



Gen Z's Customization of On-Site Leisure Activities for Harmonious Life

Z Kuşağının Uyumlu Bir Yaşam İçin Yerinde Deneyimlenen Boş Zaman Aktivitelerini Özelleştirmesi

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ABSTRACT

While activities in both digital and physical places provide various benefits for Generation Z, the negative effects of the digital world are also considered an undeniable fact. In this sense, it is important to understand and evaluate the effects of on-site experiences on individuals. As a result, this study examines the effect of customized leisure activities on individuals' on-site experiences and affect of on-site experiences on harmony in life. This will be beneficial for exploring psychological benefits, such as harmony in life, of physical-world leisure activities. Structural Equation Modeling was used in order to analyze the relationships. A total of 244 surveys collected in İstanbul/Beykoz were deemed suitable for analysis using SMARTPLS. The results show that the customization of leisure activities improves the on-site experiences of Gen Z and that these experiences affect harmony in life. Therefore, it is important for destination managers and marketers to realize the importance of on-site experiences and to structure cityscapes with more favorable places and settings.

Keywords: Leisure Customization, On-site Experience, Harmony in Life, Gen Z.



Z KUŞAĞININ UYUMLU BİR YAŞAM İÇİN YERİNDE DENEYİMLENEN BOŞ ZAMAN AKTİVİTELERİNİ ÖZELLEŞTİRMESİ

ÖZ

Hem dijital hem de fiziksel mekanlardaki aktiviteler Z kuşağı için çeşitli faydalar sağlarken, dijital dünyanın olumsuz etkileri de yadsınamaz bir gerçek olarak kabul edilmektedir. Bu nedenle, yerinde deneyimlerin bireyler üzerindeki etkilerini anlamak ve değerlendirmek önem kazanmaktadır. Bu çalışma, kişiselleştirilmiş boş zaman aktivitelerinin bireylerin yerinde deneyimleri üzerindeki etkisini ve yerinde deneyimlerin yaşamdaki uyum üzerindeki etkisini incelemektedir. Bu doğrultuda çalışma, fiziksel dünyadaki boş zamanın Z jenerasyonu açısından yaşamda uyuma bağlı olarak psikolojik faydasını değerlendirmede faydalı görülmektedir. Değişkenler arasındaki ilişkileri analiz etmek için Yapısal Eşitlik Modellemesi kullanılmıştır. İstanbul/Beykoz'da toplanan 244 anket, SMARTPLS'de analiz için uygun bulunmuştur. Sonuçlar, boş zaman aktivitelerinin özelleştirilmesinin Z kuşağının yerinde deneyimlerini iyileştirdiğini ve bu deneyimlerin yaşamdaki uyumu etkile-

diğini göstermektedir. Bu nedenle, yerinde deneyimlerin destinasyon yöneticileri ve pazarlamacıları için öneminin farkına varılması ve şehir çekiciliklerinin rekasyon ve boş zaman etkinlikleri bağlamında daha elverişli mekan ve araçlarla yapılandırılması önemlidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kişiselleştirme, Yerde Deneyim, Yaşamda Uyum, Z Kuşağı.



INTRODUCTION

Characterized by their unique relationships with technology and the digital world, Generation Z grew up in an era where their behaviors and preferences are shaped by interactions with both digital and physical spaces (Limilia et al., 2022; Hidayat et al., 2023). This era is closely associated with having information at their fingertips, being in constant communication through digital media (Spears et al., 2015), and turning to online platforms for social interaction and entertainment, particularly due to economic crises and the COVID-19 pandemic (Moore et al., 2020; Shen et al., 2022). However, while digital spaces offer instant connectivity, they can also foster isolation and psychological strain (Pantic, 2014; Kardaras, 2016). The paradox of feeling connected but isolated highlights the need for alternative experiences (Sfendla and Hadrya, 2020) that fulfill emotional and psychological needs—particularly through engagement in physical-world activities. Hence, this study focuses on how Gen Z can mitigate the negative effects of digital engagement by seeking out customized leisure experiences in the physical world. To do this, this study examines the impact of customized leisure activities on individuals' on-site experiences and the effect of on-site experiences on harmony in life.

