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A HOLISTIC VIEW OF THE TOURIST EXPERIENCE OF GENERATION Z

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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to find out what the characteristics of the tourist experience of Generation Z are. The research was designed using qualitative research techniques. Interviews were conducted with 139 young tourists living in 45 different provinces in Turkey and were analyzed using content analysis. Generation Z has a limited budget for travel. They need to devise certain strategies to cope with this. Escape from everyday life is their most important motivation in travel. The idea that the best time to travel is school and youth years. Young tourists find cultural, historical, and architectural elements interesting and are interested in traditional cuisine. They prefer types of transportation that they have not experienced before.

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INTRODUCTION

Different generations' tourism demands result in different tourism movements and experiences, and this differentiation is effectively utilized in the creation of tourism policies. Thence, the number of studies examining the relationship between different generations and tourism movements is steadily expanding (Akgiş İlhan et al., 2022a; Akgiş İlhan et al., 2022b; Corbisiero et. al., 2022; Benckendorff et al., 2010; Bernini & Cracolici, 2015;

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Rowiński et al., 2017; Khoo-Lattimore & Yang, 2018). The tourist experiences of today’s Generation Z will have a significant impact on future tourism trends. Understanding the experiences of this generation is important in determining future tourism trends. Therefore, it is necessary to delve into the specifics and to gain a thorough understanding of the younger generation’s tourism experiences. Understanding what this generation experiences during each phase of the tourist experience might help us to better understand the relationship between experience and tourism movements. Rather than maintaining the idea of focusing on individual phases of the tourist experience, a more comprehensive and multi-dimensional understanding can be developed that provides insight into how tourists relate to their experience.

The starting point of this study is the question of how Generation Z's tourist experiences can be understood. Based on the idea that the ‘tourist experience structure’ conceptualized by Williams and Lew (2014) is highly functional, the assumption of this research is that the tourist experience is a six-stage cycle (Figure 1). All these stages are interrelated and reproduce each other. However, relevant studies examine each phase of Generation Z's tourist experience separately, not as a whole. This approach leaves us unable to develop a prediction about the entire tourist experience of Generation Z. At the same time, it creates a limitation in our analysis of the relationship between the stages in the tourist experience in detail. According to this, the following questions are addressed in this study: ‘What are the features of planning, destination selection, travel to destination, experience in destination, returning home, and recall, and which are the components of Generation Z's tourist experience?’. The paper contributes to existing knowledge in two ways. Tourist experience is not just about experience at the destination. The departure and return processes are part of the experience. Similarly, recall is the starting point where a new experience is planned. Accordingly, experience consists of a cycle. In this context, its theoretical contribution is that it considers the tourist experience as a process rather than as discrete spatiotemporal experiences. In this sense, it will serve as a framework for related studies. It will also contribute to the relevant literature by allowing for a more comprehensive knowledge of Generation Z's tourist experience. The practical contribution of the study is to understand Generation Z’s priorities in tourist experiences and, thereby, to provide insights for the development of correct and effective tourism policies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptualizing Tourist Experience as a Process

Tourism-related goods and services must provide consumers with unforgettable experiences (Bigne et al., 2020). In light of tourism's 'unique' character, there is an increasing emphasis on the need to develop an 'experience economy' (Pine & Gillmore, 1999) in the industry. Creating an experience economy is possible with a good understanding of the tourist experience. The tourist experience concept, which was introduced in the 1960s, is one of the most critical concepts in this context, and one which still attracts attention (Zatori et al., 2018).

Starting from the phase of travel decision in a tourism activity, tourists experience is the processes of choosing the destination, traveling to the destination, returning home, and recalling in a chronological order. Accordingly, with a start and an end date, as well as the factors that influence them, the experience becomes a cause-and-effect problem. Therefore, the tourist experience needs to be considered holistically. In studies on the subject, there is a tendency to consider experiences independently, as stated above. This allows for a more precise knowledge of the sort of experience being researched, but also limits the development of a comprehensive theory of experience as a whole.

There are two widely accepted conceptualizations in the literature that consider the tourist experience as a process. These are suggested by MacCannel (1973) and Cohen (1973). Cohen (1979) describes the tourist experience in relation to five different modes. These are recreational, diversionary, experiential, experimental, and existential experiences. Accordingly, the tourist experience ranges from a recreationally simple quest of pleasure to an existential effort to give life meaning (Williams & Lew, 2014). Another notable contribution to the tourist experience was made by MacCannel (1973). The tourist experience is described by MacCannel as 'the pursuit of authenticity'. Cohen and MacCannel's preliminary studies on the tourist experience have also influenced the emergence of various definitions and classifications of the concept. In this perspective, Williams and Lew (2014)'s 'tourist experience structure', another conceptualization of experience, is quite functional.

The tourist experience, according to Williams and Lew (2014), is classified into six phases; planning, destination selection, travel to the destination, experience at the destination, returning home, and recall (Figure 1). Planning is the phase where the destination, preferred travel mode, and accommodation features are determined. This phase is developed within the framework of previous experiences, images of places, perceptions and suggestions. The planning and destination selection phases are followed by the experience of travel to the destination. Although travel to a destination is associated with transportation, travel is much more than a vehicle and a road. This is because it is widely recognized that in tourism activities, arriving at the destination is half of the enjoyment. In this sense, the events and emotions experienced during the journey become the main element of the tourist experience. The experience at the destination is another phase. The experience at the destination includes sightseeing, leisure shopping and the collection of souvenirs and memorabilia. The destination experience is followed by the phase of returning home and recall. Returning home is an integral part of the experience, like traveling to the destination, and is closely related to the emotional states of the tourists. Recall corresponds to the process of sharing what happened during the trip with family and friends, and where pre-planning is made for the next trip. The tourist experience emphasizes how a visit is organized by a planning process and then reenacted through memory. As it demonstrates the experience's relationship with the 'place' and the 'geographic transitions', it also provides an opportunity to evaluate the tourism's relationship with the geography.

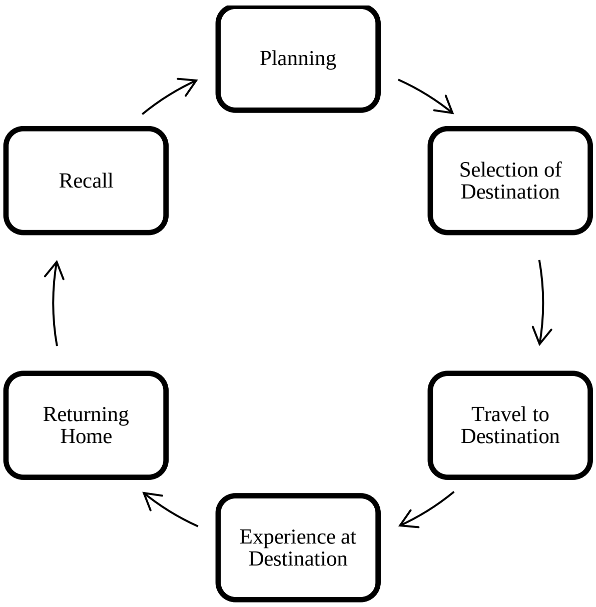

Figure 1. *Tourist Experience Conceptualization (Adapted from Williams and Lew, 2014)*

What Do We Know about the Tourist Experiences of Generation Z?

Generation Z includes individuals who were born in 1995 and after; in these days, the oldest member of whom is 27 years old (Eisner, 2005). The European Travel Commission (ETC) (2020), on the other hand, classifies those born after 1996 as Generation Z (ETC, 2020). Discussing the latest generation of Millennials or Generation Z, Howe et al. (2008) emphasize that the dividing line between Generation Y and Generation Z is not clear. However, Generation Z is distinguished from Generation Y due to its expanding proficiency in digital technologies and new online activities, such as social media and network development (Corbisiero & Ruspini, 2018).

The main differences between Generation Y and Generation Z can be understood in terms of context, behavior and consumption characteristics. In terms of context, Generation Y is associated with economic stability, globalization, and the emergence of the Internet. Generation Z, on the other hand, is conceptualized in relation to mobility, social networks, and digitalization. In terms of behavioral characteristics, while Generation Y is globalist, questioning and self-focused, Generation Z, on the other hand, is undefined id, dialogue-enhancing, and realistic. Finally, in the context of consumption patterns, while Generation Y values experience, festivals, shopping, and flagship brands, Generation Z values consuming unique, unlimited, and ethical products (ETC, 2020). Another distinction that members of Generation Z possess is that they interact with new technology on a daily basis; particularly the Internet (Monaco, 2018). These habits of theirs result in the extensive use of communication and Internet technology, also in the context of tourism. The needs of Generation Z tourists are also quite diverse compared to Generation Y. In this context, they have developed certain purchasing behavior. These are making last-minute decisions, looking for opportunities, relying on word-of-mouth recommendations when choosing a destination, and maximizing the use of resources and low-cost services (Haddouche & Salamone, 2018). Generation Z is a generation that has grown up in the age of globalization. Therefore, financial crises, terrorism, climate change, and technology appear to be other influential developments in shaping their travel characteristics (ETC, 2020).

The relevant studies elicit that the travel budget is crucial in student and youth tourism. A study by Robinson and Schänzel (2019) on Generation Z's tourist experiences provides important results. According to their study, there are numerous factors that influence the choice of service. These include affordability and budget, easy accessibility to these services, flexibility of travel plans, as well as luck. Similarly, choosing free museums is also associated with saving. According to Eugenio-Martin and Inchausti-Sintes (2016), tourists' proclivity towards similar means of saving may encourage them to spend more money at a destination. The ETC (2020) report, on the other hand, states that alternative accommodation, such as camps and caravans or staying with friends/family members, is not popular among Generation Z.

Young tourists are increasingly inclined to choose tourism modes that will provide them with ‘highly valued’ and unique experiences. Living with the locals and having more and deeper contact with local cultures are among the most remarkable motivations (UNWTO, 2016). In this sense Akgiş İlhan et al. (2022a) found that the locals' welcoming approach towards young tourists played a key role in the establishment of positive emotion-based social networks.

Xu and Tavitiyaman (2018) find that the most important attractions and motivations of young tourists from Hong Kong are local foods, escape, perceived value, and culture. Robinson and Schänzel (2019), on the other hand, explain why Generation Z travels with two different factors; external and internal factors. Intrinsic factors include seeking adventure and novelty. External factors include attractions, escapes, and popular culture (the norm). In a report by the European Travel Commission (2020), it was determined that Generation Z is extremely interested in localism and originality. A strong interest in sampling locally produced food and drink and learning about local urban culture are two examples of this. In a research study conducted on ten Generation Z tourists residing in Turkey's Isparta province and traveling alone the Generation Z tourists stated their motivation to travel alone was seeing new places, meeting new people, seeking adventure, a feeling of freedom, and learning. They also indicated that traveling alone boosted their self-confidence and that they mostly had positive experiences in travels they made alone. According to the results of Akgiş İlhan et al. (2022a) geomorphologically unique elements attract the attention of Generation Z. The young students perceive the mountains and the city as a monolithic unit and they are interested in natural elements is the positive sense of place for recreational areas, with green and rich plant diversity in a steppe-dominated topography. Similarly, Binti Ghani’s (2019) research shows that urban recreational areas are important destinations for Generation Z.

The evolution of social media and communication technologies has influenced not only the way tourists search, analyze, produce, purchase, and consume information, products, and services, but also their behavior patterns (Bizirgianni & Dionysopoulou, 2013). Generation Z recognizes social media as an important part of marketing, possibly because they grew up in a highly commercialized world (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021). The most active users of these technologies are young tourists. The Post-Z generation uses the Internet almost entirely to access information they need to make purchasing decisions and make reservations (Monaco, 2018). Similarly, when it comes to choosing travel destinations, 96% of Chinese Generation Z members state that social media plays a role in influencing them more than it does other generations (Expedia Group, 2017). Generation Z is dreaming or planning to travel, despite the COVID-19 pandemic (Contiki, 2021). According to this, it can be foreseen that this generation will play a critical role in the future of tourism industry.

METHODOLOGY

In this section, the basic assumptions of the research, the research design, the study area, the sample characteristics, and the data collection and analysis processes are explained.

Research Design

The tourist experience as a process is unique to everyone. Every experience is created and construed by tourists. Therefore, in this study, it is considered that the tourist experience is an internal reality and that information about the tourist experience is not based on objective, but rather on subjective values. The tourist experience cannot be measured precisely because it is not an objective reality. Making meaning of the tourist experience is therefore consistent with interpretivist epistemology. Based on this assumption in this research, the qualitative research method was used and the phenomenological research design was chosen to reveal Generation Z's tourist experiences as a process. The phenomenological approach is a design for examining the participants' perspectives, feelings, and thoughts on the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 2014).

Sample Group

Due to the rapid evolution of young people's tastes, life experiences, and consumer spending power since 1995, the ETC divided Generation Z into three subgroups; the 8-11 years old (older primary school children), 12-17 years old (teenagers, secondary school age), and 18-24 years old (students and young professionals). This research focuses on the tourist experiences of the 18-24 age group. The sample of the study consists of 139 Generation Z members from forty-five different cities in Turkey who have traveled individually, with friends, or with their families. 79 of the participants are women 60 of them are men. The study area is given in Figure 2.

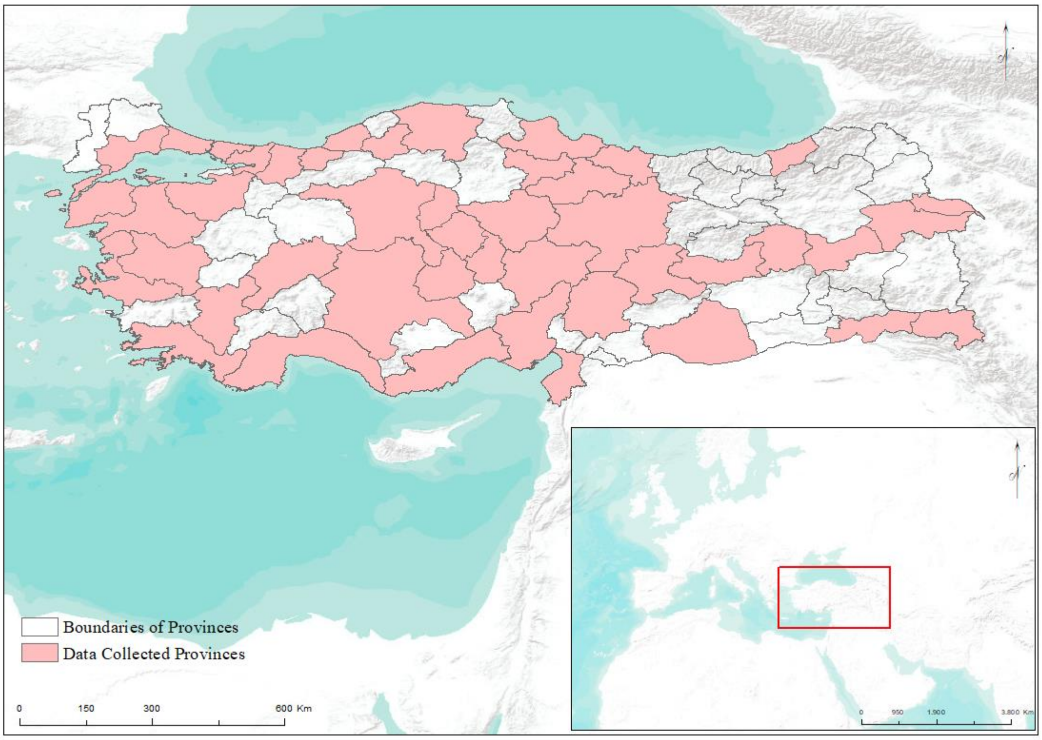

Figure 2. *Study Area*

Data Collection

A structured questionnaire was used to collect data. The form contains six questions relating to six different types of tourist experience (see in Appendix). The participants were asked to describe the phases of planning, choice of destination, travel to the destination, experience in the destination, returning home, and recall, considering any travel they have made. The snowball sampling technique was used to determine the sample. Data was collected throughout 2019 and 2020 years. The period in which the research data are collected is the dates when lockdowns are applied due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the interviews were conducted online, not face-to-face. To collect data on experience, an online questionnaire was used. The interview form consisting of six questions was prepared using Google Forms and the participants were asked to answer them.

Data Analysis

The data were evaluated using content analysis. Content analysis is recognized as a method for obtaining information on a certain concept, opinion, circumstance, feature, or variable associated with the issue under investigation (Hermann, 2008). Content analysis varies within itself. In this study, summative content analysis (Mayring, 2004) is employed. For each phase of the students' tourist experience, separate codes were created, and themes were created using these codes. Therefore, the components of each phase of the experience were identified and the tourist experience processes were analyzed (Figure 3).

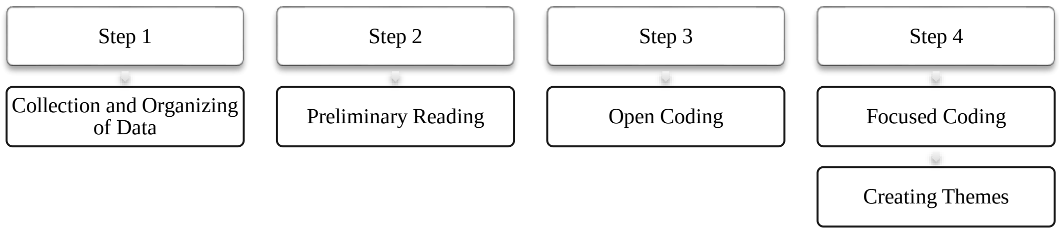

Figure 3. *Coding Process*

Social location of researchers and their place in research: Researchers' social location influences research questions and interpretation of data as they approach research and participants (Jaconson & Mustafa, 2019). All three of the researchers are faculty members at different universities, two of them at the Faculty of Tourism and one at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. The students of all three are predominantly Z generation and they are doing research on the target group for more qualified teaching. In this context, they have published studies on Generation Z in respected journals and conferences.

Two researchers are conducting the "tourism geography" course in their departments. For this reason, the conceptualization of Williams and Lew (2014) in consultation with Generation Z students in the lessons was influential in the emergence of the research question. The researchers' familiarity with communicating with Generation Z, their ability to communicate openly and mutually with this generation, and the fact that they consulted with the students in the courses on this subject caused them to prefer the qualitative research method in the research.

One of the researchers has 9 years, the other 3 years, and the third has 30 years of academic experience. Researchers look at the Z generation from the X and Y generations. There are even some studies describing the Z generation in 1990 and later (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, 2022). Although there is no definite limit, when evaluated from this point of view, the researchers were able to look at and conceptualize the X, Y, and Z generations while interpreting the results.

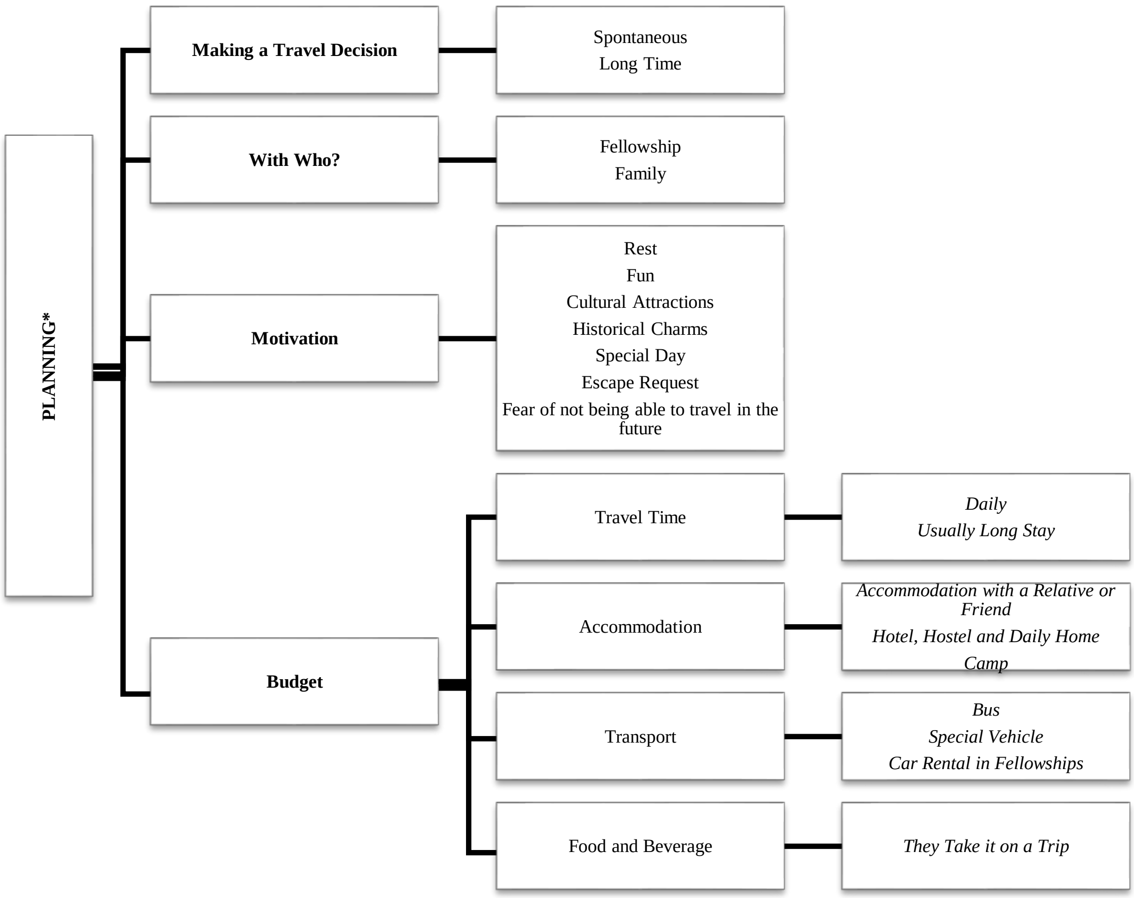

Figure 4. *Planning Stage*

Note: * Bold texts indicate themes, thin texts indicate codes, and italics indicate sub-codes

RESULTS

Planning

According to the results, the planning stage of participants' tourist experiences consists of four components (Figure 4). These are travel decision-making, who to travel with, motivations, and budgeting. The majority of the students reported that their travel decisions were not made on the spur of the moment, but rather after much consideration. Long-term plans are usually travels made with families, while travels with friends tend to be spontaneous.

Motivation, which is one of the elements of the planning process, varies greatly amongst the students and is highly variable. Rest and entertainment, which are the main motivations of tourism, are also remarkable in terms of Generation Z's travel motivations. However, one of the most powerful motivators for the students' travel decisions and destination choices is a desire to be in a 'different place'. What is different is hidden in other sorts of motivation. Other motivations, namely historical, cultural and gastronomic attractions, correspond to the students' 'different' conceptualizations. The students also believe that after completing their education, their professional life will be exceedingly hectic. Therefore, they expect to have 'time pressure/contraction' in the future and will be unable to set aside sufficient time for their travels. For this reason, they believe that their school years are ideal for travel. In addition, special day celebrations are considered as a determinant in Generation Z's travel preferences, particularly when traveling with friends.

