Self-Congruity and Behavioral Intentions of Slow Tourists by Demographic Characteristics[1]

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ABSTRACT
While considerable research has been conducted on self-congruity and behavioral intentions in tourism, there remains a notable gap in studies examining how demographic characteristics influence self-congruity and behavioral intentions in the context of slow tourism. This study aims to examine whether slow tourists' self-congruity and behavioral intentions (word-of-mouth and revisit intention) differ based on demographic variables. To achieve this, a quantitative approach was employed, and data were collected through surveys administered to local visitors of slow cities, such as Köyceğiz, Akyaka, Seferihisar, Foça, and Gökçeada. The results showed significant differences in social and ideal social self-congruity across age groups, with younger slow tourists scoring higher. Additionally, it was found that word-of-mouth behavior increases with the level of education. Furthermore, gender differences in word-of-mouth behavior were identified, with male slow tourists engaging in more word-of-mouth marketing than their female counterparts.

Yavaş Turistlerin Benlik Uyumlarının ve Davranışsal Niyetlerinin Demografik Değişkenler Açısından İncelenmesi

ÖZET
Turizmde benlik uyumu ve davranışsal niyetler üzerine daha önce çalışmalar gerçekleştirilmesine rağmen, demografik özelliklerin yavaş turizm bağlamında benlik uyumu ve davranışsal niyetler üzerindeki etkisi konusunda hala önemli bir boşluk bulunmaktadır. Bu çalışma, yavaş turistlerin benlik uyumları ile davranışsal niyetlerinin demografik değişkenlere göre farklılıklarını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışmada nicel bir yaklaşım benimsenmiş ve Köyceğiz, Akyaka, Seferihisar, Foça ve Gökçeada gibi yavaş şehirlerin yerel ziyaretçilerinden anketler toplanmıştır. Elde edilen bulgular, sosyal ve ideal sosyal benlik uyumu boyutlarında yaş grupları arasında anlamlı farklılıklar olduğunu ortaya koymuş, daha genç yaş grubundaki yavaş turistlerin daha yüksek algılara sahip oldukları belirlenmiştir. Ayrıca, eğitim seviyesi arttıkça ağızdan ağıza pazarlama davranışının da arttığı tespit edilmiştir. Bunun yanı sıra, cinsiyet farklarının da etkili olduğu görülmüş, erkek yavaş turistlerin kadınlara göre daha fazla ağızdan ağıza pazarlama yaptıkları tespit edilmiştir.

Introduction

Modernization has introduced a lifestyle that compels individuals to compete against time. This accelerated pace has fostered rapid consumption, the devaluation of cultural heritage, and a perpetual drive for more among people. Consequently, this rapid consumption has resulted in the depletion of non-renewable resources, environmental pollution, and the extinction of certain species. These issues have catalyzed the

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development of philosophies and movements focused on sustainability (Semmens & Freeman, 2012). Thus, the slow movement emerged as an alternative to fast-paced living (Presenza et al. 2015).

The slow movement, identified as an anti-globalization initiative (Schneider, 2008), originally commenced with the slow food movement and subsequently expanded into various other aspects of life. The slow food movement inspired the slow city movement, which extended to include travel and tourism as slow tourism. To understand slow tourism, it is crucial to first grasp the principles of slow food and slow cities, as these concepts have been integrated into tourism (Heitmann et al., 2011).

Carlo Petrini started the slow food movement in 1986 in Cuneo, Italy, to promote local cuisine (Jung et al., 2015). This movement began as a response to the opening of a McDonald's branch at Rome's Piazza di Spagna. The term "slow food" was coined to contrast with the fast-food concept (Jones et al., 2003; Pietrykowski, 2004). Later evolving into an international movement, the slow food philosophy became a movement aiming for gastronomic sustainability (Lotti, 2010), supported by millions of people in over 160 countries (Slow Food, 2023).