Previous research findings on the positive relationship between technology-based leisure activities and health remain controversial and open to debate (Tutar and Turhan, 2023). The main reason for this debate is that digital activities can both provide a sense of connection for individuals and lead to issues such as the distortion of real-world identities (Wallace, 2018: 82), low awareness and mindlessness (Harmon and Duffy, 2021), decreased quality of life (Jeong et al., 2020), anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, poor sleep, mental disorders, and poor social skills (Pantic, 2014). In this regard, digital activities serve as a double-edged sword that can either support or harm an individual's health (Smith, 2016). Therefore, the assumption of this study is based on the fact that Gen Z mitigates or reduces the negative effects of the digital world through the connections they establish with the physical world. In other words, it is anticipated that activities in physical places provide real-world experiences that shape the sense of harmony in life by fostering a sense of control, which is explored in this study within the context of positive psychology.

On-site experiences are expected to contribute to positive psychology, which seeks to understand and promote well-being, happiness, and optimal human functioning (Seligman and Csíkszentmihályi, 2000; Duckworth et al., 2005). In tourism literature, on-site experiences are increasingly recognized for their emotional and psychological benefits depending on the atmosphere and environment surrounding the activity (Song et al., 2013; McGillivray and Frew, 2014). In these studies, it is suggested that these emotional benefits shape tourist behaviors such as recommendation and intention to return (Chang et al., 2014; Sorrentino et al., 2020) as on-site experiences lead to a deeper understanding and appreciation of a destination as a result of visitors' interaction with the local culture, history, and environment (Polus et al., 2016 Riyami et al., 2021). On the other hand, with the exception of a few articles in leisure research (Hammitt, 1981; Hammitt & McDonald, 1983; Borrie & Roggenbuck, 2001), the topic of on-site experience has largely been overlooked in terms of its role in shaping the behaviors and well-being of Generation Z. For these reasons, addressing this gap will provide valuable insights into understanding the intentions and behaviors of Gen Z.

The experience gained from leisure has been addressed in the literature in terms of outcomes such as serenity, quality of life, and happiness (Iwasaki, 2007; Spiers and Walker, 2008; Liu & Da, 2020). Harmony in life, which has not been sufficiently explored in systematic and experimental studies, is related to these emotions as a more comprehensive concept for well-being (Kjell et al., 2016). For this reason, in this study, from a positive psychology perspective, harmony in life has been associated with the individual's development of harmony with both their environment and themselves. In other words, harmony, which takes into account social and environmental contexts, will provide a comprehensive perspective on psychological well-being in the study, as it encourages a holistic worldview that includes a balanced and flexible approach to personal well-being (Kjell et al., 2016). The study will be valuable in assessing the importance of on-site experiences, particularly those designed for Generation Z at any destination, and will provide useful insights for destination managers and recreation marketers.

Researchers seek to identify and verify factors that can enhance or diminish positive life experiences or promote the potential of young generations (Freire and Teixeira, 2018) in digital or physical contexts to impact individuals' psychological moods and emotions (Osman and Gaucher, 2021). The determination of the effects of physical world activities will lead to an understanding of the importance of face-to-face interactions that will help manage the emotions and moods of Gen Z, not only in daily life but also in touristic processes. In other words, understanding how individuals' customization of activities in the physical world, based on their

own interests, affects well-being-related situations, such as harmony in life, is essential for developing generation-specific activities in destinations. In accordance with this, there are several questions that this study aims to answer:

1. What impact does on-site experience have on Generation Z?
2. To what extent does customizing leisure activities enhance on-site experience?
3. How do these experiences contribute to Gen Z's overall life integration?
4. What role should physical-world activities play in destination planning?

