



**Assessing Professional Tour Guides' Attitudes Towards Cultural Heritage Based on Demographic Variables**

***Profesyonel Turist Rehberlerinin Kültürel Mirasa yönelik Tutumlarının Demografik Değişkenlere göre Belirlenmesi***

**Tarık YALÇINKAYA<sup>1</sup> ve Azra YAŞLI<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Öğr. Gör. Dr., Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesi, Ayvacı Meslek Yüksekokulu, Otel, Lokanta ve İkrâm Hizmetleri Bölümü, Çanakkale, tarik.yalcinkaya@comu.edu.tr, orcid.org/0000-0002-6986-2990

<sup>2</sup>Mezun Öğrenci, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesi, Ayvacı Meslek Yüksekokulu, Seyahat, Turizm ve Eğlence Hizmetleri Bölümü, Çanakkale, azrayasli@gmail.com, orcid.org/0009-0009-1832-2976

*Araştırma Makalesi/Research Article*

**Makale Bilgisi**

Geliş/Received:

15.11.2024

Kabul/Accepted:

14.11.2025

**DOI:**

10.18069/firatsbed.1585906

**Keywords**

Cultural Heritage,  
Professional Tour Guide,  
Tourism,

**ABSTRACT**

Cultural heritage is valued for its ability to represent a society's past and foster a feeling of identity. Being a relatively recent topic of study, cultural heritage naturally lends itself to multidisciplinary research and tourism is one of these fields. Cultural heritage values that enhance tourism experiences and address specific industry challenges are essential for tourism-related activities. On the other hand, professional tour guides also play a key role in tourism. Therefore, disclosing their perspectives on cultural heritage, their degree of expertise, and the actions that need to be done in this area will help to advance sustainable tourism. This study aims to assess the attitudes of professional tour guides towards cultural heritage. 366 valid questionnaires from professional tour guides working in Türkiye were collected during the study. The findings suggest that there were no statistically significant differences in the attitudes of professional tour guides on cultural heritage based on demographic variables such as gender, income, level of education, age, and years of experience. It is believed to contribute to the relevant literature.

**ÖZ**

Bir toplumun geçmişini temsil etme ve kimlik duygusunu besleme özelliğine sahip kültürel miras unsurları değer taşımaktadır. Nispeten yeni bir çalışma konusu olan kültürel miras, doğası gereği çok disiplinli araştırmalara uygundur ve turizm de bu alanlardan biri olarak ön plana çıkmaktadır. Turizm deneyimlerini iyileştiren ve sektörün karşı karşıya olduğu belirli sorunlara çözüm sunan kültürel miras değerleri, turizm faaliyetleri için önem arz etmektedir. Öte yandan, profesyonel turist rehberleri de turizmde önemli bir rol paydaş olarak kabul edilir. Bu nedenle, profesyonel turist rehberlerinin kültürel mirasa ilişkin bakış açılarını, uzmanlık derecelerini ve bu alanda atmaları gereken adımları araştırmak, sürdürülebilir turizmi ilerletmeye yardımcı olacaktır. Bu çalışma, profesyonel turist rehberlerinin kültürel mirasa yönelik tutumlarını değerlendirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma sırasında Türkiye'de çalışan profesyonel tur rehberlerinden 366 geçerli anket toplanmıştır. Bulgular, cinsiyet, gelir, eğitim düzeyi, yaş ve deneyim yılı gibi demografik değişkenlere dayalı olarak profesyonel turist rehberlerinin kültürel mirasa yönelik tutumlarında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir fark olmadığını göstermektedir. Sonuçların ilgili literatüre katkıda bulunacağına inanılmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler**

Kültürel Miras, Profesyonel  
Turist Rehberi, Turizm

**Atıf/Citation:** Yalçinkaya, T. ve Yaşlı, A.(2026). Assessing Professional Tour Guides' Attitudes Towards Cultural Heritage Based on Demographic Variables. *Firat Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 36, 1, 31-42.

**Sorumlu yazar/Corresponding author:** Tarık YALÇINKAYA, tarik.yalcinkaya@comu.edu.tr

## **1. Introduction**

Recent years have seen a significant increase in the study of cultural heritage by scientists and researchers. It has grown in importance as a factor in terms of competitive advantages at tourist locations, which increases the value of heritage sites in the tourism industry. There is a projected increase in tourist numbers at locations with heritage sites. Timothy (2014) argues that heritage tourism is regarded as one of the alternative tourism types and it plays a significant role in bolstering the economies of numerous tourist locations across the globe. As the number of tourists engaged in heritage tourism grows over time, countries and destination management organisations have begun to prioritise heritage tourism policies and initiatives in order to keep up with global changes in tourist preferences.

In order to raise awareness of heritage values, tour guides are supposed to provide an informed interpretation. Given their considerable influence over behaviors and preferences of tourists, they are significant stakeholders in the tourism industry. Guided tours have the potential to create positive experiences at heritage sites (Crespi-Vallbona, 2021), which depends on the qualifications of tour guides. More positive visitor experiences are probably influenced by a qualified tour guide. Thus, research on the impact of tour guides at heritage sites is thought to be pertinent. To properly interpret cultural heritages, tour guides must first gain a better understanding of them. However, the number of studies focusing on this influence is limited and more research is required (Alazaizeh et al., 2019; Alazaizeh et al., 2024; Şahin & Yıldırım, 2020). This study attempts to explore the attitudes of tour guides towards cultural heritage and to ascertain whether their perceptions differed depending on demographic factors such as gender, age, income, years of experience, and education. This study tried to answer the research question stated as follows:

Do attitudes of tour guides towards tangible cultural heritage differ based on demographic factors?