The slow food movement eventually expanded to urban areas, leading to the development of the slow city movement. The primary objective of the slow city movement is to maintain and enhance the quality of life within cities by prioritizing environmental sustainability. This movement's philosophy focuses on identifying and promoting the unique elements and lifestyles that constitute the traditional identity of each region (Radstrom, 2014).

Cittaslow (slow city), a term formed by combining the Italian word "Citta" (city) and the English word "Slow" (slow), emerged in 1999 through the efforts of Paolo Saturnini, the former mayor of Greve in Chianti. The movement began with the collaboration of four Italian cities: Orvieto, Greve in Chianti, Bra, and Positano (Radstrom, 2014). Starting in Italy, this initiative quickly attracted the interest of municipalities in many other countries and spread worldwide. What began with four Italian cities has now expanded to include 287 cities in 33 countries (Cittaslow, 2023).

The notions of slow food and slow cities have given rise to the concepts of slow travel and slow tourism. Slow travel entails making deliberate and mindful choices. It is characterized as a form of travel where the journey itself is an enriching experience, rather than merely a means to reach the destination. This approach promotes interactions with local communities, enabling travelers to forge meaningful connections with residents along their route (Conway & Timms, 2012). Slow tourism advocates for a leisurely travel pace, fostering local community interaction, environmental preservation, and quality experiences (Khan, 2015). Finally, individuals who engage in slow tourism activities are known as slow tourists.

In the tourism and hospitality field, the decision-making processes of tourists and their post-travel behaviors such as word-of-mouth and revisit intention (Dinc, 2023; Dinc, 2024; Ogretmenoglu et al., 2025a) are widely studied. However, behavioral intention has often been overlooked in the context of slow tourism. Thus, in this paper, slow tourists' behavioral intentions (BIs) and their self-congruity (SC) will be examined according to demographic characteristics. Therefore, to structure the rest of the paper, a brief explanation of the concepts of SC and BIs will be provided in the following paragraph.

From the marketing perspective, SC refers to individuals preferring products that they perceive as having similar images to their own self-concept or self-image (Sirgy 1982). From the perspective of tourism, SC refers to tourists preferring destinations that are in harmony with their own self-concept (Beerli et al., 2007). On the other hand, BIs in tourism is defined as a tourist's future intention to revisit a destination or recommend it to others (Ogretmenoglu et al., 2025a). Although various studies have been conducted on SC (Sirgy et al., 2014) and BIs in tourism (Meng & Choi, 2016), the role of the demographic characteristics of slow tourists in their SC and BIs has been overlooked. Based on this research gap, this study seeks to investigate how slow tourists' SC (including actual, ideal, social, and ideal-social) and their BIs (such as word-of-mouth and intentions to revisit) vary across different demographic characteristics. In this context, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

➢ Do slow tourists' SC differ based on their age, gender, income, educational level, and marital status?

➢ Do the BIs of slow tourists differ based on their age, gender, income, educational level, and marital status?

Literature Review

SC is associated with various factors and has been analyzed using data from different destinations. For example, Islam et al. (2019) investigated the impact of symbolic and functional SC on brand hate. In the study conducted by Zhou et al. (2022), the effects of self and functional congruity on tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty were examined. The results of this study, which focused on red tourism, indicated that both self and functional congruity have positive and significant effects on tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty. Kim (2023) proposed a comprehensive model based on the relationship between the brand personality of global chain hotels, SC, brand attachment, and BIs. The findings of this study revealed that brand personality significantly influences SC. It was concluded that ideal and ideal social SC are key determinants of brand attachment thereby enhancing tourists' Bis. Additionally, Vinh (2023) investigated the effects of SC, satisfaction, and destination image on tourist loyalty. The study found positive and significant relationships between SC, satisfaction, destination image, and tourist loyalty. Moreover, it was concluded that satisfaction plays a mediating role in the relationship between SC, destination image, and destination loyalty.

