. In the context of all these issues, our first choice in the recruitment of foreign personnel is to guarantee that we can complete the season with foreign personnel in a stable manner:*

*P11, Foreign language knowledge is one of the leading factors. Foreign language knowledge suitable for the hotel guest portfolio, difficulty of finding Turkish personnel for the service and housekeeping department, being educated in the profession.*

*P15, Foreign staff are employed due to knowing a foreign language and reduced workforce in tourism.*

The fourth question to be answered in the research is “RQ 4: What are the problems arising from the employment of foreign workers in hotel businesses?” Themes, categories and codes created according to answers received from the participants regarding this research question are shown in Table 5.

**Table 5**  
*Problems Arising in Employment of Foreign Workers*

		<b>Problems Arising from the Worker</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>Theme</b> <b>Basic Problems in Employment of Foreign Workers</b>		Lack of trust in foreign workers	1
		Negative experiences in the country	1
		Lack of motivation	1
		Loyalty	1
		Accommodation problem	1
		<b>Problems with Bureaucracy-Functioning</b>	<b>n</b>
		Problems with the employment visa	8
		Intermediary companies	3
		Duration/difficulty of bureaucratic procedures	4
		Difficulty in reaching foreign employees	2
		Exchange-rate difference/wage dissatisfaction	3
		<b>Socio-Cultural Issues</b>	<b>n</b>
		Adaptation problem	3
		Racism/nationalism	2
		Cultural differences	2
	Language/communication problem	3	
		<b>Total Number of Participants: 18</b>	

Although participants stated that they did not generally encounter a major problem in the employment of foreign personnel, they mostly reflected the problems they experienced related to bureaucratic functioning (such as difficulties in obtaining employment visa, long time for obtaining work permits), as can be seen also in Table 5. Participants also mentioned the existence of difficulties experienced by foreign workers regarding adaptation and communication with the cultural structure in the

host country. Participants also touched upon the difficulties in paying wages in foreign currency due to increase in the exchange rate, and therefore the dissatisfaction among foreign workers and various disputes with foreign intermediaries from which foreign workers are provided. Some participants’ responses to the fourth research question are as follows:

*P8, There is a problem of trust. Foreign workers have trust issues with the facility. For example, some contracted foreign personnel cancel the arrival close to the season. The negative experiences that the foreign staff faced in Turkey before are effective about that. There are problems in obtaining official work permit. The permit process is slow and takes a long time. The system change that occurs in certain periods regarding the permit process can not be fully carried out by the personnel working in the relevant ministry.*

*P12, There are hitches in the work permit system and problems in the adaptation process. People may be dissatisfied due to recent exchange rate differences.*

*P16, Intermediary fees, delay of work permits and high exchange rate are our important problems.*

The fifth question asked for an answer in the research is “RQ 5: Is there a problem finding a worker in tourism? If yes, what causes this problem?”. Themes, categories and codes created according to the responses of participants to this question are shown in Table 6.

**Table 6**  
*Problems Encountered in Supply of Workers in Tourism*

<b>Problems Specific to the Tourism Sector</b>		<b>n</b>	
<b>Theme</b> <b>Problems Encountered in Supply of Workers in Tourism</b>	Failure of the parties to fulfill their duties and responsibilities in employment	1	
	The gradually decline in social status of the profession	1	
	Having trouble in finding qualified personnel	1	
	Not considering tourism as a profession	3	
	Lack of employees to work in the sector	1	
	Flexible working hours	1	
	Sector’s not promising future	1	
	Low state support	1	
	Sectoral instability	3	
	Being seasonal	9	
	<b>Educational Problems</b>		<b>n</b>
	Shortage of vocational schools	1	
	Lack of practice in education	1	
	Foreign language insufficiency	1	
	<b>Problems Related to Workers</b>		<b>n</b>
	Impatience of workers who are studying tourism about promotion	1	
	Not being satisfied with the work done	1	
	Not being satisfied with the fee	1	
Disliking the job	1		
Lack of Education	1		
<b>Total Number of Participants: 18</b>			

As seen in Table 6, the most important problem faced by the participants is that the tourism sector is generally seasonal. Besides, the participants also stated the reason why workers do not tend to work in the tourism sector or to pursue a career as that

tourism is not regarded as a profession and that the tourism sector can not maintain its stability for various reasons. In addition, the participants highlighted some deficiencies related to vocational tourism education among the difficulties in finding workers, and mentioned the insufficiency of cooperation among the stakeholders in the sector. In addition, the vast majority of the participants stated that the problem experienced in finding a worker in the tourism sector can be solved with a foreign worker. The answers of some participants to the fifth research question are as follows:

*P4, In my opinion, there is no such unemployment problem in Turkey, it's just the problem of work dislike. Particularly to tourism students in schools, it is necessary to explain the importance of starting from the lowest level in order to become important. Also, trainings should be given not only from book information but also practically.*

*P9, Yes there is definitely. The reason is seasonal work. The solution to this problem seems to be possible with foreign personnel employment. I estimate that the employment of foreign personnel in hotels will increase in the coming years.*

*P14, There are problems due to bumpy characteristics of the tourism sector.*

*P18, It happens due to changes in the tourism sector each year, as it functions based on foreign relations.*

The sixth question to be answered within the scope of the research is “RQ 6: What are the prominent characteristics of the foreign workers employed in hotel businesses compared to the local workers?” Themes, categories and codes related to this research question are shown in Table 7.

**Table 7**  
*Prominent Characteristics of Foreign Workers Compared to Local Workers*

Theme	Characteristics of Foreign Workers		Characteristics of Local Workers		
		n		n	
Prominent Characteristics of Foreign Workers Compared to Local Workers	Avoid taking responsibility	1	Good grasp of Turkish culture/hospitality	5	
	Foreign language knowledge (sufficient)	11	Informal communication / frivolity	2	
	Work discipline/following the rules	5	Foreign language knowledge (insufficient)	5	
	Customer relations (positive)	5	Coping with difficult conditions	2	
	Hospitality (weak)	1	Excessive self-confidence/obstinacy	3	
	Cultural adaptation problem	4	Communication is easy/powerful	9	
	Increase satisfaction	2	Practicalness/comprehension	2	
	Willing to improve	1	Dislike of work	1	
	Strong communication	2	Unstable	1	
	Respect for the superiors	1	Flexibility	1	
	Productivity	1	Stable	1	
	Stable	6	Accessibility	1	
	<b>Total Number of Participants: 18</b>				

As is seen in Table 7, both local and foreign workers have prominent positive and negative characteristics according to the participants. However, with regard to foreign workers; it is seen that foreign language knowledge is the most important factor in the employment of foreign workers by many participants and the issue that

is most cared about by businesses. Besides, it is noteworthy that the participants emphasized stability, work discipline and positive behaviors in guest relations regarding foreign workers. Therefore, knowledge of foreign language, stability, work discipline and positive behaviors they display in customer relations are the prominent factors in preferring foreign workers over local workers. However, the most important problem that participants expressed about foreign workers is their ability to adapt to a different culture. From the perspective of local workers, the participants mostly emphasized the ability of local workers to communicate easily among their prominent features. Besides, the local workers' good grasp of Turkish culture and their hospitable behaviors are other issues emphasized by the participants. The most important inadequacy issue expressed by the participants regarding local workers is the knowledge of foreign language. The answers of some participants to the sixth research question are as follows:

*P6, (Foreign workers) They know foreign language, do not leave the work whenever they want, experience problems with some of their colleagues because the culture is different. (Local workers) They know a little foreign language, may leave the work immediately with excuses such as my mother is sick, my father is not allowing etc.*

*P8, (Foreign workers) Relations with guests are good, namely they have the communication ability, guarantee of completion of the season, foreign language, discipline. (Local workers) Good grasp of Turkish culture, Better relations with managers due to moral values, customs and traditions.*

*P13, (Foreign workers) They speak foreign languages better and have better relations with customers. (Local workers) Communication ability, continuity and easy accessible.*

## **Results and Discussions**

Employing sufficient employees in terms of number and quality, motivating and employing these employees in line with the aims of the organization and keeping qualified employees as a valuable part of the organization is very important for hotel businesses. However, due to the dynamic nature of the tourism sector, it is very difficult for hotels to achieve these alone. This situation requires being able to act in coordination with stakeholders (such as educational institutions, relevant public and private sector organizations, non-governmental organizations) that are directly or indirectly involved in the sector. For example, coordination problems or lack of cooperation with tourism education institutions as one of the external resources that hotels utilize in the process of employing employees may negatively affect the number and quality of employment in hotels. Thus it is witnessed in recent years that as a result of failing to provide all the needed workforce inside Turkey; the hotel businesses in Turkey are heading for foreign worker employment, particularly the ones in summer resorts. Therefore, examining the reasons that prompt these hotels to foreign worker employment is an important issue. This study focuses on the reasons

that lead hotel managers to employ foreign workers. The prominent findings of the research can be summarized as follows:

- The top three foreign worker group in the hotel businesses within the scope of the research are from Kyrgyz, Ukraine and Russian nationality. It was determined that the majority of these workers are employed in the food and beverage and animation departments of hotels as seasonal and lower-level personnel.
- It was determined that young people are generally preferred in the employment of foreign workers, that there is no discrimination in terms of gender in employment, and that mostly the workers having an undergraduate degree are preferred.
- It was identified that in the selection of foreign workers, the main criteria sought by the hotel managers within the scope of the research are professional experience/knowledge, knowledge of foreign language, Turkish knowledge and physical appearance.
- The most prominent option that prompts hotel managers to employ foreign workers is that these workers know foreign languages. This is followed by the need for qualified workers.
- Hotel managers stated the most important problem they had during the process of employing a foreign worker as the difficulties they faced in obtaining a work visa. Managers complained about the long duration of bureaucratic procedures, especially in the process of obtaining a work permit.
- It was determined that hotel managers within the scope of the research agree that there is a problem of finding workers in tourism in general. The vast majority of managers think that this problem stems from the seasonality of the tourism industry.
- Finally, after the hotel managers in scope of the research compare prominent characteristics of the foreign workers they employ and the local personnel; it was determined for the foreign workers that their knowledge of foreign languages, completing the season steadily in terms of working time, having a work discipline and exhibiting desired behaviors in relations with the guests were prominent. In the evaluations of managers regarding local workers; it was detected that the characteristics such as easy communication, good grasp of Turkish culture and hospitable behavior were prominent.

When the research findings are evaluated in general, it is necessary to consider it natural that foreign employees in hotels are mostly employed in the food and beverage department. Because this department is among the departments where the most employees work in hotels. Therefore, it is understood that hotel managers try to

fulfill some of the seasonal workforce need in the food and beverage department with foreign employees. The second option that is prominent is the animation department, which can be explained by seeking a good foreign language knowledge for the employees who will work in this department. As revealed in the findings of the study, the most important reason that pushes hotel managers to employ foreign employees is that these employees speak a foreign language. Therefore, it is understood that the managers try to fulfill some part of the workforce requirement in the animation department by employing foreign employees. Undoubtedly, foreign language knowledge is a feature that all employees working in front departments (such as food and beverage, front office) should have at a certain level, not only in the animation department. Therefore at least the hotel managers within the scope of this research have difficulties in finding Turkish personnel who have a good grasp of languages spoken by their guest profiles. In this context, for the young people who want to make a career in the tourism sector in Turkey or are having tourism education of any level, it is recommended to develop their knowledge levels of a foreign language by taking into account the weighted guest profile visiting Turkey.

It is quite an interesting finding to see ‘qualified worker needed’ as the second important factor after foreign language among the reasons that prompt hotel managers to employ foreign workers. Point of view this findings it is understood that in Turkey at least within the scope of this research the hotel managers have difficulty in finding qualified employee. In other words, the managers of the hotel showing seasonal activities in Turkey try to fulfill from part of the skilled labor needs of the foreign worker employment. Considering Turkey’s young population structure and a large number of institutions providing education in the tourism field, one might have thought that the tourism sector, especially the hotels, did not have any problems in providing a qualified workforce. The fact that hotel managers have emphasized the need for qualified workers among the reasons for employing foreign workers suggests that hotels have difficulties in finding a qualified workforce for some departments.

Another important finding is that after comparing the employed foreign workers with the local personnel, “stability” was mentioned among the prominent features of foreign workers after knowledge of language. The high number of resignations that may occur in hotel businesses during the peak season may leave businesses in a difficult situation in the middle of the season. For this reason, hotel managers naturally act with the motive to protect their staff during these periods until the end of the season. Workers being employed in the company until the end of the season consistently creates the possibility to eliminate or decrease flaws in the service delivery. According to the result obtained in this research, it is understood that foreign workers who are seasonally employed work largely during the season (that is, they complete the season) in a consistent manner, and therefore are preferred. It is known

that in many of the resort hotels operating in the summer season in Turkey, trainees are employed in some departments. These trainees may quit in the middle of the season for different reasons (completing the compulsory internship period, difficulty in keeping up with the intensive working tempo, obtaining a relatively low wage, etc.). In addition, creating the local worker staff other than trainees from people who are not experienced in the tourism sector may be increasing the worker turnover rate in the high season, as these workers display a problem of adapting to the work tempo and functioning of the sector. Therefore, based on such a finding; it is suggested for hotel managers to employ experienced and qualified local workers on structure and functioning of the tourism sector, and for trainees to be given the status which allow them to have the same rights with other workers in the business after the completion of their compulsory internship period; and thus preventing them from leaving the job in high season.

When we compare the findings of the study with the findings obtained from previous studies in the relevant literature, we see that some similarities are noticeable. For example, the findings which were revealed in some studies (Ergün, 2012; Benli et al., 2019) in the literature that foreign workers employed in the accommodation enterprises in Turkey consist of individuals mostly from younger age groups were also supported in this research. Yet again, some findings revealed in previous studies (Yılmaz & Arı, 2018; Benli et al., 2019) in the relevant literature suggesting that the foreign workforce employed in accommodation enterprises in Turkey mainly work in animation and food and beverage departments were also seen to be supported by the results obtained from this research. Besides, in some studies in the literature, there are findings that the long duration of processes during the obtaining of work permits for foreign workers employed in hotel businesses in Turkey causes criticism from hotel managers (Yılmaz & Arı, 2018). On the other hand, in a study conducted by Ekiz-Gökmen (2018) on migrant labor in the tourism sector; it was revealed that while migrant workforce is often seen as a way to reach cheap and unskilled labor in the world, that migrant labor in Turkey plays a role to fill the qualified manpower deficit in the tourism sector and the jobs which have labour supply constraints. In the study conducted by Yılmaz & Arı (2018), it was determined that foreign workers are more qualified in terms of foreign language. Again, in some studies in the literature (Janta et al., 2011b; Markova et al., 2016), it is emphasized that foreign workers are preferred by employers because of their foreign language skills. Similarly, in our research, the two main reasons that prompt hotel managers to employ foreign workers were determined as “these workers know foreign languages” and the “businesses’ need for qualified workers”. Again, in the study of Yılmaz & Arı (2018), the turnover rate of foreign workers was detected as relatively low. Similar to this finding, in our research, hotel managers emphasized that foreign workers finish the season more steadily in terms of working hours compared to local workers. In some studies (Janta



et al., 2011b; Kim et al., 2016), the adaptation problems experienced by foreign workers in the host country are mentioned. This problem was also supported by the statements of some participants in our research.

On the other hand, although it is emphasized in many studies in the literature (Jandl et al., 2009; Janta et al., 2011a; Janta et al., 2011b; Joppe, 2012; Zopiatis et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2016; Markova et al., 2016; Choi et al. 2017; Ravichandran et al. 2017) that foreign workers are generally preferred by employers because of their willingness to work with low wages or their cost reduction aspects, this does not overlap with the results of our research. According to the findings of our research, hotel managers did not mention the “cheap labor force” (except for one participant) among the basic criteria they sought in foreign employees. From here, it is understood that the hotel managers within the scope of the sample do not employ foreign employees with cost concerns. Therefore, our research has brought a new finding to the literature on this subject.

As a result, the findings obtained from this research are thought to be beneficial for hotel managers, educational institutions and public authorities. In this sense, the research results can significantly contribute to decisions of hotel managers on foreign personnel employment, to the relations of tourism education institutions with tourism businesses, and to the relevant legislation practices of public authorities. In summary, the findings obtained from this research are expected to help raise awareness in the perspectives of the interested circles seeking a solution in recent years for the shortage of employees in the tourism sector. Moreover, considering the limitations of relevant studies in Turkish literature, it is expected that the findings obtained from the research will contribute to the literature.

### ***Limitations and Suggestions for Further Researches***

This research is limited to five-star hotel businesses operating in Antalya and selected as samples. It is known that foreign workers are employed in hotel businesses operating in some other major cities which are important for tourism in Turkey. In the future studies, similar researches to be done in the cities which the tourism is concentrated upon such as İstanbul and Muğla can contribute to the literature and allow to reach more generalizable results. On the other hand, this research is limited to hotels operating at summer resorts of Antalya and mostly as seasonal (during summer). In the future, similar studies can be carried out on city hotels that are open throughout the year. Conducting the research on only five-star hotel businesses can also be considered a limitation. Small and medium-sized hotel businesses can also be included in the research. In fact, it is thought that foreign workers are employed not only in the hotel business in Turkey but also in other tourism businesses such as travel agencies/tour operators, food and beverage businesses, recreation businesses



etc... It is thought that the inclusion of other tourism establishments along with hotels in the sample will contribute to the literature in future researches. Finally, although the data of this research were collected by face-to-face interviews with the administrators forming the sample, some managers stated that they would not be able to perform face-to-face interviews by justification of their workload on the date of the appointment made to collect the data and filled the interview form in person and sent them via e-mail. This can be considered as a limitation of the study.

---

**Peer-review:** Externally peer-reviewed.

**Conflict of Interest:** The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

**Grant Support:** The authors declared that this study has received no financial support.

**Authors Contributions:** Conception/Design of study: B.E., T.T., E.A., T.G.; Data Acquisition: B.E., E.A., T.G., T.T.; Data Analysis/Interpretation: T.T., B.E., T.G., E.A.; Drafting Manuscript: B.E., T.T., E.A., T.G.; Critical Revision of Manuscript: B.E., T.T., E.A., T.G.; Final Approval and Accountability: T.T., B.E., E.A., T.G.

---

## References

- Atef, T. & Al Balushi, M. (2017). Omani tourism and hospitality students' employment intentions and job preferences Ramifications on Omanization plans. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 25(4), 440-461.
- Baum, T. (2006). The future of work and employment in tourism. In D. Buhalis & C. Costa (Eds.), *Tourism management dynamics trends, management and tools* (pp. 130-137). Oxford: Elsevier.
- Bayyurt, Y. & Seggie, F. N. (2017). Giriş. In F. N. Seggie & Y. Bayyurt (Eds.), *Nitel araştırma yöntem, teknik, analiz ve yaklaşımları*. (pp. 1-9). Ankara: Anı Yayıncılık.
- Benli, A., İslamoğlu, E. & Ateş-Torun, M. (2019). Turizm sektöründe çalışan yabancılar: Antalya ili üzerine nitel bir araştırma. *Bilgi*, 21(2), 320-342.
- Choi, H., Kim, W.G., & McGinley, S. (2017). The extension of the theory of person-organization fit toward hospitality migrant worker. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 62, 53-66.
- Creswell, J. W. (2017). Nitel yöntemler. (Translated by Y. Dede). In S. B. Demir (Translate Ed.), *Araştırma deseni nitel, nicel ve karma yöntem yaklaşımları*. (pp. 183-213). Ankara: Eğiten Kitap.
- Department for Business Innovation & Skills. (2015). The impact of migrant workers on UK businesses (BIS Research Paper No. 217).
- Duncan, T., Scott, D. G., & Baum, T. (2013). The mobilities of hospitality work: An exploration of issues and debates. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 41, 1-19.
- Ekiz-Gökmen, Ç. (2018). Turizm sektöründe göçmen emeği: Nitelikli emek mi? Ucuz emek mi? *Çalışma ve Toplum*, 2018/1(56), 139-166.
- Eranza, D. R. D., & Razli, I. A. (2013). Foreign employment and employability in hotels at Kuala Lumpur and Sabah. In *Proceedings of the 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the Asian Academy of Applied Business, Indonesia*, pp. 1-9.
- Erdem, B., & Tokmak, C. (2015). Turizm işletmelerinde insan kaynakları planlaması. In E. Pelit (Ed.), *Turizm işletmelerinde insan kaynakları yönetimi*. (pp. 131-198). Ankara: Grafiker Yayınları.
- Ergün, Ö. (2012). Türk turizm sektöründe yabancı işgören profili ve sosyo-kültürel uyum durumları üzerine bir araştırma. *Çalışma İlişkileri Dergisi*, 3(1), 131-147.

- Hacıoğlu, N. (2008). Turizm Pazarlaması. Ankara: Nobel Yayın Dağıtım.
- International Labour Office. (2010). "International labour migration: a rights-based approach". Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com.tr/&httpsredir=1&article=1086&context=intl> 11.08.2018.
- Jandl, M. Hollomey, C., Gendera, S., Stepien, A., & Bilger, V. (2009). *Migration and irregular work in Austria. A case study of the structure and dynamics of irregular foreign employment in Europe at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.* (IMISCOE Reports), Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Janta, H. Ladkin, A., Brown, L., & Lugosi, P. (2011a). Employment experiences of Polish migrant workers in the UK hospitality sector. *Tourism Management*, 32, 1006-1019.
- Janta, H., Brown, L., Lugosi, P., & Ladkin, A. (2011b). Migrant relationships and tourism employment. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 38(4), 1322-1343.
- Janta, H., Lugosi, P., Brown, L. & Ladkin, A. (2012). Migrant networks, language learning and tourism employment. *Tourism Management*, 33, 431-439.
- Joppe, M. (2012). Migrant workers: Challenges and opportunities in addressing tourism labour shortages. *Tourism Management*, 33, 662-671.
- Karagöz, Y. (2017). SPSS ve Amos Uygulamalı Nitel-Nicel-Karma Bilimsel Araştırma Yöntemleri ve Yayın Etiği. İstanbul: Nobel.
- Kim, W. G., Choi, H., & Li, J. J. (2016). Antecedents and outcomes of migrant workers' sociocultural adjustment in the hospitality industry. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 58, 1-12.
- Markova, E., Paraskevopoulou, A., Williams, A. M., & Shaw, G. (2016). Migrant workers in small London hotels: Employment, recruitment and distribution. *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 23(3), 406-421.
- Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative Research A Guide to Design and Implementation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass A Wiley Imprint.
- Prasirtsuk, W. (1993). Education, training, manpower planning and the persistence of manpower shortages: The case of Thailand's tourism industry (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of British Columbia, Vancouver.
- Ravichandran, S., Israeli, A. A., Sethna, F. Bolden III, E. C., & Ghosh, A. (2017). Hospitality managers' importance perceptions of human resource practices related to employment of foreign workers in the United States. *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism*, 16(4), 331-348.
- Republic of Turkey Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services. (2018). Work permits of foreigners. Retrieved from <https://ailevecalisma.gov.tr/media/31746/yabanciizin2018.pdf>. 17.02.2020.
- Republic of Turkey Ministry of Labor and Social Security. (2014). Work permits of foreigners. Retrieved from <https://www.csgeb.gov.tr/media/3245/yabanciizin2014.pdf> 05.07.2018.
- Republic of Turkey Ministry of Labor and Social Security. (2015). Work permits of foreigners. Retrieved from <https://www.csgeb.gov.tr/media/3209/yabanciizin2015.pdf> 05.07.2018.
- Republic of Turkey Ministry of Labor and Social Security. (2016). Work permits of foreigners. Retrieved from <https://www.csgeb.gov.tr/media/7315/yabancilarin-%C3%A7ali%C5%9Fma-%C4%B0z%C4%B0nler%C4%B0-2016.pdf> 05.07.2018.

- Republic of Turkey Ministry of Labor and Social Security. (2017). Work permits of foreigners. Retrieved from <https://ailevecalisma.gov.tr/media/3372/yabanciizin2017.pdf> 17.02.2020.
- Robinson, R. N. S., Martins, A., Solnet, D. & Baum, T. (2019). Sustaining precarity: Critically examining tourism and employment. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 27(7), 1008-1026
- Sadi, M. A. & Henderson, J. C. (2005). Local versus foreign workers in the hospitality and tourism industry-A Saudi Arabian perspective. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 46(2), 247-257.
- Tansel, A. (2012). 2050'ye doğru nüfusbilim ve yönetim: İşgücü piyasasına bakış. Yayın No: TÜSİAD-T/2012-11/536, Sis Matbaacılık Prom. Tanıtım Hiz. Tic. Ltd. Şti., İstanbul. Retrieved from <https://tusiad.org/tr/yayinlar/raporlar/item/6062-2050ye-dogru-nufusbilim-ve-yonetim-isgucu-piyasasına-bakis>. 19.04.2020.
- Vettori, S. (2017). The exploitation of migrant labour in the hospitality industry in South Africa. *African Journal of Hospitality*, 6(4), 1-12.
- WTTC. (2020). Travel and tourism global economic impact & trends 2020. Retrieved from <https://wttc.org/Research/Economic-Impact/moduleId/1445/itemId/91/controller/DownloadRequest/action/QuickDownload> 08.02.2021.
- WTTC Turkey. (2018). Travel and tourism economic impact 2018 Turkey. Retrieved from <https://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/reports/economic-impact-research/countries-2018/turkey2018.pdf> 30.07.2018.
- WTTC Turkey. (2020). 2020 annual research: Key Highlights. Retrieved from <https://wttc.org/Research/Economic-Impact/moduleId/704/itemId/224/controller/DownloadRequest/action/QuickDownload> 09.02.2021.
- WTTC World. (2018). Travel and tourism economic impact 2018 World. Retrieved from <https://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/reports/economic-impact-research/regions-2018/world2018.pdf> 30.07.2018.
- Yağar, F. & Dökme, S. (2018). Niteliksel araştırmaların planlanması: Araştırma soruları, örneklem seçimi, geçerlik ve güvenilirlik. *Gazi Sağlık Bilimleri Dergisi*, 3(3), 1-9.
- Yıldırım, A. & Şimşek, H. (2018). *Sosyal bilimlerde nitel araştırma yöntemleri*. Ankara: Seçkin.
- Yıldız, Z. (2011). Turizmin sektörünün gelişimi ve istihdam üzerindeki etkisi. *Vizyoner Dergisi*, 3(5), 54-71.
- Yılmaz, T. & Arı, B. (2018). “Yabancı istihdamı bir fırsat mı yoksa risk mi?” Türkiye’de faaliyet gösteren konaklama işletmelerinde bir alan araştırması. *Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Dergisi*, 10(2), 160-170.
- Zopiatis, A., Constanti, P., & Theocharous, A. L. (2014). Migrant labor in hospitality: The Cyprus experience. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 37, 111-120.





## Does Employability Anxiety Trigger Psychological Distress and Academic Major Dissatisfaction? A Study on Tour Guiding Students

Derya Demirdelen Alrawadieh<sup>1</sup> 

### Abstract

The tourism and hospitality industry has been severely hit by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic resulting in much uncertainty about the future of careers within the industry. While current employees have been subject to growing research from different perspectives, little is known about tourism students' (thus potentially future tourism employees) employability anxiety and how this can influence their well-being and attitudes toward their current academic majors. To fill this gap, this study proposes and assesses a conceptual model linking employability anxiety, psychological distress, perceived social support, and academic major satisfaction. Drawing on data collected from tour guiding students in Turkey, the results show that students' employability anxiety was significantly associated with increased psychological distress and decreased academic major satisfaction. The study findings fail to support the proposed moderating effect of perceived social support indicating that when anxious about their vocational future, tour guiding students' levels of psychological distress and academic major dissatisfaction are less likely to be mitigated by perceived social support.

### Keywords

Employability anxiety, Psychological distress, Academic major satisfaction, Perceived social support, Tour guiding, Tourism students

**1 Correspondence to:** Derya Demirdelen Alrawadieh (Asst. Prof.), Istanbul Ayyansaray University, Department of Hotel, Restaurant and Catering Services, Istanbul, Turkey. E-mail: [deryademirdelen@ayvansaray.edu.tr](mailto:deryademirdelen@ayvansaray.edu.tr) ORCID: 0000-0002-7554-2256

**To cite this article:** Demirdelen Alrawadieh, D. (2021). Does Employability Anxiety Trigger Psychological Distress and Academic Major Dissatisfaction? A Study on Tour Guiding Students. *Journal of Tourismology*, 7(1), 55-71. <https://doi.org/10.26650/jot.2021.7.1.0003>



## Introduction

The current Covid-19 pandemic has caused immense disruption to the global tourism and hospitality industry forcing many businesses to downsize and lay off their employees, thus resulting in unprecedented unemployment rates. Travel bans and lockdown orders have brought several tourism jobs, including tour guiding, to a standstill resulting in growing anxiety and stress in the labor market (Demirdelen Alrawadieh, 2021; Chen, 2020). The uncertainty about the future of careers within the industry has never been as salient as during the current crisis. Indeed, it has become apparent that the crisis will contribute to the reconfiguration of the whole tourism and travel industry (Pizam, 2021).

Recent works have addressed various issues related to tourism employees during the crisis (Mao et al., 2020; Park et al., 2020; He et al., 2020). For instance, Chen (2020) noted that the lack of social support and panic about the pandemic resulted in jeopardized well-being, with female and younger employees being more vulnerable to psychological distress. However, while research tends to focus on current tourism employees, little is known about future tourism employees i.e., current tourism students. Specifically, there is an obvious dearth of research which investigates tourism students' employability anxiety and how this can influence their well-being and attitudes toward their current academic majors. Employability anxiety has received some attention in different disciplines (Tomlinson, 2008; Pisarik et al., 2017) and, to a lesser extent, in tourism and hospitality scholarship (Unguren & Huseyinli, 2020). In the case of tourism students in general and tour guiding students in particular, the relationships between employability anxiety, psychological distress, and academic major satisfaction remain unclear. Specifically, to the best knowledge of the author, the relationship between employability anxiety and academic major satisfaction has not been addressed in tourism education scholarship. This is important because it enhances our understanding of tourism students' expectations and helps void the gap between higher education institutions and the industry.

With these thoughts in mind, the aim of this study is to empirically test a conceptual model linking employability anxiety of tour guiding students with psychological distress, academic major satisfaction and perceived social support (see Figure 1). The proposed model shows that employability anxiety has a direct effect on psychological distress and academic major satisfaction. The model also proposes a moderating effect of perceived social support on the relationship between employability anxiety and psychological distress as well as on the relationship between employability anxiety and academic major satisfaction. By examining these relationships, the study aims to provide higher education institutions offering tourism-related programs with fresh insights into how employability anxiety can bring about negative impacts influencing not only the well-being of tourism students but also harm their attitudes towards their academic majors. The study also scrutinizes the role of social support as a potential factor mitigating the adverse impacts of employability anxiety.

The contributions of the study are two-fold: First, the study examines the potential effect of employability anxiety on psychological distress and academic major satisfaction. Despite the importance of understanding these relationships for both industry practitioners and policymakers, there has been no previous study investigating this issue, a surprising omission in the existing body of literature. Second, abundant research highlights the role of social support in curbing unfavorable experiences and behaviors within the tourism industry (Alrawadieh et al., 2021; Karatepe, 2010), however, there has been little understanding of the moderating effect of perceived social support on the relationship between employability anxiety and psychological distress as well as on the relationship between employability anxiety and academic major satisfaction. Finally, the study makes an incremental contribution by drawing on the case of tour guiding students, a largely neglected segment that is worth investigation considering the nature of tour guiding being a crucial job in the travel industry with distinct characteristics (Alrawadieh et al., 2020; Cetin & Yarcin, 2017).