Its findings are believed to contribute to the relevant literature and They presented useful empirical insights into the attitudes of professional tour guides, which may shape pre-service and in-service trainings to enhance their understanding of cultural heritage and the balance between its use and preservation.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Cultural Heritage in Tourism**

Heritage values are a reflection of a society's past and culture. As a result, they play a crucial role in the development of belonging. A value must have endured from the past to the present and be significant enough to be handed on to future generations in order to be recognised as a heritage (Yalçınkaya & Güzel, 2022). Cultural heritage values are regarded as vital instruments for the survival of societies. It is therefore necessary to preserve them and pass them on to coming generations (Kuşçuoğlu & Murat, 2017; Türker & Çelik, 2012). This approach's development process ends at the turn of the 20th century. The UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage was enacted on November 16, 1972, during the General Conference of UNESCO (UNESCO, 2024a). Three lists—natural, cultural, and mixed—were established based on this agreement, and the values on these lists had to adhere to strict criteria in order to be approved. These values undergo a thorough preservation process using UNESCO methods and standards after being added to the list. As of November 2024, Türkiye has been a party to this agreement since 1982. Of the 21 heritage sites on this list, two are mixed and 19 are cultural (UNESCO, 2024b). The number of studies on this topic has increased, particularly in the last few years.

In terms of tourism activities, cultural heritage assets hold significant importance (Çetin, 2010; Pelit & Türkoğlu, 2019). The understanding of mass tourism is dispelled by the tourism approach that addresses these values, and a chance for alternative and diverse tourism is presented. This also contributes to sustainability in tourism (Açııcı et al., 2017). When visitors or tourists encounter aspects of cultural heritage, they interact with people from diverse civilisations. This fosters communication and tolerance in the atmosphere. Heritage sites can also draw more visitors from all over the world. Panzera et al. (2021) found that a destination's appeal to foreign tourists increases with the number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites it has. Tourism satisfaction and satisfaction at the destination, which have been examined in connection with the presence of historical or cultural sites, have been used to assess the competitiveness and attractiveness of destinations (Bernini et al., 2020).

This demonstrates the unique significance of such places in the tourism sector. Due to the great economic potential of cultural heritage, numerous countries have banded together to promote and foster cultural tourism as a vital component of their service economies. The increased focus on cultural heritage has resulted in a number of changes and noteworthy patterns in recent years (Timothy, 2014). As cultural heritage represents a significant category of tourist attractions (Leask, 2016), countries are currently making an effort to place more of their cultural heritages in UNESCO lists so as to preserve them and draw in more visitors from all over the world. Heritage assets present destination managers with exceptional chances to increase tourism and reap benefits of competitive advantages in tourism.

## **2.2. Tour Guide Interpretation at Heritage Sites**

With the greatest influence on tourists, Tour guides rank among the most significant stakeholders in the tourism industry (Alazaizeh et al., 2024; Crespi-Vallbona, 2021; Çapar & Yenipinar, 2017; Çeşmeci, 2004; González-Rodríguez et al., 2020; Güzel, 2007; Karacaoğlu & Yolal, 2019; Kaya & Ünlüönen, 2021; Köroğlu et al., 2012; Tetik, 2006; Toker, 2011; Weng et al., 2020; Zengin & Eker, 2014). They are essential front-line workers in the industry. Therefore, when they carry out their responsibilities in a way that enhances visitors' experiences, visitors are more inclined to revisit, give favourable reviews, and suggest the destinations to others (Alazaizeh et al., 2024). In their investigation on the impact of tour guides on visitor satisfaction, Arat & Bulut (2019) discovered that this role is crucial. The scholars contend that, particularly in cultural trips, tour guides can significantly raise visitor satisfaction levels. Gürsoy et al. (2022) identified six dimensions of heritage tourism experiences, one of which is the importance of tour guides. In their study on tourists' perceptions of professional tour guides' contribution to cultural values, Aslan & Çokal (2016) assert that tour guides play a crucial role in transferring cultural values because they serve as cultural ambassadors. Improving the visitor experience has a significant impact on increasing visitor satisfaction (González-Rodríguez et al., 2020) and tour guides have a favourably substantial influence on visitors' experiences (Crespi-Vallbona, 2021). It has been demonstrated that the most crucial element in creating a meaningful heritage experience is tour guide interpretation (McGrath, 2004). Ar & Çelik Uğuz (2015) discovered that tourists view tour guides as vital resources for learning about cultural heritages and as cultural boosters who help preserve them. Similarly, tour guides believe they are the most effective in promoting, maintaining, and safeguarding the heritage features of the region and encouraging intercultural contact, based on the findings of Karacaoğlu & Yolal (2019). Compared to visitors without guided interpretation, those with guides perceive a larger value in a heritage tour (Weng et al., 2020). In their analysis of university students' views towards intangible cultural assets, Soybalı et al. (2022) found that while there were substantial differences in the attitudes of the students based on gender, there were no significant differences based on age or income. However, Şahin & Yıldırım (2020) came to the conclusion that there are no appreciable gender-based differences in their attitudes towards cultural values.