As evidenced by previous studies, the SC of tourists has been examined in relation to various variables. However, slow tourists and their demographic characteristics have generally been overlooked. Additionally, a significant number of studies have been conducted regarding tourists' BIs (Cifci et al., 2024; Ciki et al., 2025; Ogretmenoglu et al., 2025b). For example, a study by Syakier and Hanafiah (2022) aimed to examine the role of tour guide performance on tourist satisfaction and BIs. The findings of the research indicated that tour guides and tourist satisfaction have positive effects on tourists' BIs. Another study by Nongsiej (2023) aimed to examine the relationship between experiences, satisfaction, and BIs of tourists participating in cultural festivals. The research concluded that experiences and satisfaction have effects on the BIs of tourists attending cultural festivals. A study conducted by Hashemi et al. (2023) aimed to investigate the relationships between the food image of destination, food neophobia, and BIs of international tourists. The analyses revealed that the food image of destinations and food neophobia do not have significant effects on tourists' Bis.

As can be understood from previous studies, although tourists' BIs have been addressed, there is a clear need for studies focusing on the BIs, SC and demographic characteristics of slow tourists.

Research Methodology

This study employed a quantitative approach, using a survey method to collect data. The survey consisted of demographic questions and statements designed to measure SC and BIs. The SC of slow tourists was assessed using four statements, adapted from the works of Sirgy et al. (1997), Sirgy and Su (2000), and Ulku (2017). Similarly, the statements concerning the BIs of slow tourists were adapted from Quadri's (2012) study. The surveys were administered by the author in August and September 2023. The data were collected from domestic tourists visiting slow cities, such as Gökçeada, Seferihisar, Foça, Akyaka, and Köyceğiz (N=318), destinations that are representative of the slow tourism philosophy, emphasizing sustainability, local culture, and a slower pace of life. Prior to the analyses, the reliability and validity of the scales were assessed. Reliability was tested using Cronbach's alpha, and factor analysis was conducted to confirm the construct validity. To address the research questions, T-tests and One-way ANOVA were performed using JAMOVI statistical software. These statistical tests were used to examine potential differences in SC and BIs across various demographic groups. Lastly, the kurtosis and skewness of all items were examined and found to be between -2 and + 2. Since this range meets the desired range for normal distribution, parametric tests were used in the analysis of the data (George & Mallery, 2019).

Findings

Demographic Characteristics

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of 318 domestic slow tourists. The table indicates that more than half of the participants in the study were female. Regarding age distribution, the majority of the participants were aged 46 years and older. Approximately half of the respondents held a bachelor's degree. In terms of marital status, most of the participants were married. With respect to income, it was found that the majority of respondents earned between 26,000 and 45,000 Turkish Lira per month. Furthermore, most participants reported traveling with their families and had previously visited the destination. Additionally, it was found that most participants stayed at the destination for 1–3 days or 4–6 days. Regarding accommodation types, the respondents predominantly stayed in hotels and local homes. Finally, the highest number of participants originated from Foça and Gökçeada.

Table 1. Participant Demographics

Characteristics	N	%
Gender		
Female	172	54.1
Male	146	45.9
Total	318	100
Age		
18-24	45	14.2
25-31	60	18.9
32-38	58	18.2
39-45	60	18.9
46 and older	92	28.9
Unknown	3	0.9
Total	318	100
Education Level		
Primary Education	20	6.3
High School	69	21.7
Bachelor's Degree	155	48.7