In order to answer these questions, firstly the literature review will be conducted in the study and the relationships between the variables will be determined and reported. Then, to test the relationships between the variables and analys with a survey with a survey technique. The findings of the study will briefly contribute to the flow of information in the field literature by discussing the results of the study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leisure is an important aspect of human life, providing individuals with opportunities to engage in activities that offer pleasure, relaxation, and satisfaction outside of work and other responsibilities (Tutar and Turhan, 2023). It has been suggested that, with the pandemic, these activities have increasingly created value in individuals' lives in the digital environment (Ruiz et al., 2022), fostering meaningful experiences, particularly if they encourage social interaction (Twilley et al., 2022). In general, activities conducted in the digital realm help reduce stress levels, depending on their content and context (Janicke-Bowles et al., 2018), and can positively influence individuals' health, life satisfaction (Gu, 2018), mental health, or psychological well-being (Jang, 2021; Ruiz et al., 2022). Furthermore, by reducing feelings of loneliness (Zurawik, 2020) and contributing to a sense of belonging and community through meaningful experiences (Gellmers and Yan, 2023), digital platforms facilitate the maintenance of relationships and the establishment of new connections, both of which are crucial for well-being (Rochas De Francisco et al., 2016). However, leisure activities in the physical world—such as sports, outdoor recreation, and community events—have a more direct positive impact on psychological health, life satisfaction, and emotional well-being (Kuykendall et al., 2015; Nagata et al., 2018; Şentürk and Okur, 2020). Generation Z is increasingly participating in outdoor activities as these places continue to function as open galleries where individuals can express themselves, showcase their talents, form friendships, share skills, and develop mutual respect (Toth, 2024). Particularly, participation in outdoor activities can serve as a refuge (Mitra et al., 2020; Jackson et al., 2021) to address the need for physical activity required to combat the “sedentary lifestyle” commonly observed in Generation Z (Poitras et al., 2016; Moore et al., 2020). This

refuge fosters positive peer interactions and community ties, which are vital for the social development of Generation Z (Seaman et al., 2019; Kurniawan et al., 2023), leading to higher levels of mental health and emotional stability (Coventry et al., 2021; Jackson et al., 2021). The primary reason for this is that activities performed in the physical world stimulate the release of neurotransmitters such as endorphins and serotonin, which play a key role in regulating mood (Kuykendall et al., 2015; Şentürk and Okur, 2020), resulting in lower levels of depressive symptoms and enhanced overall well-being (Nagata et al., 2018). Therefore, on-site experiences in the physical world contribute to a sense of well-being in three dimensions: flow, social, and general experience.

Leisure activities contribute to social experiences as they promote social connections and a sense of community, both essential for psychological state of a person (Iwasaki, 2007). The absence of such activities can lead to feelings of disconnection and disengagement from both peers and the wider community, with long-term consequences such as the “rural brain drain” (Seaman et al., 2019). On-site experiences, which strengthen the interconnectedness of society and individuals by contributing to social cohesion and community participation (Park et al., 2021), enable interaction with the environment in ways that virtual or remote experiences cannot replicate, fostering deeper connections (Campos et al., 2016; Polus et al., 2016; Riyami et al., 2021). An individual’s physical presence in a particular place can evoke personal memories and connections, enriching the overall experience and making it more relevant to the individual (McClain and Zimmerman, 2016; Carvache-Franco et al., 2024). This provides a structure that encourages the strengthening of the flow experience. Conversely, the immediacy and authenticity of being physically present in a location provoke stronger emotional reactions and memories compared to virtual experiences (Campos et al., 2016), allowing individuals to connect with others, share experiences, and build relationships, thereby increasing the overall enjoyment and value of the experience (Polus et al., 2016). Finally, the sensory interaction offered by on-site experiences (through images, sounds, and physical interactions) can create a more holistic and enriching experience that resonates on multiple levels, making it more appealing than passive forms of interaction (Polus et al., 2016; Smørvik, 2020; Riyami et al., 2021). Therefore, on-site experiences are considered a second-order construct encompassing flow-like, social, and general experience.

H1. On-site experience is a three-dimensional second-order construct.

Customization and On-Site Experience

Any customized attitude and behavior have replaced standardization as a powerful management tool for service industries such as tourism and recreation (Coelho and Henseler, 2012). Especially in recent years, marketers have been tr-

ying to change their old, inefficient ways by utilizing new technologies to offer individual customers exactly what they want, when, where, and how they want it (Simonson, 2005). However, customization is not only a management strategy applied by marketers, but also a technique used by individuals in line with their own needs. In this context, customization refers to individuals' determination of resources, social connections, and problems that are compatible with their internal needs and choosing those that will benefit their subjective well-being (Xue et al., 2022).