"When I was arranging my vacation, I considered the historical and cultural diversity of Istanbul, the city to which I will travel." YT1

"The planning for this trip was based on learning about the region's historical and cultural traits, as well as tasting the region's unique cuisine, and the itinerary was created accordingly." YT20

"We planned a trip with our friends to three or four cities that we had not seen in our country during the spring semester of our third year of university. The idea was proposed that university years would never return, and that we might never have the opportunity to travel in business life again." YT4

"Since high school, I have been dreaming of visiting other cities if I get to university, thinking that I might not have this opportunity again. After graduating from high school, I moved to Kırşehir to attend university. After a few weeks, I started making friends. They were friends like me who wanted to travel and see new places, and we started to discuss where to go." YT9

When the tourist in question is a student, budget is probably one of the most important factors to consider when arranging the trip. Determinants in the budgeting of the students are the duration of the trip, accommodation, transportation, and food and beverage. According to the findings of the research, young people prefer trips with accommodation rather than day trips when traveling independently from families. The majority of spontaneous trips tend to be daily trips. Accommodation expenditure, on the other hand, is the second component of budgeting. The students employ two common ways to cut their accommodation expenditure. The first of these is accommodation with relatives or friends.

This saving method is also determinant in the choice of destination, as will be stated later. It is considered that the second preferred method for lowering accommodation costs is to stay in student dormitories. In addition, due to financial constraints, camping, daily house rentals, and hostels are preferred accommodation options.

The duration of stay arises when traveling with family. This is because families cover travel expenditures. In terms of accommodation amenities, it is clear that hotels and large hotels are preferred for vacations with family. In this type of accommodation, package tours take priority (Figure 5).

Figure 5. *Word Cloud on Planning Stage*

"I have the right to stay in state-owned student dormitories as a guest. I contacted the dormitory where I was going as it would be economically convenient during my trip. I asked for confirmation to stay, and my request was accepted." YT5

Transportation is another important aspect to consider in budgeting. The students generally prefer bus travel for transportation. However, at this point, the number of persons who will participate in the trip is determinant. This is because, while small groups prefer to travel by bus, larger groups of students prefer to rent a car. This creates an advantage in terms of budgeting. The final component of budgeting concerns food and beverage facilities. Similar to the strategies for accommodation and transportation, most of the students bring the food and beverages they will need in the first few days of the trip, or throughout the trip, if it is short-term.

"We opted to use my family's car for transportation while organizing the trip. I planned the foods based on the supplies we will bring with us and the shopping we will do when we get there. I tried to take everything we needed with us as far as possible. I planned to minimize costs in this manner.'' YT18

Selection of Destination

The budget, like the planning process, is one of the most influential factors in the students' destination choices according to the results (Figure 6). In this respect, a family or friend living in the destination chosen means that the travel budget is minimal because it provides opportunities for the students in terms of accommodation. For this reason, the students tend to prefer destinations where their acquaintances live. In the absence of such an opportunity, they choose destinations with low accommodation fees, again in relation to their budget.

The proximity of the destination to the place of residence is another factor affecting the choice of destination. Proximity is directly related to the duration of the trip, the choice of accommodation, and again, the travel budget. Due to a limited budget, the students prefer daily, short-distance travel. The participants also state that they made long-distance travels. They state that they reduce their expenses at the destination they go to cover their long-distance travel expenses. Natural and historical wonders, traditional life and architecture, nightlife and entertainment options, and beaches were commonly highlighted in the features of the destinations they chose (Figure 7).

"…my motivations include meeting expectations, self-realization, the urge to discover novelties and differences, such as new and different cultures, civilizations, lifestyles, and the thought that new memories will accumulate." YT2

"My trip to Konya falls under cultural motives. My interest in another place, my interest in historical places and architecture have been effective. Again, I also have personal motives that encouraged me to go on this trip, such as making new friends, seeing new places, having different experiences, and enjoying the trip." YT19

"Factors such as being a tourist's first-time destination and the desire to explore, as well as being a city with a coast, a beach, historical structures and natural formations, and an abundance of activities to participate in, were all considered while making the decision. Furthermore, the low cost and ease of access are appealing aspects in the choice of this destination." YT27

"While choosing the destination, a close region was preferred in order to save transportation cost and time. Developed tourism facilities, proximity to entertainment, vacation, and ease of transportation, proximity to tourism destinations, and the possibility of seeing historical wonders make the Antalya region attractive. When an ideal place for accommodation is found, the choice of destination is completely clear." YT40

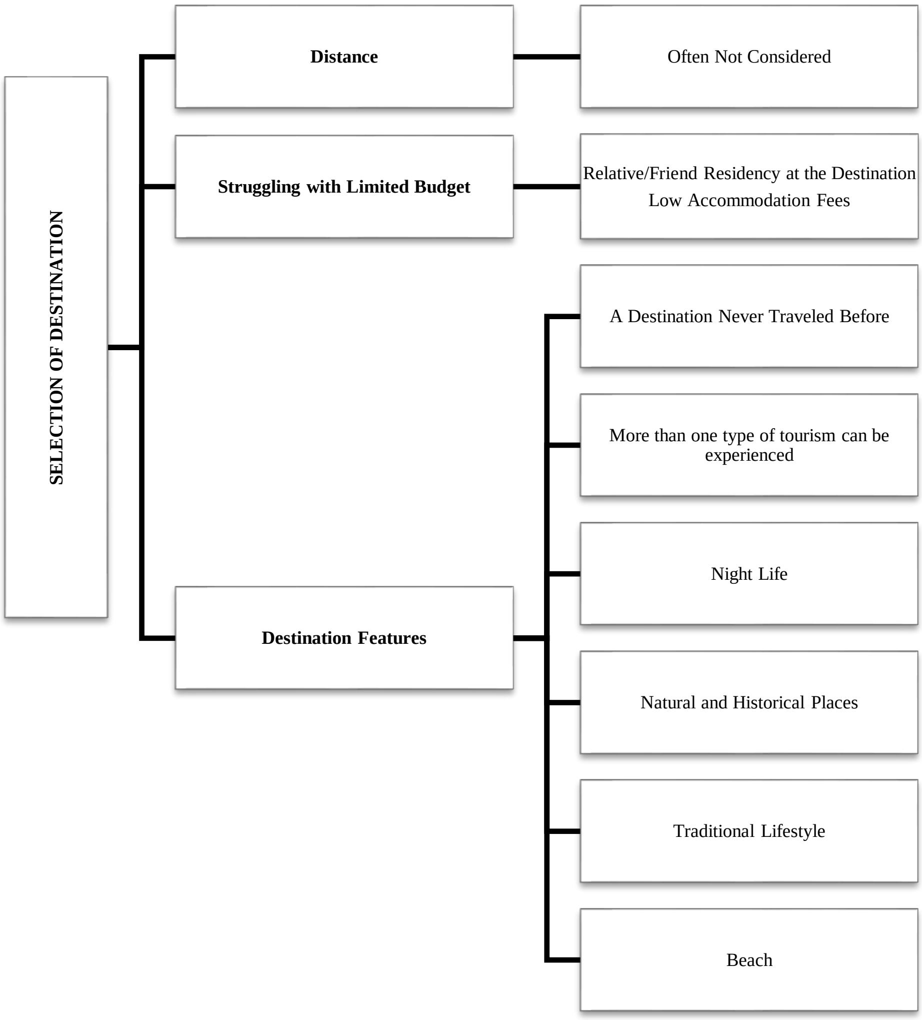

Figure 6. *Selection of Destination Stage*
Note: * Bold texts indicate themes, thin texts indicate codes, and italics indicate sub-codes

Figure 7. *Word Cloud on Selection of Destination Stage*

Travel to the Destination

During the travel planning process, transportation vehicles and systems used by the participants when they arrived at the destination were mentioned. In this sense, a land route is utilized in transportation, and buses or rented cars are favored, depending on the size of the group traveling. Similarly, for travels with family, private cars are frequently used.

The departure time at the beginning of the trip is important. Participants depart early in the morning if the destination they are traveling to is close. If the destination is far away, they prefer to leave at night. The reason for this differentiation is the desire to spend the first day of the trip productively in terms of time. In other words, they want to devote the initial days of their trip to the destination experience (Figure 8).

"Other than taking the bus, students in Turkey have few options for traveling from one city to another on a budget." YT6

"Economically, there are no other options for us students in our country other than taking the bus from one city to another. Although the city to be visited for this is a little distant from where we are, bus travel is favored for transportation to the city because it is relatively inexpensive." YT10

"In April 2019, a three-person ticket was purchased in order to take advantage of the Metro bus company's campaign in which the return ticket is only 5 TRY when purchasing a round-trip ticket." YT13

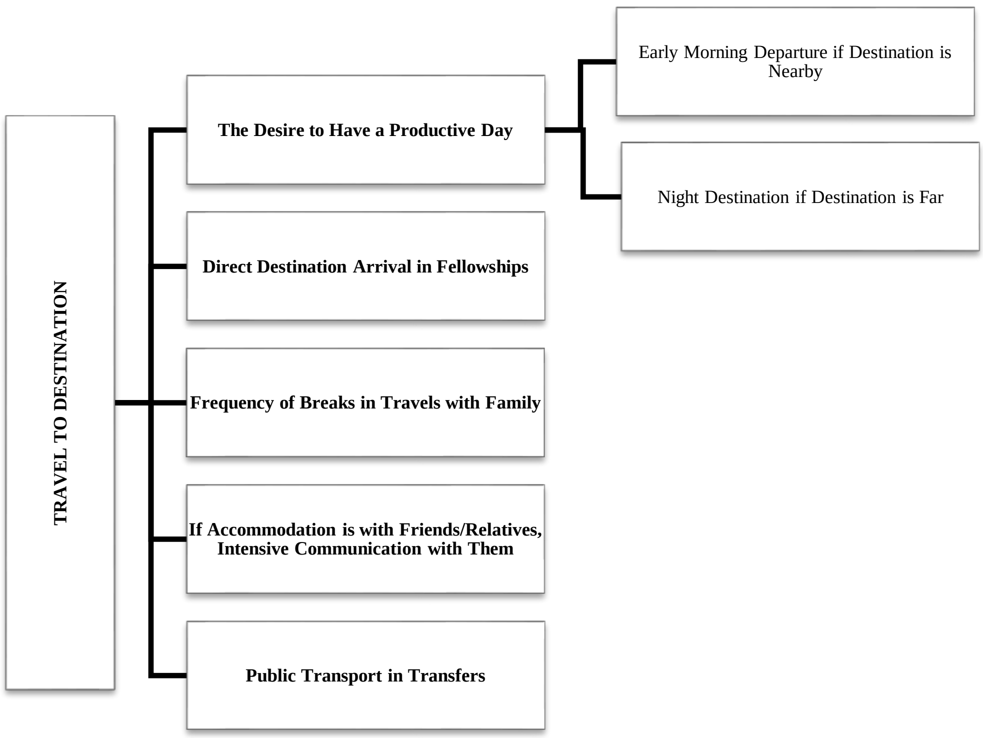

Figure 8. *Travel to Destination Stage*
Note: * Bold texts indicate themes, thin texts indicate codes, and italics indicate sub-codes

Another feature of travel to a destination is that the travel is made for the purpose of arriving directly at the destination. Visiting other destinations on the travel route is out of question. Finally, the features associated with the place to stay at the destination are among the characteristics of travel to the destination. This is because if the accommodation is to be shared with friends or relatives, there is intense communication among these people during the journey. It is noteworthy that there are more breaks and stops when traveling with family. Such breaks or stops are more frequent, in particular, if there are tourist destinations along or near the route. In addition, in travels made by plane or bus, public transportation is widely used for transfers (Figure 9).

Figure 9. *Word Cloud on Travel to Destination Stage*

Experience at Destination

The participants' destination experience begins with the determination of the areas to be visited within the destination. When determining this, they make use of travel websites or applications. Areas with high scores, which were previously voted on by visitors, have priority in the visit preferences of the participants. Accordingly, historical sites, buildings with traditional architecture, and museums were found to be the most often visited places by the participants. It is noteworthy that historical and religious sites are more preferred in travels made with family. In addition, museums, being free or cheap to visit, are among the priorities of the students (Figure 10).

“Most recommended accommodation facilities and the accommodation facilities with high scores from visitors are the most important factors in choosing the accommodation facility.” YT6

"The places and venues that were liked were visited upon deciding by looking at the comments and photos of people who had been to the city before. The liked venues were spotted on the map using Google Maps and Foursquare applications." YT13

"During our tourist trip to Mardin (necklace at night, scenery in daytime), Kırklar Church, Virgin Mary Church and Patriarchate, Zeynel Abidin Mosque and Tomb, Zinciriye Madrasah, Dara Ruins and Mardin's bazaar and inns were visited." YT20

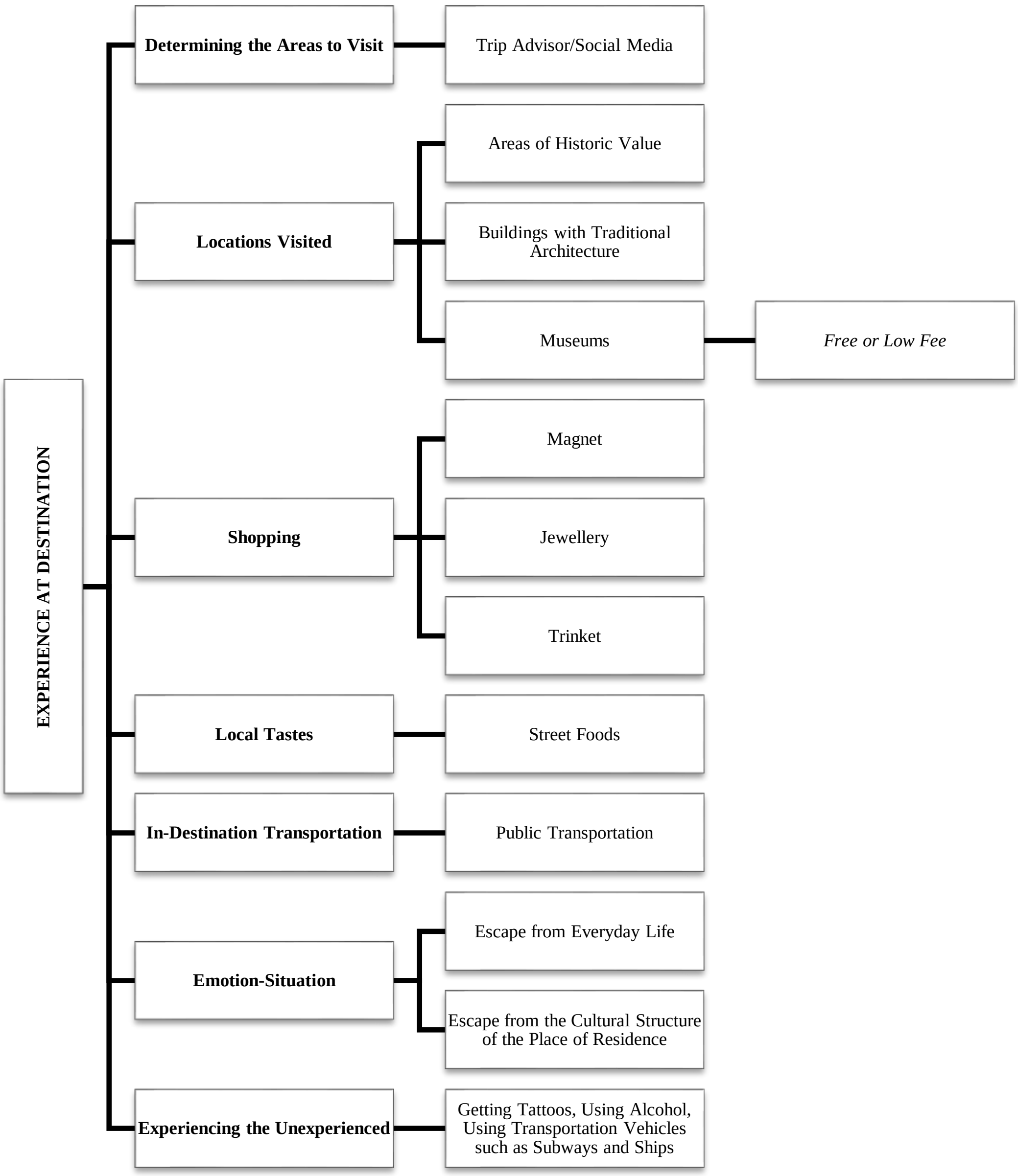

Figure 10. *Experience at Destination Stage*

Note: * Bold texts indicate themes, thin texts indicate codes, and italics indicate sub-codes

As previously stated, in order to lower their travel expenses, the participants supply a large portion of the food products they would need during their travel at the point of departure. It is also noticed that they definitely sample the local delicacies in the visited destination (Figure 11). These products generally correspond to more accessible and low-cost street foods. In addition, the participants who prefer an all-inclusive concept meet their food needs from the hotel's facilities. However, these are few in number.

Figure 11. *Word Cloud on Experience at Destination Stage*

The constraints related to their budgets are also determinant in the transportation preferences for the destination. All the participants traveling by bus stated that they prefer public transportation vehicles for intra-destination transportation. Several participants mentioned that they had used a ship or a metro for the first time. In this sense, if there are several transportation mode alternatives in the visited place, the students tend to prefer those that they have not previously used.

"The municipal fish restaurants on the beach allow you to have both cheap and delicious feasts. Entertainment life is also very common here. There are so many venues that can appeal to everyone and every budget." YT21

"This tourist trip has a very special importance for me because I have never seen a sea in my life due to the location of the city I live in. I got to know the sea for the first time, and I crossed the sea by ferry. Since I live in a small city, I have never taken the metro. I took the metro in Istanbul. I visited significant historical sites and natural wonders and, being in a different place with new people, made me tremendously pleased. At that time, I decided I had to experience the places I couldn't see, the happiness I couldn't experience, everything that I watched with admiration from afar." YT28

"I had very important experiences with this nature tourism event. The fact that I had never seen the sea, as I live in Central Anatolia, was the most important factor for me. Because of this event, I was able to fully appreciate this experience for the first time." YT36

The most striking concept regarding the emotional states of the participants at the destination is 'escape'. Travel offers young people a temporary escape from everyday life and the culture of their place of residence. This escape is not only a mental escape but also an escape that offers students the opportunity to experience what they have not experienced before. A number of the participants reported that this was their first time getting a tattoo, drinking alcohol, or seeing the sea. Shopping is an integral part of travel. The participants also stated that shopping is an important component of their experience at the destination. The products they bought the most were magnets, jewelry, and trinkets. Trinkets are generally related to region-specific natural or cultural elements. The participants stated that the products purchased were both for themselves and as gifts.

"People, I felt, needed a break from their normal lives and places like this." YT34

"During the day, pubs with campaigns were visited, and alternate dining options were sought based on recommendations. It felt good to get away from Kırşehir, where a conservative and oppressive tradition prevails." YT13

Returning Home

The most important characteristic of the participants in the phase of returning home is related to their emotional states (Figure 12). All the processes from making the travel decision to the experience at the destination created a positive emotional state in the participants. On the other hand, the phase of returning home is associated with negative emotions. Sadness and boring travel are the most evident of these. Sadness comes from the fact that returning home signifies the end of the journey. Boring travel is similarly associated with the fact that the 'escape' is over, and the routine will begin again (Figure 13). Although unpleasant emotions are the most significant aspect of returning home, the pleasure that travel brings is fascinating. The individuals' good emotional states also attract attention during journeys they make without their family members.

"We had our dinner at 20.10, we got on the buses at 21.00, it was time to leave Istanbul. I was very happy when I arrived, but when I left, a sadness filled me. I said myself, I wished I could live here until my death. There were things I experienced and saw for the first time. I fell asleep thinking of all these..." YT16

"Even though I never wanted to leave the city, we had to leave. Coming back, drained from exhaustion, but with great memories, was an unbelievable joy." YT29

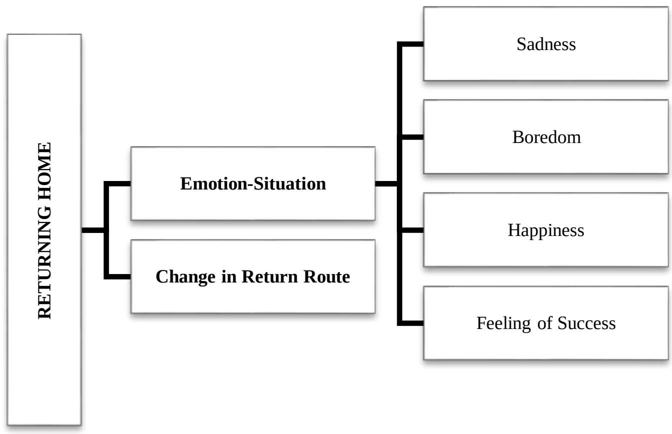

Figure 12. *Returning Home Stage*
Note: * Bold texts indicate themes, thin texts indicate codes, and italics indicate sub-codes

Figure 13. *Word cloud on returning home stage*

Another component of the phase of returning home is the participants making changes in their return itinerary. Sometimes this change takes place in the form of accommodation at another destination on the way back or a short break from the travel. The main purpose of this change is to make the journey longer.

"I was very pleased with the beauty of the region, and I was even more satisfied than I expected. For this reason, I did not want to leave the region. Although we came to the end of the planned time, we changed the plan and stayed an extra day in the region. This situation has proven me that I made the right choice of region. During our return home, we made another last-minute change of decision; we decided to return by a different route than the one we came by. This situation made the road a little longer, but it meant spending a little more time in the region." YT18

"Our traveling back was entirely unplanned. We wanted to cancel the tickets we had purchased to stay longer, and so we did. We even got the opportunity to make the journey longer to visit other places.'' YT34

Recall

Results on recall, the final phase of the tourist experience, are extremely limited (Figure 14). Recall has two components. The first of those is photographs. All of the participants stated that they took many photographs during their travels and shared these photographs with their friends and families through their social media accounts.