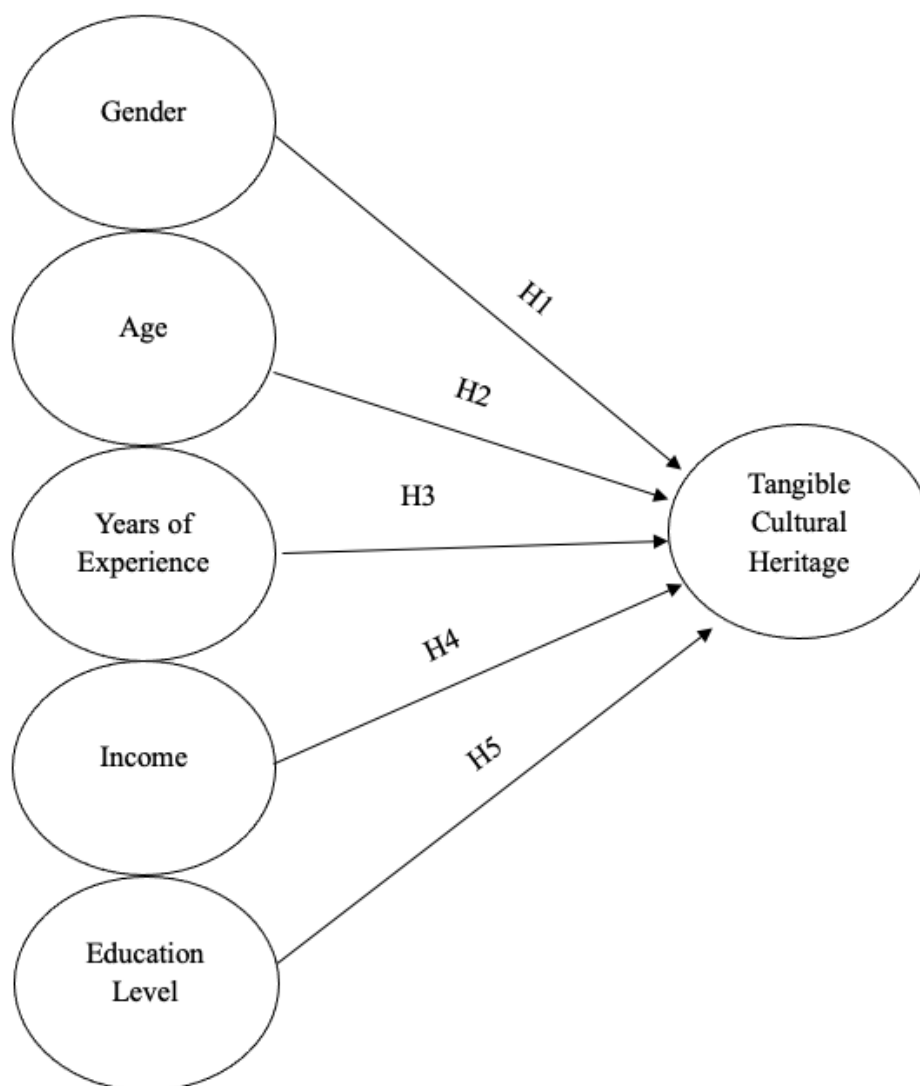
Upon reviewing the literature, it becomes evident that there are very few studies that focus especially on the interaction between tour guides and cultural heritage values (Karacaoğlu & Yolal, 2019; Şahin & Yıldırım, 2020). Research on professional tour guides' perspectives on tangible cultural heritage values has not been discovered in the literature despite studies on intangible cultural heritage (Soybalı et al., 2022). Nonetheless, as previously mentioned, there is no denying the significance of tour guides in tourism-related activities. As a result, the attitudes and knowledge levels of tour guides have an impact on the national tourism goals of countries (High knowledge levels boost the satisfaction and experiences of visitors visiting destinations). In this instance, it raises the intention to revisit, and the intention to talk positively regarding their experiences. The dissemination of scientific facts in this field and the scientific appraisal of this issue are very informative to decision makers. This situation is further reinforced by national decisions (see the 12<sup>nd</sup> development plan's 529<sup>th</sup> article and its sub-articles of Türkiye, as well as the section on "Increasing the Qualifications of Guides" in the final report of the "Tourism Education, Employment and Tourist Guidance Commission," which was presented at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tourism Council in 2017) (The 3<sup>rd</sup> Turkish Tourism Council, 2017; The 12<sup>nd</sup> Development Plan of Türkiye, 2023). Each of the aforementioned components makes up the research's unique value.

The literature review demonstrates that more research on the relationship between tour guides and cultural heritage is needed. They are among the most frequently contacted by tourists during their holiday and higher levels of expertise are anticipated of tour guides who are deemed to carry out their responsibilities effectively. Thus, the degree of their understanding of and perspectives on cultural heritage assets that are the focus of

tourism activities may have an impact on the pleasure and experience of visitors. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed in this research:

- H1: The attitudes of professional tour guides towards cultural heritage differ by gender.
- H2: The attitudes of professional tour guides towards cultural heritage differ by age.
- H3: The attitudes of professional tour guides towards cultural heritage differ by years of experience.
- H4: The attitudes of professional tour guides towards cultural heritage differ by income.
- H5: The attitudes of professional tour guides towards cultural heritage differ by education level.

Based on the proposed hypotheses, the research model is illustrated in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Research Model

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Research Design

The aim of the study is to assess the attitudes of professional tour guides towards cultural heritage. Utilizing a deductive method in quantitative research, the questionnaire technique was chosen based on the study's aim. "Research that uses numerical data to reach specific and generalisable results is known as quantitative research" (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2014). Moreover, using a questionnaire method can help enhance the amount of

data that the research obtains, which helps researchers increase the number of data collected during the research process. Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University granted ethics clearance for the research project. The following is its reference number: 2023-YÖNP-0376.

### **3.2. Data Instrument**

With two scales to be employed, the questionnaire included two sections:

- a) In the first part, "Tangible Cultural Heritage Attitude Scale," developed by Yeşilbursa (2011) was used. He discovered that this scale's Cronbach Alpha value was 0.92. The value in this study was found to be 0.79. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient, which gauges the level of scale reliability, is expected to be more than 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978). Consequently, the reliability level of the scale in this study is regarded as being fairly high.
- b) The second part of the questionnaire is the demographic questions, asked about gender, age, income, years of experience and education status.

All statements on the questionnaire form are scored using the Likert-type 5-point rating method, which goes from "strongly disagree" (=1) to "strongly agree" (=5).