When leisure activities are initiated freely according to the personal preferences of individuals, they can be integrated with the perception of self and customized with a certain sense of control (Zhang et al., 2014). In the definitions made in terms of digital activities, customization is expressed as the individual having control over the activities and consumption behaviors, being able to make changes, and taking an active role (Marathe and Sundar, 2011). Within this active role, individuals are provided with options and a sense of choice according to their unique needs and preferences, according to Kim et al. (2015b). In this study, customization refers to the process of adapting leisure activities to suit personal preferences, needs, and conditions with a sense of autonomy and control.

Individuals' ability to control their leisure time provides personal choice and self-determination, which are crucial for improving the quality of experiences (Caldwell and Witt, 2011). Leisure activities that provide a sense of control and choice (Korpela and Kinnunen, 2010; Drach-Zahavy and Marzuq, 2012) can lead to a state of flow with satisfaction, characterized by deep immersion in the activity and enjoyment (Ahn and Song 2024), as a result of using their ability to choose activities compatible with interests and skills (Lee et al., 2019; Lo et al., 2022). In addition, customized leisure activities created in line with different needs can better meet emotions such as social contact and relaxation (Nijland et al., 2010), and in addition to affecting positive emotional states and the flow experience (Tutar and Turhan, 2023), it also contributes to the improvement of the sense of belonging, mental health, and general life satisfaction (Lagrosen and Lagrosen, 2007). For these reasons, considering the individual's experience process and its impact on the perception of benefits, customization of leisure activities is expected to positively affect the on-site experience.

H2. Customization positively affects the on-site experience.

On-Site Experience and Harmony in Life

According to Thai Buddhism, harmony is a concept strengthened by a sense of gratitude (Balthip et al., 2013). In Confucian philosophy, it emphasizes the unity of different things without being same (Wei and Li). Representing a flexible relationship with the world, harmony in life involves balance rather than the ideal of

happiness imposed on oneself (Nima et al., 2020), a state of well-being that extends beyond mere life satisfaction, self-acceptance, environmental mastery, and interpersonal relationships (Ryff, 1989). For these reasons, the concept is examined in relation to well-being in the positive psychology literature.

Well-developed recreational areas are important for individuals to adapt to the events around them more quickly and gain the benefits of life. These life benefits are shaped by the satisfaction that leisure provides (Trainor et al., 2010; Molina-Garcia et al., 2011; Kim et al., 2015) when leisure activities are meaningful and foster life satisfaction (Kim and Kim, 2022). Indeed, leisure creates opportunities to meet people's needs, adding value to their lives (Brajša-Žganec et al., 2010), and paves the way for environmental mastery and self-acceptance, which in turn trigger a sense of harmony in life (Garcia et al., 2014). In particular, individuals experiencing flow during this process are found to reduce negative emotional states and positively affect positive emotional states (Tutar and Turhan, 2023). When combined with social interaction opportunities, this is seen as a link to improvements in subjective well-being (Twilley et al., 2022). Leisure activities also contribute to social cohesion and community participation, strengthening the interconnectedness of society and individuals (Park et al., 2021), thus promoting harmony. Therefore, it is expected that individuals who shape their psychological and social qualities in line with their preferences through various leisure activities will increase the likelihood of experiencing a harmonious existence as a result of their experiences.

H3. Generation Z's on-site experiences positively affect harmony in life.

METHOD

Sample of the Study

In this study, Istanbul/Beykoz was chosen as the location for data collection. In addition to being one of the leading cities in Turkey in terms of socio-economic status, Istanbul also offers a wide range of recreational areas and activity options for individuals. Since it is impossible to reach the entire population in Beykoz, Soper's sample calculator and sampling techniques were used to determine the required sample size and select the sample group to be included in the study.

The sample group consists of Generation Z individuals, born between 1996 and 2010 (Leslie et al. 2021), and was selected using a simple random sampling technique, a method of purposive sampling. A total of 261 surveys were collected face-to-face by the researcher in January 2025. The ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee of Bitlis Eren University (decision number 2025/01-12 and E.6847). Considering the variables and the number of statements in the study, 244 surveys were tested to

ensure their suitability for analysis. Using Soper's sample size calculator, the sample size was deemed sufficient, as it met the minimum sampling requirement of 161. Table 1 shows the demographic variables of the sample group.