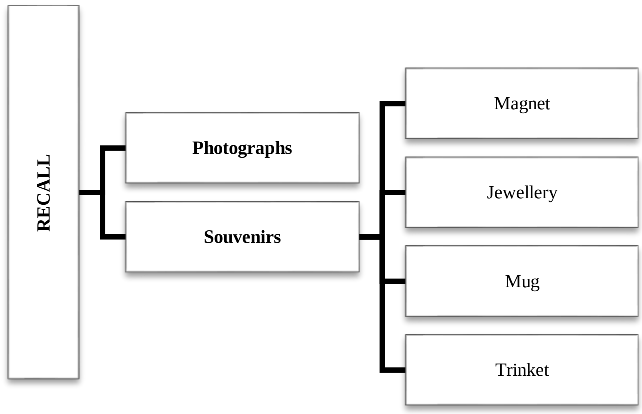

Figure 14. *Recall Stage*

Note: * Bold texts indicate themes, thin texts indicate codes, and italics indicate sub-codes

"…I gave magnets I bought from Balıklıgöl, porcelain mosaic patterns I bought from Gaziantep Castle, and key chains to my friends as gifts. I shared many photos that we had taken from the social media account that I had newly created. When I went to my hometown, I gave the scarves I had bought to my mother, and the silver coffee set I had bought to my sister." YT2

"Lots of photos were taken to keep the memories alive, because these pleasant reminders are triggers with the ability to elicit those memories. As on other trips, buying magnets was not neglected on this trip either." YT13

In addition to photographs, souvenirs purchased related to the travel destination were also considered as recollective elements. Key chains and magnets were the most purchased souvenirs. In addition, trinkets related to historical or cultural elements in the destination and jewelry, especially for women, were other types of souvenirs. The choice of these products is undoubtedly related to the travel budgets of the participants. In addition to these souvenirs, a number of students reported that they had purchased items with local motifs and patterns, such as glasses, plates, and cups (Figure 15).

Figure 15. *Word Cloud on Recall Stage*

DISCUSSION

The number of studies attempting to understand Generation Z has been increasing. Most of the research on this generation focuses on globalization and technology (Li et al., 2019; Szymkowiak et al., 2021). Tourism is one of the most studied disciplines of Generation Z (Olsson et al., 2020; Priporas et al., 2020). In tourism research, it can be stated that there is a tendency to regard Generation Z as an active generation rather than a passive one. There is a clear acceptance of this generation as both managers and employees of the future tourism industry. In this sense, there are studies that question Generation Z in the context of the workforce, and which develop planning proposals accordingly (Özkan & Solmaz, 2015; Goh & Lee, 2018; Goh & Okumuş, 2020; Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021).

A report by Barclays Bank (2018) highlights the key role of Generation Z in the future economic development of nations. In addition to being consumers, this generation will also be the policymakers of the future. In this context, in this study, the experiences of Generation Z regarding six different phases of experience, conceptualized by Williams and Lew (2014), planning, destination selection, travel to destination, experience at destination, returning home, and recall, are examined within the scope of the tourist experience structure.

The budget is one of the most significant components that produces the tourist experience of Generation Z (Donaldson & Gatsinzi, 2005). Xu et al. (2009) highlight that young travelers have relatively low incomes. This is caused by young travelers' dependence on scholarships and student loans. Similarly, Roy et al. (2021) also note that budget plays a significant role in young tourists' decision-making processes. Research findings confirm that budget is an influential factor in every phase of the tourist experience. Generation Z has a limited budget for travel. They need to devise certain strategies to cope with this. These include changing modes of transportation, staying in their friends' and relatives' houses to save money on accommodation, and bringing the food they will need with them. This finding is also consistent with a study conducted by Horner and Swarbrooke (2016) which suggests that young travelers stay at a friends' or relatives' house to conserve their budgets. Similarly, Lim et al. (2015) also suggest that most young travelers prefer to stay mostly in hotels, and sometimes in the homes of their relatives and friends. Thereby, research findings show that participants prefer low-cost services. According to Lim et al. (2015), these alternative financing strategies demonstrate young people's strong interest in tourist activities. Additionally, the limited budget leads to daily trips to closer destinations, which is consistent with the findings of Mignon (2003).

Technology is a key term to use when defining Generation Z. With this, these young people are able to search for and book travel products easily at any time of day. This also means that they can take advantage of last-minute deals (Aina & Ezeuduji, 2021). The use of digital tools is also a determinant in their last-minute travel decisions. Accordingly, research findings show that the planning process of travel with families is long, while travel with friends tends to be spontaneous. In these last-minute decisions, Generation Z's digital capacity is a determinant.

It is prudent to discuss Generation Z's motivations from multiple perspectives. The most notable motivations are rest, entertainment, and historical, cultural, and gastronomic attractions. The idea that the best time to travel is school and youth years, along with special occasion celebrations, are regarded as the main travel motivations of Generation Z. In addition, 'the desire to be in a different place' is an often-emphasized motivation. The desire to visit new places and to be in a different place is consistent with the results of Roy et al. (2021)'s study on young tourists.

Generation Z members generally prefer hotels, free student dormitories, rental houses, and staying at the homes of their acquaintances as guests. This finding differs from the results in the ETC (2020) report. This report suggests that alternative accommodation options, such as camping and caravans, are not popular among Generation Z. With regard to transportation, buses are the most widely used mode of transportation. All of the participants reported that they prefer public transport for intra-destination transportation. A number of the participants stated that they had used a ship or a metro system for the first time. In this sense, if there are several transportation alternatives in the visited place, the students tend to prefer those that they have not used before.

In the participants' experience at the destination, they chose to benefit from travel websites or applications in determining the areas to be visited within the destination. Areas with high scores, which were previously voted on by visitors, have priority in the visit preferences of the participants. According to Nowreen and Hossain (2021), the Internet and social media have a positive effect on the travel motivation of Generation Z members aged between 18 and 24, as they obtain information regarding destination selection, financial planning, accommodation, food, culture of the destination, and so on. Communication technologies are also efficiently utilized in the recollection phase of the travel. All of the participants stated that they took many photos during their travels and shared these photos with their friends and families through their social media accounts. Kim and Fesenmaier (2017) emphasize the importance of social media in post-holiday experiences.

It can be seen that historical sites, buildings with traditional architecture, and museums are the most often visited places by the participants. It is also noted that they definitely try the native delicacies at the visited destination. This result regarding local delicacies is consistent with the research findings of the ETC (2020). These products generally correspond to more accessible and low-cost street food.

The most striking concept regarding the emotional states of most of the participants at the destination is ‘escape’. This escape is not only a mental escape, but also an escape that offers students the opportunity to experience what they have not experienced before. This result on escape motivation is consistent with the research results of Xu and Tavitiyaman (2018) and Robinson and Schänzel (2019). The most important characteristic of the participants in the phase of returning home is related to the escape. All of the processes from making the travel decision to the experience at the destination created a positive mood in the participants. On the other hand, the process of returning home is associated with negative emotions. Ending ‘escape’ and the forthcoming routine bring about a negative emotional state. Therefore, both physical and abstract ‘experience’ is important for Generation Z. In their research, Prayag and Hosany (2014) emphasize the need for young travelers to get to know themselves and state that they prefer personalized tourism activities, which clearly show an interest in experience.

Family also draws attention as an important component in Generation Z's tourist experience. In travel with the family, both the accommodation and the mode of transportation used vary. In which case, budget is no longer a problem. Package tours are widely used when traveling with families. As for the places visited within the destination, religious sites are prominent, in addition to cultural and historical attractions. According to Wang et al. (2004), young people are effective in influencing the travel preferences of their families. The research findings also demonstrate that Generation Z follows the preferences of family.

CONCLUSION

As young people have begun to travel more frequently and over longer distances in recent years, youth travel has become an increasingly important part of the global tourism industry (World Tourism Organization, 2008). The travel characteristics of Generation Z, conceptualized within youth tourism, are interpreted as the main factors that will shape the tourism geography of the future, both on a global scale and in countries with a high youth population. According to the findings of the study, the tourist experiences of Generation Z are as follows:

- They anticipate having a hectic work schedule in the future. In other words, they feel time pressure. That is why they travel.
- They have a limited budget for travel. However, they develop strategies to cope with this problem.
- They travel for an escape from everyday life and culture.
- The planning process of travel with families is long, while travel with friends tends to be spontaneous. They also tend to take last-minute decisions.
- They chose to benefit from travel websites or applications in determining the areas to be visited within the destination. Communication technologies are also efficiently utilized in the recollection phase of the travel.
- They find the traditional characteristics of destinations interesting, such as architecture and local delicacies.
- They visit culturally important destinations, such as historical sites and museums.

- Only the process of returning home is associated with negative emotions.

The tourist experience is a multi-stage process from the planning to the completion of the travel. All these processes are interconnected and relate to each other. For instance, a bad experience at a destination may cause the return journey to be earlier than planned. Similarly, a bad experience in transportation during the travel to the destination or the return journey may shape the transportation preference for the next trip. Therefore, the tourist experience must be considered holistically. In this regard, this study, which acknowledges the tourist experience as a process, as well as the study's theoretical, and methodological features, will provide existing knowledge with a practical contribution. Understanding the holistic nature of the tourist experience will contribute to the development of effective tourism policies in practical terms.

Methodological Implications

- *Interpretivist epistemology:* The perspective of the Z generation, which can be considered as an important generation in the tourism planning of the future, on the tourist experience should be handled with an interpretive perspective. To achieve this, it is important to adopt qualitative research methods and techniques rather than quantitative methods. The results of this research showed that an interpretive perspective can reveal the tourist experience of Generation Z more deeply. In addition, future studies focusing not only on generation but also intersectional analyzes could give a broader picture.

- *Observation:* Alternative methodological approaches are needed to incorporate people's perceptions into destination planning and management (Bachi et al., 2020). By using the observation technique in determining the tourist experiences of the Z generation towards destinations, studies can be carried out on how the components of the tourist experience are perceived in depth.

Theoretical Implications

- This study is intended to analyze the tourist experiences of Generation Z holistically in the context of Turkey. Different studies could be conducted to examine the tourist experiences of Generation Z in different countries.

- Conducting cross-country comparative research will broaden the theoretical framework for the tourist experience of Generation Z. Tourist experiences of Generation Z in different developed and developing countries can be affected by many factors such as economic conditions, society, culture, and family structure. This study laid the groundwork for cross-country comparative research. Thus, empirical studies where such factors will be employed as variables can be conducted.
- Due to time and research funding constraints, on-site interviews could not be conducted. New studies involving face-to-face interviews with Generation Z can be conducted.
- To understand the tourist experience of Gen Z, they may be asked to make an itinerary. In this way, researchers can analyze this process by being directly involved in the experience. Therefore, participatory research can help improve the foresight on this issue.

Practical Implications

- Destination managers can plan unique experiences and activities that will appeal to this generation, considering the tourist experience components of the Z generation.
- Considering every component of the tourist experience, important marketing techniques can be developed for destinations.
- The satisfaction of the Z generation, which may occur as a result of their unforgettable tourist experiences, can positively affect the behavioral intention towards the destinations and may arouse the desire to visit the destination again.
- Each component of the tourist experience (planning, destination selection, travel to the destination, experience at the destination, returning home, and recall), which is accepted as a process, can be used by destination management organizations as an important tool that can be used in destination planning studies.

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Appendix. *Interview Form*

1. Explain the planning stage of your travel.
2. Explain the destination selection stage of your travel.
3. Explain the experience at the destination stage of your travel.
4. Explain the returning home stage of your travel.
5. Explain the recall stage of your travel.

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INTERNATIONAL INTERNSHIPS, LANGUAGE COMPETENCY, AND EMPLOYABILITY: PERCEPTIONS OF AND GAPS BETWEEN STUDENTS AND INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS

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ABSTRACT

This study systematically reviewed enhanced employability and language competency in the context of international hospitality internships. A multi-method research design was applied to analyze the perceptions of student interns and industry practitioners. Research methods included a questionnaire, interviews with practitioners, and focus group meetings with students. The quantitative techniques used were importance-performance analysis (IPA) and stepwise regression analysis, and the qualitative approach used was thematic analysis. Results showed that both groups' perceptions of employability were closely aligned, though gaps existed regarding perceptions of language competency: practitioners felt interns should improve language competency to strengthen employability; conversely, students perceived their language competency as adequate and emphasized their progress. The analysis also indicated that stress management skills and innovation capabilities significantly impacted students' willingness to remain in the industry. Educators are advised to make joint efforts with hospitality practitioners to help students in improving language competency, communication abilities, and professional knowledge, with the aim of increasing retention rates; as for students, they are advised to partake in language practice that is more interactive and

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grounded in contextually-relevant content, in order to enhance their professional knowledge and competencies, and to aid them in better navigating the international workplace.

INTRODUCTION

A better understanding of the competencies required by university students for facilitating the attainment of their career goals is an issue to which educators and researchers are paying increasing attention. To meet the needs and retain this fastest-growing segment of the workforce, the hospitality industry is struggling to attract and retain Generation Z (i.e. those born between 1995 to 2010) (Heo et al., 2018). This is especially so for students in technical and vocational fields, such as hospitality, where the ever-changing, multicultural, and linguistically diverse environment can result in substantial challenges for those new to the workplace (Lam et al., 2014). From the industry's viewpoint, it is also important to learn more about the competencies of new generation employees to resolve the human capital challenges and lower the direct costs of recruiting new employees (Guilding et al., 2014; Heo et al., 2018). Goh and Lee (2018) found that Generation Z hospitality students held more positive than negative attitudes; however, there were still key difficulties forming barriers to their integration into the hospitality industry. Among these, language proficiency, emotional labor, and pressure to perform are critical competencies in need of being developed before Generation Z employees can successfully perform in the industry. In short, attitudinal and other cognitive gaps may exist between practitioners and Generation Z students.

All of the aforementioned points are relevant to job readiness and career development. In keeping with this, one such institution, a vocational university (hereafter called University A) in Taiwan, requires all undergraduate students to complete internships to facilitate professional learning opportunities and to equip students with strong employability credentials. The majority of students partake in domestic internships within Taiwan, in hotels, restaurants, airports, travel agencies, leisure facilities, and other organizations within hospitality and tourism. In addition to the domestic options, students may also apply for international internships.

Among the international internship options, internships in Singapore are the most popular choice for students in University A. According to the Manpower Research & Statistics Department (2018), the accommodation and food service industry has the highest vacancy rate within Singapore for entry-level workers and operators, with 12.3% of the entry-level positions regularly remaining unfilled. Although these figures reflect pre-pandemic industry needs, the current post-pandemic return to normalcy occurring worldwide in general, and in Singapore in particular, points to the potential for a plethora of job opportunities for student interns from Taiwan. Moreover, due to the high degree of internationalization found in Singapore, one essential capability that students need in order to successfully participate in Singaporean internships is language competency, particularly English. In Taiwan, however, Chinese is the official language, and although English is taught as a foreign language, students rarely have the opportunity to apply their English language education. Under such circumstances, doing an internship in a location where English is spoken, such as is the case in Singapore, is both encouraged and yet also seen as a challenge.

Since the purposes of internships are for students to implement what they have learned in the classroom and also to help prepare them for post-graduation careers, and since internship program design necessitates cooperation among students, educators, and industry practitioners, it is key that these stakeholder groups understand their roles in making internship programs succeed for the benefit of all involved. Students and industry practitioners stand to benefit if they can align their goals: this alignment has a higher likelihood of success when there is greater overlap in all sides' perspectives and expectations.

Research Questions

The main purpose of this research was to investigate the perceptions of industry practitioners and student interns concerning their views on interns' language competency and employability and to ascertain the degree to which there was an overlap, or a lack thereof, among the perceptions of these two groups. The following research questions were proposed:

RQ1. How satisfied are industry practitioners with intern performance?

RQ2. Are there gaps in perceptions between student interns and industry practitioners regarding the interns' employability?

RQ3. Are there gaps in perceptions between student interns and industry practitioners regarding interns' English language competency?

INTERNSHIPS AND EMPLOYABILITY

Researchers have shown employability to be a multi-dimensional construct that can be understood in terms of employee attributes, employer preferences, and the larger socioeconomic milieu within which employees and employers operate (Huang, 2013; Kalfa & Taksa, 2015; Chen et al., 2018).

The main purposes of this research are to better understand how employability relates to successful internship completion as well as to ascertain if there are gaps between practitioners' and interns' perceptions of interns' performance, and these have received much attention in a number of previous studies (Qenani et al., 2014; Ishengoma & Vaaland, 2016; Teng et al., 2019). Indeed, according to Qenani et al. (2014), students who have completed internships are 2.5 times more confident than those who have not. Nisbet et al. (2022) applied Quinn et al.'s (2003) competency scale to compare students and supervisors on their perceived importance of competency items, finding discrepancies for nine out of 15 items, including interpersonal communication skills (verbal). Their study concluded by emphasizing the importance of evaluating the outcomes of work integrated learning as perceived by different stakeholders such as students and industry managers.

Thus, given the strong relationship between employability and internships, it is obvious why internships are an important component of student career development. Jackson (2015) described how student communication skills, organizational awareness, and professional knowledge were more likely to accumulate and flourish via the mentoring, team building, self-reflection, and professional portfolio building that are features of many well-designed internships. Additionally, Chen et al. (2018) demonstrated how internship programs are an effective way to strengthen student employability via helping interns to enhance their emotional control and tolerance of pressure, as well as aiding their ability to adapt to change.

In a similar vein, Teng et al. (2019) argued that there is a movement away from an exclusive focus on "hard" employability skills that are formal and technical in nature, to an increased emphasis on "soft" skills which are more social and personal. Examples include interaction with others, self-confidence, and self-reflection. This increased valuation of soft skills places more importance on student attitudes and behaviors, instead of only valuing technical skills and capabilities.

Within the hospitality industry, internships have helped students develop employability. Those with internship experiences have a deeper understanding of the industry, and better know how to develop their future careers. With regard to Taiwanese interns in particular, these observations apply as well. When asked about which skills and capabilities they had improved after completing internships, students indicated that their emotional control and ability to express and communicate had seen gains, but that they were less satisfied with the proficiency in both their native language and hospitality-related foreign language (Chen et al., 2018). These results are consistent with the fact that the students had done their internships in the domestic hospitality industry, where it is easier to work on attitudes and general communication than to improve language competency, particularly for foreign languages. Moreover, in an investigation of the perspectives of both students and supervisors for the purposes of evaluating students' capabilities after partaking in work integrated learning experiences, Jackson (2019) also pointed out how international students' weaknesses in communication are augmented by language deficiencies and a lack of cultural understanding.

Indeed, it bears noting that an international internship can benefit not only students' foreign language development but also their intercultural awareness. Ruhanen et al. (2013) found that international internships can make those interns more employable in the hospitality industry, relative to students who intern in their own countries. Jones (2013) pointed to how internationalization facilitates the development of graduate employability skills by fostering the following competencies: the ability to work with teams of people from different backgrounds; excellent communication skills; resilience and drive, the willingness to embrace multiple perspectives and challenge thinking; and the development of new skills and behaviors according to role requirements. Crossman and Clarke (2010), who sought to better understand the perspectives of all relevant stakeholders (interns, industry practitioners and educators), concluded that all stakeholders identified clear connections between international experiences—including internships—and employability. This connection was particularly seen for employability as manifested in soft skills, including cultural understanding, language competency, and personal traits; a result that was substantiated in other studies (Jones, 2013; Qenani et al., 2014).

Liu et al.'s (2006) employability enhancement framework for Taiwan has been well applied to investigate the employability of university graduates, and hence was used in this research to explore the degree of employability for students who had completed international internships in Singapore. Their criteria consist of four dimensions: general competencies, professional competencies, attitudes towards work, and career planning and confidence. Contained within these four dimensions are 19 specific career competencies, most of which are sub-components of the larger notion of employability and correlate with internship satisfaction as well (Chen et al., 2018).

LANGUAGE COMPETENCY

Employability includes a wide array of skills, knowledge, and competencies. Among these, language competency must be included, insofar as communication is generally held to be an essential component of employability, and language competency is a primary contributor to communicative ability. Itani et al. (2015) concluded that persons with strong language skills demonstrated the highest levels of psychological and physical career mobility, which enabled these individuals to move across organizational, geographical, and cultural boundaries in workplaces. English competency also correlates with career success in tourism-related industries even in countries where English is used only as a foreign language. Hence, educators in these countries are striving to increase student English proficiency, in order to thereby facilitate their marketability and qualifications (Yamada et al., 2014). In addition, Zainuddin et al. (2019) investigated the relationship of language competency to employability and found that interns and practitioners agreed on the importance played by language competency.

When employees are working in internships and careers in international settings, and where the language used is not necessarily the employees' native tongue, the importance of language competency and its contribution toward employability become even more salient. This particularly applies in hospitality, where languages are important means for the communication and provision of service. For these reasons, it is essential to look more closely at the role that language competency plays in professional contexts and how it affects employability.

The primary dimension of language competency is linguistic ability, or proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Primary though it is, it is certainly no simple feat, as gaining proficiency in each of these facets of language use requires a great deal of time. Moreover, the importance that employers in service-related fields place on hiring employees who possess a strong linguistic ability cannot be underestimated: in particular, oral communication skills are highly prized. This is seen in Yamada et al.'s (2014) study, which stressed that the most essential skill that employers look for is the employee’s ability to speak English effectively and good communication skills. Although strong communication skills and strong language skills are not necessarily equivalent, international interns who are highly proficient in English are poised to develop the requisite communication skills more fully. Consistent with this claim, Jackson (2019) found that international students who were evaluated by industry managers as being weaker in communication typically possessed lower English verbal skills.

For these reasons, to prepare non-native English-speaking students to succeed in the workplace, educators place a great deal of effort on teaching English for professional purposes and occupational needs. Zahedpisheh et al. (2017) pointed out that a curriculum related to tourism service English must be designed based on the needs and wants of learners, emphasizing this in their call for English for Tourism and Hospitality Purposes (ETHP).

However, students from places where English is used as a foreign language, such as Taiwan, lack in opportunities to enhance English oral communication and to come into contact with a greater variety of cultural backgrounds, due to fewer venues for practicing English outside of the classroom (Hsu, 2015). Still, with the benefit of sufficient planning and effort on the part of educators, partnering together with industry, it is possible to work toward curriculum design that better positions students to make gains in communicative competencies.

To conclude, the attainment of optimal employability requires students to have not only industry-specific professional skills, but also to possess communication skills and intercultural awareness. Although communication skills, and intercultural awareness in particular, are difficult to prepare for in advance, it is also the case that efforts made in these areas have the potential to positively impact student experiences in international internships, including their work performance.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

The conceptual framework for this research is shown in Figure 1. To better understand how employability influenced student intentions regarding career decisions, it was hypothesized that after an international internship, enhanced employability influences student intentions to remain in the hospitality industry:

H₁: Student intern employability has a direct effect on their intentions to remain in the hospitality industry.