Master's Degree	53	16.7
Doctorate	20	6.3
Unknown	1	0.3
Total	318	100
Marital Status		
Married	178	56.0
Single	103	32.4
Unknown	37	11.6
Total	318	100
Monthly Income (TRY)		
10,000 or below	21	6.6
11.000-15.000	44	13.8
16.000-25.000	94	29.6
26.000-45.000	119	37.4
46,000 and above	37	11.6
Unknown	3	0.9
Total	318	100
Travel Companion		
Alone	51	16.0
Family	194	61.0
Friends	70	22.0
Unknown	3	0.9
Total	318	100
Have you visited this place before?		
Yes	205	64.5
No	109	34.3
Unknown	4	1.3
Total	318	100
How far is your departure location from here?		
250 km or less	81	25.5
251 - 500 km	55	17.3
501km- 750km	104	32.7
751km -1000km	46	14.5
1001 km and above	29	9.1
Unknown	3	0.9
Total	318	100
Duration of Stay		
1-3 days	119	37.4
4-6 days	118	37.1
7 days or more	74	23.3
Unknown	7	2.2
Total	318	100
Accommodation Type		
Hotel	103	32.4
Motel	14	4.4
Hostel	52	16.4
Tent	14	4.4
Caravan	17	5.3
Local house	92	28.9
Other	26	8.2
Total	318	100
Transportation Type		
Airplane	33	10.4
Train	4	1.3
Bus	69	21.7
Ship/Ferry	45	14.2
Car	146	45.9
Bicycle	2	0.6
Motorcycle	8	2.5
Other	11	3.5

Total	318	100
Destination		
Foça	83	26.1
Gökçeada	83	26.1
Seferihisar	59	18.6
Akyaka	37	11.6
Köyceğiz	56	17.6
Total	318	100

Validity and Reliability Results

Table 2 displays the results of the measurement items, reliability assessments, and factor loadings. The Cronbach's alpha (α) values for each construct were above 0.7, indicating robust reliability (Hair et al., 2020). Furthermore, all factor loadings exceeded 0.6, implying that the items make a significant contribution to evaluating the constructions and supporting the validity of the measurement scales (Hair et al.,1998).

Table 2. The results of measurement items

Constructs-Items	M	SD	Factor loadings
SC (α=0.89)			
Item 1 (Actual SC)	3.63	1.02	0.885
Item 2 (Ideal SC)	3.60	1.18	0.883
Item 3 (Social SC)	3.50	1.02	0.888
Item 4 (Ideal Social SC)	3.49	1.00	0.835
BIs (α=0.93) Word-of-mouth (α=0.88) Revisit intention (α=0.89)			
Item 5 (Word-of-mouth)	3.79	0.937	0.944
Item 6 (Word-of-mouth)	3.76	1.075	0.948
Item 7 (Revisit intention)	3.77	1.023	0.947
Item 8 (Revisit intention)	3.64	1.036	0.952

T-tests and ANOVA Analysis Results

The SC of slow tourists according to demographic characteristics

Gender: Since the dependent variables were normally distributed with skewness and kurtosis between -2 and +2, their homogeneity was examined using Levene's test (Table 3).

Table 3. Levene's Test Results for Homogeneity of Variances of SC of Slow Tourists According to Gender

Homogeneity of Variances Test (Levene's)		
Dimensions	F	p
Actual SC	0.532	0.466
Ideal SC	0.236	0.628
Social SC	0.509	0.476
Ideal- Social SC	1.794	0.181

The analysis demonstrated that the distributions of Actual SC (Levene's F = 0.532), Ideal SC (Levene's F = 0.236), Social SC (Levene's F = 0.509), and Ideal-Social SC (Levene's F = 1.794) exhibited homogeneity of variances (p > 0.05). According to the criteria, the p-value should not be below 0.05 (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2018). Given that this assumption was satisfied, parametric tests were considered appropriate. The results of the Independent Samples T-test, conducted to assess whether significant differences exist in the SC of slow tourists based on gender, are presented in Table 4. The analysis revealed that there were no significant differences in the SC of slow tourists by gender (p > 0.05).

Table 4. *Independent Samples T-Test Results for SC of Slow Tourists Based on Gender*

Dependent Variable	Group	X	t	SD	p
Actual SC	Male	3.70	1.18	1.07	0.239
	Female	3.56		0.968	
Ideal SC	Male	3.69	1.33	1.15	0.183
	Female	3.51		1.196	
Social SC	Male	3.58	1.35	1.06	0.177
	Female	3.42		0.979	
Ideal Social SC	Male	3.57	1.53	1.06	0.126
	Female	3.39		0.956	

Marital Status: In Table 5, Levene's test was used to assess the homogeneity of variances in the distributions.