Table 1: *Sample of the Study (n=244)*

	n	f		n	f
Gender			Marital status		
Female	138	56.6	Married	141	57.8
Male	106	43.4	Single	103	42.2
Education			Age		
Primary-Secondary School	10	4.1	15-19	59	24.2
High school	100	41.0	20-24	116	47.5
Undergraduate	32	13.1	25-29	69	28.3
Graduate	102	41.8			
Occupation					
Private sector	61	25.0			
Civil servant	9	3.7			
Self-employed	30	12.3			
Student	91	37.3			
Unemployed	53	21.7			

Data Collection Tools

Data were collected using the survey technique, a quantitative research method, within the scope of the study. The survey form used to gather the data contained 20 statements regarding on-site experience and three statements regarding customization, which were adapted from the study by Zatori et al. (2018). This scale comprises three primary structures. The harmony in life scale used in the survey, consisting of five statements, was developed by Kjell et al. (2016). The scale statements were translated into Turkish with input from field experts. When these statements were checked for common method bias through VIF values for the Inner Model, it was found that the value of 3.3 was well below 1.000. Additionally, Hermann's common method bias analysis result was 46.820. Therefore, no common method bias problem was observed in the study. The surveys used a 7-point Likert scale, and participants were asked to rate the statements from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The second section of the survey included questions about the demographic information of the participants, aiming to reveal the age, gender, education level, marital status, and occupation of the sample group. In the second phase, interview questions based on the surveys provide insights into how various types of experiences gained by Generation Z from activities influence their harmony.

RESULTS

The measurement model of the study was assessed through internal consistency reliability, convergent reliability and discriminant validity analyses. Table 2 and table 3 show the results of measurement model analysis. In table 2, the composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach alpha values of all structures were above the acceptable threshold level of 0.70 and the average variance (AVEs) were above the threshold value of 0.50. In this direction, the findings show that internal consistency and satisfactory convergent validity were achieved for all structures.

Table 2: DFA Analysis Cronbah's alpha, CR and AVE

Code	Scale item	Factor Loading	α	CR	AVE
On-site experience			0.934	0.937	0.490
General Experience Involvement			0.890	0.892	0.604
GEI1	My outdoor activities are exiting	0.786			
GEI2	My outdoor activities are enjoyable	0.746			
GEI3	My outdoor activities are inspiring	0.775			
GEI4	My outdoor activities are engaging	0.832			
GEI7	My outdoor activities are thought-provoking	0.783			
GEI8	My outdoor activities are interesting.	0.807			
GEI9	I would like to learn more about outdoor activities	0.704			
Flow-Like Experience Involvement			0.911	0.912	0.692
FEI1	My outdoor activities are unique	0.823			
FEI2	My outdoor activities are valuable for me	0.846			
FEI3	My outdoor activities mean a lot to me	0.763			
FEI4	My outdoor activities help me to get away from all problems.	0.832			
FEI5	My outdoor activities make me feel active	0.883			
FEI6	I lost myself in the story.	0.839			
Social Experience Involvement			0.908	0.907	0.783
SEI1	I enjoy the company of others in the group	0.842			
SEI2	There is a good group atmosphere where I do my activities	0.900			
SEI3	The group I do outdoor activities interacted well with each other	0.902			
SEI4	I have rich interaction with my companionship	0.896			
Customization			0.938	0.938	0.890
CUS1	My outdoor experiences include spontaneous elements	0.931			
CUS2	I feel like I have a choice during my outdoor activity	0.959			
CUS3	I feel like I have control over my experience during my outdoor activity	0.939			

Harmony in life		0.932	0.934	0.787
HIL1	My activities help me to be in good harmony with my environment	0.846		
HIL2	My activities help me to accept the various conditions of my life	0.907		
HIL3	I am in harmony	0.881		
HIL4	Most aspects of my life are in balance thanks to my activities	0.915		
HIL5	My activities help me to be in harmony with life	0.886		

In the evaluation of discriminant validity, Fornell-Larcker criterion and HTMT values were examined. The results of Fornell-Larcker criterion can be seen in parentheses on table 3. It is seen that Fornell-Larcker criterion was met for each structure. Additionally, HTMT values were less than 0.85. Therefore, it can be said that discriminant validity was met for this study.