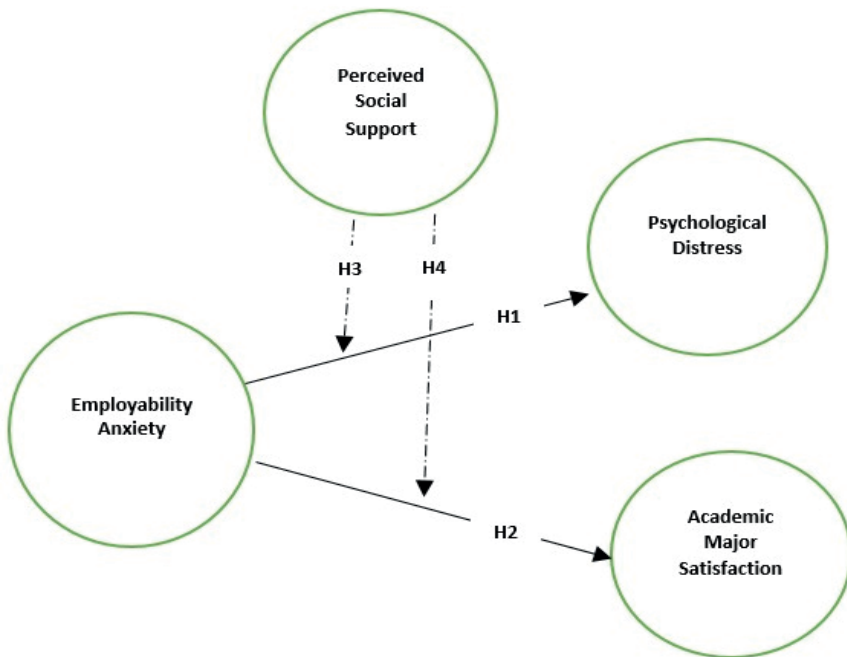


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

## Literature review

### *Employability anxiety*

Anxiety refers to the status of discomfort that an individual may feel in his or her personal life (Vidon & Rickly, 2018). While individuals might be anxious from time to time over various stages of their life, employability anxiety after graduation is seen as one of the important problems especially for university students (Unguren & Huseyinli, 2020). Therefore, it is important to investigate the causes of anxiety given its potential role in affecting students' career choice and other related decisions (Daniels et. al., 2011; Vignoli, 2015). Although it is common for students to occasionally feel anxious about their career plans after graduation (Tsai et al., 2017), the current Covid-19 pandemic may have led to increased anxiety. For more than one and a half years now, the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted tourism in all aspects (Gössling et al., 2020). The current crisis may also cause uncertainty for tourism students and give rise to concerns about their future plans. The fragile nature of the tourism sector renders it vulnerable to crises, both nationally and internationally (Yeh, 2020; Kaushal & Srivastava, 2021). While previous studies show that crises can potentially cause anxiety among current tourism employees (Park et al., 2020; Aguiar-Quintana et. al. 2021), one may safely assume that the uncertainty brought by the current crisis can significantly affect current tourism students, a good number of whom may be the tourism employees of the future. Therefore, understanding their employability anxiety and its consequences is of significant importance.

### *Psychological distress*

Psychological distress is defined as a response to threats that may arise (Jordan et al., 2015). Psychological distress is argued to trigger many negative outcomes such as depression, frustration, anxiety, and failure (Chan, 2006; Verger et. al., 2009). Reducing the destructive effects of stress is important to enhance the quality of life of individuals (Jordan et al., 2019). Psychological distress as experienced by students has also been subject to investigation in previous research (Burriss et al., 2009; Stallman, 2010; Delara & Woodgate, 2015; Sharp & Theiler, 2018). Existing literature, however, remains limited on students' stress levels and anxiety about finding a job after graduation. While unemployment and employability anxiety can be a key source of distress (Chen, 2020), in times of crises, this anxiety might be more salient, especially for tourism students, given the devastating impacts of the current crisis on tourism and travel industry (Škare et al., 2021).

### *Academic Major Satisfaction*

Defined as "enjoyment of one's role or experiences as a student" (Lent et al., 2019: 87), academic major satisfaction is of significant importance given that satisfaction in



this specific domain can potentially affect overall life satisfaction (Sovet et al., 2014; Bücken et al., 2018). This is unsurprising since individuals highly value a satisfactory job and career opportunity as an integral part of their daily life (Nauta, 2007). Despite its role in creating jobs and being appealing to students as a major over the globe, tourism is often sensitive to crises such as the current Covid-19 pandemic. Travel bans and limited mobility have not only harmed the tourism sector and tourism employees (Gössling et al., 2020) but also seem to influence students who major in tourism-related programs. Therefore, it is possible that tourism students' positive attitudes towards their current majors can be impaired due to the uncertainty about their vocational future. In a recent study, Unguren and Huseyinli (2020) collected data just before the outbreak of the pandemic and concluded that students who perceive the structural characteristics of the tourism sector would negatively experience more work anxiety after graduation. One may assume that this negativity is even more salient now with the tourism employment supply experiencing a sharp decline due to the pandemic.

### *Perceived Social Support*

Social support can be defined as “the exchange of intra-individual resources, e.g., feedback, action support, information exchange, listening, and encouragement, during the exchange of individual resources, e.g., emotional, instrumental, and recreational resources” (Lin et al., 2014: 246). Zimet et al. (1988) identify three dimensions of social support. These constitute the sources of social support and include family, friends and other important people in our lives. The presence of such individuals and the social support received from them are deemed crucial to help cope with negative situations such as stress, anxiety, and depression (Grey et al., 2020). Social support is also important in eliminating adverse situations influencing students' lives. While previous research highlights the importance of social support in reducing negative stressors and in enhancing the quality of life of students (Kim et al., 2018; Stallman et al., 2018; Alorani & Alradaydeh, 2018; Alsubaie et al., 2019), it remains unclear how social support can moderate the negative effect of employability anxiety on students' psychological distress and potential regret with university choice (i.e., academic major dissatisfaction). It is therefore important to explore this issue especially in times of crises where social support is much more needed (Grey et al., 2020).

### *Theoretical background and hypotheses development*

University students may frequently experience negative situations such as depression, anxiety, and stress (Stallman, 2010; Mahmoud et al., 2012; Alsubaie et al., 2019). Employability anxiety among university students has also been subject to investigation in the literature (Pisarik et al., 2017). For instance, in their study on university students from different departments, Tayfun and Korkmaz (2016) noted

that there was a positive and significant relationship between students' employment anxiety and stress. In tourism research, although there are limited insights into employability anxiety (Unguren & Huseyinli, 2020), the relationship between employability anxiety and psychological distress among tourism students remains unexplored. The Covid-19 pandemic has introduced a new reality whereby several jobs such as tour guiding are under threat (Bajrami et al., 2021; Kaushal & Srivastava, 2021). This may potentially influence how current tour guiding students view their future jobs, which may eventually result in psychological distress. Based on this discussion, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Employability anxiety of tour guiding students is positively associated with psychological distress.

Previous research has investigated academic major satisfaction across different disciplines (Lent et al., 2007; Doo & Park, 2019). In the field of tourism, there has been a considerable number of studies examining tourism students' attitudes towards working in the sector (Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000; Eren & Aydin, 2020), career choices of tourism graduates (Richardson, 2009), career preferences (Kim et al., 2010) and career development (Chen & Shen, 2012). However, the relationship between employability anxiety and academic major satisfaction has received little attention. Kurnaz and Kurnaz (2018), for instance, noted that tour guiding students willingly chose their major and reported low anxiety among students. Koc (2019) however, suggested that social anxiety was a fairly prevalent phenomenon among tourism and hospitality students. We argue that the current crisis has largely re-shaped tourism students' attitudes. One may assume that, when students see current tourism employees lose their jobs or are unable to take tours (in the case of freelancer tour guides), they would feel anxious about the future and thus would be less satisfied with their academic major decisions. Therefore, the following hypothesis is established:

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Employability anxiety of tour guiding students is negatively associated with academic major satisfaction.

Perceived social support is argued to enhance the quality of life (Helgeson, 2003) and well-being (Awang et al., 2014) and it may reduce stress, anxiety, and regret (Zhou et al., 2013). Chen (2020) emphasizes that social support is important in dealing with negative events and situations that may arise in human life. Social support is especially necessary for students to overcome various problems in university life. In this context, students need the presence and support of special people such as friends and family. One may assume that the stronger the social support students receive, the more likely their anxiety and stress will decrease. Civitci (2015) noted that students can cope more easily against stress with the support they receive from family and friends. Likewise, it is not uncommon that students rely on social ties such as family

members when deciding what to major in. Therefore, it is likely that perceived social support can reduce the negative effect of employability anxiety on academic major satisfaction. Based on the aforementioned discussion, the following hypotheses are proposed.

**H<sub>3</sub>**: Perceived social support moderates the relationship between employability anxiety and psychological distress.

**H<sub>4</sub>**: Perceived social support moderates the relationship between employability anxiety and academic major satisfaction.

## Methodology

### *Study context*

Tour guides are acknowledged as key players in the tourism and travel industry. Their knowledge, competency, and skills are important assets to ensure favorable tourist experiences (Güzel et al., 2020), thus raising the need to place more importance on current tour guiding students. To be an official tour guide in Turkey, candidates should receive a formal education, pass a foreign language proficiency test, and participate in applied tours in specific regions or across the country (TUREB, 2021). Despite the challenging and multi-stage nature of the tour guiding profession (Demirdelen Alrawadieh, 2021), the number of students enrolling in tour guiding programs is increasing. In the academic year 2019-2020, the number of students enrolled in tourism and hospitality-related programs in Turkey was over 85,300 of which around 12% were enrolled in tour guiding programs (YÖK, 2021). Therefore, tour guiding seems to be an attractive profession among tourism students.

### *Measures*

Multi-items scales from the previous literature were used to measure the constructs employed in the framework. Academic major satisfaction was measured using seven items adapted from Sainfort and Booske (2000) and Schlegel et al. (2013). The items were given on a 5-point Likert-type scale, with the end poles labeled as “strongly disagree (1)” and “strongly agree (5). Sample items included “*I am comfortable with my decision*”. Nine items were also adapted from Unguren and Huseyinli (2020) to measure employability anxiety. The construct was measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale, anchored from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Sample items included “*The idea of being left unemployed after graduation scares me*”. Psychological distress was operationalized using six items from Tomitaka et al. (2017). Respondents were asked the following question: “*During the past 30 days, about how often did you feel*” and their answers were measured on a 5-point Likert-

type scale ranging from “1= none of the time” to “5= all of the time”. Finally, 12 items were adapted from Zimet et al. (1988) to measure the perceived social support. The items were given on a 5-point Likert-type scale, with the end poles labeled as “strongly disagree (1)” and “strongly agree (5). Sample items included “*There is a special person who is around when I am in need*”. The survey also collected some socio-demographic data.

*Sampling and data collection*

The population of the current study is composed of students majoring in tour guiding in Turkey. In the 2019-2020 academic year, there were around 11 thousand students enrolled on different programs in tour guiding across Turkey. The present study used a self-administered questionnaire to collect data from tour guiding students. The data collection was initiated on February 8, 2021 and was completed on 25 March 2021. By the end of the data collection, 130 useable questionnaires were obtained. To assess the sample adequacy, the rule of thumb stating that the minimum sample size should be 10 times the maximum number of arrowheads pointing at a latent variable in the model (Henseler et al., 2009) was adopted. Therefore, a minimum of 120 cases was sufficient to test the proposed model in the current study. Hence, the sample size (130) is deemed adequate. Respondents were recruited from undergraduate students affiliated to a tour guiding program in a major university in Istanbul, Turkey. Filling the questionnaire took less than 10 minutes. The questionnaire consisted of two sections; the first section aimed to collect demographic data about the respondents, whereas the second section aimed to measure the constructs. The demographic profile of the respondents is presented in Table 1. Despite the challenging and demanding nature of tour guiding especially for females (Alrawadieh & Demirdelen Alrawadieh, 2020), the sample was split almost equally between females and males. Almost all the respondents mentioned that they willingly chose to major in tour guiding.

**Table 1**  
*Demographic Profile of Participants*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>N=(130)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	66	50,8
Male	64	49,2
<i>Willingly majoring?</i>		
Yes	129	99,2
No	-	-
Not sure	1	0,8
<i>Order of Major</i>		
1 <sup>st</sup> choice	108	83,1
2 <sup>d</sup> choice	15	11,5
3 <sup>d</sup> and over	7	5,4

## Findings and discussion

### *Measurement model assessment*

Before testing the structural model, the reliability and validity of the measurement model were assessed. Reliability is ensured considering the factor loadings, Composite Reliability (CR) values, Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ), and rho-A values. As a rule of thumb, factor loadings should be above 0.7 (Hair et al., 2017). However, if AVE and convergent validity are not negatively affected, items with factor loadings of 0.6 can also be retained (Hair et al., 2017). As shown in Table 2, Composite Reliability (CR), Cronbach Alpha, and rho-A values are all above 0.7. After removing 1 EA and 1 AMS, the CR values are between 0.89 and 0.94, the Cronbach Alpha values are between 0.86 and 0.93, and the rho-A values are between 0.88 and 0.95. Therefore, the reliability of the measurement model is established.

**Table 2**  
*Validity and Reliability*

Construct	Fac. loadings	Cronbach ( $\alpha$ )	Rho_A	CR	AVE
<b>Academic Major Satisfaction</b>		0.936	0.959	0.949	0.758
AMS1: My decision is sound.	0.790				
AMS2: I am completely confident I made the right decision.	0.875				
AMS3: I am completely satisfied with the decision.	0.916				
AMS4: I am comfortable with my decision.	0.912				
AMS5: This decision is consistent with my core values and beliefs.	0.890				
AMS6: I am confident I will not regret choosing this major in the future.	0.834				
<b>Employability Anxiety</b>		0.934	0.938	0.946	0.689
EA1: I am concerned about my future after graduation.	0.799				
EA2: The thought of not being able to find a job after graduation makes me feel anxious.	0.887				
EA3: I clearly don't know what to do after graduation.	0.848				
EA4: I think it will be difficult to find a job after graduation, in the field I want and in conditions I need.	0.901				
EA5: The idea of being left unemployed after graduation scares me.	0.856				
EA6: I think I will have difficulties in finding a job in the field from which I graduated and in conditions I want.	0.906				
EA7: I think I can easily find a job in the area I want after graduation.*	0.681				
EA9: I am not worried about finding a job after graduation.*	0.732				
<b>Psychological Distress</b>		0.864	0.882	0.899	0.599
PD1: Nervous	0.722				
PD2: Hopeless	0.842				
PD3: Restless or fidgety	0.624				
PD4: So depressed that nothing could cheer you up	0.858				
PD5: That everything was an effort	0.822				
PD6: Worthless	0.752				
<b>Perceived Social Support</b>		0.925	0.938	0.927	0.517
SS1: There is a special person who is around when I am in need.	0.656				

SS2: There is a special person with whom I can share my joys and sorrows.	0.683
SS3: My family really tries to help me.	0.690
SS4: I get the emotional help and support I need from my family.	0.669
SS5: I have a special person who is a real source of comfort to me.	0.736
SS6: My friends really try to help me.	0.682
SS7: I can count on my friends when things go wrong.	0.803
SS8: I can talk about my problems with my family.	0.707
SS9: I have friends with whom I can share my joys and sorrows.	0.768
SS10: There is a special person in my life who cares about my feelings.	0.758
SS11: My family is willing to help me make decisions.	0.681
SS12: I can talk about my problems with my friends.	0.774

\*reverse coded items

Validity is established by assessing the convergent validity and discriminant validity of the measures. To ensure convergent validity, the average explained variance (AVE) value for each of the constructs in the model should be higher than 0.5. As seen in Table 2, AVE values are between 0.51 and 0.75 indicating that convergent validity is established. For discriminant validity, Fornell-Larcker criterion and Hetero-Trait-Mono-Trait (HTMT) values were used (Henseler et al., 2015; Voorhees et al., 2016). According to the Fornell-Larcker criterion, the square root of the average explained variance (AVE) values should be larger than the correlations with the other variables. According to the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) criterion, the HTMT value should be lower than 85 (Henseler et al., 2015). As seen in Table 3, the discriminant validity is established using both methods.

**Table 3**  
*Discriminant Analysis*

Construct	Fornell-Larcker Criterion			
	1	2	3	4
Academic Major Satisfaction	0.871			
Employability Anxiety	-0.447	0.830		
Psychological Distress	-0.127	0.563	0.774	
Perceived Social Support	0.293	-0.268	-0.175	0.719
Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Criterion				
	1	2	3	4
Academic Major Satisfaction				
Employability Anxiety	0.462			
Psychological Distress	0.141	0.616		
Perceived Social Support	0.305	0.225	0.163	

*Structural Model Assessment*

After establishing the outer measurement model, the inner measurement model (i.e., structural model) was assessed. The Bootstrap 500 method was performed to

test the hypothesized relationships. As shown in Table 4, all the direct hypotheses proposed were confirmed. Employability anxiety of tour guiding students was found to have a positive and significant effect on psychological distress ( $\beta = 0.56, p < 0.01$ ) thus supporting H1. The results also show that the employability anxiety of tour guiding students has a negative and significant effect on academic major satisfaction ( $\beta = -0.40, p < 0.01$ ). Hence, H2 was accepted.

**Table 4**  
*Hypothesis Testing*

Hypothesis	Direction	Beta	T-value	P value	Result
H1	Employability Anxiety → Psychological Distress	0.561	8.508	0.000	Supported
H2	Employability Anxiety → Academic Major Satisfaction	-0.400	5.948	0.000	Supported

#### *Assessment of the Moderating Effect*

The proposed model suggests that perceived social support can moderate the impact of employability anxiety on psychological distress and academic major satisfaction. Table 5 shows that, contrary to our prediction, the moderating effect of perceived social support was not confirmed ( $\beta = 0.04, P > 0.05$ ;  $\beta = 0.09, P > 0.05$ ). Hence, H3 and H4 were rejected.

**Table 5**  
*Assessment of the Moderating Effect*

Hypothesis	Interaction Term	Beta	T-value	P value	Result
H3	Perceived Social Support * Employability Anxiety → Psychological Distress	0.044	0.457	0.648	Rejected
H4	Perceived Social Support * Employability Anxiety → Academic Major Satisfaction	0.096	0.947	0.344	Rejected

## **Conclusions**

Previous research focusing on tourism students indicates that students may experience high uncertainty and anxiety (Koc, 2019; Ramakrishnan & Macaveiu, 2019). The Covid-19 pandemic has introduced a new reality raising the need for more research addressing tourism students' anxiety as well as their attitudes towards their current majors. Drawing on data collected from tour guiding students in Turkey, this

study has proposed and assessed a conceptual model linking employability anxiety, psychological distress, perceived social support, and academic major satisfaction. The results partially support the proposed model indicating that students' employability anxiety was significantly associated with increased psychological distress and decreased academic major satisfaction but failed to confirm the moderating effect of perceived social support on these relationships. The findings advance our knowledge on the outcomes of employability anxiety and propose some practical implications.

First, by modeling employability anxiety with psychological distress and academic major satisfaction, the study contributes to existing research on career planning (Tsai et al., 2017; Ramakrishnan & Macaveiu, 2019). Specifically, the study draws on tour guiding students, a largely neglected context. In this vein, the current study is timely given the uncertainty caused by the ongoing pandemic. Second, while previous research underscores the importance of social support in curbing unfavorable work-related stressors, little is known about the moderating effect of perceived social support on the relationship between employability anxiety and psychological distress as well as on the relationship between employability anxiety and academic major satisfaction.

Drawing on the study's findings, it has become apparent that tourism students are likely to experience greater psychological distress and feel less satisfied with their academic majors when they perceive high uncertainty about their vocational future. While this may be bounded to the current conditions caused by the crisis, higher education institutions may play a significant role in reducing their students' employability anxiety by designing and implementing some programs. For instance, academic staff may be encouraged to invite their students to join available Webinars on resilience strategies in the tourism industry. Communicating successful stories of tour guides who managed to survive the crisis may also help students reduce stress and regain favorable attitudes towards their academic majors. This may also require a stronger collaboration between higher education institutions and industry practitioners (e.g. tour guiding association).

Finally, the present study has some limitations. The data were collected only from tour guiding students. Therefore, the results may not be valid to students majoring in other tourism programs (e.g., hotel management). Given that the data collection coincided with travel bans and lockdown orders, it is likely that students majoring in tour guiding would be less optimistic and more anxious about their vocational future. Therefore, the current study may be confined to important boundary conditions. Future research may revalidate this study after the current crisis and extend the present model by including other variables (e.g., major switching intention, intention to join the industry).



**Peer-review:** Externally peer-reviewed.

**Conflict of Interest:** The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

**Grant Support:** The authors declared that this study has received no financial support.

---

## References

- Aguiar-Quintana, T., Nguyen, H., Araujo-Cabrera, Y., & Sanabria-Díaz, J. M. (2021). Do job insecurity, anxiety and depression caused by the COVID-19 pandemic influence hotel employees' self-rated task performance? The moderating role of employee resilience. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *94*, 102868.
- Alorani, O. I., & Alradydeh, M. T. F. (2018). Spiritual well-being, perceived social support, and life satisfaction among university students. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, *23*(3), 291-298.
- Alrawadieh, Z., & Demirdelen Alrawadieh, D. (2020). Sexual harassment and wellbeing in tourism workplaces: The perspectives of female tour guides. In Vizcaino-Suárez, P., Jeffrey, H. & Eger, C. (eds.), *Tourism and Gender-Based Violence – Challenging Inequalities* (pp.80- 92). CABl, Oxford.
- Alrawadieh, Z., Cetin, G., Dincer, M. Z., & Istanbulu Dincer, F. (2020). The impact of emotional dissonance on quality of work life and life satisfaction of tour guides. *The Service Industries Journal*, *40*(1-2), 50-64.
- Alrawadieh, Z., Demirdelen Alrawadieh, D., Olya, H. G., Erkol Bayram, G., & Kahraman, O. C. (2021). Sexual harassment, psychological well-being, and job satisfaction of female tour guides: the effects of social and organizational support. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2021.1879819>
- Alsubaie, M. M., Stain, H. J., Webster, L. A., & Wadman, R. (2019). The role of sources of social support on depression and quality of life for university students. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, *24*(4), 484-496.
- Awang, M. M., Kutty, F. M., & Ahmad, A. R. (2014). Perceived social support and well being: first-year student experience in university. *International Education Studies*, *7*(13), 261-270.
- Bajrami, D. D., Terzić, A., Petrović, M. D., Radovanović, M., Tretiakova, T. N., & Hadoud, A. (2021). Will we have the same employees in hospitality after all? The impact of COVID-19 on employees' work attitudes and turnover intentions. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *94*, 102754.
- Burris, J. L., Brechting, E. H., Salsman, J., & Carlson, C. R. (2009). Factors associated with the psychological well-being and distress of university students. *Journal of American college health*, *57*(5), 536-544.
- Bücker, S., Nuraydin, S., Simonsmeier, B. A., Schneider, M., & Luhmann, M. (2018). Subjective well-being and academic achievement: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Research in Personality*, *74*, 83-94.
- Cetin, G., & Yarkan, S. (2017). The professional relationship between tour guides and tour operators. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, *17*(4), 345-357.
- Chan, D. W. (2006). Emotional intelligence, social coping, and psychological distress among Chinese gifted students in Hong Kong. *High Ability Studies*, *16*(2), 163-178.
- Chen, C. C. (2020). Psychological tolls of COVID-19 on industry employees. *Annals of Tourism Research*. doi: 10.1016/j.annals.2020.103080

- Chen, T. L., & Shen, C. C. (2012). Today's intern, tomorrow's practitioner?—The influence of internship programmes on students' career development in the Hospitality Industry. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, 11(1), 29-40.
- Civitci, A. (2015). The moderating role of positive and negative affect on the relationship between perceived social support and stress in college students. *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice*, 15(3), 565-573.
- Daniels, L. M., Stewart, T. L., Stupnisky, R. H., Perry, R. P., & LoVerso, T. (2011). Relieving career anxiety and indecision: The role of undergraduate students' perceived control and faculty affiliations. *Social Psychology of Education*, 14(3), 409-426.
- Delara, M., & Woodgate, R. L. (2015). Psychological distress and its correlates among university students: a cross-sectional study. *Journal of pediatric and adolescent gynecology*, 28(4), 240-244.
- Demirdelen Alrawadieh, D. (2021). Kadın turist rehberlerinin karşılaştıkları sorunların belirlenmesine yönelik bir araştırma. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Issues*, 3(1).
- Demirdelen Alrawadieh, D. (2021). Mapping the governmental response to Covid-19 pandemic and its implications on the hospitality and tourism industry: The case of Turkey. In *Covid-19 Pandemic and the Hospitality and Tourism Industry, What is Next?*, Nunkoo, R., D. Gürsoy, M., Sarıışık & E. Boğan (Ed.), Edward Elgar publishers.
- Doo, M. Y., & Park, S. H. (2019). Effects of work value orientation and academic major satisfaction on career decision-making self-efficacy. *Higher Education, Skills and Work-Based Learning*. 9(4), 550-562.
- Eren, R., & Aydin, A. (2020). Perceptions and attitudes of culinary students towards food and beverage industry in Turkey. *Journal of Culinary Science & Technology*, 18(5), 371-395.
- Gössling, S., Scott, D., & Hall, C. M. (2020). Pandemics, tourism and global change: a rapid assessment of COVID-19. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 29(1), 1-20.
- Grey, I., Arora, T., Thomas, J., Saneh, A., Tohme, P., & Abi-Habib, R. (2020). The role of perceived social support on depression and sleep during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Psychiatry Research*, 293, 113452.
- Güzel, Ö., Nacak, E., Bilgi, E., & Kalin, V. (2020). Sustainable tourism and the roles of tour guides in destinations: A qualitative case study in turkey. *Journal of Economy Culture and Society* 62.
- Hair Jr, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C., & Sarstedt, M. (2017). A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). Sage publications.
- He, J., Mao, Y., Morrison, A. M., & Coca-Stefaniak, J. A. (2020). On being warm and friendly: the effect of socially responsible human resource management on employee fears of the threats of COVID-19. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 33(1), 346-366.
- Helgeson, V. S. (2003). Social support and quality of life. *Quality of life research*, 12(1), 25-31.
- Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2015). A new criterion for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modeling. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 43(1), 115-135.
- Jordan, E. J., Spencer, D. M., & Prayag, G. (2019). Tourism impacts, emotions and stress. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 75, 213-226.
- Jordan, E. J., Vogt, C. A., & DeShon, R. P. (2015). A stress and coping framework for understanding resident responses to tourism development. *Tourism Management*, 48, 500-512.

- Karatepe, O. M. (2010). The effect of positive and negative work-family interaction on exhaustion: Does work social support make a difference?. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 22(6), 836-856.
- Kaushal, V., & Srivastava, S. (2021). Hospitality and tourism industry amid COVID-19 pandemic: Perspectives on challenges and learnings from India. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 92, 102707.
- Kim, B. P., McCleary, K. W., & Kaufman, T. (2010). The new generation in the industry: Hospitality/Tourism students' career preferences, sources of influence and career choice factors. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, 22(3), 5-11.
- Kim, B., Jee, S., Lee, J., An, S., & Lee, S. M. (2018). Relationships between social support and student burnout: A meta-analytic approach. *Stress and Health*, 34(1), 127-134.
- Koc, E. (2019). Turkish tourism and hospitality students' social anxiety and avoidance. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, 31(1), 49-54.
- Kurnaz, H. A., & Kurnaz, A. (2018). Önlisans turist rehberliği eğitimi alan öğrencilerin geleceğe ait düşüncelerinin belirlenmesi: Marmaris Turizm Meslek Yüksekokulu örneği. *OPUS Uluslararası Toplum Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 8(1), 237-247.
- Kusluyan, S., & Kusluyan, Z. (2000). Perceptions and attitudes of undergraduate tourism students towards working in the tourism industry in Turkey. *Tourism Management*, 21(3), 251-269.
- Lent, R. W., Singley, D., Sheu, H. B., Schmidt, J. A., & Schmidt, L. C. (2007). Relation of social-cognitive factors to academic satisfaction in engineering students. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 15(1), 87-97.
- Lin, Y. S., Huang, W. S., Yang, C. T., & Chiang, M. J. (2014). Work-leisure conflict and its associations with well-being: The roles of social support, leisure participation and job burnout. *Tourism Management*, 45, 244-252.
- Mahmoud, J. S. R., Staten, R. T., Hall, L. A., & Lennie, T. A. (2012). The relationship among young adult college students' depression, anxiety, stress, demographics, life satisfaction, and coping styles. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*, 33(3), 149-156.
- Mao, Y., He, J., Morrison, A. M., & Andres Coca-Stefaniak, J. (2020). Effects of tourism CSR on employee psychological capital in the COVID-19 crisis: from the perspective of conservation of resources theory. *Current Issues in Tourism*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2020.1770706>
- Nauta, M. M. (2007). Assessing college students' satisfaction with their academic majors. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 15(4), 446-462.
- Park, E., Kim, W. H., & Kim, S. B. (2020). Tracking tourism and hospitality employees' real-time perceptions and emotions in an online community during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Current Issues in Tourism*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2020.1823336>
- Pisarik, C. T., Rowell, P. C., & Thompson, L. K. (2017). A phenomenological study of career anxiety among college students. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 65(4), 339-352.
- Pizam, A. (2021). The Aftermath of the Corona Virus Pandemic, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, [doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2021.102909](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2021.102909).
- Ramakrishnan, S., & Macaveiu, C. (2019). Understanding aspirations in tourism students. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 39, 40-48.
- Richardson, S. (2009). Undergraduates' perceptions of tourism and hospitality as a career choice. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 28(3), 382-388.
- Sainfort, F., & Booske, B. C. (2000). Measuring post-decision satisfaction. *Medical Decision Making*, 20(1), 51-61.

- Schlegel, R. J., Hicks, J. A., Davis, W. E., Hirsch, K. A., & Smith, C. M. (2013). The dynamic interplay between perceived true self-knowledge and decision satisfaction. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 104*(3), 542-558.
- Sharp, J., & Theiler, S. (2018). A review of psychological distress among university students: Pervasiveness, implications and potential points of intervention. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling, 40*(3), 193-212.
- Škare, M., Soriano, D. R., & Porada-Rochoń, M. (2021). Impact of COVID-19 on the travel and tourism industry. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change, 163*, 120469.
- Sovet, L., Park, M. S. A., & Jung, S. (2014). Validation and psychometric properties of academic major satisfaction scale among Korean college students. *Social indicators research, 119*(2), 1121-1131.
- Stallman, H. M. (2010). Psychological distress in university students: A comparison with general population data. *Australian Psychologist, 45*(4), 249-257.
- Stallman, H. M., Ohan, J. L., & Chiera, B. (2018). The role of social support, being present and self-kindness in university student well-being. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling, 46*(4), 365-374.
- Tayfun, A. N. T., & Korkmaz, A. (2016). Üniversite öğrencilerinde işsizlik kaygısı: süleyman demirel üniversitesi öğrencileri üzerinde bir araştırma, *Mehmet Akif Ersoy Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi, 8*(17), 534-558.
- Tomitaka, S., Kawasaki, Y., Ide, K., Akutagawa, M., Yamada, H., Ono, Y., & Furukawa, T. A. (2017). Characteristic distribution of the total and individual item scores on the Kessler Screening Scale for Psychological Distress (K6) in US adults. *BMC psychiatry, 17*(1), 1-12.
- Tomlinson, M. (2008). 'The degree is not enough': students' perceptions of the role of higher education credentials for graduate work and employability. *British journal of sociology of education, 29*(1), 49-61.
- Tsai, C. T., Hsu, H., & Hsu, Y. C. (2017). Tourism and hospitality college students' career anxiety: Scale development and validation. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education, 29*(4), 158-165.
- Unguren, E., & Huseyinli, T. (2020). The moderating effect of student club membership on the relationship between career intention in the tourism sector and post-graduate employability anxiety. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education, 27*, 100265.
- Union of Turkish Tourist Guides (2021). *Nasil rehber olunur?* Retrieved April 17, 2021, from <http://www.tureb.org.tr/tr/Page/Detail/75>
- Verger, P., Combes, J. B., Kovess-Masfety, V., Choquet, M., Guagliardo, V., Rouillon, F., & Peretti-Wattel, P. (2009). Psychological distress in first year university students: socioeconomic and academic stressors, mastery and social support in young men and women. *Social psychiatry and psychiatric epidemiology, 44*(8), 643-650.
- Vidon, E. S., & Rickly, J. M. (2018). Alienation and anxiety in tourism motivation. *Annals of Tourism Research, 69*, 65-75.
- Vignoli, E. (2015). Career indecision and career exploration among older French adolescents: The specific role of general trait anxiety and future school and career anxiety. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 89*, 182-191.
- Voorhees, C. M., Brady, M. K., Calantone, R., & Ramirez, E. (2016). Discriminant validity testing in marketing: an analysis, causes for concern, and proposed remedies. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 44*(1), 119-134.

- Yeh, S. S. (2020). Tourism recovery strategy against COVID-19 pandemic. *Tourism Recreation Research*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2020.1805933>
- Yükseköğretim Kurumu (2021), 2019-2020 Öğretim Yılı Yükseköğretim İstatistikleri, Retrieved April 17, 2021, from <https://istatistik.yok.gov.tr/>
- Zhou, X., Zhu, H., Zhang, B., & Cai, T. (2013). Perceived social support as moderator of perfectionism, depression, and anxiety in college students. *Social Behavior and Personality: an international journal*, 41(7), 1141-1152.
- Zimet, G.D., Dahlem, N.W., Zimet, S.G. & Farley, G.K. (1988). The multidimensional scale of perceived social support. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 52, 30-41.





## A Study on the Use of Tourism as a Soft Power Instrument in International Relations\*

Bahadır İnanç Özkan<sup>1</sup> , Yasin Boylu<sup>2</sup> 

### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of the political crisis between the Russian Federation and Turkey in 2015 on the tourism sector in the latter. The political crisis was sparked by shooting down of a Russian military aircraft by the Turkish warplanes on the Turkish – Syrian border in November 2015. During that period, the Russian Federation implemented a number of decisions, one of which was a travel ban to Turkey, and this negatively impacted the Turkish tourism sector, particularly in Antalya. The research involved obtaining information on how tourism was used as a soft power instrument by the Russian Federation as a deterrent. A qualitative method was used, as well as phenomenology. The data were collected through a semi-structured survey that included five themes about which the selected tourism partners in Turkey were interviewed. For the research, with its subcategories of tourists and tour operators, tourism is regarded as a soft power instrument. The findings show that political crises have negative reflections on the tourism sector. This paper may assist researchers who interested in studying tourism within international relations.

