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An Inductive Study with Travellers About the Perceived Barriers and Drivers to Sustainable Tourism Development in a Nature-Based Destination

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The growing popularity of nature-based tourism triggers concerns about its environmental and cultural impacts, thereby initiating discussions on diversifying and reinforcing economic strategies. This situation is particularly relevant in destinations like Phuket, which strives to position itself as a premier global tourist hotspot while relying significantly on international tourist receipts to sustain its island economy. The study identifies the perceived barriers and drivers that prevent and enable tourists from participating in practices that support sustainability in nature-based destinations such as Phuket, shedding light on fundamental factors influencing tourist behaviours. The empirical data was gathered through 38 semi-structured interviews with Generation Z travellers and analysed thematically. The results highlight key barriers—costs, cultural differences, and convenience over sustainability—and drivers—social responsibility, policy support, and heightened awareness—impacting sustainable tourism development in Phuket. The study advances the discussion about the complicated interplay between individual motivations, external factors, and environmental realities in shaping tourists' sustainable behaviours. Theoretical implications for tourism researchers and practical implications for policymakers and businesses are discussed in the paper.

Keywords: green consumer behaviour, sustainability: environmental awareness, tourism development, tourism, sustainable tourism

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Introduction

Study Background

Phuket aims to establish itself as a world-class tourist destination (Suwangerd et al., 2021), while significantly depending on international tourist receipts for the well-being of its island economy (Zhu & Yasami, 2022). This reliance raises questions about the island's vulnerability to global economic fluctuations and its capacity to balance sustainable development with the demands of a thriving tourism industry (Fuchs, 2022). Moreover, the rapid growth in tourism in nature-based destinations might pose environmental and cultural challenges that require careful management (Grilli et al., 2021; Hernández et al., 2021; Juvan et al., 2021). The present economic model has sparked discussions about the need for diversification (Fuchs, 2021) and resilience-building measures (McCartney et al., 2021). This is particularly true in the wake of global events like the COVID-19 pandemic that disrupted international travel (Karunarathne et al., 2021). To address these issues, policymakers in Phuket are increasingly focusing on sustainable tourism practices and initiatives (Kaur, 2021), seeking a balance between economic growth and the protection of their unique island ecosystem, which attracts more than 10 million visitors annually (Tuntipisitkul et al., 2021). However, finding a sustainable and resilient path forward remains a complex task that requires collaboration among tourism stakeholders (Roxas et al., 2020).

Nature-Based Tourism

Nature-based tourism, often referred to as nature tourism, encompasses travel activities that centre around natural environments, biodiversity, and conservation (Kuenzi & McNeely, 2008). This segment of tourism involves exploring and experiencing natural landscapes, wildlife, and indigenous cultures while promoting conservation and sustainability (Wolf et al., 2019). Within the literature, nature-based tourism has been defined by various scholars and organizations, emphasizing its reliance on natural resources, education, and the enhancement of visitor experiences (Frost et al., 2014; Jones et al., 2021). Studies within this field have extensively focused on the environmental and cultural impacts associated with nature-based tourism (Jones et al., 2021). Researchers have highlighted the potential positive impacts, such as raising awareness about environmental conservation and supporting local communities economically (Winter et al., 2019; Da Mota & Pickering, 2020). However, there is substantial concern regarding the negative impacts, including habitat degradation, disruption of ecosystems, cultural commodification, and loss of authenticity in indigenous cultures (Da Mota & Pickering, 2020). Scholars have emphasized the necessity of sustainable practices and policies to mitigate these adverse effects (Da Mota & Pickering, 2020; Jones et al., 2021).

Policies and management strategies play a crucial role in regulating and promoting sustainable nature-based tourism (Winter et al., 2019). The literature review reveals the existence of various policies at international, national, and local levels aimed at conserving natural resources, preserving cultural heritage, and promoting responsible tourism practices (Kularatne et al., 2021). Case studies, such as Kularatne et al. (2021), have been conducted to analyse the effectiveness of these policies in different destinations, highlighting successful instances of managing visitor flows, implementing carrying capacities, and fostering community involvement. Tourist behaviour and experiences form another significant area of exploration within nature-based tourism literature (Winter et al., 2019). The literature emphasizes the importance of education, interpretation, and immersive experiences in shaping travellers' attitudes toward environmental conservation and sustainable behaviours (Zhao et al., 2014; Winter et al., 2019). Moreover, the economic aspects of nature-based tourism have also garnered attention in the literature (Thapa et al., 2022). For example, previous research has quantified the economic contributions of nature-based tourism to local economies, employment generation, and revenue generation (Thapa et al., 2022).

Generation Z and Sustainability

Generation Z, born roughly between the mid-1990s and the early 2010s, constitutes a demographic cohort known for its tech-savvy nature, social consciousness, and unique attitudes toward travel and sustainability (Wee, 2019; Seyfi et al., 2023). With rising incomes and access to technology, Generation Z travellers have become increasingly mobile, seeking authentic experiences and meaningful connections with the places they visit (Seyfi et al., 2023). This generation is often characterized as highly conscious of sustainability issues, showing a strong inclination toward responsible and eco-friendly travel practices (Dimitriou & AbouElgheit, 2019). Generation Z will be the largest group of travellers ever in the future (Pinho & Gomes, 2023). Literature focusing on Generation Z and sustainability in travel highlights the values, preferences, and behaviours of this cohort (Dimitriou & AbouElgheit, 2019). Nguyen et al. (2021), for example, indicate that 'environmental concerns significantly influence their travel decisions' (p. 1051). Furthermore, Generation Z travellers prioritize destinations and accommodations that prioritize sustainability, promote environmental conservation, and demonstrate social responsibility (Nguyen et al., 2021). They actively seek experiences that align with their values, such as engaging in activities that support local communities, reducing carbon footprints, and respecting indigenous cultures (Seyfi et al., 2023).

In terms of impacts, previous research explored how the preferences and choices of Generation Z travellers influence the tourism industry (Jiang & Hong, 2023). For example, Jiang and Hong (2023) note that Generation Z's demand for 'sustainable and ethical travel experiences has prompted businesses and destinations to adapt and integrate eco-friendly practices' (p. 228). This has led to a rise in eco-conscious accommodations, tours focused on environmental education, and the adoption of sustainable tourism certifications and standards by various establishments (Ribeiro et al., 2023). HOMA Phuket Town is an example of lodging that encompasses sustainability practices in its structural building efficiency, waste management, energy, and water consumption, as well as raising awareness amongst their guests in their creative co-living space (HOMA, n.d.). On the other hand, policies aimed at catering to the sustainability preferences of Generation Z travellers have also been a subject of discussion within the literature (Ribeiro et al., 2023). Ribeiro et al. (2023) advocate for stricter environmental regulations and certifications to ensure that businesses and destinations meet certain sustainability criteria to cater to increasingly eco-conscious travellers.

Research Objective

Previous research has undeniably contributed to establishing numerous cause-and-effect relationships and discovered predictive indicators for behaviour supporting sustainable travel (Darvishmotevali & Altinay, 2022; Toubes & Araújo-Vila, 2022). Nevertheless, it often falls short of capturing the complicated nuances of individual experiences, beliefs, and challenges faced by underrepresented populations (Han, 2020). The research gap lies in the need to explore how Generation Z travellers, in Phuket, perceive barriers and drivers that prevent and enable them to engage in practices that support sustainable development in a nature-based tourism destination. Simultaneously, studies focusing on Generation Z and sustainability emphasize this cohort's propensity for eco-friendly travel preferences and its potential influence on shaping tourism industries toward more sustainable practices (Nowacki et al., 2023). Hence, this study seeks to bridge the gap in understanding by exploring the specific perceptions, preferences, and challenges of Generation Z travellers in Phuket regarding sustainable tourism practices in a nature-based tourism context. Ultimately, this investigation aims to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how to effectively cater to the sustainability preferences of Generation Z travellers in nature-based tourism destinations, thereby improving the sustainability footprint of Phuket and contributing to sustainable tourism development.

Methodology

Research Design

This study uses qualitative data because it enables an in-depth exploration of experiences and perceptions, allowing for an assessment of the contextual dimensions of participants' perspectives regarding the perceived drivers and barriers of sustainable tourism development. An inductive research approach, following good practice by Mason et al. (2010), was utilized to explore the problem by comprehensively examining its complex interconnections. Conducting qualitative research is a popular and well-known methodological paradigm for tourism scholars (Khoo-Lattimore et al., 2019). Qualitative research is centred around examining how people behave and interact in the world (McGinley et al., 2021). This type of research has made a substantial contribution to the field of tourism research and has gained widespread recognition and acceptance (Wilson & Hollinshead, 2015). The aim was to fill a gap in the body of knowledge about barriers and drivers that prevent and enable tourists to engage in practices that support sustainable tourism in a nature-based tourism destination. The research was conducted from the perspective of travellers born between the years 1997 and 2012 (i.e. commonly referred to as Generation Z) while vacationing in Phuket, Thailand.

Phuket was selected as the study site for collecting empirical data, mainly due to its recognition as a nature-based tourist destination and its dependency on in-

Table 1. Summarized Sociodemographic Characteristics of the Interview Participants

Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	19	50%
	Female	19	50%
Age Range	18–19 years old	4	11%
	20–21 years old	5	13%
	22–23 years old	13	34%
	24–25 years old	16	42%
Highest Education	High School Diploma	8	21%
	Vocational Degree	2	5%
	Bachelor's Degree	25	66%
	Master's Degree	3	8%
Origin Region	Western Europe	21	55%
	Eastern Europe	5	13%
	North America	3	8%
	South America	1	3%
	Asia	3	8%
	Oceania	5	13%
Accommodation Type	Hotel (incl. boutique hotel)	21	55%
	Hostel (shared accommodation)	9	23%
	Luxury resort	4	11%
	Others (including apartment)	4	11%

ternational tourism (Suwangerd et al., 2021; Zhu & Yasami, 2022). Thailand's largest island covers a land area of 543 square kilometres, making it marginally smaller than the city-state Singapore. In qualitative research, reliability and validity are achieved through credibility and validity (Rose & Johnson, 2020). Credibility refers to the use of an appropriate data collection method that aligns with the research objective. Validity involves ensuring that the reporting is trustworthy, providing detailed and dense descriptions (Rose & Johnson, 2020). Therefore, the establishment of a robust and reliable methodological framework involved a series of steps, which have been meticulously undertaken and documented as outlined in the following sections.

Data Collection and Sample

Empirical data was gathered through semi-structured interviews. The potential participants were approached by the research team and asked for their willingness to participate in the study. For the interviews, participant selection was undertaken via purposive sampling, also referred to as selective sampling, a non-probability sampling technique in which researchers exercise their judgment to choose individuals from the population for inclusion in the study (Palinkas et al., 2015; Sim et al., 2018). A total of 80 potential participants were approached and 38 confirmed their willingness to participate in the study upon providing written consent.

Determining an appropriate sample size is intricate and challenging, with limited guidelines for estimating non-probabilistic sample sizes (Fugard & Potts, 2015; Boddy, 2016). Therefore, the concept of thematic saturation served as the foundation for ascertaining when the sample was considered sufficient becau-

Table 2 An Illustrative Example From the Inductive Open Coding Approach for the Theme 'Awareness', Along with the Relevant Verbatim, Keywords and Codes

No	Codes	Keywords	Verbatim
1	Cultural Preservation	Culture, Heritage, Protection	'I am quite sensitive towards local cultures, which led me to seek responsible tourism programmes to protect them' (#13)
2	Prior Experiences	Wildlife, Environment, Safari	'I have been on a safari and that experience really opened my eyes about protecting the environment and wildlife' (#8)
3	Decision-making	Climate Change, Travel Decision, Awareness	'I would say that I am quite aware of my impact on climate change and it somehow influences my travel choices' (#27)
4	Pollution	Plastic, Tourism Development	'I have seen what plastic pollution did in Bali and I can see Phuket heading in the same direction' (#31)
5	Consciousness	Sustainable, Knowledge	'The more aware I become and learn about it, the more I prioritize experiences that respect sustainable travel' (# 23)

se acquiring additional novel information becomes unattainable (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The participants were recruited on Phuket Island at three separate locations (Patong Beach, Phuket Laguna, and Old Town). The semi-structured interviews were conducted in late 2023 by the lead investigator and were supported by a research assistant. The length of the interviews ranged from 12 minutes to 37 minutes.

All participants were between the ages of 18 and 25, travelling for leisure, and generally familiar with the concept of sustainable tourism or sustainable travel. The interviews took place at a nearby venue with the aid of a research assistant, following an interview guide that included questions such as 'What factors do you consider when choosing a travel destination?', 'How important is sustainability in your decision-making process?', 'When travelling, what sustainable tourism practices do you actively engage in or seek to support?', or 'What would motivate you to be more conscious of sustainable practices during your travels?'. The interview guide was developed in cooperation with other faculty members who are familiar with the study site and are experts in the field of sustainable tourism development.

The sample includes a balanced split between both genders, i.e. 19 female participants and 19 male participants. The average (mean) age of the participants was 23.4 years old and all of the participants were at least high school graduates, with 28 of them holding a university degree. The majority of participants originated from Western countries, including but not limited to the United Kingdom (4), Australia (4), Germany (3), Sweden (2), Austria (2), France (2), and the United States (2), as well as Italy (1), Denmark (1), and Malta (1). The majority of participants (21) stayed in hotels, followed by hostels (9), resorts (4), and other types of accommodation (4). Table 1 summarizes additional sociodemographic information about the participants.

Results and Analysis

Thematic Analysis Process

Thematic analysis is the most common method for examining interview data (Nowell et al., 2017; Squires, 2023). The process involved several steps. The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and organized based on the questions posed to the participants. Data was then thematically analysed. The thematic analysis process helps researchers uncover common themes among participants, allowing a deeper exploration of their perspectives (Nowell et al., 2017). The transcripts were used only for thematic analysis and did not divulge the identities of the participants although for the research, each participant was given a unique number. Thereafter, keywords were identified and transformed into codes, which formed the basis for grouping and analysing the data (Table 2). This approach, known as inductive open coding, helped identify patterns and clusters within the material (Braun et al., 2022). The researchers chose to carry out these processes manually, foregoing the use of software, as it allowed them to become acquainted with the content. Next, codes were organized and grouped into suitable themes (for example, the theme 'awareness' comprises the codes 'cultural preservation', 'prior experiences', 'decision-making', 'pollution', and 'consciousness') Finally, the process was repeated until the researchers were satisfied with the results and a consensus was reached between the researchers. Six primary themes emerged from the clustered data and implications were drawn. The findings are detailed in the following sections of this study. This systematic process provided insights on barriers and drivers that prevent and enable Generation Z travellers in Phuket to engage in practices that support sustainable tourism by identifying recurring themes within the data.

Perceived Barriers – Themes: (1) Costs, (2) Cultural Differences, and (3) Convenience Over Sustainability

The discussion with tourists revealed three perceived barriers that prevent sustainable tourism development: costs, cultural differences, and prioritizing convenience over sustainability. These themes represent significant challenges faced by travellers aiming to engage in more eco-friendly practices during their vacations.

Costs

The cost factor often influences tourists' decisions, as sustainable options might come at a higher price compared to conventional alternatives. Many expressed a willingness to engage in sustainable tourism practices, but the higher prices associated with eco-friendly accommodations, tours, or products presented a significant barrier. For instance, environmentally certified hotels or tours endorsing sustainable initiatives often come with a premium price tag, deterring budget-conscious travellers from choosing these options. This can be illustrated with the following quote by a participant which is representative of the sentiment shared amongst the tourists that were interviewed. '*I am fine with paying a little more but if it doubles the price then this is something that I seriously have to consider*' (Participant #28, male, 24 years old). Another interviewee stated that '*many times, I chose one activity instead of two because I prefer the sustainable option, but it also means I can experience less during my holiday*' (Participant #16, female, 21 years old). The perception that sustainability equates to elevated costs poses a considerable challenge, especially for young travellers who might have limited financial resources.

Cultural Differences

Additionally, cultural disparities present hurdles, impacting the understanding and adoption of sustainable practices. Cultural disparities surfaced as a complex challenge impacting the sustainable tourism efforts of Generation Z tourists in Phuket. Participants reported a notable difference in perceptions between their expectations compared to local cultural norms, which was evidently reported by the majority of participants. Participants highlighted scenarios where sustainable behaviours might conflict with traditional practices or local customs. For example, '*I watched that many tourists in my age group are fairly responsible and throw their garbage in the available bins, but I saw many of the TukTuk drivers* [i.e. a common form of motorized vehicle to transport tourists] *near the beach who litter into the environment while waiting for their next customer*' (Participant #19, *female, 18 years old*). It was reported by about one-third of participants that the 'clash between local norms and sustainability expectations can complicate tourists' efforts to align with environmentally responsible behaviours'.

Convenience Over Sustainability

Moreover, it was reported by one-third of participants that the temptation of convenience often overshadows the intentions to prioritize sustainability among Generation Z travellers in Phuket. A participant expressed that the '*convenience aspect tends to succeed over sustainability concerns*' (Participant #7, male, 22 years old), leading travellers to prioritize ease and comfort over making eco-conscious choices. Participants acknowledged that choosing sustainability sometimes requires additional effort, time, or planning. Another participant shared this sentiment by stating, '*The ease of things tends to outweigh thinking about sustainability*' (Participant #18, female, 24 years old). These viewpoints underscore a tendency among travellers to favour immediate convenience over the long-term environmental impact of their choices. Nearly half of the interviewed participants highlighted instances where the ease and accessibility of non-sustainable options often overshadowed their intentions to opt for eco-conscious alternatives (for example, having take-out food in a plastic box instead of eating the dish at the restaurant). Furthermore, some participants shared experiences where sustainable choices required additional effort or advanced planning, discouraging them from embracing these options. Although half reported specific situations in which convenience was prioritized over sustainability, only about ten participants noted that there is a prevalence of convenience-centric mindsets, which tends to hinder the adoption of sustainable practices.

Perceived Drivers – Themes: (1) Social Responsibility, (2) Policy Support, and (3) Heightened Awareness

With regard to the perceived drivers towards sustainable tourism, three primary themes emerged: social responsibility, policy support, and heightened awareness. These themes encapsulate crucial factors that motivate and enable travellers to actively engage in more sustainable travel practices.

Social Responsibility

Social responsibility emerged as a driver for tourists that persuades them to make choices that minimize their ecological impact and contribute positively to local communities. More than two-thirds of the participants highlighted their sense of duty toward the environment and the community as a driving force behind their support of sustainable tourism practices. About a dozen travellers expressed a desire to 'give back' or 'make a difference', showcasing their commitment to ethical travel. Participant 4 made the following comment that is exemplary of this sentiment: '*We should feel pretty privileged that we can travel* [to different places]'. However, while the notion of social responsibility was generally regarded as positive, several participants voiced concerns about its involuntary imposition within certain social circles. More than ten participants disclosed experiencing peer pressure to support sustainable practices. They elaborated on feeling compelled to engage in eco-friendly behaviours due to societal expectations rather than personal conviction. One participant highlighted this aspect by stating, '*There is this unspoken pressure among peers. If you are not on board with sustainable choices, you are seen as against progress*' (Participant #16, female, 21 years old). This polarization within social circles might inadvertently force compliance rather than authentic voluntary engagement with sustainable practices.

Policy Support

In the realm of sustainable tourism, policy support emerged as another driver for fostering environmentally conscious practices within tourist destinations. In the context of this study, the theme of policy support means supporting the enforcement of governmental regulations and following their guidelines and regulations that were designed to support sustainable practices in Phuket. Participants acknowledged the important role of policies and regulations in shaping and promoting sustainability initiatives. Over fifteen participants acknowledged the importance of government or institutional interventions in incentivizing and regulating sustainable practices. They emphasized the need for clear, enforced guidelines that encourage businesses to adopt eco-friendly measures. For instance, one participant emphasized the necessity of strict regulations by stating, '*They need clear laws that make it mandatory for them to use sustainable practices*' (Participant #29, male, 18 years old). Another interviewee noted that '*If there are no rules in place, many businesses might prioritize profits over the environment, but Phuket has a few rules in place that protect the environment*' (Participant #9, female, 24 years old). Interestingly, none of the participants mentioned the concept of policy support targeting the regulation of behaviours from the demand side, namely, the tourists themselves. Throughout the interviews, when the theme of policy support emerged, participants inherently directed their focus toward businesses or government entities.

Heightened Awareness

Moreover, a heightened awareness of sustainability issues among travellers emerged as a catalyst for embracing eco-friendly options during their travels. Nearly all participants cited increased awareness and knowledge about environmental concerns as pivotal in influencing their travel decisions. The participants mentioned that exposure to information through various channels, such as social media, educational institutions, and advocacy campaigns, was important in shaping their perception of sustainability. However, as previously reported, costs and convenience are barriers preventing tourists from engaging to a larger degree in sustainable practices.

The interviewed tourists expressed a sentiment that they are willing to do more only if the surrounding circumstances support their views. For example, if the costs for sustainable products and services were reduced and/or if these products and services meant no inconvenience for the tourists, they would be ready to engage. One participant elaborated, '*As I became more aware of the environmental impact of travel, I started seeking out accommodations, but I also need to watch my budget*' (Participant #35, female, 20 years old). Another participant stated, '*In the future, I would prioritize destinations and services that align with my values*' (Participant #12, female, 22 years old). In essence, the sentiment amongst the participants can be summarized as: heightened awareness among travellers about sustainability issues translates into actionable behaviours only when it harmoniously aligns with the accessibility and affordability of environmentally friendly products and services.

Discussion and Implications

Discussion

This inductive research aimed to investigate how to effectively cater to the sustainability preferences of Generation Z travellers in nature-based tourism destinations, thereby improving the sustainability footprint of Phuket and contributing to sustainable tourism development. More specifically, this exploratory study sought to holistically study perceptions of Generation Z travellers, therefore advancing the theoretical discourse and providing practical implications for businesses and policymakers. The investigation of Generation Z tourists' perspectives on sustainable tourism in Phuket highlighted insights into their motivations and challenges regarding eco-friendly travel practices. The study discovered significant barriers (such as costs, cultural differences, and convenience over sustainability as visualized in Figure 1) that prevent the seamless adoption of sustainable behaviours. Among these barriers, the high cost associated with sustainable options emerged as a notable deterrent, especially among budget-conscious travellers. This aligns with existing research, emphasizing the pivotal role of affordability in influencing tourists' choices with regard to sustainability (Djafarova & Foots, 2022).

Cultural disparities also surfaced as a substantial challenge, showcasing a conflict between tourists' sustainability expectations and local customs. This dissonance complicates tourists' efforts to align their behaviours with environmentally responsible practices (Marzo-Navarro et al., 2020). Convenience prioritized over sustainability stood out as a prevailing factor, leading travellers to opt for ease and comfort over eco-conscious choices. This inclination toward convenience, while not surprising, highlights the need to address the balance between immediate gratification and long-term environmental impact in promoting sustainable behaviours among tourists (Pinho & Gomes, 2023). These barriers underscore the complexity of shaping sustainable tourism practices and emphasize the importance of addressing these challenges to foster meaningful change.

In parallel, the study revealed crucial drivers motivating sustainable tourism practices among Generation Z travellers (Figure 1). Social responsibility emerged as a powerful motivator, prompting tourists to minimize their ecological footprint and contribute positively to local communities. This aligns with prior studies emphasizing tourists' desire to make a positive impact on their destinations (Coles et al., 2013; Paskova & Zelenka, 2019; Lee et al., 2019). However, concerns surfaced regarding the involuntary imposition of sustainability ideals within social circles (i.e. peer pressure to support sustainable development), potentially leading to compliance rather than genuine voluntary engagement. While findings by Lee et al. (2019) report from diverse contexts, their implications resonate with the challenges observed in this study.

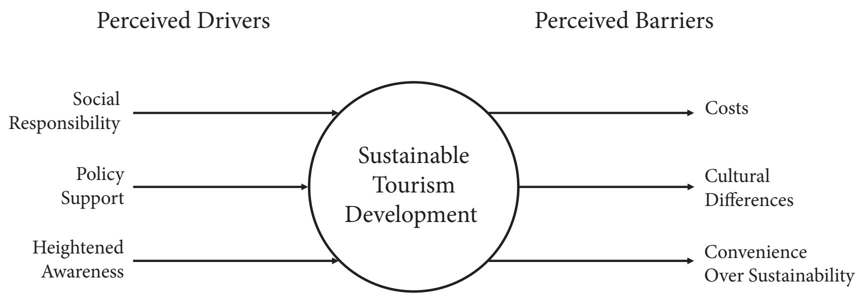

Figure 1 A Visual Synthesis Derived From the Thematic Analysis Showing the Perceived Drivers and Perceived Barriers in Sustainable Tourism Development Among Generation Z Travellers

Implications

The study provides several theoretical and managerial insights into developing a deeper understanding of the perception of Generation Z travellers (predominantly of Western descent) toward the development of sustainable tourism in nature-based destinations. The empirical findings offer theoretical contributions to the existing body of knowledge on tourist perception of sustainable tourism in the context of Thailand by supporting previous research (Dimitriou & Abou-Elgheit, 2019; Nguyen et al., 2021; Jiang & Hong, 2023; Seyfi et al., 2023) and identifying barriers and drivers preventing and enabling their participation. According to Nguyen et al. (2021), Generation Z travellers prioritize destinations and accommodations that prioritize sustainability, promote environmental conservation, and demonstrate social responsibility. However, prior to this study, there was limited knowledge about barriers and drivers preventing and enabling their participation (Salinero et al., 2022). While Jiang and Hong (2023) argued that Generation Z's demand for sustainable travel experiences has prompted destinations to adapt and integrate eco-friendly practices, the results of this study showed that only limited progress was made.

The study advances the discussion about the complicated interplay between individual motivations, external factors, and environmental realities in shaping tourists' sustainable behaviours. For instance, heightened awareness among Generation Z travellers translated into actionable results only when harmonized with local customs (D'Arco et al., 2023). Similarly, Pinho and Gomes (2023) empirically identified that many Gen Z travellers 'are concerned about choosing a sustainable destination' but did very little about supporting destinations in achieving sustainable development (p. 1). However, the barriers align with the literature, wherein costs (Djafarova & Foots, 2022) and convenience (Butnaru et al., 2022) deterred these travellers from engaging more extensively in sustainable practices, despite their heightened awareness (D'Arco et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the research highlights the importance of targeted interventions aimed at addressing barriers at the destination level (Weidenfeld, 2018). Simultaneously, it advocates for the enhancement of supportive environments and the promotion of accessible and cost-effective eco-friendly alternatives (Doran & Larsen, 2016). This implication underscores the necessity for strategies that strike a balance between individual values and external factors (Amendah & Park, 2008). Such strategies are essential to facilitate meaningful engagement in sustainable tourism among Generation Z travellers, particularly in nature-based destinations such as Phuket (Pinho & Gomes, 2023).

Conclusion and Future Work

The study contributes to the theoretical discourse on sustainable tourism by highlighting the complicated interplay between individual motivations, external factors, and environmental realities in shaping tourists' sustainable behaviours. For example, heightened awareness only translated into actionable results if aligned with the local customs and practices at the respective destination. Moreover, costs and convenience are other barriers that prevent Generation Z travellers from engaging to a larger degree in sustainable practices despite their heightened awareness. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the need for targeted interventions addressing barriers (at the destination level) while enhancing supportive environments and promoting accessible and affordable eco-friendly options. The implications derived from this study call for strategies that balance individual values with external circumstances to facilitate meaningful sustainable tourism engagement among Generation Z travellers in nature-based destinations like Phuket. As with any study, acknowledging its limitations is fundamental for a comprehensive understanding of the findings and to map future research directions. First, the study's nature is inductive, thereby limiting the generalizability of its results beyond the specific context examined. Future research could enhance these findings by validating hypotheses through a quantitative research approach. Second, further research could examine the interconnectedness of sociocultural, economic, and environmental aspects shaping tourists' sustainability choices.

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Ethics and Confidentiality

The interview participants were informed about the aim of the research and voluntarily provided their written consent prior to commencing the interviews. Furthermore, confidentiality was extended to all respondents, and finally, all interviewees received a gift card as a gesture of appreciation for their participation and insights.

Institutional Approval

The Research Committee of the Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism, Prince of Songkla University approved the study on 27th September 2023 under approval no. FHT660000007.

Author Contribution Statement

KF conceptualized the study, conducted the data collection, and prepared a first draft of the article. The author approved the final version of the manuscript.

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Original Scientific Article

The Continuance Intention of Coffee Shop Mobile Food Ordering Applications

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The purpose of this study is to determine the continuance intention of mobile food ordering apps (MFOAs) for the coffee shop industry based on attributes and customer satisfaction. This study focuses on the category of firm-owned MFOAs, specifically for coffee shop settings in the Indonesian context, in contrast with prior studies that emphasize third-party MFOAs. This research developed a framework of Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology by focusing on the model for one food service setting. A survey with questionnaires was employed and 177 valid responses were obtained and further analysed with Structural Equation Modelling using SmartPLS. Firm-owned MFOAs from seven coffee shop brands in Indonesia were used in the study. Kopi Kenangan turned out to be the most frequently used MFOA coffee shop among respondents, even double that of Starbucks. The findings show that customer satisfaction in using MFOAs is influenced by various factors of the MFOA attributes themselves, most importantly online tracking. Consequently, this satisfaction leads to the user's intention to continue using the apps in the future. This study proposes several practical recommendations for coffee shop businesses to better understand how the existence of their own MFOA may influence customer satisfaction and future continuance intention.

Keywords: continuance intention, effort expectancy, e-satisfaction, mobile food ordering application (MFOA), performance expectancy

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Introduction

Currently, Indonesia is the fourth largest coffee-bean producing country in the world, right after Brazil, Vietnam, and Colombia (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, n.d.). The availability of raw materials should be supported by respective industries to improve product competitiveness (Matrutty et al., 2018), and that is one of the reasons for the significant growth of coffee shop establishments. For instance, in 2016, the number of coffee shops in

Indonesia was only 1,000 outlets, which grew to 2,950 outlets by 2019, and is estimated to reach 9,000 outlets in 2028 (Dahwilani, 2019; Tiofani & Prasetya, 2024). This rapid development of coffee shop establishments aligns with the annual national coffee consumption growth of 8.22% (Ekarina, 2020).

Meanwhile, more than two-thirds of Indonesia's population are active internet users (Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia, 2022), which may impact their behaviour in terms of online activities. In addition, due to the COVID-19 pandemic in April 2020, lockdown measures were put in place, leading to a decrease in onsite mobility. This created more opportunities for online activities such as online transactions for food and beverages (Wahid et al., 2024). This phenomenon prompted businesses to adjust their operations to current market trends and demands, necessitating the provision of services through online platforms (Al Amin et al., 2020; Madinga et al., 2023). These platforms, later known as mobile food-ordering apps (MFOAs), are defined as 'an innovative and convenient channel to access restaurants, view food menus, place food orders, and make payments without any physical interaction with restaurant staff' (Alalwan, 2020, p. 29).

MFOAs come with diverse service and business model and can be categorized into two basic structures: (1) firm-owned (restaurant-to-consumer) or third-party (platform-to-consumer), and (2) delivery-oriented or information-oriented (Dirsehan & Cankat, 2021). The coffee shop industry in Indonesia, which initially partnered with third-party platforms for delivery purposes, has started to develop its own applications. Firm-owned MFOAs are not only information-oriented but sometimes offer delivery services; Kopi Kenangan and Fore Coffee, for instance. Currently, the Indonesian market can still find coffee shop products either in third-party MFOAs (such as GoFood, Shopee Food, and GrabFood) or firm-owned MFOAs (such as Starbucks, Kopi Kenangan, Fore Coffee, Jiwa+, Maxx Coffee, Chatime, and JCO).