Table 5. *Levene's Test Results for Homogeneity of Variances of SC of Slow Tourists According to Marital Status*

Homogeneity of Variances Test (Levene's)		
Dimensions	F	p
Actual SC	3.27	0.986
Ideal SC	0.42	0.517
Social SC	1.16	0.281
Ideal- Social SC	0.05	0.812

The analysis indicated that the variances for Actual SC (Levene's F = 3.27), Ideal SC (Levene's F = 0.42), Social SC (Levene's F = 1.16), and Ideal-Social SC (Levene's F = 0.05) were homogeneous (p > 0.05). Since this assumption was met, parametric tests were deemed suitable. The findings of the Independent Samples T-test, performed to determine whether there were significant differences in the SC of slow tourists based on marital status, are shown in Table 6. The results indicated no significant differences in the SC of slow tourists according to marital status (p > 0.05)

Table 6. *Independent Samples T-Test Results for SC of Slow Tourists Based on Marital Status*

Dependent Variable	Group	X	t	SD	p
Actual SC	Married	3.56	-0.781	1.002	0.435
	Single	3.66		1.04	
Ideal SC	Married	3.55	-0.336	1.172	0.737
	Single	3.60		1.24	
Social SC	Married	3.43	-1.068	0.979	0.287
	Single	3.56		1.07	
Ideal Social SC	Married	3.42	-1.297	0.986	0.196
	Single	3.58		1.01	

Age: In Table 7, Levene's test was used to assess the homogeneity of variances in the distributions. The analysis indicated that the variances for Actual SC (Levene's F = 1.17), Ideal SC (Levene's F = 1.20), and Ideal-Social SC (Levene's F = 2.11) were homogeneous (p > 0.05). However, Social SC (Levene's F = 2.45) was not homogeneous (p < 0.05). Thus, in the analysis of Actual, Ideal, and Social-Ideal SC by age, the Fisher's (assume equal) value was examined, and since Social SC did not show a homogeneous distribution, the Welch's (don't assume equal) value was examined.

Table 7. *Levene's Test Results for Homogeneity of Variances of SC of Slow Tourists According to Age*

Homogeneity of Variances Test (Levene's)		
Dimensions	F	p
Actual SC	1.17	0.326
Ideal SC	1.20	0.312
Social SC	2.45	0.046
Ideal- Social SC	2.11	0.080

The results of the one-way ANOVA by age are presented in the following Table 8.

Table 8. *SC of Slow Tourists by Age (One-Way ANOVA) Results*

Dependent Variable	Group	X̄	t	SD	p
Actual SC	18-24	3.73		1.031	
	25-31	3.82		1.033	
	32-38	3.71	1.54	0.937	0.191
	39-45	3.50		1.066	
	46 and older	3.47		1.010	
Ideal SC	18-24	3.82		1.193	
	25-31	3.77		1.198	
	32-38	3.78	2.33	1.044	0.056
	39-45	3.41		1.261	
	46 and older	3.37		1.156	
Social SC	18-24	3.87		0.869	
	25-31	3.53		1.065	
	32-38	3.50	3.14	1.112	0.016
	39-45	3.45		1.080	
	46 and older	3.29		0.920	
Ideal- Social SC	18-24	3.91		0.925	
	25-31	3.53		1.016	
	32-38	3.47	3.37	1.047	0.010
	39-45	3.42		1.117	
	46 and older	3.25		0.902	

ANOVA was conducted to examine differences in SC among different age groups (See Table 8 above). The results revealed no significant differences in Actual SC across the age groups ($p > 0.05$). Similarly, there were no significant differences in Ideal SC ($p > 0.05$). However, a significant difference was found in Social SC ($p < 0.05$), indicating that social SC scores differed significantly across age groups. Moreover, a significant difference was also found in Ideal-Social SC ($p < 0.05$).