Table 3: Discriminant validity of the scale

	CUS	FEI	GEI	HIL	SEI
CUS	(0.943)				
FEI	0.669	(0.832)			
GEI	0.496	0.635	(0.777)		
HIL	0.508	0.609	0.641	(0.887)	
SEI	0.681	0.711	0.586	0.479	(0.885)

In this study, on-site experience was defined as a secondary variable consisting of three dimensions. The dimensions of this secondary structure are social experience involvement, flow like experience involvement and general experience involvement. When these dimensions were tested, the weights, t-test results and VIF values in Table 4 show that the second-level model was valid.

Table 4: Second-Order Structure Analysis

	1	Weights	t value	VIF
On-site Experience	SEI	0.826	35.222	1000
	FEI	0.887	55.251	1000
	GEI	0.838	37.187	1000

The structural model was analyzed by using bootstrapping method in Smart-PLS. As seen in table 5 the result of this analysis shows that the R2 values for all latent variables in the model are above 0.10. Additionally, the results of the standardized path coefficients were examined through β . This explains the path from customization to on-site experience ($\beta_{\text{CUS} \rightarrow \text{ONSE}} = 0.666$, t value= 21.468) and

the path from on-site experience to harmony in life ($\beta_{\text{ONSE} \rightarrow \text{HIL}} = 0.631$, t value = 15.576) had a significant positive effect. Moreover, according to the R^2 and Q^2 values, the path model has reliable predictive power and predictive relationship. In addition, Cohen's f^2 values have a medium effect size for each scale and the h^2 and h^3 hypotheses were found to be acceptable.

Table 5: Structural model and hypothesis tests

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	t-value	f^2	Result
H ₂	CUS → On-site Experience	0.666	1,468	0.797	Accepted
H ₃	On-site Experience → HIL	0.631	15,576	0.662	Accepted

Harmony in Life $R^2=0,785$, $Q^2=0,218$ On-site Experience= $R^2=0,441$, $Q^2=0,436$

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Generation Z, who have an innate comfort in enjoying the visual world with the conveniences provided by technology (Nurbaiti, 2023), mostly prefer to immerse themselves in electronic devices rather than engage in outdoor activities (Ghani et al., 2016). Indeed, since digital media cannot satisfy the deep need for real human contact, it promises to offer novelty and instant pleasure while creating the illusion of social connection through an environment where our dopamine receptors are constantly on high alert (Kardaras, 2016). Despite the fact that the digital world reveals unique preferences in terms of leisure activities and technology use, it is also evaluated with an emphasis on problematic or addictive issues that cause concerns among researchers (Tutar and Turhan, 2015). Therefore, this study focuses on the idea that digital activities cannot offer the health and well-being conditions that on-site experiences in the physical world provide to individuals. In this direction, some theoretical and practical conclusions were reached by examining the effects of personalizing Generation Z's activities in the physical world on on-site experiences, and, in turn, their life adaptation.

In this study, customization refers to the individual's selection and organization of activities with a certain sense of control, in line with their own desires and needs. Accordingly, each individual has an experience that meets their desires and needs to the extent that the activities are customized. The first finding of the study shows that this kind of customized leisure activity may have a positive effect on individuals' on-site experiences. This situation was evaluated in previous studies on the sub-dimensions of on-site experience, and similar results were found in the findings of this study (Korpela and Kinnunen, 2010; Nijland et al., 2010; Drach-Zahavy and Marzuq, 2012; Lee et al., 2019; Lo et al., 2022). These studies show that activities carried out by individuals moving from one place to another have an

impact on both flow and socialization experiences. The main reason for this may be that the individual's constant movement during the activity they carry out in outdoor settings occupies their visual memory, shapes their perceptions, and leads to memorable experiences.

The experiential process is formed in the mind of the individual through the stages of expectation, travel, real-life experience, return phase, and remembrance (Borrie and Roggenbuck, 2017). In these experiential stages, any person needs to move from one place to another and reach a new experience area. Experiencing such a process fosters a sense of belonging and purpose that is vital for the overall development of the Gen Z generation. Therefore, another finding of the study—that on-site experiences support and increase harmony in life—is consistent with the findings of previous studies (Garcia et al., 2014; Ghani et al., 2018; Auhuber et al., 2019).