### Keywords

Tourism, Tourist, International relations, Foreign Policy, Soft power

\* This article is based on a PhD thesis.

1 **Correspondence to:** Bahadır İnanç Özkan (Dr.), Ankara, Turkey. E-mail: inancozkan@gmail.com ORCID: 0000-0002-7665-6765

2 Yasin Boylu (Prof. Dr.), Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University, School of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic. E-mail: yasinboylu@gmail.com ORCID: 0000-0002-4226-232X

**To cite this article:** Ozkan, B. I., & Boylu, Y. (2021). A Study on the Use of Tourism as a Soft Power Instrument in International Relations. *Journal of Tourismology*, 7(1), 73-99. <https://doi.org/10.26650/jot.2021.7.1.0004>



## Introduction

While much is known about the relationship between tourism and international affairs, the literature on linking tourism with international relations is still limited. Against this background, the central question that motivates this article is: how were tourism and tourists used by the Russian Federation as a soft power instrument against Turkey during the crisis period in 2015 and 2016? The link between tourism and international relations is established through international travel. The attractiveness of destinations, curiosity, increased national income, and mutual visa agreements are some of the factors responsible for the increase in international travel. On the other hand, countries may take restrictive or prohibitive decisions affecting travel for political reasons (Prezident Rossii, 2015).

One of these bans occurred due to the political crisis between the Russian Federation and Turkey in 2015 (BBC, 2016). Due to the travel ban imposed on Turkey by the Russian Federation, tourism shareholders, accommodation businesses and travel agencies, and tourism employees serving the Russian market in Turkey were negatively affected. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study regarding tourism reflections of the Russian Federation and Turkey.

Although the crisis between the two countries in 2015 had a political dimension, the damage caused by the crisis should not be interpreted only using numerical data. In a crisis, it is assumed that tourism can be a political tool in international relations, and the effects may be felt in employment, investment, and transportation in the tourism sector. Furthermore, situations such as countries' deteriorating relations in international relations and situations leading to a showdown can plunge businesses into a crisis they were never expecting (Çakmak, 2019, p. 14).

Among the causes of tourism crises, economic, political, socio-cultural, technological, and environmental factors can be listed (Henderson, 2007, p. 3). Reasons such as stagnation or recession in the economy and fluctuations in exchange rates may lead to a tourism crisis. Depending on the nature of the change occurring within the economy, the demand will recover or worsen in the resource markets while simultaneously making the markets more or less attractive in terms of targets, prices, and products (Davidson & Cope, 2003, p. 14).

In politics, tourism crises are a dimension of political crises, and tourism itself is a matter of political debate and contention (Cheong & Miller, 2000). Government structures and processes shape tourism movements and the sector's functioning at home and abroad at the national and international levels. Good relations between countries facilitate the flow of tourists. The opposite is also true, and international tensions tend to reduce or control the flow of tourists. (Henderson, 2007, p. 34).



The present study explores the ways in which tourism is used when there is a political crisis between countries. To put it in simple terms, when the crisis arose between the Russian Federation and Turkey in November 2015, everyone thought that it was a political one and it would soon be over. However, when this political crisis reached its climax, tourism was recognized as among the sectors negatively affected due to the number of foreign tourists coming to Turkey from the Russian Federation. As stated above, travels to Turkey were banned by the Russian Federation and it was not taken into account that tourism may be used as a soft power instrument under the circumstances. However, little is known about the relationship between soft power and tourism, and it is not clear what factors are used as a soft power instrument in terms of tourism during a crisis. Thus, there are two primary aims of this study: 1. To examine the relationship between soft power and tourism 2. To ascertain which tourism actors are used to exert soft power. A qualitative method was adopted, and the study was conducted in the form of a semi-structured survey with data being gathered via phone conversation, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with Turkish tourism partners. The findings should make an important contribution to the field of tourism. This study is unable to encompass all Turkish and Russian tourism partners. The remaining part of the paper proceeds as follows: a) Soft Power and Tourism, b) Literature review, c) Methodology, d) Results, and e) Discussions. Six factors related to tourism as a soft power instrument were established.

### **Soft Power and Tourism**

The concept of soft power first introduced by J.S. Nye to the literature in 1989 expresses an element's ability to shape other elements' preferences. Soft power is based not only on the ability to persuade and mobilize people but also to attract the other party. Soft power employs the charm created by shared values and the correctness and responsibility of contributing to these values to ensure cooperation between actors. The soft power of a country is based on the following three sources: culture (where it attracts others), political values (demonstrating behaviour at home and abroad in line with the political values possessed), and foreign policies (other actors perceiving these policies as legitimate), and the elements of soft power are as follows: media, nongovernmental organizations, and higher education institutions (Nye, 2017, p. 24-32).

The effects of tourism on soft power can be divided into two parts in terms of host and sending parties. One of the priority tasks that decision-makers in the tourism sector should execute is to create an attractive image of the country as a travel destination for the global tourism market. Moreover, a well-designed image becomes a powerful trump card to counteract negative impressions about the destination. Thus, the country will have the opportunity to tell its story to the whole world. Secondly,

based on Nye's theory, both foreign policy and cultural consumption are soft power sources. Tourism policies can be used in foreign policy in a particular country or worldwide by influencing the target audience's ideas and transferring political values, cultural values, beliefs, and agendas. For the sending party, tourism may encourage countries to pursue good diplomatic relations and follow some criteria determined by the countries that receive tourists (Yang, 2019, p. 6-8).

There are at least four interlinked ways of looking at tourism and soft power. First, tourists will provide a better understanding of the destination leading to greater empathy. Second, tourism authorities are tasked with presenting an attractive image of their country to the world. Third, the Olympics and worldwide expos are also crucial in building geopolitical impact. These attract the tourists, exhibit the destination, and communicate with their capacities. Fourth, tourists traveling abroad convey their country's messages (Ooi, 2016, p. 860).

Furthermore, tourism as a soft power tool can be used in foreign aid activities. After the earthquake and tsunami in the Indian Ocean in 2004, former Chinese minister Jiabao Wen attended the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting held with a special agenda, and at the end of the meeting, when circumstances returned to normal, the Chinese government promised to encourage Chinese tourists to travel to the countries affected by the disaster. A similar situation can be seen in the disaster experienced by Japan on 11 March 2011 (Xu et al, 2018).

International tourism cooperation agreements can be cited as an example of using tourism to exert soft power. With these agreements, countries provide each other with their experiences in tourism, their technologies, education, infrastructure opportunities and their development, the creation of a touristic product, new investment opportunities, and technical expert support for stakeholders in the tourism sector (Aydemir & Bal, 2018).

### **The Literature Review**

Based on the academic studies on the relationship between tourism and soft power, it has been determined that the use of tourists as a soft power instrument in tourism-developed regions such as the city of Tai'an in Shandong Province, China is closely related to local development, so personal perspectives to support the use of tourists in this way have been revealed (Han et al., 2012). In a study (Tse, 2013) indicating that China uses outbound tourists to exert soft power in foreign policy and that this practice constitutes an integral whole with Chinese politics (Tse, 2013), it is stated that the number of tourists to be sent to countries is determined depending on the relations between those countries and China within the context of the Chinese foreign policy. Moreover, examination of the effect of politics on tourism in China reveals that

outbound tourists can be used to exert soft power in solving diplomatic problems. In a study examining the effect of Turkish TV series sold abroad on the number of tourists coming to Turkey, it was determined that these TV series had a positive impact on the number of tourists coming to the country by using secondary data on tourism. A successful film or TV series may create a positive image of a location, and films such as *Troy*, *Brave Heart*, etc. affected the destinations positively in terms of tourist flow (Anaz & Özcan, 2016). Cankurtaran and Cetin (2016) examined the impact of political principles and foreign policy of Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party, JDP) on the number of foreign tourists from the Middle East to Turkey. That study asserted that the conservative identity and foreign policy of JDP caused a considerable increase of foreign tourists from the Middle East. The authors suggested Muslim friendly products and services should be incorporated into tourism strategies if Turkey wants to its market in the Middle East. In a study conducted on the Chinese government's use of outbound tourists for enhancing its relations with African countries (Chen & Duggan, 2016), the overlooked political effects of outbound tourists were examined. Policy documents and campaign materials were analyzed methodologically, and two people were interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire. It was discovered that not all African countries were successful in attracting Chinese tourists. Another study is about Wuzhen, historic town which has become the most popular tourist destination in China in recent years. It explores how effective Wuzhen reflects the soft power of China via focusing on English-speaking countries (Mao, 2017). Khodadi (2018) analyzed the relationship between foreign policy and tourism through a nuclear agreement with Iran. It was stated that speeches of the U.S. president about the withdrawal from nuclear agreement with Iran negatively affected tourism investments in Iran. Factor and structural analysis methods as well as content analysis were used in an examining soft power in the Russian tourism sector. According to the study's results, it was discovered that the use of soft power in the tourism sector positively affected tourists' flow both on a national and regional basis (Bunakov et al., 2018). In another study based on the concept of soft power, it was analysed how China used its citizens and to whom it sent as tourists as a soft power tool and what successes were achieved. That study concluded that tourism-based soft power builds government policies that cover destination status, cultural activities, interactions between tourists and hosts, tourism as foreign aid, and tourism cooperation (Xu et al., 2018). Hussin (2018) studied the relationship between soft power and tourism in terms of 5 interrelated approaches proposed by Ooi, as a case study, and whether Malaysia attained the goals by using them. That study found that 5 interrelated approaches proposed by Ooi have sufficient criteria to analyze a country's tourism policy. In another study, the strategy of promoting Japanese culture, which was launched by Japan in 2012 called "Cool Japan." was adopted as a soft power approach. It was suggested that the relationship between anime, anime culture,

and travelling to Japan should be based on conceptual framework as a soft power, and the effect of anime on travel motivation has been investigated. It was found that anime fans can create tourism potential and they have implications for destination marketing (Agyeiwaah et al, 2018) Research examining effects of the relationship between soft power and cultural tourism on Lithuanian tourism, using a comparative statistical method and interview technique to determine the role tourism plays on soft power, found that cultural tourism can be a channel of soft power and tourism has an indirect effect on soft power (Jureniene & Jurene, 2019). Seyfi and Hall (2020) investigated the relationship between international sanctions and tourism. They found that international sanctions seriously affected the tourism sector, accommodation facilities, travel agencies, and the image of destinations, and that these sanctions also negatively affected financial investments and supply chain.

### **Methodology**

This study aimed to determine the damages caused to tourism by the crisis between the two countries in 2015, to assess tourists' role in putting pressure on a country, and to reveal why alternative markets could not be found during the crisis in question. In line with the study's aim, a qualitative research technique, phenomenology, was used (Kocabiyik, 2016).

The research data were obtained from interviews with tourism partners in Turkey using a semi-structured interview form consisting of five themes. In determining the research themes, the effect of income and investment, i.e. tourism's monetary economic effects, and the employment effect, one of the real economic impacts of tourism (Ünlüönen et al., 2009), were considered. In determining the crisis management theme, macro-environmental factors, which are among the factors that businesses producing touristic goods and services should consider in their tourism marketing activities, were also considered (Kozak, 2014). Maximum variation sampling, a purposeful sampling method, was used to form the study group.

The research universe comprised of institutions, organizations, and individuals that can be considered the tourism sector partners in line with the study's purpose, and the study group consisted of various public and private sector stakeholders in the tourism sector, determined by the maximum variation sampling method. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism and universities represented the public stakeholders in the study group. The private sector stakeholders included in the research were the Mediterranean Tourist Hoteliers Association (AKTOB), the Turkey Travel Agencies Association (TURSAB), the Turkey Travel Agencies Association's Regional Representative Councils, the Association of South Aegean Hoteliers (GETOB), the Alanya Representation of the International Skål Federation, Tourism Media

Organizations, the Turkey Hoteliers Federation (TUROFED), the Tourist Guides Association (TUREB), the Antalya Chamber of Guides (ARO), the Mugla Chamber of Guides (MUTRO), a private company that conducts data research in the field of tourism, and an international tour operator operating in the Mediterranean region. Russia is the leading country in the Turkish tourism market (TurkStat, 2020). Since a crisis with a market leader country affects destinations more, the crisis was discussed from the perspective of Turkey.

The interviews with the participants were conducted by telephone due to the pandemic process. The data used in the study were collected between 1 June and 14 July 2020. During the interview, it was observed that the participants did not digress from the subject with their answers, and no additions were made to questions. On the other hand, the answers given by participants to the questions were sorted during the analysis of data. After this sorting process, the findings were defined and categorized, and citations were made. In order to make a descriptive analysis, sound recordings were listened four times during the transcription process, and the deciphered texts were read three times as a whole. A computer-based qualitative data analysis program was not used. After the data was documented, sub-categories were generated under each theme, and sub-categories were created below these categories. A descriptive code was given to each participant.

**Table 1**  
*Information About the Study Group*

Participant	Participant Code	Number of Participants
Ministry of Culture and Tourism	MCT	1
SKAL, AKTOB, GETOB, TURSAB, TURSAB RO, TUREB, ARO, MUTRO	TPA	15
Media Institutions	MI	3
University	U	2
Private company	PC	2
Total		23

TPA: Tourism Professional Associations

When the number of tourists coming to Turkey from the Russian Federation up to 2016, when the ban was imposed, is examined, it was seen that the highest figure recorded was 4,479,049 people in 2014. This figure was 3,649,003 in 2015 and 866,256 in 2016. With the improvement in relations between the two countries, positive momentum occurred, and there were 7,017,657 tourists in 2019 (Turkstat, 2020).

On a national basis, tourism revenues followed an upward trend and reached their highest level in 2014 of 34.3 billion USD. Tourism revenue, which was 31.5 billion USD in 2015, was 22.1 billion USD in 2016 when the travel ban imposed by the

Russian Federation came into effect. With the improvement in bilateral relations, Turkey’s tourism income, the highest income of the pre-crisis period, reached 34.5 billion USD in 2019 (Turkstat, 2020).

Although there was no decline in the total number of those employed in Turkey’s accommodation and food service activities due to the 2015 tourism crisis, it is considered that there may have been regional repercussions since Russian tourists prefer the Mediterranean region. Accordingly, instead of Turkish Statistics Institute (Turkstat) statistics showing accommodation and food service activity in Turkey, the interviewees were asked about this effect (Turkstat, 2020).

### Results

The first theme covered by the research was employment. Within this theme, the answer to the following research question was asked:

*Q1: What were the effects of the decrease in the number of tourists coming from Russia to Turkey in terms of employment during the period in question?*

Participants’ responses to this question emerged in two categories.

**Table 2**  
*The Effect of Using Tourism as Soft Power on Employment in the Tourism Sector*

Theme	Category	Sub-Category
Employment	Direct Effect	The decrease in employment in the accommodation sector, Decrease in jobs in the travel sector, Effects on seasonal employees.
	Indirect Effect	Employment decrease in food and beverage businesses, Gift sellers, Jewelry shops, etc.

#### Direct effet

*U1 - Male, 67, Academician, Sector Representative*

*It definitely affected employment negatively since tourism is a labour-intensive sector. We have three types of staff in holiday hotels: permanent staff for 12 months, seasonal staff, and eight-month staff. We also have part-time employees during the peak periods of the season. Of course, you keep the 12-month staff on even when you are closed, like security, management, or talented cooks. When you start to open up the facility, you gradually attract other staff; in this case, the facilities did not have to seek part-time employees, which negatively affected employment.*

## Indirect effect

*TPA1 - Male, 50, Business Owner*

*With the 2016 crisis, there was a sharp decrease in the number of tourists coming from Russia. Many hotels and businesses are operating only in the Russian market. Many people work in places such as jewelry shops, leather, and souvenirs shops in addition to these hotels. The decrease in the number greatly affected the sector and the employees in the places I mentioned earlier. Some people could not find a job.*

The second theme within the scope of this research was investment. Firstly, the answer to the following research question was sought regarding investment:

**Q2:** *What happened to tourism investments originating from Russia in said period?*

Participants' answers to this question emerged in three categories.

**Table 3**

*The Impact of Using Tourism as Soft Power on Russia Originated Tourism Investments in Turkey*

Theme	Category	Sub-Category
Investment	Accommodation Facility Investments	The decrease in hotel investments
	Travel Agency Investments	The decrease in Travel Agency investments
	Real Estate Investments	The decrease in housing purchases

## Impact on Accommodation Facility Investments:

*MI2 - Male, 67, Tourism Media Member*

*All of the companies that work with Russia and even dominate the Russian market are Turkish. In the Russian market, the entire Russian travel industry is in the hands of the Turks. If we look at it like this, it can be assumed that the Russians have investments in Turkey, but those who make those investments are Turks, not Russians. Ninety percent of the tourists coming to Turkey are also brought to Turkey by these Turkish companies. So, the Russians have no investment in terms of tourism in Turkey. However, these tour operators of Turkish origin that we have mentioned have serious investments in Turkey; they have investments in the network of airlines, hotels, travel agencies, and tour operators. It is crucial to evaluate the situation by looking at that fine point. When you consider that Turkish companies are already dominant in the market, they have serious investments in Turkey. These investments experienced difficulties after the downing of the Russian plane.*

## **The Impact on Travel Agency Investments**

*U2 - Male, 47, Academic*

*... Some agreements were made. The Russians had partnerships in Turkey, particularly regarding agency issues, and there were some problems in that regard... They had purchases through the agency; they stopped for a certain period. However, as soon as the incident was resolved, the investments continued where they had left off.*

## **Effect on Real Estate Investments:**

*TPA4 - Male, 62, Business Owner*

*... Mostly our southern coasts were like the summer resorts in Russia. In parallel with this, housing purchases created direct demand, but there was an immediate slowdown with the plane crisis. Some investors even sold their investments and returned to their countries.*

The third theme within the scope of the research was income. Two questions were asked on this theme.

**Q3:** *How did the decreases in businesses' incomes with the start of reservation cancellations originating from Russia affect the businesses' primary and secondary fields of activity?*

Participants' responses to this question fell into three different categories.



**Table 4**

*The Effect of Using Tourism to exert Soft Power on the Loss in Income Drops of Tourism Businesses in Primary and Secondary Fields of Activity*

Theme	Category	Sub-Category
Income	Primary activity	Failure to pay loans, loss of personnel, difficulty in repayments, downsizing, postponement of renovation, transportation revenues, suppliers, secondary businesses (restaurant rental), tour services
	Secondary activity	The decrease in car rental income
	Multiplier Effect	The decline in the income of carpet shops; greenhouse producers; meat combines, furnishings; glassware, and bedding companies; agriculture; sellers of construction materials such as glass, tiles, paint, etc.; egg producers

### **Effects of Income Decline in Primary Fields of Activity:**

*TPA2 - Male, 58, Business Owner*

*It affected tourism very negatively. Compared with the rest of the world, tourism in Turkey has reached its present state via a much faster growth trend. It has always been with investments; it has been with excessive growth. This growth does not necessarily happen through financial resources. Therefore, this direct income loss also disrupted people's companies' financial structures, upsetting the debt-receivable balance. At that time, there were some companies that had severe difficulties with the banks, that could or could not defer loan installments, and went bankrupt.*

### **Effects of Income Decline on Secondary Fields of Activity:**

*TPA12- Male, 55, Professional Tourist Guide*

*Of course, secondary fields of activity are also seriously interrupted, such as car rental. Think of a Russian agency; the first thing it does is to cancel its rented cars immediately.*

### **Multiplier Effect:**

*M11 - Male, 57, Media Member*

*... The tourism crisis affects 54 sectors. Glass producers, food producers, and egg producers are in this category. Therefore, a broad population is adversely affected. When we look at it, it was the tourism professionals who took the most damage. However, besides this, it could be food, furnishings, chairs, glassware, and indirectly selling goods to tourism and hotels. Because some products that can be broken in hotels should be replaced within a certain period, their income is also affected.*

The fourth theme within the scope of the research was crisis management. Within the crisis management theme, categories were created according to the answers received from the participants.

**Q4:** *Was the Tourism Action Plan announced during that period satisfactory?*

Although most participants responded negatively to this question, they also made a general evaluation of the action plan in question and presented alternatives. According to the results obtained from these evaluations, it was concluded that the participants' responses fit within two categories.

**Table 5**  
*Evaluation of Tourism Action Plan by Tourism Stakeholders*

Theme	Category	Sub-Category
Evaluation of the tourism action plan	Compensation for crisis-related losses	Failure to increase the number of tourists, not being able to compensate for the loss of income, inability to reverse the decrease in investments, inability to attract tourists from alternative markets, unfair distribution of incentives, unfair use of Eximbank loans
	Action plan alternatives	A political solution, ability to take a position against the crisis, diplomatic solution, reduction of regional dependence on Russian tourists, better crisis management of the ministry and the state, package of measures to solve the problem

**Compensation for crisis-related losses:**

*TPA1 - Male, 71, Former President of TURSAB*

*There are still suspicions that the implementation was done in a way that favoured some selected businesses. For instance, the written motion asking which companies received how much support was not answered on the grounds of it being a “trade secret,” and the issue was also excluded from the Turkish Grand National Assembly audit. An incentive is a form of subsidy. It was applied via an anti-competitive and preferential approach. Once diplomatic relations with Russia improved, the incentives had little to no effect on this country’s resuming arrivals.*

**Action plan alternatives:**

*PCI- Male, 34, Operations Manager*

*...In Turkish-Russian relations, the bilateral ties between higher levels are more important in this regard, not over action plans or through various processes, but due to the two countries’ culture. If we had experienced the same situation with Germany, this action plan would have been taken seriously. There is a huge difference between persuading the German state to lift a travel warning to Turkey and convincing the Russian government. The course of bilateral relations is warmer. In Europe, it is moving a little more systematically. They are a bit more prescriptive, a little more disciplined. However, as I mentioned before, I can say that the most important thing is the foreign affairs between the two countries, whether at the level of the ministry of tourism, or directly at the presidency or prime ministry level, which are also more influential than that action plan.*

**Q5:** *Which markets could be alternatives to the Russian market in this crisis?*

The second question of the fourth theme, crisis management, was about markets that can be alternatives to the Russian market. The responses of the participants were divided into ten categories.

**Table 6**  
*Evaluation of Markets That May Be Alternative to the Russian Market by Tourism Stakeholders*

Theme	Category	Sub-Category
Evaluation of markets that can be alternative to the Russian market	Country Population	India, China
	Geographical Distance	America, India, China, Far East, South America
	Geographical proximity	Iran, Arab World, Israel, Balkans, Western Europe
	Domestic Tourism	Istanbul tourism, Black Sea tourism, Coastal tourism
	The similarity of Consumer Behaviour	Scandinavian market
	Cultural Relations	Balkans
	Market Size	India, China, Korea, Japan, Europe, Far East, Saudi Arabia
	Increasing Market Share	Europe, Russia, former iron curtain countries that are now the EU Member States
	Traveling Habits	Italy, France, America, China
	Alternative Tourism Types	High income Alternative Tourism Types

**Country Population:**

*TPA1 - Male, 50, Business Owner*

*...When there are problems with the Russian market, you cannot replace it with any other market. Even at that time, the Chinese market or a country with a large population such as India emerged as possible alternatives. Nevertheless, they could not be an alternatives since neither China nor India has the same characteristics.*

**Geographical Distance:**

*TPA10 - Female, 48, Business Owner*

*Take Turkey, put a compass on a map, and draw a circle for 4.5 hours of flight time. You can achieve mass tourism with the countries that fall within this circle. India or China are, of course, big markets. They involve serious numbers. The market number for the two is 1 billion. The other way to get the mass tourism is to fly full charter. It is when tour operators step in and fly them in. You usually do mass tourism*

*with the countries that are 4.5 hours away. It is not an easy thing to compensate for the Russian market with only one other country.*

### **Geographical proximity:**

*TPA14 - Male, 45, Professional Tourist Guide*

*There have been urgent efforts towards solving this issue. There has been a shift towards Western Europe and the Balkans. After that, we saw a shift towards the Arab market, countries such as the UAE and Qatar. They contributed a little; Iran also contributed a little.*

### **Domestic Tourism:**

*TPA3 - Male, 64, Business Owner*

*Perhaps the 2015 crisis lesson taught Turkey that tourism should not be linked only to mass tourism. Some progress has been made since then, but Turkey could not sustain it. If you look at it carefully, Istanbul and Black Sea tourism have become more important.*

### **Consumer Behaviour Similarity:**

*PC2, Male, 49, Company Owner*

*Now that one market can be replaced by another, it means that consumer behaviour is parallel for the hotelier, so when you think of the Scandinavian market, you can say Norwegian, if not Swedish and Finnish, because the behaviour patterns are more or less the same.*

### **Cultural Relations:**

*MI2 - Male, 67, Media Member*

*Unfortunately, Turkey has a Balkan market that is not discussed much; we have cultural relations and close ties with them. Thus, there is potential in the Balkan market in addition to the existing markets. However, it cannot be an alternative to fill the gap arising from Russia.*

### **Market Size:**

*TPA4 - Male, 62, Business Owner*

*At that time, there was a massive demand from the Middle East market, and we received feedback. However, even though there were periodic improvements in the markets of Korea, China, and Japan, we could not achieve the numbers we wanted.*

### **Increasing Market Share:**

*TPA11 - Male, 51, Professional Tourist Guide*

*The closest place to you is Europe. You have many tourists from Europe, including Germany with 5 million and the UK with 2.5 million. You have to add to that number the number of Russians that did not arrive, so that you can compensate for it.*

### **Traveling Habits:**

*TPA2 - Male, 58, Business Owner*

*..Where could there be more? People from Italy in Central Europe do not come here. These are regions where the populations travel a lot. France is the same. The activity is high, income level is high, but they come to Turkey very little, maybe years ago. However, we would be in a stronger position now if we had targeted them.*

### **Alternative Tourism Types:**

*TPA2 - Male, 58, Business Owner*

*.. We should have put effort into such high-income alternative tourism rather than the Middle East side. I think we could both change this whole thing internally and increase our average prices.*

**Q6:** *Has the industry achieved satisfactory results for 2016 and the years following the end of the crisis?*

This is the third question involving the fourth theme, crisis management. According to the results obtained from the participants' answers to this question, two subcategories were determined.

**Table 7***Evaluation of the Results Achieved by the Sector since the End of the Crisis by Tourism Stakeholders*

Theme	Category	Sub-Category
Evaluation of the results achieved by the sector since the end of the crisis	Economic Effect	Compensation of active income, increase in market share (increase in the number of tourists), a continuation of investments, company growth (Professionalization), the establishment of partnerships, prevention of bankruptcies, increase in bed supply, increase in the length of stay, digitalization of the market, prevention of income loss
	Social Effect	Destination adoption

**Economic Effect:***TPA3 - Male, 64, Company Owner*

*Of course, the situation could not improve in a year. Indeed, we only had good days before the crisis in 2019. While everyone wondered if they could organize the renovations they had postponed during the Russian crisis, they also believed that they should not open up too much and not take on loans due to the lessons they learned from this crisis.*

**Social Effect:***TPA5 - Male, 63, General Coordinator*

*Look at the social side of this, not only economically since Russia is a cold country. The streets are empty there because of the cold. However, they consider Antalya, the Aegean region, and the Mediterranean region as somewhere to find happiness. They fulfill these desires very easily in Turkey.*

**Q7:** *How did the crisis affect businesses? (Some hotels never opened, some reduced business volume, some turned to the domestic market)*

This is the fourth question involving the fourth theme, crisis management. Based on the results obtained from the participants who answered this question, three different categories were determined.

**Table 8**

*Assessment of the Effect of the Crisis on Businesses by Tourism Stakeholders*

Theme	Category	Sub-Category
Evaluation of the reflection of the crisis on businesses	Economic Effect	Business closure, business failure of businesses to open, businesses' half-capacity operation, failure of businesses to pay off bank loans, bankruptcy, sequestration, stopping of investments, price reduction, reduction in business volume
	Employment Effect	Unemployment, sector change, delay in recruitment, unpaid leave
	Market Effect	Alternative market, the domestic market

**Economic Effect:**

*TPA6 - Male, 58, Business Owner*

*.... If 70% of the tourists come from the Russian market and when that market is closed down, our profit as a sector is zero; it does not even cover costs. Thus, many of them closed their businesses; some could not open them; some worked at half capacity.*

**Employment Effect:**

*MI2 - Male, 67, Media Member*

*The industry is already seasonal, with employees working in regular periods for 3-4 months. During the rest of the year, they are unemployed but are not considered so under the law. Since their contracts are suspended, they cannot receive unemployment benefits. Typically, an unemployed person can receive unemployment benefits if he or she applies. However, suspension is used in the tourism sector. According to this method, "I do not fire you; I suspend your employment contract until a certain date." Until that date, the employer does not pay wages, and the employee cannot receive unemployment benefits. In this regard, employees experienced severe difficulties. This resulted in two problems. First, employees gave up on the industry and started working elsewhere. They had already been experiencing unemployment problems due to this seasonality, but when this incident occurred, they started looking for a job in another sector. The sector lost its trained workforce, which is the basis of the success of Turkey in tourism.*



**Market Effect:**

*PCI- Male, 34, Operations Manager*

*Consider a bag shop, for example. Someone who runs a shop inside the hotel serving the Russian market asks the hotelier what they will do because he knows that no Russian tourists will come. When the hotelier responds that they will continue with domestic tourists, if the shopkeeper was planning to buy goods worth, say, 100-200 thousand TL, for the winter; for example, he gives up on that idea and instead starts to buy goods that Turkish tourists are likely want to buy, such as inflatable sea mattresses.*

The fifth theme of the research subject was Tourism and Politics. Categories were created according to the participants’ answers in response to the questions asked within this theme. Moreover, some questions in this theme were combined and analyzed by categorizing them according to their answers.

**Q8:** *Is it possible to see tourism as a part of international relations?*

Participants addressed this question in two ways. The first of these is the effect of foreign policy on tourism and the effect of foreign policy on cultural relations.

**Table 9**  
*Evaluation of Tourism as a Part of International Relations*

Theme	Category	Sub-Category
Evaluation of tourism as a part of international relations	Foreign policy’s impact on tourism	Aggressive foreign policy damages tourism, tourism reduces political tensions, and tourism helps break prejudices. Tourism contributes to world peace; political crises are reflected in tourism; tourism is used as a tool in diplomacy. The EU’s keeping its citizens within its borders ignores the benefits of politics and tourism, and the country that accepts tourists should have a soft style. Tourism affects international relations; political tensions hinder tourism investments. The aggressive foreign policy affects tourist demand, the use of tourism as an economic weapon and a means of pressure in foreign policy.
	Foreign policy’s impact on culture	Tourism enables cultural recognition, provides cultural proximity, intercultural reconciliation, and cultural interaction.

**Foreign Policy’s Impact on Tourism:**

*MI3 - Male, 42, Media Member*

*Just as an economy is a part of international relations, tourism is a much more significant part. You can also use the travel industry as an economic weapon and a tool of political pressure. There are many examples of this; travel alerts are issued frequently. It says in those warnings, “do not go unless it is necessary.” what does that mean? It says if you do not have a funeral or an emergency, do not go to this country as a tourist. However, there is a critical point there, that is, when a country officially says nonessential travel, that is, do not make non-compulsory trips, insurance companies do not provide you with travel insurance. As Europeans know this very well, they tend to avoid going to the countries for which there is a travel warning unless it is necessary.*

**Foreign Policy’s Impact on Culture:**

*MCTI - Male, 52, Consultant*

*...There is a saying that “Man is the enemy of what he does not know.” With the flow of tourists between countries, people’s capacity to learn and understand each other’s cultures increases and leads to positive thoughts.*

**Q9:** *Is tourism used as a pressure tool in international relations?*

From the answers given by the participants, it was concluded that they responded to this question in two categories.

**Table 10**

*Evaluation of the Use of Tourism as a Pressure Tool in International Relations by the Sector*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Sub-Category</b>
Evaluating the use of tourism as a pressure tool in international relations	Direct Effect	The adverse reaction in tourist behavior due to the use of hard style, economic, harsh foreign policy
	Indirect effect	Embargo, pressure tool, the transmission of international messages through tourism, tourism marketing and politics relationship, blackmail

**Direct Effect:**

*PC2 - Male, 49, Company Owner*

*They use it as a tool of pressure because your soft belly is tourism; the man looks at your balance of payments and decides accordingly. That is why, it is used as a tool of political pressure.*

**Indirect Effect:**

*MI2 - Male, 67, Media Member*

*... When we chat from time to time, the Germans say, “Isn’t tourism important for you? Isn’t Germany a critical market for you?” He is talking about NATO, Syria, about Libya, something purely political; but he’s speaking softly but carrying a big stick regarding tourism. As a matter of fact, Putin spoke frankly when the Russian plane was shot down. As far as I know, tourism is an important sector for Turkey and Russia plays a vital role in tourism, he said. What does this mean? Behave yourself, your industry depends on us, so tourism plays a crucial role in political relations. Even today, Turkey develops its relations with other countries through tourism.*

**Q10:** *Can tour operators and similar organizations play a constructive or destructive role in international relations?*

From the answers given by the participants, it was concluded that they responded to this question in two categories.