### **3.3. Data Collection**

Using a smaller sample size to represent the universe was the chosen approach in order to get the data in a realistic and detailed manner (Patton, 1987). Convenience sampling was the method used to collect data for this study. 13,659 tour guides that are registered with the Union of Turkish Tourist Guides Chambers make up the study's universe, according to data from the union's website that was viewed on September 13, 2024 (TUREB, 2024). Based on the "Acceptable Minimum Sample Sizes for Different Universes" table (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2014:130) as a reference, the minimum sample size calculation of 375 persons was established. The sole factor taken into account while approaching the potential research participants was whether or not they held a tour guide license. By the time the study concluded, the researchers had distributed 408 questionnaires; 378 of them were completed, yielding a 92.6 percent response rate. The Union has 13 chambers spread around the country and data were collected from tour guides registered in all 13 chambers. Between October 2023 and August 2024, data was gathered both in-person and online. In-person collected data was obtained during the tour guide chambers' training sessions, which are affiliated to the Turkish Union of Tour Guides. Participants were asked to fill out questionnaires and informed of the main objective of the study prior to any data collection. Following the informative part, professional tour guides were requested to complete the questionnaires. For research participants who would rather complete the questionnaire on their smartphones, an online version was developed, and participants were given access to this online questionnaire via a QR code.

### **3.4. Data Analysis**

Twelve of the data were deemed unacceptable owing to incomplete information after being entered into the excel spreadsheet. As a result, 366 questionnaires were approved for analysis. SPSS software was used to analyze the quantitative data that was gathered during the research. The data was first prepared for analysis, after which the hypotheses were to be tested using the t-test, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), factor analysis, descriptive statistical analyses.

## **4. Findings**

Demographics of the respondents are presented in Table 1. There are 101 female respondents and 265 male ones. The age group spanning from 35 to 44 (111) has the biggest number of respondents. It is followed by the age groups of 25 to 34 (79), 45 to 54 (70), 55 to 64 (62), 65 and older, and 18 to 24 (19).

Of the respondents, 115 professional tour guides (31.42%) have worked in the sector for one to five years, 60 for 30 years or more (16.39%), 54 for 11 to 15 years (14.75%), 47 for six to 10 years (12.84%), 33 for 16 to

20 years (9.02%), 32 for 21 to 25 years (8.74%) as well as 25 for 25 to 30 years (6.83%). Given how much mental and physical strength the profession itself demands, it could be considered typical that there are comparatively fewer elderly replies than younger ones among the sampling group.

231 professional tour guides (63.11%) earn more than 35.001 TL, 40 (10.93%) between 25.001-30.000 TL, 33 (9.02%) between 30.001 and 35.000 TL, 21 (5.74%) between 20.001 and 25.000 TL, 19 (5.19%) between 15.001 and 20.000 TL, 13 (3.55%) between 11.403 and 15.000 TL and 9 (2.46%) between 11.402 TL and less. It should be noted that the minimum monthly pay in Türkiye was 11.402 Turkish lira at the time of data collection. With the exception of a small portion of respondents who are thought to work as tour guides on the side in addition to their regular jobs, these statistics indicate that professional tour guides make comparatively a good amount of money compared to minimum monthly pay.

176 professional tour guides (48.09%) of those surveyed have completed their undergraduate degrees (four years programs. It is followed by 137 (37.43%) with graduate degrees (master's or PhD programs), 40 (10.93%) with associate degrees (two-year programs), and 13 (3.55%) with high school diplomas. These figures show that professional tour guides strive to improve themselves at various degrees of universities. Except for gender, the distribution of variance equality among the groups was balanced.

**Table 1. Demographics**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Female	101	27.60	18-24	19	5.19
Male	265	72.40	25-34	79	21.58
			35-44	111	30.33
			45-54	70	19.13
			55-64	62	16.94
			65 and older	25	6.83
<b>Income (Turkish Lira)</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Years of Experience</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
11.402 TL and less	9	2.46	1-5 years	115	31.42
11.403-15.000 TL	13	3.55	6-10 years	47	12.84
15.001-20.000 TL	19	5.19	11-15 years	54	14.75
20.001-25.000 TL	21	5.74	16-20 years	33	9.02
25.001-30.000 TL	40	10.93	21-25 years	32	8.74
30.001-35.000 TL	33	9.02	25-30 years	25	6.83
35.001 TL and more	231	63.11	30 and more years	60	16.39
<b>Education Level</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>			
High School	13	3.55			
Associate Level (2 years program)	40	10.93			
Undergraduate Level (4 years program)	176	48.09			
Graduate Level (Master and PhD)	137	37.43			

The statistical measures of skewness and kurtosis were employed to assess the degree of normality. Kline (2005) states that statistics less than 3.00 don't not break normality. As both values in this study were between -1.558 and +1400, normality was ensured.

**Table 2. Averages of Items**

<b>Codes</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Average</b>
Tangible		
Cultural		
Heritage		
TCH1	It means nothing to me to walk around a historic street.	1,188
TCH2	It is critical to preserve old newspapers concerning the city I live in.	4,5820
TCH3	When I visit a new place, I want to see historical buildings.	4,8689
TCH4	It is significant to me that historical cemeteries and cemeteries are well-maintained.	4,8005
TCH5	It's pointless to learn about how people lived in the past.	1,1475
TCH6	I believe historical battlefields should be protected.	4,7240
TCH7	I find it uninteresting to visit museums with antique objects and items	1,3060
TCH8	I believe it is critical to preserve historical cities.	4,9399

TCH9	I can learn a lot about history from old photographs	4,6612
TCH10	I believe it is critical to preserve archeological sites.	4,9672
TCH11	Historic battlefields should be converted to agricultural land.	1,4699
TCH12	It's fascinating to hear elderly individuals discuss their youth.	4,5191
TCH13	It is boring to help preserve historical buildings.	1,2158
TCH14	It is enjoyable to visit museums where historical items and objects are displayed.	4,6066
TCH15	I would like to help preserve old photographs related to the history of my city.	4,6721
TCH16	I'd like to witness firsthand how archaeological excavations are carried out.	4,6940
TCH17	It is boring to visit historic cities.	1,1448
TCH18	I find it boring to visit ruins left from ancient civilizations.	1,1776
TCH19	I'm intrigued by the excavations that archaeologists conduct.	4,7404
TCH20	It is boring to visit museum houses.	1,3989
TCH21	Historical monuments serve as markers of a society's level of artistic accomplishment.	4,6120
TCH22	I enjoy walking around a historical street.	4,9153
TCH23	It is not important to protect objects and items with no material value	1,3115
TCH24	Archaeological sites, in my opinion, are a shared treasure among all people worldwide.	4,8634
TCH25	Historical structures should be removed and replaced with contemporary ones.	1,1093
TCH26	I believe archaeological sites are historical documents.	4,9317
TCH27	It is not significant to me that historical cemeteries and cemeteries are well-maintained.	1,5246