Although harmony in life and life satisfaction are two different concepts, it is possible to base these concepts on similar outcome perspectives, as harmony refers to the mindful, non-judgmental, subjective evaluation of the quality of life as a construct of cognitive well-being (Garcia et al., 2014). In this sense, the positive results of this study may be analyzed and explained from the life satisfaction perspective. Leisure activities, which provide opportunities for individuals to shape their perceptions of value toward life and meet their needs, also provide opportunities to establish social relationships, feel positive emotions, and acquire skills and knowledge. These activities thus improve the quality of life (Brajša-Žganec et al., 2010). This suggests that when an individual finds satisfaction in the leisure domain of life, the perception of harmony in life can be enhanced through various acquisitions. Especially for Generation Z, on-site experiences contribute to general health and personal development (Ghani et al., 2018; Auhuber et al., 2019). Therefore, it is likely that one can gain the perception of harmony in life.

Individuals who spend relatively longer periods of time outdoors rather than at home and maintain social distance from others often experience poor mental health, which increases the risk of depression (Shen et al., 2022). For this reason, interacting with others in public spaces is considered important for individuals of all age groups to ensure psychological well-being. In this context, on-site activities reinforce meaning and social interaction, especially during the recall phase (Walker et al., 1998), as well as promoting basic life skills (Seaman et al., 2019; Kurniawan et al., 2023). Consequently, the on-site experiences individuals gain from physical world activities are considered crucial, and, as Spears et al. (2015) note, they need to be evaluated to recognize the value of face-to-face communication.

Leisure is a dynamic, evolving, and partially context-dependent structure that includes positive emotional states, personal meaning, and cognitions related to the environment (Borrie and Roggenbuck, 2017). Individuals may choose destinations based on the attractions of activities that will provide such positive benefits. Marketers and managers who create such places—particularly in line with the needs and desires of Gen Z—can play an active role in meeting the need for social interaction and self-definition, reflecting the social values and needs expressed by Ghani et al. (2018). This may improve mental health outcomes, such as reducing anxiety and enhancing mood for Generation Z. Given this structure, Gen Z's desire for socially attractive places where they can spend time with friends without interference makes it important to design spaces with appropriate features (Ghani et al., 2016). In this direction, it is essential for managers and marketers to design spaces and activities that can address and personalize the needs of individuals, as suggested by Simonson (2005). This added value will be effective in influencing Gen Z's destination preferences and in creating sustainable destinations.

In relation to the findings of this study, it is expected that the reflection of customized leisure activities on experiences will affect individuals' perceptions and behaviors. This assumption is based on the fact that the ability to freely choose activities contributes to a sense of impact, which is linked to positive psychological outcomes (Caldwell and Freire, 2023). These positive outcomes foster trust, satisfaction, and loyalty behaviors by regulating perceived quality (Coelho and Henseler, 2012). Indeed, individuals who have control over leisure time may explore their identities and preferences more accurately. In future research, these outcomes should be evaluated more deeply to define individual perceptions, the organization of these perceptions, and how to transform them into experiences within a specific behavioral process.

The results of this study reveal the feelings of well-being related to the vital harmony that individuals who participated in activities in Istanbul/Beykoz experienced from personalized on-site encounters. Considering that the activities available in Istanbul and the lifestyles of individuals in the region are different from those in other destinations, it does not seem possible to generalize the results of this study. Therefore, implementing the study in several different destinations, while considering cultural and lifestyle differences, will be effective in producing more generalizable results. In addition, although a sufficient number of samples were obtained for analysis in the study, time and cost limitations also restricted the sample size. Overcoming these limitations, reaching a wider sample, and supporting the study with qualitative data could be effective for destination management and marketing.

Author Contribution Rates

Design of Study: SK(%50), EY(%50)

Data Acquisition: SK(%50), EY(%50)

Data Analysis: SK(%50), EY(%50)

Writing Up: SK(%50), EY(%50)

Submission and Revision: SK(%50), EY(%50)

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