**Table 11**  
*Evaluation of the Constructive or Destructive Role of Tour Operators and Similar Organizations by Tourism Stakeholders*

Theme	Category	Sub-Category
Evaluating the constructive or destructive role of tour operators and similar organizations by tourism stakeholders	Constructive Role	Guiding, decision-maker, the nationality of the capital owner, promotional arguments, market demand, firm cost, commercial concerns, monetary power provided by government agencies
	Destructive Role	Publicity arguments, number of tourists it has, bankruptcy, monetary power provided by government agencies, travel warnings by governments

**Constructive Role:**

*MII - Male, 57, Media Member*

*They play a constructive role. The aim of the tour operator that sends tourists to Turkey, regardless of their origin, is to earn money. If he is making money from Turkey, he will not have a negative attitude towards Turkey. Indeed, we see that in recent years, western-based tour operators of Russian origin have encouraged tourists to go to Turkey. They do business and make money and so they do not shoot themselves in the foot.*

**Destructive Role**

*MI2 - Male, 67, Media Member*

*Politicians can use it as a tool, but the industry cannot do it on its own. It is not without reason that the sector has gained great importance. The tourism sector cannot itself affect the relations between countries positively or negatively, but the governments can by using tourism.*

**Q11:** *Do you think tour operators are used as an instrument of soft power in international relations?*

**Q12:** *What are your thoughts on the use of tourists as a soft power tool?*

The last questions within the fifth theme are given above. Since tour operators and tourists are identified as two elements involved in the soft power of tourism, these two questions were perceived as a single question. The answers were categorized according to the participants’ responses.

**Table 12**

*Evaluation of the Use of Tourists and Tour Operators as Soft Power by Tourism Sector Representatives*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Sub-Category</b>
Evaluating the use of tourists and tour operators as soft power	Tour Operators	Economic interests of states, lobbying activity in current and target markets, image studies in current and target markets, political interests
	Incoming Tourists	Satisfaction, word of mouth marketing, image, promotion, tourism ambassador, propaganda, advertising

**Tour Operators:**

*MI2 - Male, 67, Media Member*

*...From here, they, the tour operators themselves, have no chance to do such a thing. For instance, let’s take TUI; TUI is the pioneer of Europe’s tourism sector. It has no chance of doing anything to any country alone. However, the German government can use TUI to oppress Turkey or develop good relations with Turkey. Likewise, Turkey can also use the current tour operators in the countries they are going to, France, China, Singapore, and the tour operators actively working in these countries. So, the public can use them, but there is no chance of doing anything like that on their own. When the public sector uses it, it gets results that no industry can achieve.*

### **Incoming Tourists:**

*U2 - Male, 47, Academic*

*...I believe that tourists should be used to exert soft power since political problems between countries can always be solved or exacerbated. Tourists who have visited the country before and are familiar with it find a way to return despite the restrictions imposed by politicians. I think it is an exceptionally important form of soft power; it can also facilitate politics. Every satisfied tourist is a source of positive propaganda and of soft power for people who want to go to the country.*

### **Discussion**

According to the study results, one of the areas most affected by the crisis experienced with Russia was employment. The reflection of a specific decrease in the number of tourists coming from Russia had negative repercussions on employment in the tourism sector. The sector's employees turned to other sectors during the crisis, resulting in the loss of the qualified workforce. The Turkish tourism industry was unable to compensate for this loss.

Regarding investment, it was concluded that there was no tourism investment by Russian businesspeople in Turkey. It was surmised that most of Turkey's touristic assets consist of Turkish companies operating in Russia. What stands out in the field of investment is that, with the amendment made in the Russian Commercial Code after the crisis broke out, foreign capital enterprises operating in Russia must acquire Russian partners. This amendment aimed to exclude Turkish companies, which dominate the Russian market, from the country due to their inability to find partners, reduce their market shares in the country, make Russian companies dominant, or make the Turkish companies continue their activities with Russian status.

In terms of income, it was concluded from the numerical data that there was a decrease in Turkey's tourism revenues due to the absence of Russian tourists. Moreover, this situation negatively affected enterprises' revenues. Projects such as planned renovations could not be fulfilled. Simultaneously, the multiplier effect in tourism affected fifty-four sectors linked with tourism, and a decrease in income occurred. To recover from this situation, tourism enterprises and other sectors connected to it changed their markets. However, this situation caused price decreases in the new markets they entered. The main reason for this was the inability to recognize the market and consumer behaviour.

According to the crisis management theme, alternative markets could not be established immediately. It was discovered that the markets suggested as alternatives were not satisfactory for the sector. Concerning crisis management, the

tourism sector failed to receive the crisis signals that may have arisen and was not prepared for any crisis that may have occurred. Although there were efforts to contain the crisis, they were not successful. The tourism sector experienced difficulties in areas such as income and employment. This crisis also, however, brought benefits to the tourism industry. For instance, the Russian market became more professional and switched to the online reservations. Simultaneously, another positive development was change in focus towards the domestic market. As the crisis had a political character, it was solved by a meeting between two political leaders.

It was discerned that tourism and politics are two directly proportional phenomena. When states do not have vital interests, they should adopt a foreign policy with constructive language, and that this attitude will reflect positively on tourism. Furthermore, this situation reveals that tourism is an element of international relations.

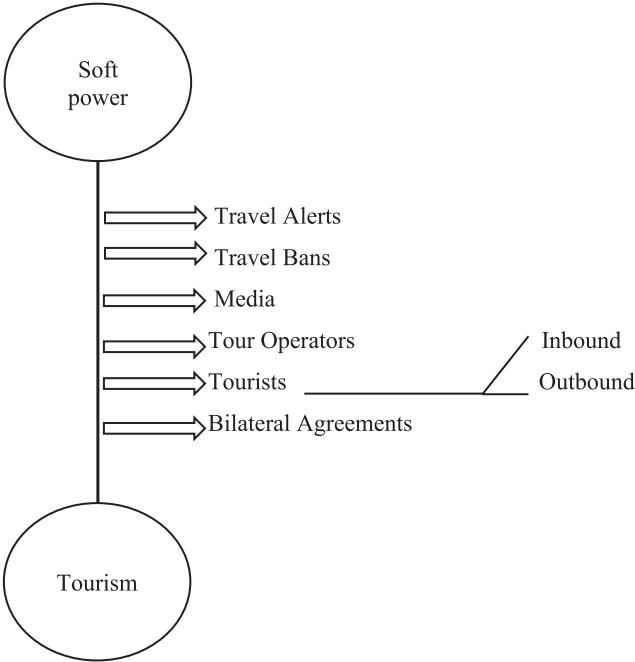


Figure 1. Tourism actors as soft power tools

The decisions taken in the international arena, such as those concerning economics, law, and politics, also affect tourism. This situation arises from the political relations of states with each other. It is recognized that the stronger party in this relationship is the country that sends tourists. Thus, the relationship of tourism with soft power is born. Tourism actors used to exerting soft power are shown in Figure 5.1. The countries sending tourists take decisions such as imposing a travel ban and issuing travel warnings concerning the destination country. When the travel ban was

imposed, it was realized that international flights, which naturally constitute tourism movements, were not possible. At the same time, when a travel warning was issued, it was seen that the companies that provide holiday insurance to tourists did not offer this service.

The use of the media to exert soft power in tourism is only possible by providing information about the country's tourism in the print media of the target markets, writing promotional articles, and making frequent visual media statements. These actions may assist in attracting more tourists to the country.

Stakeholders such as tour operators and travel agencies that make up the travel industry cannot exert pressure on a country by themselves. However, the political mechanism can use these touristic businesses as a means of pressure. The European Union can achieve specific political results by using tour operators. The European Union can direct tourism to any destination, thanks to the financial and flight support it provides to tour operators. One of the most obvious examples apart from such applications is the People's Republic of China. Due to good bilateral relations, the People's Republic of China has provided support to a country or countries on the opposite side by using tour operators.

Every tourist who comes to the country and leaves satisfied can be considered as a soft power factor. This tourist can promote the country he/she has visited in his/her own country by word of mouth. In times of crisis, especially when security risks to the country are high, using these tourists coming to the country, incoming tourists in order to make a positive contribution to the country's image is another example of tourists being used to exert a soft power. Such an application may be one example of what can be done in times of crisis.

The use of outbound tourists as soft power tools becomes more apparent, as explained above. This can be backed up with some statistical data. States have a decisive role regarding outbound tourists. They can easily direct these tourists to other destinations, but this does not apply to incoming tourists. This is because the countries they go to, namely the destinations, have no power on their home country. Accordingly, outbound tourists are considered a more influential factor in the use of tourists to apply soft power.

Finally, the relationship between tourism and soft power can be shown by interstate agreements. While there may be issues such as the sharing of experiences of tourism between the parties signing the agreement, a specific tourist flow between countries will be ensured by providing visa liberalization. For future research, more participants from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey, nongovernmental organisations that are related to the Russian Federation, and embassy employees of

the Russian Federation should be incorporated into the research to gain detailed data about such kind of crises.

---

**Peer-review:** Externally peer-reviewed.

**Conflict of Interest:** The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

**Grant Support:** The authors declared that this study has received no financial support.

**Authors Contributions:** Conception/Design of study: Y.B.; Data Acquisition: Y.B., B.I.O.; Data Analysis/Interpretation: B.I.O.; Drafting Manuscript: B.I.O.; Critical Revision of Manuscript: Y.B.; Final Approval and Accountability: Y.B., B.I.O.

---

## References

- Anaz, N. and Özcan, C. C. (2016). Geography of Turkish soap operas: Tourism, Soft Power, and Alternative Narratives. In *Alternative Tourism in Turkey*. Springer, Cham.
- Agyeiwaah, E., Suntikul, W. & Carmen, L. Y. S. (2018) “Cool Japan”: Anime, Soft Power, and Hong Kong Generation Y Travel to Japan, *Journal of Chine Tourism Research*, 15(2), 127-148
- Aydemir, B. & Bal, K. (2018). Bir Dış Politika Aracı Olarak Turizm: Gana Örneği, *Türk Turizm Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 2(1), 71-84.
- BBC News (2016). “Turkey faces big losses as Russia sanctions bite”. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-35209987> 09/11/2020
- Bunakov, O. A., Zaitseva, N. A., Larionova, A. A., Zhukov, V. A., Morozova, M. A., & Dmitrieva, N. V. (2018). The Use of the «Soft Power» Concept in the Modern Russian Tourism Industry. *Espacios*, 39(22), 9.
- Cankurtaran, B. S., & Cetin, G. (2016). Ideology, Foreign Policy and Tourism: The Case of Turkey – Middle East Relations. *International Journal of Turcologia*, 11(21), 45-64.
- Chen, Y. W., & Duggan, N. (2016). Soft Power and Tourism: A study of Chinese Outbound Tourism to Africa. *Journal of China and International Relations*, 4(1), 45-66.
- Cheong, S. M., & Miller, M. L. (2000). Power and Tourism: A Foucauldian Observation. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27(2), 371-390.
- Çakmak, T. F. (2019). *Turizm Endüstrisinde Bütüncül Yaklaşımla Kriz Yönetimi ve Örnek Olaylar*. Ankara: Detay Yayıncılık
- Davidson, R. and Cope, B.(2003). *Business Travel*. London: Pearson
- Han, S., Cui, C. M., & Zhang, X. P. (2012). The Study on the Tourist Soft Power Promoting the Economic Development of Taian City. In *Advanced Materials Research* (Vol. 524, pp. 3290-3293). Trans Tech Publications.
- Henderson, J. C. (2007). *Tourism Crises: Causes, Consequences and Management*. Burlington: Elsevier
- Hussin, H. (2018). Gastronomy, Tourism, and the Soft Power of Malaysia. *Sage Open*, 8(4), 1-11
- Jureniene, V. & Jurene, S. (2019). Impact of Tourism on National Soft Power. *Transformations in Business & Economics*, 18.
- Khodadadi, M. (2018). Donald Trump, U. S. Foreign Policy and Potential Impacts on Iran’s Tourism Industry: Post-Nuclear Deal. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 26, 28-30.
- Kocabıyık, O. O. (2016). Olgubilim ve Gömülü Kuram: Bazı Özellikler Açısından Karşılaştırma. *Trakya Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 6(1), 55-66.



- Kozak, N. (2014). *Turizm Pazarlaması*. Ankara: Detay Yayıncılık
- Mao, L. (2017). Between Tradition and Modernity: Wuzhen and China's Soft Power in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, *Journal of Literature and Art Studies*, 7(11), 1457-1477.
- Nye, J. S. (2017). *Yumuşak Güç: Dünya Siyasetinde Başarının Araçları* (Çev. R. İnan-Aydın). Ankara: BB101 Yayınları.
- Ooi, C. S. (2015). Soft power, Tourism. In J. Jafari & H. Xiao (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Tourism*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer.
- Prezident Rossii (2015). "Ukaz Prezidenta Rossiyskoy Federatsii Ot 28.11.2015 g. No 583". Retrieved from <http://kremlin.ru/acts/bank/40248> 04/11/2020
- Seyfi, S. and Hall, C. M. (2020). Sanctions and Tourism: Effects, Complexities and Research. *Tourism Geographies*, 22(4-5), 749-767.
- Tse, T. S. (2013). Chinese Outbound Tourism as a form of Diplomacy. *Tourism Planning & Development*, 10(2), 149-158.
- TurkStat (2020). "Turizm İstatistikleri". Retrieved from [https://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreTablo.do?alt\\_id=1072](https://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreTablo.do?alt_id=1072) 18.07.2020
- TurkStat (2020). "Turizm İstatistikleri". Retrieved from [http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreTablo.do?alt\\_id=1007](http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreTablo.do?alt_id=1007) 18.07.2020
- TurkStat (2020). "Turizm İstatistikleri". Retrieved from [http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreTablo.do?alt\\_id=1072](http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreTablo.do?alt_id=1072) 28.08.2020
- TurkStat (2020). "Turizm İstatistikleri". Retrieved from [http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreTablo.do?alt\\_id=1072](http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreTablo.do?alt_id=1072) 28.08.2020
- Ünlüöner, K., Tayfun, A., & Kılıçlar, A. (2009). *Turizm Ekonomisi*. Ankara: Nobel Yayıncılık.
- Xu, H., Wang, K., & Song, Y. M. (2018). Chinese Outbound Tourism and Soft Power. *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events*, 12(1), 34-49.
- Yang, J. (2019). *Analysing the Effects of International Tourism on Soft Power*





## The Other's Wave: Ethnographic Insights on Three "Tsunamis of Tourism" in Barcelona

Marco Romagnoli<sup>1</sup> 

### Abstract

Before the outbreak of COVID-19, the case of Barcelona was an emblematic example of how a city had turned into an iconic tourism destination in a few decades thanks to smart, yet incautious, tourism development policies based on the most attractive features the city is endowed with. The paper is a critical reflection analyzing the major complications, called "tsunamis", the city of Barcelona has faced in recent years: political instability, terrorism and tourismophobia. The paper aims at 1) retracing the causes and motivations but also community reactions and sociocultural consequences to the three tsunamis, and 2) trying to learn lessons from the Barcelonan case study proposing solutions to the tourismophobia phenomenon. The results stem from an ethnographic fieldwork undertaken during the IPAC Summer School in 2018, whose aim was to understand the paradox of international tourism, at once bringing economic benefits but creating sociocultural disequilibria. The analysis considers written sources and the participant observation during the ethnographic fieldworks in Barcelona.

### Keywords

Tourismophobia, Tsunamis of tourism, Barcelomania, Mass tourism, Political instability, Terrorism

**1 Correspondence to:** Marco Romagnoli (PhD Researcher), Ethnology and Heritage, Université Laval, Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, Department of Historical Sciences, IPAC and CÉLAT member, Vanier Scholar, Québec, Canada.  
E-mail: marco.romagnoli.1@ulaval.ca ORCID: 0000-0001-9809-8875

**To cite this article:** Romagnoli, M. (2021). The Other's Wave: Ethnographic Insights on Three "Tsunamis of Tourism" in Barcelona. *Journal of Tourismology*, 7(1), 101-121. <https://doi.org/10.26650/jot.2021.7.1.0005>



## Introduction

*La única calle en la tierra que desearía que no terminara nunca* (The only street in the world that I wish it would never end). This way the Andalusian poet Federico García Lorca (1898-1936) described the Barcelonan famous promenade, La Rambla: the essence of the city of Barcelona in 1.2 kilometers. According to the poet, La Rambla was a symbol, a meeting point and a place of dialogue. But right before COVID-19 outbreak, the *passeig* was an entanglement of tourists and, instead of being the favorite space for poets or artists, symbolized the conversion of the city of Barcelona into a mass tourism icon or, better, into a touristic thematic park.

The present work is part of a reflection begun at the 2018 International Summer School of IPAC, the Institute of Cultural Heritage of Université Laval in Quebec City (Canada), whose fieldwork was undertaken in Barcelona, a city that completely transformed itself in the timespan of a few years, becoming a world-renowned tourism giant. Probably, the biggest paradox of tourism lies in the fact that it is a sector capable of generating as many benefits, and the economic one outweighs the others, as many social pressures in the touristic destination if tourism is poorly managed (Robinson & Picard, 2006). The Summer School was titled *Barcelomania and touristophobia: museality and urbanity pushed to the extreme* and aimed at studying the paradox of international tourism. The field study in Barcelona, and in the region of Catalonia (two outdoor field visits took place in the cities of Tarragona and Girona), from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> June 2018 has allowed a deeper understanding of the research question and how to approach the touristic problems affecting the city. Directly and symbolically, La Rambla was the scene of several *waves* that struck the Catalan city in 2017. Within a few months, the three “tsunamis” that I illustrate in this study have occurred and even crossed: the Catalan independence referendum, two terrorist attacks and the phenomenon of tourismophobia.

The data collected and the reflection of the paper stem from both written sources (scientific articles) and from the ethnographic fieldwork, considering the notes taken during the experts’ conferences attended in situ, as well as the field observations (Barcelona, Tarragona, Girona) and the exchanges had with tourists and residents. Observations, impressions and conversations which had taken place in the field were written down in a logbook. The ethnographic method is particularly apt for tourism-related research, as pointed out by many research scholars (Nash, 2000; Palmer, 2001, 2009; Graburn, 2002; Cole, 2005; Salazar, 2011; Andrews *et al.*, 2019; Leite *et al.*, 2019). Direct observation corresponds to *witnessing the social behavior of individuals or groups in the very places of their activities or their residences without modifying the ordinary course* (Peretz, 2004, p.14). In order to minimize the bias during the data collection process (Laperrière, 2009), we introduced ourselves to the field of study first in theory, through several readings related to the Barcelona Model,

CIs, the governmentality and the innovation of the city of Barcelona (Saint-Pierre, 2004; Montaner, 2006; Bel & Warner, 2009; Ter Minassian, 2010; McDonogh, 2011; Bonnafont, 2015; Pecot and De Barnier, 2015; Coll-Martínez *et al.*, 2017; Zapata-Barrero, 2017; Zarlenga & Capdevila, 2018). This reflective *préalable* aims to reflect the *theoretical path of researchers in their intention to explain the observed situation* (Fortin & Gagnon, 2016, p.318). In fact, within the framework of this study, participant observation (PO) is essential and very explanatory of the “world of participants” and integrates, say complements, the information collected through the written sources. The purpose of the field of study is to draw *a cultural portrait or a synthesis showing the complexity of all aspects of the life of a group* (Wolcott, 1999). In the method used, pros and cons should be extrapolated. In terms of limits, the disadvantage is the risk of bias from the observer in the field, and during exchanges. On the other hand, the wealth of content and data obtained during the fieldwork is unparalleled in comparison to other methods, such as questionnaires.

### Catalan National and Touristic Context

Second largest city of Spain with a population of 1.6 million inhabitants in 2020 within city limits (INE, 2020), Barcelona is the fourth most visited city in Europe by international tourists after London (19.6), Paris (15.45) and Istanbul (9.16) (Statista, 2018). The Barcelonan tourism narrative relies, broadly speaking, on three facts characterizing the city embodied, first, in its modernism (Catalan art and its Catalan artists *with a universal vocation* (Carrera, 2014, p.125), its connotation of fashion and cultural city...) and in its cosmopolitanism. Barcelona has a reputation of being a Mediterranean festive city, the second reason for its touristic success, and, ultimately, it is known for the openness of its inhabitants, favored by the *proximity to France and Europe and its access to the Mediterranean* (Carrera, 2014, p.129).

The tourism figures of Catalonia and Barcelona show important tourist flows. Tourism is the most dynamic industry in Catalonia (12% of its GDP) (Eurorégion Pyrénées-Méditerranée, 2018). It is the most visited Autonomous Community in Spain by international tourists totaling 19 million in tourism receipts, followed by the Canary Islands and the Balearic Islands. Total tourist spending in Catalonia reached 19.2 trillion euros in 2017. Following Barcelona's tourism development policies, the number of overnight stays in the Catalan capital tripled by 3.8 million in 1990 to 12.4 million in 2008 (Turisme Barcelona, 2009), figures not taking into account excursionists and cruise tourists and excluding those who stayed in a non-hotel infrastructure (Airbnb, for example). In 2016, the number of tourists amounted to 8.36 million (Statista, 2018) and, since the number of inhabitants of Barcelona is equal to 1.6 million, the tourist-inhabitant ratio equals 10 tourists per Barcelonan (Paquot, 2016, p.87).

The main anti-tourism criticism made to Barcelona concerns a prioritization, by the city and the regional governments, of policies in favor of an economic growth engendered by tourism (instead of policies directed to the welfare of the population of Barcelona) and of immigration (Delgado, 2007, p.242). Barcelona has become a touristic icon on a global scale like the cities of Prague and Venice. At the same time, the inhabitants of the *barrios* (neighborhoods) where the tourist influx is major, experience the feeling:

To be no longer at home, but rather in a sort of 'human safari' where tourists armed with cameras and cell phones come to photograph you and do not hesitate to enter the courtyards, the dead-ends, the gardens (Paquot, 2016, p.87).

### **Barcelona Model and Barcelomania: Identity Creation of the City of Barcelona**

One of the most emblematic and controversial cases of tourism development in Spain is represented by the city of Barcelona and its model taking the name of the city itself. To (re)trace the development of tourism in Barcelona, we should go back to the end of Franco's dictatorship and the beginning of the democratization, socialization and *touristization* of the city. This very beginning is called *Barcelona model* and represents the reason behind the touristic success of the Catalan capital and the phenomenon of *Barcelomania*, intended as the touristic appeal and obsession tourists have for Barcelona. I agree with other researchers when asserting that the existence and direct application of a single Barcelona model concerning the renewal of the city is debatable (McNeill, 1999; Marshall, 2000; Monclus, 2003; Casellas & Pallares-Barbera, 2009). However, distinctive features of urban and cultural development of the city since the 1980s are identifiable: the unique governance based on a strong citizen support and the innovative combination of cultural activities and the urban regeneration of the city (González & Healey, 2005). The modernization of Barcelona after Franco's death and the democratic elections of 1979 are shaped by three distinctive phases of urban transformation, i.e. from a governance going from a bottom-up community-based approach until the end of the 1990s to a top-down approach dominated by the private sector and with more hegemonic features in the early 2000s (Monclus, 2003).

## The cultural transformation of the 'Barcelona model'

1025

**Table 1** Phases of urban transformation in Barcelona since 1979

	Role of Culture	Governance	Inclusivity/Redistribution
Phase 1	Foster democratic urban Catalan identity and civic pride	Dialogue with citizens	Provision of collective, public services such as schools Provision of new public spaces (democratization of urban spaces) Provision of public housing
Phase 2	Architectural expression and urban pride Marketing the city for the Olympic Games Promoting urban lifestyles	Consensus	Provision of civic centres and libraries Renovation of museums Renovation of cultural infrastructure (e.g. theatres)
Phase 3	Functional tool Support 'knowledge economy' and cultural industries	Hegemonic; top-down organized participation	Top-down organized festivals Promotion of 'interculturality'

**Figure 1.** The cultural transformation of the 'Barcelona model'. Table in Degen and García (2012, p.1025).

Criticism related to this model has been raised. Delgado (2007) traces the flaws of the Barcelona model by situating the city in the contemporary international context and defining it as a post-industrial and capitalist city. According to Con Iglesias (2009), the city has been converted into a consumer product via an extraordinary marketing operation, the Olympic Games in the front line, for the sale of its brand-new image. Among others, Vives (2018) provides guidance concerning Barcelona's transformation into the world's leading smart city, while Calzada (2018) examines Barcelona's transition from the conventional smart city approach to the new experimental urban development mode, exploring the "techno-stakeholders" in smart cities (Calzada, 2021). While the model has initially been the vehicle for economic growth and city development in several sectors, tourism included (Wilson & Antón, 2016), the medium-term consequences of the model are beginning to worry and the city itself is not only questioning its sustainability for the long-term but also attempting *to rewrite past policies from a further democratic standpoint by including aspects such as social justice and rights, collectivism, Catalanism and its identitarian pathway* (Calzada, 2020). According to multiple authors (Bakici *et al.*, 2013; Karvonen *et al.*, 2018; Calzada & Almirall, 2019), Barcelona's smart policy agenda is shifting from a dominant techno-cratic approach to a preferable techno-logical sovereignty. From here, Barcelonan socio-cultural concerns will be called the *tsunamis of tourism* in Barcelona.

My posture is based on the fact that the three tsunamis were caused by the mismanagement of the Barcelona model and by a more capitalistic than social and sustainable will to take advantage of the metamorphosis of the city. The word tsunami



seems the ideal term to use for the aims of the present study because Barcelona has suffered, and is undergoing, multiple tsunamis whose triggering element was its tourism development model. The term tsunami applied to the Barcelona context is borrowed from Dolores Sánchez Aguilera, Professor of Geography at the University of Barcelona, who used it during her lecture *The three tsunamis of tourism in Barcelona* on June 4, 2018. It is very likely though that the first time we hear of a “touristic tsunami” dates back to the campaign of the CUP (*Candidatura d’Unitat Popular*), a Catalan independence political party, when a manifesto explaining how to behave in the event of a touristic tsunami is published.



Figure 2. Què fer en cas de tsunami turístic? (What to do in the event of a tourist tsunami?).  
 Source: Infotour Barcelona (2018).



The three tsunamis correspond to political instability, terrorism and tourismophobia. They represent the three waves crashing into the "Barcelonan organism" and can be interpreted as the three major complications the city faced until early 2020. Taking the scale of three different matrices (political, terrorist and touristic), the waves intersect, overlap and fit into a very precise geopolitical and socio-cultural context, in the "big picture" of the city, reflected in a specific need, more universal than circumscribed to the city of Barcelona: the current problem to relate to the Other and the need to know how to dialogue and exchange with the Other in a better way. In the three sections that follow, the three tsunamis are reconstructed in terms of historical origin, causes and motivations as well as community reactions and sociocultural consequences, and lessons from the Barcelona tourism case study are drawn.

### **Tsunami #1: Political Instability ("Us", the Catalans)**

Nationalism and independence are an important part within the Catalan political discourse. During the fieldwork in Girona, I discovered that behind the popularity of a city that has become renown thanks to the filming of the medieval-fantasy American series *Game of Thrones* lies the most independentist city of Catalonia. This aspect is an inconspicuous element to film tourists' passionate yet politically-inexperienced eyes. The pride of Catalans residing in the city is palpable, from the terraces of houses to the entrances of restaurants, and demonstrated by the yellow flags, symbol of Catalan independence, waving in the wind.

Throughout its history and, in particular, since the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Catalonia has been marked by nationalist movements. Its culture and language have been the identity vectors to be retrieved and defended in a discourse and in a desire to recognize Catalonia as a cultural space, even as a nation in its own right (Castellet, 1983; Sobrequés, 2012; Prat de la Riba, 2013). Later, this politico-cultural movement of provincialist matrix is identified with the name of *Renaixença* (Renaissance, in Catalan) and represents the beginning of a national awakening where part of the Barcelonan elite (i.e. the bourgeoisie, the main defenders of the movement) and Catalan society (especially intellectuals) organized to build a collective and identity memory marked by a *coherent vision of the past of Barcelona and Spain* (Michonneau, 2000, p.10). The practice of this *policy of liberal-provincialist memory* (*ibid.*, p.13) began in the 1830s until the years of the Spanish Civil War and ended with the start of Franco's dictatorship. The *Renaixença* takes its most powerful and persuasive form in the revalorization of heritage, particularly urban (Balaguer, 1865), bringing to an idealization of the Catalan past; a past where Catalans were part of this blossoming, aptly called a renaissance, both in political and cultural terms (García, 1998, p.51).

Initially, social division dominated the Barcelonan society but, from and during the Catalan Renaissance, elements of memory converged towards an effectively common

identity and a shared political effort, sold as past but, on the contrary, belonging to contemporaneity. These elements justify the assertion of several authors that Catalan nationalism is not of ethnic order but is fundamentally cultural (Castellet, 1983; Sobrequés, 2012; Prat de la Riba, 2013). Under Franco's regime, heritage becomes a vehicle for political propaganda and promotion of the regime itself. The growth of the tourism sector fits into the main objectives of this propaganda. During the nearly forty years of Francisco Franco's dictatorship (1939-1975), the Catalan "flagships" mentioned earlier, culture and language, were however denied and banned everywhere in Spain, replaced by a dominant totalitarian policy and a common imposed vehicular language. Once the Generalitat of Catalonia was re-established in 1977 and the Spanish Constitution adopted in 1978, a recovery of cultural and linguistic freedoms was in action as well as a democratic transition and cultural, urban and museum effervescence (Carrera, 2014).

If, on the one hand, democratization and socialization processes were visible in Catalonia following Franco's dictatorship and resulted in the flowering of Catalan culture, on the other hand, mobilizations and Catalanist society's radicalizations perform today more than ever. The political situation is aggravated for several reasons, from the 2008 global economic crisis to, and this point is crucial, the annulment of 14 articles in the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia which altered the concept of "Catalan nation". Released on 9 July 2010 by the *Tribunal Constitucional* (Constitutional Court), the full judgement was interposed by 99 Deputies of the Popular Parliamentary Group of Congress in relation to various provisions of Organic Law 6/2006, reforming the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia. Called *Pleno. Sentencia 31/2010. Recurso de inconstitucionalidad 8045-2006*, the resolution annuls 14 articles of the Statute and reinterprets 27 more (Boletín Oficial del Estado, 2010). Two of the 14 articles declared unconstitutional refer to the Catalan flagships previously mentioned: culture and language. In fact, the Constitutional Court (TC) believes that the Constitution *does not know any other nation than the Spanish* (p.272) and that *the Catalan people is nothing but a species of 'Spanish citizenship'* (p.271) and, therefore, the Statute of Catalonia does not have interpretative legal effectiveness. The magistrates point out repeatedly that Catalonia cannot be a nation in the legal sense since the idea of *'Catalonia as a nation' stands against 'the indissoluble unity of the Spanish Nation' on which the Constitution is based* (p.23). It is interesting here to point out the use of small (Catalonia as a nation) and capital letters (Spanish Nation) for the term nation. With regard to national symbols, they must be understood as *symbols of a nationality constituted as an autonomous community* (p.269), without this creating *competition or contradiction with the symbols of the Spanish Nation* (p.272). Concerning the linguistic aspect, if the magistrates, on the one hand, endorse the school model of linguistic immersion in Catalan (but also stress that Spanish should be considered vehicular language), they also warn, on the other hand, that the right of citizens to be

served in either language is only enforceable in relations with public authorities, so that an obligation cannot be imposed directly on private sector relations and makes it clear that the Administration *cannot have preference for either language* (p.275).

These tensions consequently led to the most politically direct means of claiming one's own cultural identity: a referendum for independence, which took place on October 1, 2017 and where the 'yes' won (90%). It is not the yes in itself that is of interest in the context of this work but the fact that 1) Catalonia has asked for a separatist referendum although it is already a region with autonomous status, and that 2) the language it claims for the administration and for the media is already official (with Castilian) according to the Spanish Constitution. Moreover, Catalan is already spoken by the majority of the population and is taught in schools where it is the language of instruction. If we follow the path that Catalonia has taken from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to present days, we notice that the discourse on its political instability being prioritized over others is that of a difficult and conflicting *coexistence between the culture, the territory and the state* (Carrera, 2014, p.129). Judit Carrera, director of the CCCB (Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona), affirms that *this ability to claim one's own identity by dialoguing with the world is the common thread in the history of Catalan culture* (Carrera, 2014, p.125). Was the referendum a means, more symbolic than legal, to dialogue with the world and to assert its own culture and language in a "closed" Spanish state context? A question that also makes us wonder if, in 2020, a "modern community" is capable of defending its "cultural sovereignty" without having to have officially recognized its sovereignty as a full nation. These questions remain on the agenda, and not only on the Catalan scene.