Since Turkish professional tour guides made up the research sample, the data collecting tool was used in Turkish. However, in order to report the averages of all items of the Tangible Cultural Heritage Attitude Scale, they were translated into English by a qualified translator as seen in Table 2. The initial Turkish scale created by Yeşilbursa (2011) had a number of items that were reverse-coded. The English translation preserved them in the same manner. The abbreviation TCH refers to Tangible Cultural Heritage. They are TCH1, TCH5, TCH7, TCH11, TCH13, TCH17, TCH18, TCH20, TCH23, TCH25, TCH27. The five items with the highest averages are listed as follows: TCH10 (I believe it is critical to preserve archeological sites), TCH8 (I believe it is critical to preserve historical cities.), TCH26 (I believe archaeological sites are historical documents.), TCH22 (I enjoy walking around a historical street.), and TCH3 (When I visit a new place, I want to see historical buildings). All five of these items are about archaeological sites or historical places. These statistics suggest that these are among the most frequently visited locations by professional tour guides while conducting their groups. According to the findings of this study, archaeological sites are regarded vital cultural assets, and as a result, they are highly valued by professional tour guides. Türkiye, a historically and archaeologically rich country, was the area of this research. There are several archaeological sites spread across its territory, some of which have already been designated as UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Therefore, the findings are compatible with the country's rich culture. At this stage, it is necessary to address to the balance between the preservation and utilisation of cultural heritage. Archaeological sites in particular may be susceptible to weather-related problems like wind, rain, or severe weather. It is deemed crucial to assist them unharmed. Effective preservation policies could help make this a success, which calls for established partnerships between interested stakeholders including professional tour guides. The number of guests, repair techniques, and any applicable price policies are some of the major issues that the destination management organisation or site management must address for a well-managed heritage site. One of the goals of heritage tourism is to pass on heritage values to future generations while preserving them. This could only be accomplished via efficient collaboration among stakeholders, and professional tour guides bear responsibility for this preservation. During their visit, they must increase awareness about cultural heritage protection and ensure that their guests do not damage any cultural heritage sites. They have the ability to lead their visitors on their tours since they are the tourism stakeholders with whom tourists interact the most.

Among the reverse-coded items. TCH25 (Historical structures should be removed and replaced with contemporary ones - 1,1093) has the lowest average. This indicated that professional tour guides in Türkiye pay special attention to maintaining ancient structures/places and oppose the idea of replacing them with modern and contemporary constructions. They have of the opinion that that since ancient places reflect the culture and history of the society they belong to, these values should be maintained and passed on to future generations. TCH25 (Historical structures should be removed and replaced with contemporary ones) is

followed by TCH17 (It is boring to visit historic cities - 1,1448), TCH5 (It's pointless to learn about how people lived in the past - 1,1475), TCH18 (I find it boring to visit ruins left from ancient civilizations - 1,1776), and TCH1 (It means nothing to me to walk around a historic street- 1,188). Likewise, based on the perspectives of professional tour guides, taking a stroll down a historic street, or visiting an archeological site, where ruins were left from ancient civilizations, is important to them and can teach them something new. This illustrates how history is included into tourism activities and cultural heritage values.

Even though every item (except from those that were reverse-coded) received high ratings (averages exceeding 4.50 out of 5), TCH12 (It's fascinating to hear elderly individuals discuss their youth - 4,5191) had the lowest average. It is understandable that not all professional tour guides are eager to spend time with senior citizens by discussing their early years. TCH12 (It's fascinating to hear elderly individuals discuss their youth - 4,5191) is followed by TCH2 (It is critical to preserve old newspapers concerning the city I live in) with the average of 4,5820). Since this item appears to evaluate something personal, it could be accepted as normal for not all professional tour guides to agree with it. TCH14 states that it is enjoyable to visit museums where historical items and objects are displayed and has the average of 4,6066. Museums could be regarded as a part of working life for professional tour guides; that's why, this finding seems to be interesting. Despite being sufficiently high (4,6066 out of 5.00), its average seems to be still lower than others. This may be because participants are dispersed throughout the nation and some professional tour guides don't often visit museums because their tour routes may fluctuate, which makes them less interested in visiting museums. TCH14 (It is enjoyable to visit museums where historical items and objects are displayed – 4,6066) is followed by TCH21 states that historical monuments serve as markers of a society's level of artistic accomplishment and has the average of 4,6120. Although professional tour guides are expected to expand their competence in a variety of areas, art may not be one of them. That could explain why not all professional tour guides agree on this item. TCH21 (Historical monuments serve as markers of a society's level of artistic accomplishment – 4,6120) is followed by TCH9, stating that I can learn a lot about history from old photographs. It has the average of 4,6612. Because they do not commonly use old photographs during their work process, extracting meaning and information from antique photographs may not be a skill that professional tour guides are expected to have, despite their high average.

An independent t-test was conducted to find out whether the attitudes of professional tour guides towards cultural heritage differ by gender (see Table 3). Its results showed that the attitudes of professional tour guides towards cultural heritage did not significantly differ based on their gender (3.345 vs 3.3336). Therefore, hypothesis 1 was rejected.

**Table 3.** T-Test Results - Gender

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	SD	t	p-Value
Female	101	3.345	.10435	247.435	.841	.401
Male	265	3.333				

One-way ANOVA test was conducted to find out whether the attitudes of professional tour guides towards cultural heritage differ by their *age* (see Table 4). First, Levene's test had been conducted to test if samples had equal variances. Its result indicated that they have equal variances ( $p > 0,05$ ,  $p = .091$ ). Then one-way ANOVA test's results were analyzed. Its results showed that the attitudes of professional tour guides towards cultural heritage did not significantly differ based on their *age* ( $p > 0.05$ ,  $p = 0.230$ ). Therefore, hypothesis 2 was rejected.