This study focuses on the latter category, firm-owned MFOAs, specifically for coffee shop settings in the Indonesian context. This means the main characteristic of MFOAs in this study is information-oriented, followed by delivery-oriented. This is in contrast with prior extensive studies that have investigated the former MFOA category, (third-party) as delivery-oriented apps with no specific business setting (Alalwan, 2020; Dirsehan & Cankat, 2021; Francioni et al., 2022; Gunden et al., 2020). However, studies have shown MFOAs benefit from a business perspective, such as accelerating competitive advantages, elevating the company brand, increasing employee productivity, improving order accuracy, and providing customer databases (Wang et al., 2022). From the customer's standpoint, an MFOA is easily accessible, time-saving, timeless, real-time, adds a unique experience, and is energy-saving (Alalwan, 2022; Lalita & Suzianti, 2022). Aside from the aforementioned benefits, a significant challenge lies in retaining customers and ensuring their continued use of the platform in the face of market competition in order to keep its sustainability (Humbani et al., 2024; Wiastuti et al., 2022).

In essence, MFOAs benefit both restaurants and customers, thus assessing how technology is perceived by the user is considered crucial, as retaining current users is more cost-effective than acquiring new ones (Munday & Humbani, 2024). Technology value lies not in how fast it is adopted, but instead primarily in how long it will be used by customers (Yap & Lee, 2023). MFOA markets are very competitive, thus, understanding how to retain customer continuance intention is critical (Munday & Humbani, 2024). This study corresponds to the recommendations from Francioni et al. (2022) and Tsang et al. (2024) to research restaurant-to-consumer platforms.

Additionally, Gunden et al. (2020), Teo et al. (2024), and Munday and Humbani (2024) suggest further investigating online food technology in specific platforms and settings. Here the authors focus on the coffee shop setting due to the phenomenon defined earlier. Consequently, there is a need for further research to investigate the predictors for customer satisfaction and continuance intention on MFOAs, specifically in the coffee shop setting. Therefore, this research aims to investigate the determinant factors that influence e-satisfaction and continuance intention of mobile food ordering applications for coffee shop businesses in the Indonesian market.

Literature Review

Continuance Intention of MFOAs

Continuous intention (CI) is 'the degree to which a person has formulated a conscious plan to perform or not perform a specified behavior in the future' (Madinga et al., 2023, p. 178). In the context of mobile apps, including online delivery, CI is strongly related to user willingness to use the same application (Yap & Lee, 2023), or repeat use of the product or service (Gunden et al., 2020). CI pertains to the individual evaluation made by the customer regarding their likelihood of engaging in future repurchases or other transactional activities with the same service provider (Ramos, 2022).

Here, the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) and UTAUT2 theory (Venkatesh et al., 2003; Venkatesh et al., 2012) serve as underlying theories to explain the acceptance and usage of technology by individuals, consisting of four plus three predictors: performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions, plus hedonic motivation, price value, and habit. Both UTAUT and UTAUT2 have become the two most frequently used models of technology acceptance and usage in various research because they cover diverse applications, integration, and extension (Dwivedi et al., 2019). In what follows, Humbani et al. (2024) believe that one of the keys to retaining customer CI on restaurant products and services is their satisfaction.

E-Satisfaction on MFOAs

E-Satisfaction (SA) is 'the contentment of the customer with respect to his or her prior purchasing experience with a given electronic commerce firm' (Anderson & Srinivasan, 2003, p. 125). In the mobile app context, SA refers to the evaluation of all aspects of the app's performance, including its attributes and features (Tsang et al., 2024). It also implies the cumulative experience that emerges from the usage of several MFOAs, alongside the interactions with the providers, which can result in both negative and positive states (Humbani et al., 2024). In that case, when the actual results of using MFOAs meet or surpass customers' expectations, they are more likely to be satisfied with their experience (Alalwan, 2020). Consequently, satisfied customers are more inclined to keep using these apps (Yeo et al., 2021). This implies the more customers are satisfied with MFOAs, the more likely they are to show a willingness to keep using MFOAs in the future, as depicted in prior studies, for instance, studies on online food delivery in Indonesia (Wahid et al., 2024), online food delivery in Hong Kong (Lin et al., 2024; Tsang et al., 2024), mobile food delivery apps in South Africa (Humbani et al., 2024), and mobile food ordering apps in Jordan (Alalwan, 2020). Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H9 MFOA e-satisfaction positively influences continuance intention

Antecedents of MFOA e-Satisfaction and Continuance Intention

Performance expectancy (PE) is 'the degree to which using a technology will provide benefits to consumers in performing certain activities' (Venkatesh et al., 2012, p. 159). PE shows how people believe that utilizing multiple channels, such as mobile, online, and physical stores, can help them shop more effectively and efficiently (Ryu & Fortenberry, 2021). In UTAUT, PE is about users' expectations of a technology's usefulness, convenience, and efficiency. This implies that a high level of performance expectancy leads to greater satisfaction with the MFOA technology, as proven by prior studies, for instance, online food delivery in Indonesia (Wahid et al., 2024), mobile food delivery apps in South Africa (Humbani et al., 2024), and mobile food ordering apps in Jordan (Alalwan, 2020). Additionally, PE is shown to have a significant effect on CI, such as through studies on mobile food delivery apps in South Africa (Munday & Humbani, 2024), food delivery apps in Saudi Arabia (Abed, 2024), and online food delivery systems in the USA (Gunden et al., 2020). Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1 Performance expectancy positively influences e-satisfaction on MFOAs

Effort expectancy (EE) is 'the degree of ease associated with consumers' use of technology' (Venkatesh et al., 2012, p. 159). In UTAUT, EE resonates with how much effort it takes users to be able to use the technology properly (Konietzny & Caruana, 2019). In other words, EE is also the extent to which the users believe that using the app does not require great effort (Okumus et al., 2018). Given the unique characteristics of MFOAs, which demand some level of expertise and ability, EE may be essential in forming users' desire to continue using them (Abed, 2024). Ramos (2022) found that EE is the most crucial factor that determines customer CI, especially during the COVID-19 era. Interestingly, EE studies on SA and CI show various results. For instance, a study on online food delivery services in Italy (Francioni et al., 2022) shows a significant impact between EE and CI, in contrast with other studies, such as a study on online food delivery in Malaysia (Teo et al., 2024), food delivery apps in Saudi Arabia (Abed, 2024), and mobile food ordering apps in Jordan (Alalwan, 2020). This implies that when customers agree effort expectancy is easy, it may lead to greater satisfaction with the MFOA. Hence, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2 Effort expectancy positively influences e-satisfaction on MFOAs

Social influence (SI) is 'the extent to which consumers perceive that important others, such as family and friends, believe they should use a particular technology' (Venkatesh et al., 2012, p. 159). In the MFOA context, SI can be described as 'the impact of one's surrounding social environment (i.e. family, friends, peers) on the intention to continue using apps' (Abed, 2024, p. 2047). SI reflects an individual's capacity to persuade others to adopt a new system based on the fact that important individuals in their social circle are also utilizing the same system (Taylor, 2021). SI influences a person's decision on which restaurant to go to. If their social circle chooses to go to a certain restaurant, the individual will likely to follow. Hence, a person's behavior can be shaped by various sources of social influence, whether those influences come from online (such as MFOA) or offline platforms (Hsieh & Tseng, 2018).

Prior studies revealed SI to have a direct and positive impact on customer attitudes toward food delivery apps (Madinga et al., 2023), behavioural intention (Izzati, 2020), and continuance intention (Abed, 2024). On the other hand, SI does not significantly influence e-satisfaction (Alalwan, 2020). In contrast, Hariguna and Ruangkanjanases' (2020) study found significant results. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3 Social influence positively influences e-satisfaction on MFOAs

Facilitating conditions (FC) is defined as 'consumers' perceptions of the resources and support available to perform a behavior' (Venkatesh et al., 2012, p. 159). FC relates to access, infrastructure, and technical support, which is not the intention of the user's behaviour (Alharbi et al., 2020). It indicates the individual's understanding that the technical aspects and organizational infrastructure are necessary to support the existing systems. FC plays an important role in better enhancing customer experience (Ambarwati et al., 2020) because it ensures smooth operations and minimizes potential issues in the future (Dwivedi et al., 2019). This implies that a high level of facilitating conditions leads to greater satisfaction with the MFOA, as proven by prior studies (Alalwan, 2020). Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

H4 Facilitating conditions positively influence e-satisfaction on MFOAs

Hedonic motivation (HM) is 'the fun or pleasure derived from using a technology' (Venkatesh et al., 2012, p. 161). HM involves multisensory, fantasy, and emotional experiences that are not based on primary needs (Chang et al., 2011). It is also when consumers try to find positive emotions, such as pleasure, joy, pride, and happiness, while avoiding negative emotions, for instance, regret and shame, at a later date (Rezvani et al., 2018). HM implies the pleasure and satisfaction as the outcomes of the appc or technology used (Tyrväinen et al., 2020). For instance, shoppers who shop based on hedonic motivation enjoy the fun, entertainment, and exploration of the store. Prior studies have shown that HM can be a significant (Abed, 2024; Alalwan, 2020; Hariguna & Ruangkanjanases, 2020) but also not significant (Munday & Humbani, 2024) predictor of SA and CI. This implies that a high level of HM may lead to greater or even lower satisfaction with the MFOA. Hence, we propose the following hypothesis:

H5 Hedonic motivation positively influences e-satisfaction on MFOAS

Price value (PV) is the 'consumer cognitive trade-off between the perceived benefits of the application and the monetary cost for using them' (Venkatesh et al., 2012, p. 161). PV is usually used as the main measurement that represents what users have to sacrifice to get a product or service that they want to receive or have (Okumus et al., 2018). In essence, PV associates with the advantages of comparing prices among online food delivery users in regard to the quality of the food they consume (Tsang et al., 2024). The PV of a service or product paid for is very important. Customers hope that by paying a higher price, they will get better products or services (Kaczorowska et al., 2019). Further, PV has shown a positive and significant impact on SA and CI towards MFOAS, as depicted by prior studies, such as in the context of Malaysia (Teo et al., 2024), Thailand (Hariguna & Ruangkanjanases, 2020), Hong Kong (Tsang et al., 2024), and Jordan (Alalwan, 2020). Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H6 Price value positively influences e-satisfaction on MFOAS

Habit is 'the extent to which people tend to perform behaviors automatically because of learning' (Venkatesh et al., 2012, p. 161). Habit implies a customer's tendency to react spontaneously and naturally due to the accumulation of experience and knowledge that the customer has (Hariguna & Ruangkanjanases, 2020). In other words, habit emerges as a result of prior learning (Yap & Lee, 2023), such as when someone has learned and experienced using an MFOA. Habit encompasses the compilation of past experiences, acquired knowledge, and received information, which subsequently influences behaviour and transforms into repetitive actions (Sun & Chi, 2018). In UTAUT, a regular habit of using an MFOA will form a connection to the application. Positive experiences customers have with MFOAS will lead to repeated use without additional thought and result in enjoyment and engagement, including feelings of happiness (Wahid et al., 2024). Habit has been studied to positively affect SA and CI, particularly in the context of MFOAS, online food delivery, and food delivery apps in Indonesia (Wahid et al., 2024), South Africa (Munday & Humbani, 2024), Saudi Arabia (Abed, 2024), Thailand (Hariguna & Ruangkanjanases, 2020), and the USA (Gunden et al., 2020). As a result, we propose this hypothesis:

H7 Habit positively influences e-satisfaction on MFOAS

Online tracking (OT) involves the monitoring of customers' orders at various stages and providing real-time updates on the progress of those orders until they are successfully completed (Kapoor & Vij, 2018). According to Yeo et al. (2017), OT enables users to find out the status of their orders, which has an impact on their experience in using the application. The availability of online tracking capabilities has the potential to incentivize customers to revisit MFOAS in the future (Flores & Castaño, 2020). This functionality assists in saving customers' time and effort compared to the conventional delivery system, thus serving as a motivating factor for their continued usage. This implies that the higher the aggregable level of online tracking, the greater satisfaction with the MFOA, as proven by prior studies, for instance, studies on mobile food ordering apps in Jordan (Alalwan, 2020) and Thailand (Hariguna & Ruangkanjanases, 2020). Hence, we propose this hypothesis:

H8 Online tracking positively influence e-satisfaction on MFOAS

Methodology

This research uses a quantitative method with a survey. The respondent criteria are (1) they must be Indonesian citizens, as the questionnaire is in the Indonesian language, and (2) they must have experience using at least one MFOA from seven specific coffee shop brands: Starbucks, Kopi Kenangan, Fore Coffee, Jiwa+, MAXX Coffee, Chatime, and JCO. These brands were selected because they are the only coffee shop brands in Indonesia that have an MFOA service available as of the beginning of 2022, which then can be downloaded through mobile phones in both Google

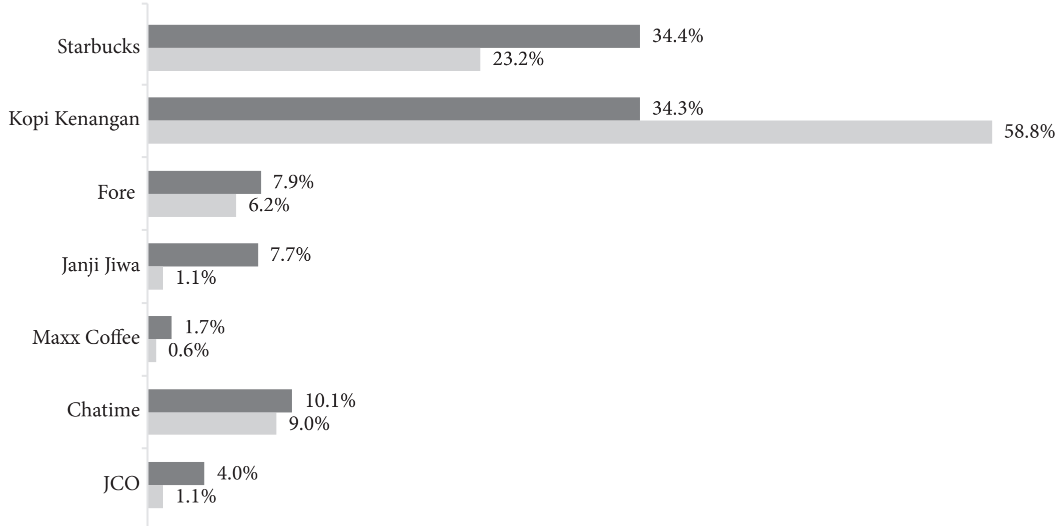

Figure 1 Research Framework

Play Store and Apple Store. Other coffee shop brands also offer online ordering, not through MFOAs, but instead through food delivery applications (FDAs), such as GoFood, GrabFood, ShopeeFood, and TravelokaEat. Our study focuses only on MFOAs instead of FDAs.

Primary data were collected through an online questionnaire, created using Google Forms and written in the Indonesian language. Further, this study employs a convenience and snowball sampling approach. To obtain the data and reach a varied range of respondents, the voluntary survey invitation was circulated for a month in May 2022 and posted on social media and in personal communications. Due to COVID-19 movement restrictions at the time this study was conducted, data collection could only be available through an online survey. As a result, 177 valid responses were obtained and further analysed with structural equation modelling (SEM) using SmartPLS. A study with SEM analysis in the context of tourism hospitality requires at least more than 100 samples (Memon et al., 2020). Thus, the sample size of 177 in this study follows this minimum threshold.

The questionnaire was divided into three parts: (1) respondent demographic profile, consisting of gender, age, domicile, and occupation; (2) behaviour pattern toward MFOAs, and (3) measurement items for all variables consisting of 33 questions. Figure 1 shows the research framework, consisting of 10 latent variables. The first to seventh variables are adopted from Venkatesh in Alalwan (Alalwan, 2020), which are performance expectancy (4 items), effort expectancy (4 items), social influence (3 items), facilitating conditions (3 items), hedonic motivation (3 items), online tracking (3 items), and habit (4 items). Price value is measured by 3 items adopted from Shang and Wu (2017) and Venkatesh in Alalwan (Alalwan, 2020). Next, e-satisfaction is measured by 3 items adopted from Wang et al. (2022) and Shang and Wu (2017). Lastly, continuance intention is measured by 3 items adopted from Masrurin et al. (2021). All items in part three are measured with a five-point Likert scale with five being 'strongly agree' to one being 'strongly disagree'.

Findings

Respondents' Profile

Figure 2 illustrates the findings from the seven MFOA coffee shops regarding their adoption and preferences. It is evident that Kopi Kenangan is the most widely used app, followed by Starbucks and Chatime. Kopi Kenangan, an Indonesian brand established in

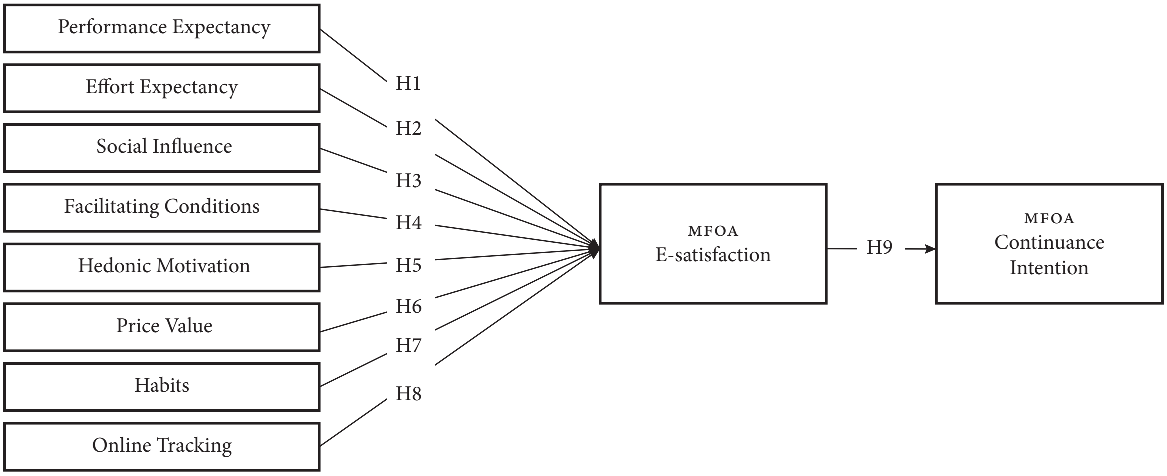

Figure 2 MFOA Coffee Shop Adoption

2017, launched their MFOA in January 2020. Remarkably, within just two years of launching their MFOA, Kopi Kenangan has captured the hearts of coffee lovers in Indonesia. The majority of respondents (74%) are students under the age of 27 in 2022, primarily residing in Jakarta (63.8%), with a nearly equal gender distribution of 50.8% male and 49.2% female. Furthermore, Table 1 outlines the MFOA usage profile of the respondents, showing that when using MFOA coffee shops, they typically order coffee-based beverages between 12:00 and 18:00, with a budget of IDR 20,000 to 30,000.

Measurement Test

Referring to Table 2, the loading factor value for all measurement items is in the range of 0.770 to 0.956, meaning that it has a good loading factor value (Ghozali, 2021); in other words, each item of the latent variable can explain the latent variables. Further, the CR value of all constructs complied with the rule of thumb of a minimum of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2017), namely 0.961 (CI), 0.919 (EE), 0.883 (FC), 0.927 (HB), 0.938 (HM), 0.946 (OT), 0.908 (PE), 0.933 (PV), 0.954 (SA), and 0.912 (SI). The AVE value of all constructs also meets the rule of thumb of a minimum of 0.5 (Hair

Table 1 MFOA User Profile

Questions	%	
What product do you frequently order from the MFOA?	Coffee-based beverages	67.8%
	Milk-based beverages	14.7%
	Chocolate-based beverages	7.9%
	Tea-based beverages	5.6%
	Smoothies	4%
What time do you frequently order from the MFOA?	Dinner time	30.5%
	Lunchtime	27.1%
	Afternoon teatime	24.3%
	Breakfast time	14.1%
	Supper time	4%
What is your budget for each order from the MFOA (per person)? (1 USD equal to IDR 15,000)	Less than IDR 20,000	0.6%
	IDR 20,000 to 30,000	46.3%
	IDR 30,000 to 50,000	33.3%
	More than IDR 50,000	19.8%

et al., 2017), namely 0.892 (CI), 0.739 (EE), 0.716 (FC), 0.762 (HB), 0.834 (HM), 0.854 (OT), 0.713 (PE), 0.823 (PV), 0.874 (SA), and 0.775 (SI). Hence, the result from the measurement model analysis confirmed that the data is valid, reliable, and fit, therefore it is possible to move forward to the second step of structural model evaluation and analysis.

The first variable, performance expectancy, comprises four key indicators: PE1, PE2, PE3, and PE4. According to the respondents, the MFOA is deemed useful in their everyday lives (PE1, mean 4.28), aids in completing important tasks more efficiently (PE2, mean 4.14), and facilitates faster task completion (PE3, mean 4.27). Furthermore, respondents strongly agree that their productivity has increased as a result of using the MFOA (PE4, mean 4.63). The second variable, effort expectancy, includes four indicators: EE1, EE2, EE3, and EE4. The respondents concur that learning the MFOA is easy (EE1, mean 4.45), the features of the MFOA are clear and easy to understand (EE2, mean 4.49), and becoming proficient in using the MFOA is easy (EE4, mean 4.49). Additionally, the respondents strongly agree that overall usage of the MFOA is easy (EE3, mean 4.79).

The third variable, social influence, comprises three indicators: SI1, SI2, and SI3. Respondents indicated that people important to them recommended the use of the MFOA (SI1, mean 4.14), as well as their role models (SI2, mean 4.37), and individuals whose opinions are valued by the respondents (SI3, mean 4.21). The fourth variable, facilitating conditions, includes three indicators: FC1, FC2, and FC3. Respondents strongly agreed that they have ample facilities for using the MFOA (FC1, mean 4.51) and sufficient knowledge of its usage (FC2, mean 4.74). Furthermore, the respondents strongly agreed that the MFOA is compatible with other technologies they use (FC3, mean 4.63).

The fifth variable, hedonic motivation, comprises three indicators: HM1, HM2, and HM3. Respondents indicated a strong agreement that using the MFOA is exciting (HM1, mean 4.56). They also agreed that using the MFOA is fun (HM2, mean 4.29) and entertaining (HM3, mean 4.47). The sixth variable, price value, includes three indicators: PV1, PV2, and PV3. The respondents agreed that the MFOA provides an economical price (PV1, mean 4.30) and that buying food through the MFOA is economically beneficial (PV3, mean 4.29). Additionally, respondents strongly agreed that the MFOA provides good value in exchange for the money spent (PV2, mean 4.67).

The seventh variable, habit, is made up of four indicators: HB1, HB2, HB3, and HB4. The respondents strongly agreed that using the MFOA has become a habit (HB1, mean 4.86), and they are accustomed to using it (HB4, mean 4.71). Furthermore, they agreed that they want to continuously use the MFOA (HB2, mean 4.34) and feel the need to use it (HB3, mean 4.18). The eighth variable pertains to online tracking and comprises three indicators: OT1, OT2, and OT3. Respondents consistently express strong agreement regarding the availability of the tracking feature on the MFOA (OT1, mean 4.78). They also agree that this feature is highly valuable (OT2, mean 4.45) and perceive it as useful for saving time (OT3, mean 4.46).

The ninth variable concerns e-satisfaction and includes three indicators: SA1, SA2, and SA3. Respondents consistently strongly agree that they have a positive experience using the MFOA (SA1, mean 4.68). Furthermore, they agree that the MFOA meets their expectations (SA2, mean 4.42) and overall, they express satisfaction with the MFOA (SA3, mean 4.44). Lastly, the tenth variable, continuance intention, comprises three indicators: CI1, CI2, and CI3. Respondents consistently express strong agreement regarding their intention to continuously use the MFOA (CI1, mean 4.75) and to order food using the MFOA whenever the situation permits (CI2, mean 4.69). Additionally, they agree that even after the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, they will continue to use the MFOA (CI3, mean 4.46).

Structural Model

The rule of thumb to accept the hypotheses are positive path coefficient (β), a p-value less than 0.05, and a t-value greater than 1.97 (Hair et al., 2017). According to Table 3, six direct relationships met the rule of thumb, while three failed. H1 shows the value of $\beta = 0.226$ positive; t-value = 2.318; p-value = 0.021, thus the hypothesis is accepted. It means performan-

Table 2 Measurement Items

Measurement Items		Mean	Loading	CA	CR	AVE
Performance Expectancy (PP)				0.866	0.908	0.713
PE1	The MFOA is useful in my daily life	4.28	0.886			
PE2	Using the MFOA helps me to complete the work that I per ceive as important	4.14	0.823			
PE3	The MFOA helps me to get work done faster	4.27	0.828			
PE4	My productivity has increased because of using the MFOA	4.63	0.838			
Effort Expectancy (EE)				0.885	0.919	0.739
EE1	Learning to use the MFOA is easy	4.45	0.892			
EE2	Features on the MFOA are clear and easy to understand	4.49	0.770			
EE3	Using the MFOA is easy	4.79	0.898			
EE4	Being skilful in using the MFOA is easy	4.49	0.872			
Social Influence (SI)				0.857	0.912	0.775
SI1	The people important to me recommend that I should use the MFOA	4.14	0.818			
SI2	The person who is my role model recommended that I should use the MFOA	4.37	0.892			
SI3	The person whose opinions I value recommended I use the MFOA	4.21	0.928			
Facilitating Condition (FC)				0.802	0.883	0.716
FC1	I have adequate facilities to use the MFOA	4.51	0.815			
FC2	I have sufficient knowledge of using the MFOA	4.74	0.855			
FC3	The MFOA is compatible with other technologies that I use	4.63	0.868			
Hedonic Motivation (HM)				0.907	0.938	0.834
HM1	Using the MFOA is exciting	4.56	0.926			
HM2	Using the MFOA is fun	4.29	0.891			
HM3	Using the MFOA is entertaining	4.47	0.922			
Price Value (PV)				0.894	0.933	0.823
PV1	The MFOA provides an economical price	4.30	0.880			
PV2	The MFOA provides a 'good value for money' price	4.67	0.922			
PV3	Buying food through the MFOA is more economical	4.29	0.920			
Habit (HB)				0.895	0.927	0.762
HB1	Using the MFOA has become a habit for me	4.86	0.788			
HB2	I want to continue to use the MFOA	4.34	0.882			
HB3	I must use the MFOA	4.18	0.931			
HB4	I am used to using the MFOA	4.71	0.885			
Online Tracking (OT)				0.915	0.946	0.854
OT1	The tracking feature is available on the MFOA	4.78	0.933			
OT2	The tracking feature in the MFOA is very important	4.45	0.914			
OT3	The tracking feature on the MFOA is useful to save my time	4.46	0.924			
E-satisfaction (SA)				0.928	0.954	0.874
SA1	I have a pleasant experience while using the MFOA	4.68	0.930			
SA2	The MFOA meets my expectancy	4.42	0.947			
SA3	Overall, I am satisfied with the MFOA	4.44	0.928			
Continuance Intention (CI)				0.940	0.961	0.892
CI1	I intend to continue using the MFOA	4.75	0.956			
CI2	I will use the MFOA to order food if the situation allows	4.69	0.941			
CI3	After COVID-19 ends, I will continue to use the MFOA	4.46	0.935			

Note MFOA (Mobile Food Ordering Application), (Cronbach's Alpha), CR (Composite Reliability), AVE (Average Variance Extracted)

Table 3 Hypotheses Testing for Direct Effect

Hypotheses	β	T-Value	P- Value	Result	
H1	Performance Expectancy → E-Satisfaction	0.226	2.318	0.021	Accepted
H2	Effort Expectancy → E-Satisfaction	0.090	1.065	0.288	Rejected
H3	Social Influence → E-Satisfaction	−0.196	3.489	0.001	Rejected
H4	Facilitating Condition → E-Satisfaction	0.178	2.412	0.016	Accepted
H5	Hedonic Motivation → E-Satisfaction	−0.128	2.001	0.046	Rejected
H6	Price Value → E-Satisfaction	0.138	2.162	0.031	Accepted
H7	Habit → E-Satisfaction	0.204	2.452	0.015	Accepted
H8	Online Tracking → E-Satisfaction	0.198	2.274	0.023	Accepted
H9	E-Satisfaction → Continuance Intention	0.275	3.520	0.000	Accepted

ce expectancy has a positive and significant impact on e-satisfaction. Therefore, the higher the value of performance expectancy, the higher the value of e-satisfaction, and vice versa. H2 shows the value of $\beta = 0.090$ positive; t-value = 1.065; p-value = 0.288, thus the hypothesis is rejected. It implies that EE negatively impacts SA. This finding, however, aligns with prior studies by Abed (2024), Alalwan (2020), and Teo et al. (2024).

H3 shows the value of $\beta = 0.196$ negative; t-value = 3.489; p-value = 0.001, thus the hypothesis is rejected. It indicates that social influence has a negative but significant impact on e-satisfaction. Therefore, the higher the value of social influence, the lower the value of e-satisfaction will be, which is in contrast with Hariguna and Ruangkanjanases (2020). H4 shows the value of $\beta = 0.178$ positive; t-value = 2.412; p-value = 0.016, thus the hypothesis is accepted. It means the facilitating condition has a positive and significant impact on customer e-satisfaction. Therefore, the higher the value of facilitating condition, the higher the value of e-satisfaction, and vice versa.

H5 shows the value of $\beta = 0.128$ negative; t-value = 2.001; p-value = 0.046, thus the hypothesis is rejected. It means that hedonic motivation has a negative and significant impact on customer e-satisfaction. Therefore, the higher the value of hedonic motivation, the lower the value of e-satisfaction will be. Prior studies have shown that HM can be a significant (Abed, 2024; Alalwan, 2020; Hariguna & Ruangkanjanases, 2020) but also not significant (Munday & Humbani, 2024) predictor of SA and CI. H6 shows the value of $\beta = 0.138$ positive; t-value = 2.162; p-value = 0.031, thus the hypothesis is accepted. It means the price value has a positive and significant impact on customer e-satisfaction. Therefore, the higher the value of price value, the higher the value of e-satisfaction.

H7 shows the value of $\beta = 0.204$ positive; t-value = 2.452; p-value = 0.015, thus the hypothesis is accepted. It means the habit has a positive and significant impact on customer e-satisfaction. Therefore, the higher the value of habit, the higher the value of e-satisfaction, which aligns with Abed (2024) and Munday and Humbani (2024). H8 shows the value of $\beta = 0.198$ positive; t-value = 2.274; p-value = 0.023, thus the hypothesis is accepted. It means that online tracking has a positive and significant impact on customer e-satisfaction. Therefore, the higher the value of online tracking, the higher the value of e-satisfaction, and vice versa, in line with Hariguna and Ruangkanjanases (2020).