## **Tsunami #2: Terrorism (the "Other", the Terrorists)**

An initial decline in tourism revenues in Catalonia, as well as the shift to the second plan of the debate on the referendum for the independence of Catalonia in October 2017, took place when two attacks, claimed by the Islamic State, occurred in the Autonomous Community: in the city of Barcelona on August 17, 2017 and in Cambrils on the night of August 18, 2017. A second tsunami materializes not with an aversion of the Catalans against the central(izing) Spanish State but with a fear of the Other, here the terrorist acting according to religious fanaticism, that of the radical Salafism of the jihadist organization called Daesh. While it is interesting, and above all useful, to study the reasons and impacts of terrorist attacks linked to violent Islamism around the world, our aim here is to clarify the relationship linking terrorism with tourism and how the "touristic tsunami" in Barcelona represents the start of the terrorist wave that struck it by explaining the causes behind a terrorist attack whose target, both physical and symbolic, is the visitor.

In the years 1960-1970, the main *raison* of terrorism was politics. Today, religion is the trigger in the terrorist impulse and terrorism usually concerns Islamic areas in the world, whether the country is Arab (such as the countries of the Middle East or the

Maghreb) or not, for example in Europe (Domboróczy, 2010). Terrorism and tourism have certain basic characteristics in common: crossing national borders, involving (inter)national protagonists, and using travel and communication technologies to make themselves known (Sönmez, 1998). Notwithstanding the different matrix of the two activities, opposing life and death, intense tourist activity can represent a trigger for a terrorist attack. We can even say that tourism attracts terrorism, and that terrorism uses tourism as a means to convey a message (Romagnoli, 2016). Wassim Nasr (2016), specialist in jihadist movements, says that the aim of the attacks by the Islamic State is:

To claim the most victims among nationals of countries that are members of the coalition against the Islamic State. As usual, it is intended to frighten, to undermine the public freedoms of Western states, to radicalize opinion.

City-exaltation of cosmopolitanism (Appiah, 2008) and in the peak of the touristic summer season, Barcelona has suffered a fierce attack on Barcelona's most famous and most frequented pedestrian alley, La Rambla (El País, 2020). The terrorist attack killed 15 people and left 43 injured (Le Monde, 2020). The same *modus operandi* was used in the attack in Cambrils. The number of nationalities hit by the attack in the famous Catalan promenade is equal to 32. If, on the one hand, the cosmopolitanism characterizing the city of Barcelona constitutes a pull factor in the city's tourism narrative, the fact of being a city that several nationals of Western developed countries visit (Le Figaro, 2020) and being part of a country engaged in the international coalition against Daesh (Huffington Post, 2020), represents the *ratio essendi* of a terrorist operation targeting both residents and tourists. In short, Barcelona's cosmopolitanism is reflected in a kind of double-edged sword in the tourism-terrorism paradigm, and the actions perpetrated by terrorists should be conceived in an-eye-for-an-eye-tooth-for-tooth formula against the countries representing the Arab-Muslim coalition in Iraq and Syria or against countries which hinder the development of the transnational jihadist ideology. It is not about attacking international tourists per se, the goal is to make terrorists' ideological goals as much visible as possible (Hall & O'Sullivan, 1996). In the case of Barcelona, we can trace several reasons which are added to the terrorist impulse: 1) The socioeconomic factor (poverty, high unemployment rate, urban concentration of the population, xenophobic, anti-Moroccan and anti-Pakistani tensions), 2) The religious factor (Islamic State propaganda, jihadist concentration, ideological void), 3) The strength of the symbol (Barcelona and its tourism are positioned in the festive, Western, gay-friendly and open city narrative).

Tourists are targeted as symbolic representatives of the "Other". They are "visiting ambassadors" from another country. From here, the importance of visual media, such as television or photojournalism, which come into play and have a significant impact on international public opinion. The formula for making attacks "appetizing"

from a media viewpoint is that when nationals of another country, or one's fellow citizens, are involved in a terrorist attack, media coverage is assured (Weimann & Winn, 1994). Once the tourist, and therefore the country (s)he represents, is struck, the ideological message of the terrorists is amplified and feared. Therefore, tourists become a valuable resource for terrorists to attract international attention (Sönmez, 1998).

### **Tsunami #3: Tourismophobia ("Us" and the "Other" at the same time, the Tourists)**

This is a warning sign. Any city that sacrifices itself on the altar of mass tourism will be abandoned by its people when they can no longer afford the cost of housing, food, and basic everyday necessities. (Colau, 2014)

Ada Colau, Mayor of Barcelona (2015-present)

Until the terrorist attacks claimed by the Islamic State on August 17 and 18, 2017, another "wave" dominated Barcelona's scene, that of mass tourism and its nuisances (Lamant, 2017). Stencils in the walls of the city read "Tourists = Terrorists", the silent signal that tourists are the cause of such negative effects on Barcelonan culture and society and that their attitude is put, symbolically, on the same level of terrorist activities. The first effects of the touristic success of the city of Barcelona are starting to emerge to the point that it risks dying of its success (Romagnoli, 2020). One example among many are the protests against mass tourism in the form of a movement called #TouristGoHome (Egresi, 2018; Forbes, 2018), which has spread across several European cities and has one of its most active and influential representatives in the city of Barcelona. In the wake of protest movements against tourism comes the third tsunami: tourismophobia. Literally translatable with "the fear of tourism" and not to be confused with the concept of overtourism (Soydanbay, 2017; Séraphin *et al.*, 2020), the recent creation of this neologism designates:

This form of tiredness of the inhabitants before, in bulk, soaring rents, the disappearance of local shops, the proliferation of precarious jobs or the pressure on the water resources of the city (Lamant, 2017, p.16).

Eduardo Chibás's documentary *Bye Bye Barcelona* (available on YouTube) provides valuable insight into the city's tourism phenomenon by describing the *residents' dissatisfaction with the uncontrolled influx of arrogant tourists* (Paquot, 2016, p.87). Such dissent began in the 1990s in several cities worldwide (Colomb & Novy, 2016; Novy & Colomb, 2016; Milano & Mansilla, 2018), and the scientific literature touching on the case of Barcelona has helped shape the main characteristics related to the protests against the intensification of tourism (Arias & Russo, 2017; Blanco-Romero *et al.*, 2018; Jover *et al.*, 2018; Milano & Mansilla, 2018). Until recently, tourismophobia translated in multiple demonstrations and acts of protests

that drew the media attention, and Barcelona was no exception (Goodwin, 2017; Lambea Llop, 2017; National Geographic, 2017). Barcelona is a city “built” by its own citizens, a bourgeois city, endowed with a very strong identity and, with few surprises, the responses and reactions to the tourist wave are evident through the action of three main actors: the municipality of Barcelona, Catalan anarchist groups and the local population.

1. Concerning the municipality of the city of Barcelona, we find in the first line Ada Colau, Mayor of Barcelona since 2015, and her citizen platform constituted in political party called *Barcelona in Comú* (Barcelona in Common). Colau makes tourism one of her priorities in a line in favor of a regulated decrease of tourism. Among the measures adopted, I quote:

A moratorium on the opening of new hotels in the city center in 2015, or fines against the Airbnb platform, when inspectors detect housing that compete with hotels, but not having a tourist permit (In Lamant, 2017, p.17). (My translation)

In a way, Ada Colau theorized her response to tourismophobia. During an interview in July 2017, she affirms:

It is not, of course, to put an end to tourism, but rather to imagine a model of more sustainable tourism at the city level, spreading the benefits across the neighborhoods, including the poorest (ones) (*ibid.*, p.16). (My translation)

2. As for the anarchist groups, several acts of vandalism are traceable, making Barcelona one of the “European Capitals”, or even the “birthplace” (Ballester, 2018), of tourismophobia. For example, on July 27, 2017, young Catalan anti-capitalist and pro-independence activists forming the Arran group stopped the race of a tourist bus, punctured its tires and tagged the windshield of the vehicle with the words *El turisme mata els barris* (Tourism kills the neighborhoods), a clear sign of protest against the touristic invasion that Barcelona undergoes throughout the year and, in particular, during the summer period. The act was filmed and shared on social networks to have a wider sounding board and as an incentive for other cities to react to problems created by mass tourism. Barcelona’s anarchists have described it as an act of “self-defense” (Lamant, 2017, p.16). Other less publicized episodes include travel agencies’ gates locked with silicone, punctured tires of the city’s rental bikes and attacks on tourism infrastructures (Huete & Mantecon, 2018).

3. The local population adopts the means of the protest and of the demonstration to be heard and respected. During the summer of 2017, residents of Barcelona formed a human chain in the Barceloneta beach and, wearing yellow T-shirts (color associated with Catalan independence) saying Barceloneta is not for sale in Catalan, they prevented tourists from bathing and invited them to leave the beach. Several have been the anti-tourist slogans and parades in 2017 (7sur7, 2020).

From the anarchist group responsible for the acts of vandalism produced in 2017 to the top of the administration of the city of Barcelona, the consensus is that neither tourists nor tourism are to demonize nor should be considered the problem per se, although the concept of tourismophobia indicates an extreme aversion to tourism (Donaire, 2008; Milano, 2017) and residents' high degree of tourists' rejection (Abril-Sellares *et al.*, 2015). On the contrary, tourism growth is generally desired by emerging tourism destinations as a means of economic development and is indicated in places that would benefit from this market, all in a sustainable promotion discourse and using a bottom-up approach. The argument here is to understand how to deconstruct the "hegemonic tourism discourse" (Barrado-Timón & Hidalgo-Giralt, 2019) around Barcelona, how to decrease tourism in the Catalan capital and, likewise, in cities where tourismophobia has become an "infection" provoking protests and the local population's general dissatisfaction. If we were to diagnose the "tourismophobic infection" of the city of Barcelona, we would probably identify overcrowding as the main symptom, whose five main marks striking the "Barcelonan organism" are: 1) The marginalization of the resident population (in action in Barcelona and, even more worrying, it is the case of Venice where the depopulation of the city is called Ven-exodus), 2) A degraded touristic experience (Barcelona is the fourth most visited destination in Europe but also the fourth most disappointing to visit according to the tourist) (Chibás, 2020: minute 11:29), 3) Overloaded infrastructures (only in 2016, 1.2 million visitors rented their tourist accommodation via the Airbnb platform) (Shankman, 2017; Blanco-Romero *et al.*, 2018), 4) Environmental damage (for example, cruise tourism causing contamination of marine waters or contributing to global warming) (Observatorio de Turismo Irresponsable, 2020), 5) The threat to the integrity of culture and heritage (for instance, the conversion of La Rambla from a Sunday walk for Barcelonans to the tourists' "runway") (WTTC, 2017, p.17).

According to Fabiola Mancinelli, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Barcelona, tourismophobia does not exist but it would be nothing more than the result of a tourist sales policy promoted by the media, from the Olympic Games of 1992 until now<sup>1</sup>. As for whether we speak of touristophobia or tourismophobia, the response to the intensity of the tourist phenomenon does indeed have the character of popular resistance. In an article in the French daily newspaper *Libération*, we read about the reasons behind the reactions to the mismanagement of visitors in Spain:

Although the feeling of saturation is national [Spanish], it is expressed above all in the touristic regions where nationalism is strong. This is why the manifestations of rejection (symbolic or violent) are confined to the Catalan-speaking areas and, increasingly, to the Basque Country, healing its wounds after four decades of separatist terrorism (*Libération*, 2020). (My translation)

---

<sup>1</sup> Affirmed at the 2018 IPAC Summer School in Barcelona by Fabiola Mancinelli. Conference no. 5, *Tourism in Barcelona*. Barcelona: Sala de Juntas, Facultat de Geografia i Història (Spain).



So, it would not be about the tourist or tourism per se but about the fear of a loss of identity caused, in part, by the troubled, almost conflictual, resident-tourist relationship (Milano, 2017; Vainikka & Vainikka, 2018), and of a denial of the “citizen’s right to the city” (Lefebvre, 1996 [1968]) in the face of the touristification of public spaces. From a place where different realities coexisted, the Rambla has become the symbol of the “Barcelonan theme park”. Touristified cities, including Barcelona, are taking a step back in order to control their tourist flows and return the city to its inhabitants. If we observe well, and this is what I retained most of the fieldwork, identity continues to impregnate spaces, even those most touristified. I find that the most successful and “visible” popular resistance to tourismophobia, or it would be better to define it an “identity resilience”, is represented by florists and the sale of flowers on La Rambla; the same flowers bought during Sunday walks by the inhabitants of Barcelona and that inspired poets, writers and playwrights. This corresponds to a silent identity among the souvenir shops and street vendors. What is the uniqueness of these flowers and why do they represent part of the identity of the Spanish capital of tourism? The passage of an article on the symbolism of flowers and florists at La Rambla clarifies this point and concludes the reflection on tourismophobia with a nuance of hope:

If the florists of La Rambla disappeared, Barcelona would become the saddest city in the world. It would be as if the Sagrada Família was dragged out, as if a hurricane tore apart the tiles of Gaudí’s works and La Boqueria only sold energy bars. Gray would seize the streets of the city and La Rambla, with its strength, determination and joy, would not smile again. That’s why La Rambla’s florists cannot leave. Neither do they intend. They have ensured that in this *calle* is always spring, whether it rains, it freezes, or it is super-hot. They settled in the nineteenth century and it is thanks to them that the walk began to swarm with people (La Rambla Barcelona, 2020). (My translation)

## **Conclusion**

The present work has led us to reflect between the fictitious order of a Barcelona built through the Barcelona model as well as a city imagined by tourists according to sales and tourism promotion policies, and the reality of the contemporary disorder of a city both master and victim of its success.

From the flagship event of 1992, the holding of the Summer Olympics, Barcelona has been able to create its own city brand by combining several elements that have structured the city’s tourist narrative. What could be identified as a “second cultural *Renaixença*” for the city thanks to the Barcelona model is an example “Made in Barcelona” of combining citizen participation with the democratization of public spaces and an urban architectural flowering financed by tourism, alas uncontrolled, development. The Barcelona model has transformed the cultural imagination of the city of Barcelona, converting it into an open and globally renowned tourist



city. However, the prioritization of tourism growth policies (construction of hotel infrastructure, massive reception of cruise ships in the port, etc.) and the conversion of Barcelona into a tourism brand have supplanted the spirit of a model that had been created for the benefit of its inhabitants, to the point that the "tourist gold rush" is considered the beginning of the *cultural decadence* (Carrera, 2014, p.132) of the Catalan capital.

In a context of collective local bother, the "three tsunamis" of tourism in Barcelona are a valuable resource for reflecting on the causes of a "triple wave" caused by the Other. The materialization and centralization of the three tsunamis takes place in Barcelona because the city combines, feeds and, at times, resolves the tensions of Catalan culture. In this context, Barcelona is a real intercultural platform for the universal question about the "Us", especially in a time of globalization and massive immigration.

# 1 In the case of political instability, the accentuated Catalan independence process reflects a need for recognition by the Other (the Spanish State, the European Union, the whole world). The fear of a lack of Catalan identity and cultural recognition is a first "Us-the Other" paradigm established in the form of a constitutive problem of the Catalan political space, a problem still current and much felt.

# 2 As for terrorism, it seems that Barcelona's cosmopolitanism, its international tourist flows, whose figures for Western tourists are very high, and the large number of jihadists in the city (to be recruited and recruited), have propelled the terrorist attack in Barcelona in 2017. Although research on the links between terrorism and tourism, as well as the perceived risk in travel by the tourist, has been carried out, more attention is needed to deal with contemporary fear, real or perceived, of the Other.

# 3 The latest tsunami, tourismophobia, is a symbol of the Other's refusal. A refusal that occurs because *the people of Barcelona are fed up and refuse to become the Mickey's of a themed city* (Paquot, 2016, p.87). Too many tourists kill tourism, even more so in the absence of tourism regulations dedicated to the welfare of Barcelona and in a context where the control of public space is becoming increasingly less public (Delgado, 2007, p.242). At the same time, it is not about tourism per se (the what) but about the way in which tourists undertake tourism activities (the how). From an educational background (if we think of the Grand Tour back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century), the tourist activity moves towards the concept of an affirmation, even a confirmation, of oneself. According to David Picard, Professor of Tourism Anthropology, *many people take trips that correspond to their self-image or aspiration in terms of social status* (Femina, 2016). The rewarding nature of the trip may therefore remain the same but can we say the same about the travel goals of today's tourists?

To conclude, tourism should be rethought, not in its sole economic sense, but as a critical appreciation of discovering the Other. The responsibility is twofold. On the one hand, the local community should not start offering a standardized and redesigned product for mass consumption once tourism plays an important economic role. On the other hand, the tourist should adopt an attitude that is both exploratory, which implies an openness to discovering a place, and learning in a more documentary and informative approach before, during and after the trip. Tourists' mantra should be reflected in the famous quote by Jost Krippendorf, one of the founding fathers of sustainable tourism, who said: *It's your vacation, it's their daily life* (Krippendorf, 1987).

---

**Peer-review:** Externally peer-reviewed.

**Conflict of Interest:** The author has no conflict of interest to declare.

**Grant Support:** The author declared that this study has received no financial support.

---

## References

- 7sur7 (2020). Les Barcelonais poussent les touristes à quitter la plage. Retrieved from: <https://www.7sur7.be/7s7/fr/1505/Monde/article/detail/3231796/2017/08/12/Les-Barcelonais-poussent-les-touristes-a-quitter-la-plage.dhtml>.
- Abril-Sellares, M., Azpelicueta, M. C., & Sanchez-Fernandez, M. D. (2015). Turismo sostenible: lugareños frente a turistas. El caso de la ciudad de Barcelona. *Holos*, 31(3), p. 331-337.
- Andrews, H., Jimura, T. & Dixon, L. (2019). *Tourism Ethnographies. Ethics, Methods, Application and Reflexivity*. Abingdon, Oxon | New York, Routledge.
- Appiah, K. A. (2008). *Mi cosmopolitismo*. Buenos Aires/Barcelona, Katz & CCCB.
- Arias, A., & Russo, A. (2017). The right to Gaudí. What can we learn from the commoning of Park Güell, Barcelona. In C. Colomb and J. Novy (Eds.), *Protest and Resistance in the Tourist City* (pp. 247-263). London: Routledge.
- Bakici, T., Almirall, E., & Wareham, J. (2013). A smart city initiative: the case of Barcelona. *Journal of the Knowledge Economy*, 4(2), p. 135-148.
- Balaguer, V. (1865). *Las calles de Barcelona*. Barcelona: Eds. Salvador Manero, 2 vol.
- Ballester, P. (2018). Barcelone face au tourisme de masse : 'tourismophobie et vivre ensemble'. *Téoros [Online]*, 37, 2 | 2018. Retrieved from: <http://journals.openedition.org/teoros/3367>.
- Barrado-Timón, D. A., & Hidalgo-Giralt, C. (2019). Golden hordes or mere barbarians? Discourses on tourism, touristification, and tourismophobia in Madrid's Lavapiés neighborhood. *Boletín de la Asociación de Geógrafos Españoles*, 83, 2824, 1-36.
- Bel, G., & Warner, M. E. (2009). Managing Competition in City Services: the Case of Barcelona. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, Volume 31, Number 5, p. 521-535.
- Blanco-Romero, A., Blázquez-Salom, M., & Cánoves, G. (2018). Barcelona, Housing Rent Bubble in a Tourist City. *Social Responses and Local Policies. Sustainability*, 10(6), 2043. Retrieved from: <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/10/6/2043/pdf>.
- Boletín Oficial del Estado (BOE) (2010). Documento BOE-A-2010-11409. Retrieved from: [https://boe.es/diario\\_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2010-11409](https://boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2010-11409).

- Bonnafont, J. (2015). Quelle stratégie l'Espagne a-t-elle déployée pour devenir le deuxième pays touristique au monde ? *Annales des Mines - Réalités industrielles*, 2015/3 (Août 2015), p. 38-42.
- Calzada, I. (2018). (Smart) Citizens from Data Providers to Decision-Makers? The Case Study of Barcelona. *Sustainability* 10(9): 3252. *Special Issue: Big Data Research for Social Sciences and Social Impact*.
- Calzada, I. (2020). [Review of the book *Smart City Barcelona: The Catalan Quest to Improve Future Urban Living*, by A. Vives]. *International Journal of Iberian Studies* 33(1), p. 103-104.
- Calzada, I. (2021). *Smart City Citizenship*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Elsevier Science Publishing Co Inc.
- Calzada, I. & Almirall, E. (2019). *Barcelona's Grassroots-led Urban Experimentation: Deciphering the 'Data Commons' Policy Scheme*. Zenodo. Conference Data for Policy 2019, London (UK), 11-12 June.
- Carrera, J. (2014). La culture catalane. *Pôle Sud* 2014/1 (n° 40), p. 121-135.
- Casellas, A. & Pallares-Barbera, M. (2009). Public-sector intervention in embodying the new economy in inner urban areas: the Barcelona experience. *Urban Studies* 46.5/6, p. 1137-55.
- Castellet, J. M. (1983). *Per un debat sobre la cultura a Catalunya*. Barcelona: Edicions 62.
- Chibás, E. (2014). Bye Bye Barcelona. Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kdXcFChRpmI>.
- Cole, S. (2005). Action ethnography: using participant observation. In B.W. Ritchie, P. Burns and C. Palmer (eds.), *Tourism Research Methods: Integrating Theory with Practice*. Wallingford, UK and Cambridge, MA: CABI Publishing, p. 63-72.
- Coll-Martínez, E., Moreno-Monroy, A.-I. & Arauzo-Carod, J.-M. (2017). *Agglomeration of creative industries: An intra-metropolitan analysis for Barcelona*. Working Papers 2072/266575, Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Department of Economics.
- Colomb, C., & Novy, J. (Eds.) (2016). *Protest and resistance in the tourist city*. London: Routledge.
- Con Iglesias, A. (2009). Analyse de l'ouvrage : Delgado, Manuel. La ciudad mentirosa. Fraude y miseria del "modelo Barcelona". *Biblio 3W, Revista Bibliográfica de Geografía y Ciencias Sociales*, Universidad de Barcelona, Vol. XIV, n° 836.
- Degen, M. & García, M. (2012). The Transformation of the 'Barcelona Model': An Analysis of Culture, Urban Regeneration and Governance. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research. Flight*. 36.5, September 2012: 1022-1038.
- Delgado, M. (2007). *La ciudad mentirosa. Fraude y miseria del "modelo Barcelona"*. Madrid: Los libros de la Catarata.
- Domboróczy, Z. (2010). The New Target Area of International Terrorism: The Tourism. *Agricultural Management/Lucrari Stiintifice Seria I, Management Agricol*, 12(3), p. 1-8.
- Donaire, J. A. (2008). L'efervescencia de la turismofobia. *Barcelona Metropolis*, 72, p. 70-75.
- Egresi, I. (2018). "Tourists go home!" - *Tourism overcrowding and "tourismophobia" in European cities (Can tourists and residents still co-habitate in the city?)*. [Co]Habitation Tactics: Imagining Future Spaces in Architecture, City and Landscape. Tirana (Albania), Conference Proceedings.
- El País (2020). Lo que se sabe del atentado en Barcelona y Cambrils. Retrieved from: [https://politica.elpais.com/politica/2017/08/17/actualidad/1502984144\\_099524.html](https://politica.elpais.com/politica/2017/08/17/actualidad/1502984144_099524.html).
- Euroregion Pyrénées-Méditerranée (2018). Le Tourisme en Catalogne. Retrieved from: [http://www.euroregio.eu/sites/default/files/focus\\_cat\\_tourisme.pdf](http://www.euroregio.eu/sites/default/files/focus_cat_tourisme.pdf).

- Femina (2016). Décryptage : pourquoi voyager est devenu une obligation. Retrieved from: <http://www.femina.ch/societe/news-societe/decryptage-pourquoi-voyager-est-devenu-une-obligation-airbnb-tourisme-responsable>.
- Forbes (2018). #TouristGoHome? Spain Becomes World's #2 Tourist Destination. Retrieved from: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/michaelgoldstein/2017/12/31/looking-back-on-2017touristgohome/#379135cf39cd>.
- Fortin, M.-F. & Gagnon, J. (2016). *Fondements et étapes du processus de recherche*. Méthodes quantitatives et qualitatives. Montréal (3<sup>e</sup> éd.) : Chenelière Éducation.
- García, M.-C. (1998). *L'identité catalane, analyse du processus de production de l'identité nationale en Catalogne*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- González, S., & Healey, P. (2005). A sociological institutionalist approach to the study of innovation in governance capacity. *Urban Studies* 42.11, p. 2055-69.
- Goodwin, H. (2017). *The challenge of overtourism*. Responsible Tourism Partnership Working Paper 4.
- Graburn, N. H. H. (2002). The ethnographic tourist. In G. Dann (ed.), *The Tourist as Metaphor of the Social World*. Wallingford, UK and Cambridge, MA: CABI Publishing, p. 19-38.
- Hall, C. M., & O'Sullivan, V. (1996). Tourism, Political Stability and Violence. In Pizam, A. and Mansfeld, Y. (1996). *Tourism, Crime and Inter-national Security Issues*. New York: Wiley, p. 105-121.
- Huete, R., & Mantecon, A. (2018). The Rise of Tourismophobia: Research Hypothesis or Ideological Noise? *Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural*, 6(1), p. 9-19.
- Huffington Post (2018). 7 raisons qui expliquent pourquoi Barcelone est l'un des centres du jihadisme en Europe. Retrieved from: [https://www.huffingtonpost.fr/sebastien-bousois/raisons-attentat-barcelone\\_a\\_23154579/](https://www.huffingtonpost.fr/sebastien-bousois/raisons-attentat-barcelone_a_23154579/).
- INE, Instituto Nacional de Estadística (2018). Barcelona: Population by municipality and sex. Retrieved from: <https://www.ine.es/jaxiT3/Datos.htm?t=2861#!tabs-tabla>.
- Infotur Barcelona (2018). Campaña de la CUP contra el "tsunami turístico" en Barcelona. Retrieved from: <https://infotur.barcelona/2015/01/25/campana-de-la-cup-contra-el-tsunami-turistico-en-barcelona/>.
- Jover, J., Berraquero-Díaz, L., Barrero-Rescalvo, M., & Jiménez-Talavera, A. (2018). Turistización y movimientos urbanos de resistencia: experiencias desde Sevilla. In Milano, C. and Mansilla, J. (Coord.), *Ciudad de Vacaciones. Conflictos urbanos en espacios turísticos* (pp. 403-438). Barcelona: Pol·len Ediciones.
- Karvonen, A., Cugurullo, F. & Caprotti, F. (2018). *Inside Smart Cities: Place, Politics and Urban Innovation*. London: Routledge.
- Krippendorf, J. (1987). *The Holiday Makers: Understanding the Impact of Leisure and Travel*. University of Minnesota: Elsevier Science & Technology Books.
- La Rambla Barcelona (2020). ¿Pero qué tienen de especial las floristas de La Rambla? Retrieved from: <https://www.laramblabarcelona.com/floristas-de-la-rambla/>.
- Lamant, L. (2017). Occuper les institutions. Expériences espagnoles. *Association Vacarme*. 2017/4 N° 81, p. 16-21.
- Lambea Llop, N. (2017). A policy approach to the impact of tourist dwellings in condominiums and neighbourhoods in Barcelona. *Urban Research & Practice*, 10(1), p. 120-129.

- Laperrière, A. (2009). L'observation directe. Dans B. Gauthier (dir.), *Recherche sociale : de la problématique à la collecte des données (5<sup>e</sup> éd)*. Québec, Québec : Presses de l'Université du Québec, p. 311-316.
- Le Figaro (2020). Les Français, premier contingent de touristes en 2016. Retrieved from: [http://www.lefigaro.fr/assets/infographie/print/highcharts/graphiques/web\\_201742\\_3181\\_Touristes\\_en\\_Catalogne\\_/web\\_201742\\_3181\\_Touristes\\_en\\_Catalogne\\_.html](http://www.lefigaro.fr/assets/infographie/print/highcharts/graphiques/web_201742_3181_Touristes_en_Catalogne_/web_201742_3181_Touristes_en_Catalogne_.html).
- Le Monde (2020). Attaques en Catalogne : attentat meurtrier à Barcelone, des blessés à Cambrils. Retrieved from: [https://www.lemonde.fr/europe/live/2017/08/17/en-direct-un-vehicule-fonceur-la-foule-a-barcelone-plusieurs-blesses\\_5173481\\_3214.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/europe/live/2017/08/17/en-direct-un-vehicule-fonceur-la-foule-a-barcelone-plusieurs-blesses_5173481_3214.html).
- Lefebvre, H. (1996 [1968]). *Writing on Cities*. London: Blackwell.
- Leite, N. M., Castañeda, Q. E. & Adams, K. M. (2019). *The Ethnography of Tourism. Edward Bruner and Beyond*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Libération (2020). En Espagne des touristes malmenés et un ras-le-bol généralisé. Retrieved from: [http://www.liberation.fr/planete/2017/08/07/en-espagne-des-touristes-malmenes-et-un-ras-le-bol-generalise\\_1588183](http://www.liberation.fr/planete/2017/08/07/en-espagne-des-touristes-malmenes-et-un-ras-le-bol-generalise_1588183).
- Marshall, T. (2000). Urban planning and governance: is there a Barcelona model? *International Planning Studies* 5.3, p. 299-319.
- McDonogh, G. W. (2011). Learning from Barcelona: Discourse, Power and Praxis in the Sustainable City. *City & Society, Vol. 23, Issue 2*, p. 135-153.
- McNeill, D. (1999). *Urban change and the European left: tales from the new Barcelona*. London: Routledge.
- Michonneau, S. (2000). Société et commémoration à Barcelone à la mi-XIXe siècle. *Genèses, 40. Fabrique des lieux*, p. 6-32.
- Milano, C. (2017). *Overtourism y turismofobia. Tendencias globales y contextos locales*. Barcelona: Ostelea School of Tourism and Hospitality.
- Milano, C., & Mansilla, J. A. (Coord.) (2018). *Ciudad de Vacaciones. Conflictos urbanos en espacios turísticos*. Barcelona: Pol·len Ediciones.
- Monclus, F. (2003). The Barcelona model: an original formula? *Planning Perspectives* 18.4, p. 399-421.
- Montaner, J. P. (2006). Le modèle Barcelone. *La pensée de midi* 2006/2 (N° 18), p. 16-20.
- Nash, D. (2000). Ethnographic windows on tourism. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 25 (3), p. 29-35.
- Nasr, W. (2016). *État islamique. Le fait accompli*. Paris: Plon.
- National Geographic (2017). Hot topic: The rise of tourismophobia. Retrieved from: <http://www.natgeotraveller.co.uk/smart-travel/travel-talk/hot-topic-the-rise-of-tourismophobia/>.
- Novy, J., & Colomb, C. (2016). Urban tourism and its discontents: an introduction in Europe's 'Capital of Cool'. In C. Colomb, and J. Novy (Eds.), *Protest and Resistance in the Tourist City* (pp. 1-30). London: Routledge.
- Observatorio de Turismo Irresponsable (2020). El impacto de turismo de cruceros en Barcelona. Retrieved from: <http://oti.turismo-sostenible.net/project/el-impacto-de-turismo-de-cruceros-en-barcelona/>.
- Palmer, C. (2001). Ethnography: a research method in practice. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 3 (4), p. 301-312.