A Games-Howell post-hoc test was conducted to examine pairwise comparisons between the age groups. The results showed that the 18-24 group had significantly higher Social SC scores compared to the 46 and older group (Mean Difference = 0.575, $p > 0.05$). Lastly, the Tukey post-hoc test was conducted to explore differences between the age groups regarding Ideal- Social SC. The results indicated that the 18-24 group had significantly higher Ideal- Social SC scores compared to the 46 and older group (Mean Difference = 0.658, $p > 0.05$).

Educational Level: In Table 9, Levene's test was used to assess the homogeneity of variances in the distributions. The analysis indicated that the variance for Actual SC (Levene's F = 3.999) was not homogeneous ($p < 0.05$). On the other hand, Ideal SC (Levene's F =2.261), Social SC (Levene's F =0.891) and Ideal-Social SC (Levene's F =0.601) were homogeneous ($p > 0.05$). Thus, in the analysis of Actual SC by educational

status, the Welch's (don't assume equal) value was examined, and since Ideal, Social and Social-Ideal SC show a homogeneous distribution the Fisher's (assume equal) value was examined.

Table 9. *Levene's Test Results for Homogeneity of Variances of SC of Slow Tourists According to Educational Level.*

Homogeneity of Variances Test (Levene's)		
Dimensions	F	p
Actual SC	3.999	0.004
Ideal SC	2.261	0.063
Social SC	0.891	0.470
Ideal- Social SC	0.601	0.662

The results of the ANOVA by educational level are presented in the following Table 10.

Table 10. *SC of Slow Tourists by Educational Level (One-Way ANOVA) Results*

Dependent Variable	Group	X̄	t	SD	p
Actual SC	Primary Education	3.15		1.268	
	High School	3.54		1.106	
	Bachelor's Degree	3.72	1.44	0.888	0.230
	Master's Degree	3.74		1.041	
	Doctorate	3.40		1.188	
Ideal SC	Primary Education	3.05		1.57	
	High School	3.64		1.20	
	Bachelor's Degree	3.65	1.37	1.11	0.246
	Master's Degree	3.65		1.14	
	Doctorate	3.40		1.23	
Social SC	Primary Education	3.25		1.164	
	High School	3.64		1.057	
	Bachelor's Degree	3.47	0.743	0.949	0.564
	Master's Degree	3.49		1.103	
	Doctorate	3.35		1.040	
Ideal- Social SC	Primary Education	3.35		1.040	
	High School	3.58		1.090	
	Bachelor's Degree	3.46	3.13	0.946	0.869
	Master's Degree	3.42		1.100	
	Doctorate	3.45		0.999	

The analysis revealed no significant differences in SC scores across educational levels for any of the four SC types ($p > 0.05$).

The BIs of slow tourists according to demographic characteristics

Gender: Table 11 presents the results of Levene's test for homogeneity. An examination of Table 11 reveals that the p-value is greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, it can be concluded that the assumption of homogeneity of variances is satisfied.

Table 11. *Levene's Homogeneity Test Findings (BIs in Terms of Gender)*

Dependent Variables	F	p
Word-of-mouth	0.4540	0.501
Revisit intention	0.0115	0.915

Given that the dependent variables exhibit normal distribution and homogeneous variances across gender, a parametric test, specifically the Independent Samples T-Test, was utilized in the analysis. The

findings are detailed in Table 12 below. Analysis of Table 12 reveals a statistically significant difference in "word-of-mouth" based on gender ($p < 0.05$), while no statistically significant difference is found in revisit intention ($p > 0.05$). Male slow tourists have higher mean scores for the intention to recommend (word-of-mouth). Additionally, a Cohen's d calculation was performed to determine the magnitude of the observed difference. Cohen's d values are interpreted as 0.2 = small, 0.5 = medium, and 0.8 = large (Cohen, 1988). The Cohen's d value calculated in the analysis is 0.228. Based on this result, it can be concluded that the difference in word-of-mouth behavior has a small effect.