H9 shows the value of $\beta = 0.275$ positive; t-value = 3.520; p-value = 0.000, thus the hypothesis is accepted. It means that e-satisfaction has a positive and significant impact on continuance intention. Therefore, the higher the value of e-satisfaction, the higher the value of continuance intention, and vice versa. Moreover, this is in line with prior extensive studies in the food business context, for instance, Alalwan (2020), Al Amin et al. (2020), Humbani et al. (2024), Lin et

Table 4 Hypotheses Testing for Indirect Effect

Relationship	β	T-Value	P-Value	Results
PE → SA → CI	0.062	2.125	0.034	Significant
EE → SA → CI	0.025	0.971	0.332	Not Significant
SI → SA → CI	-0.054	2.729	0.007	Significant
FC → SA → CI	0.049	1.892	0.059	Not Significant
HM → SA → CI	-0.035	1.731	0.084	Not Significant
PV → SA → CI	0.038	1.702	0.089	Not Significant
HB → SA → CI	0.056	1.876	0.061	Not Significant
OT → SA → CI	0.054	1.607	0.109	Not Significant

Note PE (Performance Expectancy), EE (Effort Expectancy), SI (Social Influence), FC (Facilitating Condition), HM (Hedonic Motivation), PV (Price Value), HB (Habit), OT (Online Tracking), CI (Continuance Intention)

al. (2024), Tsang et al. (2024), Wahid et al. (2024), and Wiastuti et al. (2022). Similarly in other tourism hospitality contexts, the use of technology in medical tourism destinations (Bader et al., 2023) and beach tourism (Magaš et al., 2023) have the same results.

Further, Table 4 presents the statistical result of the indirect effect of SA as the mediating variable between eight MFOA attributes and CI. SA was found to significantly mediate the relationship of two MFOA attributes on CI with a *p*-value greater than 0.05, which are performance expectancy (*p*-value = 0.034) and social influence (*p*-value = 0.007). In contrast, customer e-satisfaction was found to not significantly mediate the relationship of the remaining six MFOA attributes on CI with a *p*-value less than 0.05, which are hedonic motivation (*p*-value = 0.084), effort expectancy (*p*-value = 0.332), price value (*p*-value = 0.089), habit (*p*-value = 0.061), and facilitating condition (*p*-value = 0.059).

Discussion and Conclusion

This study focuses on the category of firm-owned MFOAs, specifcally for coffee shop settings in the Indonesian context, in contrast with the majority of prior studies that emphasize third-party MFOAs. The study examines various attributes of MFOAs, such as performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, facilitating conditions, hedonic motivation, price value, habits, and online tracking, derived from the UTAUT2 and Technology Acceptance Models. The research found that these attributes significantly influence user e-satisfaction, except for effort expectancy, social influence, and hedonic motivation. Interestingly, social influence and hedonic motivation were found to have a negative impact on customer satisfaction with MFOAs. This indicates that customer satisfaction is primarily influenced by the performance and interface of MFOAs rather than emotional factors or external influences (such as friends, family, and peers).

Additionally, the R-squared value for continuance intention is 0.071, and 0.369 for e-satisfaction. This suggests that customer e-satisfaction could be influenced by 36.9 percent by eight MFOA attributes. Conversely, the continuance intention of using the MFOA is influenced by customer e-satisfaction by only 7.1 percent. This implies that customers may intend to use the MFOA in the future whether or not they are satisfied. Enhancing MFOA attributes could positively influence customers to continue using it.

The Kopi Kenangan brand leads as the most widely used MFOA for coffee shop settings, offering seven main functions: locating the nearest outlet, customizing orders, pre-ordering, cashless payment, real-time tracking notifications, collecting points, and exclusive app promos, similar to the MFOAs offered by Starbucks and Chatime. What sets firm-owned MFOAs apart from third-party MFOAs is the function of collecting points and exclusive app promos. It is the case that some promotional programmes are exclusively available on firm-owned MFOAs and cannot be found in third-party MFOAs. This serves as a key reason why customers choose the former over the latter.

In the coffee shop business, ensuring customer satisfaction is crucial. However, to maintain sustainable success for firm-owned MFOAs, customers prioritize the app's attributes over satisfaction with the product or company. Once customers discover that the MFOA offers a reliable tracking system and provides value for money, they are likely to continue using it. Furthermore, in today's digital era, coffee shops must focus on innovation not only in terms of product development but also in process innovation, particularly in the area of ordering and delivery systems. Direct ordering through the company's official distribution channel is far more advantageous than orders placed through third-party platforms such as GoFood, GrabFood, and ShopeeFood. One of the main benefits is that the company can build its own customer database, allowing for personalized engagement based on customers' buying habits and preferences. From a profitability standpoint, the company can retain all margins as no third-party commissions need to be paid.

This research makes three significant contributions. Firstly, it focuses on firm-owned MFOAs rather than third-party MFOAs, which have received more attention from scholars. Secondly, it highlights the intention of repeat customers of the MFOA, a group that has been understudied (Ramos, 2022). As a result, this study has been able to identify salient areas and make small contributions to enhance the theoretical framework. Lastly, it revealed that in the context of firm-owned MFOAs, social influence and hedonic motivation were found to be negative predictors of customer e-satisfaction.

The coffee shop business in Indonesia has been going through remarkable shifts due to the increasing popularity of coffee as a lifestyle choice and social activity. Among local tourists and customers, for instance, the coffee shop is not solely a place to drink coffee; instead, it is considered a place to enjoy quality time (Mulyaningtias, 2022). Particularly for Gen Z tourists, coffee drinking culture in cafés has become a prominent factor when they visit certain places (Agustiani & Agoes, 2023). Given that Gen Z is highly tech-savvy, offering online service options at coffee shops can provide a unique and competitive advantage.

On the other hand, among international tourists, coffee shops, especially in major tourist destinations like Bali, Yogyakarta, and Bandung, serve as alternative workspaces, especially for digital nomads. Catering to the digital nature of these tourists, providing an online platform at coffee shops can be an additional selling point. Furthermore, this can help overcome language barriers, as international tourists may prefer not to engage in face-to-face transactions and instead conduct their transactions online. In summary, the innovative MFOA services offered by coffee shops are expected to address the technology needs and demands of both local and international tourists when they travel and therefore support the tourism industry in that particular destination.

Based on the research findings, we have formulated some recommendations for coffee shop businesses to enhance their firm-owned MFOAs to effectively compete in the market and attract customers from various third-party MFOAs. Firstly, to enhance the MFOA attribute of performance expectancy, the company should consider incorporating a messaging feature that allows users to communicate with the company, similar to what is offered by GrabFood. Simplifying the app interface is also crucial, as some users have found it overly complex compared to other pre-existing food delivery applications (such as GoFood, Shopee Food, and GrabFood). It is important for the MFOA to be compatible with all mobile phone types and have a smaller file size for wider accessibility.

Secondly, to improve MFOA e-satisfaction, it is advisable to introduce additional monetary incentives such as points, price discounts, and quantity discounts, along with a loyalty programme for active users who play a vital role in driving sales and attracting new customers. Lastly, to enhance MFOA continuance intention, it is recommended to periodically review and update the MFOA features to ensure they meet customers' expectations, thereby encouraging continued usage. Overall, satisfactory performance of MFOA attributes is essential for the coffee shop business as it significantly influences customer e-satisfaction and their intention to continue using the app.

Although this study provides valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations. The findings are specifically limited to the MFOAs of coffee shops in Jakarta, Indonesia, and may not apply to similar MFOA coffee shops in other settings. The data was gathered during the COVID-19 pandemic, when lockdown measures were in place, leading to the usage of an online survey exclusively. It is worth noting that the number of respondents is relatively low due to the limited customer base of the targeted MFOA coffee shops. As these establishments are relatively new, their recognition among the general population is still growing. Furthermore, there is an uneven distribution of respondents, with a predominant representation from younger age groups. Additionally, the study solely relied on a quantitative approach and did not explore potential moderating effects based on respondent profiles, such as gender, budget category, and ordering time.

Therefore, we suggest that future studies consider the specific context of different settings, tailored to the characteristics of each location. For example, in Indonesia, the growth of firm-owned MFOAs is notable in coffee shop settings, as well as in fast food and bakery settings. Key brands in these settings include KFC, McDonald's, Burger King, Hokben, Pizza Hut, Domino's Pizza, Harvest, Capital, and BreadTalk. It is essential to ensure a broad and equally distributed pool of respondents. Additionally, segmenting the findings by generation cohort could yield valuable insights, as different age groups may have varying perspectives on technology adoption in their daily lives.

It would be beneficial to employ a mixed methods approach, possibly incorporating interviews with select respondents to gather more in-depth data through open-ended questions, alongside face-to-face data collection during surveys. Moreover, supplementing data analysis with econometrics, such as regression analysis, could provide forecasts for the dependent variables, such as satisfaction and intention to continue using the MFOA, based on the independent variables. By integrating the findings from both surveys and interviews with additional data analysis, we can enhance the overall results. Furthermore, conducting an exploratory study to understand the push and pull factors influencing customer resistance to initially downloading firm-owned MFOAs could offer valuable insights for the restaurant industry, enabling them to adapt their strategies based on customer feedback.

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Original Scientific Article

Exploring the Differences Among Luxury and Budget Brands in Terms of Emotional and Functional Values Applied to the Hospitality Sector

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The exploration of budget and luxury hospitality brands reveals contrasting views in consumer preferences and purchasing behaviour. While luxury brands promise emotional gratification through premium experiences, budget brands aim to fulfil practical needs with cost-effective solutions. This paper investigates the complexity of the relationship between emotional and functional values provided by these brand categories, aiming to clarify their implications for consumer behaviour. An exploratory qualitative content analysis was conducted on ten websites of budget and luxury hospitality brands to identify the ratio between the emotional and functional values they offer, revealing patterns in value provision by each brand category. The conducted analysis identified an inverse ratio of functional and emotional values in the analysed budget and luxury hospitality brands. Consequently, a theoretical 60:40 ratio between functional and emotional values is proposed for both brand categories, budget and luxury, taking into account the identified inverse ratio pattern. Further empirical research is suggested to validate these findings and expand the understanding of brand value in the hospitality industry and beyond.

Keywords: budget brands, luxury brands, hospitality industry, functional values, emotional values

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Introduction

Oscar Wilde is often credited with a famous thought: 'I have the simplest tastes; I am always satisfied with the best.' Though the interpretation of this thought may vary from one person to another and from context to context, there is an intriguing idea hidden in these words if applied to luxury. The thought that choosing the best available and discarding less valuable options is what provides the best consumer experience and emotional satisfaction. But there is another thought: 'If you buy cheaply, you pay dearly', and this can be applied to price-conscious consumers. It implies that buying just on price is not convenient. Cheap products are often limited in terms of features and quality (Kotler & Keller, 2012). Cost reductions through the use of low-quality resources may cheapen the product and, consequently, compromise its image or integrity (Anderson, 2020). This implies that such products are low in performance and durability, consequently leading to multiple purchases. Therefore, evaluating both price and quality ensures a wise purchase.

These two concepts, as described, represent opposite ends of the consumer purchase spectrum: luxury on one end and budget on the other. This suggests that luxury brands are associated with emotional experiences from high-quality purchases (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009), while budget-friendly brands prioritize functional values and value-based decisions (Bruhn & Zimmermann, 2022). Chen (2022) supports this notion, categorizing brands broadly into luxury and everyday brands. Chen elaborates on the motivations behind purchase behaviour, noting that luxury brands are purchased for personal and symbolic reasons, while everyday brands are chosen for practical and functional purposes.

Luxury brands attract consumers and provide them with unique experiences, driven by factors such as strong brand image, differentiation, innovation, exclusivity, high quality, and premium pricing (Ilias, 2010). Consumers are drawn to luxury products for reasons including status, values, and social comparison (Ko et al., 2019). However, the scientific literature lacks a unified definition of luxury (Kim, 2019; Kapferer, 2017b), as it remains a concept with unclear boundaries and criteria (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009). Many definitions focus on elements, e.g. high quality, high price, exclusivity, and positive emotions (Wirtz et al., 2020). Hagtvedt and Patrick (2009) define a luxury brand as 'one that has premium products, provides pleasure as a central benefit, and connects with consumers on an emotional level' (p. 609). This emphasis on emotions highlights how luxury prioritizes hedonism over functionality (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009).

Budget-friendly brands tend to economize by eliminating superfluous and expensive features from their offerings to cut business costs (Ivens et al., 2022). These brands are characterized by highly standardized and simple offers designed to satisfy customers' core functional benefits (Bruhn & Zimmermann, 2022). The primary motivators associated with budget brands include value for money (De Chernatony et al., 2011), an offer of adequate quality and comfort (Ren et al., 2018), convenience (Colbu et al., 2008), and price (Ivens et al., 2022).

When comparing luxury and budget brands, it has been noticed that they differ significantly in the values they embody. However, both categories offer functional and emotional values to customers. According to De Chernatony et al. (2011), a brand comprises functional and emotional values, enabling organizations to promise a unique and welcomed experience. Emotional values symbolize aspects, e.g. prestige, reassurance, style, or distinctiveness, while functional values encompass rational or objective factors, e.g. packaging, functionality, and price. They further emphasize that consumers' purchase decisions are influenced by both rational and emotional factors.

This paper aims to identify the relative importance of functional and emotional brand values, particularly within the luxury sector, from the service provider's perspective. This exploratory analysis is motivated by a study conducted by Dugandžić (2023) in luxury hospitality, which found a higher incidence of emotional (66%) versus functional (34%) values. The paper questions whether this ratio applies to the entire brand offer. Subsequently, the following research questions are posed:

- What is the functional-to-emotional value ratio in luxury hospitality?
- How does this ratio compare in budget hospitality?
- Does this ratio differ between luxury and budget brands, and if so, by how much?

While the hospitality literature primarily emphasizes the descriptive importance of functional and emotional brand values, this study aims to quantify the ratio between these values in both budget and luxury hospitality brands to provide a holistic understanding of their interaction and prioritization within these categories. A literature review will follow to provide a theoretical basis for the present study and subsequent discussion.

Literature Review

Defining the Terms 'Luxury' and 'Budget'

Luxury is inherently elusive; it is subjective, shaped by culture and lifestyle, making it challenging to define (Kapferer, 2017b; Okonkwo-Pézard, 2017). Its meaning varies among individuals, reflecting personal opinions (Kapferer, 2017a). As economic opportunities expand, consumers increasingly focus on comfort and pleasure, reaching beyond mere necessities (Patrick & Hagtvedt, 2014). These indulgences signal social status, with luxury being perceived as a social marker (Kapferer & Bastien, 2017).

Luxury, in general terms, can be defined as 'a condition of abundance or great ease and comfort' or 'something adding to pleasure or comfort but not absolutely necessary' (Merriam-Webster, n.d.-a). A distinction can be made between terms such as 'pleasure', 'ease' and 'comfort', and the term 'necessity', emphasizing the emotional versus functional aspect. Primarily, luxury is invested in providing pleasure, with luxuries being mainly associated with hedonic experiences, while necessities are more associated with functional benefits (Kivetz & Simonson, 2002). Moreover, luxury products offer a higher level of hedonic value compared to their non-luxury counterparts (Peng & Chen, 2019). Batat (2019) delves further into the experiential value of luxury, emphasizing that today's luxury customers are increasingly seeking immersive and varied experiences to discover new meanings and enrich their lives. Luxury can be experienced only through the interaction with the luxury offer. Hence, the qualitative aspect of what luxury is cannot be defined except through both the objective features of the offer and subjective customer perceptions (Wirtz et al., 2020).

Han and Kim (2020) define a luxury brand as 'a product/service brand that consumers perceive to be of high quality and provides them with real value—functionally and emotionally' (p. 2). Additionally, it excels in each category, offering pleasure as a central benefit (Patrick & Hagtvedt, 2014). However, luxury cannot be uniformly applied. A distinction should be made between a luxury product and a luxury service. A service cannot be owned like a product but only experienced while it is consumed. The expected benefit derived from a luxury service, as opposed to a luxury product, is primarily experiential, whereas the pleasure derived from owning a luxury product comes from mere possession. Hence, creating psychological ownership for services is of utmost importance compared to legal ownership of products (Wirtz et al., 2020). A more specific definition of luxury can be formulated with an emphasis on the service industry. Luxury services are defined as 'extraordinary hedonic experiences that are exclusive' (Wirtz et al., 2020, p. 682). The exclusivity in this context 'can be monetary, social and hedonic in nature' (p. 682). Luxury services are, therefore, highly experiential, as the customer experience represents a central component of the offer (Batat, 2019).

Budget, on the other hand, is primarily associated with low cost. It can be defined through its synonyms; for example, affordable is described as 'having a cost that is not too high' or 'that is not too expensive for people of limited means' (Merriam-Webster, n.d.-b). The connection with individuals with low purchasing power is immediately evident. Therefore, market segmentation is an essential tool for budget brands that primarily target segments that are more price-sensitive (Putri et al., 2021; Nakaprasit, 2012; Danaher et al., 2011). Consequently, these consumers, due to financial constraints, might also show greater financial responsibility (Baker et al., 2020).

Different companies act differently in the market. While some tend to raise the prices of their offerings due to increased value through feature extensions, others choose to lower prices and shape their offers accordingly, indicating a demand for budget brands as well (Kotler et al., 2019). Budget brands are widely present, for example, in the airline business (Albers et al., 2020), hospitality (El Haddad, 2015), the smartphone market (Putri et al., 2021), and retail sectors such as consumer electronics and grocery stores (Berman, 2015), as well as in the furniture and fashion markets (Giménez, 2013), to name a few. Drawing from the main characteristics of budget brands in these industries, the following can be summarized.

The lowest achievable prices are a defining characteristic of no-frills offerings—those reduced to basic functionality (Albers et al., 2020)—providing significant financial value to consumers by eliminating unnecessary and unrequested extra services (Berman, 2015). Therefore, brands striving for success in the budget sector are able to reduce development and production costs to a minimum (Antonovici, 2016), often outsourcing activities, and opting to acquire the rights to use technology instead of investing in patent development (Berman, 2015). However, basic offers may not meet the needs of some budget consumers. To better suit their needs, budget brands can offer a choice between extra services for an additional fee, expanding their core offering through, e.g., pure components bundling (Nakaprasit, 2012). Furthermore, price alone is no longer the main driver for budget consumption. Consumers also demand an adequate level of quality from what they buy. Therefore, a price-for-value approach is an essential business strategy for budget companies nowadays (Giménez, 2013).

The Hospitality Industry

Both products and services serve the same purpose, which is solving a customer's problem (Mcdonald & Wilson, 2016). However, both products and services significantly differ in their essence. Services possess unique characteristics compared to physical products, differing in terms of intangibility (primarily abstract and non-material), heterogeneity (non-standardized and highly variable), inseparability (production and consumption occurring simultaneously), and perishability (cannot be stored) (McDonald et al., 2011). Moreover, defining the quality of a service is a difficult task due to its nature. Service quality is a subjective concept, interpreted as 'perceived quality', which refers to a 'customer's judgment about a service' (Culiberg & Rojšek, 2010, p. 152). This variability means that consumers differ in their perceptions of what constitutes quality, making its understanding and practical application challenging.

But what is the hospitality industry? In general terms, it can be defined as the provision of food, drinks, lodging, entertainment, and friendly, welcoming service to guests (Pijls-Hoekstra, 2020). As a service provider, the hospitality industry is subject to the same limitations mentioned earlier, common to all services when compared to physical products. Given these significant differences, understanding how consumers form value perceptions of intangible services, especially in the hospitality industry, is crucial (Yang & Mattila, 2016). Hence, the difficulty in evaluating the quality of hospitality services compared to products due to the lack of tangible cues is significant. Therefore, consumers, in forming their perceptions, need more concrete images and cues provided by hospitality practitioners to make services as tangible as possible (Heo & Hyun, 2015).

To bridge the quality perception gap and establish a solid foundation for creating and effectively communicating values to the market, it is essential to delve into the fundamentals of hospitality. The focus of this study is on the hotel industry within hospitality; therefore, brief definitions of luxury and budget hotels will be presented first.

Due to the difficulty of defining luxury, luxury in hospitality also lacks a generally accepted definition (Jain et al, 2023). A luxury hotel, as an integral component of the hospitality sector, can be defined as a lodging facility that offers top-tier services, including both its physical attributes and intangible elements, such as relationships with customers (Ariffin et al., 2018).

A generally accepted definition of a budget hotel is also missing (Ren et al., 2016). Considering the main characteristic of this hospitality service, specifically a low price or better value for money (Chiang, 2018; Ren et al., 2016), the synonym 'economy hotel' is also frequently used (Ren et al., 2016). These are affordable hotel alternatives that provide a clean room with a bed and a shower but without additional services (Colbu et al., 2008). Hence, a suitable definition for budget hotels might be formulated as providers of basic accommodations with convenient functionality for tourists (Chiang, 2018).

To deepen the understanding of these two types of hospitality services, the next sections will expand on these concepts, emphasizing the values they provide to consumers.

An Overview of Brand Values

Firstly, in this paper, values and benefits are closely related and in a general sense will be used interchangeably according to the definition provided by McDonald and Dunbar (2012), where customer value is defined as 'the benefits gained from the product or service, but it can also encompass the value to the customer of other constituents of the total offer such as surrounding services (maintenance or information, for example), channels, and so on' (p. 8).

In brand management, various types of values are identified to be provided by brands. Consumer needs are met through functional, symbolic, relational, and experiential benefits (Florack & Palcu, 2017). According to Sweeney and Soutar (2001), four distinct value types drive purchase attitudes, namely emotional, social, quality/performance, and price/value for money. Batat (2019), on the other hand, focuses on brand values within the context of luxury, presenting a similar list that includes functional, experiential, social, and the additional aspect of ideological values. De Chernatony et al. (2011) narrowed the value spectrum down to two categories, which are functional and emotional. Kwon et al. (2016) suggest a similar categorization, dividing values into functional and non-functional. While these categorizations overlap, they also complement each other, providing a broader understanding of the types of values offered by brands.

Functional values provide solutions to a consumer's problem (Florack & Palcu, 2017). They involve the 'rational evaluation of brands' abilities to satisfy utilitarian needs' (De Chernatony et al., 2011, p. 418). On the other hand, they can refer to the functional, instrumental, and practical benefits of an offer (Chitturi et al., 2008). Functional values can also be defined from two perspectives, which are the value for money associated with the cost of the offer and the value derived from the relationship between the quality and the performance of the offer (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001).

Non-functional values, on the other hand, encompass symbolic values but also experiential values aimed at satisfying pleasure-seeking needs (Kwon et al., 2016), emphasizing a broader scope of included values in this category.

Symbolic values manifest in self-expressive and social values (Jung Choo et al., 2012), fulfilling internally generated psychological needs for self-enhancement and self-verification (Florack & Palcu, 2017; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004). They are also associated with factors such as personality congruence, user imagery congruence, brand prestige, and brand tribalism (Esmaeilpour, 2015). Therefore, symbolic values encompass the psychological meanings consumers attach to an offer (Yang & Mattila, 2016), emphasizing their inherently psychological nature.

Social values, as defined by Sweeney and Soutar (2001), refer to 'the utility derived from the product's ability to enhance social self-concept' (p. 211), aligning with the definition of symbolic values.

Ideological values are linked to consumer consciousness and personal systems of values, as well as religious and ideological beliefs (Batat, 2019).

Experiential values can satisfy needs arising from seeking pleasant sensory experiences, stimulation, or variety (Florack & Palcu, 2017), closely related to hedonic values that encompass aesthetic, experiential, and enjoyment-related aspects (Chitturi et al., 2008). Hedonic values also include emotional aspects such as indulgence and pleasure (Yang & Mattila, 2016).

Emotional values are defined as the 'evaluation of brands' abilities to help consumers express something about themselves', e.g. their personality, their mood, their membership of a particular social group, or their status (De Chernatony et al., 2011, p. 419). The authors associate emotional values with symbolic values, adding that consumers are also concerned with the brand's ability 'to help them interpret the people they meet, to reinforce membership of a particular social group, to communicate how they feel and to say something privately to themselves' (pp. 417–418), indicating an overlap of these two types of values. In a more simplified version, emotional values are defined as utilities associated with feelings generated by products/services (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001), such as emotional satisfaction (Ladhari, 2009). Emotional values are of significant importance, given the fundamental role of emotions and feelings in establishing relationships between consumers and brands (Chen, 2022).

Relational values are related to the consumer-brand relationship, providing individuals with a feeling of belonging (Florack & Palcu, 2017). Emotional bonds with the brand can be achieved through various brand-related activities like loyalty programmes (Lee et al., 2021). These values are developed through the fulfilment of consumer expectations and result in repeated purchases and emotional connections with the brand (Grönroos, 2006).

From these various presented definitions, it is evident that there is overlap and synonymy among these types of values. Some authors specifically identify different types of values, while others tend to generalize and place them into more inclusive units.

Brand Values in Luxury Hospitality

Consumers are increasingly engaged in pursuing emotional benefits (Santos et al., 2022), a trend reflected in the luxury industry as well (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2009). Consequently, emotional values appear to be what customers primarily expect from luxury brands (Chen, 2022; Patrick & Hagtvedt, 2014). Kapferer and Bastien (2009) go even further, stating that quality is not the defining feature of luxury; instead, it is the emotion at the highest level that should be strived for. Luxury brands thrive on the experience provided by their luxury offering—experiences that are hedonic in nature and exclusive. Such exclusivity, denoting a sense of limited access or availability, is created through monetary, social, and hedonic exclusivity (Wirtz et al., 2020). Khan et al. (2022) emphasize the priority given by consumers of luxury brands to social and symbolic values over functional values, further highlighting that functionality and performance are of less importance than connections with consumers on an emotional level (Patrick & Hagtvedt, 2014). Although functionality is superseded in importance by emotions, a high standard of functional value is expected by consumers for all luxury brands (Tynan et al., 2010). A luxury offer, besides functional needs, also satisfies the consumer's psychological needs (Wiedmann et al., 2017; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004). Psychological needs are directly related to symbolic benefits, meaning that consumers of luxury brands want to express affluence, self-image, demonstrate their social class, and enhance their self-concept (Nia & Lynne Zaichkowsky, 2000). Luxury brands can be associated with key terms that broaden their understanding. Words such as 'magnificent', 'extravagance', 'opulence', 'sumptuous', and 'lavishness' indicate the highest level of brand luxury (Miller & Mills, 2017) and can evoke a unique customer experience. Finally, contributing to the exclusivity and differentiation of luxury brands, Kapferer (2017a) emphasizes another characteristic—to be slightly excessive in details, in care, in honour, in precaution. This approach stands in stark contrast to standardization, cost reduction, and mass production.

According to Yang and Mattila (2016), hedonic value is the most significant purchase motivator in luxury hospitality, and the experience in hospitality is primarily driven by feelings of pleasure, excitement, and enjoyment. Therefore, at the heart of luxury hotel service lies the anticipation of an emotional experience (Ariffin et al., 2018), as luxury hotels belong to the highly experiential luxury domain (Batat, 2019). What further contributes to a high-end luxury accommodation experience is the extensive interpersonal contact provided by the hotel staff (Harkison et al., 2018), including the concierge and the personalized service they offer to meet the unique expectations of luxury customers (Batat, 2019). Lo and Yeung (2020) also support the notion that guest-to-staff interactions play a significant role in consumers' experiences.

However, due to the intangible nature of luxury hotel services, customers often find it challenging to evaluate functional benefits, such as quality and sophistication, provided by luxury hotels prior to their stay. Therefore, according to Chen and Peng (2014), this is the reason why functional values do not exert the same impact on consumer behaviour as symbolic and experiential values. Nevertheless, consumers highly value the service quality of a luxury hotel, particularly focusing on the physical environment and the interior of the suite, including components such as the bedroom and bathroom, with specific attention to elements like the bed and washbasin (Giglio et al., 2020; Lo & Yeung, 2020).

In conclusion, customer satisfaction in a luxury hotel setting is achieved through personalized services, ensuring more effective and efficient need fulfilment, as well as the higher level of comfort provided by hotel facilities, amenities, and the physical environment. Additionally, a genuine and authentic expression in service provision by hotel employees also significantly contributes to customer satisfaction (Ariffin et al., 2018). Furthermore, a luxury hotel service should embody qualities such as being 'authentic, exceptional, unique, magical, emotional, and, above all, memorable' (Batat, 2019, p. 27), as luxury demands.

Brand Values in Budget Hospitality

Vigneron and Johnson (2004) identified dimensions that distinguish between luxury and non-luxury brands. These five perceived dimensions characterizing luxury are conspicuousness, uniqueness, quality, extended self, and hedonism. Reversing them easily reveals the characteristics of non-luxury, common, or budget brands. Budget brands may be perceived as offering social indistinctiveness, commonality, minimal quality and performance, low emotional fulfilment, and a lack of psychological connection with the brand as part of the customer's identity. Such brands emphasize functional benefits and aim to provide good value for money or affordability (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2009), while differentiating themselves by delivering competitive performance in meeting customer needs (Brotherton, 2004).

Budget hotel brands are known for offering affordable rates while fulfilling the basic needs of customers (Ye et al., 2020). Functional values form the core of their offerings, with customers seeking benefits such as a convenient location, consistent service standards, value for money, hygiene and cleanliness (Brotherton, 2004). In addition to competitive pricing, these hotels often provide limited services and amenities (Ren et al., 2015). However, some hotels have adopted dynamic pricing strategies, offering a variety of services with a flexible pricing structure (El Haddad, 2015).

While budget hotel consumers are primarily motivated by functional value, their assessments also consider experiential values, representing novel and pleasant experiences (Chiang, 2018). This aligns with the broader concept of branding, as articulated by De Chernatony et al. (2011), suggesting that, regardless of type, brands provide both functional and emotional values to customers.

Methods

The exploratory analysis in this paper aims to unveil patterns and relationships between the functional and emotional values provided by luxury and budget brands. These values were selected based on the definition provided by De Chernatony et al. (2011), which conceptualizes a brand as a combination of functional and emotional values.

A qualitative content analysis was conducted on ten selected websites for each brand type. A website serves as a communication channel between the customer and the company, providing 'practical and functional information content' (Batat, 2019, p. 92) regarding its offerings. Descriptors of the service provided were identified on each brand's website, including appropriate subpages, and subsequently, values were derived from them. This analysis is based on two assumptions. The first assumption is that the description of a service is coherent with the actual substance of the service provided. The second assumption is that the analysed companies understand the needs and wants of their customers and that these needs and wants are adequately reflected through the information presented on their websites. The list of companies used for the analysis is listed in Table 1 and Table 2.

Specifically, these values were derived from the identified keywords related to the complete offerings provided by a hotel and presented on these websites. The complete offerings include all elements of the marketing mix for services, namely the 7Ps: product, place, price, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence. The rationale behind this approach is that hotel customers interact with all aspects of the mix, not only with the core service. Factors such as price, location, promotional messaging, interactions with hotel staff, the processes involved in service delivery, and the hotel environment and its surroundings all directly influence the formation of customer value perception and are integral parts of the holistic tourist experience. An illustrative example of this analysis is shown in Table 3 for budget brands and Table 4 for luxury brands. After identifying functional and emotional values, they were quantified and compared between the two types of brands.