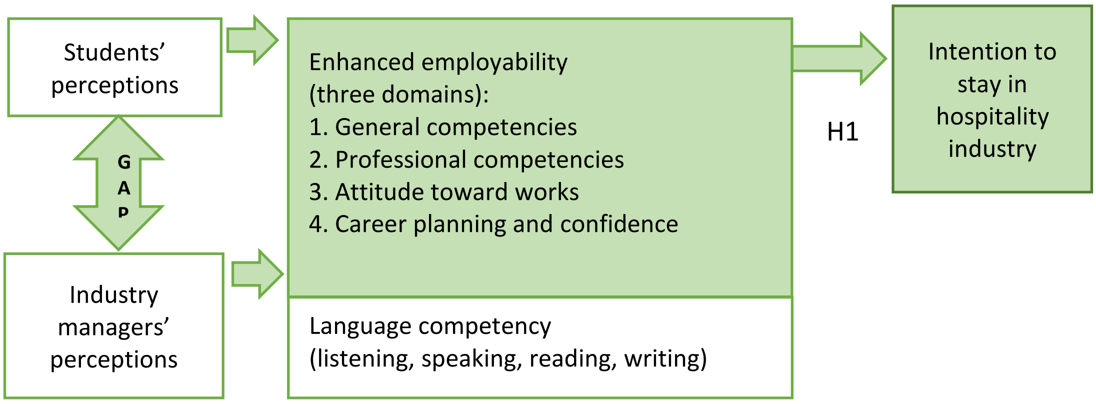


Figure 1. *Research conceptual model*

METHODOLOGY

This research proposed three research questions (RQs) and one hypothesis (H_1). To address these, a mixed method research design was adopted. The quantitative techniques used were importance-performance analysis (IPA) and stepwise regression analysis, and thematic analysis was applied to provide a qualitative perspective.

The first quantitative instrument consisted of a survey completed by industry practitioners. The instrument was adopted from Liu et al. (2006) and Chen et al. (2018), and revised after on the basis of a validity check conducted by three experts. Thirty-two questionnaires were sent via University A's Hotel Human Resource delegation in Singapore. It focused on employability, with some additional company-specific questions. The questionnaire consisted of 25 items and covered the following areas: work performance, professional knowledge, English competency, and skills and abilities (items provided in Table 1). Each item was evaluated regarding two factors, importance and performance, using a five-point Likert scale. The survey ended with three open-ended items on the following topics: practitioner perceptions of how students performed in their establishments, the top three ways in which they felt that students excelled in their performance, and the three areas in which they felt that students most needed to improve.

The second quantitative data source was a survey of 74 students who had completed one-year internships in Singapore—constituting 57% of

University A's students who completed Singaporean internships during the relevant year. This questionnaire was regarding student perceptions of their international internships, based on Wang and Sun's (2014) work. The first two sections focused on background information and degree of English oral competency, respectively. The third section focused on employability enhancement and was based on Chen et al.'s (2018) work.

Chen and Shen (2012), Farmaki (2018), and Jackson (2019) suggested that qualitative methods have valuable insights to offer to the study of internship practice. More specifically, thematic analysis is highly suited to yielding deeper insights from stakeholders, and is widely used in qualitative research. Zopiatis et al. (2021) indicated that much internship qualitative research applied this method, and it can be applied in both primary research and systematic review papers (Pursell & Gould, 2021). Thus, the third and fourth methods of data collection were conducted for the purpose of qualitative analysis.

The third data source was a series of interviews with seven industry practitioners, who were interviewed in their Singaporean hotels. These interviews were based on an exploration of the three topics of discussion that were the focus of the open-ended questions used at the end of the survey.

The fourth data source was a series of focus group interviews held with 32 students, divided into nine groups, to collect in-depth descriptions regarding their international internships in Singapore. For these focus groups, two question threads were used for discussions: first, questions about student perceptions of their strengths and difficulties regarding English language competency in the context of internship performance; second, questions about student perceptions of their strengths and difficulties regarding overall internship performance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Profiles

As the profiles of the surveyed industry practitioners show (Appendix 1), the Food and Beverage (F&B) department accounted for the highest percentage (47%), followed by Human Resource Management (HRM) supervisors (28.1%); in addition, most respondents were managers (78.1%). The profiles of the surveyed student respondents are shown in Appendix 2. Most respondents were female (81%), and restaurant server was the most common internship position (54%). Professional English courses had been taken by 72.9% of the students; moreover, thirty-two students (43%) possessed an English certification equivalent to the CEFR B2 level, indicating that their English language competency was at the upper-intermediate level.

Analysis of Industry Practitioner Satisfaction with Intern Performance (RQ1)

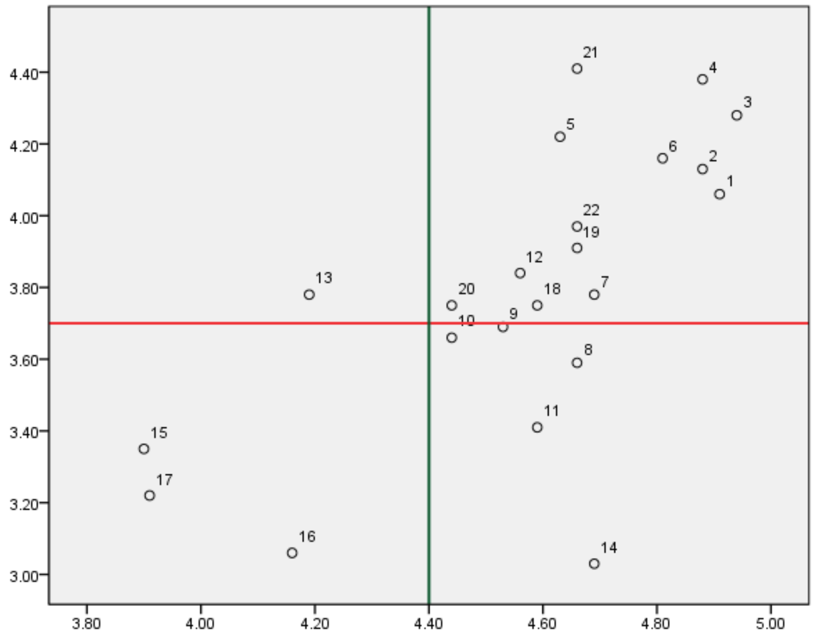
According to the results of the practitioner survey, the mean of the overall satisfaction with the performance of the interns was 4.27 out of 5.00, which demonstrates a good level. The average mean of the importance of employability was 4.56, and that of intern performance was 4.41; hence, the results showed performance was rated slightly lower than importance. Among the variables related to importance, service attitude, responsibility, teamwork, and punctuality had the highest means (Table 1), with work attitude being rated as most important. As for variables related to performance, the highest level of satisfaction was for the interns' willingness to learn new knowledge, punctuality and scheduling ability, and service work attitudes.

Table 1. *Importance and performance rankings by practitioners*

Factors	Items	Importance (rank)	Performance (rank)
Work performance	Work responsibility	4.91 (1)	4.06 (7)
	Teamwork ability	4.88 (3)	4.13 (6)
	Service work attitude	4.94 (2)	4.28 (3)
	Punctuality and scheduling ability	4.88 (3)	4.38 (2)
	Personal grooming	4.63 (11)	4.22 (4)
	Timely and reliable service	4.81 (5)	4.16 (5)
	Emotional ability	4.69 (6)	3.78 (11)
	Stress management	4.66 (8)	3.59 (17)
Professional knowledge	Professional knowledge meets requirements	4.53 (15)	3.69 (15)
	Application of professional knowledge	4.44 (16)	3.66 (16)
	Use of professional language	4.59 (12)	3.41 (18)
	Familiarity with service process	4.56 (14)	3.84 (10)
	Students' professional knowledge	4.19 (18)	3.78 (11)
	English communication ability	4.69 (6)	3.03 (22)
Skills and abilities	Communication ability in other language	3.90 (22)	3.35 (19)
	Handle customer complaints independently	4.16 (20)	3.06 (21)
	Handle promotional activities	3.91 (21)	3.22 (20)
	Interpersonal relationship skills	4.59 (12)	3.75 (13)
	Service skills	4.66 (8)	3.91 (9)
	Understanding company values	4.44 (16)	3.75 (13)
Other	Willing to learn new knowledge and skills	4.66 (8)	4.41 (1)
	Adaptation to rotation	4.66 (8)	3.97 (8)

Note: n = 32

Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) showed results from the practitioner perspective (Figure 2). At least 13 competencies were located in Quadrant 1, indicating competencies that were deemed important and where interns were perceived to perform well. For Quadrant 2, regarding competencies that were deemed important but where interns were perceived to not perform well, practitioners felt that interns should concentrate and perform better in five important competencies: stress management (3.59), professional knowledge (3.78), application of professional knowledge (3.66), professional language ability (3.41), and communication ability (3.03). Among these competencies, communication and professional language showed the lowest rates of satisfaction. As for the attention paid to stress management and application of professional knowledge, this is consistent with previous research findings (Chen et al., 2018; Teng et al., 2019). Educators should focus more on enhancing these soft skills and communication skills to enhance student employability.



Quadrant 1 (Keep up the good work)	*Quadrant 2 (Concentrate on these topics)*
1.Responsibility	8. Stress Management
2.Team	9. Professional Knowledge Requirement
3.Service attitude	10. Apply Professional Knowledge
4. Punctual	11. Professional Language
5. Grooming	14. Communication Ability
6. Reliable	
7. Emotion	*Quadrant 3 (Low priority)*
12. Service Process	15. Communication in Other Languages
18. Inter Relationship	16. Handling Complaints
19. Service Skill	17. Promotion Ability *(e.g. upselling)*
20. Company Value	
21. Learn New Knowledge	*Quadrant 4 (Possible overkill)*
22. Adaptation Rotation	13. Professional Knowledge

Figure 2. *IPA analysis from industry practitioners' perspectives*

Student intention to remain in the hospitality industry (H1)

The causal relationship between employability (independent variable) and willingness to remain in the industry (dependent variable) was measured and is shown in Table 2. Stepwise regression analysis was applied to ascertain which employability dimensions influenced the dependent variable.

Table 2. *Summary of the models*

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted r^2	Estimated standard error	Durbin-Watson	F	Significance
1	0.303[a]	0.092	0.079	1.053		7.258	0.009
2	0.397[b]	0.157	0.134	1.021	1.949	6.625	0.002

Note. Dependent variable is willingness to remain in the hospitality industry.
[a] Predicted variable: constant (60) stress management (β = .303).
[b] Predicted variable: constant (60) stress management (β = .290); constant (56) innovation ability (β = –0.257).

Two dimensions demonstrated statistically significant explanatory power regarding willingness to remain in the hospitality industry: stress management at 30.3%, and innovation ability at 39.7%. More specifically, stress management positively affected willingness to remain, whereas innovation ability had a negative impact. The F-value had a statistically significant effect, and the t-value was also statistically significant, showing that there was no collinearity in the model. The regression results supported the hypothesis, insofar as two of the employability dimensions had a direct effect on willingness to remain in the hospitality industry. These two employability dimensions were soft skills, and the means from student perceptions were in the top five and six in international internships (Table 3: stress management, 4.20 (5th); innovation ability 4.19 (6th)). This result is consistent with Crossman and Clarke's (2010) claim that soft skills are connected to employability, and also supports the assertions of Kalfa and Taksa (2015) and Teng et al. (2019) that soft skills are among the most fundamental graduate attributes, and hence educators should pay more attention to them. To sum up, enhanced stress management increases intern willingness to remain in the hospitality industry, whereas enhanced innovation ability reduces willingness. Although the reasons for this discrepancy are not fully apparent and need to await further investigation, this study demonstrated specific areas where soft skills influence intern career decisions.

Comparison of perceptions on employability (R2)

Both the employers and students ranked willingness to learn as the top employability trait. This was seen in both the survey (Table 3) as well as in the interview results, and hence the high level of agreement was maintained not only across the two groups but also across both quantitative and qualitative findings.

Table 3. *Perceptions of employability*

Employability Items	Student interns (*n* = 74) Mean (rank)	Industry practitioners (*n* = 32) Mean (rank) from performance in Table 1
Willingness to learn	4.27 (1)	4.41(1)
Professional English language	4.24 (2)	3.41 (18); 3.02 (22)
Understanding of the hospitality industry	4.24 (3)	
Career planning	4.24 (4)	
Stress management	4.20 (5)	3.59 (17); 3.78 (11)
Innovation ability	4.19 (6)	
Adaptability	4.15 (7)	3.97 (8)
Communication ability	4.15 (8)	
Application of professional knowledge	4.14 (9)	3.66 (16)
Devoted to work	4.12 (10)	4.06 (7)
Time management ability	4.09 (11)	Punctual 4.38 (2) Timely and reliable 4.16 (5)
Problem-solving ability	4.08 (12)	
Domestic language	4.05 (13)	3.35 (19)
Teamwork ability	4.01 (14)	4.13 (6)
Leadership ability	3.93 (15)	
Application of computer science	3.92 (16)	
Job searching ability	3.77 (17)	
Professional service and skill	3.59 (18)	
		Professional knowledge and skills: Attitude 4.28 (3) Skills 3.91 (9) Knowledge 3.78 (11) Process familiarity 3.84 (10)
Personal grooming		4.22 (4)
Understanding of company values		3.75 (13)
Interpersonal relationships		3.75 (13)
Handle promotional activities		3.22 (20)
Handle customer complaints		3.06 (21)
Average mean	4.08	3.79
Willingness to remain in the hospitality industry	4.24	
Satisfaction with internship	3.59	

Regarding other employability dimensions, there was a general pattern of agreement as well, although a closer analysis reveals some differences in perspectives. For example, practitioners deemed stress management and industry-specific professional knowledge to be critical areas wherein interns should put more effort, a result similar to that found in Qenani et al. (2014) and Lou et al. (2019). Conversely, interns perceived their stress management abilities to be somewhat higher than what practitioners perceived, whereas they thought their professional knowledge was lower. In addition, another important performance dimension was intern service attitudes. From the practitioner perspective, intern service attitudes were a strength. Interns did not highlight service attitudes to the same degree, possibly because they had already become accustomed to them in the course of their university studies and hence had come to take them for granted. Attitudes play a crucial role in the hospitality and tourism industry, and the findings regarding their importance to practitioners were consistent with Walsh's et al. (2015) and Lou's et al. (2019) findings that student service orientation and emotional intelligence influence intentions to join the hospitality industry and remain as future practitioners.

To gain deeper insight, practitioners were interviewed in order to understand their viewpoints better. The thematic analysis of their responses in the interviews yielded results consistent with those found in their answers to the open-ended questions at the end of the survey. The most frequently-mentioned advantages were willingness to learn (18); having positive attitudes (15); being hard-working (7); providing good service (7); responsibility (5); and punctuality (5). Moreover, all the disadvantages they mentioned were related to intern English proficiency. One advantage mentioned by practitioners was related to attitudes and capabilities, as can be seen in the following quotes:

> "*Their strength is their capability. They learn quickly and are eager to learn*." and "*They learn really fast. Moreover, after learning, they are able to operate on their own, even alone. The progress is outstanding*." (SQ P09)

These findings are consistent with the aforementioned claims regarding the importance of soft skills, and how these skills contribute invaluably to the enhancement of international internship experiences (Crossman & Clarke, 2010; Jones, 2013; Qenani et al., 2014; Ruhanen et al., 2013). As this research demonstrates, intern attitudes and dedication to work made the strongest and most positive impressions on industry practitioners.

Comparison of perceptions on language competency (R3)

As shown in the IPA (Figure 2), the gap between the importance of, and the satisfaction with, language competency clarified that practitioners believed that interns should put more effort into professional language and communication abilities. Moreover, in the interviews, the practitioners expressed that interns should have more confidence in speaking English, and at the same time did not indicate that intern language competency was a strength. The above findings echoed Jackson's (2019) observations that international students' lower English verbal skills tend to hinder their communicative competence.

Practitioners, in both the quantitative and qualitative analyses, highlighted the importance of language competency and emphasized how intern language competencies tended to lag.

> "*We understand that they are still learning how not to upset the guests when they are using the language, but the guests who come to 5-star hotels expect us to speak English with proficiency, so we need to focus on this part.*" (SQ P1)

Although the managers understood that student proficiency in English was low, they nonetheless emphasized interns' need to attain the proficiency needed to deliver the high quality of customer service required in upscale hotels. This finding is consistent with Leong and Li's (2011) result regarding the discrepancy between graduate English proficiency and employer expectations, suggesting the need for more communication among educators, students, and industry practitioners to better clarify expectations. Moreover, these results are also in line with Qenani et al.'s (2014) findings regarding the importance of oral communication as a key factor in influencing intern employability.

Interestingly, this consistency in practitioner perceptions was at variance with some of the findings for the interns. The interns expressed at least some level of satisfaction with their language competency—in contrast to the consistently-low ratings given to them by practitioners. This result suggested that practitioners and interns were very likely operating with different beliefs about intern language competency, which could result in interns failing to recognize a key dimension in which practitioners would like to see improvement. After conducting the focus group interviews with the students, there were 96 items related to language competency. Among these, approximately one-third were strengths, including being proficient in producing a native-like accent and possessing strong listening comprehension. The other two-thirds were challenges, with the following appearing multiple times: inadequate English proficiency, inadequate formal English, lack of industry-specific English, poor conversation skills and social interaction (including small talk skills), lack of familiarity with accents and code-switching in Singapore, and lack of knowledge of local hospitality vocabulary. However, even though the students were twice as likely to point out their language competency challenges as compared to their strengths, they nonetheless held largely positive views of their internship experiences in Singapore, including the excellent opportunity it afforded them to improve their English proficiency. This phenomenon suggests that students are likely to concur with Itani et al.'s (2015) observations on the correlation of strong language skills with high levels of psychological and physical career mobility: that is to say, the students in this study seek to embrace the challenges to improve their language competency in order to move across organizational, geographical, and cultural boundaries in workplaces.

One interesting point mentioned repeatedly was that the "Singlish" (Singaporean English) accent was hard for them to understand at the beginning of their internships; however, as they became accustomed to it, they not only understood but moreover began speaking in Singlish, as one student put it:

> "*Many locals dare to express and speak in different accents with fluency. But those words are a mix of English, Malay, and Chinese. We sometimes feel more comfortable in this way without grammar*." (S02)

This had the effect of leading them to believe that English was not so difficult to use, and they found themselves becoming less preoccupied with grammatical accuracy, and more capable of speaking fluently. At the same time, formal English was still seen as important for executing their job duties satisfactorily. Some students said:

> "*I have a hard time using polite English*" and "*My difficulty is handling the complaining guests. It's hard to find the right words to apologize to the guests in a polite way*" (S08)

These statements from students point for the need for English language training to be designed based on the hospitality contextual environment, and emphasized the intercultural adeptness required to meet interns' needs (Zahedpisheh et al., 2017).

Still, it bears noting that the qualitative data for the two stakeholder groups showed some areas of consistency, insofar as both practitioners and interns mentioned the tendency of interns to be shy and lacking in confidence when speaking English. Indeed, both groups suggested that interns need to practice more in a work-related context. In addition, the survey results showed the two agreed on the importance of language competency, with practitioners and interns ranking it near the top in terms of its role in enhancing employability.

CONCLUSION

This research set out to contribute to the discussion on student employability and the role of language competency within it, using the perceptions of different stakeholders in the context of internship programs, and including both quantitative and qualitative methods. Some alignment between the perspectives of students and industry practitioners was found, especially regarding the important role played by soft skills in student enhanced employability after completing international internships. It was found that the soft skills of stress management and innovation ability had a direct effect on student intentions to stay in the hospitality industry after graduation, with stress management having a positive effect, whereas innovation ability had a negative effect. Also, stakeholders demonstrated similar viewpoints regarding intern attributes, both groups deeming a good working attitude and the willingness to work hard and learn to be the key advantages that the students demonstrated during their internships.

However, there were perceptual gaps as well. In particular, their perspectives on language competency revealed discrepancies, particularly in the quantitative analysis data. More specifically, practitioners felt intern language competency constituted a key dimension that Taiwanese interns need to improve upon to strengthen their employability. Students were somewhat more likely to perceive their language competency as adequate and emphasized the progress that they were making.

Although these differences are not contradictory per se, they indicate a difference in emphasis between the two groups. For example, practitioners may be more future-oriented and are anticipating what the students will need after graduating when they enter the workforce as full-time employees. Students appear to be more present-oriented, insofar as their comments on their language competency were more consistent with a focus on what they were capable of within the context of internships, where the demands made upon them are likely to be less demanding than what they would face as full-time employees after graduation. Generally, it appears that practitioners observed intern language proficiency and found it wanting. This suggests a need to implement more effective teaching strategies regarding English conversation skills in the classroom and to provide more opportunities to speak English.

International internships may be one of the most effective ways to enhance student communication skills; however, before internships, more effort should be made to achieve the requisite English level needed to work in the industry. According to Zou et al. (2019), English competency influences service quality in the hospitality industry. Strong proficiency improves service quality, whereas poor proficiency runs the risk of leading to dissatisfied customers and hence may diminish customer loyalty. Hsu (2014) also mentioned that attaining a satisfactory level of English communication with guests is a challenge to hotel practitioners in Chinese-speaking countries. Hence, he recommended that hoteliers should work with educators to better prepare students to have stronger English proficiency, especially in speaking and listening. Other researchers have also supported the finding that English language competency plays a major role in employability and have suggested that educators and industry human resource practitioners place more effort on better preparing the future workforce in their respective industries (Yamada et al., 2014; Zainuddin et al., 2019).

Limitations and suggestions for future research

This research only explored one international internship (Singapore); future studies should explore a wider array of international settings in different cultural contexts. Another limitation is the use of a relatively small sample size; only 74 student respondents from a single university in Taiwan. Further studies are needed to validate the results, especially using samples from different universities. Regarding the international experiences, this research analyzed an exclusively work-based international internship; however, internship program design covers more than just this type, including domestic internships as well as international internships that have academic study components. Hence, there should be a closer look at a greater number of variables, to see how different internship experiences influence student language competency and employability. Finally, this research considered just two stakeholder groups, students and industry practitioners. Future research should also include the perspectives of educators, especially since they are the group responsible for curriculum design and are hence best placed to lead the way in helping students prepare for internships.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. *Profiles of industry practitioner respondents*

		Frequency	Percent
Department	HRM	9	28.1
	Housekeeping	2	6.3
	Front Office	3	9.4
	Kitchen	3	9.4
	F&B	15	46.9
	Total	32	100.0
Position	Supervisor	4	12.5
	Manager/Director	25	78.1
	Chef	1	3.1
	Subtotal	30	93.8
Missing values		2	6.3
Total		32	100.0

Note. $n = 32$

Appendix 2. *Profiles of student intern respondents*

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	60	81.1
	Male	14	18.9
Department	Front office	5	6.7
	Front office + Restaurant service	6	8.1
	Housekeeping	1	1.3
	Bell service	1	1.3
	Kitchen	7	9.5
	Restaurant service	40	54.1
	Bartender	6	8.1
	Others in rooms division	8	10.8
English learning	1–10 years	30	40.6
	11–15 years	27	36.5
	16 or more years	11	14.9
Professional English courses	Yes	54	72.9
	No	20	27.0
TOEIC Certification ($n = 46$)	550 and below	15	20.3
	551–600	5	6.8
	601–700	9	12.2
	701–800	12	16.2
	801 and above	5	6.8
TOEFL Certification ($n = 1$)	61–100	1	

Note. $n = 74$

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INTENTION OF INDEPENDENT TRAVELERS TO CONSUME STREET FOODS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF EXTENDED TPB: THE MODERATING ROLE OF HEDONISM

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the intention of consuming street food during independent travelers' trips based on the Theory of Planned Behavior, which is expanded with the variables of past experience and hedonism. The relationships between the variables of attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control and past experience, and behavioral intention variable were examined. Moreover, moderator role of hedonism variable in the relationship between attitude and behavioral intention was tested. The study was conducted in Istanbul, and 523 of 541 questionnaires were analyzed. Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to test the five hypotheses proposed in research model. Results showed that attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control and experience, respectively, were important factors affecting the intention of independent travelers to consume street food. However, results also indicated that hedonism does not have a moderating effect between attitude and behavioral intention. It was shown in this study that the expanded Theory of Planned Behavior can be used to explain street food consumption intention. Finally, theoretical and managerial implications of the current study were presented.