- Palmer, C. (2009). Reflections on the practice of ethnography within heritage tourism. In M. L. S. Sørensen and J. Carman (eds.), *Heritage Studies: Methods and Approaches*. Hoboken, NJ: Routledge, p. 123-139.
- Paquot, T. (2016). Tourisme urbain : à quand la décroissance ? *Esprit* 2016/7 (Juillet-Août), p. 86-89.
- Pecot, F., & De Barnier, V. (2015). Stratégies de marques de ville basées sur le patrimoine de marque : le rôle des symboles. *Management & Avenir*, 2015/4 (N°78), p. 143-159.
- Peretz, H. (2004). *Les méthodes en sociologie : l'observation*. Coll. Repères. Paris, France : La Découverte.
- Prat de la Riba, E. (2013). *La nacionalitat catalana*. Barcelona: La Magrana.
- Robinson, M. & Picard, D. (2006). *Tourism, Culture and Sustainable Development*. Paris : UNESCO.
- Romagnoli, M. (2016). The Effects of Terrorism on Tourism: (Inter)relations, Motives & Risks. *University of Bologna, AlmaTourism – Journal of Tourism, Culture and Territorial Development. Special Issue n. 5, War and Tourism*, p. 125-133.
- Romagnoli, M. (2020). *Dying of Success: Ethnographic Insights of Touristophobia in Barcelona*. Acta Geographica Lovaniensia, KU Leuven: Belgium, p. 229-238.
- Saint-Pierre, D. (2004). La Culture comme Facteur de développement de la ville : quelques expériences étrangères. *Loisir et Société / Society and Leisure*, 27:2, p. 423-444.
- Salazar, N. (2011). Studying local-to-glocal tourism dynamics through glocal ethnography. In C. M. Hall (ed.), *Fieldwork in Tourism: Methods, Issues and Reflections*. Abingdon, UK and New York: Routledge, p. 177-187.
- Séraphin, H., Christodoulidi, F., & Gladkikh, T. (2020). Case Study 2: Broadly Engaging with Interaction Between Visitors and Locals – Towards Understanding tourismphobia and Anti-tourism Movements. In H. Séraphin, T. Gladkikh and T. Vo Thanh (eds.), *Overtourism. Causes, Implications and Solutions*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.
- Shankman, S. (2017). Barcelona overtourism: Airbnb and short-term rentals. Retrieved from: <https://skift.com/2017/08/03/barcelona-overtourism-airbnb-and-short-term-rentals/>.
- Sobrequés, J. (dir.)(2012). *La cultura catalana*. Barcelona: Base.
- Sönmez, S. F. (1998). Tourism, terrorism, and political instability. *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 25, p. 416-456.
- Soydanbay, G. (2017). A Systemic Analysis of Overtourism and Tourismphobia: And What Destinations Can Do About It. Retrieved from: <https://placebrandobserver.com/overtourism-tourismphobia-causes-solutions/>.
- Statista (2018). Number of international overnight visitors in the most popular European city destinations in 2016 (in millions). Retrieved from: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/310536/overnight-visitors-to-top-european-city-destinations/>.
- Ter Minassian, H. (2010). La réhabilitation du centre ancien de Barcelone : discours et représentations par les pouvoirs publics (1980-2008). *Espaces et sociétés* 2010/2 (n° 142), p. 95-112.
- Turisme Barcelona (2009). Pla estratègic de turisme de la ciutat de Barcelona [Strategic plan for tourism in the city of Barcelona]. Retrieved from: [www.turisme2015bcn.cat/](http://www.turisme2015bcn.cat/).
- Vainikka, V. & Vainikka, J. (2018). Welcoming the masses, entitling the stranger – commentary to Gill. *Fennia*, 196(1), p. 124-130.

- Vives, A. (2018). *Smart city Barcelona: the Catalan quest to improve future urban living*. Eastbourne; Portland, OR, USA: Sussex Academic Press.
- Weimann, G. & Winn, C. (1994). *The Theater of Terror: Mass Media and International Terrorism*. White Plain, NY: Longman.
- Wilson, J., & Antón, C. (2016). The evolution of coastal tourism destinations: A path plasticity perspective on tourism urbanization. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 25(1), 96-112.
- Wolcott, H. F. (1999). *Ethnography: A Way of Seeing*. Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press.
- WTTC (2017). *Coping with success. Managing overcrowding in tourism destinations*. McKinsey & Company and World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC).
- Zapata-Barrero, R. (2017). Politique interculturelle et gouvernance à niveaux multiples à Barcelone : Approche globale en matière d'intégration. *Revue Internationale des Sciences Administratives*, 2017/2 (Vol. 83), p. 251-270.
- Zarlenga, M. I., & Capdevila, I. (2018). Les multiples échelles et dynamiques urbaines de créativité et d'innovation. La double réalité créative du quartier du Poblenou à Barcelone. *Géographie, économie, société*, 2018/1 (Vol. 20), p. 89-111.







## Current challenges facing ecotourism development in Iran

Sarasadat Makian<sup>1</sup> , Farid Hanifezadeh<sup>2</sup> 

### Abstract

Iran is a rich country in terms of natural, historical, and cultural resources appropriate for ecotourism development. Despite its many valuable attractions and growth potential, Iranian ecotourism has faced various problems that have slowed or even prevented its expansion. Thus, in order to plan to address these challenges, we need to identify them. This study highlights the challenges of Iranian ecotourism and identifies areas where further research is required by reviewing some of the previous studies on Iran's ecotourism. Based on a literature review and thematic analysis, six different categories of challenges are presented: governance and planning, political, socio-economic, cultural; legal aspects; infrastructure; community awareness and knowledge; and environmental challenges. The study results indicated that the most significant challenges facing the Iranian ecotourism industry are governance, management, and planning issues. The research findings enhance our understanding of the current challenges of ecotourism in Iran that need to be rigorously investigated in the future and before any development planning projects. This study provides valuable insights for researchers, managers, and tourism officials on the development of Iranian ecotourism, which can be considered for future studies and planning.

### Keywords

Ecotourism, Development Challenges, Ecotourism Planning, Ecotourism Challenges, Ecotourism Potentials, Iran

1 **Correspondence to:** Sarasadat Makian (PhD candidate), Geography, Grenoble Alpes University, Urban Planning and Alpine Geography Institute, Grenoble, France. E-mail: [sarasadat.makian@univ-grenoble-alpes.fr](mailto:sarasadat.makian@univ-grenoble-alpes.fr) ORCID: 0000-0002-9935-5877

2 Farid Hanifezadeh (M.A.), Allameh Tabataba'i University, Faculty of Management and Accounting, Department of Tourism Management, Tehran. E-mail: [iran.f.hanifezadeh@gmail.com](mailto:iran.f.hanifezadeh@gmail.com) ORCID: 0000-0002-2249-4270

**To cite this article:** Makian, S., & Hanifezadeh, F. (2021). Current challenges facing ecotourism development in Iran. *Journal of Tourismology*, 7(1), 123-140. <https://doi.org/10.26650/jot.2021.7.1.0007>



## Introduction

Over the past few years, due to environmental and ecological potentials, a great deal of attention has been paid to ecotourism, considered to be one of the most favourable types (Kamyabi & Rajaei Rizi, 2018) and the fastest-growing segment of tourism (Carvache-Franco, Segarra-Oña, & Carrascosa-López, 2019). While there are no reliable statistics on the number of nature tourists and the growth rate of ecotourism, it has grown faster than mainstream tourism (Moghimehfar, Halpenny, & Ziaee, 2014). Ecotourism is a potentially efficient tool for mass tourism adopted by policy-makers and planners (Mosammam, Sarrafi, Nia, & Heidari, 2016). It supports nature's protection and improves local communities' socio-economic conditions (Ahmadi, Khodadadi, & Shahabi, 2018; Shemshad & Malek Mohammadi, 2012) and contributes to increasing their education level (Mansoori, Behzad, & Jaybhaye, 2014). Ecotourism is directly linked to natural factors such as topography, hydrology networks, meteorological and the biological characteristics of the destinations linked to natural, intact, and protected areas (Mohajer & Avagyan, 2014). It can be taken as an alternative approach to protecting natural resources and biological diversity, promoting the sustainable use of resources, developing ecological experience, and making tourists aware of the environment (Mosammam et al., 2016). Ecotourism creates new employment opportunities based on local resources for people living in remote areas with poor economic conditions and high underemployment rates. It requires less investment (Shemshad & Malek Mohammadi, 2012) and could positively impact on urban and rural transformations with sustainable management and development (Ghorbani, Raufirad, Rafiaani, & Azadi, 2015).

For developing countries with distinctive natural and cultural environments and opportunities, the potential to benefit from ecotourism is available (Asadpourian, Rahimian, & Gholamrezai, 2020). One of these countries is Iran, rich in cultural, natural, and historical attractions (Asadi, 2012; Ghorbani et al., 2015; Goharipour & Hajiluie, 2016). Ecotourism is also identified in Asadi's (2012) study as the most important competitive advantage of the Iranian tourism industry. On the other hand, according to Goharipour & Hajiluie (2016), ecotourism's development brings many benefits to Iran, such as economic growth, the preservation of cultural values, the conservation of natural resources, community participation, and employment. In addition, feasibility studies on Iran's ecological attractions highlight ecotourism as its unique economic resource (Hadizadeh Zargar, 2016). Numerous studies were carried out on the potential of ecotourism in different regions of Iran and on various aspects of its development (e.g., Ahmadi et al., 2018; Ganjali et al., 2014; Mobaraki et al., 2014; Rakhshan Nasab & Zarabi, 2010; Zarabi & Safarabadi, 2014). On the contrary, some of the existing literature shows that ecotourism in this country has many challenges and obstacles. Given the global importance of ecotourism (Nee &

Beckmann, 2011), the potential of Iran's nature for ecotourism (Ghorbani et al., 2015; Mansoori et al., 2014), the positive role of ecotourism in the development of Iranian rural areas (Khalili, Moridsadat, & Soltaninejad, 2020) and in the conservation of biodiversity in Iran (Ghoddousi, Pintassilgo, Mendes, Ghoddousi, & Sequeira, 2018; Kolahi, Sakai, Moriya, Yoshikawa, & Esmaili, 2014), it is necessary to consider the challenges facing the development of ecotourism. Therefore, by reviewing Iranian ecotourism literature, this study highlights the main challenges of Iranian ecotourism, provides an overview of the different challenges confronting ecotourism development, presents the categorization of these challenges, identifies gaps that require further research in the future, and discusses existing challenges. It is hoped that the findings provide a better understanding of ecotourism's current challenges and problems in Iran for relevant organizations and researchers.

## Literature Review

### General Challenges of Ecotourism

Ecotourism has contributed to eradicating poverty and conservation of natural resources in many parts of the world (Das & Chatterjee, 2015) by generating income for conservation, developing local businesses, and creating employment opportunities (Teressa, 2015). This type of tourism helps us understand, appreciate, and preserve the environment and the local culture (Tripathi & Jain, 2017). Despite all the opportunities that ecotourism creates, some challenges prevent its proper and sustainable development in every destination. Mgonja, Sirima, & Mkumbo (2015) state that the lack of access to capital prevents local people's participation in ecotourism activities. According to González Fonseca (2012), one of Mexico's challenges in the field of ecotourism is the absence of an appropriate design of public policies capable of generating economic prosperity and social welfare. Otago (2014) identifies challenges such as limited awareness and concern of local communities for the conservation of environmental attractions and the degradation of natural resources in Ethiopia.

Bego & Malltezi (2011) examine the challenges of ecotourism in Albania and conclude that the main challenges are uncontrolled grazing, illegal hunting, and poaching. The main challenges of ecotourism in Nigeria include inadequate facilities and financing, poor infrastructure, and seasonal inaccessibility, according to Ijeomah & Okoli (2016). In addition, Cetinkaya (2004) mentions the challenges of ecotourism development in Turkey, such as the lack of an operating plan, the absence of a responsible organization, and the lack of adequate services and qualified staff. Fernando & Shariff (2017) highlight the key challenges of ecotourism in Sri Lanka: a lack of financial and human resources, poor management, a lack of a clear

vision, and a lack of basic tourism infrastructure. According to Okech (2011), a lack of appropriate management plans and guidelines, insufficient staff, and a lack of partnership programs and security issues are the challenges facing ecotourism development in Kenya. Furthermore, a lack of national strategies and regulatory frameworks and inappropriate use of ecosystems by the inhabitants pose challenges for Ethiopia's ecotourism (Teresa, 2015).

### **Iranian Ecotourism Potential**

Iran's tourist opportunities, natural attractiveness, unspoiled landscapes, and favourable climate reinforce the potential for the development of ecotourism (Pourasghari & Amar, 2018). It is a predominantly arid country, more than half of which is covered by rangelands, less than 10% by forests, and about 20% by arid deserts and salt marshes (Dabiri, Fazel, Moghaddasi, & Mehrasa Mehrdadi, 2016). Iran's climate diversity, biodiversity, beautiful and diverse natural landscapes have contributed to its ecotourism wealth (Hosseinalizadeh, Jabbari, & Haghlesan, 2018). In addition to many natural characteristics (see Mohajer & Avagyan, 2014), the country's protected areas have increased steadily to 185, 150 with national designations and 35 with international designations (UNEP-WCMC, 2020).

The Iranian ecotourism industry is relatively new. It has excellent growth potential, as there are many natural attractions in different parts of the country (Riasi & Pourmiri, 2015). Many individuals are interested in visiting Iran's natural landscapes (Soroushnia, 2020). However, Iran accounts for less than 1% of the 5.2% of the Middle East's global ecotourism market (FinancialTribune, 2017). In addition, leading organizations have not presented an official categorization of ecotourism activities. Very few researchers, however, have worked on this. According to a general classification developed by Karami (2008), Iranian ecotourism activities include winter sports, nature excursions, hunting, fishing, water sports, desert excursions, eco-therapy, climbing, and caving. Having considered the previous category, Salehi & Fayaz (2013) introduced other possible types of activities in Iran such as hiking, trekking, cycling in nature, stargazing, bird watching, visiting geomorphological attractions, visiting wildlife and national parks, jungle excursions, village tours, surviving in the wilderness and experiencing nomadic life.

In the country's 20-year vision document (2005-2025), the position of ecotourism is unclear (Ghadiri & Sabzi, 2011). It is not mentioned to any extent in any of the country's upstream documents and is not supported by the government, planners, and policy-makers (Veicy, 2018). On the other hand, one of the strategic objectives of Iran's National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plan (2016-2030) is to reduce the pressure on biodiversity and promote the sustainable use of natural resources through the revision and improvement of environmental regulations, especially by

developing national legalisation on biosafety and ecotourism (Dabiri et al., 2016). In addition, Asadi (2011) indicated in his study that ecotourism is one of Iran's most promising forms of tourism. Despite Iran's great potential and the growing demand for ecotourism worldwide, Iran does not have a large share of the world ecotourism market (Yekani Motlagh, Hajjarian, Hossein Zadeh, & Alijanpour, 2020).

### **Methodology**

This study aims to provide an overview and in-depth understanding of the current challenges of ecotourism development in Iran based on a literature review. Concerning the study's scope, we focused on studies conducted on ecotourism in Iran to contribute to this field's theoretical knowledge. Using keywords such as "ecotourism" and "Iran", we searched in online search engines such as Google scholar and Sid.ir (Scientific journals database of Iran) and obtained 59 papers. After reading the abstracts to determine whether the articles were relevant to our question, 27 papers were appropriate for our study (from 2007 to 2020). We reviewed these empirical studies' findings and extracted the relevant data, which were the challenges stated by researchers facing ecotourism development in Iran. Then we organized the challenges into six thematic categories and discussed each category with different secondary data (related academic papers, reports, and websites such as government news agencies).

### **Findings and Discussion**

Iran tried to get itself on the tourists' travel list after the lifting of sanctions in 2015. As a result, ecotourism travels have been increasing, attracting domestic and foreign backpackers to the country's pristine and relatively untouched natural areas (IRNA, 2018; TehranTimes, 2017). According to the Iranian Department of Environment, Iran's small share of the global ecotourism market does not reflect its potential in the sector (FinancialTribune, 2017). Regardless of all of ecotourism's attractions and potential, Iran faces many challenges in developing this type of tourism. Table 1 shows the previous studies addressing these challenges.

**Table 1**  
*Papers Used for Content Analysis*

<b>Author(s) and Year published</b>	<b>Title of the paper</b>	<b>Category of thematic</b>
Abdolahi, 2007	Ecotourism compatible with environmental protection and sustainability of natural resources	Governance and planning challenges / Political, socio-economic, and cultural context
Ahmadi, Khodadadi, & Shahabi, 2018	Planning for ecotourism in the protected area of Manesht and Ghelarang, Ilam Province, Iran	Governance and planning challenges / Political, socio-economic, and cultural context/ Infrastructural challenges
Akbari, Khodadad, Musazadeh, & Rudgar Safari, 2017	Evaluating the ecological capability of Tehran province in the development of ecotourism using geographic information system	Legal aspects
Amiri, Zoghi, Sadat, & Karimi, 2015	Assessing ecotourism potential in protected areas to contribute to sustainable rural development (Case study: Arasbaran protected area- Mishehpareh)	Legal aspects
Asadi, 2012	Strategies for Iran Ecotourism	Political, socio-economic, and cultural context / Infrastructural challenges / Community awareness and knowledge toward ecotourism / Environmental challenges
Bazm Ara, Tavakoli, & Kaveh, 2017	Assessing Appropriate Areas for Ecotourism Development of Protected Areas. Case Study: Khaeez Protected Area	Governance and planning challenges / Community awareness and knowledge toward ecotourism
Mohajer & Vahagan Varazdat, 2017	Prospects and Problems of Ecotourism in Iran	Governance and planning challenges / Political, socio-economic, and cultural context
Farajzadeh Asl & Karim Panah, 2009	Possibility Study of Ecotourism Development Zones in Kurdistan Province Using Geographic Information System (GIS)	Political, socio-economic, and cultural context
Ganjali, Shayesteh, Ghasemi, & Mohammadi, 2014	Environmental and strategic assessment of ecotourism potential in Anzali Wetland using SWOT analysis	Governance and planning challenges / Political, socio-economic, and cultural context / Legal aspects / Environmental challenges
Ghadiri Masoum, Nasiri, Hosseini, & Rafii, 2012	Ecotourism Planning Using Remote Sensing and GIS: A Case Study for Marvdasht, Iran	Political, socio-economic, and cultural context
Ghorbani nia, Mirsanjari, & Liaghati, 2018	Evaluating ecotourism potential development in Dena county using multi-criteria evaluation of specific hybrid indices	Governance and planning challenges
Ghorbani, Raufirad, Rafiaani, & Azadi, 2015	Ecotourism sustainable development strategies using SWOT and QSPM model: A case study of Kaji Namakzar Wetland, South Khorasan Province, Iran	Infrastructural challenges

Habibi Kutanaie & Zande Moghadam, 2013	Analysis and leveling of ecotourism potentials and its impact on permanent development using TOPSIS multivariate model (a case study: Mazandaran province)	Governance and planning challenges
Hosseinalizadeh, Jabbari, & Haghlesan, 2018	Assessment of Ecotourism from the Perspective of the Sustainable Development Based on SWOT Model (Case: Azerbaijan Region of Iran)	Environmental challenges / Infrastructural challenges
Kiakojori & Isa Karkroodi, 2015	Feasibility study of the rural ecotourism in the Javaherdeh village of Ramsar using SWOT	Political, socio-economic, and cultural context
Kolahi, Sakai, Moriya, & Aminpour, 2013	Ecotourism Potential for Financing Parks and Protected Areas: A Perspective From Iran's Parks	Governance and planning challenges / Political, socio-economic, and cultural context
Kolahi, Moriya, Sakai, Khosrojerdi, & Etemad, 2014	Introduction of Participatory Conservation in Iran: Case Study of the Rural Communities' Perspectives in Khojir National Park	Governance and planning challenges / Political, socio-economic, and cultural context
Mobaraki, Abdollahzadeh, & Kamelifar, 2014	Site suitability evaluation for ecotourism using GIS and AHP: A case study of Isfahan Townships, Iran	Infrastructural challenges
Modiri, Salimimanesh, Abbasi, & Bagheri Seyyed Shokri, 2011	Analysis and Evaluation of Ecotourism Development Potential and Strategies in Rijab Region (Kermanshah Province)	Governance and planning challenges / Political, socio-economic, and cultural context / Legal aspects
Moharramnejad & Aghakhani, 2009	Evaluation of threats and opportunities of ecotourism industry strategic factors (Case study: protected area of Jajroud)	Governance and planning challenges / Political, socio-economic, and cultural context
Najafi Kani, Motiei Langarodi, & Najafi, 2012	Feasibility study of ecotourism development in rural areas using SWOT analytical model Case study: Amol city	Governance and planning challenges / Political, socio-economic, and cultural context / Legal aspects
Omidi Najafabadi, Haghbin, & Farajolah Hosseini, 2016	Factors affecting ecotourism development: a case study of Lavasan-e Kuchak rural district	Infrastructural challenges
Rakhshan Nasab & Zarabi, 2010	Challenges and opportunities of ecotourism development in Iran	Infrastructural challenges
Ramezani Gourabi & Rajabi, 2015	Environmental vulnerability assessment of Tourism in Anzali Coastal using SWOT.	Infrastructural challenges
Shomalizade, Dashti, & Hemadi, 2015	Analysis and evaluation of potential and strategies for ecotourism development in lake of Dez dam using Freeman's method	Governance and planning challenges / Political, socio-economic, and cultural context
Soltani, Baygloo Shaykh, & ChamanMah, 2009	Conservation of international ecotourism attractions (case study: Gavkhuni swamp in Iran)	Legal aspects / Community awareness and knowledge toward ecotourism / Environmental challenges
Zarabi & Safarabadi, 2014	Assessment of sustainable ecotourism development in Kermanshah city	Governance and planning challenges / Legal aspects / Community awareness and knowledge toward ecotourism

## **Governance and Planning Challenges**

Iranian researchers most commonly discuss governance and tourism planning as the most important tourism development issue in Iran (Ghaderi, Abooli, & Henderson, 2018; Torabi, Rezvani, & Badri, 2019). Desirable governance and management are the key factors in tourism development (Alipour, Vaziri, & Ligay, 2011; Churugsa, McIntosh, & Simmons, 2007; Siakwah, Musavengane, & Leonard, 2019). Simultaneous attention to three categories of natural resources, local communities, and tourists ensure ecotourism's successful development (Yekani Motlagh et al., 2020). Current tourism development strategies in Iran have proven to be ineffective, and its position in the international tourism market is not comparable to its high potential. Therefore, there is a need for a long-term approach to tourism development obstacles (Golghamat Raad, 2019) with appropriate ecotourism development management in order to conserve and maintain the area's biological richness and economic well-being (Ghadiri Masoum et al., 2012).

An inappropriate use of natural resources (Bazm Ara et al., 2017), a lack of management and plans for environmental conservation (Abdolahi, 2007; Kolahi et al., 2014), the poor performance of the National Ecotourism Committee (Abdolahi, 2007), a lack of environmental pollution taxes (Ahmadi et al., 2018), an absence of priority given to ecotourism development projects (Bazm Ara et al., 2017), the ambiguity of approaches to ecotourism development (Modiri et al., 2011), a lack of consolidated management for accurate targeting and monitoring of ecotourism development and its sustainable maintenance (Esmacil Mohajer & Vahagan Varazdat, 2017), a lack of ecotourism promotion strategies (Shomalizade et al., 2015) and the presentation of natural attractions without taking into account the principles of responsible tourism (Zarabi & Safarabadi, 2014), are some of the challenges related to governance and planning of ecotourism development in Iran.

The need for appropriate institutions, decision-making rules, and established practices are effective governance components (Bramwell & Lane, 2011). Tourism policies and plans need to address the opportunities, conditions, and constraints of national or local planning (Jenkins, 2015), facilitating cooperative behaviour that is a prerequisite for sustainable development (Nunkoo, 2017). Although tourism planning began in Iran in 1980 and despite the progressive policies adopted to encourage tourism development (Ghanian, Ghoochani, & Crofts, 2014), the following challenges in the field of tourism planning and governance in Iran can be mentioned, such as the absence of strategic planning with intersectoral coordination (Abdolahi, 2007) and organizational management practices (Ganjali et al., 2014), the unbalanced development of tourism activities (Ghorbani nia et al., 2018), the lack of forward-looking development policies based on the environmental capacities of each region (Habibi Kutanaie & Zande Moghadam, 2013), the existence of a traditional (top-



down) approach to biodiversity protection (Kolahi et al., 2013), the lack of effective land-use planning, the lack of regional carrying capacity studies (Makhdoum, 2008), the lack of comprehensive biodiversity protection management plans (Moharramnejad & Aghakhani, 2009) and the lack of appropriate planning adapted to the ecological conditions of the regions (Najafi Kani et al., 2012).

### ***Political, socio-economic, and cultural context***

As Jenkins (2015) states, for tourism policymaking in developing countries, internal issues are important to establish a process to facilitate policy formulation, planning, and monitoring of the tourism sector. Such internal challenges to ecotourism development in Iran include economic recessions (Asadi, 2012), inexperienced workforces (Shomalizade et al., 2015), insufficient management experts and ecotourism professionals (Ahmadi et al., 2018; Kiakojsori & Isa Karkroodi, 2015), a lack of coordination between ecotourism related organizations and local agencies (Abdolahi, 2007; Shomalizade et al., 2015), a lack of local people's agreement on the benefits of ecotourism development (Farajzadeh Asl & Karim Panah, 2009; Kolahi et al., 2013; Esmail Mohajer & Vahagan Varazdat, 2017) and a lack of community participation in the planning, development, and conservation of natural resources (Abdolahi, 2007). However, in partnership with local communities and conservation projects, the development of ecotourism can restore local livelihoods (Ghadiri Masoum et al., 2012).

Political systems shape the preconditions for participation in the tourism development process (Causevic & Lynch, 2013). Still, the lack of two-way interactions between local people and government officials (Kolahi et al., 2014) as well as between public and private organizations have led to the absence of private sector supports (Ganjali et al., 2014) and insufficient government budgets for environmental conservation in Iran (Moharramnejad & Aghakhani, 2009). Tensions, unrest, and insecurity in the Middle East (Asadi, 2012), the unstable international political condition (Modiri et al., 2011), increased and intensified competition in global markets and the existence of competent competitors (Najafi Kani et al., 2012) are other challenges that have affected Iranian tourism.

### **Legal aspects**

The country's legislators do not adequately address tourism, especially ecotourism, to protect natural attractions because of the weak governance we face in developing tourism in Iran. While the government's role in development has shifted to addressing issues such as economic and socio-cultural impacts, political responsibilities, power relations, and environmental awareness (Yang, Wall, & Smith, 2008), the role of the government is still not well understood in the development of tourism in Iran. Countries or regions successful in ecotourism have stipulated strict laws and regulations or have special institutions to oversee the implementation of these laws and regulations (Wang,

2010). Tourism development requires appropriate regulations because not all tourism is environmentally friendly or socially acceptable (Tisdell, 2011).

In Iran, a wide range of policies, laws, and regulations directly or indirectly lead to the loss or work against biodiversity conservation (Kolahi et al., 2012), particularly in ecotourism, as there is a poor connection between environmental laws and tourism (Modiri et al., 2011). Too frequent exploitation of natural resources in an economical way (Zarabi & Safarabadi, 2014) and excessive recreational use (Makhdoum, 2008) are the most prevalent challenges in Iran's ecotourism zones, along with illegal fishing, mining exploitation, sewage disposal (Soltani et al., 2009) and illegal hunting (Ganjali et al., 2014). Some of the major legal challenges are related to the lack of explicit rules and mechanisms in protected areas (Ganjali et al., 2014), the lack of regulatory provisions to limit the damage caused by ecotourists (Amiri et al., 2015), and the lack of monitoring in ecotourism areas (Makhdoum, 2008). Other challenges affecting the development of ecotourism in Iran are the lack of institutionalized capacity (Akbari et al., 2017), laws and regulations for the development of ecotourism by related organizations to reduce the risk of natural landscape loss (Akbari et al., 2017; Najafi Kani et al., 2012). The main debate in environmental ethics is about how to value nature (Thompson, 2001). However, there is no environmental ethics code to be respected by the different beneficiaries in Iran (Makhdoum, 2008).

### **Infrastructural Challenges**

Infrastructure is a significant factor in developing destinations (Adeola & Evans, 2020; Khadaroo & Seetanah, 2008, 2014) and in overall tourist impression and destination image (Imikan & Ekpo, 2012). The lack of infrastructure is one of the main limitations hindering tourism development in this country, despite its diverse cultural and natural attractions (Ahmadi et al., 2018; Hashemi & Ghaffary, 2017; Nematpour & Faraji, 2019; Tahbaz, 2016; Zamani-Farahani, 2016). Infrastructure problems are another obstacle to the development and implementation of ecotourism activities in Iran, reflected in the lack of reception and accommodation centers, the inadequacy of the transport system to facilitate access to ecotourism activities, the poor access to modern technology in areas likely to develop ecotourism (Asadi, 2012), the lack of tourist facilities in regions capable of developing ecotourism activities (Mobaraki et al., 2014) and the lack of appropriate environmental as well as physical infrastructure (Ghorbani et al., 2015). It is necessary to pay attention to the infrastructure dimension for tourism development to promote destinations' competitive advantage (Imikan & Ekpo, 2012).

### **Community Awareness and Knowledge Toward Ecotourism**

The weaknesses in the sustainable development of ecotourism in Iran and the main problem regarding the preservation of its attractions are the low level of environmental

education of the host communities (Hosseinalizadeh et al., 2018), a lack of education for attitude change, and awareness of tourists on ecotourism issues (OmidiNajafabadi et al., 2016), insufficient information on natural phenomena (Soltani et al., 2009) and irresponsibility towards environmental and natural conservation (Asadi, 2012; Ramezani Gourabi & Rajabi, 2015). The lack of awareness of ecotourism development opportunities among residents is linked to the decrease in local initiatives and benefits (Nault & Stapleton, 2011). Another challenge is the absence of indigenous community empowerment (Bazm Ara et al., 2017). However, ecotourism in Iran requires indigenous communities in the decision-making process in agreement with managers. Kolahi et al. (2014) point out that one of the main concerns requiring more attention is ineffective management in participatory conservation and the insufficient link between man and nature. On the other hand, weak marketing efforts (Asadi, 2012), a lack of adequate presentation of ecotourism attractions (Zarabi & Safarabadi, 2014), and a lack of public understanding of the absolute value of the country's natural resources (Rakhshan Nasab & Zarabi, 2010) are additional factors affecting ecotourism development in Iran.

### **Environmental Challenges**

Environmental impact challenges have received very little attention and research among tourism researchers. In contrast, environmental crises are the main threats to Iran's natural resources (Atlantic Council, 2018). Such hidden challenges affecting the development of ecotourism in Iran have many long-term effects on the country's natural and cultural attractions, such as environmental pollution (Ganjali et al., 2014), ecological changes (Hosseinalizadeh et al., 2018), climate change, consequent droughts, natural disasters (Asadi, 2012), water pollution (Soltani et al., 2009) and in particular environmental degradation (Laylin, 2018; Makhdom, 2008). While tourism growth is likely to continue, the natural resources that make destinations attractive to tourists do not expand but risk being lost and taking a long period to replenish (Hübler, 2019). Sustainable and practical solutions (Tahbaz, 2016) and the implementation of long-term tourism planning (Nematpour, Khodadadi, Rezaei, & Makian, 2020) are required to address the challenges caused by the destruction of biodiversity in Iran.

### **Conclusion and Implications**

Iran has a comparatively advantageous position in ecotourism compared to other tourism branches because of its territorial varieties, historical and cultural attractions, and biological diversity (Ahmadi et al., 2018). However, the development of ecotourism currently faces major challenges. Unbridled tourism development can pose a severe threat to these areas, leading to irreversible environmental changes in the absence of

a systematic and knowledge-based management system (Ziaee & Mirzaee, 2005). Despite measures taken in the past, including the approval of ecotourism regulations by the Iranian Parliament, the creation of the National Ecotourism Committee in 2005, the establishment of the Iranian Ecotourism Scientific Association in 2016, and the government's efforts to develop ecotourism through supportive programs, especially in the post-Corona era (Irangov, 2020), some challenges persist. Challenges related to the management and planning of tourism in Iran have led to the emergence of other challenges, such as legal, infrastructural, environmental, political, socio-economic, cultural, and community awareness problems. However, many of the challenges mentioned in the findings section may overlap. Studying and evaluating existing challenges will provide planners and policy-makers with an overview of Iran's current ecotourism situation to improve the design and implementation of programs and identify what could be done better in the future (OECD, 2012).

A regional vision for ecotourism development planning must identify and promote a range of unique tourist experiences that can be environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable while meeting visitor and local community's needs (Azimi & Hajipour, 2008). So, the principles of ecotourism, such as minimizing the negative environmental impact, building environmental awareness, creating positive experiences, providing financial support for conservation, empowering local people, and raising awareness about the political, environmental, and social situations of the host community, should be followed by those who implement and participate in ecotourism activities (Ghorbani et al., 2015). To make sustainable use of natural resources and attractions for the planning of ecotourism in Iran, it is essential to study and evaluate the main challenges in ecotourism regions that will affect future development. As the natural environment is a fundamental basis for ecotourism activities, tourism authorities must adopt corrective strategies to minimize these negative effects. By looking retrospectively at the past challenges of Iranian ecotourism and its performance, businesses, academics, and government agencies can plan their strategic future (O' Regan, 2018). For future research, it is suggested to study the challenges of ecotourism development in Iran, using methods such as scenario planning to determine strategies for its future planning and development.

---

**Peer-review:** Externally peer-reviewed.

**Conflict of Interest:** The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

**Grant Support:** The authors declared that this study has received no financial support.

**Authors Contributions:** Conception/Design of study: S.M.; Data Acquisition: S.M., F.H.; Data Analysis/Interpretation: S.M.; Drafting Manuscript: S.M., F.H.; Critical Revision of Manuscript: S.M.; Final Approval and Accountability: S.M., F.H.