To address the challenge of identifying luxury and budget brands, the selection of companies for analysis was based on their self-definition and self-promotion as luxury or budget. The hotels chosen for the analysis were identified through an internet search, wherein keywords found on their websites, e.g. 'opulence', 'luxury', and 'sumptuous', were associated with luxury. Conversely, terms such as 'value for money', 'affordability', and 'convenience', as highlighted in the literatu-

Table 1 List of Budget Hotel Brands

Budget hotel	Source
Travelodge	(https://www.travelodge.co.uk/)
Motel 6	(https://www.motel6.com/en/home.html)
Ibis	(All.accor, n.d.)
Premier Inn	(Premier Inn, n.d.)
Wyndham Hotels	(Super 8 Worldwide, n.d.)
Point A Hotels	(Point A Hotels, n.d.)
easyHotel	(Easy Hotel, n.d.)
Motel One	(https://www.motel-one.com/en/)
Best Western	(https://www.bestwestern.com/en_US.html)
Go Hotel Saga	(https://saga-hotel-copenhagen.h-rez.com)

Table 2 List of Luxury Hotel Brands

Luxury hotel	Source
Hyatt Regency	(Hyatt Regency, n.d.)
Burj Al Arab Jumeirah	(https://www.jumeirah.com/en)
The Ritz-Carlton	(The Ritz-Carlton, n.d.)
The Savoy	(https://www.thesavoylondon.com/)
La Mamounia	(https://mamounia.com/en/)
The Westin Excelsior	(Westin Hotel & Resorts, n.d.)
The Plaza	(https://www.theplazany.com/)
Aman	(Aman, n.d.)
Four Seasons Hotel	(Four Seasons Hotel, n.d.)
The Boulders	(https://www.theboulders.com/)

re review, were linked to budget. Websites were then randomly chosen based on their prominence in the search listings.

Analysis and Results

The first step in the analysis process was to identify ten luxury and budget hotel brands. The selection is presented in Table 1 and Table 2.

The next step was to identify keywords related to the service offerings and derive the provided values from them. An example of the analysis is provided in Table 3 and Table 4.

The identified functional and emotional values were classified according to key descriptors derived from the literature review. For example, for budget brands, terms such as offer of adequate quality and comfort (Ren et al., 2018), value for money (Chiang, 2018; Ren et al., 2016), consistent service standards (Brotherton, 2004), convenience in general (Colbu et al., 2008) or a convenient location (Brotherton, 2004), and price (Ivens et al., 2022; Ye et al., 2020) are considered functional values, while novel and pleasant experiences (Chiang, 2018) are indicative of emotional values. For luxury brands, the types of values with the appropriate dimensions presented by Batat (2019) were primarily used, e.g. functional (efficiency and excellence), ideological (ethics and spirituality), experiential (hedonism, affection, and aesthetics), and social (status and esteem).

In Table 3, a shortlist of identified values for each presented service feature in a budget hotel context is provided, along with the following rationale. A king-size bed provides comfort and relaxation based on its main feature, which is size, indicating more space

Table 3 Values for Budget Hotel Brands – Shortlist

Service feature	Functional values	Emotional values
King size bed	Comfort – more space enhances comfort and rest	Relax – enhances relaxation
Wi-Fi internet access	Convenience – it is an accessible and available means to solve a practical problem	–
Amazing value food and drink	Money-saving – affordable food prices	Affection/satisfaction – enhanced satisfaction through meeting or surpassing expectations in food service

Table 4 Values for Luxury Hotel Brands – Shortlist

Service feature	Functional values	Emotional values
Wi-Fi internet access	• Convenience – it provides an accessible and readily available solution to a practical problem	–
Luxurious Hermès bathroom amenities	• Excellence – high-quality service provided • Comfort – the specific quality and fragrance of Hermès amenities ensure greater physical and psychological ease	• Affection/satisfaction – enhanced satisfaction through experiencing the luxury service • Esteem – indulging in luxury service enhances customer self-esteem • Status – consumption of luxury services indicates higher status
Marble bathrooms / soothing mood lighting / Moroccan-style walk-in showers	• Excellence – high-quality service provided • Comfort – the environment design enhances physical and psychological ease	• Relax – mood lighting enhances the feeling of relaxation • Aesthetic – the environment is visually pleasing • Esteem – indulging in luxury service enhances customer self-esteem • Status – consumption of luxury services indicates higher status

to accommodate a person's rest compared to a small, cramped bed. Wi-Fi internet access is now considered a standard amenity in hotels, even in budget ones. It does not necessarily provide any emotional values but rather offers a convenient solution to a customer's need. The statement 'amazing value food and drink' emphasizes the term 'amazing value' rather than focusing on fulfilling customers' physiological needs. It suggests a considerable enhancement in the value offered by the service, indicating an exceptionally attractive price point for food and drink. Consequently, it may result in reduced expenditure for customers, potentially leading to increased satisfaction.

Compared to budget hotels, luxury services are described using a distinctly different language. A significant number of superlative adjectives and storytelling techniques are employed to underscore the richness and emotional value associated with luxury. Table 4 presents a shortlist of identified values for each service feature in a luxury hotel context, accompanied by the rationale which follows. The internet access provides the same benefit as budget hotels do, without any additional service features presented in these descriptions to justify additional values. 'Luxurious Hermès bathroom amenities' distinguish themselves from budget services through the inclusion of

Table 5 Budget Hotels Value Analysis

Hotel	Functional value	Emotional value
Travelodge	61%	39%
Motel 6	62%	38%
Ibis	62%	38%
Premier Inn	61%	39%
Wyndham Hotels	62%	38%
Point A Hotels	61%	39%
easyHotel	62%	38%
Motel One	58%	42%
Best Western Hotels	66%	34%
Saga Hotel	62%	38%
Average value	62%	38%

Table 6 Luxury Hotels Value Analysis

Hotel	Functional value	Emotional value
Hyatt Regency London	42%	58%
Burj Al Arab Jumeirah	39%	61%
Ritz Carlton Kyoto	43%	57%
The Savoy London	42%	58%
La Mamounia	42%	58%
Westin Excelsior Rome	44%	56%
The Plaza NY	43%	57%
Four Seasons Istanbul	44%	56%
The Boulders	41%	59%
Aman Venice	41%	59%
Average value	42%	58%

the keywords 'luxurious Hermès'. The term 'luxurious' suggests an inherently higher quality of service, particularly when combined with the renowned brand Hermès, which is associated with exclusivity, high quality, and a luxurious lifestyle. The unique status of the Hermès brand, coupled with the descriptor 'luxurious', implies a premium service and overall comfort provided through the sensory experience of the distinctive fragrance of these amenities. The use of such luxurious amenities enhances experiential satisfaction, leading to an increase in customer self-esteem and reinforcing their perception of status by indulging in these luxury-related experiences. The bathroom design is described with the keyword 'marble', which is an unusual material for bathrooms outside of luxury contexts. Utilizing such a service is thus associated with higher status and an increase in self-esteem. Additionally, these materials are chosen to enhance the quality of the service, but also for their aesthetic appeal, as are the exclusive design features of the 'Moroccan-style walk-in showers'. The 'soothing mood lighting' in these bathrooms implies a calming environment that provides physical and psychological comfort, enhancing relaxation.

Based on the previously provided examples, an extensive analysis was conducted on the selected hotels listed in Table 1 and Table 2. The results of the analysis are as follows.

Table 5 presents the results of the qualitative analysis on brand values for budget brands. The ratio between functional and emotional values provided by budget hospitality brands is 62:38, with a maximum variability of 4 percentage points for each value around the mean.

Table 6 presents the results of the qualitative analysis on brand values for luxury brands. The ratio between functional and emotional values provided by luxury hospitality brands is 42:58, with a maximum variability of an average 2.5 percentage points for each value around the mean.

Table 7 and Figure 1 show a significant similarity between the functional values of luxury brands and the emotional values of budget brands, and vice versa. The difference between these value categories is 4 percentage points, indicating an inverse ratio between values provided by luxury and budget brands.

The analysis revealed distinct values provided by budget and luxury brands. The key functional value for budget hospitality brands is practicality and convenience, linked to service efficiency and quality, including useful amenities and services to fulfil a wider range of customer needs and wants. Other emphasized values are comfort and cost-saving, with custo-

Table 7 Value Comparison Between Luxury and Budget Brands

Luxury brands	Budget brands	Luxury brands	Budget brands
Functional value	Emotional value	Emotional value	Functional value
42%	38%	58%	62%

mers expecting a comfortable environment proportionate to the price paid. Price is crucial for budget hospitality services, as customers often have limited financial means.

The most prominent emotional value for budget hospitality brands is overall satisfaction with the service, reflected by balancing price with quality expectations. Other key emotional values are stress reduction and relaxation, highlighting the need for minimizing customer concerns about whether extra services and amenities will be available to fulfil all their expected needs. Relaxation is a core value, reflecting customers' desire for leisure and a comfortable environment.

The most prominent functional value for luxury hospitality brands is excellence in service quality, reflecting the high price paid. This includes quality materials, personalized service, and high-quality food and drink. Additionally, comfort and convenience are key values, achieved through comfortable beds, spacious accommodations, and extra services, e.g. room service, spa facilities, and gym access. Convenience also involves efficiently fulfilling all customer needs with available amenities and additional services.

The most prominent emotional value for luxury hospitality brands is satisfaction with the service, often characterized by a sense of fulfilment. This satisfaction is linked to service excellence, overall quality, and positive staff interactions. Other key emotional values include relaxation, hedonism, and esteem. Luxury clients prioritize relaxation, achieved through comfortable and aesthetically pleasing environments. Hedonism is supported by extra services, such as diverse dining and entertainment options. Luxury services also enhance self-esteem and status, as clients appreciate the exclusivity of these offerings.

Discussion and Conclusion

The exploratory analysis presented in this paper has yielded insights into the underlying structure of values offered by both budget and luxury hospitality brands. These findings serve as the foundation for the ensuing discussion, highlighting several important points, which are worthy of further examination.

An attempt to quantify both the functional and emotional values provided by budget and luxury hospitality brands: Based on the literature review, it is evi-

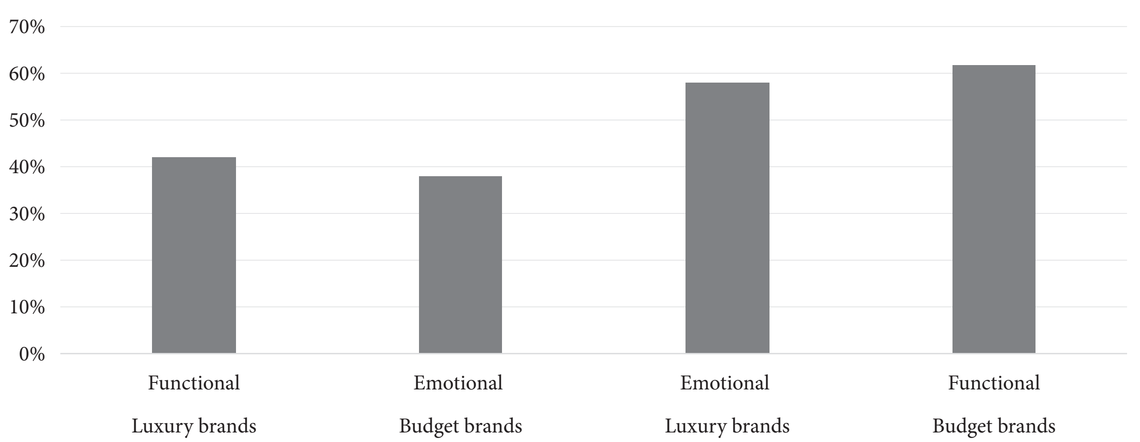

Figure 1 Value Comparison between Luxury and Budget Brands – Graphical Representation

dent that both brand categories offer different quantities and qualities of customer value. Budget brands primarily focus on functional aspects such as price (Ivens et al., 2022), targeting more price-sensitive market segments (Putri et al., 2021) and providing greater value for money (Chiang, 2018; Ren et al., 2016). Conversely, luxury brands, while also delivering high-quality service (Han & Kim, 2020), place a greater emphasis on fulfilling consumers' emotional needs, focusing on pleasure (Patrick & Hagtvedt, 2014), and social and hedonic exclusivity (Wirtz et al., 2020), which are highly experiential (Batat, 2019). The analysis presented here offers insight into the ratio between functional and emotional values of hospitality brands, indicating that for budget brands, providers emphasize functional values over emotional values at a ratio of 62:48. In contrast, for luxury brands, this ratio is 42:58, favouring emotional values.

The quantity and quality of values in budget and luxury hospitality brands: There is an unexpectedly low difference between functional and emotional values in luxury brand offerings, amounting to only 16 percentage points. A greater disparity in values in favour of emotional values was anticipated based on the literature review. As indicated in the literature review, luxury brands, in addition to high quality (Wirtz et al., 2020), which is considered a functional value, primarily focus on establishing an emotional connection with consumers through pleasure (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2009), hedonism (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009), status, and social comparison (Ko et al., 2019). The reason for this is that providers aim to meet the primary expectation of emotional values from their customers (Chen, 2022; Patrick & Hagtvedt, 2014). Similarly, the case might be argued for budget brands. The difference between functional and emotional values in this case is also lower than expected, amounting to only 24 percentage points. A higher difference was anticipated based on the literature review. According to the literature review, budget brands tend to focus on affordable rates while fulfilling the basic needs of customers (Ye et al., 2020), providing basic functional values, e.g. a convenient location, consistent service standards, hygiene, and cleanliness (Brotherton, 2004). It is evident that there is a balance between functional and emotional values in both brand categories that should not be disrupted but acknowledged according to the specific brand characteristics and market they serve. As stated by De Chernatony et al. (2011), regardless of the type, all brands provide both functional and emotional values to customers. Consequently, both categories of service providers, budget and luxury, emphasize both functional and emotional values as appropriate to their brand characteristics and market.

Value communication differences between budget and luxury hospitality brands: Luxury brands tend to employ a distinctive language when communicating values to their audience. It is evident that a storytelling approach predominates, portraying the richness of experiences customers will encounter through engagement with their services and offerings as a whole. Additionally, a conspicuous vocabulary of superlative adjectives is utilized to target and captivate the emotional nature of customers, evoking excitement. Terms such as conspicuousness, uniqueness (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004), magnificence, extravagance, opulence, sumptuousness, and lavishness (Miller & Mills, 2017) are prominent descriptors of luxury services. As expected, such language is absent in communications from budget brands, which typically adopt a straightforward approach with minimal or no gimmicks when engaging with customers.

The 60:40 value ratio in hospitality brands: The presented exploratory analysis, although limited in scope, has uncovered an intriguing pattern between functional and emotional values among budget and luxury hospitality brands. As previously outlined in the paper, Table 7 and Figure 1 reveal a pattern of similarity between the functional value provided by luxury brands and the emotional value provided by budget brands, as well as emotional values for luxury brands and functional values of budget brands. The 4-percentage point difference between both value categories is minimal; consequently, it can be conjectured that a correlation exists between functional and emotional values provided by budget and luxury hospitality brands. An inverse ratio between functional and emotional values among these two brand categories exists. Similar results have been identified by Dugandžić (2023), with a ratio of 66:34 in favour of emotional values provided by luxury hospitality services. Additionally, a study conducted by Barsky and Nash (2002), focusing solely on emotional values, identified the importance of emotional values at 65% for luxury hospitality brands and 45% for budget (economy) hospitality brands. These values closely align with those presented in this paper; therefore, the author suggests a general theoretical 60:40 value ratio between functional and emotional values. For budget hospitality brands, the 60:40 ratio is suggested in favour of functional values, while the same ratio is recommended for luxury hospitality brands in favour of emotional values.

In conclusion, the discussion presented in this paper sheds light on the identified issues within the hospitality literature regarding the quantification of functional and emotional values provided by budget and luxury hospitality brands. Although efforts to quantify the importance of these values in hospitality literature are scarce, the presented analysis represents a novel approach to achieving a holistic understanding of how these values interact in shaping and communicating hospitality services. Despite the limitations of this analysis, the proposed 60:40 ratio offers a theoretical framework for understanding the balance between these values. Further empirical research is needed to provide more evidence of the validity of the proposed ratio. With new information available, it will be possible to expand and enrich the discussion about brand value in the hospitality context, as well as extend the boundaries beyond just one industry.

Theoretical Contribution and Practical Implications

The theoretical contribution of this paper lies in its attempt to quantify the ratio between functional and emotional values provided by budget and luxury hospitality brands. While existing literature suggests that budget brands prioritize functional aspects of the offering and luxury brands prioritize emotional values, the quantified ratio of these two types of values is not clearly presented in the literature. Therefore, a quantified value ratio of 60:40 is proposed. For budget hospitality brands, this ratio favours functional values, while for luxury hospitality brands, it favours emotional values.

The practical contribution of this paper is contingent upon empirical research that surpasses the current exploratory analysis, which is constrained by its focus on the perspectives of service providers alone. Without empirical insights from customers, effectively formulating communication activities and shaping offerings for both budget and luxury brands remains challenging. However, practitioners can benefit from this research as follows:

Balanced value communication: Understanding that, according to brand theory, every brand, whether budget or luxury, provides both functional and emotional value to customers. Practitioners should neither overemphasize, understate, nor exclude one type of value or the other in their communication and service shaping. Customers seek both types of values in every purchase.

Quantifying communicated values: Providing practitioners with value quantification allows them to gain deeper insight into the balance between functional and emotional values communicated through hotel websites. This is crucial for those who may not be aware of the specific value proportions they are conveying.

Competitive benchmarking: Offering an overview of how different competing brands in the category, both budget and luxury, balance functional and emotional values. The identified average ratio can serve as a guideline for practitioners to avoid deviating significantly from the competition when shaping their communication strategies, especially on their websites.

Evaluation and feedback: The proposed ratio represents the industry average value of functional and emotional benefits communicated by multiple competitors in each brand category (luxury and budget). This provides practitioners with a benchmark for comparison, allowing them to assess whether their offerings and communications align with the industry average and how well they meet customer expectations. To achieve this, practitioners can conduct surveys and gather feedback through direct interaction with customers. The process involves comparing the hotel's communication messages and service offerings with the functional and emotional values desired by customers, ensuring their services meet these needs and wants. This comparison helps practitioners understand if their identification of customer needs is close to or far from others within their category relative to the industry average. Consequently, if they are far from the average, it might mean that they can gain a competitive advantage by communicating values better than the rest of the competition, who are closer to the industry average. Conversely, if they are close to the average, adhering to the industry standard is relevant because deviating from it could negatively impact their competitive advantage by communicating values less effectively than their competitors.

Future research endeavours should prioritize gathering concrete data from customers to validate the 60:40 ratio, thereby providing more insights for practitioners in enhancing the precision and efficacy of communication strategies and service offering designs across both budget and luxury hospitality brands.

Limitations and Future Research

The main limitation of this analysis is twofold: its qualitative nature and its perspective from the viewpoint of the service provider. Consequently, this study is subject to individual interpretation and understanding. The derived values from identified service attributes may vary significantly based on individual interpretations, particularly in the absence of empirical research to support such claims.

For future research, it is suggested that primary research be conducted on consumers of budget and luxury hospitality brands to validate or refute the proposed 60:40 theoretical ratio between emotional and functional values presented in this paper. Subsequently, similar research principles could be applied to other categories of budget and luxury brands beyond hospitality to investigate whether the 60:40 rule holds true in a broader context.

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Original Scientific Article

Croatian Validation of TWS and Predictors of Tourist Psychological Well-Being

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This study aimed to validate the Croatian version of the Tourism Well-being Scale (TWS) and identify potential predictors of tourist psychological well-being. Grounded in the theoretical framework of the HOPE (Human Optimal Psychological Experiences) model, the TWS measures psychological well-being resulting from touristic activities and experiences. Four hundred Croatian-speaking adults participated in the study via Google Forms, completing the TWS, a sociodemographic questionnaire, the Flourishing Scale, the Purpose in Life test, and the Big Five Inventory (BFI). Confirmatory factor analysis initially revealed a suboptimal fit of the original one-factor model of the TWS to the data. However, the one-factor model was confirmed through modifications proposed by the scale authors. The TWS demonstrated internal consistency and congruent validity, manifesting positive correlations with meaning in life and flourishing. Examining measurement invariance across biological sexes underscored the scale's configural, metric, and scalar invariance.
Regarding predictors of tourist psychological well-being, hierarchical regression analysis indicated that extraversion and openness have positive, and neuroticism negative effects on tourist psychological well-being. Additionally, forms of tourism such as retreats, volunteer activities, charity engagements, or visits to slums significantly positively affected tourists' psychological well-being. Age, agreeableness, and conscientiousness did not significantly predict tourist psychological well-being. This research advances tourism studies by emphasizing the importance of validating tourist-related scales across various cultural and linguistic settings. Doing so promotes the creation of reliable measurement instruments, enabling better comparisons of psychological well-being among tourists from diverse backgrounds. Also, identifying predictors of tourist psychological well-being gives essential directions for further research in the hospitality industry.

Keywords: Tourism Well-being Scale, validation, measurement invariance, predictors, multiple regression analysis

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Introduction

Despite its significant impact on tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty (Al-okaily et al., 2023), psychological well-being is an under-researched topic in tourism studies (Filep, 2014). Constructing and validating instruments related to psychological well-being in tourism is crucial for advancing research in this area. Validating an instrument in different language and cultural contexts is essential because instrument understanding and psychometric properties can vary across populations (Campo-Arias & Pineda-Roa, 2022). Moreover, such validation is fundamental for conducting cross-cultural research and comparing findings across different contexts.

The current study aims to validate the Tourist Well-being Scale (TWS; Garcês et al., 2020) in a Croatian sample. The TWS is a self-assessment measure designed to evaluate well-being associated with tourism experiences at various destinations (Garcês et al., 2018). While the original validation research of the TWS demonstrated construct and congruent reliability and high internal consistency, the measurement invariance of the scale was not tested. This research aims to evaluate the measurement invariance of the TWS across male and female participants, thereby ensuring that the scale measures the construct of tourist well-being equivalently across biological sexes. This validation will contribute to the robustness of the TWS and enhance its applicability in diverse cultural and linguistic settings, ultimately facilitating more comprehensive and comparative research in tourism-related psychological well-being.

The second goal of this research is to enhance the limited knowledge of psychological well-being resulting from tourism experiences by examining various predictors of tourists' psychological well-being. As a general construct, psychological well-being is best predicted by personality traits, particularly neuroticism and extraversion (Landa et al., 2010). Results consistently show that individuals with low neuroticism and high extraversion tend to have higher psychological well-being (Gale et al., 2013). While personality traits are the strongest predictors of psychological well-being, some sociodemographic factors, like age, also play an important role in predicting psychological well-being (Momtaz et al., 2011). This study will examine the impact of the Big Five personality traits and participants' age on psychological well-being resulting from tourism experiences. Finally, since different tourism forms and activities promote different aspects of tourist well-being, and given that previous research (Smith & Diekmann, 2017) has linked certain forms of tourism, such as retreats, volunteer activities, charity engagements, or visits to slums, with psychological well-being, the predictive value of such tourism forms in the context of tourist psychological well-being will also be examined.

Literature Review

Psychological Well-Being

Research on well-being has grown significantly in recent decades (Dodge et al., 2012). Early studies by Diener (1984) introduced the concept of subjective well-being, focusing on individuals' self-reported happiness and life satisfaction. Later, psychological well-being models, such as those proposed by Ryff (1989), Ryan and Deci (2000), and Seligman (2011), expanded the understanding of well-being to include multiple dimensions of human actualization and fulfilment. Ryff's (1989) model posits that psychological well-being is a multidimensional construct composed of six aspects of human actualization: self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life, autonomy, environmental mastery, and positive relations. The latter three dimensions are central to the self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), which asserts that psychological well-being results from satisfying three fundamental psychological needs: relatedness (positive relations), autonomy, and competence (environmental mastery). Seligman's PERMA model (2011) is also frequently employed in assessing psychological well-being (Han et al., 2022). PERMA stands for positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. While it is primarily a model of psychological well-being, it also incorporates elements traditionally associated with subjective well-being, such as positive emotions.

In tourism studies, psychological well-being is rarely the focus. Research in this field often assesses tourists' subjective well-being by assessing their satisfaction with travel experiences (Bader et al., 2023) and emotional responses to tourism experiences (Janchai et al., 2020). However, subjective well-being is insufficient to fully explain the meaning and value tourists find in tourism. This gap can be addressed only by examining tourists' psychological well-being (Han et al., 2022). Despite the necessity to shift perspective from a subjective to a psychological perspective, only a few tourism studies have studied psychological well-being (Filep, 2014). One possible reason for such a lack of scientific interest in tourists' psychological well-being might be the absence of psychological well-being measures to assess this part of well-being. To advance this field, developing and validating psychological well-being measures designed especially for the tourism context is essential (Piuchan & Suntikul, 2016).

TWS (Garcês et al., 2020)

One instrument that measures psychological well-being as a product of touristic activities and experiences is the Tourist Well-being Scale (TWS) developed by Garcês et al. (2020). Recent tourism research has employed the TWS to measure tourist well-being (Magano & Leite, 2021; Magano et al., 2022). However, besides the original TWS validation study (Garcês et al. 2020), no other research has validated this instrument in other language and cultural contexts. Once a scale is constructed, validating it in different languages is important for ensuring its relevance to different cultures, making them more accessible, and allowing researchers to compare results across cultures (Hambleton et al., 2005).

The TWS is grounded in the theoretical framework of the HOPE model (Human Optimal Psychological Experiences), introduced by Garcês et al. in 2017. The HOPE model is based on the PERMA model of well-being (Seligman, 2011). The HOPE model (Garcês et al., 2017) proposes that in the context of tourism, psychological well-being is influenced by both personal and situational factors. Personal factors include creativity, optimism, and spirituality, which interact with the specific situations and experiences encountered at a tourist destination to mould overall psychological well-being.

To illustrate the interaction of personal factors, tourist experiences, and psychological well-being, picture a tourist exploring a historic city renowned for its architectural wonders. Rather than adhering strictly to a guidebook, a creative tourist might wander through the city streets with a sketchbook, capturing the details of buildings. Engaging in creative activities during travel positively impacts psychological well-being (Huang et al., 2020) by fostering engagement. So, the relationship between creativity and tourist psychological well-being could be mediated by engagement. In other words, a single tourist experience or visit can enhance psychological well-being by fostering positive emotions, engagement, and a sense of meaning in alignment with the principles outlined in the PERMA model (Seligman, 2011). The TWS in the original validation study showed good psychometric characteristics (Garcês et al., 2020). Both construct and congruent validity, as well as reliability, were established. However, the authors (Garcês et al., 2020) noted that further validation research is necessary to continue developing this measure.

Predictors of Tourist Psychological Well-Being

Numerous factors influence psychological well-being, which can vary significantly across different settings. Individual factors such as personality traits, especially the Big Five personality traits, have shown moderate to strong correlations with psychological well-being measures. Extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness showed positive, and neuroticism negative correlations with psychological well-being measures (Anglim et al., 2020). In terms of sociodemographic factors, age appears to be an exception. Research suggests that younger individuals tend to report higher levels of psychological well-being. However, other sociodemographic factors generally have a limited impact on psychological well-being (Pourebrahim & Rasouli, 2019).

Despite the extensive research on predictors of psychological well-being in general settings, there is a notable gap in studies focusing on predictors of psychological well-being resulting from a tourism experience. One of the recent studies in this field (Smith & Diekmann, 2017) revealed that certain tourism activities and forms may predict tourists' psychological well-being, namely forms of tourism such as retreats, volunteer activities, charity engagements, or visits to slums. This finding is in line with the previously mentioned HOPE model (Garcês et al., 2017), which postulates that activities developed in the tourist destination could influence tourists' psychological well-being by raising their creativity, optimism, and spirituality.

Table 1 TWS Scale Items and Well-Being Dimension They Refer To

Scale item	Scale items in Croatian	Well-being dimension
I was able to see the positive side of the less agreeable situations that occurred.	Uspio/la sam vidjeti pozitivnu stranu manje ugodnih situacija koje su se dogodile.	Optimism
I have discovered new ways of being that have brought meaning to different aspects of my life.	Otkrio/la sam nove načine postojanja koji su dali smisao različitim aspektima moga života.	Meaning
I had lots of fun.	Jako sam se zabavio/la.	Positive emotions
I faced this experience as a unique/original opportunity.	Pristupio/la sam ovom iskustvu kao jedinstvenoj/izvornoj prilici.	Creativity
I engaged in the community activities (cultural, events, etc.)	Sudjelovao/la sam u aktivnostima zajednice (primjerice kulturalnim događajima).	Engagement
This experience was a dream come true.	Ovo iskustvo je bilo ostvarenje sna.	Accomplishment
I experienced a connection/relationship with something higher than myself.	Doživio/la sam vezu/odnos s nečim višim od sebe.	Spirituality
I felt good in the relationship I developed with new people.	Osjećao/la sam se dobro u odnosima koje sam uspostavio/la s novim ljudima.	Positive relationships

When faced with an open question like identifying the predictors of tourist psychological well-being, the first step is to identify potential groups of predictors and then test their subsequent effects on tourist psychological well-being.

Method

Sample Design

Data collection was conducted online using a Google Forms questionnaire. While online data collection has several advantages, it also presents limitations, such as sample representativeness, response credibility, and potential survey dropout (Žmuk, 2019). To address these limitations, a purposive sampling strategy was used to ensure a diverse sample of age, sex, education, and socioeconomic status. Participants were recruited through social media and online community forums. The survey was designed to be concise and engaging, with mandatory responses to ensure completeness and minimize dropout rates. Participants were informed about the study's purpose, voluntary participation, and data anonymity. Participation in the survey was available from February to May 2022.

Instruments

Tourist Psychological Well-Being

Participants received the following instructions before completing the scale: 'The purpose of this scale is to evaluate your last tourist experience. There are no correct or incorrect answers; how you perceive your last tourist experience matters. Your responses are anonymous and confidential. For each statement, please indicate your level of agreement on a 7-point scale, where 1 indicates total disagreement, 2 disagreement, 3 partial disagreement, 4 neutrality, 5 partial agreement, 6 agreement, and 7 total agreement.

Personality Traits

The Big Five personality traits (extraversion, openness, neuroticism, agreeableness, and conscientiousness) were assessed using the BFI (Big Five Inventory) (Benet-Martinez & John, 1998) questionnaire. Extraversion and neuroticism were measured using eight items each, agreeableness and conscientiousness with nine items, and openness with ten items. Participants rated their agreement with each item on a 5-point Likert scale (1 – strongly disagree, to 5 – strongly agree). The score for each subscale is calculated as the average of all the items within that subscale. The items were formulated as short phrases derived from prototypical adjectives representing the traits of the five-factor model. The questionnaire was translated into Croatian and validated by Kardum et al. (2006), who confirmed that the five-factor model fits the data well.

Psychological Flourishing

The Croatian version (Rijavec et al., 2016) of the Flourishing Scale (FS) (Diener et al., 2009) was used to evaluate participants' psychological flourishing. The FS includes eight items designed to capture individuals' perceived success in significant life domains such as relationships, self-esteem, purpose, and optimism. Participants are instructed to indicate their level of agreement with each statement using a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Scores range from 7 to 56, with higher scores indicating greater psychological flourishing.

Meaning in Life

Meaning in life was assessed using the Croatian version of the Purpose of Life Test, adapted by Vulić-Prtorić and Bubalo (2006). The Meaning of Life Scale consists of 23 statements measuring emotional and cognitive aspects of purpose in life. Participants rated their agreement with each statement on a 5-point Likert scale. Scores range from 23 to 115, with higher scores indicating greater meaning in life.

Tourist-Related Factors

To assess the nature of participants' most recent tourist experience, a single question with a dichotomous response (yes/no) was utilized. Participants were asked if their last tourist experience involved retreats, volunteer work, charitable engagements, or slum visits.