**Table 4.** ANOVA Test Results - Age

Groups	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.123	6	.025	1.383	.230
Within Groups	6.413	360	.018		
Total	6.536	364			

One-way ANOVA test was conducted to find out whether the attitudes of professional tour guides towards cultural heritage differ by *years of experience* (see Table 5). First, Levene's test had been conducted to test if samples had equal variances. Its result indicated that they have equal variances ( $p > 0.05$ ,  $p = 0.508$ ). Then, one-way ANOVA test's results were examined. Its results showed that the attitudes of professional tour guides

towards cultural heritage did not significantly differ based on their *years of experience* ( $p > 0.05$ ,  $p = 0.551$ ). Therefore, hypothesis 3 was rejected.

**Table 5.** ANOVA Test Results – Years of Experience

Groups	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.089	6	.015	.825	.551
Within Groups	6.447	359	.018		
Total	6.536	365			

One-way ANOVA test was conducted to find out whether the attitudes of professional tour guides towards cultural heritage differ by *income* (see Table 6). First, Levene's test had been conducted to test if samples had equal variances. Its result indicated that they have equal variances ( $p > 0.05$ ,  $p = 0.215$ ). Then, one-way ANOVA test's results were examined. Its results showed that the attitudes of professional tour guides towards cultural heritage did not significantly differ based on their *income* ( $p > 0.05$ ,  $p = 0.051$ ). Therefore, hypothesis 4 was rejected.

**Table 6.** ANOVA Test Results –Income

Groups	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.224	6	.037	2.119	.051
Within Groups	6.313	359	.018		
Total	6.536	365			

One-way ANOVA test was conducted to find out whether the attitudes of professional tour guides towards cultural heritage differ by *level of education* (see Table 7). First, Levene's test had been conducted to test if samples had equal variances. Its result indicated that they have equal variances ( $p > 0.05$ ,  $p = 0.596$ ). Then, one-way ANOVA test's results were examined. Its results showed that the attitudes of professional tour guides towards cultural heritage did not significantly differ based on their *level of education* ( $p > 0.05$ ,  $p = 0.839$ ). Therefore, hypothesis 5 was rejected.

**Table 7.** ANOVA Test Results – Level of Education

Groups	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.015	3	.005	.280	.839
Within Groups	6.521	362	.018		
Total	6.536	365			

## 5. Discussion

This study aimed to assess the attitudes of professional tour guides towards cultural heritage. The findings indicate that their attitudes had high averages. To achieve the study's goal, a thorough literature review was conducted first, and then five hypotheses were put forth based on demographic variables. During the data processing procedure, averages were revealed prior to testing the hypothesis.

The result indicate that ancient places/archeological sites are among the most frequently visited places by professional tour guides while leading groups. According to the study's findings, archaeological sites are viewed as significant cultural assets, and as such, professional tour guides place a high value on them. This research focused on Türkiye, a historically and archaeologically rich country. There are several archaeological sites spread across its territory, some of which have already been designated as UNESCO World Heritage Sites. As a result, the findings are consistent with the country's diverse culture. At this stage, it is necessary to address to the balance between the preservation and utilisation of cultural heritage. Weather conditions such as wind or rain can all cause problems for archaeological sites. It is critical to keep them safely. Effective preservation policies, which need established collaborations amongst interested stakeholders, including professional tour guides, could aid in the success of this endeavour. Some of the primary difficulties that a well-managed cultural property must handle are the quantity of guests, repair processes, and any applicable price regulations. One of the purposes of heritage tourism is to transmit heritage values to future generations while protecting them. This can only be accomplished via effective coordination among parties, and competent tour guides are responsible

for its preservation. During their tour, they must raise awareness about cultural heritage protection and guarantee that their visitors do not cause any damage to cultural heritage sites. They have the power to guide their visitors on tours because they are the tourism stakeholders with whom tourists interact the most.

Even though every item (except from those that were reverse-coded) received high averages (averages exceeding 4.50 out of 5), the ones with lower averages compared to other ones need to be addressed. For example, Items such as spending time with senior citizens by discussing their early years, visiting museums, seeing art as an important part of their work, or learning from old photographs may be considered personal; thus, it is understandable that not all professional tour guides are interested in talking to older people or trying to learn from old photographs. Still, they averages exceed 4.50 out of 5.00.

Statistical findings revealed that all hypotheses were rejected. Tour guides' perceptions regarding intangible cultural assets varied greatly depending on their gender, according to research by Soybalı et al. (2022), which is inconsistent with the findings of this study. One possible explanation for this could be the distinction between intangible and tangible cultural heritage. Intangible assets might be perceived from a more personal standpoint, while tangible assets may be viewed from a more universal one. This study, like that of Şahin & Yıldırım (2020), discovered no gender-based differences in their attitudes towards cultural heritage, which could be attributed to the sample group or type of cultural heritage. The above-mentioned authors focused on the attitudes of university students at the department of tour guiding towards intangible cultural heritage, whereas this study's concept was those of professional tour guides towards tangible ones. Consistent with the conclusions established by Soybalı et al. (2022), this study didn't identify any statistically significant differences in tour guides' perspectives towards cultural heritage according to their age or income level. This result appears intriguing because it is acknowledged that a tour guide's remuneration plays a significant role in their motivation (Xu & McGehee, 2017). However, this may be the cause of the fact that they are all tour guides and make comparable earning as indicated by Table 1, where 63.11 percent of them make at least three times the minimum wage in Türkiye. On the other hand, increases in professional experience led to improved performance from tour guides (Köroğlu & Avcıkurt, 2014). However, the research based on years of experience did not reveal any appreciable differences in their perceptions towards cultural heritage. The level of education positively impacts the working lives of tour guides (Çetinkaya & Öter, 2016). Nonetheless, when it comes to perceptions towards cultural heritage, this study found no statistically meaningful difference based on level of education. This may be explained by the fact that 85.52 of the sample's respondents had a rather high level of education, with an undergraduate or graduate degree. This might result from the population and sampling group of the study, and it amply illustrates that this research should be repeated with other samples and research settings. Practically speaking, regardless of their age, gender, income, degree, or years of experience, tour guides ought to have more training in tangible cultural heritage. This study is thought to fill a significant gap in the literature since, to the best of our knowledge, it was the first to evaluate tour guides' attitudes towards cultural heritage.