---

## References

- Abdolahi, E. (2007). *Ecotourism compatible with environmental protection and sustainability of natural resources*. Presented at the Sixth Iranian Agriculture Economics Conference, Mashhad-Iran.
- Adeola, O., & Evans, O. (2020). ICT, infrastructure, and tourism development in Africa. *Tourism Economics*, 26(1), 97–114. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354816619827712>
- Ahmadi, M., Khodadadi, M., & Shahabi, H. (2018). Planning for ecotourism in the protected area of Manesht and Ghelarang, Ilam Province, Iran. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 19(2), 243–268. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1528008X.2017.1394956>
- Akbari, M., Khodadad, M., Musazadeh, H., & Rudgar Safari, V. (2017). Evaluating the ecological capability of Tehran province in the development of ecotourism using geographic information system. *Geographical Journal Of Tourism Space*, 6(21), 117–132.
- Alipour, H., Vaziri, R. K., & Ligay, E. (2011). Governance as Catalyst to Sustainable Tourism Development: Evidence from North Cyprus. *Journal of Sustainable Development*, 4(5), 32–49. <https://doi.org/10.5539/jsd.v4n5p32>
- Amiri, M. J., Zoghi, M., Sadat, M., & Karimi, S. (2015). Assessing ecotourism potential in protected areas to contribute to sustainable rural development (Case study: Arasbaran protected area- Mishehporeh). *Journal of Research and Rural Planning*, 4(3), 39–50.
- Asadi, R. (2012). Strategies for Iran Ecotourism. *World Applied Sciences Journal*, 18(3), 414–424. <https://doi.org/10.5829/idosi.wasj.2012.18.03.1710>
- Asadpourian, Z., Rahimian, M., & Gholamrezai, S. (2020). SWOT-AHP-TOWS Analysis for Sustainable Ecotourism Development in the Best Area in Lorestan Province, Iran. *Social Indicators Research*, 152(1), 289–315. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-020-02438-0>
- Atlantic Council. (2018). Iran's Environmental Impasse. Retrieved October 10, 2020, from <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/commentary/event-recap/iran-s-environmental-impasse/>
- Azimi, N., & Hajipour, A. H. (2008). Planning the Cultural Tourism and Ecotourism Industry for Economic Development: A Case Study of Iran. *Environmental Sciences*, 6(1), 53–64.
- Bazm Ara, M., Tavakoli, M., & Kaveh, J. (2017). Assessing Appropriate Areas for Ecotourism Development of Protected Areas. Case Study: Khaeez Protected Area. *The Journal of Spatial Planning*, 21(3), 95–118.
- Bego, F., & Malltezi, J. (2011). Ecotourism Opportunities and Challenges in Butrint, Albania, a Unique UNESCO and Ramsar Site. *Journal of Coastal Research*, 61, 150–157. <https://doi.org/10.2112/SI61-001.9>
- Bramwell, B., & Lane, B. (2011). Critical research on the governance of tourism and sustainability. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 19(4–5), 411–421. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2011.580586>
- Carvache-Franco, M., Segarra-Oña, M., & Carrascosa-López, C. (2019). Segmentation by Motivation in Ecotourism: Application to Protected Areas in Guayas, Ecuador. *Sustainability*, 11(1), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11010240>
- Causevic, S., & Lynch, P. (2013). Political (in)stability and its influence on tourism development. *Tourism Management*, 34, 145–157. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2012.04.006>
- Cetinkaya, G. (2004). Challenges for ecotourism development in Çukurova delta Biosphere Reserve, Turkey. *Budownictwo*, 16, 89–96.
- Churugsa, W., McIntosh, A. J., & Simmons, D. (2007). Sustainable tourism planning and development: Understanding the capacity of local government. *Leisure/Loisir*, 31(2), 453–473. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14927713.2007.9651391>

- Dabiri, F., Fazel, A. M., Moghaddasi, N., & Mehrasa Mehrdadi. (2016). *Revised National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plan (NBSAP2) of Islamic Republic of Iran*. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.17561.62567>
- Das, M., & Chatterjee, B. (2015). Ecotourism: A panacea or a predicament? *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 14, 3–16. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2015.01.002>
- Farajzadeh Asl, M., & Karim Panah, R. (2009). Possibility Study of Ecotourism Development Zones in Kurdistan Province Using Geographic Information System (GIS). *Physical Geography Research Quarterly*, (65), 33–50.
- Fernando, S. L. J., & Shariff, N. M. (2017). Wetland ecotourism in Sri Lanka: Issues and challenges. *Geografia-Malaysian Journal of Society and Space*, 9(4), 99–105.
- FinancialTribune. (2017, May 23). Iran Ecotourism Untapped. Retrieved June 17, 2020, from Financial Tribune website: <https://financialtribune.com/articles/travel/65072/iran-ecotourism-untapped>
- Ganjali, S., Shayesteh, K., Ghasemi, A., & Mohammadi, H. (2014). Environmental and strategic assessment of ecotourism potential in Anzali Wetland using SWOT analysis. *Caspian Journal of Environmental Sciences-University of Guilan*, 22(1), 155–164.
- Ghadery, Z., Abooli, G., & Henderson, J. (2018). Community capacity building for tourism in a heritage village: The case of Hawraman Takht in Iran. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 26(4), 537–550. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2017.1361429>
- Ghadiri Masoum, M., Nasiri, H., Hosseini, A., & Rafii, Y. (2012). Ecotourism Planning Using Remote Sensing and GIS: A Case Study for Marvdasht, Iran. In R. Abu (Ed.), *Current Issues in Hospitality and Tourism: Research and Innovations* (pp. 225–229). CRC Press. <https://doi.org/10.1201/b12752>
- Ghadiri, N., & Sabzi, A. (2011). *Analytical article on ecotourism and its place in the vision document for the development of Iran's cultural heritage and tourism sector*. Presented at the 11th Congress of Geographers of Iran, Iran.
- Ghanian, M., Ghoochani, O. M., & Crotts, J. C. (2014). An application of European Performance Satisfaction Index towards rural tourism: The case of western Iran. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 11, 77–82. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2014.04.005>
- Ghoddousi, S., Pintassilgo, P., Mendes, J., Ghoddousi, A., & Sequeira, B. (2018). Tourism and nature conservation: A case study in Golestan National Park, Iran. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 26, 20–27. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2017.12.006>
- Ghorbani, A., Raufirad, V., Rafiaani, P., & Azadi, H. (2015). Ecotourism sustainable development strategies using SWOT and QSPM model: A case study of Kaji Namakzar Wetland, South Khorasan Province, Iran. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 16, 290–297. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2015.09.005>
- Ghorbani nia, V., Mirsanjari, M., & Liaghathi, H. (2018). Evaluating ecotourism potential development in Dena county using multi-criteria evaluation of specific hybrid indices. *Journal of Rangeland*, 12(3), 316–329.
- Goharipour, H., & Hajiluie, M. M. (2016). A Study on River Ecotourism Development: Case Study: Karaj River. *International Journal of Geography and Geology*, 5(4), 73–85. <https://doi.org/10.18488/journal.10/2016.5.4/10.4.73.85>
- Golghamat Raad, N. (2019). A Strategic Approach to Tourism Development Barriers in Iran. *Journal of Tourism & Hospitality*, 08(03), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.35248/2167-0269.19.8.410>



- González Fonseca, F. (2012). Challenges and Opportunities in the World of Tourism from the Point of View of Ecotourism. *Higher Learning Research Communications*, 2(4), 5–22. <https://doi.org/10.18870/hlrc.v2i4.82>
- Habibi Kutanaie, S., & Zande Moghadam, M. (2013). Analysis and leveling of ecotourism potentials and its impact on permanent development using TOPSIS multivariate model (a case study: Mazandaran province). *Geographical Journal of Tourism Space*, 2(8), 99–111.
- Hadizadeh Zargar, S. (2016). Tourism Environmental Zoning Powers of Mazandaran Province to Develop Ecotourism. *Journal of Urban Economics and Management*, 5(1(17)), 31–46.
- Hashemi, N., & Ghaffary, G. (2017). A Proposed Sustainable Rural Development Index (SRDI): Lessons from Hajij village, Iran. *Tourism Management*, 59, 130–138. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2016.07.021>
- Hosseinalizadeh, S., Jabbari, S., & Haghlesan, M. (2018). Assessment of Ecotourism from the Perspective of the Sustainable Development Based on SWOT Model (Case: Azerbaijan Region of Iran. *European Journal of Sustainable Development*, 7(1), 163–174. <https://doi.org/10.14207/ejsd.2018.v7n1p163>
- Ijeomah, H. M., & Okoli, C. I. C. (2016). Challenges of Ecotourism in Selected Destinations of Nigeria. *International Journal of Agriculture and Rural Development*, 19(2), 2655–2668.
- Imikan, A. M., & Ekpo, K. J. (2012). Infrastructure and Tourism Development in Nigeria: The Case Study of Rivers State. *International Journal of Economic Development Research and Investment*, 3(2), 53–60.
- Irangov. (2020). Efforts to approve the tourism support package in the government. Retrieved October 11, 2020, from the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran website: <http://dolat.ir/detail/347916>
- IRNA. (2018, November 13). Ecotourism in Iran: Pure joy of staying in heavenly spots. Retrieved June 20, 2020, from IRNA English website: <https://en.irna.ir/news/83097910/Ecotourism-in-Iran-Pure-joy-of-staying-in-heavenly-spots>
- Jenkins, C. L. (2015). Tourism policy and planning for developing countries: Some critical issues. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 40(2), 144–156. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2015.1045363>
- Kamyabi, S., & Rajaei Rizi, M. A. (2018). Ecotourism Development Strategies in Chahardangeh District of Sari County. *Journal of Research and Rural Planning*, 6(4), 107–126.
- Khadaroo, J., & Seetanah, B. (2008). The role of transport infrastructure in international tourism development: A gravity model approach. *Tourism Management*, 29(5), 831–840. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2007.09.005>
- Khadaroo, J., & Seetanah, B. (2014). Infrastructure, tourism. In J. Jafari & H. Xiao (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Tourism* (pp. 1–2). Cham: Springer International Publishing. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-01669-6\\_447-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-01669-6_447-1)
- Khalili, S., Moridsadat, P., & Soltaninejad, H. (2020). Toward Sustainable Rural Ecotourism Evolution: The Case Of Kiskan, Iran. *Geography, environment, sustainability*, 13(3), 39–48. <https://doi.org/10.24057/2071-9388-2019-133>
- Kiakojori, D., & Isa Karkroodi, N. (2015). Feasibility study of the rural ecotourism in the Javaherdeh village of Ramsar using SWOT. *Quarterly Natural Ecosystems of Iran*, 6(1–2), 111–124.
- Kolahi, M., Moriya, K., Sakai, T., Khosrojerdi, E., & Etemad, V. (2014). Introduction of Participatory Conservation in Iran: Case Study of the Rural Communities' Perspectives in Khojir National Park. *International Journal of Environmental Research*, 8(4), 913–930. <https://doi.org/10.22059/ijer.2014.784>

- Kolahi, M, Sakai, T., Moriya, K., Yoshikawa, M., & Esmaili, R. (2014). From paper parks to real conservations: Case study of social capital in Iran's biodiversity conservation. *International Journal of Environmental Research*, 8(1), 101–114.
- Kolahi, Mahdi, Sakai, T., Moriya, K., & Aminpour, M. (2013). Ecotourism Potentials for Financing Parks and Protected Areas: A Perspective From Iran's Parks. *Accounting Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 9(1), 144–152.
- Kolahi, Mahdi, Sakai, T., Moriya, K., & Makhdom, M. F. (2012). Challenges to the Future Development of Iran's Protected Areas System. *Environmental Management*, 50(4), 750–765. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00267-012-9895-5>
- Laylin, D. (2018). *Environmental and Wildlife Degradation in Iran*. Atlantic Council. Retrieved from Atlantic Council website: [https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep17110?seq=1#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep17110?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents)
- Makhdom, M. F. (2008). Management of protected areas and conservation of biodiversity in Iran. *International Journal of Environmental Studies*, 65(4), 563–585. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00207230802245898>
- Mansoori, S., Behzad, R., & Jaybhave, R. G. (2014). The Role of Ecotourism in the Prosperity of Local People in the Tandooreh National Park and the Shir-Ahmad Wildlife Refuge- Iran. *The International Journal Of Humanities & Social Studies*, 2(8), 111–114.
- Mgonja, J. T., Sirima, A., & Mkumbo, P. J. (2015). A review of ecotourism in Tanzania: Magnitude, challenges, and prospects for sustainability. *Journal of Ecotourism*, 14(2–3), 264–277. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14724049.2015.1114623>
- Mobaraki, O., Abdollahzadeh, M., & Kamelifar, Z. (2014). Site suitability evaluation for ecotourism using GIS and AHP: A case study of Isfahan Townships, Iran. *Management Science Letters*, 4(8), 1893–1898. <https://doi.org/10.5267/j.msl.2014.6.038>
- Modiri, M., Salimimanes, J., Abbasi, M., & Bagheri Seyyed Shokri, S. (2011). Analysis and Evaluation of Ecotourism Development Potential and Strategies in Rijab Region (Kermanshah Province). *Scientific- Research Quarterly of Geographical Data (SEPEHR)*, 20(78), 43–50.
- Moghimehfar, F., Halpenny, E. A., & Ziaee, M. (2014). How big is the gap? Comparing the behaviours and knowledge of mountain hikers with ecotourism ideals: a case study of Iran. *Journal of Ecotourism*, 13(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14724049.2014.925466>
- Mohajer, E., & Avagyan, A. (2014). Evaluation of Ecotourism Capabilities of Golestan Province. *Bulletin of Environment, Pharmacology and Life Sciences*, 3(12), 116–128.
- Mohajer, Esmail, & Vahagan Varazdat, G. (2017). Prospects And Problems of Ecotourism in Iran. *World Journal of Environmental Biosciences*, 6. Retrieved from <https://environmentaljournal.org/index/ArchivDetail/21-37HED/articles/R4.pdf>
- Moharramnejad, N., & Aghakhani, M. (2009). Evaluation of threats and opportunities of ecotourism industry strategic factors(Case study: Protected area of Jajroud). *Journal Of Environmental Science And Technology*, 11(3), 237–248.
- Mosammam, H. M., Sarrafi, M., Nia, J. T., & Heidari, S. (2016). Typology of the ecotourism development approach and an evaluation from the sustainability view: The case of Mazandaran Province, Iran. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 18, 168–178. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2016.03.004>
- Najafi Kani, A. A., Motiei Langarodi, S. H., & Najafi, K. (2012). Feasibility study of ecotourism development in rural areas using SWOT analytical model Case study: Amol city. *Journal of Geography*, (19–18), 121–137.
- Nault, S., & Stapleton, P. (2011). The community participation process in ecotourism development: A case study of the community of Sogoog, Bayan-Ulgii, Mongolia. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 19(6), 695–712. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2010.536240>



- Nee, I., & Beckmann, I. (2011). Ecotourism: The growth, its implications and trends. In A. Papathanassis (Ed.), *The Long Tail of Tourism* (pp. 115–127). Wiesbaden: Gabler. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-8349-6231-7\\_13](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-8349-6231-7_13)
- Nematpour, M., & Faraji, A. (2019). Structural analysis of the tourism impacts in the form of future study in developing countries (case study: Iran). *Journal of Tourism Futures*, 5(3), 259–282. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JTF-05-2018-0028>
- Nematpour, M., Khodadadi, M., Rezaei, N., & Makian, S. (2020). Structural analysis of the development of the Iranian tourism market employing a MICMAC approach: A new long-range planning method to attract the ASEAN international tourist market. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights, ahead-of-print*(ahead-of-print). <https://doi.org/10.1108/JHTI-04-2020-0053>
- Nunkoo, R. (2017). Governance and sustainable tourism: What is the role of trust, power and social capital? *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 6(4), 277–285. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2017.10.003>
- O' Regan, M. (2018). Backpacking's future and its drifter past. *Journal of Tourism Futures*, 4(3), 193–204. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JTF-04-2018-0019>
- OECD. (2012). Evaluating Tourism Policies and Programmes. In OECD, *OECD Tourism Trends and Policies 2012* (pp. 55–85). OECD. <https://doi.org/10.1787/tour-2012-4-en>
- Okech, R. N. (2011). Ecotourism Development and Challenges: A Kenyan Experience. *Tourism Analysis*, 16(1), 19–30. <https://doi.org/10.3727/108354211X12988225899967>
- Omidi Najafabadi, M., Haghbin, A., & Farajolah Hosseini, S. J. (2016). Factors affecting ecotourism development: A case study of Lavasan-e Kuchak rural district. *Journal of Agricultural Extension and Education Research*, 99(3), 11–21.
- Otago, G. S. (2014). Planning for Sustainable Tourism: Challenges and Opportunities for Ecotourism Development in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. *American Journal of Human Ecology*, 3(2), 20–26.
- Pourasghari, M., & Amar, T. (2018). Feasibility of Ecotourism Development in Anzali Wetland: An Emphasis on Bird Watching Stations. *Journal of Tourism & Hospitality Research*, 6(1), 59–77.
- Rakhshan Nasab, H., & Zarabi, A. (2010). Challenges and opportunities of ecotourism development in Iran. *Journal of Geographic Space*, 9(28), 41–55.
- Ramezani Gourabi, B., & Rajabi, R. (2015). Environmental vulnerability assessment of Tourism in Anzali Coastal using SWOT. *Journal of Environmental Science and Technology*, 16(1), 245–256.
- Riasi, A., & Pourmiri, S. (2015). Effects of online marketing on Iranian ecotourism industry: Economic, sociological, and cultural aspects. *Management Science Letters*, 5(10), 915–926. <https://doi.org/10.5267/j.msl.2015.8.005>
- Salehi, N., & Fayaz, M. A. (2013). *Ecotourism in Iran*. Iran: Mirmah.
- Shemshad, M., & Malek Mohammadi, I. (2012). Analysis of Factors Affecting the Ecotourism Development (In Pasture and Forest Cooperatives in Golestan Province, Iran). *International Journal of Architecture and Urban Development*, 2(4), 19–24.
- Shomalizade, F., Dashti, S., & Hemadi, K. (2015). Analysis and evaluation of potential and strategies for ecotourism development in lake of Dez dam using Freeman's method. *Journal of Wetland Ecology*, 7(3), 5–20.
- Siakwah, P., Musavengane, R., & Leonard, L. (2019). Tourism Governance and Attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa. *Tourism Planning & Development*, 17(4), 1–29. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21568316.2019.1600160>
- Soltani, Z., Baygloo Shaykh, R., & ChamanMah, M. (2009). Conservation of international ecotourism attractions (case study: Gavkhuni swamp in Iran). *Journal of Environmental Research And Development*, 4(2), 594–600.

- Soroushnia, S. (2020). Developing Rural Ecotourism Strategies in Wetland Protected Areas. The Case Study of Helleh Wetland, Iran. *Geography and Human Relationships*, 2, 22–36. Retrieved from [http://www.gahr.ir/article\\_105182\\_3aadbee4f74459b30a2fa886b52dbe.pdf](http://www.gahr.ir/article_105182_3aadbee4f74459b30a2fa886b52dbe.pdf)
- Tahbaz, M. (2016). Environmental Challenges in Today's Iran. *Iranian Studies*, 49(6), 943–961. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2016.1241624>
- TehranTimes. (2017, April 15). Iran moves into flourishing ecotourism market. Retrieved June 17, 2020, from Tehran Times website: <https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/412621/Iran-moves-into-flourishing-ecotourism-market>
- Teressa, D. K. (2015). Development of community based ecotourism in Wenchi Crater Lake, Ethiopia: Challenges and prospects. *Journal of Hospitality Management and Tourism*, 6(4), 39–46. <https://doi.org/10.5897/JHMT2014.0133>
- Thompson, J. (2001). Environmentalism: Philosophical Aspects. In *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* (pp. 4679–4685). Elsevier. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B0-08-043076-7/01060-3>
- Tisdell, C. (2011). Economic Aspects of Ecotourism: Wildlife-based Tourism and Its Contribution to Nature. *Sri Lankan Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 5(1), 83–95. <https://doi.org/10.4038/sjae.v5i0.3478>
- Torabi, Z.-A., Rezvani, M. R., & Badri, S. A. (2019). Pro-poor tourism in Iran: The case of three selected villages in Shahrud. *Anatolia*, 30(3), 368–378. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13032917.2019.1595689>
- Tripathi, U. N., & Jain, A. K. (2017). Opportunities And Challenges Of Ecotourism With Reference To Its Employability Potential: Uttar Pradesh, India. *Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies*, 4(37), 8872–8882.
- UNEP-WCMC. (2020). Protected Area Profile for Iran (Islamic Republic Of) from the World Database of Protected Areas, May 2020. Retrieved May 9, 2020, from Protected planet website: <https://www.protectedplanet.net/country/IR#ref1>
- Veicy, H. (2018). The study of Tourism Industry in National Basic Laws of Islamic Republic of Iran. *Strategic Studies of public policy*, 7(25), 93–112.
- Wang, X. (2010). Critical Aspects of Sustainable Development in Tourism: Advanced Ecotourism Education. *Journal of Sustainable Development*, 3(2), 261–263. <https://doi.org/10.5539/jsd.v3n2p261>
- Yang, L., Wall, G., & Smith, S. L. J. (2008). Ethnic tourism development: *Annals of Tourism Research*, 35(3), 751–771. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2008.06.005>
- Yekani Motlagh, E., Hajjarian, M., Hossein Zadeh, O., & Alijanpour, A. (2020). The difference of expert opinion on the forest-based ecotourism development in developed countries and Iran. *Land Use Policy*, 94, 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2020.104549>
- Zamani-Farahani, H. (2016). Host Attitudes toward Tourism: A Study of Sareyn Municipality and Local Community Partnerships in Therapeutic Tourism. *Journal of Tourismology*, 2(1), 16–34.
- Zarabi, A., & Safarabadi, A. (2014). Assessment of sustainable ecotourism development in the Kermanshah city. *Journal of Geography and Planning*, 17(46), 147–170.
- Ziaee, M., & Mirzaee, R. (2005). Management challenges and tourism development in the protected areas of the southern coast of the Caspian Sea (Case study of the Miankaleh Wildlife Sanctuary). *Tourism Management Studies*, 48(10), 1–34.



## Contactless habits in the all-new tourism due to COVID-19: A rapid assessment of the views of Russians and Uzbeks

Aleksandr Gudkov<sup>1</sup> , Deniza Alieva<sup>2</sup> 

### Abstract

The aim of this pilot study is to develop academic work regarding the future behavior of tourists during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as to determine the impact of technology and the wilderness on safe contactless travel. A total of 162 respondents from Russia and Uzbekistan were selected and analyzed using the IBM SPSS Statistics 23 at the end of 2020. Descriptive statistical indicators were calculated, and correlations between participants' characteristics and their openness to new experiences in the tourism industry were analyzed. The findings suggest that tourists consciously prefer contactless interaction, and this behavior pattern is becoming a new social norm, which is likely to persist even when normalcy returns. The pandemic has caused major changes in the perception and use of technology, as well as in the intention of tourists to travel to the wilderness.

### Keywords

Tourists' behavior, Contactless travel, Technology, Wilderness, Social distancing, COVID-19

1 **Correspondence to:** Aleksandr Gudkov (Assoc. Prof.), Orel State University, Department of Economics, Finance and Accounting, Orel, Russia. E-mail: [sashaworld777@gmail.com](mailto:sashaworld777@gmail.com) ORCID: 0000-0002-4006-4522

2 Deniza Alieva (Leading Lecturer), Management Development Institute of Singapore in Tashkent, School of business and management, Tashkent, Uzbekistan. E-mail: [deniza.alieva@gmail.com](mailto:deniza.alieva@gmail.com) ORCID: 0000-0002-3860-1333

**To cite this article:** Gudkov, A., & Alieva, D. (2021). Contactless habits in the all-new tourism due to COVID-19: A rapid assessment of the views of Russians and Uzbeks. *Journal of Tourismology*, 7(1), 141-147. <https://doi.org/10.26650/jot.2021.7.1.0006>



## Introduction

The COVID-19 outbreak is the biggest challenge for the tourism and hospitality sector for 2020 and in the near future. Travel restrictions have been widely imposed in response to the coronavirus worldwide and COVID-19 has become a significant incentive for people to change their travel behavior (Brooks et al., 2020; Galvani et al., 2020; Hall et al., 2020; Ivanova et al., 2020). One of the results of these changes is that people are now strongly trying to avoid interacting with others and going to non-essential travel because of the threat of infection and health risk perceptions (Gössling et al., 2020; Li et al., 2020; Rahimzhan & Irani, 2020).

Earlier, in many cases, different characteristics served as a tool for attracting tourists to a particular destination (Alieva, 2018), now the situation has changed dramatically. One of the ideas that is in spotlight currently due to the pandemic is contactless travel. The travel industry has begun to offer customers a variety of innovative digital solutions that help to maintain social distance with room service and cleaning robots, food/parcel delivery robots, autonomous vehicles, delivery drones, and other robots while traveling (Seyitoğlu & Ivanov, 2020). On the other hand, the usage of other ICT tools in tourism to ensure convenience and safety is increasing (De La Harpe & Sevenhuysen, 2020; Dragović et al., 2018; Gudkov & Dedkova, 2020). Furthermore, traveling in the wild has become more popular as it helps tourists to maintain a social distance. During lockdowns, humans are flocking to green spaces around the world (Rutz et al., 2020) as intact nature provides such essential elements as air, water, and food and serves as a “natural vaccine” (Paxton, 2020).

This research seeks to build upon academic work regarding the future of tourists' behavior during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. This study aims to identify the impact of technology and the wilderness on safe contactless travel.

## Methodology

The data was collected by the application of an online questionnaire distributed to two groups of people. The first one included respondents from Russia, and the second from Uzbekistan. The questionnaire included two sets of questions: one regarding demographic characteristics of participants, and the other one measuring their perceptions on safety, readiness to travel to mass tourism places, openness to explore new wild destinations, and their interest and evaluations of the application of AI in the tourism industry. The questionnaires were designed in Russian, and then translated into English and Uzbek, in addition, their correspondence to the Russian version was checked.

The data collected was analyzed with the IBM SPSS Statistics 23. The researchers calculated the descriptive statistical measures, analyzed correlations between

participants' characteristics and their openness to new experiences in the tourism industry, and conducted a comparative analysis between respondents from Russia and Uzbekistan.

### **Results**

Out of 162 participants who took part in the survey 39.5% (or 64 people) are currently living in Uzbekistan and 60.5% (98 people) are living in Russia. The majority of our respondents are women (85.2%), and more than half of them (55.6%) are 18-25 years old.

Apart from profiling participants based on their demographic characteristics, we also measured their travel preferences. In particular, we determined that 63.0% of them prefer to travel with family, 24.7% - with friends and only 12.3% alone. Self-management and self-organization of the trip are preferred by 61.7% of participants. According to the information provided, cultural tourism is one of the types selected by the majority of participants (55.6%) as the most practiced one. However, ecotourism or community-based tourism (CBT) that are related with the topic of the present research were chosen by 37.0% and 6.2% respectively.

After analyzing the data collected, we determined the following (Figure 1).

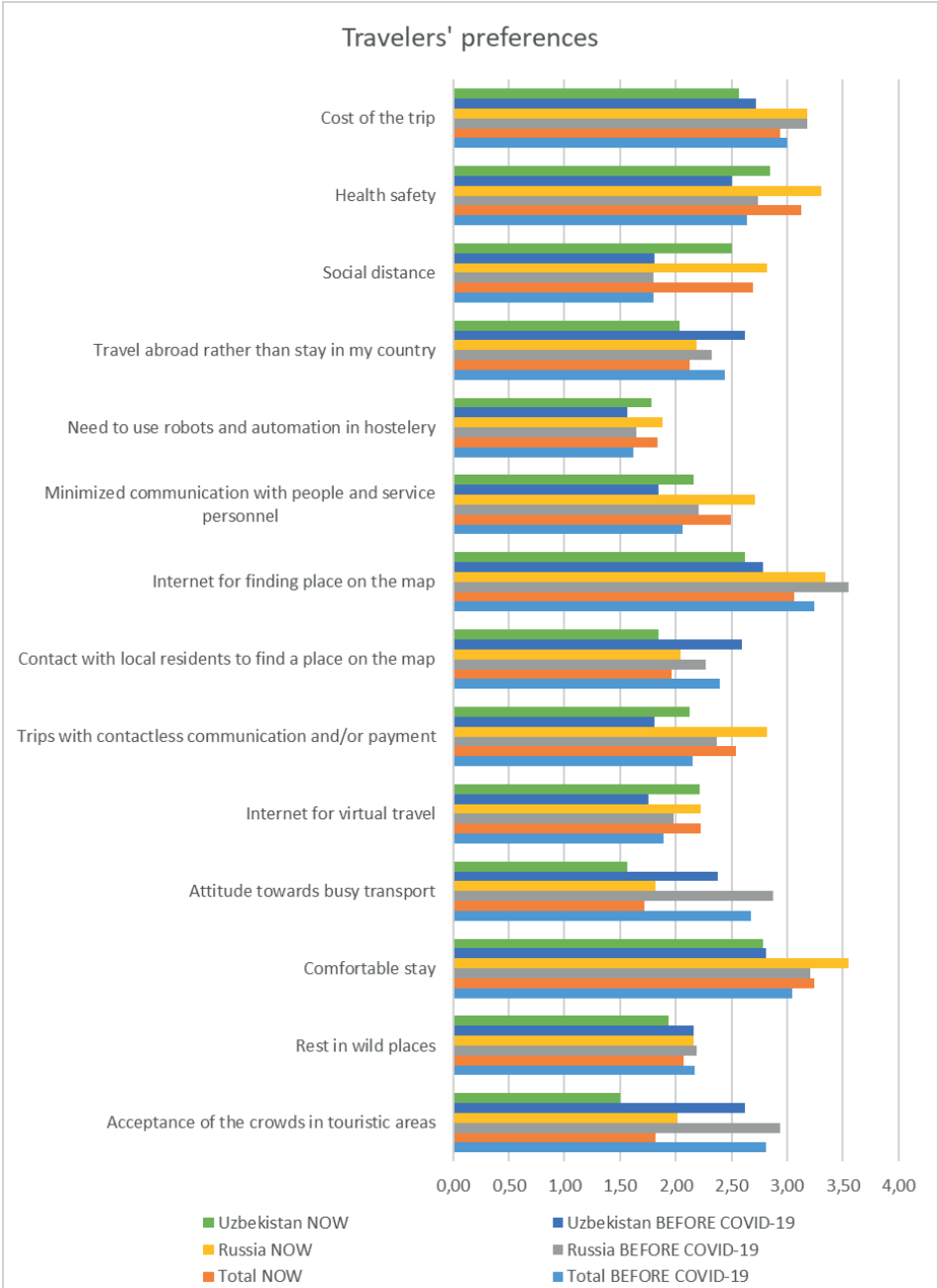


Figure 1. Travelers' preferences on scale from 1 to 4 before COVID-19 outbreak and now

Before the COVID-19 outbreak, people did not use the Internet for virtual travelling, preferring physical trips. However, now the index of this item increased from M=1.89 (SD=1.33) to M=2.22 (SD=1.47), showing an increasing interest of

people towards virtual tours. The other change noticed in terms of people's priorities during the trip is related with the increasing importance of health safety characteristics of the trip in comparison with prioritizing travel costs. If prior to pandemic travelers paid more attention to costs of the trip, now the focus has switched to health safety:  $M=3.00$  ( $SD=1.14$ ) and  $M=2.64$  ( $SD=1.11$ ) respectively before COVID-19, and  $M=2.94$  ( $SD=1.34$ ) and  $M=3.12$  ( $SD=0.26$ ) now.

The comparison between data collected in Uzbekistan and in Russia shows that the pandemic caused changes in perception and the usage of technology. The willingness to use more contactless payments while travelling increased in the case of Uzbekistan for 0.92, while Russia showed 0.45 points positive change. The usage of robots in tourism is also more welcomed by residents of both countries after the pandemic with 0.22 points increase in Uzbekistan and 0.12 in Russia.

The perceptions of the crowd is also changing due to the pandemic. Respondents from Russia reported an increase of 0.92 in non-willingness to have a crowd around, and those from Uzbekistan are also showing a need to be more isolated from people while travelling, scoring 0.82 higher in that item in comparison with the pre-pandemic situation.

A strong correlation was found between the preferred way of travelling and the desire to opt for "wild" tourism. Tourists choosing CBT and ecotourism scored higher in intention to go to wild places far from crowds both before pandemic and now ( $M=2.34$ ,  $SD=1.13$ ;  $M=3.01$ ,  $SD=1.30$ ). However, one group of travelers also became interested in this type of tourism in the current moment – those who choose beach tourism showed an increase in these items to  $M=3.42$ ,  $SD=1.29$ .

There is no evidence that any other factor measured in the current study influences tourists' perception of "wild" tourism or usage of AI in touristic sphere.

### **Conclusion**

COVID-19 has already transformed the global tourism industry from "overtourism" to "no tourism" (Koh, 2020). Tourist behavior patterns are also being transformed after the COVID-19 outbreak (Li et al., 2020).

The present study clearly identified that travel safety for health is becoming an absolute priority now (Ivanova et al., 2020). Taking into consideration the limitations of the study related with the limited number of participants we could not expand the results obtained to the whole population of both countries. However, we were able to determine several trends in tourists' behavior and their preferences. Of course, there is a chance that the pattern changes as time passes, however in the near future we cannot see any potential decline in travel safety prioritizing. Tourists consciously

prefer contactless interaction, and this behavior model is becoming a new social norm. Changes in the physical world only come through changes in the human mind and consciousness (Galvani et al., 2020). These changes are leading people to prioritize the use of technology and artificial intelligence in tourism (Rahimizhian & Irani, 2020). In cases when they are not available, travelers opt for the wilderness to maintain social distance. Our findings will help to deepen knowledge about the transformation of tourists' behavior because of COVID-19 and can become a base for consequent studies in the field.