Table 12. *Independent Samples t-Test Results for BIs Scores by Gender*

Dependent Variables	Group	X̄	SD	t	p	Effect Size (Cohen's d)
Word-of-mouth	Male	3.87	0.896	2.273	0.024	0.228
	Female	3.66	0.926			
Revisit intention	Male	3.75	0.962	0.866		
	Female	3.65	0.998		0.387	

Marital Status: Before assessing if slow tourists' BIs vary by marital status, we tested assumptions including homogeneity of variance (Table 13). While variances are considered homogeneous for word-of-mouth, it has been determined that variances are not homogeneous for the intention to revisit behavior. Therefore, since the variances are unequal for intention to revisit behavior, a different approach is required when conducting parametric tests for this group (e.g., the Welch test).

Table 13. *Levene's Homogeneity Test Findings (BIs in Terms of Marital Status)*

Dependent Variables	F	p
Word-of-mouth	0.503	0.479
Revisit intention	4.514	0.035

Independent Samples T-Test conducted to examine whether there is a difference in the BIs of married and single slow tourists, are presented in Table 14.

Table 14. *Independent Samples T-Test Results for BIs Scores by Marital Status*

Dependent Variables	Group	X̄	SD	t	p
Word-of-mouth	Married	3.77	0.983	0.206	0.837
	Single	3.74	0.926		
Revisit intention	Married	3.66	1.023	-0.834	
	Female	3.76	0.866		0.405

Table 14 shows no significant differences in word-of-mouth scores or intention to revisit scores based on marital status ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, Cohen's d was not calculated.

Age: An ANOVA test was used to determine if age affects the BIs scores of slow tourists. For the ANOVA test, data must follow a normal distribution, and homogeneity of the dependent variables must be ensured. The results of Levene's homogeneity test are shown in Table 15 below.

Table 15. *Levene's Homogeneity Test Results (BIs by Age Variable)*

Dependent Variables	F	p
Word-of-mouth	0.636	0.637
Revisit intention	2.040	0.089

Table 15 shows that the distribution variances for the word-of-mouth (Levene's F = 0.636) and the intention to revisit (Levene's F = 2.040) are homogeneous, as their p-values are above 0.05. Additionally, since the normality of the data was previously tested and it was concluded that the data follows a normal distribution, the results of the one-way ANOVA test are presented in the next step (See Table 16).

Table 16. *One-way ANOVA Results for BIs of Slow Tourists by Age Variable*

Dependent Variables	Group	X̄	SD	F	p
Word-of-mouth	18-24	3.90	0.843	0.639	0.635
	25-31	3.87	0.911		
	32-38	3.74	0.919		
	39-45	3.64	1.090		
	46 and older	3.77	0.973		
Revisit intention	18-24	3.92	0.761	0.859	0.489
	25-31	3.75	0.918		
	32-38	3.66	0.947		
	39-45	3.69	1.113		
	46 and older	3.60	1.050		

As indicated in Table 16, the BIs of slow tourists, such as the word-of-mouth (F = 0.639) and the intention to revisit (F = 0.859), do not exhibit a significant difference based on age (p > 0.05).

Educational Level: A One-way ANOVA test was conducted to determine if there are significant differences in the BIs scores of slow tourists based on their educational level. For the ANOVA test to be valid, the data must follow a normal distribution, and the homogeneity of the dependent variables must be assessed. The results of Levene's homogeneity test are presented in Table 17 below.

Table 17. *Levene's Homogeneity Test Results (BIs by Education Level)*

Dependent Variables	F	p
Word-of-mouth	6.09	< .001
Revisit intention	7.54	< .001

Table 17 reveals that the variances of the distributions for word-of-mouth (Levene's F = 6.09) and revisit intention (Levene's F = 7.54) are not homogeneous, with p-values below 0.05. Due to this, Welch's ANOVA test, which does not assume equal variances, was used, followed by the Games-Howell post hoc test for further analysis (See Table 18).