Data Analysis

All statistical analyses were conducted using R (R Core Team, 2016). First, confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) were used to establish the factor structure of TWS, and other scales used in research. CFA enables testing how well data fits a hypothesized measurement model, confirming the scale's construct validity. Maximum likelihood estimation with robust standard errors was used, which accounts for any possible deviations from normality, providing robust estimates. Regarding the TWS, the model fit of two structures was compared: the one-factor model and the one-factor model with modifications suggested by the authors of the original scale. Modifications included correlations between error terms for the several item pairs. The previously established one-factor structure of the FS (Tadić-Vujčić et al., 2017) and Meaning in Life Scale (Vulić-Prtorić & Bubalo, 2006), and the five-factor structure of BFI were also tested (Kardum et al., 2006). Model fit was considered acceptable if the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) and comparative fit index (CFI) were both ≥ 0.90, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) was ≤ 0.08, and the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) was ≤ 0.10 (Little, 2013). Biological sex was chosen for invariance testing of the TWS to ensure the scale measures the same construct equivalently across male and female participants. Models that examine the relationships between observed variables and underlying latent factors are known as measurement invariance tests. Three standard measurement invariance models were tested: configural invariance, metric invariance, and scalar invariance (Milfont & Fischer, 2010). The configural model tests whether participants from different groups conceptualize the constructs similarly, meaning that the basic model structure is the same across groups. If the configural invariance is obtained, the next step is determining if different groups respond similarly to the items, specifically examining whether the relationships between scale items and their corresponding latent construct are consistent across groups (metric invariance). Finally, to compare latent means, scalar invariance is necessary. Scalar invariance suggests that individuals with identical scores on the latent construct will achieve the same score on the observed variables, regardless of their group membership (Milfont & Fischer, 2010). The criteria for accepting measurement invariance were set at ΔCFI $\leq |0.010|$ and ΔSRMR $\leq |0.015|$ (Chen, 2007).

The reliability of the TWS was assessed with inter-item correlations (≥ 0.5) and Cronbach's alpha coefficient, with a criterion value of > 0.70 for acceptable consistency (DeVellis, 2003). Reliability was assessed

Table 2 Pearson Correlation Coefficients Between TWS and Measures of Congruent Validity, and Descriptive Statistics of Continuous Study Variables (N = 400)

	TWS	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Meaning in life	0.36**	84.32	16.03	-1.21	-0.48
Psychological flourishing	0.60**	43.52	5.52	2.31	0.32
TWS	-	34.4	8.25	-0.58	0.08
Agreeableness		3.58	0.69	-0.45	0.17
Extraversion		3.40	0.86	-0.34	-0.56
Neuroticism		2.78	0.89	0.32	0.27
Openness		3.7	0.73	-0.48	-0.12
Conscientiousness		3.66	0.73	-0.50	0.27
Age		33.3	11.4	1.9	1.31

Note **$p < 0.01$

solely with Cronbach's alpha for the other scales, which had already been validated in Croatian samples. The congruent validity of the TWS was evaluated by calculating Pearson correlation coefficients with measures of meaning in life and psychological flourishing, with expected positive correlations between TWS and these measures. Hierarchical regression analysis was used to assess the unique contribution of sociodemographic variables, Big Five personality traits, and tourist forms in explaining tourist psychological well-being. This method was chosen because it allows the analysis of the effect of predictor variables after controlling for other variables, thus helping to determine the incremental validity of each block of variables (Lewis, 2007).

No missing data were identified in the study variables, as the questionnaire format required responses to every question.

Results

Sample Description

The required sample size was determined *a priori* using G*Power software. Based on a medium effect size (f2) of 0.15, an alpha error probability of 0.05, a power of 0.8, and a model containing seven predictors, the total sample size required for the study was 103 participants. The final sample consisted of 400 adult participants whose native language is Croatian. The majority of the sample comprised females (71%). The age range of participants was from 18 to 83 years. The average age of the participants was 33 years (SD = 11). Regarding educational level, 30% of the sample had a high school diploma, 23% held a bachelor's degree, 38% held a master's degree, and 9% held a PhD. The majority of participants reported a middle socioeconomic status (68%). In comparison, 24% reported a high socioeconomic status, and 8% reported a low socioeconomic status. 61% of participants declared that their last tourism experience involved activities such as retreats, volunteer work, charitable engagements, or visits to slums.

Descriptive Statistics and Congruent Validity

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics of the continuous study variables. TWS was positively correlated to meaning in life and psychological flourishing. Additionally, all variables in the study meet the criteria for normal distribution, as indicated by skewness and kurtosis values within acceptable ranges according to Kline's criteria (2011).

Reliability Analysis

All scales demonstrated strong internal consistency, as indicated by Cronbach alpha values of 0.9 for the Meaning in Life Scale, 0.89 for the Flourishing Scale, 0.87 for extraversion, 0.85 for openness, 0.88 for neuroticism, 0.78 for agreeableness, and 0.84 for conscientiousness. The TWS also showed high internal

Table 3 Inter-Item Correlations, Overall Scale Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha), and Item Deletion Analysis of Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients for the TWS, N = 400

Item	r_{it}	α if item deleted
1	0.664	0.836
2	0.792	0.817
3	0.689	0.832
4	0.714	0.830
5	0.619	0.846
6	0.787	0.818
7	0.684	0.841
8	0.702	0.830
Cronbach's α for the whole scale	0.849	

consistency with a Cronbach alpha value of 0.85 (Table 3). Furthermore, the inter-item correlations (rit) in Table 3 indicate high relationships between each TWS item and the rest of the scale, suggesting strong inter-item associations ranging from 0.619 to 0.792. As the table shows, removing any item would not significantly improve the scale's internal consistency reliability.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Confirmatory factor analyses of all scales used in research are presented in Table 4. The one-factor model of the TWS exhibited an acceptable CFI value; however, the TLI fell slightly below the acceptable threshold. The RMSEA surpassed the recommended limit of ≤ 0.08, suggesting a suboptimal fit. Conversely, the SRMR fell within the acceptable range. Despite the acceptable CFI and SRMR values, the elevated RMSEA and marginally lower TLI imply an inadequate overall fit of this model. In contrast, as proposed in the original study, the one-factor model of the TWS with modifications demonstrated a favourable fit to the data across all utilized fit indices. Furthermore, all items exhibited statistically significant and high factor loadings onto the presumed factor, ranging from 0.51 to 0.90 ($p < 0.01$), as illustrated in Figure 1.

The one-factor model of the Meaning in Life Scale demonstrated an acceptable CFI and slightly below the threshold TLI value. The RMSEA and SRMR fell within the acceptable range, suggesting a good fit to the data overall. The one-factor model of the Flourishing Scale demonstrated acceptable CFI, TLI, and SRMR values, with RMSEA higher than acceptable. However, with simple models with few degrees of freedom, RMSEA tends to increase (Kline, 2011), so the overall model fit was deemed acceptable for the Flourishing Scale. Finally, the five-factor model of the BFI scale showed a poor fit to the data, with CFI and TLI values below the threshold and RMSEA and SRMR values above the acceptable threshold. Despite poor CFA results, the BFI is a widely used instrument across different populations, demonstrating its overall reliability and validity (John & Srivastava, 1999; Soto & John, 2017). Personality traits' complexity can lead to model fit issues, but alternative methods like EFA often support the BFI structure (Marsh et al., 2010). Additionally, the BFI shows strong reliability and criterion validity in various contexts, reinforcing its utility despite CFA limitations (John & Srivastava, 1999; Soto & John, 2017).

Measurement Invariance of the TWS

Results presented in Table 5 indicate that the configural, metric, and scalar invariance between male and female participants were observed, with the difference in CFI and RMSEA below the standard thresholds (Chen, 2007).

Hierarchical Linear Regression

Table 6 presents the results of the hierarchical regression analysis for tourist psychological well-being as the criterion variable, with the age, personality traits, and forms of tourist experiences as separate blocks of predictor variables.

No significant contribution of age to tourist psychological well-being was found. After controlling for age, the second block of variables consisted of the Big Five personality traits, which significantly increased the proportion of explained variance in tourist psychological well-being by an additional 23%. Specifically, a significant independent contribution of extraversion ($\beta = 0.228$), openness ($\beta = 0.263$), and neuroticism ($\beta = -0.133$) were found. The results indi-

Table 4 Measurement Models, N = 400

	X2(df)	CFI	TLI	RMSEA [90%CI]	SRMR
One-factor model (TWS)	11.344(20)**	0.905	0.867	0.119 (0.098–0.141)	0.055
One-factor model with modifications (TWS)	32.518(12)**	0.978	0.950	0.073 (0.044–0.104)	0.032
Five factor model (BFI)	3487.762 (892)**	0.654	0.633	0.095 (0.092–0.098)	0.112
One-factor model (Meaning in Life Scale)	810.237 (230)**	0.902	0.848	0.08 (0.079–0.085)	0.055
One-factor model (FS)	135.410 (20)**	0.907	0.900	0.134 (−113–0.156)	0.045

Note **p < 0.01

cate that individuals who are higher in extraversion and openness are more prone to experiencing tourist psychological well-being. In contrast, those higher in neuroticism are less likely to experience tourist psychological well-being. After controlling for age and personality traits, the third block of variables consisted of different forms of tourist experiences, which significantly increased the proportion of explained variance in tourist psychological well-being by an additional 5%. Participation in retreats, volunteer activities, charity engagements, or visits to slums significantly positively affected psychological well-being. The final regression equation shows that this set of predictor variables (age, Big Five personality dimensions, and forms of tourist experiences) can explain 28% of the variance in tourist psychological well-being.

Discussion

This research had two main goals. First, it aimed to translate, adapt, and validate the Tourism Well-being Scale (TWS) on a Croatian sample. Second, it aimed to identify predictors of tourist psychological well-being.

Regarding the first goal, the present research confirms that the TWS has a consistent factor structure with the original version by Garcês et al. (2020). Initially, the one-factor model showed a poor fit, but the model reached an acceptable fit after allowing error correlations between certain items (Table 4), a standard practice in CFA (Brown, 2015). The scale demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency (Table 3), with the Cronbach's alpha value exceeding the recommended 0.70 threshold (DeVellis, 2003). The scale also showed congruent validity through positive correlations with psychological flourishing and mea-

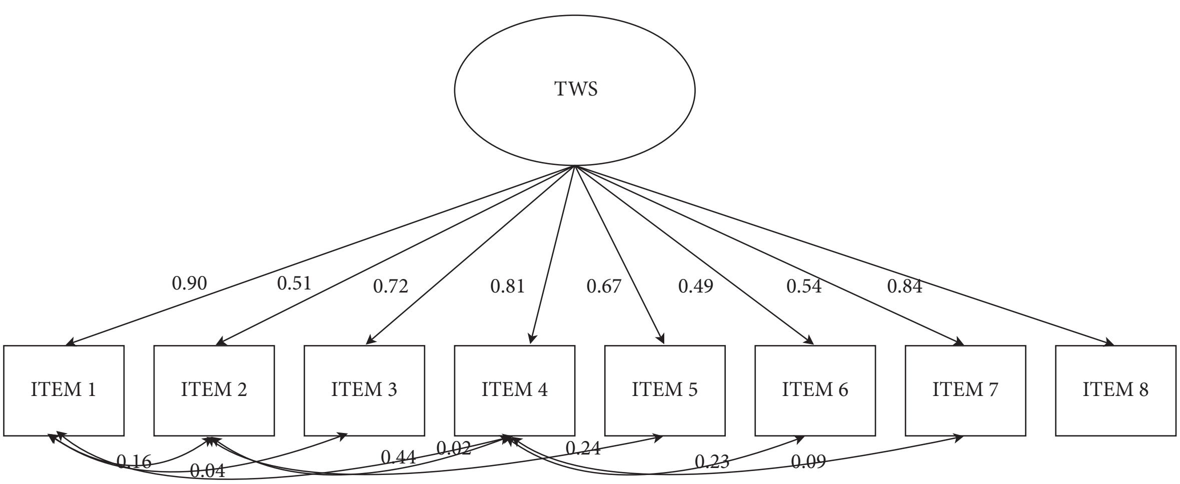

Figure 1 Factor Structure and Loadings of all TWS Items

Table 5 Measurement Invariance Testing of the tws Across Biological Sexes

	cfi	srmr	Δ cfi	Δ srmr
ci[1]	.989	.031		
mi[2]	.988	.035	.001	.004
si[3]	.983	.039	.005	.004

Note ci – configural invariance; mi – metric invariance; si – scalar invariance

Table 6 Results of the Hierarchical Regression Analysis With Criterion Variable Tourist Psychological Well-Being, N = 400

Predictors	1. (β)	2. (β)	3. (β)
1. Sociodemographics			
Age	0.09	-0.023	
2. Personality traits			
Extraversion		0.228**	0.205**
Agreeableness		0.064	0.109
Conscientiousness		-0.021	-0.029
Openness		0.263**	0.252**
Neuroticism		-0.133**	-0.144**
3. Tourist-related factors			
Tourist form[a]			0.204**
ΔR^{2b}		0.23**	0.046**
R^{2c}	0.008	0.238**	0.284**

Notes [a] Tourist form: 2 = retreats, volunteer activities, charity engagements, visits to slums; 1 = other forms of tourism; [b] ΔR^2 = the contribution of an individual group of predictors to the explained variance; [c] R^2 = the total contribution of predictors to the explained variance.

ning in life (Table 2). Thus, it can be concluded that tws is a valid and reliable instrument in the Croatian context. Furthermore, this is the first research to test the scale's measurement invariance, demonstrating that the tws has configural, metric, and scalar invariance across biological sexes (Table 5).

The study also examined predictors of tourist psychological well-being, drawing hypotheses from general psychological well-being research (Pourebrahim & Rasouli, 2019; Anglim et al., 2020). The results showed that age did not significantly affect tourists' psychological well-being, contradicting previous findings that younger individuals report higher psychological well-being (Pourebrahim & Rasouli, 2019). This suggests that the benefits of tourist experiences on psychological well-being may be universal across different age groups, highlighting tourism's potential as a broadly effective intervention for enhancing psychological well-being. The significant contributions of Big Five personality traits align with existing literature, where extraversion and openness positively predict psychological well-being, while neuroticism negatively predicts it (Joshanloo, 2023; Anglim et al., 2020).

Extraverted people are sociable and optimistic (Costa & McCrae, 1992). They might enjoy travel and benefit from it due to its social and exploration components, which aligns with research done by Alves et al. (2023). Open individuals, inclined to experience new stimuli with curiosity and willing to try novel activities (Costa & McCrae, 1992), are drawn to diverse tourism motivations. These motivations include experiencing new and different things, fostering self-development, and seeking relaxation and bonding experiences (Alves et al., 2023). Such activities enhance their psychological well-being by providing intellectual stimulation, emotional engagement, and meaningful social interactions (Hooker et al., 2019). Conversely, individuals with high neuroticism, who are more prone to stress and negative emotions (Costa & McCrae, 1992), may find the uncertainties and potential challenges of tourism less beneficial to psychological well-being. Agreeableness and conscientiousness, although fundamental personality traits with significant implications for various life domains, such as physical health (Siegler et al., 2003), academic (Lounsbury et al., 2003), and occupational domain (Sutin et al., 2009) do not seem to influence tourist psychological well-being substantially.

Furthermore, this research shows the importance of specific tourist experiences in facilitating tourist psychological well-being. Participating in retreats, volunteer activities, and charity engagements enhances psychological well-being, supporting Smith and Diekmann's (2017) findings that meaningful engagement and altruistic behaviour are associated with greater psychological well-being. Consequently, not all tourist experiences are equal; deeper, meaningful interactions and altruistic behaviour in travel destinations may benefit tourists' psychological well-being.

Conclusion

To conclude, the TWS exhibited reliability, congruent, and construct validity. It also demonstrated configural, measurement, and scalar invariance across biological sexes. The results of hierarchical regression analysis revealed that extraversion and openness positively predict tourist psychological well-being, while neuroticism negatively impacts it. Some tourism activities, like retreats or volunteer engagements, also increase tourists' psychological well-being.

This study has several scientific contributions. Firstly, it showed that the TWS is a valuable and reliable tool for assessing tourist psychological well-being in Croatian samples. Researchers can now use this tool as a reliable measure of Croatian tourists' psychological well-being, which adds to and enhances the scale's applicability in cross-cultural research. Secondly, this research identified key personality traits and specific tourism activities that impact tourists' psychological well-being. These findings add to the growing body of literature on the effects of tourism on well-being and provide practical insights for the tourism industry. For instance, promoting activities such as retreats and volunteer engagements can significantly boost tourists' psychological well-being, making them more likely to revisit and recommend the destinations.

Some limitations of this research should be noted. The study aimed to identify predictors of psychological well-being due to tourism experiences but used a cross-sectional design, thus limiting the predictive power of identified predictors. Another limitation regarding predictors of tourist psychological well-being is the binary response form of the question related to different touristic forms and activities. Future studies should use a variety of touristic activities and tourism forms, test their relationship with tourist psychological well-being, and compare the weight of each form on tourist psychological well-being. Another suggestion for future studies is to validate the scale in other cultures and compare different cultural contexts to understand the effects of culture on the psychological well-being of tourists. It would also be beneficial to explore the long-term effects of tourism on psychological well-being using longitudinal designs.

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Original Scientific Article

Acculturation Research in Residential Tourism

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Although the acculturation theory has been tested in tourism, there are almost no empirical studies in residential tourism. It needs to be clarified whether the general assumptions of the acculturation theory can be applied or whether the specifics of residential tourism call anew for an evaluation of the preconditions of acculturation theory in this setting. The existing studies, however limited, are misleading. This article calls attention to this fact and shows the necessity of testing the presumptions of acculturation theory in residential tourism before further research is conducted. A questionnaire research was conducted among residential tourists in Alanya. A total of 489 questionnaires from over 12 countries were included, reflecting the residential market in Alanya. The preference for a specific acculturation strategy was tested in relation to the influencing factors and level of satisfaction with life in the destination. The most preferred strategy by international residential tourists was integration, followed by assimilation and marginalisation. The strategy preference was influenced by demographic characteristics, holiday behaviour factors, second home characteristics, personality traits, and level of knowledge about Turkish culture. The overall level of satisfaction with life was 4.3 out of 5, which implies a very high level of satisfaction. Following limited previous research, the article uncovers the pitfalls and proposes a more suitable approach for acculturation research in this area. If the unique circumstances of residential tourism are taken into consideration, the study reveals some results that oppose the general acculturation theory and thus calls for further research.

Keywords: residential tourism, acculturation, Alanya, acculturation in tourism, residential tourists' acculturation

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Introduction

The acculturation of international residential tourists is a relatively untouched field that has captured the attention of very few researchers. During their prolonged stay in the destination, residential tourists are under the influence of the foreign culture. The differences between residential and mass tourists are sufficiently profound to form a separate research sample. However, while the acculturation theory has been tested in the field of tourism, the motivations, relations and results of this process have not yet been evaluated in terms of residential tourism.

The current state of the literature on the topic stems from a limited number of studies, all of them based on the same methodology, which leads to misleading interpretations of the results. By choosing an approach based on calculating the acculturation level and adopting a simple scale, the current studies´ findings lead to misinterpretation when general acculturation theory assumptions are applied. This article shows how discrepancies with general acculturation theory can be revealed by selecting an approach and instruments suitable for residential tourism. The article includes a preliminary evaluation of fundamental relations within the concept of acculturation to illustrate such discrepancies. The article aims to call attention to the current state of the literature as well as accentuate the necessity to reevaluate the assumptions of the general acculturation theory in residential tourism. It is meant as a preamble to further studies, setting the tone of the research rather than a full-scale research article.

Theoretical Background

Nowadays, as a result of globalisation, an increase in income and leisure time, change in consumption patterns, easier accessibility of foreign destinations, and other factors, it is common for people from different cultures to live in the same region. Such a society comprises various groups defined by the voluntariness of contact with another culture, the time frame of their stay and whether the contact happens in their place of living or outside. Berry (1990) categorised such a society into 6 basic groups that may coexist in the same space and influence each other, i.e. indigenous people, ethnocultural groups (descendants of previous immigrants), migrants, temporary stayers or guests, refugees, and asylum seekers. This article focuses on temporary stayers or so-called sojourners, including international residential tourists.

Like all the above-mentioned groups, international residential tourists undergo the process of acculturation when in different cultural environments for a certain period of time (Berry, 2005). Although acculturation has been defined differently over time (Powell, 1883; McGee, 1898; Simons, 1901; Maldonado & Tansuhaj, 1998), the most commonly accepted definition may be considered that by Redfield et al. (1936). The authors define acculturation as a process that results in changes in the original cultural patterns of individuals or groups with different cultures due to continuous first-hand contact with a different culture.

Each group or individual experiences the acculturation process in a different way. As Berry (1992) states, although there is no single acculturation model, different strategies and outcomes lead to successful or unsuccessful long-term adaptation. The first acculturation model was the unidimensional model of acculturation by Gordon (1964), which operates on the assumption that for one to adopt the host culture, one must give up one's culture of origin. This approach was controverted by Berry (1992, 1997), who introduced the bidimensional acculturation model, in which the cultures are not exclusive. It varies in its assumption that one can maintain one's culture of origin and adopt the new mainstream culture to a certain extent. The extent then identifies one of four acculturation strategies, i.e. assimilation, integration, separation, or marginalisation, which an individual prefers in a new cultural environment. Although it is the most commonly used acculturation model today, the matter of how many dimensions accurately express the acculturation process still needs to be clarified (Miller, 2007).

As a consequence of rising diversity in hosting societies, cosmopolitanism development and migration changes, the tridimensional and multidimensional acculturation constructs have been introduced in the literature. For example, the 3D model of acculturation of Black Caribbean immigrants in the USA by Ferguson and Bornstein (2013) is based on a simultaneous orientation toward three cultures within a multicultural society. In the tridimensional process-oriented acculturation model TDPOM (Wilczewska, 2023), the third dimension of cultural creation is introduced in addition to Berry´s maintenance of original culture and adoption of host culture. Navas et al. (2005) elaborated the two-dimensional model into the Relative

Acculturation Extended Model RAEM, which follows the two main dimensions of Berry but expands them into seven subdimensions (political, work, economic, family, social, religion, and ways of thinking) and distinguishes between ideal and actual orientation.

Regardless of the model, the final part of the acculturation process includes adaptation as a long-term acculturation result. It reflects how successfully an individual adapts to the new culture when they apply specific acculturation strategies. It can be divided into psychological and sociocultural adaptation (Ward, 2001; Sam & Berry, 2006) or psychological (feeling well), sociocultural (doing well) and intercultural (relating well) adaptation (Schwartz & Unger, 2017). Integration is generally the most preferred acculturation strategy as it is considered the most efficient in relation to psychological and sociocultural adaptation (Berry et al., 2022; Ward & Szabo, 2019; Yoon et al., 2013; Berry, 2006). With assimilation and separation somewhere in the middle in most studies, marginalisation is the least preferred, with a negative perception (Berry, 2006). LaFromboise et al. (2010) state concerning marginalisation that 'a lack of identification with any culture is problematic'. Marginalisation strategy is related to the lowest levels of adaptation (Sam & Berry, 2006), higher levels of acculturative stress (Schmitz & Schmitz, 2022), cultural conflict, and dysfunctional and deviant behaviour (Berry, 2005). Choy et al. (2021) in their research state that marginalisation has the worst effects on the mental health of migrants. Similarly, in the study of Schmitz and Schmitz (2022), lower life satisfaction, poor ability for psychological adjustment, low self-esteem, depression and psychosomatic problems were related to the marginalisation strategy.

Acculturation in Tourism

It is a fact that tourism destinations are regions that are directly subject to cultural interaction. Despite this, the theory of acculturation has not been sufficiently researched in the field of tourism (Özekici & Ünlüönen, 2019). The past studies have proven that tourists are also a part of acculturation (Doğan, 1989; Penaloza, 1989). The two-dimensional acculturation model was proven suitable for tourism in a study conducted on Chinese, German and American tourists who have visited or will visit Australia (Rasmi et al., 2014). Doğan (1989) applies the two-dimensional acculturation model to the concept of tourist consumption.

Various aspects have been examined in relation to acculturation in tourism, such as the shopping behaviour of second-home tourists (De-Juan-Vigaray et al., 2013; De-Juan-Vigaray et al., 2021), consumption acculturation between immigrants and tourists (Sevim & Hall, 2016), participation in tourism and its contribution to acculturation (Cruz & Buchanan-Oliver, 2017), acculturation and tourist satisfaction (Zhang et al., 2018), and the relationship between acculturation strategies and behavioural preferences, destination selection, holiday activities and individual characteristics (Rasmi et al., 2014). Although the topic of acculturation in tourism has been addressed by several other researchers (Berno & Ward, 2005; Rasmi et al., 2014), the field of acculturation of international residential tourists has remained relatively untouched.

Residential tourism has gained in numbers and importance during the last decades. It accounts for a significant number of tourists in countries like Spain or Turkey. International residential tourism creates an important tourist movement and surpasses official accommodation establishments regarding the number of overnight stays in some destinations (Okuyucu & Somuncu, 2015). During their prolonged stay in the destination, residential tourists create a significant economic effect as a specific consumer group for touristic and non-touristic products (Casado-Diaz, 1999; Kozak & Duman, 2011). Compared to mass tourists they show many differences (Müller, 2002a; Hall & Müller, 2004; Barrantes-Reynolds, 2011). Those include usually longer stays for vacation or temporary residence purposes, a preference for previously known destinations, a special bond with the place where the second home is located, lower seasonality, repeated visitations, high loyalty, connection to the real estate sector, dependence on a certain life standard, and usually a higher age and income tourist profile. In conclusion, international residential tourists (hereinafter referred to as IRTS) create a substantial group significantly different from mass tourists to form a separate research group.

Due to their prolonged stay in a destination, IRTs are expected to be exposed to the influence of a different culture to a greater extent than mass tourists. Despite this conclusion, the question of how IRTs are influenced and to what end has remained unanswered in the literature. To date, the only research that covers the topic of acculturation of IRTs to a limited extent is the research of De-Juan-Vigaray and her colleagues (De-Juan-Vigaray et al., 2013; De-Juan-Vigaray & Garau-Vadell, 2015; De-Juan-Vigaray et al., 2021). However, several aspects of the approach and conclusions of this study need to be addressed in order to prevent simplification and misinterpretation of such a complex process.

This study aims to elaborate on aspects that should be considered in future studies of the acculturation of IRTs compared to the work of De-Juan-Vigaray et al. (De-Juan-Vigaray et al., 2013; De-Juan-Vigaray, 2015; De-Juan-Vigaray et al., 2021). Secondly, the study presents the results of research on IRTs and their acculturation in Alanya conducted in accordance with the proposed methods.

The Critical Aspects in the IRTs' Acculturation Research

This article was written in response to the work of De-Juan-Vigaray and colleagues (De-Juan-Vigaray et al., 2013; De-Juan-Vigaray, 2015; De-Juan-Vigaray et al., 2021), who conducted the first studies concentrating on international residential tourists and acculturation. The authors were the first to recognise the importance and difference of IRTs and the need to examine their acculturation as a separate research sample. However, some aspects need to be pointed out when considering their conclusions. As the unique aspects and relations within the acculturation process in residential tourism remain unknown, it is critical to carefully consider the selected instrument and the suitability of the approach of calculating the acculturation level.

The previous research was based on calculating the acculturation level of international residential tourists. The results of the study of De-Juan-Vigaray et al. (De-Juan-Vigaray et al., 2013; De-Juan-Vigaray, 2015; De-Juan-Vigaray et al., 2021) state that IRTs have a very low level of acculturation with an acculturation score of 0.16 out of a range between 0 and 1. The low score is interpreted as the preference of IRTs for preserving their own culture, which in turn points to the preference for the separation or marginalisation strategy. In general acculturation literature, extensive research about acculturation strategies exists in relation to acculturation outcomes and adaptation. As mentioned above, the marginalisation strategy is the least desired strategy because of its connection to a variety of negative outcomes such as low level of adaptation, acculturative stress, conflict, deviant behaviour, depression, low self-esteem, or low life satisfaction (Berry, 2006; Sam & Berry, 2006; LaFromboise et al., 2010; Choy et al., 2021; Schmitz & Schmitz, 2022). The marginalising individuals have been found to show higher neuroticism, psychoticism, impulsivity or aggression-hostility traits. In a study of older Chinese adults in Chicago (Dong et al., 2015), marginalisation was related to lower overall health status and quality of life. In conclusion, the overall image of marginalisation painted in the acculturation literature is not consistent with the reality of residential tourism and the results of the study of De-Juan-Vigaray et al. (De-Juan-Vigaray et al., 2013; De-Juan-Vigaray, 2015; De-Juan-Vigaray et al., 2021) regarding IRTs. Unlike immigrants, international residential tourists willingly enter a different cultural environment for a desired period of time. Usually, they are in a better economic position than the local population and represent a source of income for the destination. The local population thus generally has a positive attitude towards the residential tourists. As the study presented further shows, marginalisation may be a successful acculturation strategy in the case of IRTs.

This brings forth the argument of Schwartz and Unger (2017) about the suitable approach in acculturation studies. According to the authors, calculating an acculturation level in acculturation studies may lead to misinterpretation of results. It is argued that terms such as low or high acculturation level only reflect the level to which a new culture is accepted by an individual or a group. As such, the terms 'high level of acculturation' and 'low level of acculturation' in reality reflect 'high level of assimilation' and 'low level of assimilation', respectively, and therefore they should not refer to acculturation as a whole. According to Berry (2006), it is not possible to estimate a level of acculturation but the level of support for individual acculturation strategies only.

In the case of IRTs with their unique position between locals, tourists and immigrants, the relations between orientations, acculturation strategies and their success in adapting successfully to a new environment have yet to be examined. Accepting the new culture may be the preferred orientation in general acculturation theory when it comes to immigrants. However, to make any conclusions about acculturation of IRTs based solely on the level to which they accept the new culture may be misleading, especially without defining the relations within the process and relations to the results of the complex phenomenon of acculturation of this specific group. That is why the current study of IRTs in Alanya, Turkey, centres on measuring the preference for individual acculturation strategies in relation to influencing factors and results of the acculturation process.

Another issue of tourism acculturation studies is the lack of instruments. There has yet to be a specific acculturation scale for IRTs. The researchers depend on adopting general acculturation scales. The scale used in the study of De-Juan-Vigaray et al. (De-Juan-Vigaray et al., 2013; De-Juan-Vigaray, 2015; De-Juan-Vigaray et al., 2021) was the scale of Lerman et al. (2009), which is said to have been adopted for IRTs. After closer inspection, however, the scale may be argued to be highly unsuitable for the segment of IRTs. Four of the six items in the scale are oriented towards the language skills of IRTs. Specifically, the language spoken with friends and the language in which IRTs watch TV, read newspapers and magazines and tell jokes. The IRTs are not required to learn the local language as is often the case with immigrants; neither do they need to. In a developed residential tourism destination, the locals speak the languages of the major groups within IRTs. Furthermore, due to the temporality of their stay in the destination and easy access to communication channels and media in their home country via the Internet, it can be expected that the IRTs retain a relationship with their home country, friends, and media. The remaining two items of the scale refer to social interactions and examine the origin of closest friends and people with whom IRTs attend social events. None of the items specify that they refer to people with whom the IRTs socialise while in the destination. Otherwise there is a high probability that their closest friends are still those in their home country. In conclusion, measuring acculturation based on a scale that focuses solely on language skills and ethnic origin of the closest social circles of a group that moves only semi-permanently to a new destination is very narrow-profiled and does not have any real explanatory value.