## **6. Conclusion**

This study provides empirical evidence on how professional tour guides perceive cultural heritage and attempts to investigate if their attitudes towards cultural heritage differ depending on their demographic factors. The research yielded empirical insights into their perceptions and it may be utilized by decision makers, particularly those involved in tour guide education, destination management groups, or heritage site management. Professional tour guides, as key stakeholders in the tourism industry, are thought to play a vital role in maintaining the balance between cultural heritage preservation and use at tourism destinations. As a result, their pre-service and in-service training programs may be structured around scientific research.

## **7. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research**

The study has certain limitations. It was conducted through a questionnaire method. Future studies could be done with the help of qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews. More in-depth research might be carried out, such as evaluating how tour guides' performances at heritage sites affect visitors' behavioral intentions. This research focused on tangible cultural heritage. Subsequent research endeavors may pertain to intangible cultural heritage. It is also suggested for future researchers to add different demographic variables or different variables rather than demographic ones into the research model. It may also be possible to use mixed methods

techniques and collect data through in-depth interviews in conjunction with quantitative data. In addition, instead of tour guides, other tourist stakeholders' perspectives (such as museum staff and hotel employees) towards both tangible and intangible cultural heritage may be investigated, and a more comprehensive framework could be developed.

## 8. Acknowledgement

This research project was funded by TÜBİTAK 2209-A - Research Project Support Programme for Undergraduate Students.

## References

- Açııcı, F. K., Ertaş, Ş., & Sönmez, E. (2017). Sürdürülebilir turizm: Kültür turizmi ve kültürel miras. *Akademia Disiplinlerarası Bilimsel Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 3(1), 52-66
- Alazaizeh, M. M., Jamaliah, M. M., Mgonja, J. T., & Ababneh, A. (2019). Tour guide performance and sustainable visitor behavior at cultural heritage sites. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 27(11), 1708-1724.
- Alazaizeh, M. M., Jamaliah, M. M., Alzghoul, Y. A., & Mgonja, J. T. (2024). Tour guide and tourist loyalty toward cultural heritage sites: a signaling theory perspective. *Tourism Planning & Development*, 21(3), 255-275.
- Ar, H., & Çelik Uğuz, S. (2015). Somut olmayan kültürel mirasın korunmasında turist rehberlerinin rollerine yönelik turist algıları üzerine bir araştırma. *Journal of International Social Research*, 8(41).
- Arat, T., & Bulut, H. Ç. (2019). Turist memnuniyetinde turist rehberinin rolü: Konya'da bir araştırma. *Turist Rehberliği Dergisi (TURED)*, 2(1), 31-43.
- Aslan, Z., & Çokal, Z. (2016). Profesyonel turist rehberinin kültürel değerlere katkısına ilişkin turist algılamaları. *Journal of Tourism and Gastronomy Studies*, 4(1), 53-69.
- Bernini, C., Cerqua, A., & Pellegrini, G. (2020). Endogenous amenities, tourists' happiness and competitiveness. *Regional Studies*, 54(9), 1214-1225.
- Crespi-Vallbona, M. (2021). Satisfying experiences: guided tours at cultural heritage sites. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 16(2), 201-217.
- Çapar, G., & Yenipınar, U. (2017). Kültürel ve Doğal Mirasın Sürdürülebilirliğinde Turist Rehberlerinin Rolüne İlişkin Turist Algısı. *Balıkesir Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 20(38), 397-424.
- Çeşmeci, N. (2004). "Türkiye'de paket turların yönetiminde turist rehberlerinin fonksiyonu: yönetsel rollerin tespiti, sorunları ve çözüm önerileri", Yüksek Lisans Tezi. Erciyes Üniversitesi, Kayseri.
- Çetin, T. (2010). Cumalıkızık köyünde kültürel miras ve turizm algısı. *Milli Folklor*, 11(87).
- Çetinkaya, M. Y., & Öter, Z. (2016). Role of tour guides on tourist satisfaction level in guided tours and impact on re-visiting Intention: A research in Istanbul. *European Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Recreation*, 7(1), 40-54.
- González-Rodríguez, M. R., Domínguez-Quintero, A. M., & Paddison, B. (2020). The direct and indirect influence of experience quality on satisfaction: the importance of emotions. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 23(22), 2779-2797.
- Gürbüz, S., & Şahin, F. (2014). Sosyal bilimlerde araştırma yöntemleri. Ankara: Seçkin Yayıncılık, 271.
- Gürsoy, D., Akova, O., & Atsız, O. (2022). Understanding the heritage experience: a content analysis of online reviews of World Heritage Sites in Istanbul. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 20(3), 311-334.
- Güzel, F. Ö. (2007). "Türkiye imajının geliştirilmesinde profesyonel turist rehberlerinin rolü (Alman turistler üzerine bir araştırma)", Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Balıkesir Üniversitesi, Balıkesir.
- Karacaoğlu, S., & Yolal, M. (2019). Kültürel mirasın korunması ve sürdürülmesinde turist rehberlerinin rolü. *Türk Turizm Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 3(4), 833-847.
- Kaya, B., & Ünlüönen, K. (2021). Turist Rehberlerinin Kültürel Miras Aktarımında Hikâye Anlatıcılığının Rolü, *Türk Turizm Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 5(3): 2166-2179.
- Kline, R. B. (2005). *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling (2nd ed.)*. Guilford publications.
- Köroğlu Ö., Köroğlu A., & Alper, B. (2012). "Doğaya dayalı gerçekleştirilen turizm faaliyetleri içerisinde turist rehberlerinin rolleri üzerine bir inceleme", *KMÜ Sosyal ve Ekonomi k Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 14 (22), 131-139.
- Köroğlu, Ö., & Avcıkurt, C. (2014). Turist rehberlerinin motivasyonu ile performansı arasındaki ilişkinin belirlenmesi. *Dumlupınar Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, (39)
- Kuşçuoğlu, G. Ö., & Murat, T. A. Ş. (2017). Sürdürülebilir kültürel miras yönetimi. *Yalvaç Akademi Dergisi*, 2(1), 58-67.