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INTRODUCTION

Street food has an important place among alternative products for eating out. World Health Organization (WHO) defines street food as "Food and beverages prepared in the streets and similar public places, or prepared and presented at the sales place by the seller, which can be consumed at the time of sale or later without the need for any additional processing" (WHO, 1996). Many studies (Privitera, 2012; Choi et al. 2013; Hiamey et al. 2013) show that street foods are mostly consumed by low-income people in developing countries since it is easily accessible and cheap. However, in the USA, there is a rise of the "food truck" movement, where street food is seen as an important fashion and trend regarding consumer nutrition (Newman & Burnett, 2013). Since it is consumed in different ways throughout various geographies, it can reflect the characteristics of the society in which it is consumed, as it is prepared with local products and cooking techniques (Calloni, 2013). Therefore, it provides an authentic experience for tourists with its features such as representing a local product, creating sociality, and being more accessible than other food groups. Moreover, the street food festivals organized in some countries (European Street Foods Festival, Austria; Thai Street Food Festival, Thailand etc.) show that this phenomenon is not only about meeting nutritional needs through cheap consumption, but that it can also provide consumers with an enjoyable consumption experience. In this framework, street foods have recently managed to attract the attention of researchers in the field of tourism and gastronomy.

Street food has been discussed mostly as regards vendors in studies on food hygiene and safety (Abdalla et al., 2009; Cho et al., 2011). On the other hand, it is seen that there are fewer studies on consumers. In particular, although some studies were conducted on consumer attitudes in the context of tourists (Chavarria & Phakdee-auksorn, 2017; Akşit, 2019), perceptions of risk and benefit (Choi et al., 2013; Gupta et al., 2018), intention to revisit (Yeap et al., 2019; Maknu et al., 2020), and street food experience (Ozcelik & Akova, 2021; Cifci et al., 2022), their numbers are still insufficient. In this context, there is a need to examine street food in the context of tourists’ food consumption.

Previous studies used Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) successfully in exploring behavioral intents toward certain food groups (Padgett et al., 2013; Wu, 2014) and street foods (Chavarria & Phakdee-auksorn, 2017; Ukenna et al., 2018; Şahin & Solunoğlu, 2019). Similarly, this study explores the intention of independently traveling tourists to consume street foods using TPB extended with past experiences and hedonism variables. Specifically, there is a lack of studies and discussions on the reasons for consumption of street foods in the context of utilitarian or hedonic value. In addition, no study was found that investigated the intentions of foreign independent travelers (backpackers, travelers, etc.) towards street food. Independent travel has become a growing segment in the tourism industry with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic crisis (Wen et al., 2021). With the increasing interest in independent travel, there is a need to explain the behavior of independent travelers in particular, rather than examining tourist behavior in general. In this context, this research focuses on independent travelers to explain their intention to consume street food. This study, which is a first in this framework, is considered valuable in filling the literature gap. This exploratory study, mainly focused on independent travelers, was conducted to provide theoretical and practical implications for the marketing of street food, which attracts a lot of attention, as a sustainable gastronomic tourism product. In other words, discovering the factors affecting the intention of independent travelers to consume street food will help this phenomenon to be used as a touristic marketing tool and to develop marketing strategies.

In the following sections, an extended literature on street foods presented first. The concepts of the study explained in detail and the research model developed. Later, methods and analyses introduced, and the findings of the field study were presented and discussed within the literature. The results of the study, theoretical and practical implications, limitations and suggestions for future studies constitute the last section.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Street Foods as General

Viewed from a wider perspective, street foods have been examined by several disciplines. Most of these studies have focused on the hygiene and sanitation practices of vendors within the concept of food hygiene and safety. It has been often found that vendors displayed unhygienic practices such as not washing their hands while preparing these foods (Da Silva et al., 2014), having insufficient knowledge about food safety (Liu et al., 2014), being inadequate in terms of personal hygiene, storing food in improper conditions (Choudhury et al., 2011), and keeping garbage at their working counter (Muyanja et al., 2011). In addition, various microorganisms that may cause potential hazards have been detected in samples taken from street foods (Abdalla et al., 2009; Cho et al., 2011). On the other hand, according to research conducted on consumer perceptions, consumers have negative attitudes such as not trusting the quality of food, suspecting it to be contaminated (Cardoso et al., 2014), and seeing it as risky for health as a result of unhygienic practices, and thus they avoid consuming such foods (Khongtong et al., 2017). Studies in the field of socio-economics and governance show that street food vendors represent the informal economy, they create an unfair competition environment as they do not pay taxes as a result of working without a license (Bromley, 2000), and they disrupt pedestrian and vehicle traffic, cause waste problems and noise (Martin, 2014). It is also among the findings of the studies that some local governments apply double standards to immigrant vendors and local vendors for such reasons (Basinski, 2014). Vendors suffer from practices such as arrests, intimidation, and the destruction of sales carts/stands (Tinker, 1993) by the police officers or soldiers of local governments. In the literature, it has been reported that despite the problems, consumers consider street foods unclean yet tasty, and they are preferred for reasons such as price, unique tastes, easy accessibility, and social benefit (Hiamey et al., 2013).

Street Foods in Tourism and Gastronomy

Street food has become an important part of the tourist experience. Therefore, the concept has been discussed in different contexts within the disciplines of tourism and gastronomy. For example, Ozcelik and Akova (2021) found that street food experience affected behavioral intentions and that there was a positive correlation between relevant variables. Cifci et al. (2022) shown that street food experience affected destination image, revisiting intention, and word of mouth communication intention. Another study revealed that the quality of street food experience positively affects the destination image and word-of-mouth intention (Lee et al., 2020). In addition, Maknu et al. (2020) found that gastronomy attractiveness and past gastronomic experience have positive effects on Malaysian Muslim tourists' revisit intentions.

The effects of perceived risks and benefits on attitudes and behavioral intentions as regards street food are also discussed. In this context, it has been determined that perceived risks affect the attitude towards street food negatively, but the perceived benefit positively (Choi et al., 2013; Gupta et al., 2018). It is also stated that attitudes affect behavioral intentions (Gupta et al., 2018). Khanna et al. (2022), on the other hand, emphasized that word-of-mouth communication about street food vendors positively affects the attitude and intention to consume. They also found that there is a significant negative relationship between perceived risk and intention to consume. Mudunkotuwa and Arachchi (2020) revealed that perceived risks negatively affected attitude, but unlike other studies, they found a positive effect between perceived risks and behavioral intentions. The researchers concluded that in this case, despite the risks, tourists can still recommend street food.

Opinions regarding street food, components of attitude, and the relations between attitudes and behavioral intentions have been examined. In his study on determining the attitudes of domestic tourists towards street food, Akşit (2019) found that it consists of six dimensions: food quality, service quality, sense of pleasure, hygiene, monetary value, and satisfaction. The attitude towards street food is positive with the highest average attitude belonging to the service quality, and the lowest belonging to the hygiene factor. Yıldırım and Albayrak (2019) investigated the opinions of foreign tourists visiting Istanbul about street foods and reported concerns about the nutritional value, cleanliness, sellers' clothes, and cleanliness of the sales place. In another study, Jeaheng and Han (2020) mentioned the positive effect of tourists' attitudes toward street food on their intention to continue consuming and to recommend. Additionally, Yeap et al. (2019) reported that the attitude toward street food influences young domestic travelers' intention to revisit Penang through place attachment.

A group of researchers examined street food based on TPB. In this context, Chavarria and Phakdee-auksorn (2017), among the leading researchers, analyzed attitude in six dimensions. The authors argued that affection, satisfaction, and service quality dimensions have significant effects on behavioral intention whereas hygiene, food quality and value for money do not make a significant contribution. They also found that subjective norms and perceived behavioral control (PBC) affected the intention for consuming street food. Ukenna et al (2018) found that attitude, subjective norm and PBC were effective on intentions to patronize street food vendors within the framework of expanded TPB, but past experience did not have any affect. Hakeem and Lee (2018) reported that the attitude toward Korean street food and subjective norms of Muslim visitors affected their buying intentions. Finally, Kargiglioğlu and Aksoy (2020) concluded that attitudes and subjective norms regarding traveling for tasting street food positively affected behavioral intention for destination selection. Within this framework, it is understood that TPB is successfully used on street food. The literature review will be continued in the conceptual framework and hypotheses section that follows.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

Independent Travelers

According to Cohen's (1972) tourist typology, independent travelers are wandering and exploratory individuals, who are open to innovation, avoid tourism industry businesses, and do not find ordinary tourist experience intimate enough. They can distance themselves from their own culture, but at the same time preserve their core values, use accommodation and adopt food habits of the place visited, and try to learn the language of local community. On the other hand, unlike tourists who buy package tours, it is seen that independent visitors are defined as visitors who are prone to risk when choosing certain holiday items, have a more flexible schedule as they make their own tour planning without using any intermediary, travel multiple regions and not stick to just one destination; they are also described as individuals who are able to quickly internalize new information, desiring to learn unusual routes and new cultures, and people with low budgets who make their own budgeting decisions for their travel (Murphy & Pearce, 1995; Tsaur et al., 2010; Hyde & Lawson, 2003). In addition, the desire to see and travel to new places, search for exploring new cultures, new information, and adventure, search for something new, developing social interaction and personal development (Andersen et al., 2000; Richards & Wilson, 2004) are among the main motivation sources of independent travelers. As mentioned above, street food is seen as a fun alternative for people with this kind of motivation as it is less expensive, helps save time, is easily accessible, provides social benefits, represents local cuisine, and serves as a bridge in communication with the local people. Moreover, it is observed in the literature that there is a relationship between personality traits and food preferences, and personality affects food choices (Shipman & Durmuş, 2016; Kılıçlar et al., 2018). Street foods considered traditional and readily available with a wide variety at any time of the day are acceptable to independent tourists who are open to experience. Therefore, independent travelers were chosen as the target group in this study.

Theory of Planned Behavior

According to this theory, the main factor determining behavior is the behavioral intention that immediately precedes the behavior (Ajzen, 1985). The three main factors that determine behavioral intention are attitude toward behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Attitude towards behavior represents the positive or negative evaluations an individual makes for a behavior. Subjective norms express the social pressure that an individual perceives on certain behavior. PBC represents such as time, money, opportunity, resources, skills, knowledge, and cooperation with other people. More generally, the individual's positive or negative thoughts about a behavior, the social pressure he/she perceives and perceived ease or difficulty about it determine one's intentions towards such behavior. Since behavioral intentions represent the individual's willingness to perform certain behavior, it is important to examine and reveal those intentions.

Behavioral Intention. Behavioral intention is defined as the individual's readiness to perform any behavior, as well as the evaluation of motivational factors that can affect it (Ajzen, 1991). Thus, it is a phenomenon that determines how much effort the individual is willing to put into the realization of the behavior. If the individual has a positive attitude towards the behavior, the social environment approves it, and the perceived control power is high, the behavioral intention will also be high. Since behavioral intentions are the immediate antecedents of the behavior, they increase the likelihood of such behavior being performed.

Attitude Towards Behavior. Attitude generally refers to positive or negative evaluations of objects, people or thoughts (Ajzen, 1991). After the individual's self-evaluation, the attitude towards the behavior can be positive or negative, positively or negatively affecting the behavioral intention.

A review of the tourism and gastronomy literature shows that there are studies examining the relationship between attitudes and behavioral intentions from different perspectives. For example, Han et al. (2011) showed that the attitudes of Chinese tourists towards visiting Korea are significant in their behavioral intentions. Similarly, attitudes toward special food groups affect the consumption intentions towards mentioned foods (Wu, 2014; Menozzi et al., 2015; Gakobo & Jere, 2016). For example, Ryu and Han (2010) found that attitude significantly predicts tourists' intention to consume local foods in New Orleans. Moreover, attitude towards consuming street foods affects intention (Choi et al., 2013; Chavarria & Phakdee-aurkson 2017; Şahin & Solunoğlu, 2019) because if individuals have a strong belief that consuming street food will lead to positive results (satisfaction, taste, exploring culture, developing social relations), it can be expected that their desire to consume street food will increase. Considering the current study, attitude of independent travelers towards street food consumption may affect the behavioral intention in question. Accordingly, the relationship between these two variables is given below as the first hypothesis.

H1: *Attitudes towards street food consumption affect the intention to consume street food.*

Subjective Norms. Subjective norm is a concept that expresses the relationship of a particular behavior with the social environment. Ajzen (1991) defines subjective norm as the perceived social pressure of an individual to perform or not perform a certain behavior. These similar pressures may also apply to the consumption of certain foods. For example, Menozzi et al. (2015) found that subjective norms affect vegetable consumption positively. If the individual receives suggestions from his social circle (people he cares about) that it would be beneficial to consume street food, this may lead him to have a positive attitude toward street food consumption. Previous studies conducted among tourists have shown that subjective norms affect the intention to consume street food (Chavarria & Phakdee-aurkson, 2017; Hakeem & Lee, 2018; Şahin & Solunoğlu, 2019; Kargiglioğlu & Aksoy 2020). Following the current study context, subjective norms may be effective in the intention of consuming street food of independent travelers, resulting in the following hypothesis:

H2: *Subjective norms towards street food consumption affect intention to consume street food.*

Perceived Behavioral Control. Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) refers to the perceived ease or difficulty in performing a behavior (Ajzen, 1991). The ability of an individual to exhibit any behavior may depend on factors such as time, opportunity, resources, knowledge, and skills. If the presence or absence of these factors is perceived, the individual has PBC. In other words, as the level of personal control increases, the probability of performing the behavior increases as well. Gakobo and Jere (2016) stated that PBC plays an active role in the consumption intention of African ethnic foods, which was also supported by other studies (Chavarria & Phakdee-aurkson, 2017; Ukenna et al., 2018; Şahin & Solunoğlu, 2019). Accordingly, knowing where, under what conditions, and at what prices street food is sold and how to eat it, as well as spare time, will increase the desire to consume such food. Therefore, PBC may be effective in the intention to consume street food of independent travelers, leading to the establishment of the third hypothesis:

H3: *Perceived behavioral control towards street foods consumption affects intention to consume street food.*

Past Experience

Past experiences can be an important reference source for future behavior. Some researchers have argued that individuals' past experiences should be considered to explain better their behavioral intentions (Kim & Chung, 2011). Taking the critical stance, Conner and Armitage (1998) argued that behaviors can be better explained if the past experience variable is added to the TPB. Therefore, researchers in various fields have often included the past experience factor in their research models to explain behavior.

Ye et al. (2017) found a significant relationship between past experience and Chinese consumers' intention to visit local wineries, while Ryu and Jang (2006) found that past experience has a positive effect on tourists' intention to try local cuisine. Jun et al. (2016) examined female restaurant customers' past experience with healthy foods that had less fat and calories and revealed that past experience positively affects their attitudes and intentions towards their next consumption of such food. In addition, Higuchi et al. (2017) showed that past experience affects intention of consuming fish and is an important variable in repetition of behavior. Finally, some research (Lee et al., 2020; Ozcelik & Akova, 2021; Cifci et al., 2022) also reported a positive impact of street food experience on behavioral intentions.

The findings of the above studies show that the past experience factor has an important effect on explaining individuals' behavioral intentions. In particular, this variable was examined in the studies using TPB framework, obtaining positive results and contributing to better explanations of the examined behavior (Conner & Armitage, 1998; Huang & Hsu, 2009; Kim & Chung, 2011). The positive/negative experiences of individuals who previously consumed street food and their confidence due to obtained information may determine their future street food consumption. Therefore, the intention of independent tourists to consume street food can be influenced by their past experiences, formulized in the fourth hypothesis:

H4: *Past experiences towards street foods consumption affect street food consumption intention.*

Hedonism

Understanding the value that individuals perceive against any phenomenon is important for various branches of science and disciplines, and this concept attracted the attention of researchers in fields such as psychology, sociology, and marketing. Ryu et al. (2010) conceptualized perceived value as general evaluations based on consumers' perceptions of what they give and get from a product or service. According to Babin et al. (1994), most researchers have focused on the utilitarian value of consumer behavior, which has long been characterized as a rational task. It is accepted that consumers perform consumption behavior by making more cognitive decisions. However, this traditional approach to the consumption decision falls short of fully addressing the consumption value (Babin et al., 1994), ignoring important consumption phenomena such as sensory and emotional pleasures. As a result, a hedonic perspective has emerged for a better understanding of consumer values (Lim, 2014).

There are two types of consumption values: utilitarian and hedonic. While the utilitarian value is related to the purpose of consumption to perform the task and whether this task is fulfilled effectively or not, the hedonic value represents the value related to the perception of pleasure in the consumption process (Doong et al., 2012). More precisely, utilitarian value focuses on the functional and objective characteristics of the product or service (Ünal & Ceylan, 2008). In this case, price, usefulness, efficiency and benefits of the product or service are important. Hedonic value is more subjective and personal than utilitarian value. It is associated with the consumer's desired sensations, such as visual images, fantasies, pleasures, sounds, smells, and touches with certain products or services (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982). Similarly, hedonic value refers to consumers' desire for psychological benefits, including experiential, intangible, multi-affective, and positive states such as happiness (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Hyun et al., 2016). In short, hedonic value is related to the consumer's prioritizing the pursuit of entertainment and pleasure.

Utilitarian and hedonic values are included in some research models to explain behaviors that occur in the context of a particular food group. For example, Kang et al. (2015) stated that hedonic value positively affects restaurant customers' intention to choose healthy foods. On the other hand, Lee and Yun (2015) found that hedonic and utilitarian values significantly both affected the intention to purchase organic food. Anisimova's (2016) study also proved the important role of hedonic values in the intention to purchase organic foods.

Considering the studies that emphasize cheapness, accessibility, and nutrition values as reasons for consuming street food among locals, it is possible to say that street food consumption is shaped around utilitarian values. However, it can be interesting to examine which values affect consumption preference among non-local people or more specifically, to understand how important hedonic values are for tourists traveling to a new destination. Some tourists consume local foods to learn about the local culture, gain new experiences, and socialize, arousing curiosity and excitement. Since street food can also be perceived as one that can give happiness when consumed, it can be associated with hedonic values. Moreover, the hedonic approach of tourists may also positively affect their attitudes toward street food consumption. In the current study, it is predicted that hedonism (pleasure, discovery, excitement, etc.) plays a moderating role between the attitudes and intentions of independent travelers toward the consumption of local street foods. Finally, the last hypothesis can be proposed as follows.

H5: *Hedonism has a moderator role between attitude and intention to consume street food.*

Based on the above hypotheses, the research model is created and presented in Figure 1.

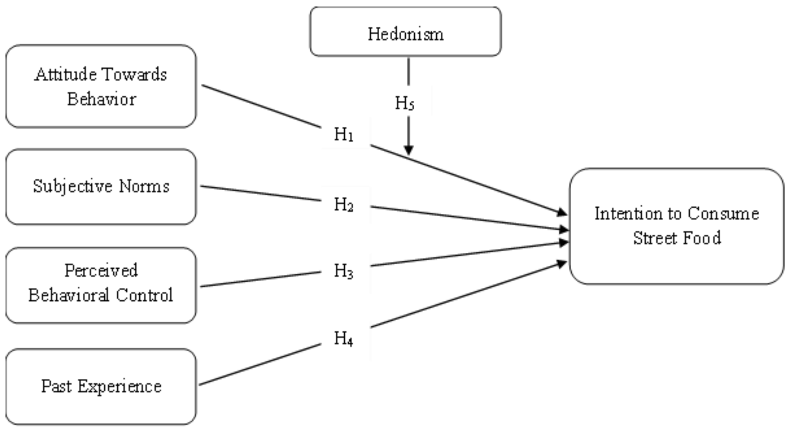

Figure 1. *Research Model*

METHODOLOGY

Quantitative method approach was adopted in the study, which is an approach that allows testing the relationships between variables that can generally be measured with the help of measurement tools and analyzed using statistical processes (Creswell & Creswell, 2014). The cross-sectional study design, on the other hand, is a research design that is used to quantitatively describe the prevalence of a phenomenon, trend, problem, attitude, opinion or topic by taking a section (sample) from the population, and it is the most commonly used research design in social sciences (Kumar, 2011; Creswell, 2016).

Research Instrument

Measurement scales in the current study were adapted by using the relevant literature for the proposed research model. In order to measure attitude as an independent variable, six-item scale proposed by Han et al. (2011) was used. For measuring the other two independent variables, subjective norm and PBC the three-item scales were taken from Wu's (2014) study. For measuring past experience as an independent variable, the six-item scale was taken from Higuchi et al.'s (2017) study, while for hedonism seven-item scale was taken from Anisimova (2016). The dependent variable, behavioral intention, was measured through five-item scale by Gakobo and Jere (2016). Participants were asked to answer a total of 30 questionnaire statements regarding these six scales with a 5-point Likert-type rating (1=I strongly disagree and 5=I strongly agree). The questionnaire forms were prepared in English only, considering the nationalities of the participants would be very diverse and taking the scales' original language into account.

Pilot study was conducted on a small group of 51 foreign independent travelers to check the suitability of the measurement tool and Cronbach Alpha values for six different scales were calculated as follows: attitude was 0.803, subjective norm was 0.844, PBC was 0.780, intention as 0.865, past experience as 0.855, and hedonism as 0.807. Regarding construct validity, factor analysis determined that each scale was gathered under one factor. Based on these results, it may be concluded that the reliability and validity of the scales are ensured. After pilot study and considering the expert opinions, a few minor changes were made to the questionnaire form.