As pointed out by Özekici and Ünlüönen (2019), the extent to which the acculturation theory can be applied to the concept of tourism, its basic assumptions, and explanatory power remain unknown when it comes to the specific conditions of tourism. The same applies to residential tourism. It is imperative that tourism researchers refrain from simplifying such a complex phenomenon as acculturation in their future studies. Simply applying a general construct without considering the specific differences between residential tourists and other acculturating groups may lead to misinterpretation and misleading results.

An empirical study is presented to underline the necessity of reevaluating the acculturation process and its assumptions in the specific circumstances of residential tourism. By testing the basic relationship between influencing factors, acculturation strategies, and adaptation success, the article illustrates discrepancies with general acculturation theory. The results clearly support the argument that applying the methodology and general assumptions from acculturation studies in other fields has no real explanatory value.

The Study of IRTs in Alanya Turkey

Since the 1950s, Alanya has steadily become one of Turkey's most frequented sand-sea-sun tourism destinations. In parallel with mass tourism, residential tourism has been growing rapidly since opening the market to foreign buyers in 2003. Since then, over 40,000 houses have been sold to foreigners in Alanya up to the end of 2020 (Alanya Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2021). For years, Alanya has been among the

Table 1 Distribution of the Research Sample

Nationality	Properties sold to foreigners in Alanya (inc. 2020)		Sample	
	Total	%	Total	%
Russia	8,926	22.3	102	20.7
Germany	4,549	11.4	53	10.8
Norway	3,987	9.9	50	10.1
Sweden	3,008	7.6	39	7.9
Denmark	2,916	7.3	32	6.5
Holland	1,813	4.5	19	3.9
Ukraine	1,702	4.3	20	4.1
İran	1,642	4.1	32	6.5
Finland	1,443	3.6	19	3.9
Kazakhstan	1,239	3.1	18	3.7
Ireland	1,070	2.7	11	2.2
United Kingdom	959	2.4	20	4.1
Other	6,756	16.8	74	15.2
Total	40,010	100	489	100

first 3 cities, along with Istanbul and Ankara, where the most properties are sold to foreigners every year. It ranked second after Istanbul in 2021, with 12,384 houses sold to foreigners that year (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2022).

Methodology

The research population was defined as international residential tourists using the second homes sold to foreigners within the borders of the Alanya district. Due to the lack of any statistical data on residential tourism, the research sample was calculated based on the statistics of house sales to foreigners in Alanya. A stratified sampling method was used in the study based on the number of houses sold to foreigners within the borders of the Alanya district. Alanya is a multi-national destination where international residential tourists cannot be reduced to one or two nationalities.

According to statistics from the Alanya Chamber of Commerce and Industry (2021), citizens from 87 different countries have bought a property in Alanya up to the end of 2020. Nationalities with at least 1,000 second homes sold determined the strata (Table 1). Despite its significant representation, Iraqi citizens were counted under the 'Other' category in the study because of the difficulties in reaching them and their unwillingness to participate. In its place, United Kingdom was included as a separate group near the 1,000 properties border.

A questionnaire was designed to collect data. The snowball sampling method was preferred for data collection in the study. To reflect the tourism movement created by second homes, three international residential tourist groups, namely homeowners, guests, and tenants (Müller, 2002b), were included in the study. The questionnaire was translated into English, German, Russian, Arabic, and Persian by professional translators or bilingual academicians using the reverse translation method for translation accuracy control.

The data were collected online and offline. The online questionnaire was distributed to international residential tourists via e-mail or WhatsApp with the help of local real estate companies, the Real Estate Professionals Association and members of the Alanya Foreigners Council. Printed versions of the questionnaires were distributed to selected apartments with high concentrations of foreigners and service providers frequented by international residential tourists such as tourist shops, restaurants, beach buffets, pool restaurants, hairdressers and Turkish bath service providers.

Between May and August 2022, a total of 511 questionnaires were collected, 489 of which were included in further analysis. As Table 1 shows, the share of individual countries in the research sample approximately corresponds with the representation of each country in the total number of properties sold to foreigners. It is considered the most adequate way of representing the research population as there are no other statistical data even remotely related to residential tourism in Alanya. This fact is also considered the biggest limitation of the research.

The Design of the Questionnaire

In accordance with the arguments of Berry (2006) and Schwartz and Unger (2017), the questionnaire was designed to establish international residential tourists´ preference for acculturation strategies. A shortened form of the Acculturation Strategies Scale of Berry et al. (1987), whose usability in the field of tourism has been proven by Rasmi et al. (2014), was applied. Each of the four statements was adapted to Turkey and Turkish culture and represented one of the acculturation strategies, i.e. integration, assimilation, separation and marginalisation. The preferences were further studied in relation to influencing factors and level of satisfaction with life in the destination.

The factors influencing the acculturation process were selected from general acculturation literature as well as obtained from the specific circumstances of residential tourism. This question pool included demographic information and holiday habits associated with acculturation (Berry, 1997; Berry & Sam, 1997; Chung, 2001; Horenczyk & Munayer, 2005; De-Juan-Vigaray et al., 2021). The first eight questions determined nationality, gender, age, marital status, education level, occupation, monthly household income and population of the place of residence. The holiday habits-related questions included the number of visits to Alanya in a year, the total duration of stay, the preferred months, and the method of staying in Turkey. As the point where residential tourists differ from general tourists is in terms of their accommodation, questions collecting second home information were added to the questionnaire. This section included questions regarding the relationship with the second home, the year of purchase or first rental, the type and size of the second home, and the reasons for choosing a second home instead of a hotel. Further pre-existing factors derived from the literature research included prejudice (Berry, 1997), personality traits (Berry, 1997; Berry & Sam, 1997; Celenk & Van de Vijver, 2011), perceived cultural similarity (Rasmi et al., 2014; Piontkowski et al., 2000), experience with the new culture, level of knowledge and language proficiency (Berry & Sam, 1997).

Finally, questions to evaluate acculturation results, i.e. level of success of adaptation, were included in the study. Taking into consideration the classification of adaptation by Schwarz and Unger (2017), psychological and intercultural adaptation were evaluated in the study, while the sociocultural adaptation questions related to work or school were not included. The questions representing psychological or internal adaptation evaluate satisfaction with life in Alanya, stress level or tendency to depression. Intercultural adaptation includes questions that evaluate the level of satisfaction with socialising with Turks and whether there are problems in handling daily tasks.

The validity and reliability of the measurement tool was evaluated by calculating Cronbach Alpha coefficients. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient was 0.857, indicating that the scale was highly reliable (Kalaycı, 2016: 405.)

The Results of the Acculturation of International Residential Tourists Study in Alanya

The p-value calculated at the 0.05 significance level in the Pearson Chi-square test was used to examine a relationship between the preferred acculturation strategy and the participants' demographic information, holiday habits, and second home-related information. Table 2 shows the participants' demographic profiles.

According to the study's results, integration was the widely preferred acculturation strategy among international residential tourists in Alanya (82.2%),

Table 2 The Demographic Information of the Participants

		Sum	Share (%)
Gender	Female	319	64.7
	Male	174	35.3
Age	18–24	10	2.0
	25–34	33	6.7
	35–44	111	22.5
	45–54	119	24.1
	56–64	131	26.6
	65+	89	18.1
Marital Status	Single	50	10.1
	Married without children	49	9.9
	Married with children (< 18)	102	20.7
	Married with children (> 18)	122	24.7
	Married with children (<> 18)	42	8.5
	Widowed	35	7.1
	Divorced	85	17.2
Education	Primary school	14	2.8
	High School	143	29.0
	University	213	43.2
	University–post graduate	118	23.9
Occupation	Government Official	58	11.8
	Private Sector	143	29.0
	Self-employed	111	22.5
	Housewife	23	4.7
	Retired	95	19.3
	Unemployed	14	2.8
	Student	9	1.8
Monthly Household Income (EUR)	< 50	32	6.5
	751–1,500	90	18.3
	1,501–2,250	105	21.3
	2,251–3,000	83	16.8
	> 0,000	167	33.9
Population of hometown	Up to 50,000	97	19.7
	50,001–200,000	125	25.4
	200,001–500,000	62	12.6
	500,001–1.5 mil.	74	15.0
	Over 1.5 mil.	130	26.4

followed by assimilation (9.9%) and marginalisation (6.9%). The share of the separation strategy below 1% excluded this strategy from further analysis.

Among the demographic information, a relationship between the preferred acculturation strategy and nationality ($p = 0.000$), age ($p = 0.047$), marital status ($p = 0.000$), education level ($p = 0.014$), occupational category ($p = 0.000$), household income level ($p = 0.031$) and the population of the city of permanent residence ($p = 0.000$) was found. A Biplot chart from the correspondence analysis was used to examine the relationships confirmed with the Pearson Chi-square test.

The results show that participants from Ukraine and Finland tend to prefer the marginalisation strategy more than other strategies compared to other nationalities. The Dutch and British have been found to be closer to the assimilation strategy than other nationalities, while participants from other countries tend to prefer the integration strategy.

The confirmed relationship between an acculturation strategy and age shows that participants between the ages of 25 and 34 are closer to the marginalisation strategy than other participants. Participants between the ages of 45 and 54 are in a position between integration and assimilation. The remaining age groups seem to prefer the integration strategy over assimilation and marginalisation.

It was found that participants who were married and had children under the age of 18 tended to prefer the assimilation strategy compared to other strategies. The married participants whose children are both under and over 18 are closer to the marginalisation strategy. The other participant groups were found to have a preference for the integration strategy.

Considering the education level, university graduates and postgraduates are associated with the integration strategy. High school graduates are in a position between integration and assimilation, while the marginalisation strategy does not appear to be related to the education level of participants.

The results further show that self-employed participants prefer the assimilation strategy rather than integration and marginalisation. The unemployed participants tend toward the marginalisation strategy, while the rest of the occupation groups prefer integration.

Participants with low monthly household income (income 750 euros or less) were found to be the group that preferred the marginalisation strategy the most. Participants with medium monthly household income (751–2250 euros) are positioned between assimilation and integration strategies. Finally, the participants with high income levels (monthly household income of 2,251 euros and more) tend to prefer the integration strategy over marginalisation and assimilation.

Participants from cities with lower populations (less than 50,000 or between 50,000 and 200,000) were the closest to the integration strategy compared to the other strategies. Participants from cities with medium population density (between 200,000 and 500,000) seem to prefer the assimilation strategy the most. It was concluded that participants from metropolitan cities were interested in two strategies. While those from cities with a population of 500,000 to 1.5 million prefer the integration and assimilation strategy, those from metropolitan cities with a population of more than 1.5 million seem to be associated with integration and marginalisation strategies.

Among the participants' holiday habits, acculturation strategies are related only to the number of visits to Alanya within a year ($p = 0.007$). It was concluded that participants who travel to Alanya once, twice or three times a year tend to prefer the integration strategy. Those who come to Alanya 4 times a year were the most associated with the assimilation strategy. The most frequent visitors (5 times per year or more) were found to have no clear strategy preference as they were approximately the same distance from all three strategies. No relation to participants´ duration of stay, preferred months or the method of staying in Turkey was confirmed.

The relationship between acculturation strategies and second-home characteristics was tested by calculating the p values of the Pearson Chi-square test. According to the findings, a significant relationship exists between preferred acculturation strategies and the type of relationship with second homes ($p = 0.021$). Relationship types with second homes were defined as owners (54.8%), guests (21.3%) and tenants (23.3%) to

Table 3 Analysis of Differences in Other Acculturation Preconditions

According to acculturation strategies, there is a significant difference in the level of experience with Turkish culture.		
Variance homogeneity test	p = 0.691	
ANOVA	p = 0.626 (no difference among groups, x̄=2.84)	
There is a significant difference in the level of language proficiency according to acculturation strategies.		
Variance homogeneity test	p = 0.152	
ANOVA	p = 0.668 (no difference among groups, x̄=2.20)	
There is a significant difference in perceived cultural similarity according to acculturation strategies.		
Variance homogeneity test	p = 0.288	
ANOVA	p = 0.371 (no difference among groups, x̄=2.57)	
There is a significant difference in the opinion on Turkish culture according to acculturation strategies.		
Variance homogeneity test	p = 0.549	
ANOVA	p = 0.035	
Tukey test	Group 1	Group 2
	Marginalisation (x̄ = 4.03)	Assimilation (x̄ = 3.76) Integration (x̄ = 3.58)
There is a significant difference in the level of knowledge about Turkish culture according to acculturation strategies.		
Variance homogeneity test	p = 0.000	
ANOVA	p = 0.047	
Games-Howell test	Group 1	Group 2
	Marginalisation (x̄ = 3.94)	Assimilation (x̄ = 3.23) Integration (x̄ = 3.56)

Note x̄ - average score value out of 5

better reflect the complex movement within residential tourism. The second-home owners and their guests who stay for free with the owner's permission tend to prefer the integration strategy to other strategies. Second-home tenants who stay for a fee are closer to the assimilation strategy than the integration or marginalisation strategy.

Parallel to the duration of stay, the year of purchasing the second home or renting for the first time did not have a significant effect on the preferred acculturation strategy. Although the Chi-square test pointed toward a relationship between the acculturation strategy and the size of the second home, the Biplot chart from the correspondence analysis revealed only a relation to the integration strategy. The reasons for preferring a second home to a hotel during the stay in Turkey were tested using the Kruskal-Wallis independent samples test. The results showed that economic reasons ($p = 0.008$), the opportunity to be closer to Turkish culture ($p = 0.000$) and the familiarity with the environment factor ($p = 0.048$) have a significant effect on the acculturation strategy.

Furthermore, a one-way analysis of variance was used to determine whether there was a significant difference in the participants' acculturation strategy from the perspective of their preconditions identified in the literature. Personality traits were studied using the Big Five personality dimensions model (Schmitz, 1994; Ones & Viswesvaran, 1999; Ward et al., 2004; Caliguiri, 2017) and the Ten-Item Personality Inventory scale (Gosling et al., 2003). Following the results, there is a significant difference in extraversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness among the five personality traits included in the study. The participants with extroversion characteristics have a higher tendency to marginalisation and assimilation, while more introverted participants prefer the integration strategy. The participants with strong conscientiousness traits are prone to marginalisation and integration strategies, while participants with less dominant conscientiousness traits prefer the assimilation strategy. It was found that participants with high neuroticism were more prone to the assimilation strategy. Although there was a difference between acculturation strategies in terms of openness, the Post-hoc tests did not determine the source of the difference.

As can be seen from the results, the level of prior experience with Turkish culture, language proficiency or perceived cultural similarity was found to show no significant differences among the acculturation strategies. The opinion on Turkish culture was intended to measure the level of prejudice and was scored on a scale from 0 to 5. The higher the score, the more positive the opinion. The findings show that a positive opinion towards Turkish culture was found to be more strongly associated with the marginalisation strategy. When the opinion on Turkish culture scored in the middle range, it was more inclined towards integration and assimilation strategies. Similarly, participants with a high level of knowledge about Turkish culture were more prone to marginalisation. When the knowledge about the Turkish culture was at a medium level, assimilation and integration strategies were preferred.

The level of satisfaction with life in Alanya reflects the level of adaptation that is the result of the acculturation process. The average satisfaction level for each participant was found by calculating the average score of 6 statements evaluating psychological and intercultural adaptation. A one-way analysis of variance did not find a significant difference in the level of satisfaction with life in Alanya in terms of acculturation strategies. The level of satisfaction was very high regardless of the strategy. The average satisfaction level of IRTs with their life in Alanya was 4.34 out of 5. In conclusion, the adaptation of IRTs in Alanya can be considered highly successful whether they prefer the integration, assimilation, or marginalisation strategy.

Conclusion and Discussion

This study of IRTs in Alanya, Turkey, attempts to show a way for further acculturation studies in the field of residential tourism. The circumstances of residential tourism are significantly different from those of mass tourism and other settings in which the acculturation process happens. That is why it is important to approach the phenomenon of acculturation in residential tourism as new and examine the functions and relations within the process to confirm the conclusions of general acculturation theory or reveal the differences.

The study of IRTs in Alanya shows that integration was the most preferred strategy by IRTs. It was followed by assimilation and marginalisation with close to zero preference for separation. This corresponds with the previous research of Rasmi et al. (2014), who successfully tested the bidimensional acculturation model in tourism. In accordance with the present study, the integration strategy was the most common among tourists (36% share), followed by marginalisation and assimilation. Both studies confirmed that the separation strategy was the least preferred among tourists and residential tourists.

The strategy preference was influenced by several demographic characteristics, and some of the holiday habits and second home characteristics included in the study. Contrary to De-Juan-Vigaray et al. (2021), the current study reveals that IRTs who stay in Alanya for a short or long period of time do not tend to a specific acculturation strategy. The duration of stay does not play any role in their choice of assimilation, integration or marginalisation strategy. This result supports the study of Sam and Berry (2006), who argue that in acculturation theory, it is not the duration of contact with a different culture that is important, but the changes that occur. Parallel to the findings, the year of a property purchase or of first property rental in the destination was also found to have no effect on strategy preference.

The relation of IRTs to their second homes substantially influenced their choice of acculturation strategies. Accommodation in second homes is the main factor distinguishing residential tourists from other tourists. As emphasised by Hall and Müller (2004), the tourism movement created by second homes is not limited to homeowners. Family, friends, guests and tenants of second homeowners also contribute to the tourism movement. As the study results present, the second home owners, guests and tenants do not share the same preference for acculturation strategy. This fact should be taken into consideration when researching the acculturation in residential tourism. This study is the first to recognise the need to extend the research sample beyond the homeowners to better capture the tourism movement generated by residential tourism. As the results differ among the individual groups of residential tourists, not only second home owners but also their guests staying for free and tenants staying for a fee should be included in the research sample in future studies.

As to the other acculturation preconditions, several points need to be addressed. Ward et al. (2004) claim that adaptation is related to personality traits while Schmitz (1994) also states that personality traits play a significant role in the choice of acculturation strategies. The results of the study confirm this fact as well. The level of experience with Turkish culture and language proficiency before coming to Alanya was low but did not affect the choice of acculturation strategies. Furthermore, it was found that perceived cultural similarity did not create a significant difference in the selection of acculturation strategies, as in the study of Rasmi et al. (2014). However, the international residential tourists in Alanya perceive Turkish culture as different from their own culture. It disagrees with current literature, which states that the distance between two cultures is associated with negative effects, acculturation stress and unsuccessful adaptation (Ward & Kennedy, 1999; Yeh & Inose, 2003; Miller et al., 2011). Contrary to the literature, IRTs in the study claim that they are highly satisfied with their lives in Alanya, that life is not stressful and that they do not have any problems in continuing their daily lives, regardless of their acculturation strategies. The reason why perceived high cultural distance is associated with positive assimilation in residential tourism may be due to tourism-specific circumstances or the intensity of interest in Turkish culture.

The success of the adaptation of IRTs in the destination was expressed through a level of satisfaction with life in Alanya. Zhang et al. (2018) found a relationship between tourists' acculturation strategies and satisfaction. Integration and assimilation strategies are positively related to satisfaction, while separation and marginalisation strategies are negatively related. Contrary to the study of Zhang et al. (2018), no significant difference was found in the satisfaction level of IRTs in Alanya according to acculturation strategies in this study. All strategies, i.e. integration, assimilation and marginalisation, provide a highly successful adaptation.

In the literature, the group that generally prefers the marginalisation strategy is associated with acculturation stress and negative health effects, low self-esteem and psychological problems, not being able to adapt to society, having problems in establishing relationships and continuing their daily lives. From the perspective of mainstream society, it is an acculturation strategy that is mainly perceived as negative and undesirable. On the contrary, the results of the current study clearly show that marginalisation does not have to represent a problem in the context of residential tourism. Participants who prefer the marginalisation strategy were found to be the most extrovert and responsible individuals with an equally high level of satisfaction with their life in the destination as those preferring integration and assimilation. The extent to which the marginalisation strategy in residential tourism conforms to the general acculturation theory should be considered. Bourhis et al. (1997) state that in some contexts, marginalisation is more of a form of individualism, in which one does not identify oneself with either culture but sees oneself as an individual. Such individuals are often self-confident, highly educated and very successful in adapting to new environments.

In conclusion, the study presents sufficient discrepancies between general acculturation theory and acculturation in residential tourism to justify examining the phenomenon from ground zero. It is imperative that acculturation studies in residential tourism are focused on examining the preference for specific acculturation strategies instead of calculating a level of acculturation in order to avoid simplification and misleading conclusions.

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Original Scientific Article

Authenticity and Commercialisation: A Netnographic Study of Tourist Experiences in Mawlynnong, India

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This study explores the dynamic interplay between authenticity and commercialisation in rural tourism, focusing on Mawlynnong, India, acclaimed as Asia's cleanest village. Using a netnographic analysis of 359 TripAdvisor reviews from 2012 to 2024, the research investigates tourists' perceptions of authenticity and commercialisation and develops a framework of authenticity and commercialisation for rural tourism. Positive themes identified include cleanliness, natural beauty, community hospitality, and cultural engagement through homestays. These attributes contribute to the village's appeal as an authentic rural destination. However, tourists also expressed concerns regarding over-commercialisation, including excessive construction, overcrowding, overpricing, and limited local interaction. The study highlights the dual role of commercialisation in enhancing economic development and tourism infrastructure while potentially eroding cultural and experiential authenticity. The research contributes to the theoretical discourse on rural tourism by integrating sustainability into the authenticity-commercialisation framework. Practical implications include the need for destination managers to balance tourism growth with cultural preservation and authenticity.

Keywords: rural tourism, tourist experience, commercialisation, authenticity, rural interaction, netnography

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Introduction

The symbiotic relationship between tourism and its destinations has long been the focus of academic inquiry, especially in its role as a catalyst for rural development (Akay, 2020; Li & Wang, 2023). Within this discourse, authenticity and commercialisation have emerged as pivotal constructs, reflecting the evolving dynamics of tourism and shaping its economic, cultural, and social dimensions (Le et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2021). These themes hold particular significance in rural tourism, a domain celebrated for its potential to foster economic growth, cultural exchange, and heritage preservation while grappling with challenges posed by commodification and commercialisation (Majewski, 2010).

Authenticity is a cornerstone of tourist motivations, particularly in rural and cultural tourism contexts. As MacCannell (1973) introduced in his seminal work on 'staged authenticity,' the pursuit of authenticity shapes how destinations curate and present experiences to meet tourists' expectations. For many travellers, the allure of rural tourism lies in its promise of genuine and unspoiled cultural encounters (Airbnb, 2021).

In rural tourism, authenticity is often experienced through interactions with local communities, participation in traditional practices, and immersion in pristine natural settings (Jyotsna & Maurya, 2019). Visitors seek to escape the artificiality of urban life, embracing the perceived 'real' and 'unchanged' elements of rural destinations. However, this quest for authenticity presents challenges as cultural practices and landscapes adapt to accommodate tourism demands. Recent studies, such as those by Wall and Xie (2002) and Zhao et al. (2024), highlight how the negotiation of authenticity involves stakeholders ranging from local communities to tourists, each shaping and reshaping what is deemed 'genuine.'

Commercialisation plays a dual role in tourism, both as a driver of economic benefits and a potential threat to cultural integrity. On the one hand, it fosters local economies, generates employment, and enhances the visibility of cultural heritage (MacDonald & Jolliffe, 2003; Streifeneder et al., 2023). On the other hand, excessive commercialisation risks eroding intrinsic cultural values, leading to homogenisation and a loss of uniqueness (Li, 2003; Sheedy, 2022). Scholars like Cohen (1988) and MacCannell (1973) have highlighted how commodification reduces cultural practices and artefacts to mere marketable commodities, raising concerns about the sustainability of such transformations.

This paradox is particularly evident in rural tourism, where economic reliance on tourism coexists with efforts to preserve traditional lifestyles and socio-cultural dynamics. As Chhabra et al. (2009) argue, tourists' perception of authenticity diminishes when destinations prioritise commercial interests over cultural preservation. Zhang et al. (2021) further elaborate that commercialisation, when thoughtfully managed, can enhance perceived authenticity and tourist satisfaction (Song et al., 2021; Sun et al., 2019; Tang et al., 2019).

Existing literature extensively documents rural tourism's economic, social, and environmental impacts, focusing on sustainability and community involvement (Karali et al., 2021; Ruiz-Real et al., 2022). However, research addressing the nuanced interplay between authenticity and commercialisation in rural contexts remains limited, particularly in India. Most studies emphasise developed economies or cultural heritage tourism, leaving rural tourism in developing countries underexplored (Le et al., 2024; Rickly, 2022; Wang et al., 2024).

Additionally, theoretical frameworks on authenticity, such as MacCannell's (1973) staged authenticity and Wang's (1999) existential authenticity, have predominantly been applied in urban or heritage tourism contexts. Their relevance to rural tourism, especially in the Global South, requires further exploration. This study addresses these gaps by focusing on rural tourism with a case study of Mawlynong (the cleanest village in Asia). This study employs a netnographic approach to analyse tourists' perceptions as reflected in TripAdvisor reviews. This research explores how tourists perceive authenticity and commercialisation in rural tourism destinations. The study seeks to develop a comprehensive framework of authenticity and commercialisation of rural tourism that balances economic growth with cultural preservation. Through its granular analysis of tourists' perceptions, this research contributes to the theoretical discourse on authenticity and commercialisation, offering actionable insights for destination managers and policymakers. These findings have broader implications for developing rural tourism strategies aligned with sustainability and cultural preservation principles, ensuring that destinations retain their unique character while meeting the demands of a globalised tourism market. The study begins with a literature review synthesising existing research on authenticity and commercialisation in tourism, identifying key theoretical frameworks and empirical findings. The methodology section outlines the netnographic approach used to analyse TripAdvisor reviews, detailing the data collection and analysis procedures. The results and discussion sections present the study's findings, contextualising them within the broader discourse on rural tourism. Finally, the conclusion highlights the study's contributions, implications, and recommendations for future research.

Literature Review

Authenticity and commercialisation are intertwined constructs significantly influencing tourism development and tourist experiences. The dual pressures of commodification and preservation shape the evolution of rural and cultural tourism landscapes.

Conceptualising Authenticity in Tourism

Authenticity is a contested concept in tourism studies, often interpreted through varied frameworks. Wall and Xie (2005) emphasise that authenticity is a negotiated construct involving multiple stakeholders, including tourists, local communities, and governing bodies. They propose five dimensions of authenticity: commodification versus spontaneity, cultural evolution versus museumification, economic development versus cultural preservation, ethnic autonomy versus state regulation, and mass tourism development versus sustainable cultural tourism. These dimensions highlight the inherent tensions in authenticity debates. Similar observations are made by Cole (2007) and Yang and Wall (2009), who argue that authenticity often reflects the interplay of tourists' expectations and local adaptations, blending pride with commodified cultural expressions.

Constructive and existential authenticity frameworks further complicate this discourse. Zhang et al. (2021) and Hughes and Carlsen (2010) note that commercialisation when balanced with cultural preservation, can enhance perceived authenticity. Conversely, over-commercialization risks undermining the authenticity tourists seek. Studies by Markwick (2001), Su et al. (2019), and McCartney and Chen (2019) align in emphasising that local adaptations to tourism demands often dilute cultural integrity yet provide economic opportunities that communities cannot ignore.

Commercialisation and its impacts

Commercialisation is a double-edged sword, driving economic benefits while risking cultural degradation. Several studies highlight these dynamics. For instance, Tang et al. (2019) and Zhao et al. (2024) focus on how over-commercialization at heritage sites diminishes cultural authenticity and compromises visitor experiences. Similarly, Liu et al. (2022) argue that the commodification of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) often leads to cultural loss, echoing findings by Song et al. (2021) on the commercialisation of ethnic music in China. In contrast, Prince (2023) and Hughes and Carlsen (2010) demonstrate instances where thoughtfully managed commercialisation can complement cultural preservation. Kontogeorgopoulos et al. (2013) reinforce these findings by examining homestay tourism in Thailand, noting that while economic benefits increase, perceived authenticity may decline due to increased dependence on tourism.

Intersections of Authenticity and Commercialisation in Rural Tourism

Rural tourism presents unique challenges in balancing authenticity and commercialisation. Studies by Zhang and Stewart (2017) and Wall and Xie (2005) show that rural landscapes often face pressures to commercialise, risking the loss of their cultural and environmental integrity. However, Zhao et al. (2024) and Le et al. (2022) argue that rural tourism can thrive by leveraging contextual involvement and existential authenticity to enhance visitor satisfaction. Local communities play a pivotal role in maintaining authenticity amidst commercialisation. Studies by Prince (2023), Wang et al. (2024), and Cole (2007) highlight how communities navigate these dynamics, often redefining their cultural narratives to meet tourist expectations while preserving core elements of their identity. Similar findings by Kontogeorgopoulos et al. (2013) and Su et al. (2019) illustrate that active community involvement is key to sustaining authenticity and economic benefits in rural and ethnic tourism contexts.

Tourist Perceptions and Experiences

Tourist perceptions are central to understanding the interplay between authenticity and commercialisati-

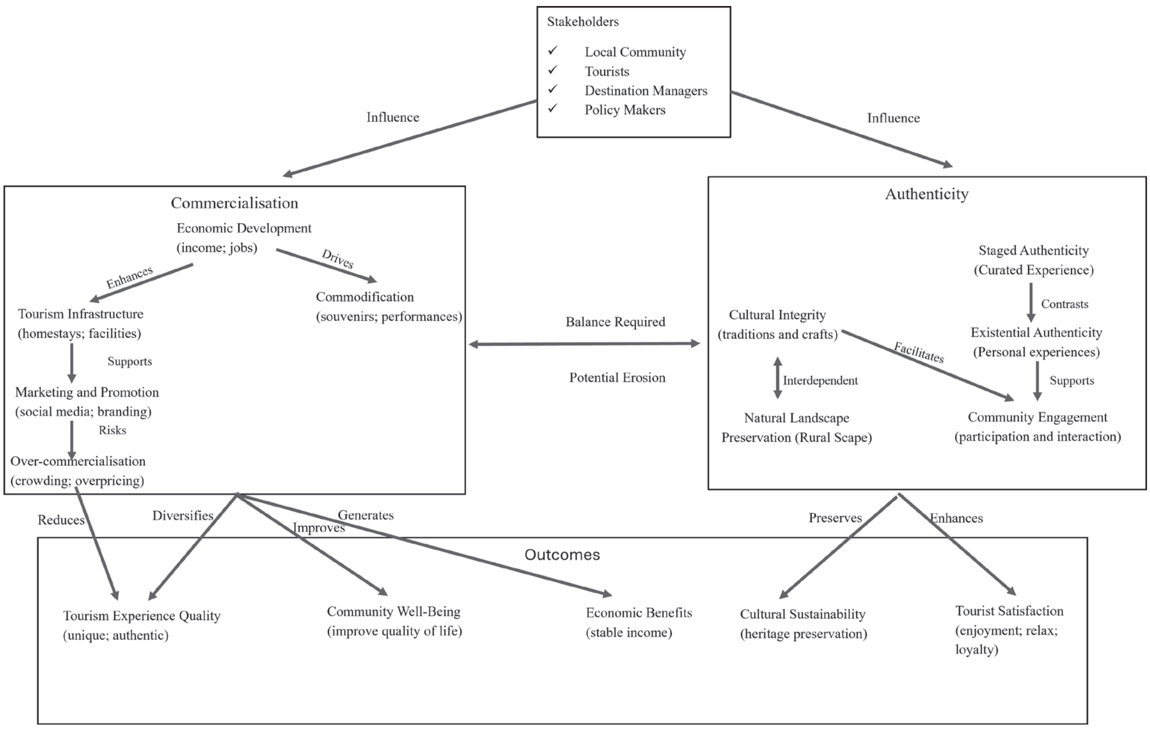

Figure 1 Comprehensive Framework for Authenticity and Commercialisation of Rural Tourism

on. Research by Zhang et al. (2021), Zhao et al. (2024), and Le et al. (2022) underscore the importance of aligning tourist expectations with authentic experiences to ensure satisfaction and loyalty. Tourists often value existential and postmodern authenticity over objective authenticity, prioritising emotional and aesthetic experiences (Song & Yuan, 2021; Yang & Wall, 2009). Song and Yuan (2021) explore how ethnic music commercialisation aligns with tourist expectations, emphasising the dynamic relationship between cultural adaptation and authenticity. Similarly, McCartney and Chen (2019) advocate for co-creation experiences, where tourists and hosts collaboratively shape authentic interactions. These studies collectively highlight the evolving nature of tourist expectations and the challenges of balancing authenticity with commercialisation.