***Table 18.** ANOVA Results for Slow Tourists' BIs by Education Level*

Dimensions	Group	X̄	SD	F	p
Word-of-mouth	Primary Education	3.20	1.081	3.00	0.024
	High School	3.60	1.178		
	Bachelor's Degree	3.84	0.852		
	Master's Degree	4.00	0.721		
	Doctorate	3.85	1.014		
Revisit intention	Primary Education	3.23	1.400	2.34	0.065
	High School	3.55	1.112		
	Bachelor's Degree	3.77	0.834		
	Master's Degree	3.96	0.871		
	Doctorate	3.45	1.129		

Table 18 shows a significant difference in word-of-mouth behavior among slow tourists based on education (F = 3.00; $p < 0.05$), however, no significant difference in intention to revisit (F = 2.34; $p > 0.05$). The Games-Howell post hoc test identified this difference between primary school graduates and Master's Degree graduates (Mean difference = -0.800, $p < 0.00$), indicating that education levels influence word-of-mouth behaviors.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study investigated whether there are differences in SC and BIs among slow tourists based on demographic characteristics. The findings indicate that SC and BIs of slow tourists differ by demographics. Notably, younger slow tourists scored higher in Social and Ideal Social SC than older groups. Additionally, it was found that as the level of education increases, word-of-mouth behavior also increases. Furthermore, it was determined that the word-of-mouth of slow tourists varies by gender, with male slow tourists engaging in higher word-of-mouth marketing than females.

These findings have significant implications for marketing strategies and destination management in slow tourism. The results reveal that there are notable differences in the behavior of slow tourists based on demographic variables. In terms of social and ideal social SC, individuals in the 18-24 age group scored higher, indicating that younger tourists tend to associate their travel experiences more with their social spheres and exhibit a profile that seeks greater acceptance within the community. On the other hand, the observed decrease in these dimensions with increasing age suggests that the slow tourism preferences of individuals are shaped more by personal motivation as they age. Furthermore, the increase in word-of-mouth marketing behavior with higher education levels indicates that more educated individuals tend to share their slow tourism experiences more frequently. This underscores the necessity for slow tourism destinations to develop targeted strategies in their marketing approaches. However, the absence of significant differences across other variables suggests that the slow tourism experience is generally more dependent on individual preferences and travel motivations.

Practical Implications

This study offers several practical implications. The findings can help slow tourism destinations refine their marketing strategies by considering demographic differences. Young tourists value social SC, highlighting the importance of effectively utilizing social media and digital platforms to promote slow tourism.

Educated individuals are more likely to engage in word-of-mouth marketing, indicating that targeting this group with specific strategies could significantly enhance slow tourism. Additionally, destination managers and policymakers can tailor services to meet the needs of different age groups.

Theoretical Contributions

This study makes several significant academic contributions. First, it enriches literature by being one of the few studies to systematically examine the impact of demographic differences on SC and BIs within the context of slow tourism. Second, the findings, which suggest that slow tourists perceive SC differently across age groups, raise important new research questions for future investigations in this area. Third, by emphasizing the need for a multidimensional approach to consumer behavior in slow tourism, the study offers novel insights into tourism marketing and consumer behavior theories. In conclusion, this study provides important implications for marketing, destination management, and academic understanding of slow tourism, laying a crucial foundation for future research.

Limitations and Future Direction

Every study has its limitations, which also present opportunities for future research. First, a notable limitation of this study is that the data were collected exclusively from Turkish tourists who visited Turkish Slow Cities. This narrow focus limits the generalizability of the findings. Future researchers should aim to expand the sample to include tourists from diverse cultural backgrounds. Second, this study was confined to quantitative data. Future research could benefit from integrating qualitative data collection methods. Third, this study examined variables such as age, gender, education level, marital status and income. Thus, future studies should explore various demographic characteristics in greater depth. In this study, BIs and SC variables were examined. Additionally, future studies can examine different variables in terms of slow tourism.

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