- Leask, A. (2016). Visitor attraction management: A critical review of research 2009–2014. *Tourism Management*, 57, 334-361.
- McGrath, G. (2004). Including the outsiders: The contribution of guides to integrated heritage tourism management in Cusco, Southern Peru. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 7, 426–432.
- Nunnally, J. C. (1978). *Psychometric theory* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Panzer, E., de Graaff, T., & de Groot, H. L. (2021). European cultural heritage and tourism flows: The magnetic role of superstar World Heritage Sites. *Papers in Regional Science*, 100(1), 101-123.
- Patton, M. Q. (1987). *How to use qualitative methods in evaluation*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Pelit, E., & Türkoğlu, T. (2019). Somut olmayan kültürel miras değerlerinin turizme yansımaları ebru sanatı üzerine bir inceleme. *Güncel Turizm Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 3 (1), 101-118.
- Soybalı, H. H., Çoban, E., & Türkoğlu, T. (2022). Turizm rehberliği bölümü öğrencilerinin somut olmayan kültürel miras değerlerine yönelik bilgi, deneyim ve tutumlarının belirlenmesi. *Turist Rehberliği Dergisi (TURED)*, 5(2), 161-181.
- Şahin, S., & Yıldırım, H. U. (2020). Turist rehberi adaylarının kültür varlıklarına yönelik bilgi düzeyleri ve tutumları. *Manisa Celal Bayar Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 18(3), 120-136.
- Tetik, N. (2006). “Türkiye’de profesyonel turist rehberliği ve müşterilerin turist rehberlerinden beklentilerinin analizi (Kuşadası örneği)”, Yüksek Lisans Tezi. Balıkesir Üniversitesi, Balıkesir.
- The 12<sup>nd</sup> Development Plan of Türkiye (2023, October 31). [https://www.sbb.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/On-Ikinci-Kalkinma-Plani\\_2024-2028\\_11122023.pdf](https://www.sbb.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/On-Ikinci-Kalkinma-Plani_2024-2028_11122023.pdf)
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> Turkish Tourism Council (2017, November 1-3). *Tourism Education, Employment and Tourist Guidance Commission*  
<https://turizmsurasi.ktb.gov.tr/Eklenti/57389,turizmegitimiistihdamituristrehberligikomisyondururaporupdf.pdf?0>
- Timothy, D. J. (2014). Contemporary cultural heritage and tourism: Development issues and emerging trends. *Public Archaeology*, 13(1-3), 30-47.
- Toker, A. (2011). “Kültür turizminin sürdürülebilirliğinde profesyonel turist rehberlerinin rolü: Ankara örneği”, Yüksek Lisans Tezi. Anadolu Üniversitesi, Eskişehir.
- TUREB (2024, September 13). *Rehber İstatistikleri*. <https://www.tureb.org.tr/RehberIstatistik>
- Türker, A., & Çelik, İ. (2012). Somut olmayan kültürel miras unsurlarının turistik ürün olarak geliştirilmesine yönelik alternatif öneriler. *Yeni Fikir Dergisi*, 4(9), 86-98
- UNESCO (2024a, September 11). *UNESCO Dünya Mirası Listesi*. <https://www.unesco.org.tr/Pages/125/122/UNESCO-D%C3%BCnya-Miras%C4%B1-Listesi>.
- UNESCO (2024b, November 4). *Properties inscribed on the World Heritage List*. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/tr>
- Weng, L., Liang, Z., & Bao, J. (2020). The effect of tour interpretation on perceived heritage values: A comparison of tourists with and without tour guiding interpretation at a heritage destination. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 16, 100431.
- Xu, Y., & McGehee, N. G. (2017). Tour guides under zero-fare mode: evidence from China. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 20(10), 1088-1109.
- Yaşınkaya, T., & Güzel, T. (2022). Somut Olmayan Kültürel Miras Kapsamında Toplumsal Uygulamalar, Ritüeller ve Şölenler.. Her Yönüyle Miras Turizmi (s.177-187) içinde. Detay Yayıncılık.
- Yeşilbursa, C., C. (2011). “Sosyal Bilgilerde Miras Eğitiminin Öğrencilerin Somut Kültürel Mirasa Karşı Tutumlarına ve Akademik Başarılarına Etkisi”, Yayınlanmamış Doktora tezi, Gazi Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Ankara.
- Zengin, B., & Eker, N. (2014). “Alternatif turizm kapsamında kültür turizminin sürdürülebilirliğinde turist rehberlerinin rolü: bir uygulama”, XIII. Geleneksel Turizm Paneli, 11 Nisan 2014, İstanbul.

---

### Etik, Beyan ve Açıklamalar

---

1. Etik Kurul izni ile ilgili;

Bu çalışmanın yazar/yazarları, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesi Lisansüstü Eğitim Enstitüsü Etik Kurulu’nun tarih 04.05.2023 sayı E-84026528-050.01.04-2300100473 ve karar 06/25 ile etik kurul izin belgesi almış olduklarını beyan etmektedir.

2. Bu çalışmanın yazar/yazarları, araştırma ve yayın etiği ilkelerine uyduklarını kabul etmektedir.

3. Bu çalışmanın yazar/yazarları kullanmış oldukları resim, şekil, fotoğraf ve benzeri belgelerin kullanımında tüm sorumlulukları kabul etmektedir.

4. Bu çalışmanın benzerlik raporu bulunmaktadır.

---