Despite extensive research, several gaps persist. Most studies focus on Western or Asian urban and heritage tourism contexts, with limited attention to rural tourism in non-Western settings. Existing literature often examines authenticity and commercialisation from stakeholders' perspectives, with fewer studies delving into tourists' perceptions in rural contexts. Additionally, a lack of a comprehensive framework integrating authenticity and commercialisation dimensions limits the applicability of existing findings. Developing a framework specific to the rural tourism context can provide actionable insights for sustainable tourism development.

Framework on Authenticity and Commercialisation of Rural Tourism

Building upon the above-discussed theoretical underpinnings, this study develops a comprehensive framework to understand the interplay between authenticity and commercialisation in rural tourism (Figure 1). The framework integrates the dynamic interplay between authenticity and commercialisation in rural tourism, offering a comprehensive understanding of their interdependence. It is grounded in the theoretical constructs of authenticity, including staged authenticity (MacCannell, 1973) and existential authenticity (Wang, 1999). These concepts emphasise the balance between curated cultural performances and tourists' pursuit of genuine, emotional connections during their visits (Song & Yuan, 2021; Zhao et al., 2024). In rural settings, authenticity often manifests through immersive experiences, community engagement, and the preservation of natural landscapes (Orden-Mejía et al., 2022; Palacios-Florencio et al., 2021; Su et al., 2019; Wall & Xie, 2005; Zhang et al., 2021).

On the other hand, commercialisation, while driving economic benefits, risks commodifying cultural practices into marketable products, potentially undermining their intrinsic value (Cohen, 1988; Chhabra et al., 2009; Streifeneder et al., 2023). However, when managed thoughtfully, it can enhance tourism infrastructure and accessibility, benefiting tourists and local communities (Zhang et al., 2021; Zhao et al., 2024). The framework balances these dual dimensions across five key areas: cultural evolution versus preservation, economic development versus over-commercialization, community engagement versus tourist expectations, environmental sustainability as an authenticity marker, and tourist perceptions of value and authenticity.

The application of the framework in rural tourism highlights the challenges and opportunities of maintaining cultural integrity while benefiting from increased tourism. Tourists praise the village's sustainability and hospitality as authentic markers, yet concerns about overpricing and overcrowding reveal the risks of excessive commercialisation (Chhabra et al., 2009; MacCannell, 1973; Li et al., 2022; Song & Yuan, 2021; Wall & Xie, 2005). By integrating these theoretical constructs, the framework provides a practical tool for destination management, emphasising the importance of balancing sustainability, cultural preservation, and economic viability (Palacios-Florencio et al., 2021; Orden-Mejía et al., 2022).

Research Methodology

Netnography

This study utilises the online ethnography method, netnography (Kozinets, 1998). This study employed a passive 'lurker' methodology, in which the researcher refrained from engaging with the online communities (Mkono, 2012). Web 2.0 enables consumers to express their candid thoughts and share their personal experiences. The profusion of user-generated material provides an opportunity for academics and marketers to identify patterns in consumer behaviour, consumer experience, beliefs, and expectations and predict future actions (Bartl et al., 2016; Atsız et al., 2022; Gholamhosseinzadeh et al., 2023; Hernández et al., 2022). With the increasing number of travellers sharing their trip experiences and photos on travel websites, blogs, and social media platforms, netnography in tourism research is gaining popularity (Tavakoli & Wijesinghe, 2019; Jyotsna & Maurya, 2019).

Ontological and Epistemological Perspectives

The study is rooted in a constructivist ontological perspective, which posits that social realities are constructed through human interaction and subjective experiences (Burns et al., 2022). The epistemological stance is interpretivist, emphasising understanding tourists' perceptions and experiences through their narratives. These philosophical positions underpin the methodological choice of netnography, as it allows for a nuanced exploration of subjective meanings embedded in online reviews (Gholamhosseinzadeh et al., 2023).

Area of the Study

The study has chosen Mawlynnong, a Khasi community village located in the East Khasi highlands of Meghalaya state in India, close to the border with Bangladesh. In 2003, this town was awarded the title of 'cleanest village of Asia' by Discovery India Magazine. This recognition was then confirmed by BBC and National Geographic in 2004 (Shermin, 2017). According to a BBC interview, around 130 years ago, there was a Cholera epidemic in the village (Badal, 2016). Without medical resources, missionaries advised prioritising hygiene as a fundamental measure to fight against the sickness (Badal, 2016). Across the course of history, rural communities have transmitted knowledge regarding cleanliness and its impacts from one generation to the next. After receiving extensive international media attention in 2004, the town attracted attention from the tourism sector. For travellers travelling to the northeastern states of India, it is strongly advised to include a visit to Mawlynnong. Gradually, the village has emerged as a sought-after tourist spot in North-East India. This hamlet in India is renowned for being a women-led community that has established a matriarchal culture that empowers women. Additionally, it prides itself on achieving a 100% literacy rate.

Data Source and Data Collection

We have collected data from Tripadvisor.in. This travel website is a significant and unbiased source of both qualitative and quantitative data (Amatulli et al., 2019; Zaman et al., 2016; Atsız et al., 2022; Hernández et al., 2022). To investigate tourists' experiences, this website is acknowledged by worldwide scholars owing to its wealth of information (Chiu & Cho, 2021). Web scraping was used to collect the review data (Ali et al., 2021; Barbierato et al., 2021), extracting review data from multiple sources utilising their origin paths (Khder, 2021). The 'rvest' and 'dplyr' packages in the 'R' programming language facilitated this process. The researchers gathered all 359 review data of 'Mawlynnong Village' as of 22nd December 2024. The data of rating (1 – 'Terrible,' 2 – 'Poor,' 3 – 'Average,' 4 – 'Very good' and 5 – 'Excellent'), the month and year, country of tourists belonging, type of travel (in terms of travel companion) and main text review has been stored in an excel file.

Data Analysis Approach

We carefully read 359 reviews to identify the positive and negative themes. First, after data collection, the reviews with ratings of 1 – 'Terrible,' 2 – 'Poor,' and 3 – 'Average' have been considered dissatisfied tourist reviews, or they did not like the rural destination. The reviews with ratings of 4 – 'Very good' and 5 – 'Excellent' have been considered satisfied tourist reviews, or they liked the rural destination. From Excel, review data was imported to Word to open coding each review sentence. After reading all reviews, recurring patterns and themes were identified (Naeem et al., 2023). The themes were iteratively refined through cross-verification by the researchers to ensure consistency and accuracy. The manual analysis method gave an in-depth understanding of subjective experiences that automated techniques might overlook (Garner & Kim, 2022). The process ensured that nuanced details embedded in the narratives were captured and interpreted (Garner & Kim, 2022; Hong, 2020). The researchers maintained a reflexive approach throughout the study, acknowledging their positionality and potential biases. The manual analysis method ensured that interpretations were grounded in the data, reflecting the authentic voices of the reviewers (Garner & Kim, 2022).

Results and Findings

Descriptive Results

As travel becomes more accessible and individuals search out unique experiences, the small village of Mawlynnong has become a popular tourist destination. We obtained valuable insights into evolving travel patterns by analysing a dataset of 359 reviews collected from the TripAdvisor travel website. We can comprehensively understand tourist characteristics by analysing the distribution of reviews, travel companions, tourists' origins, and seasonal trends.

We found that reviews fluctuate significantly over the year. One review for 2012 and 2014 indicated that social media, the internet, and technology were relatively unexplored earlier. As the pandemic (COVID-19) spread globally, the number of reviews decreased, and signs of recovery appeared in the 2022, 2023, and 2024 data (Figure 2). However, the village did not recover like other destinations regarding the number of reviews given on Tripadvisor websites.

The total number of reviews reveals that most tourists were from India (290 reviews), highlighting the village's popularity among domestic tourists. Nonetheless, the data demonstrate a substantial interest from international tourists (27 reviews). Most reviews from international tourists were from Bangladesh, the USA, Singapore, the UK, Canada, Israel, and Australia. Notably, 40 of them did not mention their country of origin.

When it comes to wandering around Mawlynnong, tourists have a variety of preferences regarding their travel companions. Most tourists travelled with their families, couples travelling together made second in

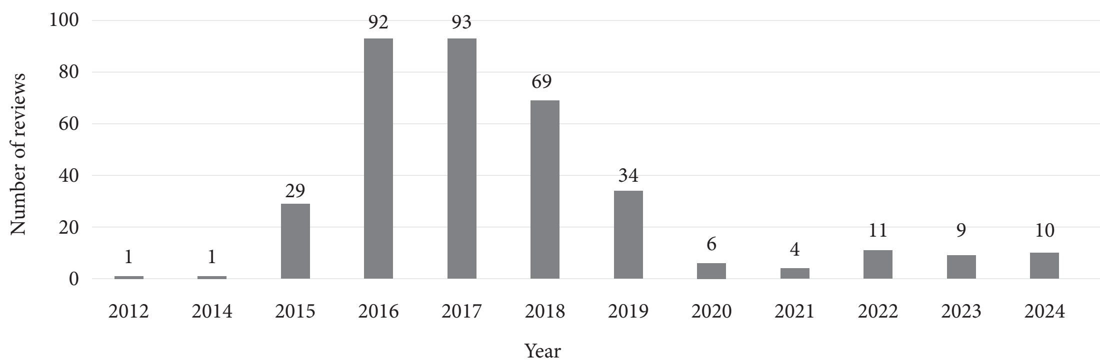

Figure 2 Number of Reviews in Each Year

terms of all tourists, with friends coming in third. A smaller percentage of tourists went on their vacations solo and for business purposes, while a significant percentage did not mention their travel companions.

Tourists are drawn to Mawlynnong all year by its natural beauty, which features several distinct seasonal activities. In the evaluations that we looked at, we found that most of the tourists were during the Winter (November–February) season. After that, they visited during the monsoon season (May–Seprtember), followed by the spring season (March–April), and finally, the post-monsoon season (October).

To analyse the satisfaction level expressed in the reviews, we classified tourists with terrible, poor, and average ratings as dissatisfied and those with very good and excellent ratings as satisfied. The data reveals a gradual increase in dissatisfaction among tourists visiting Mawlynnong Village over the years, with satisfaction declining significantly (Figure 3).

Analytical Results

To fulfil the study's objective of exploring tourists' perceptions of authenticity and commercialisation in rural tourism, an in-depth analysis of TripAdvisor reviews from 2012 to 2024 was conducted. The thematic analysis identified several key factors, grouped into those contributing to tourists' positive experiences and those leading to dissatisfaction, providing insights into how authenticity and commercialisation are perceived at Mawlynnong.

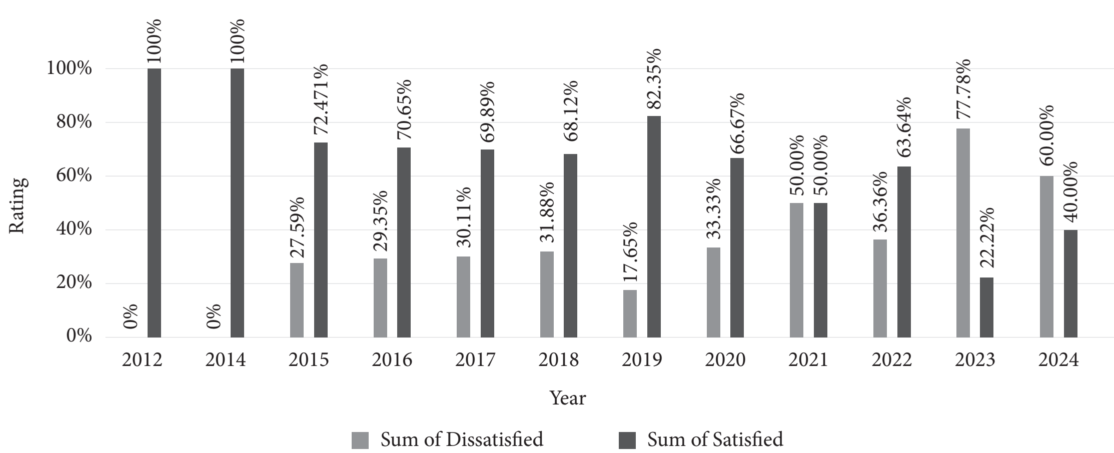

Figure 3 Percentage of Satisfied and Dissatisfied Tourists Over the Years

Positive perceptions and themes of authenticity

The common positive themes are the cleanliness and sustainability practices in the village, scenic beauty and connection with nature, Community hospitality, and Cultural engagement through homestays.

Cleanliness and sustainability

Mawlynnong's reputation as 'Asia's cleanest village' emerged as a central theme. Tourists consistently praised the village's well-maintained streets, abundant greenery, and effective waste management practices, including bamboo dustbins and solar-powered streetlights. These efforts were authentic representations of local commitment to cleanliness and sustainability. Such sustainable practices align with the expectations of rural tourists seeking environmentally conscious destinations. Some representative quotes from tourists' reviews regarding cleanliness included:

> The clean village is must stay place to have the experience of staying in proximity to nature, if not for life at least a brief. The greenery is beautifully maintained. It was raining all day during our visit […]. [A group of friends from Chennai, India in August 2017,]

> The most beautiful scenic clean village. Fantastic cleanness. Wonder how they managed. People are beautiful and courteous. So is the atmosphere, homes and view. [A couple from Jaipur, India in December 2018]

> We enjoyed the walk around the village. Truly clean. It seemed like even children are into keeping it clean – a lesson for just all villages and cities in India. […] The trees are pruned and paths are well paved. This is a must to get a glimpse of how committed ppl can be towards cleanliness […]. [A tourist from Pune, India in April 2022]

> Everywhere there are baskets made of cane, where one can throw their garbage. All village roads are made of concrete; all the street lights get their source from sun through solar panels […]. A group of tourists from Odisha, India in May 2017]

> I did not find any littering of paper or plastic bags, bottles etc Besides, at every lane and street corner, we found baskets made out of the locally available wooden splints, canes and ropes etc for garbage collection […]. [A tourist from Hyderabad, India in November 2017]

Scenic beauty and connection to nature

The lush greenery, tropical forests, and vibrant flower gardens contributed to tourists' appreciation of Mawlynnong's natural charm. For many visitors, these features represented an authentic rural experience, reinforcing their desire for meaningful interactions with nature. This aligns with rural tourism's fundamental appeal of escaping urban monotony and experiencing the unspoiled beauty of rural life.

> The place is full of lush green gardens, beautiful flowers, tropical forest, bamboo houses and one feel as if they are in the nature's lap […]. [A couple from New Delhi, India in December 2016]

> Very clean and neat village. looks very beautiful. So many flowers there. Lovely evening […]. [A couple from Vadodara, India in January 2023]

Community hospitality

The Khasi community's warm hospitality was another theme that contributed to positive experiences. Tourists described locals as welcoming and eager to accommodate visitors, often exceeding expectations to ensure comfort. Such experiences fostered perceptions of a genuine and inclusive rural atmosphere, a key driver of satisfaction in rural tourism.

> The way they treat guests is something which someone should experience at least once. [A Family from Vadodara, India in October 2015]

> We came for a late-night walk, late means around 9 PM. All shops are in the closing mode, hence no food. Glad we had our dinner on the way, we were looking for some coffee/tea. The first shop near to parking lot was closed, so went ahead for another shop. They almost

> closed, but while seeing us, the owner again opened the shop and prepared coffee for us. One of the best cups of coffee, we had during our Meghalaya […]. [A tourist from Vadodara, India in January 2022]

Cultural engagement through homestays

Homestays were frequently highlighted as avenues for authentic cultural exchange, enabling tourists to engage with Khasi traditions, savour local cuisines, and experience the simplicity of bamboo huts. This personalised approach to hospitality created immersive experiences that strengthened perceptions of authenticity. Tourists valued these opportunities for interaction and cultural immersion. Representative quotes from reviews included:

> There are lot of homestays available, where you can enjoy staying in a bamboo hut and enjoy some delicious meals made by the owners […]. [A group of tourists from New Delhi, India in March 2017]

> Nice place to stay overnight. Homestays provide basic facilities but received superb hospitality at Kharmawshun Homestay. Do go for a walk in a village. [Another group of tourists from New Bengaluru, India wrote in April 2019]

> Every home is a homestay thus lots of options for staying […]. [A group of tourists from Pune visited Mawlynnong post covid in April 2022]

> There are multiple homestays and if you decide to stay in one of them then you will experience awesome serenity and sense of bliss. [Another tourist on 5 May 2022]

Negative perceptions and themes of commercialisation

The common themes found in the reviews are Increased construction and homestay in the village, Overcrowding and tourism saturation, Overpricing and commodification, Lack of interaction with locals, and Perceived overhype.

Increased construction and homestay in the village

A significant theme was tourists' disappointment with perceived over-commercialization. Many visitors felt the village's transformation into a tourism hub had compromised its authenticity. Modern developments, such as increased construction and homestays, were viewed as detracting from the village's original rural charm, making it feel more like a 'showpiece' than a genuine village. Significant statements concerning this included:

> Unfortunately, the success of the publicity about the cleanliness has caused a building boom so everything looked like a construction site with heaps of sand and piles of bricks everywhere […]. [A tourist from UK in March 2018]

> Did not extend a natural feel though it was clean. Somehow did not feel like visiting a village. Rather looked like a showpiece. [A tourist's group from Navi Mumbai, India in October 2019]

> This is a village which doesn't look like a village. […] A lot of commercialisation is also seen with every third house offering homestay […]. [Another tourist from Mumbai, India in March 2023]

Overcrowding and tourism saturation

Over-tourism emerged as a critical concern, with visitors expressing dissatisfaction over the influx of tourists that led to overcrowded spaces. Large crowds diminished the tranquil atmosphere many sought in rural destinations, highlighting the challenges of balancing tourism growth with maintaining an authentic rural experience. Significant statements concerning overcrowding included:

> I found it to be a bit touristy. [An Australian tourist in November 2016]

> It has become like hordes of tourists coming in the village, to practically see nothing. The beauty of the village is being destroyed by the flocks of tourists coming here […]. [A couple from Bangaluru, India in December 2017]

> It claims one of the cleanest villages in Asia. But to my surprise, they have made it very touristy, full of cafes and homestays, looks made up rather than rustic raw natural village […]. [Another couple from Mumbai, India in March 2023]

Overpricing and commodification

Tourists frequently criticised the high costs associated with entry fees, accommodations, and even basic amenities like restrooms. This commodification of the village's offerings led to perceptions that locals were overly focused on monetary gains, further eroding the sense of authenticity. Many felt the value provided did not justify the premium prices charged. Some quotes from tourist reviews mentioning overprice included:

> Have stopped for lunch there, which was average and overpriced. […] Even home stays are very expensive […]. [A solo traveller from Hyderabad, India in December 2016]

> On entry you will be charged INR 100 for car parking or whatever you would like to treat it as. The charges of using toilet are INR 10 which is hugely expensive. if you want to go to relieve your stomach it is INR 20. gosh! […]. [A Family from Noida, India in April 2017]

> They sell basic amenities at premium rates […]. [A group of friends From Kochi, India in December 2018]

> Paying to get access to the village is definitely not worth. Highly disappointed. People are just money minded here everything is overpriced as well. [A tourist mentioned in April 2023]

> Overpriced and serving bad quality food, can be skipped. [A tourist from New Delhi, India in March 2018]

Lack ®of interaction with locals

Another recurring theme was the limited interaction between tourists and villagers, especially during day visits. Many visitors noted a lack of opportunities to engage meaningfully with the community, contrasting with expectations of immersive cultural exchanges in rural tourism. Such limitations contributed to feelings of detachment and disappointment. Significant reviews concerning this included:

> Felt as if all the children, and locals were asked not to interact, or a subtle village code that all seemed to follow, maybe it's the tribal nuance they want to protect and to limit interaction with tourists. […]. [A tourist from Mumbai, India in December 2021]

> Walk around, expect no communication from villagers. […]. [Another tourist from Mumbai commented in April 2023]

Perceived overhype

Several tourists described Mawlynnong as overhyped, suggesting that the marketing of the village had created unrealistic expectations. They found the actual experience underwhelming compared to the idyllic image portrayed in promotional materials, which led to dissatisfaction and a sense of unmet expectations,

> […] but it is overhyped. This place can be skipped as it has nothing new to see […]. [A tourists visited with friends from Kolkata, India visited in August 2016]

> Honestly speaking, this is an overhyped place and for all the wrong reasons. The living root bridge is undoubtedly an incredible thing to see, but then one should visit the double root bridge in Cherrapunji […]. [A tourist from Kolkata, India in July 2017]

> There are much beautiful places in Meghalaya to see than designed and hyped village which only has a bunch of homestays and nothing else. Please do not waste your time. [A couple from Mumbai, India in December 2022]

Discussion

The results of this study illuminate the intricate balance between authenticity and commercialisation in rural tourism. The analysis of tourists' positive reviews underscores the role of authenticity as a core motivator for rural tourism. Mawlynnong's cleanliness, natural beauty, and hospitable community resonated with tourists seeking an authentic escape from urban monotony. Tourists' appreciation for sustainable practices, including the use of bamboo dustbins and solar lighting, further supports arguments by Zhao et al. (2024) and Le et al. (2022) that contextual involvement enhances perceptions of authenticity.

However, the simultaneous emergence of themes related to commercialisation challenges the perception of authenticity. Many tourists viewed the village as overly curated or 'showpiece-like,' detracting from its rural essence. This critique aligns with the tension identified by Wall and Xie (2005) and Tang et al. (2019) between commodification and cultural preservation. The shift from a functional rural environment to a heavily commercialised tourism hub suggests that an excessive focus on economic gains may erode the genuine experiences tourists seek. The results vividly reflect the duality of commercialisation and its potential to drive economic benefits while risking cultural integrity. Mawlynnong's reliance on tourism has fostered economic growth, as evidenced by the thriving homestay industry and local craft sales. These developments echo findings by Prince (2023), and Kontogeorgopoulos et al. (2013) that thoughtfully managed commercialisation can complement cultural preservation.

However, dissatisfaction related to overpricing, overcrowding, and perceived exploitation reveals the darker side of commercialisation. Many tourists criticised the high costs of basic amenities and the overt focus on monetising the destination. This sentiment aligns with Chhabra et al. (2003), who argue that prioritising commercial interests diminishes perceptions of authenticity. Additionally, the findings corroborate Song and Yuan (2021) and Li and Wang (2023), who caution that unchecked commodification often leads to cultural homogenisation and diminished tourist satisfaction. While the results largely reinforce existing frameworks, they also introduce new dimensions to the discourse. One such dimension is the interplay between sustainable practices and perceived authenticity. Mawlynnong's environmental initiatives, such as banning plastic and promoting eco-friendly infrastructure, emerged as a unique factor in enhancing authenticity. This finding builds on the work of Palacios-Florencio et al. (2021) and Orden-Mejía et al. (2022), suggesting that sustainability can serve as a modern marker of authenticity in rural tourism. Another novel insight is the role of community engagement in shaping tourist perceptions. While tourists praised the hospitality of locals, the lack of meaningful interaction outside of homestay settings was a common critique. This highlights the importance of fostering genuine host-guest interactions, as Kastenholz et al. (2021) and McCartney and Chen (2019) emphasised. Mawlynnong's model suggests that creating opportunities for cultural exchange beyond commercial transactions could mitigate perceptions of over-commercialisation. The findings reveal that balancing authenticity and commercialisation requires careful planning and management. The criticisms of overhype and overcrowding highlight the challenges of scaling tourism while maintaining its rural charm. This aligns with Marques Santos et al. (2020) and Seraphin and Ivanov (2020), who emphasise the detrimental effects of over-tourism on destination sustainability and visitor experiences.

Conclusion

This study examined the intersection of authenticity and commercialisation in rural tourism, with Mawlynnong as a case study. By analysing over a decade of tourist reviews, the research shed light on how rural destinations navigate balancing economic development and cultural preservation challenges. The findings reveal that authenticity remains a cornerstone of tourist satisfaction in rural settings. Mawlynnong's well-maintained cleanliness, natural beauty, and hospitable community resonate deeply with visitors seeking an escape from urban life. However, the study also underscores the complex challenges posed by commercialisation. While tourism has significantly contributed to the village's economic prosperity by establishing homestays and improved infrastructure, excessive commercialisation has led to perceptions of overcrowding, overpricing, and diminished cultural authenticity. The research highlights the transformative impact of sustainability initiatives on perceptions of authenticity. Practices such as banning plastic, promoting eco-friendly infrastructure, and prioritising cleanliness have positioned Mawlynnong as a model for sustainable rural tourism. These initiatives resonate with the evolving expectations of environmentally conscious tourists, aligning economic growth with ecological and cultural sustainability. The findings also caution against over-commercialisation, which risks reducing the village's unique identity to a marketable commodity. Many tourists expressed dissatisfaction with perceived exploitation and the limited opportunity for meaningful interaction with locals. Such concerns underscore the need for thoughtful planning to ensure that tourism development aligns with cultural preservation.

Implications of the Research

This research contributes to the theoretical discourse on rural tourism by developing a framework by deepens our understanding of the interplay between authenticity and commercialisation (see Figure 1). While prior studies have explored these constructs in urban and heritage tourism, the study contextualises them within a rural setting, offering insights specific to developing economies like India. The findings expand MacCannell's (1973) theory of staged authenticity and Wang's (1999) existential authenticity by incorporating sustainability as a modern dimension of authenticity. The study illustrates how eco-friendly practices and community-led initiatives contribute to the perception of authenticity, suggesting a need to adapt existing frameworks to consider the evolving priorities of contemporary tourists. Additionally, it highlights the dual role of commercialisation as both an economic driver and a potential threat to cultural integrity, reinforcing the need for nuanced approaches in managing rural tourism.

From a managerial perspective, the study provides actionable insights for destination managers, policymakers, and local communities. Destination managers should implement zoning regulations to limit construction and maintain the village's rural character. Enhancing opportunities for authentic cultural exchanges can enrich visitor experiences and foster deeper engagement. Expanding initiatives such as plastic bags and eco-friendly infrastructure can reinforce Mawlynnong's reputation as a sustainable tourism destination. Promoting these practices through targeted marketing can attract environmentally conscious tourists. Addressing tourists' concerns about overpricing is crucial for maintaining satisfaction and loyalty. Establishing standardised pricing for amenities and services can ensure fairness and enhance the destination's value proposition. Implementing visitor management strategies, such as promoting off-season tourism and capping daily tourist numbers, can mitigate overcrowding and preserve the tranquil atmosphere tourists seek. Empowering residents through training programs and participatory decision-making can enhance their role in tourism management, ensuring that economic benefits are equitably distributed while preserving cultural authenticity.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

While the study provides valuable insights, it is not without limitations. First, the reliance on secondary data, specifically TripAdvisor reviews, limits the scope of tourists' self-reported experiences. This approach may introduce biases, as reviews typically reflect extreme satisfaction or dissatisfaction, potentially overlooking more nuanced perspectives. Second, the geographic focus on Mawlynnong restricts the generalisability of the findings to other rural tourism contexts. The village's unique attributes, such as its designation as Asia's cleanest village, may not represent broader rural tourism dynamics. Third, the study does not account for the perspectives of local stakeholders, such as residents and policymakers. Understanding their views could provide a more holistic picture of the impact of tourism on authenticity and commercialisation.

Future research should address these limitations by adopting a multi-stakeholder approach. Integrating the perspectives of tourists, local communities, and policymakers can offer a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play. Comparative studies across diverse rural settings can further validate the findings and refine the proposed framework. Additionally, longitudinal research across destinations is needed to explore the long-term impacts of tourism on rural destinations. Examining how perceptions of authenticity and commercialisation evolve can inform sustainable tourism strategies. Finally, integrating emerging technologies such as sentiment analysis and AI-driven data collection can enhance the depth and accuracy of future research. These tools can capture a broader spectrum of tourist experiences, providing

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Original Scientific Article

Role of Travel Motivation and Destination Image to Promote Destination Loyalty

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This study examines the impact of travel motivation on destination loyalty through the mediating role of destination image and moderating influence of destination satisfaction using the push and pull theory. The data was collected from 209 local visitors visiting Kaghan Valley, the northern areas of Pakistan, through a self-administered questionnaire. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling was employed to investigate the impact of hypotheses. Results postulate that there is a positive influence of travel motivation on destination loyalty whereas destination image significantly mediates this relationship. Results further reveal an insignificant moderating influence of destination satisfaction on destination image and destination loyalty. This research provides guidelines for the policymakers to adopt destination-specific strategies to boost tourism industry in Pakistan.

Keywords: travel motivation, destination image, destination satisfaction, destination loyalty, Pakistan.

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Introduction

The tourism industry has become an essential contributor to economic growth over the past decade, offering multi-dimensional opportunities that create jobs, reduce poverty, and improve local infrastructure on both global and local levels (Destek & Aydın, 2022; Liu et al., 2022). Recognizing these benefits, many countries have focused on tourism growth through various initiatives. However, understanding travel motivation of tourists has been a focal point of research to comprehend tourist loyalty behavior (Woyo & Slabbert, 2020). Knowing the reasons behind travel and the factors influencing tourists' behavioral intentions is beneficial for effective tourism planning and marketing (Wasaya et al., 2022). Scholars have highlighted different travel reasons, like personal business travel, corporate business travel, visiting friends and relatives, and vacation travel for pleasure (Holloway & Humphreys, 2022). Among these, vacation travel for pleasure is the most extensively researched area. Research on vacation travel for pleasure has identified various motivating factors, such as the desire for novelty, knowledge enhancement, relaxation, shopping, self-esteem, social recognition, escape from routine, social bonding, learning and discovery, thrill and excitement, destination information, destination features, family and friends, leisure and relaxation and religious and cultural considerations (Holloway & Humphreys, 2022).