---

**Peer-review:** Externally peer-reviewed.

**Conflict of Interest:** The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

**Grant Support:** The authors declared that this study has received no financial support.

**Authors Contributions:** Conception/Design of study: A.G.; Data Acquisition: A.G., D.A.; Data Analysis/Interpretation: D.A.; Drafting Manuscript: A.G., D.A.; Critical Revision of Manuscript: A.G.; Final Approval and Accountability: A.G.

---

## References

- Alieva, D. (2018). *Redes de organizaciones turísticas, itinerarios de viaje y experiencias interculturales de los turistas ruso-hablantes en Andalucía*. Doctoral thesis, University of Seville (Spain).
- Brooks, S.K., Webster, R.K., Smith, L.E., Woodland, L., Wessely, S., Greenberg, N., Rubin, G.J. (2020). The psychological impact of quarantine and how to reduce it: rapid review of the evidence. *The Lancet*, 395, 912–920. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)30460-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30460-8)
- De La Harpe, M, Sevenhuysen, K. (2020). New Technologies in the Field of Tourist Guiding: Threat or Tool? *Journal of Tourismology*, 6 (1), 13-33. <https://doi.org/10.26650/jot.2020.6.1.0009>
- Dragović, N., Stankov, U., and Vasiljević, Đ. (2018). Contactless Technology as a Factor of Tourism Industry Development - A Review of Current Practices and Future Directions. *Economic Themes*, 56(2), 179-202. <https://doi.org/10.2478/ethemes-2018-0011>
- Galvani, A., Lew, A.A. & Perez M.S. (2020). COVID-19 is expanding global consciousness and the sustainability of travel and tourism. *Tourism Geographies*, 22(3), 567-576. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2020.1760924>
- Gössling, S., Scott D. & Hall C. M. (2020). Pandemics, tourism, and global change: a rapid assessment of COVID-19. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2020.1758708>
- Gudkov, A., Dedkova, E. (2020). What Does ICT Mean for Tourism Export Development? In: Antipova T., Rocha Á. (eds) *Digital Science 2019. DSIC 2019. Advances in Intelligent Systems and Computing*, 1114, 165-174. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-37737-3\\_15](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-37737-3_15)
- Hall, C. M., Scott, D. & Gössling S. (2020). Pandemics, transformations and tourism: be careful what you wish for. *Tourism Geographies*, 22(3), 577-598. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2020.1759131>
- Ivanova, M., Ivanov, I. K. & Ivanov, S. (2020). Travel behavior after the pandemic: the case of Bulgaria. *Anatolia*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13032917.2020.1818267>
- Koh, E. (2020). The end of over-tourism? Opportunities in a post-Covid-19 world. *International Journal of Tourism Cities*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJTC-04-2020-0080>



- Li, Z., Zhang, S., Liu, X., Kozak, M., Wen, J. (2020). Seeing the invisible hand: Underlying effects of COVID-19 on tourists' behavioral patterns. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 18, 100502. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2020.100502>
- Paxton, M. (2020). The coronavirus threat to wildlife tourism and conservation. <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/blog/2020/the-coronavirus-threat-to-wildlife-tourism-and-conservation.html>
- Rahimizhian, S. and Irani, F. (2020). Contactless hospitality in a post-Covid-19 world. *International Hospitality Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IHR-08-2020-0041>
- Rutz, C., Loretto, M., Bates, A.E. et al. (2020). COVID-19 lockdown allows researchers to quantify the effects of human activity on wildlife. *Nature Ecology & Evolution*, 4, 1156–1159. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-020-1237-z>
- Seyitoğlu, F., Ivanov, S. (2020). Service robots as a tool for physical distancing in tourism. *Current Issues in Tourism*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2020.1774518>



## AIM AND SCOPE

*Journal of Tourismology* (JoT) publishes two issues per year; one in December and the other in June. *JoT* is an open access journal without any submission or processing charges or fees that aims to be a comprehensive and innovative publication for scholars to present views and ideas at international level on key issues that shape tourism knowledge and industry from past to present.

The objectives of the journal are: (i) To present the latest disciplinary/multidisciplinary set of views and trends on tourism; (ii) To contribute a deeper understanding of international tourism development; (iii) To create and disseminate knowledge by providing insights into developments, issues and methods in tourism research

*JoT* strongly encourages scholars and professionals in the tourism to share their ideas and research through the journal. Submitted papers should not have been previously published nor be currently under consideration for publication elsewhere. All submissions are double blind refereed which takes on average 6 weeks. The journal's contents reflect its integrative approach - theoretical, empirical or policy-related papers, discussion of current issues, case studies, reports, book reviews, research notes and forthcoming meetings might be submitted to the journal. The topics of journal include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Tourism theory
- Tourism research and methodology
- Advances in tourism development, planning and policy-making
- Tourism education and its role in managing tourism development
- Economic/social/environmental/cultural impact of tourism and sustainability
- Hospitality, gastronomy, transportation, attractions, recreations, leisure studies
- Tourism industry, marketing, organizational aspects, technology
- Cross-cultural differences- tourist and traveler behavior
- Tourism sociology and psychology
- Alternative and special forms of tourism
- Terrorism, safety and security in tourism
- Globalisation and tourism
- Future of tourism

## EDITORIAL POLICIES AND PEER REVIEW PROCESS

### Publication Policy

The subjects covered in the manuscripts submitted to the Journal for publication must be in accordance with the aim and scope of the Journal. The Journal gives priority to original research papers submitted for publication.

### General Principles

Only those manuscripts approved by its every individual author and that were not published before in or sent to another journal, are accepted for evaluation.

Submitted manuscripts that pass preliminary control are scanned for plagiarism using iThenticate software. After plagiarism check, the eligible ones are evaluated by editor-in-chief for their originality, methodology, the importance of the subject covered and compliance with the journal scope.

Short presentations that took place in scientific meetings can be referred if indicated in the article. The editor hands over the papers matching the formal rules to at least two national/international referees for evaluation and gives green light for publication upon modification by the authors in accordance with the referees' claims. Changing the name of an author (omission, addition or order)

in papers submitted to the Journal requires written permission of all declared authors. Refused manuscripts and graphics are not returned to the author. The copyright of the published articles and pictures belong to the Journal.

### **Author Responsibilities**

It is authors' responsibility to ensure that the article is in accordance with scientific and ethical standards and rules. And authors must ensure that submitted work is original. They must certify that the manuscript has not previously been published elsewhere or is not currently being considered for publication elsewhere, in any language. Applicable copyright laws and conventions must be followed. Copyright material (e.g. tables, figures or extensive quotations) must be reproduced only with appropriate permission and acknowledgement. Any work or words of other authors, contributors, or sources must be appropriately credited and referenced.

All the authors of a submitted manuscript must have direct scientific and academic contribution to the manuscript. The author(s) of the original research articles is defined as a person who is significantly involved in "conceptualization and design of the study", "collecting the data", "analyzing the data", "writing the manuscript", "reviewing the manuscript with a critical perspective" and "planning/ conducting the study of the manuscript and/or revising it". Fund raising, data collection or supervision of the research group are not sufficient roles to be accepted as an author. The author(s) must meet all these criteria described above. The order of names in the author list of an article must be a co-decision and it must be indicated in the [Copyright Agreement Form](#). The individuals who do not meet the authorship criteria but contributed to the study must take place in the acknowledgement section. Individuals providing technical support, assisting writing, providing a general support, providing material or financial support are examples to be indicated in acknowledgement section.

All authors must disclose all issues concerning financial relationship, conflict of interest, and competing interest that may potentially influence the results of the research or scientific judgment.

When an author discovers a significant error or inaccuracy in his/her own published paper, it is the author's obligation to promptly cooperate with the Editor-in-Chief to provide retractions or corrections of mistakes.

### **Peer Review Process**

Only those manuscripts approved by its every individual author and that were not published before in or sent to another journal, are accepted for evaluation.

Submitted manuscripts that pass preliminary control are scanned for plagiarism using iThenticate software. After plagiarism check, the eligible ones are evaluated by editor-in-chief for their originality, methodology, the importance of the subject covered and compliance with the journal scope. Editor-in-chief evaluates manuscripts for their scientific content without regard to ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, citizenship, religious belief or political philosophy of the authors and ensures a fair double-blind peer review of the selected manuscripts.

The selected manuscripts are sent to at least two national/international referees for evaluation and publication decision is given by editor-in-chief upon modification by the authors in accordance with the referees' claims.

Editor in chief does not allow any conflicts of interest between the authors, editors and reviewers and is responsible for final decision for publication of the manuscripts in the Journal.

Reviewers' judgments must be objective. Reviewers' comments on the following aspects are expected while conducting the review.

- Does the manuscript contain new and significant information?
- Does the abstract clearly and accurately describe the content of the manuscript?

- Is the problem significant and concisely stated?
- Are the methods described comprehensively?
- Are the interpretations and conclusions justified by the results?
- Is adequate references made to other Works in the field?
- Is the language acceptable?

Reviewers must ensure that all the information related to submitted manuscripts is kept as confidential and must report to the editor if they are aware of copyright infringement and plagiarism on the author's side.

A reviewer who feels unqualified to review the topic of a manuscript or knows that its prompt review will be impossible should notify the editor and excuse himself from the review process.

The editor informs the reviewers that the manuscripts are confidential information and that this is a privileged interaction. The reviewers and editorial board cannot discuss the manuscripts with other persons. The anonymity of the referees is important.

## **PUBLICATION ETHICS AND PUBLICATION MALPRACTICE STATEMENT**

Journal of Tourismology is committed to upholding the highest standards of publication ethics and pays regard to Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing published by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA), and the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME) on <https://publicationethics.org/resources/guidelines-new/principles-transparency-and-best-practice-scholarly-publishing>

All parties involved in the publishing process (Editors, Reviewers, Authors and Publishers) are expected to agree on the following ethical principles.

All submissions must be original, unpublished (including as full text in conference proceedings), and not under the review of any other publication synchronously. Each manuscript is reviewed by one of the editors and at least two referees under double-blind peer review process. Plagiarism, duplication, fraud authorship/denied authorship, research/data fabrication, salami slicing/salami publication, breaching of copyrights, prevailing conflict of interest are unethical behaviors.

All manuscripts not in accordance with the accepted ethical standards will be removed from the publication. This also contains any possible malpractice discovered after the publication. In accordance with the code of conduct we will report any cases of suspected plagiarism or duplicate publishing.

### **Research Ethics**

The journal adheres to the highest standards in research ethics and follows the principles of international research ethics as defined below. The authors are responsible for the compliance of the manuscripts with the ethical rules.

- Principles of integrity, quality and transparency should be sustained in designing the research, reviewing the design and conducting the research.
- The research team and participants should be fully informed about the aim, methods, possible uses and requirements of the research and risks of participation in research.
- The confidentiality of the information provided by the research participants and the confidentiality of the respondents should be ensured. The research should be designed to protect the autonomy and dignity of the participants.
- Research participants should participate in the research voluntarily, not under any coercion.
- Any possible harm to participants must be avoided. The research should be planned in such a way that the participants are not at risk.
- The independence of research must be clear; and any conflict of interest or must be disclosed.

- In experimental studies with human subjects, written informed consent of the participants who decide to participate in the research must be obtained. In the case of children and those under wardship or with confirmed insanity, legal custodian's assent must be obtained.
- If the study is to be carried out in any institution or organization, approval must be obtained from this institution or organization.
- In studies with human subject, it must be noted in the method's section of the manuscript that the informed consent of the participants and ethics committee approval from the institution where the study has been conducted have been obtained.

### **Author Responsibilities**

It is authors' responsibility to ensure that the article is in accordance with scientific and ethical standards and rules. And authors must ensure that submitted work is original. They must certify that the manuscript has not previously been published elsewhere or is not currently being considered for publication elsewhere, in any language. Applicable copyright laws and conventions must be followed. Copyright material (e.g. tables, figures or extensive quotations) must be reproduced only with appropriate permission and acknowledgement. Any work or words of other authors, contributors, or sources must be appropriately credited and referenced.

All the authors of a submitted manuscript must have direct scientific and academic contribution to the manuscript. The author(s) of the original research articles is defined as a person who is significantly involved in "conceptualization and design of the study", "collecting the data", "analyzing the data", "writing the manuscript", "reviewing the manuscript with a critical perspective" and "planning/ conducting the study of the manuscript and/or revising it". Fund raising, data collection or supervision of the research group are not sufficient roles to be accepted as an author. The author(s) must meet all these criteria described above. The order of names in the author list of an article must be a co-decision and it must be indicated in the Copyright Agreement Form. The individuals who do not meet the authorship criteria but contributed to the study must take place in the acknowledgement section. Individuals providing technical support, assisting writing, providing a general support, providing material or financial support are examples to be indicated in acknowledgement section.

All authors must disclose all issues concerning financial relationship, conflict of interest, and competing interest that may potentially influence the results of the research or scientific judgment.

When an author discovers a significant error or inaccuracy in his/her own published paper, it is the author's obligation to promptly cooperate with the Editor to provide retractions or corrections of mistakes.

### **Responsibility for the Editor and Reviewers**

Editor-in-Chief evaluates manuscripts for their scientific content without regard to ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, citizenship, religious belief or political philosophy of the authors. He/ She provides a fair double-blind peer review of the submitted articles for publication and ensures that all the information related to submitted manuscripts is kept as confidential before publishing.

Editor-in-Chief is responsible for the contents and overall quality of the publication. He/She must publish errata pages or make corrections when needed.

Editor-in-Chief does not allow any conflicts of interest between the authors, editors and reviewers. Only he has the full authority to assign a reviewer and is responsible for final decision for publication of the manuscripts in the Journal.

Reviewers must have no conflict of interest with respect to the research, the authors and/or the research funders. Their judgments must be objective.

Reviewers must ensure that all the information related to submitted manuscripts is kept as confidential and must report to the editor if they are aware of copyright infringement and plagiarism on the author's side.

A reviewer who feels unqualified to review the topic of a manuscript or knows that its prompt review will be impossible should notify the editor and excuse himself from the review process.

The editor informs the reviewers that the manuscripts are confidential information and that this is a privileged interaction. The reviewers and editorial board cannot discuss the manuscripts with other persons. The anonymity of the referees must be ensured. In particular situations, the editor may share the review of one reviewer with other reviewers to clarify a particular point.

## **MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSION GUIDE**

### **Language**

The language of the journal is English.

### **Manuscript Organization and Submission**

All correspondence will be sent to the first-named author unless otherwise specified. Manuscript is to be submitted online via [tourismology@istanbul.edu.tr](mailto:tourismology@istanbul.edu.tr) and it must be accompanied by a cover letter indicating that the manuscript is intended for publication, specifying the article category (i.e. research article, review etc.) and including information about the manuscript (see the Submission Checklist). Manuscripts should be prepared in Microsoft Word 2003 and upper versions. In addition, [Copyright Agreement Form](#) that has to be signed by all authors must be submitted.

1. The manuscripts should be in A4 paper standards: having 2.5 cm margins from right, left, bottom and top, Times New Roman font style in 12 font size and line spacing of 1.5.
2. The manuscripts should contain between 4500 and 8500 words and the page numbers must be at the bottom and in the middle.
3. The name(s) of author(s) should be given just beneath the title of the study aligned to the right. Also the affiliation, title, e-mail and phone of the author(s) must be indicated on the bottom of the page as a footnote marked with an asterisk (\*).
4. Submitted manuscripts in Turkish must have before the introduction section, the abstract both in Turkish and English, between 200 and 250 words and an extended abstract in English between 600-800 words, summarizing the scope, the purpose, the results of the study and the methodology used. Underneath the abstracts, 3 to 5 keywords that inform the reader about the content of the study should be specified in Turkish and in English. If the manuscript is written in English, it must include an abstract only in English.
5. The manuscripts should contain mainly these components: title, abstract and keywords; extended abstract, body text with sections, footnotes and references.
6. The 6<sup>th</sup> version of the APA (American Psychological Association) reference style should be used for in-text citation and references list. For information and samples on the APA 6 style please refer to [tourismology@istanbul.edu.tr](mailto:tourismology@istanbul.edu.tr) and/or REFERENCES section in the Information for Authors.
7. Tables, graphs and figures can be given with a number and a defining title if and only if it is necessary to follow the idea of the article. The title of table should be placed above the table; caption of figure should be placed beneath the figure. Features like demographic characteristics that can be given within the text should not be indicated as tables separately.
8. A title page including author information must be submitted together with the manuscript. The title page is to include fully descriptive title of the manuscript and, affiliation, title, e-mail address, postal address, phone and fax number of the author(s) (see The Submission Checklist).
9. Authors are responsible for all statements made in their work submitted to the Journal for publication.
10. The author(s) can be asked to make some changes in their articles due to peer reviews.
11. A copy of the journal will be sent to each author of the accepted articles upon their request.
12. The manuscripts that were submitted to the journal will not be returned whether they are published or not.

## REFERENCES

Although references to review articles can be an efficient way to guide readers to a body of literature, review articles do not always reflect original work accurately. Readers should therefore be provided with direct references to original research sources whenever possible. On the other hand, extensive lists of references to original work on a topic can use excessive space on the printed page. Small numbers of references to key original papers often serve as well as more exhaustive lists, particularly since references can now be added to the electronic version of published papers, and since electronic literature searching allows readers to retrieve published literature efficiently. Papers accepted but not yet included in the issue are published online in the Early View section and they should be cited as “advance online publication”. Citing a “personal communication” should be avoided unless it provides essential information not available from a public source, in which case the name of the person and date of communication should be cited in parentheses in the text. For scientific articles, written permission and confirmation of accuracy from the source of a personal communication must be obtained.

### Reference Style and Format

Journal of Tourismology complies with APA (American Psychological Association) style 6<sup>th</sup> Edition for referencing and quoting. For more information:

- American Psychological Association. (2010). Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: APA.
- <http://www.apastyle.org>

### Citations in the Text

Citations must be indicated with the author surname and publication year within the parenthesis.

If more than one citation is made within the same parenthesis, separate them with (;).

### Samples:

#### ***More than one citation;***

(Esin, et al., 2002; Karasar, 1995)

#### ***Citation with one author;***

(Akyolcu, 2007)

#### ***Citation with two authors;***

(Sayiner & Demirci, 2007)

#### ***Citation with three, four, five authors;***

First citation in the text: (Ailen, Ciambrune, & Welch, 2000) Subsequent citations in the text: (Ailen, et al., 2000)

#### ***Citations with more than six authors;***

(Çavdar, et al., 2003)

### Citations in the Reference

All the citations done in the text should be listed in the References section in alphabetical order of author surname without numbering. Below given examples should be considered in citing the references.

### Basic Reference Types

#### **Book**

##### **a) Turkish Book**

Karasar, N. (1995). *Araştırmalarda rapor hazırlama* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.) [Preparing research reports]. Ankara, Turkey: 3A Eğitim Danışmanlık Ltd.



**b) Book Translated into Turkish**

Mucchielli, A. (1991). *Zihniyetler* [Mindsets] (A. Kotil, Trans.). İstanbul, Turkey: İletişim Yayınları.

**c) Edited Book**

Ören, T., Üney, T., & Çölkesen, R. (Eds.). (2006). *Türkiye bilişim ansiklopedisi* [Turkish Encyclopedia of Informatics]. İstanbul, Turkey: Papatya Yayıncılık.

**d) Turkish Book with Multiple Authors**

Tonta, Y., Bitirim, Y., & Sever, H. (2002). *Türkçe arama motorlarında performans değerlendirme* [Performance evaluation in Turkish search engines]. Ankara, Turkey: Total Bilişim.

**e) Book in English**

Kamien R., & Kamien A. (2014). *Music: An appreciation*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education.

**f) Chapter in an Edited Book**

Bassett, C. (2006). Cultural studies and new media. In G. Hall & C. Birchall (Eds.), *New cultural studies: Adventures in theory* (pp. 220–237). Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press.

**g) Chapter in an Edited Book in Turkish**

Erkmen, T. (2012). Örgüt kültürü: Fonksiyonları, öğeleri, işletme yönetimi ve liderlikteki önemi [Organization culture: Its functions, elements and importance in leadership and business management]. In M. Zencirkıran (Ed.), *Örgüt sosyolojisi* [Organization sociology] (pp. 233–263). Bursa, Turkey: Dora Basım Yayın.

**h) Book with the same organization as author and publisher**

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American psychological association* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

**Article****a) Turkish Article**

Mutlu, B., & Savaşer, S. (2007). Çocuğu ameliyat sonrası yoğun bakımda olan ebeveynlerde stres nedenleri ve azaltma girişimleri [Source and intervention reduction of stress for parents whose children are in intensive care unit after surgery]. *Istanbul University Florence Nightingale Journal of Nursing*, 15(60), 179–182.

**b) English Article**

deCillia, R., Reissigl, M., & Wodak, R. (1999). The discursive construction of national identity. *Discourse and Society*, 10(2), 149–173. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0957926599010002002>

**c) Journal Article with DOI and More Than Seven Authors**

Lal, H., Cunningham, A. L., Godeaux, O., Chlibek, R., Diez-Domingo, J., Hwang, S.-J. ... Heineman, T. C. (2015). Efficacy of an adjuvanted herpes zoster subunit vaccine in older adults. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 372, 2087–2096. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1056/NEJMoa1501184>

**d) Journal Article from Web, without DOI**

Sidani, S. (2003). Enhancing the evaluation of nursing care effectiveness. *Canadian Journal of Nursing Research*, 35(3), 26–38. Retrieved from <http://cjr.mcgill.ca>

**e) Journal Article with DOI**

Turner, S. J. (2010). Website statistics 2.0: Using Google Analytics to measure library website effectiveness. *Technical Services Quarterly*, 27, 261–278. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07317131003765910>

**f) Advance Online Publication**

Smith, J. A. (2010). Citing advance online publication: A review. *Journal of Psychology*. Advance online publication. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a45d7867>

**g) Article in a Magazine**

Henry, W. A., III. (1990, April 9). Making the grade in today's schools. *Time*, 135, 28–31.

**Doctoral Dissertation, Master's Thesis, Presentation, Proceeding****a) Dissertation/Thesis from a Commercial Database**

Van Brunt, D. (1997). *Networked consumer health information systems* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 9943436)

**b) Dissertation/Thesis from an Institutional Database**

Yaylalı-Yıldız, B. (2014). *University campuses as places of potential publicness: Exploring the political, social and cultural practices in Ege University* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from Retrieved from: <http://library.iyte.edu.tr/tr/hizli-erisim/iyte-tez-portali>

**c) Dissertation/Thesis from Web**

Tonta, Y. A. (1992). *An analysis of search failures in online library catalogs* (Doctoral dissertation, University of California, Berkeley). Retrieved from <http://yunus.hacettepe.edu.tr/~tonta/yayinlar/phd/ickapak.html>

**d) Dissertation/Thesis abstracted in Dissertations Abstracts International**

Appelbaum, L. G. (2005). Three studies of human information processing: Texture amplification, motion representation, and figure-ground segregation. *Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B. Sciences and Engineering*, 65(10), 5428.

**e) Symposium Contribution**

Krinsky-McHale, S. J., Zigman, W. B., & Silverman, W. (2012, August). Are neuropsychiatric symptoms markers of prodromal Alzheimer's disease in adults with Down syndrome? In W. B. Zigman (Chair), *Predictors of mild cognitive impairment, dementia, and mortality in adults with Down syndrome*. Symposium conducted at the meeting of the American Psychological Association, Orlando, FL.

**f) Conference Paper Abstract Retrieved Online**

Liu, S. (2005, May). *Defending against business crises with the help of intelligent agent based early warning solutions*. Paper presented at the Seventh International Conference on Enterprise Information Systems, Miami, FL. Abstract retrieved from [http://www.iceis.org/iceis2005/abstracts\\_2005.htm](http://www.iceis.org/iceis2005/abstracts_2005.htm)

**g) Conference Paper - In Regularly Published Proceedings and Retrieved Online**

Herculano-Houzel, S., Collins, C. E., Wong, P., Kaas, J. H., & Lent, R. (2008). The basic nonuniformity of the cerebral cortex. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 105, 12593–12598. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1073/pnas.0805417105>

**h) Proceeding in Book Form**

Parsons, O. A., Pryzwansky, W. B., Weinstein, D. J., & Wiens, A. N. (1995). Taxonomy for psychology. In J. N. Reich, H. Sands, & A. N. Wiens (Eds.), *Education and training beyond the doctoral degree: Proceedings of the American Psychological Association National Conference on Postdoctoral Education and Training in Psychology* (pp. 45–50). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

**i) Paper Presentation**

Nguyen, C. A. (2012, August). *Humor and deception in advertising: When laughter may not be the best medicine*. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Psychological Association, Orlando, FL.

**Other Sources****a) Newspaper Article**

Browne, R. (2010, March 21). This brainless patient is no dummy. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 45.

**b) Newspaper Article with no Author**

New drug appears to sharply cut risk of death from heart failure. (1993, July 15). *The Washington Post*, p. A12.

**c) Web Page/Blog Post**

Bordwell, D. (2013, June 18). David Koepp: Making the world movie-sized [Web log post]. Retrieved from <http://www.davidbordwell.net/blog/page/27/>

**d) Online Encyclopedia/Dictionary**

Ignition. (1989). In *Oxford English online dictionary* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Retrieved from <http://dictionary.oed.com>

Marcoux, A. (2008). Business ethics. In E. N. Zalta (Ed.). *The Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy*. Retrieved from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-business/>

**e) Podcast**

Dunning, B. (Producer). (2011, January 12). *in Fact: Conspiracy theories* [Video podcast]. Retrieved from <http://itunes.apple.com/>

**f) Single Episode in a Television Series**

Egan, D. (Writer), & Alexander, J. (Director). (2005). Failure to communicate. [Television series episode]. In D. Shore (Executive producer), *House*; New York, NY: Fox Broadcasting.

**g) Music**

Fuchs, G. (2004). Light the menorah. On *Eight nights of Hanukkah* [CD]. Brick, NJ: Kid Kosher.

## SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

Ensure that the following items are present:

- Cover letter to the editor
  - ✓ The category of the manuscript
  - ✓ Confirming that “the paper is not under consideration for publication in another journal”.
  - ✓ Including disclosure of any commercial or financial involvement.
  - ✓ Confirming that last control for fluent English was done.
  - ✓ Confirming that journal policies detailed in Information for Authors have been reviewed.
  - ✓ Confirming that the references cited in the text and listed in the references section are in line with APA 6.
- Copyright Agreement Form
- Permission of previous published material if used in the present manuscript
- Title page
  - ✓ The category of the manuscript
  - ✓ The title of the manuscript both in the language of article and in English
  - ✓ All authors’ names and affiliations (institution, faculty/department, city, country), e-mail addresses
  - ✓ Corresponding author’s email address, full postal address, telephone and fax number
  - ✓ ORCIDs of all authors.
- Main Manuscript Document
  - ✓ The title of the manuscript both in the language of article and in English
  - ✓ Abstracts (200-250 words) both in the language of article and in English
  - ✓ Key words: 5 words both in the language of article and in English
  - ✓ Grant support (if exists)
  - ✓ Conflict of interest (if exists)
  - ✓ Acknowledgement (if exists)
  - ✓ References
  - ✓ All tables, illustrations (figures) (including title, description, footnotes)



Istanbul University  
İstanbul Üniversitesi

Journal name: Journal of Tourismology  
Dergi Adı: Journal of Tourismology

Copyright Agreement Form  
Telif Hakkı Anlaşması Formu

<b>Responsible/Corresponding Author</b> Sorumlu Yazar	
<b>Title of Manuscript</b> Makalenin Başlığı	
<b>Acceptance date</b> Kabul Tarihi	
<b>List of authors</b> Yazarların Listesi	

Sıra No	Name - Surname Adı-Soyadı	E-mail E-Posta	Signature İmza	Date Tarih
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

<b>Manuscript Type (Research Article, Review, Short communication, etc.)</b> Makalenin türü (Araştırma makalesi, Derleme, Kısa bildiri, v.b.)	
--	--

<b>Responsible/Corresponding Author:</b> Sorumlu Yazar:	
--	--

<b>University/company/institution</b>	Çalıştığı kurum	
<b>Address</b>	Posta adresi	
<b>E-mail</b>	E-posta	
<b>Phone; mobile phone</b>	Telefon no; GSM no	

**The author(s) agrees that:**  
The manuscript submitted is his/her/their own original work, and has not been plagiarized from any prior work, all authors participated in the work in a substantive way, and are prepared to take public responsibility for the work, all authors have seen and approved the manuscript as submitted, the manuscript has not been published and is not being submitted or considered for publication elsewhere, the text, illustrations, and any other materials included in the manuscript do not infringe upon any existing copyright or other rights of anyone. İSTANBUL UNIVERSITY will publish the content under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) license that gives permission to copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format other than commercial purposes as well as remix, transform and build upon the material by providing appropriate credit to the original work. The Contributor(s) or, if applicable the Contributor's Employer, retain(s) all proprietary rights in addition to copyright, patent rights; to use, free of charge, all parts of this article for the author's future works in books, lectures, classroom teaching or oral presentations, the right to reproduce the article for their own purposes provided the copies are not offered for sale. All materials related to manuscripts, accepted or rejected, including photographs, original figures etc., will be kept by İSTANBUL UNIVERSITY for one year following the editor's decision. These materials will then be destroyed. I/We indemnify İSTANBUL UNIVERSITY and the Editors of the Journals, and hold them harmless from any loss, expense or damage occasioned by a claim or suit by a third party for copyright infringement, or any suit arising out of any breach of the foregoing warranties as a result of publication of my/our article. I/We also warrant that the article contains no libelous or unlawful statements, and does not contain material or instructions that might cause harm or injury. This Copyright Agreement Form must be signed/ratified by all authors. Separate copies of the form (completed in full) may be submitted by authors located at different institutions; however, all signatures must be original and authenticated.

**Yazar(lar) aşağıdaki hususları kabul eder**  
Sunulan makalenin yazar(lar)ın orijinal çalışması olduğunu ve intihal yapmadıklarını, Tüm yazarların bu çalışmaya aslı olarak katılmış olduklarını ve bu çalışma için her türlü sorumluluğu aldıklarını, Tüm yazarların sunulan makalenin son halini gördüklerini ve onayladıklarını, Makalenin başka bir yerde basılmadığını veya basılmak için sunulmadığını, Makalede bulunan metnin, şekillerin ve dokümanların diğer şahıslara ait olan Telif Haklarını ihlal etmediğini kabul ve taahhüt ederler. İSTANBUL ÜNİVERSİTESİ'nin bu fikri eseri, Creative Commons Atıf-GayriTicari 4.0 Uluslararası (CC BY-NC 4.0) lisansı ile yayınlamasına izin verirler. Creative Commons Atıf-GayriTicari 4.0 Uluslararası (CC BY-NC 4.0) lisansı, eserin ticari kullanım dışında her boyut ve formatta paylaşılmasına, kopyalanmasına, çoğaltılmasına ve orijinal esere uygun şekilde atıfta bulunmak kaydıyla yeniden düzenleme, dönüştürme ve eserin üzerine inşa etme dâhil adapte edilmesine izin verir. Yazar(lar)ın veya varsa yazar(lar)ın işverenin telif dâhil patent hakları, yazar(lar)ın gelecekte kitaplarında veya diğer çalışmalarında makalenin tümünü ücret ödemeksizin kullanma hakkı makaleyi satmamak koşuluyla kendi amaçları için çoğaltma hakkı gibi fikri mülkiyet hakları saklıdır. Yayımlanan veya yayıma kabul edilmeyen makalelerle ilgili dokümanlar (fotoğraf, orijinal şekil vb.) karar tarihinden başlamak üzere bir yıl süreyle İSTANBUL ÜNİVERSİTESİ'ne saklanır ve bu sürenin sonunda imha edilir. Ben/Biz, telif hakkı ihlali nedeniyle üçüncü şahıslara vuku bulacak hak talebi veya açılacak davalarda İSTANBUL ÜNİVERSİTESİ ve Dergi Editörlerinin hiçbir sorumluluğunun olmadığını, tüm sorumluluğun yazarlara ait olduğunu taahhüt ederim/ederiz. Ayrıca Ben/Biz makalede hiçbir suç unsuru veya kanuna aykırı ifade bulunmadığını, araştırma yapılırken kanuna aykırı herhangi bir malzeme ve yöntem kullanılmadığını taahhüt ederim/ederiz. Bu Telif Hakkı Anlaşması Formu tüm yazarlar tarafından imzalanmalıdır/onaylanmalıdır. Form farklı kurumlarda bulunan yazarlar tarafından ayrı kopyalar halinde doldurulurak sunulabilir. Ancak, tüm inzaların orijinal veya kantlanabilir şekilde onaylı olması gerekir.

<b>Responsible/Corresponding Author:</b> Sorumlu Yazar;	<b>Signature / İmza</b>	<b>Date / Tarih</b>
		...../...../.....