Research Area, Sampling and Data Collection

Data were collected in Istanbul. Istanbul is among the top ten cities in the world in terms of diversity of street food culture and street food consumption (CNN Travel, 2018; Ozcelik & Akova, 2021). However, in this study, the intention to consume street food in general, not street food specific to Istanbul, was examined. Istanbul offers not only street food, but also museums, historical sites, ancient structures, unique Bosphorus views and world-famous places of worship, all of which are highly attractive in terms of the main motivations of independent travelers. Being an attractive cultural tourism and important transfer center with many international flight connections are only some reasons for selecting Istanbul for data collection. Moreover, Istanbul is considered as the first stop for those independent visitors who wish to visit more places throughout Turkey on a low budget. Harman et al. (2013) stated that backpackers stay in Turkey for 11,5 days and spend 6 days in Istanbul. Thus, it is possible to conclude that the duration of independent travel in Istanbul is more than half of the total duration of a traveler's stay in Turkey. In addition, Istanbul was evaluated as the most suitable environment to reach the targeted independent travelers, as it hosted more tourists than other provinces in the season in which the data were collected.

According to the scope of the current study, foreign independent travelers who came to Istanbul were targeted. Convenience and purposeful sampling techniques were used for sampling. These techniques were preferred in order to increase the participation rate and to reach the participants easily, and also because they take into account some criteria in order for the participants to be included in the sample. In other words, it is aimed to choose individuals who do not travel with any tour guide, are younger and prefer to travel more individually, as they reflect the characteristics of the sample. The lack of statistics for the research population creates an obstacle to calculate the sample exactly. However, a certain number of samples can be targeted for the statistical approaches to be applied. PLS-SEM was used for model testing in this study. PLS offers the opportunity to work with smaller sample sizes than variance-based SEMs (Hair et al., 2017). Accordingly, an approach of 5 or 10 times the number of items can be adopted for the sample size (Hair et al., 2017).

The questionnaires were distributed around designated UNESCO sites, the Blue Mosque, Hagia Sophia and Topkapi Palace museums in March and April 2018, between 10:00-18:00. In total, 541 questionnaires were distributed. 18 questionnaires were eliminated due to missing data, resulting in 523 valid questionnaires being included in the analyses. In this case, the requirement of 10 times the number of items, which was 30, was met (Hair et al., 2017) and it was decided that the collected data were adequate for the sample size.

Data Analysis

Demographic characteristics of the participants, frequency and percentage distributions were examined using the SPSS 23 program. On the other hand, research was modelled and tests for hypotheses were conducted using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 3 program. CFA is an analysis used to test whether a previously used scale fits with the original structure and the degree of fit during current use (Thompson, 2004). SEM is a statistical approach to verifying structural theories and testing and predicting causal relationships (Hoyle, 1995; Lee, 2007). Assumptions, validity, and reliability analyzes for PLS-SEM are given in the findings section. In addition, a checklist prepared on the use of PLS-SEM in the field of gastronomy and tourism (Aybek & Karakaş, 2022) and the approach presented by Hair et al. (2017) were used as guidelines.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Participants' Demographic Characteristics

When Table 1 is examined, it can be seen that majority of participants are single individuals at 18-30 years of age whose monthly income is below $2000. This is similar to the findings of earlier studies (Murphy & Pearce, 1995; Tsaur et al., 2010; Harman et al., 2013), showing that independent travelers are mostly young people with low budgets. A vast majority of the participants have undergraduate and graduate degrees. In addition, most of them are private sector employees and students.

Table 1. *Participants' Demographic Characteristics*

Variable	*Category*	*Frequency*	*%*
Gender	*Male*	272	52
	Female	251	48
	Total	**523**	**100**
Age	*18-24*	179	34,2
	25-30	219	41,9
	31-36	84	16,1
	37-42	18	3,4
	43 and over	23	4,4
	Total	**523**	**100**
Profession	*Private Sector Employee*	198	37,9
	Public Officer	44	8,4
	Student	176	33,7
	Retired	5	1
	Unemployed	11	2,1
	Other	89	17
	Total	**523**	**100**
Marital Status	*Married*	111	21,2
	Single	412	78,8
	Total	**523**	**100**
Education Level	*Primary School*	2	0,4
	High School	54	10,3
	College	28	5,4
	Bachelor	223	42,6
	Master	195	37,3
	PhD	21	4
	Total	**523**	**100**
Average Monthly Income ($)	*1000 and over*	96	38,4
	1001-2000	60	24
	2001-3000	46	18,4
	3001-4000	22	8,8
	4001-5000	10	4
	5000 and over	16	6,4
	Total	**250**	**100**

A total of 67 different nationalities have been identified, and the highest distribution of nationalities is as follows: British, German, Spanish, French, American, and Chinese (Table 2). It is understood that the majority of them are individuals from the European region. Demographic findings were compared with the findings of Harman et al.'s (2013) study, and it was found that there were small differences in the top five rankings of frequencies according to nationalities. The reason for this difference may be that the research data were collected at different times, as Harman et al. (2013) collected the research data in August, and in this study, the data were collected in March and April. When other demographic characteristics are examined, the findings of the two studies mostly overlap.

Table 2. *Participants' Nationalities*

Nationality	*N*	*%*	*Nationality*	*N*	*%*	*Nationality*	*N*	*%*
English	**31**	**5,9**	***Chinese***	**20**	**3,8**	*Serbian*	14	2,7
German	**30**	**5,7**	*Russian*	19	3,6	*Ukrainian*	14	2,7
Spanish	**27**	**5,2**	*İranian*	18	3,4	*Austrian*	13	2,5
French	**24**	**4,6**	*Indian*	15	2,9	*Belgium*	13	2,5
American	**23**	**4,4**	*Dutch*	15	2,9	*Romanian*	12	2,3
						Others	**187**	**54,9**
						Total	**475**	**100**

Reliability and Validity

According to Aybek and Karakaş (2022), few studies on tourism and gastronomy mention nomological validity, which refers to the foundation and proposition of conceptual models and relations between variables for the relevant literature (Hagger et al., 2017). Research model and hypotheses were developed following a comprehensive literature review as a result of which nomological validity was ensured. Composite reliability values were used to determine reliability. Table 3 shows that composite reliability values receive scores between 0.721 (lowest) and 0.901 (highest), which means that they are higher than 0.7 (Henseler et al., 2015; Hair et al., 2017). AVE values calculated for convergent validity indicate that most structures have values higher than the recommended 0.50 (Hair et al., 2017; Sarstedt et al., 2019). However, hedonism (0.470) and attitude (0.467) structures remained slightly below the recommended value. Item number 2 was removed from the structure as the attitude structure obtained a lower score (Bagozzi et al., 1991; Hair et al., 2011). In addition, the satisfactory composite reliability and standardized factor loading values and the fact that these two constructs were just below the recommended value showed that they were acceptable. In this context, it is seen that the structures in the model are sufficient in terms of convergent validity.

Table 3. *Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis*

Construct	*Cronbach's Alpha*	*Composite Reliability*	*AVE*	*Items*	*Loadings*	*VIF*	*t*
Attitude Towards Behavior	.714	.721	.467	*Attitude1*	.754	1.434	15.190
				Attitude3	.677	1.293	12.326
				Attitude4	.681	1.348	12.123
				Attitude5	.609	1.380	13.701
				Attitude6	.711	1.219	10.992
Subjective Norms	.759	.759	.675	*SubjectiveNorm1*	.819	1.523	17.541
				SubjectiveNorm2	.801	1.464	15.377
				SubjectiveNorm3	.844	1.673	16.900
Perceived Behavioral Control	.717	.730	.639	*BehaviorControl1*	.811	1.443	11.872
				BehaviorControl2	.851	1.576	13.349
				BehaviorControl3	.731	1.312	9.108
Past Experience	.817	.858	.517	*Experience1*	.676	1.538	10.713
				Experience2	.699	2.407	8.005
				Experience3	.619	2.085	5.466
				Experience4	.810	1.953	12.103
				Experience5	.845	2.331	14.888
				Experience6	.638	1.418	7.643
Hedonism	.806	.828	.470	*Hedonism1*	.704	1.568	16.828
				Hedonism2	.498	1.227	7.962
				Hedonism3	.746	1.709	17.168
				Hedonism4	.717	1.606	14.852
				Hedonism5	.752	1.808	17.441
				Hedonism6	.792	1.896	20.119
				Hedonism7	.532	1.215	10.265
Intention to Consume Street Food	.900	.901	.714	*Intention1*	.839	2.365	36.642
				Intention2	.865	2.604	36.971
				Intention3	.837	2.266	32.448
				Intention4	.863	2.623	36.149
				Intention5	.821	2.286	34.766

Table 4 shows the HTMT values for discriminant validity. When HTMT coefficients are considered, a value over 0.90 indicates that discriminant validity could not be reached (Henseler et al., 2015; Hair et al., 2017). In Table 4, the lowest HTMT value is seen as 0.228 (between PBC and Subjective Norms), whereas the highest value is found as 0.823 (between Intention to Consume Street Food and Hedonism). In addition, a tolerance value lower than 0.20 and a VIF value higher than 5 implies potential collinearity issues (Hair et al., 2011, 2017). Table 3 shows that there is no collinearity problem.

Table 4. *Discriminant Validity*

	HTMT				
	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1. Attitude Towards Behavior					
2. Hedonism	0,739				
3. Intention to Consume Street Food	0,764	0,823			
4. Past Experience	0,468	0,560	0,497		
5. Perceived Behavioral Control	0,367	0,343	0,476	0,265	
6. Subjective Norms	0,484	0,533	0,570	0,376	0,228

Model Fit

It is recommended to calculate model fit indices for latent variables before testing the research model. Within this framework, R^2 and AVE scores are used for goodness of fit (GoF) index suggested by Tenenhaus et al. (2004). As can be seen in Table 5, model fit index was calculated as 0.59 (> 036), which is evaluated as a very good fit (Tenenhaus et al., 2004).

Table 5. *Goodness-of-Fit index*

	AVE	R2
Attitude	0,467	N.A.
Subjective Norms	0,675	N.A.
Perceived Behavioral Control	0,639	N.A.
Past Experience	0,517	N.A.
Hedonism	0,470	N.A.
Intention to Consume Street Food	0,714	0,63
Mean	0,580333333	0,63
Goodness-of-Fit = $\sqrt{Mean(R2) \times Mean(AVE)}$	0,599838867	

Model and Hypotheses Testing

The model was created at SmartPLS using structural equation modeling. Figure 2 shows that attitude towards street food, PBC, subjective norms and past experience accounted for 63% of intention to consume street food. Table 6, on the other hand, shows that attitude towards street food (β = 0.231; t = 6.675), PBC (β = 0.177; t = 5.377), subjective norm (β = 0.156; t = 4.684) and past experiences (β = 0.080; t = 2.233) directly affect the intention for consuming street food. Attitude has stronger impact on intention (f^2 = 0,624) followed by subjective norm, PBC, and past experience. In addition, there is a negative and statistically significant relationship towards the moderating impact of hedonism between attitude and intention (β = -0.059; t = 2.521). In this direction, the first four hypotheses were accepted but the fifth hypothesis was rejected for having a negative impact although it was statistically significant.

Previous research found that attitudes towards certain food groups affected consuming intentions (Ryu & Han, 2010; Wu, 2014; Menozzi et al., 2015; Gakobo & Jere, 2016) and that attitude towards street food, in particular, affected behavioral intentions such as recommending, revisiting (Yeap et al., 2019; Jeaheng & Han, 2020), repurchasing, and mouth-of-word advertising. This study determined that attitude towards street food affected intention and had the highest impact among the tested independent variables. This finding is similar to the attitude and intention relationships that are frequently repeated in the literature. In this context, it is once again revealed that attitudes are an important factor in consuming street food. It is also consistent with the findings of studies showing that subjective norms (Menozzi et al., 2015) and PBC (Gakobo & Jere, 2016) significantly affect intention to consume food.

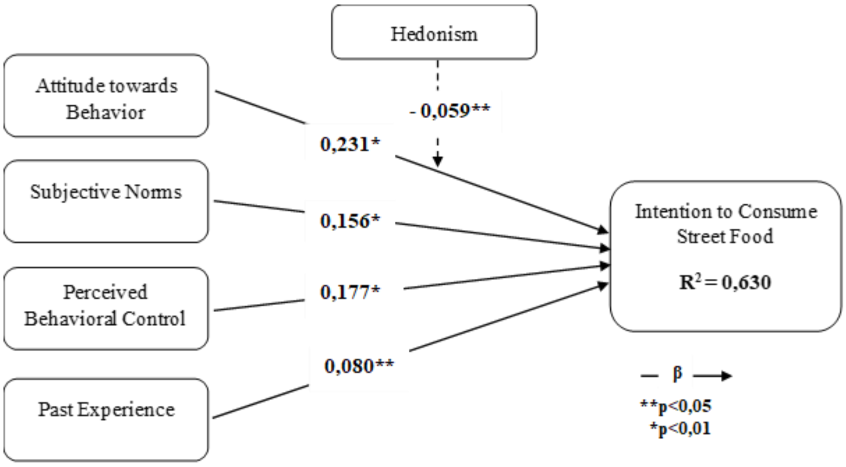

Figure 2. *Model Testing*

Table 6. *Model and Hypotheses Testing*

H	Path	Std. â	Std. Er.	t value	Decision	f^2	Confidence Int. 2.5%	97.5%
H_1	ATT → ICSF	0.231	0.035	6.675*	Supported	0,624	0.160	0.297
H_3	PBC → ICSF	0.177	0.033	5.377*	Supported	0,384	0.112	0.240
H_2	SN → ICSF	0.156	0.034	4.684*	Supported	0,408	0.091	0.224
H_4	PE → ICSF	0.080	0.035	2.233**	Supported	0,362	0.008	0.146
H_5	HE x ATT → ICSF	-0.059	0.023	2.521**	Not Supported	0,624	-0.099	-0.008

ATT: Attitude; **SN:** Subjective Norms; **PBC:** Perceived Behavioral Control; **PE:** Past Experience; **HE:** Hedonism; **ICSF**: Intention to Consume Street Food
*p < .01 (t > 2.58) **p < .05 (t> 1.96)
R^2 (Intention to Consume Street Food = 0.630)
f^2: 0.35 = high; 0.15 = medium; 0.02 = low

This study supported the findings of previous studies which examined street food within the framework of TPB and indicated that all relevant variables affected behavioral intentions positively (Chavarria & Phakdee-auksorn, 2017; Ukenna et al., 2018; Şahin & Solunoğlu, 2019), and that attitude and PBC were found effective (Hakeem & Lee, 2018; Kargiglioğlu & Aksoy, 2020). Therefore, the fact that TPB is an important theory explaining behavioral intentions toward street food is also supported by this study.

Similar to the previous studies (Conner & Armitage, 1998; Huang & Hsu, 2009; Kim & Chung, 2011), past experience was integrated to the model in this study to contribute to the theory and increase its explanatory power, and it was seen that it affected intention. Previous research (Lee et al., 2020; Maknu et al., 2020; Ozcelik & Akova, 2021; Cifci et al., 2022; Rewtrakunphaiboon & Sawangdee, 2022) reported that experiences positively affected behavioral intentions. This study found a similar impact of past experience on behavioral intentions. However, it disagrees with Ukenna et al. (2018) who could not find support for the effect of past experiences on behavioral intentions. The difference can be attributed to the respective samples, contexts, or cultural dissimilarities of the studies.

Some researchers have considered hedonic value as an independent variable in the intention to consume certain food groups (organic foods, healthy foods) and have found that it affects consumption intentions positively (Kang et al., 2015; Lee & Yun, 2015; Anisimova, 2016). However, in this study hedonism has a negative effect on the relationship between attitude and intention. This result disagrees with the findings of previous studies. The rejection of hypothesis 5 can be attributed to the behavior of the independent travelers under consideration as independent travelers act with main motivations such as seeing several places in a short time with a low budget and desiring to learn new cultures and interact socially (Murphy & Pearce, 1995; Hyde & Lawson, 2003; Tsaur et al., 2010). On the other hand, street foods are consumed mostly because of their low cost, easy accessibility and understanding of fast consumption and sociality (Privitera, 2012; Choi et al., 2013; Hiamey et al., 2013). Therefore, it is believed that this hypothesis was rejected because independent travelers consume street food with a utilitarian approach rather than for hedonic reasons (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Hyun et al., 2016).

CONCLUSION

This study explored the independent travelers' intention to consume street food through the attitude, perceived behavioral control and subjective norms included in the TPB expanded with experience and hedonism variables. Findings of the current study showed that the most important variables affecting the intention of independent travelers to consume street food are attitude, subjective norm, PBC, and past experience, respectively. On the other hand, hedonism plays a negative role between attitude and intention. In this context, according to the research findings, it becomes evident that attitude towards street food is the most important factor in consuming intention. Time, money, resources and information for the consumption in question, the opinions of the people who are important to the traveler and information brought by their previous experiences with street food are significantly effective. At the same time, it has been found that street food is consumed with a utilitarian rather than a hedonistic approach.

Findings obtained from the study show that TPB can still provide valid and useful results in understanding the behavioral intentions for street food. In addition, integrating past experiences into the model increased its explanatory power, which is a novel finding. It reveals that past experience variable, which is recommended in the literature, can be analyzed in similar studies. On the other hand, this is the first study that used hedonism in street food research. However, rejection of the hypothesis suggests that utilitarian value can also be added to research models in the context of street food.

Findings of this study implicate important practical aspects. In particular, positive attitude towards street food will stimulate more desire for consumption. Various problems are indicated including potential risks related to street food (Abdalla et al., 2009; Cho et al., 2011), unhygienic practices by vendors (Choudhury et al., 2011; Muyanja et al., 2011; Da Silva et al., 2014; Liu et al., 2014), high levels of risk perception (Choi et al., 2013; Cardoso et al., 2014; Gupta et al., 2018; Mudunkotuwa & Arachchi, 2020; Khanna et al., 2022) and governance issues (Tinker, 1993; Bromley, 2000; Basinski, 2014; Da Silva et al., 2014). It is clear that findings such as hygienic problems can lead to negative attitudes regarding street food (Akşit, 2019; Yıldırım & Albayrak, 2019). In this context, problems can be solved through preventive measures such as educating street food vendors on hygiene and sanitation, constructing infrastructure appropriate for the vendors instead of developing policing measures by local governments, controlling all relevant activities, and preparing legal structure. In this case, attitudes towards street food can be improved in more positive direction. With the increase in trust in street food, the approval of people (spouse, mother, father, friends, etc.) who create subjective norms can be perceived at a higher level. In addition, inclusion of information about street foods in the sources used in the marketing of touristic products can make it easier for the tourists to consume these foods, as they will have certain preliminary knowledge about them. Including street food vendors in international fairs and organizations can be beneficial in terms of promoting street foods. Developing projects that increase the quality of street foods by public institutions make it possible to evaluate street foods within the scope of gastronomy tourism. Furthermore, utilitarian approaches are more popular than hedonic values in interpreting the consumption of street food; thus, if street foods maintain their status of being easily accessible and inexpensive without being adjusted for tourists, more positive results can be achieved.

In other words, applications that lead to a change in production and consumption of street food can generate negative effects. This study and previous research have shown that past experiences affect next behaviors. Contrary to the problems mentioned so far, in Portland, USA (Newman & Burnett, 2013), street food is a special group in diversifying and marketing tourism activities as an important gastronomic element. This can be used as a good example, provided that safe and enjoyable consumption is coordinated with the relevant managers and practitioners. Enabling consumers to have positive experiences with street food with such exemplary practices may lead to positive effects such as starting to consume street food and recommending it again.

Limitations and Future Research

Due to time-related and economic constraints, only the independent travelers who visited Istanbul in March and April were included in the sample. Research can be conducted in different regions during busier tourism seasons to improve the generalizability of results. Data collection tool was prepared in English language, as a result of which only those who spoke English could participate in the study. Further research can use scales in different languages to improve sample diversity. In addition, it was assumed that the participants had past experiences regarding street food. Further studies can add some items to the scales to ensure the participants have experienced street food. To be sure about past experiences, areas where street food is being sold or organizations for street food (fairs, festivals, etc.) can be chosen. Further research can take hedonism as an independent variable, integrate it into utilitarian model and thus reach more statistically significant results.

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THE CONCEPTUAL GROUNDING OF OVERTOURISM AND OVERTOURISM-DRIVEN CHANGE: OLYMPOS CASE

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ABSTRACT

Heritage tourism destinations (HTDs) in rural places host not only tourists and tourism service facilities but also negative consequences such as urbanization and overtourism-based spatial transformation on the social, economic, and physical landscape. This paper aims to investigate the ontological groundings of a rehashed overtourism phenomenon by employing an integrative reviewing method of related literature with a focus on rural HTDs and reveal the landscape change by extracting the spatial transformation from satellite images and historical orthophotos of Olympos/Turkey by using semi-automatic classification analysis in QGIS. The findings implicate that the indicators of overtourism can be grounded on the latest levels of the Creative Destruction Model, the Vicious Circle, and the Tourismification approaches, however, still there is a need for reconceptualization of the phenomenon. Moreover, the findings showed that the modus operandi of overtourism-based spatial expansion of tourism service units in protected areas follows a path through the gaps between the two inverse philosophies of protection and use which is critical for stage changes in the evolution process of HTD.

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INTRODUCTION

Social sciences began with the idea that we could not merely critique subjective biases and categorize or catalogue the world around us but that we could offer scientific explanations to help understand how human societies work, the variables that influence them, the human ability for change (Lempert, 2015) and to transform the physical, economic and social environment. Scientific explanations/studies show that human interactions

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with the physical environment generally create a negative transformation of tourism destinations through overuse, misuse, crowding, degradation and deformation. As one of the world's top industries, tourism has become a prominent force behind this transformation in tourism destinations where cultural or natural attractions and the tourists -as consumers of the attractions- concentrate. Human mobility has created a distinctive pressure, especially on heritage tourism destinations due to their unique conditions and the delicate balance between "protection" and "use". Before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism destinations witnessed extreme levels such as too much or too little tourism (Milano & Koens, 2022) and pandemic-related undertourism is one of the most challenging issues that the tourism industry has ever faced, however, overtourism is considered a more chronic, deep-rooted and long-established issue.

In recent years, the overtourism phenomenon has become a significant research topic among tourism scholars. The term has been used to provide a new aspect to define the negative impacts of tourismification with case studies in a diverse array of popular tourism destinations. However, it is argued that the term has been neither properly framed nor explained. Koens et al. (2018) underlined that overtourism is a highly complex, and opaque phenomenon that is not well conceptualized, which could be oversimplified by stakeholders. Studies (Capocchi et al., 2019; Dredge, 2017; Perkumiene & Pranskuniené, 2019) indicated that the term is new but the content is a rehash of the previous impact studies. Therefore, it can be said that the attempts to explain overtourism are still far from having a consensus among tourism researchers.

Especially after 2017, there has been a growing body of research papers and media content about overtourism, mostly related to the negative impacts of rapid tourism growth in popular tourism destinations. The low-cost flights and the new technologies are seen as an effective factor that caused the concentration of tourist flows to specific areas (Butowski, 2019) and -as a consequence- over-crowding brought pressure on carrying capacity and sustainability (Namberger et al., 2019). The tourism-based pressure on the environment and social milieu of tourism destinations has become a more visible and significant problem to be overcome by local and/or central managing bodies and stakeholders. In other words, the negative effects of tourism growth have come on the stage with a new term "overtourism" and global and domestic policy factors (Peterson & DiPietro, 2021) or inaction to prevent overtourism through effective policies (Butler & Dodds, 2022) are frequently found a voice as critics in tourism literature.

The groundings of the overtourism phenomenon in the earlier tourism literature are underlined by Capocchi et al. (2020). The most frequently used models are pointed out as Doxey's (1975) "irritation index" and Butlers' (1980) "tourism area life cycle" models. However, there is a need to reveal the groundings of the phenomenon in heritage tourism studies and set forth the connections with particular models and approaches that are emphasizing the specific conditions of heritage tourism destinations.

The assessment of the tourism impacts is an extensive area of research with multi-disciplinary dimensions. The complexity of the tourism system is yet another challenge that makes impact studies necessary to have a more holistic approach. Investigating the change or transformation that has been brought about by tourism is not a new area of inquiry but also still has some gaps that are enough to attract a researcher. From year to year, new studies have been conducted on the phenomenon, involving a more extensive body of indicators, processes, and cases. However, up to now, the tourismification process has not been satisfactorily explained in specific settings such as archeological heritage that are located in rural areas as are frequently observed in the Mediterranean basin. In this sense, the main objective of this paper can be announced as to track the footprints of the overtourism-driven spatial transformations in protected rural heritage sites and the ontological groundings of the overtourism concept in tourism studies. Also, the sub-objectives associated with the study could be listed as; to investigate the definitions related to the "overtourism" phenomenon and reconceptualize what is frequently referred to as a criticism in current tourism studies, to reveal the groundings of overtourism in HTDs assessments and the development of related models and approaches that have been used to examine the transformation of HTDs. This study, therefore, sets out an assessment and monitoring of the process of spatial transformation that is created by overtourism in protected rural areas, such as natural and archaeological heritage tourism destinations, and an in-depth investigation of the groundings of the overtourism phenomenon. To achieve these objectives, Olympos / Türkiye is chosen due to its potential to represent key symptoms of the research subject and the availability of the geospatial data of the physical gentrification. The evidence/symptoms of the phenomenon emerged due to unplanned tourism development and illegal land use forms that are frequently seen in 2nd degree protected areas in Olympos where conservation and protection principles have been ignored for providing provisional solutions to satisfy rapidly growing tourism demand. Overtourism is strongly associated with the number of tourists. Rapidly increased number of tourists caused faster and uncontrolled growth in the illegal building of tourism facilities and spatial gentrification of a protected area that can be detected through GIS.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: Literature review summarizes the studies on heritage tourism research, emphasizing the transition from impact studies to overtourism approach. The methodology section explains the data-gathering process in Olympos and the GIS analysis of satellite images. The results section includes the groundings of the overtourism research by investigating the development of impact studies and models that are used to measure the change in tourism destinations with a minor focus on HTDs. Also, it underlines the scope of tourismification approach which has been frequently used to examine the transformation of heritage tourism destinations. In the discussions section, the conceptual framework of the issue is structured by considering different approaches to the overtourismification phenomenon. Following this, suggestions have been made for theoretical implications in consideration of the empirical findings in conclusions section. Last but not least, limitations of the study and the suggestions for future research are expressed briefly in limitations section.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Heritage tourism research: From impact studies to overtourism approach

Even though that heritage is a recent phenomenon of the last quarter of the twentieth century, it is difficult to pin down a moment, or even a period when research on heritage began (Harvey, 2001). From the nineteenth century onwards, heritage tourism has been considered a tool for building national identity. Visitor experiences are designed for nation-building projects in landscapes of national history (Franklin, 2003). After the Second World War, there was a significant increase in the diversity of tourism products due to the shifting nature of capitalism from Fordism to post-Fordism. The tourism industry changed from being characterized by relatively homogeneous demand to more flexible and differentiated forms of tourist consumption. Therefore, new forms of tourism have been taken place and termed niche tourism or post-modern tourism. Heritage tourism can be identified as one of the earliest forms of post-modern tourism (Light, 2015). In this manner, definitions of cultural tourism and heritage tourism usually overlap or heritage tourism is seen as a sub-concept of cultural tourism (Timothy & Boyd, 2003). From a management point of view, heritage is shaping tourism activity and needs to be managed by tourism scholars, on the other hand, heritage scholars need to control and manage tourism activity. McKercher and du Cros (2002) claimed that the historical background of both disciplines -heritage and tourism- evolved independently. There was a lack of communication due to different ideologies and values, sets of stakeholders, objectives, political masters, and roles in society. For instance, while tourism professionals value heritage assets as raw materials for the product, on the other side, heritage professionals value the same assets for intrinsic merits like inventory. Also, cultural heritage management aims to conserve and protect cultural assets as a heritage for future generations in the public sector and non-profit sense. Stakeholders are community groups or representatives of indigenous or ethnic groups. In contrast, the tourism industry is dominated by the private sector and driven by profit with economic objectives. Stakeholders are mostly driven by the commercial sector with commercial purposes. Another distinction can be made based on the backgrounds of professionals. While cultural heritage professionals come from art or social sciences backgrounds, tourism professionals have business or marketing backgrounds or they are from the commercial world. In this sense, managers struggled to apply different strategies in a touristic area to keep the balance between heritage protection and use. Tourism planning strategies are designed with conservation concerns and heritage planners took into account the impacts of tourism on the site.

In the conceptual model of overtourism (Peeters et al., 2018), it has been underlined that overtourism occurred when the tourism impacts transcend the tourism capacity in a destination. Tourism density/intensity, tourism share (GDP), environmental, economic, social, and psychological pressure are bigger than the physical, ecological/environmental, economic, political and governance, social and psychological capacity of a tourism destination, overtourism can be identified through its impacts. The impacts of overtourism can be briefly listed as; declining population, protest movements, loss of destination attractiveness and residents' liveability, a mismatch between the type of visitors and destination/groups of visitors, and gentrification. It can be argued that the impacts of overtourism are a follow-up of the impacts of tourism in general at a more observable and perceivable level. Tourism destinations can be considered complex networks that involve a large number of co-producing actors delivering a variety of products, and services (Pearce, 1989; Buhalis, 2000; Haugland et al., 2011).

To set some examples for the complexity of the overtourism, recent studies revealed that massive events may play a key role to trigger "tourismofobia" as a consequence of the social negative impacts of tourism. Tokyo 2020 Olympics case study showed that negative emotions such as disruption and fear are escalating in parallel with the increasing numbers of visitors in the city (Duignan et al., 2022). On the other hand, cities are staging not only social negative impacts but also spatial impacts of overtourism due to increasing numbers of short-term rental platforms (Celata & Romano, 2022). In urban areas, the accommodation capacity is used to limit tourism service units, however, short-term rental platforms created an atmosphere where functional systems and tourism facilities coexist in residential areas. The spatial consequences of the overtourism often be associated with the social injustice (Jover & Diaz-Parra, 2022) among tourists and locals where physical environment and social milieu of HTD stages different but interrelated dimensions of the same issue.

Heritage tourism destinations are not different in this sense but also present some additional complexities due to protection and conservation concerns. As it has been abovementioned among the impacts of overtourism, rural gentrification or overtourism-driven transformation of the landscape can be analyzed by identifying the spatial changes, especially in sensitive historical or natural protected rural areas. It can be put forward that the causes and the consequences of overtourism in different environments are interrelated due to the complexity of the tourism system. Overall, the research questions of the study can be expressed as "what are the overtourism-driven spatial transformations in an HTD that is located in a protected rural area? and how the footprints of the physical gentrification can be analyzed by using GIS?" On the conceptual side, "what are the ontological groundings of the overtourism phenomenon with a focus on HTDs and protected areas, and what is the modus operandi of the tourismification process?"

METHODOLOGY

Following the main objective of the research, the development of impact assessment models that have been used to understand the impacts of tourism has been explained in detail. Approaches that focused on the development of HTDs with specific conditions such as protected areas are gathered. Also, the definitions of the term are studied to provide new conceptualizations of the phenomenon, thus, the integrative review method has been employed.

The integrative review method is described as an approach that allows for the inclusion of diverse methodologies and contributes to the presentation of varied perspectives on a phenomenon of concern. It can summarize past empirical and theoretical literature on a topic of interest and incorporate diverse methodologies to capture the context, processes, and subjective elements of the topic (Whittemore & Knafl, 2005). The method consists of five steps; problem identification, literature review, data evaluation, data analysis, and presentation. Therefore, the steps of integrative review for identification of the groundings of overtourism in heritage tourism destinations can be listed as follows:

- Problem identification: Overtourism is a new term but the content is a reconsideration of the former tourism impact studies. As Dredge (2017) and Capocchi et al. (2019) indicated that the phenomenon put forward, especially the negative impacts of rapid tourism growth in popular European destinations such as Venice and Barcelona. The concept has been investigated mostly in urban tourism destinations. The groundings of the phenomenon of former tourism impact studies on HTDs that are located in archaeological or natural rural protected areas are not fully revealed yet. Hence, there is still a need to illuminate various perspectives that constituted the groundings of the new concept.

- Literature review: There is a growing interest in overtourism research and the number of papers and media content on the related topic is increasing. On the other hand, existing literature on the assessment of the evolution of heritage tourism destinations are adequate to identify the overlapping themes with overtourism such as social, economic, or environmental impacts that have been revealed in the evolution processes of HTDs.

- Data evaluation: Having a specific focus that is limited to the impacts of overtourism in HTDs, it provides a lens to make an analogical assessment to clarify the similarities between formerly specified indicators through researches and latterly conceptualized overtourism phenomenon in HTDs.

- Data analysis: Data were extracted based on relativity to their assessments of indicators that are identified during the evolution process of HTDs. Each model, approach, or method to assess the development of HTDs is reviewed and the groundings of the overtourism phenomenon in HTDs are explained by revealing the connections in the related literature.

- Presentation: The groundings of overtourism in tourism literature are portrayed by showing the connections of indicators with former models and approaches in a table.

Semi-automatic classification analysis of geospatial data

Empirical data that contain the spatial transformations in Olympos / Antalya are extracted from the satellite images by using GIS techniques to identify the consequences of overtourism on landscape and physical environment. Satellite images from ASTER-MODIS, Landsat, Sentinel 2, Sentinel 3, and historical orthographic data have been analyzed and used to detect the physical transformations. During the first phase, multiband set images (RGB: Red-Green-Blue) have obtained from Landsat, Sentinel 2 and Sentinel 3 satellites and the images are analyzed in QGIS by using a semi-automatic classification plugin. Built structures, soil, vegetation and water are referenced on RGB band images.

The additional data have been gathered from the General Directorate of Mapping of Turkey. The orthophotos are providing better resolution in GIS-based researches. Therefore 0.3m resolution orthophotos from 1977, 1992, and 2015 are analyzed in QGIS. Then the results of semi-automatic classification (Figure 2) are agglomerated in one (Figure 3). Following the program-based analyses on raster files, manual classification is made on vector files. Superimposed files are analyzed manually and the findings that could not be detected during the semi-automatic classification tools are identified manually.

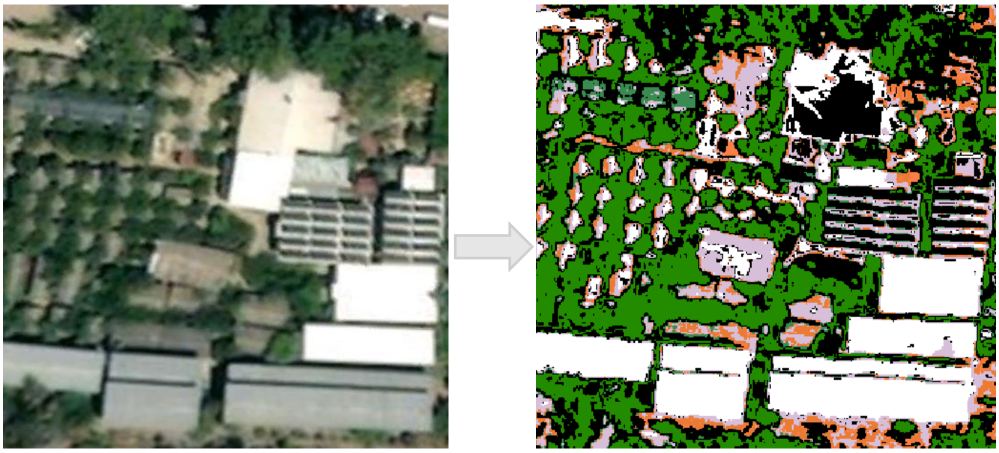

Figure 1. *A detail of tourism business on the satellite image and the result of semi-automatic classification on the raster image. (Source: Author, 2019)*

During the last section, identified physical transformations on the landscape of the Olympos area and the spatial expansion of the tourism service units are compared with the approaches that are prognosticative referring to the expansion of the tourism service units. Lastly, the modus operandi of the two inverse philosophies (protection and use) in tourismification of protected areas are portrayed to understand the critical points of stage changes in the evolution process of the HTDs.

RESULTS

Groundings of overtourism phenomenon in heritage tourism studies

To set an example to the transformation of specific tourism destinations, a distinction has been done by Kaspar (1989) about SPA destinations development. In the beginning, there was the unipolar region with tourism mostly focused to accommodation and thermal facilities. However, during the evolution process of SPAs, a multipolar type of spatial organization becomes more and more developed. Tourists are accommodated in several blocks that are not strictly tied to SPA medication but also to the recreational or cultural contents which made unipolar tourism growth into multipolar (Jovicic & Tomic, 2009). Some of the HTDs have similar unipolar tourism in the beginning with a single heritage site and then on, changing into a multipolar destination by incorporating some tourism facilities like thematic events and entertainment or physical structures for accommodation or other service units. Especially in rural places, archaeological sites provide accommodation and service facilities nearby or outside of the protected area. Restaurants, hotels, and other touristic units transform into another center that has no strong ties with the archaeological site. On the other hand, heritage sites can be located close to a tourism center where the dominant attraction is not the heritage (i.e., Sea-Sun-Sand oriented mass tourism centers). Frequent excursions from the tourism center to the heritage site may force a spatial sprawl in/around the heritage site and create a multipolar destination.

In a similar vein, an assessment of the spatial organization of HTDs has been made by Jansen-Verbeke and Russo (2008) by referring to the "core" and "periphery" concepts of Miossec (1977) in tourism systems. Core has been explained as a center of attention for visitor activity, spaces that are holding power on development and reaping benefits from tourism. Also, cores are referring a place where financial capital is concentrated. In contrast, peripheries are identified as territory around a destination and passive players. Also, the peripheries have been cut off from the economic benefits of tourism when compared to the cores. Another dimension in the core-periphery analytic framework is the focalization of the tourist products. Hypothetically, the driving system of attractions, the image of a place and its hegemonic representations constitute the core. On the other hand, the periphery has elements that are not directly related to the core attributes and has not got components to establish a tourist center to be promoted as attractions.

Heritage assets can be found in rural areas as well as in urban areas. Especially in rural areas, tourism facilities (i.e., hotels, restaurants) can find a place to sprawl easier than urban areas, hence, heritage tourism management and planning should include not only the heritage site itself but also the region at the periphery. To set an example, Russo (2002) created a categorization in terms of tourist regions and functional tourist regions (FTR). FTR refers to hinterland areas with no tourist attractiveness per se but providing accommodation facilities and other tourist services for visitors to the main destination. Tourist centers and heritage centers might be seen as complex and hard to separate one from another. This may occur frequently in urban heritage destinations where historical structures are still in use or have been revitalized for tourism purposes. On the contrary, the distinction between the heritage site and the "periphery" surrounding the heritage site can be more observable in rural heritage sites. Due to protection and conservation principles, rural heritage sites are usually allowed for a limited time of visits and actions (most of them are forbidden to accommodation and urbanization). In addition, Russo (2002) analysed the costs and benefits provided by tourism and verified that urban heritage destinations are going through a "vicious circular" process in four steps. During the first step, demand for the destination exceeds the carrying capacity of the historic center and expands. Tourism activity has spread and created a functional tourist region. The second step refers to the progressive enlargement of FTRs and the leaking out of the tourist expenditure due to increased costs of accommodation in the city center. Also, the number of false excursionists (whose main motivation is the destination for their journey but they spent the night in another place) and the congestion produced by them are increasing. The third step is explained by the deterioration of the quality of products and, as a result, the inefficiency of the tourism cultural system within the destination. Lastly, the fourth step of the model highlighted the linkage between bad quality of the services and non-central visits. Furthermore, this step includes a strong distinction between the area where costs are imposed and the area that captures the benefits of tourism.

The results indicated that another model that is a mainstay of the overtourism phenomenon is the latest stages of the Creative Destruction Model (CDM). The CDM consists of analyzing the indicators from socio-cultural, economic, and physical environments and has been tested and refined for more than ten years in countries such as Canada, Australia

(Tonts & Greive, 2002) and China (Fan et al., 2008). During the primary applications of the model to the Canadian cases, the model consisted of five stages: early commodification, advanced commodification, pre-destruction, advanced destruction, and post-destruction.

Table 1. *Similitudes of vicious circle approach (urban) and creative destruction model (rural) in heritage tourism.*

Approaches	Tourism Product	Economy	Socio-cultural Dimensions	Spatial Context
Vicious Circle of Heritage Cities	The quality of heritage tourism product (supply)	Dynamics of regional economies	Mobility of residents caused by congestion	Spatial organization of tourism service units, FTR
Creative Destruction of Rural Tourism Centres	Consumption behaviour of heritage tourists (demand)	Investments profiteers, promoters, and preservationists	Immigration, commodification	Type of dominant landscape

Data source: Author, 2019

Similarly, the vicious circle in heritage cities and the creative destruction model emphasizes stages that have significant indicators such as the immigration of residents after a measurable increase in congestion. Changes in regional economic dynamics and investments are another dimension that can be assessed as indicators to explain the economic environment of an HTD. Also, both CDM and Vicious Circle approaches focus on the consumption behaviour of tourists and quality of tourist products. The vicious circle of heritage cities is based on economic relations between spatial organisations in a tourism area. As it has been explained in FTR, the spatial distribution of tourism facilities and services can be used to reveal the inner dynamics of an HTD and the characteristics of its development in parallel with economic development. CRM (Fan et al., 2008) describes spatial characteristics of an HTD as "productivist rural landscape" during the first stage (pre-commodification) of the destination development. It refers to a period where the community is a part of extractive activities (economically stable or declining form) before tourism activities begin and -in parallel with that- process of commodification emerges. Therefore, the rural space hosts a transformation from a countryside that is designed to produce a limited array of commodities for economic gain, to another one that has functionality derived from a large discourse of preservation, rather than excess profit. The type of dominant landscape in HTDs is an indicator that refers to a change in the productivist landscape into a post-productivist heritage scape and lastly into a neoproductivist leisure landscape which is described as a particular type of post-industrial landscape of accumulation that is driven by profit rather than preservation.

Another approach that the results indicated as a grounding for overtourism in heritage destinations is the “tourismification” approach. Transformation of heritage sites into HTDs can briefly be expressed as the “tourismification process”. Salazar (2009) used the term “tourismification” rather than “touristification” because it is the mere presence of tourists that are shaping this phenomenon but, rather, an ensemble of actors and processes that constituted tourism as a whole. Tourism research have shifted from analysis of tourism potential and development plans to impact assessment studies by associating the sustainability concerns (Jansen-Verbeke, 2009). During the 1990’s, resource-based tourism development models like Tourism Opportunity Spectrum or Recreational Opportunity Spectrum were used to incorporate relations between settings and activities (Boyd & Butler, 1996) within a limited time and space equilibrium. Latterly, with the help of technological advancements like GIS time-space, the behavior of tourists has been identified by analysis such as Tourist Activity Space. Furthermore, a two-dimensional model, Tourist Attraction Index has been created to analyze tourismification in historic cities based on morphological characteristics of the built environment (architecture, urban forms, and artifacts) and the present functions (public accessibility, attractiveness) (Jansen-Verbeke, 1998).

By incorporation of a territorial approach to previous research, symptoms of tourismification have begun to be evaluated more comprehensively and included rural heritage areas. Linkages between people, place, and environment are evaluated under the cultural landscape concept. Cultural landscapes are considered cultural properties representing the combination of works of nature and human. The recognition of cultural landscapes as carriers of heritage opened new perspectives for rural areas and communities (Jansen-Verbeke, 2009). The territorial approach is used to measure the impacts of tourism or to assess the multi-dimensional and diverse array of indicators brought by tourism. Also, spatial indicators of tourismification are included in assessments in addition to natural, morphological, and natural characteristics, social and political relationships, economic structures, and functional profiles. Yet another innovation in tourismification analysis provided by the territorial approach is, it has enabled the assessment of tourism-induced impacts in specific areas. Inherently, more focused and detailed analysis has been possible on small scales. As a consequence, the driving forces behind spatial transformation and the social understanding of changing patterns of space use (Jansen-Verbeke, 2007) have become more visible through the instrumentality of new tracking technologies.

Table 2. *Overtourism-driven impacts and groundings in heritage studies.*

	Overtourism-driven Impacts	**Related Approaches in Heritage Tourism Studies**
Environmental	Increased usage of natural resources (land, water, energy), construction of tourism infrastructure and disturb natural and cultural landscapes, congestion, overcrowding,	Tourismification of physical landscapes, congestion and overcrowding as an indicator in former steps of creative destruction model and vicious circle, environmental negative impacts of tourism in general,
Economic	Increased demand for certain specific tourism goods and services and production factors, gentrification, increased prices for residents and disappearance of supply for inhabitants, Accessibility loss due to overcrowding leading to a reduction of usage of infrastructure, sites and facilities,	Concentration of tourism benefits and activities and deterioration of the quality of products in vicious circle, raising in prices that cause immigration of residents and loss of accessibility in the creative destruction model,
Socio-cultural	Touristification of residential areas, marginalization of residents, increased number of visitors that residents differing from the population (age, ethnicity, gender, moral values), criminality, loss of cultural identity and increased visitation by non-residents of sites, events, and activities,	Increasing crime rates, immigration, and loss of local identity in the later stages of the creative destruction model, commodification and staged authenticity in tourismification of local culture, congestion, and overcrowding as an indicator in former steps of the creative destruction model and vicious circle, socio-cultural negative impacts of tourism in general

(Data source: Author, 2019)

With this aspect, the territorial approach has also expanded tourism impact studies. Especially, environmental impact assessment researches have been influenced by innovation. Jansen-Verbeke (2008) has classified tourism impacts in a framework based on their environments. Location patterns, infrastructure, clusters and trails, transport systems, space use and mobility patterns in a physical environment of territory have been opened to investigate in detail. Policy impact and monitoring researches are continued to focus on policy priorities, government subsidies, public aid programs, legislation, and measures of a political environment in a specific area. Economic impact researches are explained in terms of macro-meso-micro scale, expenditures, employment, business networks, marketing and local entrepreneurship. Impacts on the social environment have been defined as participation, trends in behavioural patterns, preferences, cultural values, inclusion, and exclusion in socio-cultural impact studies.

To sum up, overtourism term is new, however, the conceptual background of the phenomenon is as old as the impact studies in tourism research. Therefore, the groundings of overtourism can be identified in former impact studies based on indicators and processes that have been investigated in a diverse array of research in tourism literature. To be more precise, as a new inquiry of research, overtourism in heritage tourism destinations can be understood and revealed through disambiguation of its groundings in former approaches to assess the development of tourism in heritage tourism destinations.

Overtourism-driven urbanization pressures in protected rural heritage sites: Olympos case study

In an urban context, the tourismification of the space only concerns the inner historical city (Russo, 2002). However, in rural contexts or destinations where the main heritage site and the tourism area are apart (as mentioned in core and periphery concepts), spatial expansion occurs around the core and through the different directions of protection zones. A distinction can be made by excluding the archaeological site where generally there is no transformation and stability is dominant due to the high level of conservation and protection concerns and outer space with dynamic transformation. Olympos / Antalya is one of the most outstanding examples of such graduations for protection that provide protection against the negative and destructive impacts of tourism development. However, unplanned and fast growth, legal infringements, and lack of governance has led to an awkward development of a tourism destination that can be counted as a significant example of overtourism in HTDs. Graduations such as 1st, 2nd or 3rd degree of archaeological or natural protection zones have different levels of planning and implications.

In Olympos / Antalya, overtourism brought awkward spatial organization of tourism facilities. Firstly, Olympos ancient city is declared as the 1st and 2nd degree archaeological protected area and 1st and 3rd degree natural protected area with decision dated and numbered 13.03.1978 and 8995 in Northern Antalya Environmental Plan by Ancient Arts and Higher Council of Monuments (Antalya Kültür Envanteri, 2005). In 2020, a new legislative regulation about the graduation of the archaeological site has been issued and the physical borders of each grade have been changed. Therefore, the spatial distribution of the tourism-related units is affected directly by the new regime and the new debate about the urbanization levels in the area has been subject to new discussions in the media.

Seyhan and Russo (2020a; 2020b) underlined that there were no buildings or significant spatial transformations until 1975. However, agricultural lands have begun to host bungalow-type accommodation and service units due to legal gaps which implicate that the bungalows are not counted as structures. Afterwards, the toilets and bathrooms that were in common areas and within accommodation units were begun to be built during the 1990s. As the demand increased, the number of the units with interior or private toilets increased through a decadelong until the 2000s. Consequentially, the consumption level of water and the requirement for sewage disposal has increased. Despite having built in a strictly protected area, the businesses which were built illegally have gained their licence. Notwithstanding, the demolishment decisions -declared long before this date- by legal authorities have neither been applied nor cancelled. A conservation master plan started in 2009, however, bungalow-type tourism units dominated the built environment, and as a consequence, the destination transformed into a shanty or ghetto-style settlement. The bed capacity of the businesses that have been built in the protected area has reached approximately 1500 in 2000 and nowadays it is around 2500. The number of tourism facilities is stated as 70 (Uçkan, 2017).

Figure 2. *Olympos Tourism Area (OTA) and Olympos Ancient City. (Source: Author, 2019)*

Since the announcement of the protection decision in the area, a wide variety of changes have occurred in social, economic and physical environments of the area. In the first place, by the beginning of spatial restrictions such as 1st degree and 2nd degree archaeological sites, new regimes have been brought into force by legal frame which imposed a new phase in the evolution process of the destination. Therefore, the first stage in the development process of OTA as a tourist destination can be stated as the exploration stage before the announcement of the protected area. Following to this, by the beginning of the new legal regime, an awkward development of tourism facilities developed by taking advantage of the legal gap and lack of governance.

The results of the extraction of tourism-based spatial transformations in the 2nd degree archaeological protected area indicates that the abovementioned impacts of overtourism on the environment are observable. The environmental impacts that have been pointed out in the literature such as increased usage of natural resources (land, water, and energy) are significant due to the increased number of accommodation and service units. In the first place, the 2nd degree archaeological site became a periphery of the main ancient city by hosting tourists in pergolas that are latterly transformed into bungalow-type accommodation units. As the periphery developed with the new type of accommodation offerings, it become more popular and staged a rapid occupation of illegal housing. Consequently, the new type of tourism destination that was offering low-cost holidays in shanty pensions to -especially- young tourists took its place in the tourism market. As Miossec (1977) and Jansen-Verbeke and Russo (2008) explained, the core should be the centers of attention for visitor activity, hold power on development and reap benefits from tourism. In OTA case, it can be said that the situation is vice-versa. The 1st degree archaeological protected area and the ancient city were the main attractions for -mostly- heritage tourists in the beginning, however, the rapid and unplanned grown periphery itself started to be the main attractions for the non-heritage-oriented tourists. The note of the tourism destination has shifted from a natural and archaeological heritage-based destination to a shanty urbanized tourism destination. Consequently, the ancient city -as the core- became the least changed (due to different legal basis) and even under the pressure of the periphery.

As it has been emphasized in the vicious circle of heritage cities, a decrease in the quality of heritage tourism products (supply side) have occurred in addition to the discomfort of congestion that is created by tourism density. Also, as it has been indicated in CDM, the consumption behaviour of heritage tourists (demand side) took shape based on the transformation of the landscape. For instance, in the documentaries of BBC and Discovery Channel on backpackers, bungalow-type pensions have started to be seen frequently and the destination that has developed as a periphery became more popular than the core and the main characteristic of the destination among the international backpacker community. The first hostel that has been built in the 2nd degree archaeological protected area without any legal basis and the necessary infrastructure. In parallel with a rapid increase in the number of tourists, the tourists whose primary purpose of visits were "visiting cultural and natural attractions" have moved out from where the congestion and overcrowding predominate over (see consumption section). Therefore, it can be said that the place where primarily defined as periphery and then became the core of tourism activity that created similar effects with functional tourist region (FTR) which have been frequently pointed out in the vicious circle of heritage cities. In addition, due to commodification and lack of authenticity in local products (i.e., pancake) and handcrafts are seen in accordance with the mass production for tourists. The type of dominant landscape shifted from a natural and cultural landscape into a shanty district which consisted of illegally build-structures as band-aid solutions by taking advantage of legal gaps.

In particular, the spatial development of OTA has followed a path without governance and the tourism supply has increased rapidly in according to satisfy changing tourism demand. It can be stated that the regimes and the legislative regulations which have been intervened in the process to protect the natural and historical landscape have been neither fully implemented nor monitored. Consequently, managing a destination that has already been developed and took a large scale becomes more and more difficult to handle for local, regional, and national managing bodies. The socio-cultural indicators of overtourism such as the increasing rate of crime and diversification in crime types or negative environmental indicators like the construction of tourism infrastructure and disturbing natural and cultural landscapes have become more observable. The spatial development of OTA has shifted from a "base source" dominated destination to a "service source" based destination through the development of the necessary post-hoc services to satisfy increased demand.

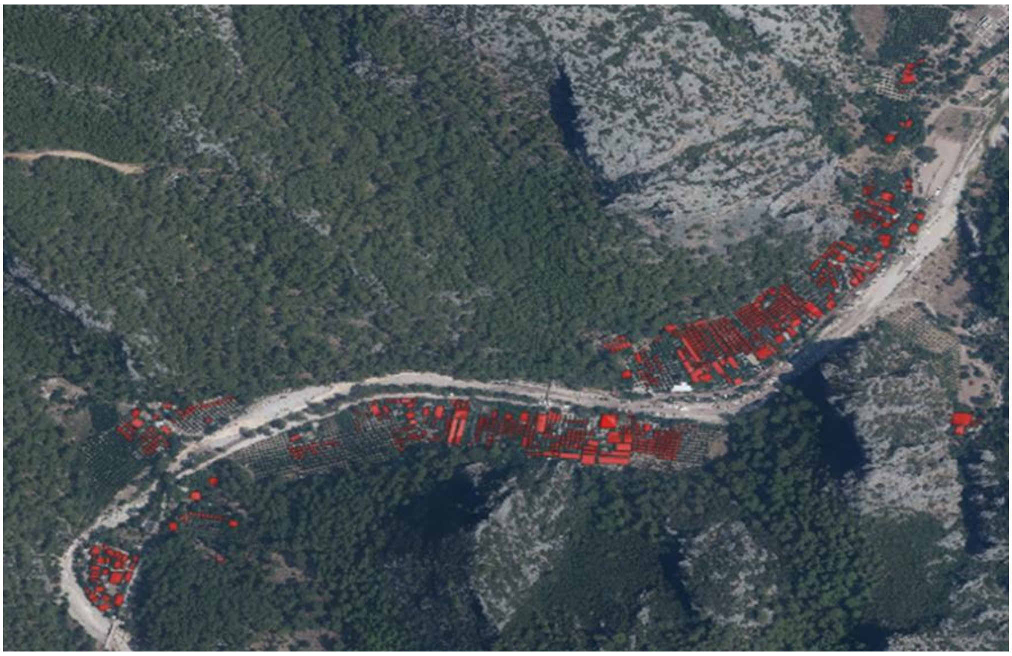

Figure 3. *Overlapping the results of all detected tourism facilities in OTA. (Source: Author)*

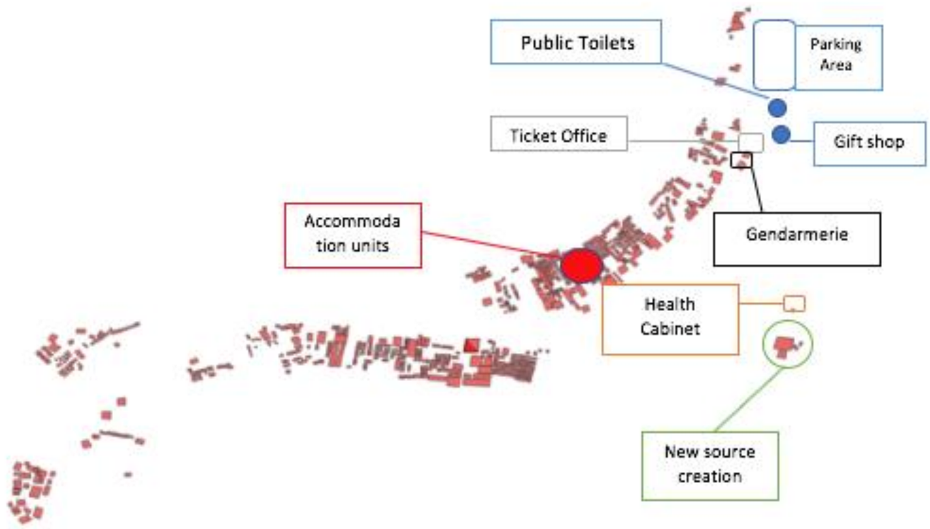

Figure 4. *Classification of spatial transformations in Olympos based on Johnston (2001) and Smith (1988). (Source: Author)*

Figure 4 shows that the service resources that have been built in the 2nd degree archaeological protected area include almost all Tier types that have been indicated in Johnston's (2001) study. The extracted satellite images showed that the majority of the structures are Tier 1 type service units that are consisted of accommodation units, souvenirs shops, food and beverages units that are serving directly to tourists and also discotheque -

new source creation- which has developed separately from the concentration of other tourism units. In addition, the health cabinet can be seen as an example of Tier 2 type of units that are serving both tourists and locals. Furthermore, services such as Gendarmerie and cell towers that are located in different points in the area can be assessed as governmental structures in the protected area.

DISCUSSION

It can be stated that the advancement of the spatial transformations in OTA, proceeded under motivation to have profit from tourism activity which has been begun during the 1970s and continued against to protection concerns and legislative regulations. The stakeholders of the process such as local, regional, and national administrative bodies and local people who are also the owners of the tourism businesses should develop long-term plans that are including principles of sustainable development. More importantly, the implications of created plans should be supervised and monitored by the participation of all stakeholders. Therefore, to achieve success in sustainable tourism development, the participation of local people, professions, and managing bodies should be provided. OTA as a heritage destination has been a stage for negative impacts of tourism through decades and latterly consequences of overtourism should be examined in detail and the recognition of current problems should be done objectively. The most obvious finding to emerge from this study can be stated as the importance of governance and the implications of legal frameworks that have been put forward to protect cultural and natural sources of the protected area. Provisional solutions and perfunctorily legal sanctions that can be count as "staged governance" are frequently led to a "de facto protection" which is affluently spoken and written, however, neither applied nor controlled.

The final phase of the awkward and unplanned development of shanty tourism centers can be stated as overtourism stage which should be explained and defined in detail. However, the results of the integrative review indicated that the definitions of "overtourism" are ambiguous. Even though the term is created and then trademarked by Skift in 2016, it has been used on Twitter back in August 2012 and addressed in UNWTO's Ministers' Summit in World Travel Market in 2017 (Goodwin, 2017). It is defined as "the impact of tourism on a destination, or parts thereof, that excessively influences perceived quality of life of citizens and/or quality of visitors experiences in a negative way". Another definition is made by the Responsible Tourism Partnership as "destinations where hosts or guests, locals or visitors, feel that there are too many visitors and that the quality of life in the area or the quality of experience has deteriorated unacceptably". As it is seen, the scope of overtourism is based on not only quantitative but also qualitative indicators. Therefore, it involves commonly used approaches such as carrying capacity (Weber, 2017; Muler Gonzales et al., 2018), acceptable change, or sustainability (UNWTO, 2018). In other words, the overtourism phenomenon is related to uncontrolled tourism growth and/or unmanageable concentration of tourist flows -especially in urban tourism destinations- that negatively affects all stakeholders of a tourism destination. Walmsley (2017) pointed out similarities between definitions by exemplifying Weber's (2017) definition "the phenomenon of overcrowded tourism destinations, where the (mainly social) carrying capacity is exceeded" and supported the idea that definitions are referring to concerns about limitation and where it should be set. However, a distinction should be made between former conceptualizations such as carrying capacity that refers to a limit exceeding and the later formulations of the new phenomenon that refers to the whole process itself.

Based on the information given above, it can be argued that the term "overtourism" is insufficient to conceptualize the existing phenomenon which is attempted to be defined and hotly debated by scholars in tourism studies. The reasons for the exigency of reconceptualization can be listed as:

- As it can be seen in definitions, the phenomenon is based on an ongoing process and mutual interaction among stakeholders rather than an excess of a limit which is formerly has become one of the main topics of tourism researches as carrying capacity and acceptable change.

- The term "tourism" has a diverse array of definitions without any consensus or common measurable indicators. Therefore, to identify what is over? Or which indicators to be assessed based on which criteria? are elusive, ambiguous and -even if existing definitions of tourism are considered- complicated.

- In essence, the phenomenon is about the absence of good management and uncontrolled development (UNWTO, 2018). Therefore, the issues that the tourism destinations are facing today are based on neither the concept of "tourism" nor its quantity but how we manage it. To this respect, the determinants such as "over" or "under" are insufficient to indicate mentioned issues and cannot be substituted with an absence of successful management or control of tourism activity.

- Existing definitions and researches are underlining a transformation; social milieu (Milano, 2017), economic (Oklevik et al., 2019; Walmsley, 2017) and physical environment (Milano et al., 2018) of tourism destinations. Starting from this point of view, it can be argued that former conceptualizations such as "tourismification" or "touristification" are more fulfilling to explain processes like transformation. Similarly, from a linguistic point of view, determinants such as "over" and "under" are seen likelier with the words which unambiguously referring a process. Due to these reasons, it can be put forward that the terms "over-tourismification" or "over-touristified" is more satisfactory to conceptualize the phenomenon.

The overall results of the research also showed that the mechanisms of the evolution process have some specific conditions, in other words, modes of operation. The overall results indicated that the driving force behind the transformation is to reap the maximum profit from tourism activity, provide advancement of the process and an increase in the number of tourists' overtime. However, the operation of tourismification process of naturally or historically protected areas has some distinctive characteristics that help us to distinguish it from the evolution process of other types of destinations. The first characteristic can be announced as the inverse relationship between demand and supply. In tourism destinations -in general-, the increase in tourism supply is seen as favourable to satisfy the increasing tourism demand. In contrast, in protected areas, the same philosophy may lead to some destructive consequences on delicate environments of the HTDs. Therefore, HTDs should form the demand to avoid exceeding carrying capacity limits and to keep the delicate balance between the protection and the use.

As an example of the modus operandi of tourismification process of protected areas, the contextual domains such as physical or cultural environments that are preserved by "counter-discourses" through protection regulations, conservation efforts and tight control within a specific legal framework can be given. From political economy and governance perspective, these counter-discourses can be count as efforts to keep delicate balance (Wang & Bramwell, 2012). While legal regulations are aiming to keep the heritage site "static", tourism economy-based motivations are obligating the development of tourism-based facilities and forcing the destination for a transformation which refers to a "dynamic" process in its nature.

The two inversive philosophies that have been identified in tourismification process of protected areas and the evolution of HTDs can be conceptualized as "transformative" and "preservative" philosophies. The transformative approach emphasizes actions and practices that may have negative consequences on protected areas such as; excessive use of resources, commodification, ignorance of sustainability, legal infringements, exploitation of legal gaps and the object of forming supply dominantly and dynamically. On the other hand, the preservative approach includes actions and practices which are related to sustain and keep static the worth preserving characteristics of the area by providing governance and conservation within a specific legal framework and considering protection and use balance and carrying capacity in a sustainable way against to transformative actions.

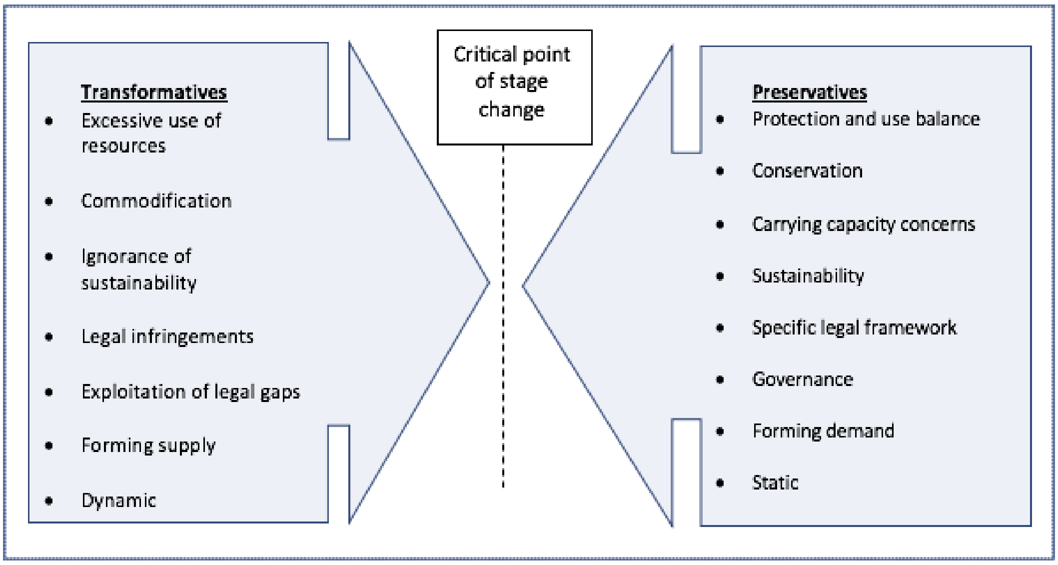

Figure 5. *The inverse philosophies of modus operandi in tourismification of protected areas. Source: Author.*

CONCLUSIONS

The empirical findings of the study provided a new understanding evolution process of HTDs that are located in rural areas. Olympos case study showed that the assessment of the evolution of tourism facilities in protected rural areas should be taken into consideration with a diverse array of external factors. Firstly, rural landscapes require additional efforts and strategies to protect natural environment in addition to historical protection. This may occur through more strict governance of policies or legal implementations than urban areas do. Consequently, even low-level advancements of the tourism related changes are seen unfavourable. This conflict of the strategies is pointed out in Anton Clave's (2012) classification as the protected areas may require "reactive" strategy implementations to prevent irreversible distortion. Also, as it has been discussed in the former section, the critical point between the two controversial philosophies can be triggered under the influence of "preservative" or "transformative" actions.

The OTA case study showed that the exploitations of the legal gaps have led to an uncontrolled increase in the number of tourism units and awkward development of supply which there is no doubt about the fact it is neither sustainable nor governable. Moreover, the violation of carrying capacity limits in the area which is underlined by Jansen-Verbeke and Russo (2008) in terms of relation with the socioeconomic milieu can be stated as another risk. Also, another generalization of the study outcomes can be made about one of the main criticisms (for instance TALC) that have been done to lack of significant tools to identify stage changes in the process. The employed techniques during the study can be used to identify advanced stages such as overtourism in the evolution path of HTDs. To set an example, overtourismification that have been come insight in HTDs can be identified by through indicators whom the groundings in heritage tourism have been explained. Moreover, as Yates (2011) underlined that the legal frameworks, legislations and their implications related to them are vital for the management of both tangible and intangible assets.

The zoning efforts for classification of the heritage sites require a wide variety of legal measures and governance mechanisms in addition to specific strategies to tackle the emerged issues. Therefore, while top-down approach is considered as vital to establishing these legal frameworks and governance, on the other hand, bottom-up approach is been regarded as necessary to provide community participation to achieve success in the implementations of these established strategies. A diverse array of researches and case studies showed that overtourism is not a new matter of fact but a growing global reality that is strongly related to new technologies such as house-sharing platforms and low-cost flights. Therefore, it has multi-dimensions that are interrelated and involves both local, central and international managing bodies. Tangible and intangible heritage tourism attractions, the delicate balance between the use and the protection of the cultural and natural resources may be affected irreversibly due to the negative impacts of overtourism. Therefore, the experiences and the extensive knowledge of former studies on tourism destinations that have been evolved from identifying tourism potential to impacts assessment and then to sustainability approach through years should be taken into consideration while estimating the possible consequences of overtourism in the post-COVID-19 era.

Limitations

In spite of its limitations, the study certainly adds to our understanding of the evolution process of HTDs in protected areas. The absence of more comprehensive historical orthographic photos and the rarity in the frequency of yearlong/decadelong satellite images can be count as limitations of the study. Further research should be undertaken to reveal ecologic consequences of overtourism such as gentrification of vegetation cover or soil pollution, and to explore how governance bodies underwhelmed despite of the final verdict of the judicature authorities on legal violations during the overtourismification process.

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