Extensive research has explored the relationships between travel motivation and destination image (Su et al., 2020), between travel motivation and tourists' attitudes toward destinations (Kim et al., 2021), and between destination image and tourists' attitudes toward destinations (Thi Khanh & Phong, 2020). However, the impact of travel motivation on both destination image and tourists' loyalty to destinations remains a significant knowledge gap in the literature (Pereira et al., 2022). Studies have mostly emphasized the importance of satisfaction as a significant indicator of loyalty (Al-Msallam, 2020; Khan & Hemsley--Brown, 2024). Similarly, research has also established a significant correlation between destination image and tourist satisfaction (Jeong & Kim, 2020). Considering the significant interplay between these variables, a recent study in a similar context highlighted a knowledge gap, emphasizing the need to explore the role of destination satisfaction in relation to motivation and destination image (Pereira et al., 2022). Likewise, Lee and Xue (2020), identified a knowledge gap, suggesting to examine tourists' motivation link with satisfaction and destination loyalty. Hence, this study has included destination satisfaction as a moderator. The important argument behind the expected moderating influence is that, despite the prominence of tourist satisfaction with destination (Asmelash & Kumar, 2019; Biswas et al., 2020), there are some unanswered questions about its potential role. Does destination image have a different impact on destination loyalty in relation to the tourist satisfaction level?

This study contributes to push and pull motivation theory by addressing notable knowledge gaps within the literature. Additionally, it advances the destination loyalty domain by examining the combined effect of travel motivation, destination image, and destination satisfaction in promoting tourist loyalty. Within the cultural context of an emerging economy, this study provides valuable insights into the specific factors that influence tourist loyalty behaviors. The findings also provide actionable recommendations for policymakers to design destination specific strategies to enhance tourist motivation and loyalty. These recommendations can be used to improve destination specific attributes to boost tourism industry of Pakistan.

Literature Review

Theory and Hypotheses Development

The concept of 'push and pull motivation,' initially proposed by Dann (1977), offers a social perspective on understanding visitor motivation in tourism. While early academic discussions predominantly emphasized push factors (Dann, 1981), subsequent research recognized the complementary role of pull factors in shaping traveler motivation (Jeong & Kim, 2020; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). According to Yoon and Uysal (2005), push motivations (e.g. relaxation, family togetherness, or safety and fun) serve as the primary drivers of tourists' travel decisions making process. Whereas pull factors (e.g. reliable weather, cleanness and shopping, night life and local cuisine) attract tourists to specific destinations. This balanced approach, considering both push and pull motivations, is crucial for crafting effective promotional strategies in tourism. Push factors represent internal motivations that drive individuals to engage in tourism activities, while pull factors encompass destination-specific attributes that influence visitors' perceptions of particular tourism locations (Higham & Hinch, 2018; Potti et al., 2023). For example, Kim et al. (2006), identified weather, fun, entertainment, spending time with friends, and escaping routine as key push factors, while travel time, cost value, accessibility, transportation convenience, and destination information emerged as significant pull factors for university graduates. Similarly, Prayag and Hosany (2014), highlighted shopping as a pull factor and rest and relaxation as a push factor motivating young Arab tourists visiting Western countries. Other studies have also underscored the significance of push and pull elements in elucidating tourist motivations and behaviors (Wen & Huang, 2019; Yim et al., 2021), highlighting their pivotal role in shaping travel preferences and destination choices.

Travel Motivation and Destination Loyalty

Scholars consider travel motivation as a key factor in developing tourists' loyalty toward their destination (Al-okaily et al., 2022; Leo et al., 2021), as well as one's need to get involved in tourism activities. It results from both internal and external factors and frequently serves as the catalyst for a traveler's visit (Leo et al., 2021). According to the push and pull theory, tourist desires are influenced by internal factors like exploring recreation activities and escape from tedious routines and external factors like attractive environment and affordable pricing-related destination characteristics (Piper et al., 2022). Push aspects are closely linked to visitors' inner needs and can be both tangible and intangible (Gavcar & Gursoy, 2002) and demographic, socioeconomic, and psychological (Prebensen et al., 2013). Pull factors are destination specific that motivate tourists to destination selection (Prebensen et al., 2013). Prior research have also found a substantial correlation between travel motivation and destination loyalty (Sato et al., 2018). Hence, we propose

H1 *Travel motivation positively influences destination loyalty.*

Travel Motivation and Destination Image

Travel motivation refers to an individual's inner aspirations and intentions in line with the attractive attributes of a destination, resulting in an urge to plan a visit to that location (Kusdibyo, 2022). Psychological, physical, social, and exploration needs jointly constitute the inner motivation of an individual called a push factor (Hsu et al., 2009). Whereas, the pull factor is considered as an external facet of an individual and results from the attraction attached to a destination while considering the tangible and intangible features of the location (Blomstervik & Olsen, 2022). Besides tourism, academics from other fields have highlighted motivation as a crucial aspect of perception. Li et al. (2010), while investigating the linkage between motivation and destination image, found a significant impact of motivation factors (intellectual, escape, and belonging) on cognitive as well as an effective image of a destination. In their literature review, Sio et al. (2024) discovered a significant association between motivation and image building. Chaulagain et al. (2019), in their study, highlighted that destination image is an essential element that can influence travelers' choices of visiting some location. Therefore, we propose:

H2 *Travel motivation positively influences destination image.*

Destination Image and Destination Loyalty

Destination image is referred as tourists' perceptions of a destination, comprising various dimensions such as tourism infrastructure, hospitality atmosphere and cultural attractions (Cardoso et al., 2019). Early researcher emphasized the role of, stimulus factors and personal factors in destination image formulation (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). The stimulus factors are referred as external stimulus and physical object along with previous experience, whereas, personal factors pertain to social and psychological characteristics of the tourist. The variety and type of information sources (stimulus factors) influence cognitive image, whereas socio-psychological motivations (personal factors) influence only affective image. Wang and Hsu (2010), building on this perspective, provided different dimensions of cognitive image, like amenities, tourism service quality, tourism resources, support factors, and travel environment. However, they emphasized that overall destination image formulation consists of both cognitive and affective image components and these dimensions do not operate in isolation but mutually influence each other in shaping tourist's experiences.

The later research highlighted that organic (personal experience, friends and acquaintances), induced (online information source) resources also influence destination images formulation (Beerli & Martín, 2004; Llodrà-Riera et al., 2015). While tourists consider both organic and induced sources when selecting a destination (Qiu et al., 2018), the influence of organic image tends to be perceived as stronger (Tasci, 2017). Image plays a pivotal role in the effective promotion of tourism destinations (Stylidis et al., 2017), as visitors often evaluate and choose destinations based on favorable impressions (Song et al., 2019). Earlier research has highlighted the critical role of destination image in developing loyalty (Folgado-Fernández et al., 2017).

Additionally, research has shown that tourists' loyalty intentions are positively influenced by both cognitive and affective features of destination image, suggesting that visitors with strong perceptions about a destination are more likely to recommend it to others and exhibit a higher inclination to revisit (Stylidis & Cherifi, 2018). Thus, we propose:

H3 *Destination image positively influences destination loyalty.*

Mediating Role of Destination Image

Destination image serves as a crucial factor in tourist decision-making processes, guiding their choices regarding destinations (Chen & Tsai, 2007). A positive image has been associated with increased intentions among travelers to revisit the destination or recommend it to others, commonly referred to as loyalty (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Stylidis et al., 2020). Hallmann et al. (2015), discovered that destination image may both predict and directly influence tourists' loyalty. Within this relationship motivation is considered as a crucial factor influencing the image-building process and destination selection (Hosany et al., 2020). Understanding tourist motivation is deemed essential for comprehending destination preferences and improving destination (Beerli & Martín, 2004), as well as its association with tourist loyalty. Yoon and Uysal (2005), argue that the effectiveness of destination promotion can be assessed through a detailed examination of traveler motivation and its interaction with loyalty. Thus, it is suggested that a destination's positive perception, influenced by appealing travel motivations, likely mediates the relationship between travel motivation and destination loyalty.

H4 *Destination image significantly mediates the relationship between travel motivation and destination loyalty.*

Destination Satisfaction as a Moderator

The extant literature on destination-specific satisfaction, rooted in the broader field of customer satisfaction (Shyju et al., 2023), has extensively examined the antecedents and consequences of satisfaction within tourism, encompassing factors such as travel motivation (Bayih & Singh, 2020), service quality & value (Demir et al., 2021), tourism products and tourist facilities (Abror et al., 2021), image congruency (Huang et al., 2015) and travel involvement (Chi et al., 2018), and outcomes like traveler loyalty (Kusdibyo, 2022; Masserini et al., 2019). However, the role of satisfaction as a moderating variable in relation to destination loyalty remains underexplored, indicating a gap in understanding within the loyalty domain. Satisfaction is a crucial factor that influences loyalty (Oliver, 1980). It suggests that persons having a higher range of satisfaction visit the same place more frequently than those with low levels of satisfaction. The higher level of satisfaction with a destination (Seetanah et al., 2020), improves tourists' intentions to revisit. Satisfaction was found having non-linear impact on the intention to return, indicating that highly satisfied visitors are more likely to revisit as compared to those with low satisfaction (Antón et al., 2017). Park et al. (2019), while focusing on wine tourism at Marqués de Riscal in Spain, found substantial moderating effect of satisfaction on revisit intentions. Similarly, Wong et al. (2019) found moderating role satisfaction on the link between cognitive and affective image and destination loyalty intention. These varying views warrant further research to determine whether destination satisfaction can holistically affect the destination image and destination loyalty relationship:

H5 *Destination satisfaction has a positive and significant moderating influence on destination image and destination loyalty relationship.*

Theoretical Framework

By taking the lens of well-established push-pull framework, this study developed a theoretical model which includes variables, travel motivation, destination image, destination satisfaction and destination loyalty. The theoretical framework is presented in Figure 1.

Methodology

Research Context

The current study explores the relationship between travel motivation and tourists' loyalty toward a destination, with a focus on the mediating role of destination image and moderating role of destination satisfaction. Data was collected from local tourists

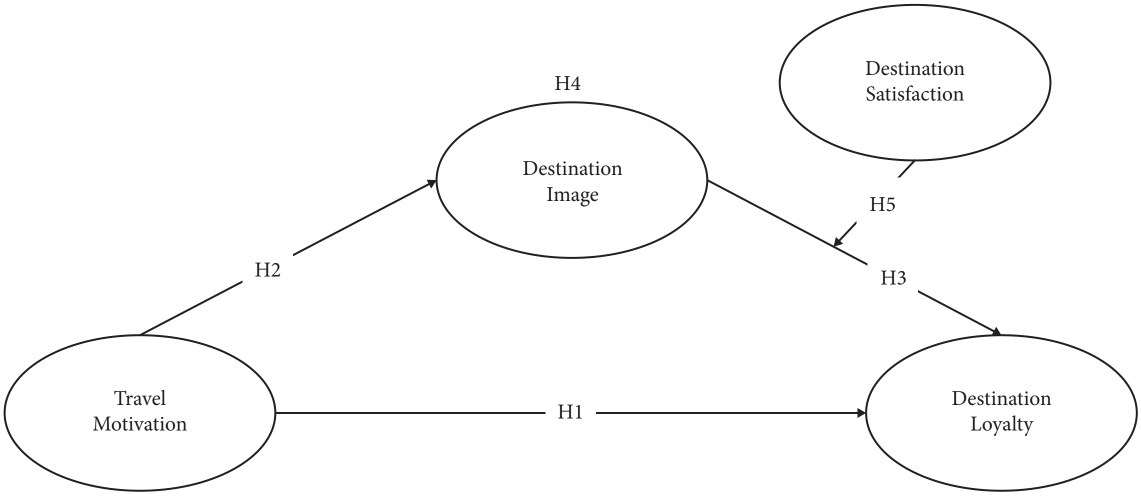

Figure 1 Theoretical Framework

visiting Kaghan Valley, the northern area of Pakistan. The Hazara region of Pakistan contains the Kaghan Valley, which borders Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir to the north and east, respectively, both of which are managed by Pakistan. The Lower Himalayan Mountain range encloses the 155-kilometer-long valley, giving rise to an alpine environment, pine woods, and alpine meadows. Glaciers, waterfalls, icy mountain streams, and lakes as beautiful as crystal can be found in the valley beside the Kunhar River. The Kaghan is a well-liked summertime resort for both locals and visitors because of its picturesque scenery and surroundings.

Sample and Data Collection Procedure

The study employed a deductive approach with a self-administered questionnaire survey. The data was collected from local tourists who had recently visited Kaghan Valley, the northern area of Pakistan. Section 1 of the questionnaire survey was related to demographics, whereas section 2 focused on study variables with items. Non-probability convenience sampling was applied to collect the data between April to May 2024. For the sample size requirements, 1 item into 10 times guidelines was applied (Kock & Hadaya, 2018) to collect the data from minimum of 220 respondents. The questionnaire survey was distributed to 345 respondents while 236 responses were returned (68.4%). Twenty-seven questionnaires were rejected because of the missing information, further data analysis was comprised on 209 questionnaires. For respondents' privacy, confidentiality and anonymity were ensured during the research process. No personally identifiable information, such as names, contact details, or any identifying details, was collected. Data was securely stored and used exclusively for research purposes to maintain the integrity of the study.

Research Instruments

The measurement scale was adapted from previously well-established studies on the travel motivation from Beerli and Martín (2004), destination loyalty from (Patwardhan et al., 2020), destination satisfaction from Westbrook and Oliver (1981), and destination image from Kaplanidou (2009). The respondents were asked to rate on a five-point Likert scale with "1" being "strongly disagree" and "5" being "strongly agree". The Cronbach's alpha value of all these variables was found to be above than 0.70, indicating strong reliability and internal consistency.

Analytical Technique

Partial Least Square Structural Modeling (PLS-SEM) via Smart PLS 4.0.9.3 was applied to validate the model

(Hair et al., 2019). PLS-SEM is recommended for exploring intricate mechanisms (Hair, Black et al., 2014), employing non-parametric assessment standards for model evaluation. Recent studies have increasingly used this technique for testing complex research models that incorporate both mediator and moderator variables (Abiola-Oke, 2024). PLS-SEM employs a two-stage approach. In the first stage, the measurement model is evaluated for reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. The second stage utilizes the structural model for hypothesis testing.

Findings

Respondents' Socio-demographic Profile

Out of all respondents, 61.4% (128) were male, and 38.6% (81) were female. The results revealed that 41.3% (87) participants were 31–40 years old, 48.9% (103) were 41–50 years old, 8.3% (17) were 51–60 years old and the remining 1.1% (2) were 61–above years in age. In the case of educational level, 55.3% (116) respondents had formal education (degree level studies), 39.4% (82) respondents had professional education (master level studies) and 5.3% (11) respondents had scholarly education (PhD/DBA level studies). In addition, all 209 participants were domestic tourists, belonging to different areas/states of Pakistan.

Common Method Bias

Self–reported data may result in "common method bias" (CMB) that might artificially articulate the findings (Podsakoff et al., 2003). To assess the potential issue of CMB, the criteria of Harman's single factor and variance inflation factor (VIF) criteria were used. Results of Herman's single factor method shows that the one factor explains less than 50% (40.60%) of the total variance, confirming the non–presence of the CMB. In addition, the values of VIF are less than 3.3, which also confirms that there is no issue of CMB (Kock, 2015).

Measurement Model Assessment

The "measurement model assessment" validates measures using factor loading, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) (Hair et al., 2019). Table 1 findings demonstrate factor loadings within accepted criteria (0.62 to 0.89) (Hair, Black, et al. 2014). CR values (0.88 to 0.91) in Table 1 confirm strong internal consistency (Hair et al., 2019). AVE values (travel motivation = 0.61; destination image = 0.60; destination satisfaction = 0.65; destination loyalty = 0.65) indicate variance above 50%, establishing 'convergent validity' (Hair et al., 2019). Discriminant validity was confirmed by Fornell–Larcker and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio Criteria (Hair et al., 2019). HTMT values in Table 2 are below the criterion (0.85) confirm the discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015).

Structural Model Assessment

The proposed hypotheses were tested by using PLS-SEM in smart PLS. The "coefficient of determination" (R^2) and "effect size" f^2 values are used to explain the ability of the overall model and the effect of each exogenous variable, respectively (Hair et al., 2019). Results of R^2 show that travel motivation explains 28.6% and 49.7% variance in destination image and destination loyalty, respectively. The "effect size (f^2)", which measures the extent to which an "exogenous variable" contributes to the R^2 values of an "endogenous variable", was also examined. Values of f^2 show the high effect size of travel motivation on destination image. On the other hand, the effect of destination image on destination loyalty is small (Cohen et al., 2013). Moreover, model's predictive relevance was tested using the PLS-predict. The values of Q^2 in Table 4 show medium predictive accuracy of the PLS path model (Hair et al., 2019).

Model Fit

Scholars suggested standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) criteria to confirm the goodness of fit of the estimated model (Hair et al., 2019). The value of SRMR < 0.08 indicates a good model fit (Hair et al., 2019). Results in Table 4 confirm the goodness of fit of the estimated model with the empirical data as the value of SRMR = 0.07 < 0.08.

SmartPLS structure model offers an analysis of direct and indirect linkages among variables, presenting *t* values and path coefficients (Henseler et al., 2009). The 'path coefficient' is alike to the standardized beta

Table 1 Convergent Validity

Construct	Items	Loadings	VIF	Alpha	CR	AVE
Destination Image	People in Kaghan are friendly (DI1)	0.80	2.06	0.83	0.88	0.60
	Kaghan offers suitable accommodation (DI2)	0.78	1.95			
	Kaghan is a safe city (DI3)	0.79	1.86			
	Kaghan has beautiful natural scenery (DI4)	0.78	1.81			
	Kaghan is an interesting city (DI5)	0.72	1.64			
Destination Loyalty	I am willing to revisit there in future (DL1)	0.83	2.06	0.87	0.90	0.65
	I am willing to recommend there to my family and friends (DL2)	0.89	2.76			
	I stay for longer periods there compared to any other tourist destination (DL3)	0.83	2.05			
	I come with more companions there (DL4)	0.85	2.43			
	I have a wonderful image of this place as a tourist destination (DL5)	0.62	1.43			
Destination Satisfaction	I am sure it was the right thing to be a tourist in Kaghan (DS1)	0.78	1.97	0.86	0.90	0.65
	Using Kaghan has been a good experience (DS2)	0.86	2.34			
	I feel good about my decision to visit Kaghan (DS3)	0.80	2.03			
	I have truly enjoyed Kaghan (DS4)	0.82	1.88			
	I am satisfied with my decision to visit Kaghan (DS5)	0.76	1.74			
Travel Motivation	To know different cultures/ways of life knowledge (TM1)	0.84	2.61	0.89	0.91	0.61
	To travel for Intellectual improvement (TM2)	0.79	2.08			
	To travel to know new, different places (TM3)	0.75	1.85			
	To travel for rest and relaxation purpose (TM4)	0.79	1.98			
	To travel to seek adventure and pleasure (TM5)	0.78	2.05			
	To travel to seek diversion and entertainment (TM6)	0.74	1.92			
	To seek recreation and entertainment leisure (TM7)	0.76	1.85			

Note AVE: average variance extracted > 0.50, CR: composite reliability > 0.70, VIF: variance inflation factor < 3.

Table 2 Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criteria)

	Destination Image	Destination Loyalty	Destination Satisfaction	Travel Motivation
Destination Image	**0.77**			
Destination Loyalty	0.60	**0.81**		
Destination Satisfaction	-0.45	-0.52	**0.80**	
Travel Motivation	0.54	0.62	-0.68	**0.78**

Table 3 Discriminant Validity (HTMT Criteria)

	Destination Image	Destination Loyalty	Destination Satisfaction	Travel Motivation
Destination Image				
Destination Loyalty	0.69			
Destination Satisfaction	0.51	0.56		
Travel Motivation	0.61	0.67	0.76	

Note Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio < 0.85

Table 4 Path Analysis

	Relationship	Beta	SD	t-value	P-value	Decision
H1	TM →DL	0.32	0.08	3.99	0.00	Accepted
H2	TM → DI	0.54	0.06	8.32	0.00	Accepted
H3	DI → DL	0.32	0.06	5.38	0.00	Accepted
H4	TM → DI → DL	0.17	0.04	4.46	0.00	Accepted
H5	DS X DI → DL	0.06	0.04	1.40	0.16	Rejected

Note DI = destination image, DL = destination loyalty, DS = destination satisfaction, TM = travel motivation. Bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa) bootstrapping with 5,000 resampling iterations, R2 = Determination coefficients; Q2 = Predictive relevance of endogenous. Standardized Root Mean Square Residual = 0.07; R2 Destination Image = 0.28; Q2 Destination Image = 0.27; *f* 2 Travel Motivation = 0.40; R2 Destination Loyalty = 0.49; Q2 Destination Loyalty = 0.39; *f* 2 Destination Image = 0.12; **p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001*. R2 considered weak (> 0.25), moderate (> 0.50), and substantial (> 0.75). Effect size (*f* 2) is considered small (> 0.02), medium (> 0.15), and large (> 0.35). Q2 > 0 indicate predictive relevance. VAF = Variance accounted for = 34.64%; Full mediation is indicated by a VAF exceeding 80%, partial mediation by a VAF between 20% and 80%, and no mediation by a VAF below 20%.

coefficient in regression analysis. The study followed recommendations from (Hair, Hult et al., 2014) and utilized 'bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa) bootstrapping with 5,000 resampling iterations' for hypotheses testing, as presented in table 4.

Findings suggest travel motivation has a positive effect on destination loyalty ($\beta = 0.32$, $t = 3.99$; $p < 0.05$); thus, hypothesis 1 is accepted. Results in table 4 confirm travel motivation has a substantial effect on destination image ($\beta = 0.54$, $t = 8.32$; $p < 0.05$) and destination image has a positive effect on destination loyalty ($\beta = 0.32$, $t = 5.38$; $p < 0.05$); hypotheses 2 and 3 are accepted. Results also revealed that destination image significantly mediates the relationship between travel motivation and destination loyalty ($\beta = 0.17$, $t = 4.46$; $p < 0.05$), hence, hypothesis 4 is supported. Further the values of variance accounted for (VAF) in Table 4 indicated partial mediation as the value of VAF (34.64%) is between 20% and 80% (Hair, Black, et al., 2014). Finally, results showed an insignificant influence of destination satisfaction on the destination image and destination loyalty link ($\beta = 0.06$, $t = 1.40$;

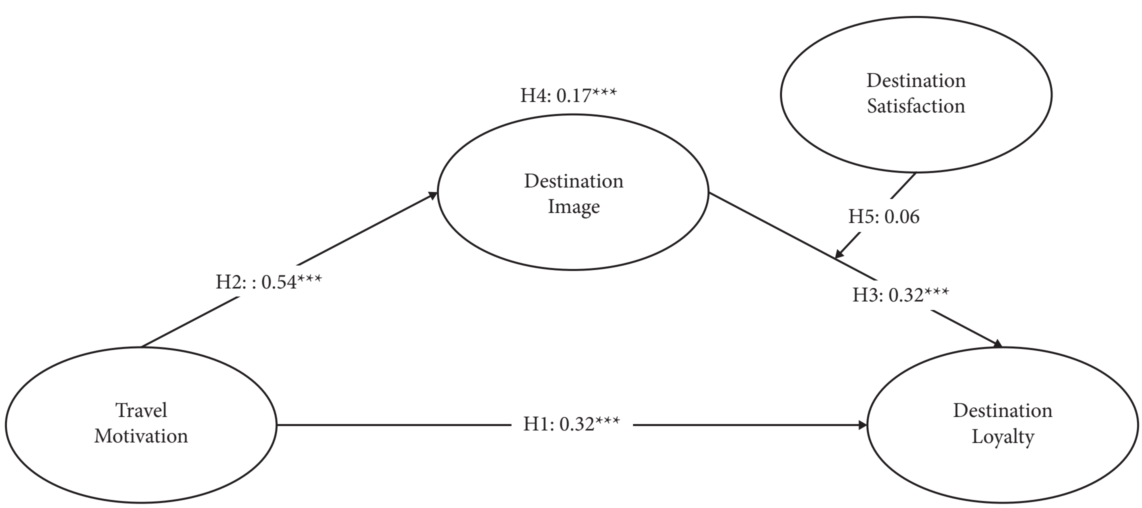

Figure 2 Structural Model (Hypotheses Testing)

p>0.05); hence, hypothesis 5 is rejected. The results confirm that, beyond a certain limit, tourist satisfaction does not yield different outcomes, highlighting the importance of a positive perception of the destination as a critical factor in influencing tourist loyalty.

Discussion

The study's findings, which demonstrate a positive mediating impact of destination image on the relationship between travel motivation and destination loyalty, alongside a non-significant moderating effect of destination satisfaction, hold significant implications that extend beyond the local context. Results confirmed travel motivation as a significant determinant of destination loyalty which is consistent with previous research (Pestana et al., 2020; Santana & Sevilha Gosling, 2018; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Additionally, travel motivation strongly influences destination image, suggesting tourists' motivation shapes their destination choices, aligning with the push and pull theory (Crompton, 1979). The findings of this study are also in line with earlier research which revealed tourists' overall image formulation, positively and significantly impacts tourists' revisit intentions and recommending destination to others, jointly referred as destination loyalty (Khasawneh & Alfandi, 2019; Santana & Sevilha Gosling, 2018).

Moreover, the third finding emphasized a strong positive link between Destination image and destination loyalty, indicating that a positive image significantly enhances loyalty. This corroborates Li et al.'s (2023) research highlighting the importance of an improved overall perception of the destination in driving visitor loyalty. The significance of destination image as a mediator in the relationship between travel motivation and destination loyalty aligns with established global trends in tourism research. A substantial body of research has emphasized the critical role of destination image in shaping tourist behavior across diverse cultural and economic contexts (Hosany et al., 2017; Hung et al., 2021). These findings highlight that enhancing overall perception positively impacts tourists' motivation to choose a destination. It further underscored that tourists' motivations for choosing a specific location are tied to meeting personal needs, with various destination attributes positively influencing their perception and, consequently, fostering loyalty.

The study shows that destination satisfaction has a minimal impact on the correlation between destination image and destination loyalty due to unique destination characteristics affecting tourist satisfaction (Wong et al., 2019). Positive destination perception significantly influences tourist loyalty and beyond a certain point, increased tourist satisfaction does not drastically change outcomes (Amissah et al., 2022). Cultural affinity and biases, especially tourists belonging to different provinces of Pakistan, may also influence this phenomenon. Moreover, Pakistan's diverse provincial cultural backgrounds can limit tourists' loyalty to destinations in other provinces, which is consistent with prior cross-cultural research (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2011).

Conclusion

This study aimed to assess how travel motivation affects destination loyalty both directly and through the intermediary of destination image. The results highlight that travel motivation significantly contributes to shaping the destination image for tourists, consequently fostering destination loyalty. Moreover, the findings emphasize that a positive perception of the destination is a pivotal influencer of tourist loyalty. Interestingly, beyond a specific threshold, tourist satisfaction might not yield significantly distinct outcomes.

Theoretical Implications

The findings confirm the crucial role of destination image as a robust mediating mechanism in the relationship between travel motivation and destination loyalty. Consistent with prior studies (Higham & Hinch, 2018; Trang et al., 2023), destination image emerges as a significant predictor of loyalty behaviors. The study further demonstrates that a positive destination image not only directly enhances loyalty but also serves as an important link, effectively translating tourists' motivations into loyalty behaviors. Aligning motivational factors with loyalty outcomes, the findings emphasize the importance of destination image within the push-pull framework (Crompton, 1979), reflecting its essential role in shaping tourist behavior.

Study found an insignificant moderating effect of destination satisfaction on the relationship between destination image and destination loyalty, offering a significant contribution to the literature. While previous studies have predominantly focused satisfaction as a mediating variable (Bayih & Singh, 2020), this study took it as moderator, changing the conventional assumptions. Findings suggest that higher levels of destination image can independently drive loyalty, regardless of satisfaction levels. This insight provides new avenues for researchers on the moderating role of tourists' satisfaction in shaping their travel perceptions and behaviors in similar or different contexts.

Furthermore, by exploring the applicability of satisfaction as a moderator, the study extends the push-pull framework, highlighting the complexity of tourist behavior. It suggests that loyalty can be achieved through a strong destination image, even when satisfaction does not significantly influence the loyalty outcome (Vareiro et al., 2019; Wong et al., 2019).

Practical Implications

As the tourism industry continues to evolve in response to global challenges, understanding the complex relationship between travel motivations, destination image, and loyalty has become increasingly important. These insights can guide destinations in developing targeted marketing strategies that cater to the preferences of diverse tourist segments. First, understanding tourist travel motivations is essential for a destination's success. Marketers and service providers need to grasp what drives travel choices and preferences (Osei, 2022). Tailored marketing strategies based on travel motivations enhance destination image and loyalty. Therefore, destination managers must provide facilities for tourists' relaxation, family togetherness, and safety and fun to attract tourists' internal motivation for traveling (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Second, destination image significantly shapes tourists' perceptions and attitudes. Managers may focus on showcasing unique features and cultural experiences to cultivate a positive image aligned with tourists' preferences.

The insignificant moderating effect of destination satisfaction on the relationship between destination image and destination loyalty offers a fresh perspective with important implications for global tourism strategies. While earlier research highlights the correlation between satisfaction with the overall destination experience, destination image, and loyalty (Kumar et al., 2020), this finding suggests that loyalty may not always depend on satisfaction levels. In cultural contexts, like Pakistan, a strong and compelling destination image may independently foster loyalty, irrespective of satisfaction levels. Cultural aspects and emotional attachment are more important to shape loyalty (Prayag & Ryan, 2012) than satisfaction alone. Therefore, managers may prioritize exceptional visitor experiences and meet expectations through various aspects like quality of services, conservation of tourist attractions, adequate infrastructure, and compatible prices, may be considered while strategically positioning the destinations (Khasawneh & Alfandi, 2019; Santana & Sevilha Gosling, 2018).

Fourth, tourist feedback is crucial for understanding their experiences and perceptions. Addressing unmet needs influences revisits and positive reviews (Torabi et al., 2022). Gathering feedback through surveys, reviews, or social media helps managers identify areas for enhancement and boost tourist loyalty. Fifth, a positive destination image requires strong community and stakeholder engagement (Nguyen et al., 2022). Involvement of community allows tapping into local knowledge and resources, fostering a favorable perception and loyalty. Finally, tourism growth hinges on destination stability and safety (Zou & Yu, 2022). Finally, a secure environment is pivotal for attracting visitors. Policymakers should comprehend the diverse implications of tourism growth, guiding effective policies for development, especially in a developing country.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study offers valuable theoretical and practical insights, yet its limitations are important to acknowledge. The cross-sectional design may introduce 'common-method bias,' hindering cause-and-effect determination. Future research should explore time-

-lagged data collection or alternative approaches to mitigate this bias. While this study focused on the mediation of destination image and the moderation of destination satisfaction in the relationship between travel motivation and destination loyalty, future studies may explore other mediating variables, such as customer engagement, tourist experience, and involvement, to assess their effects in different contexts (Singh et al., 2024). Further, future research may explore 'destination familiarity' as a moderating factor in tourist motivation to visit a specific destination. Beyond satisfaction, destination image, and motivation, trust also plays a significant role in visitor loyalty. To improve the predictive model, future research may consider incorporating trust as a mediator (Chen & Phou, 2013).

Digitalization has reshaped tourism, influencing destination decision-making. Future research may explore the role of emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and virtual reality in tourism marketing to enhance tourists' experiences and loyalty. Considering the diverse cultural contexts within which tourism operates (Stepchenkova et al., 2015), cross-cultural comparisons may provide valuable insights into how travel motivations and destination images differ across regions. Future studies may explore how cultural factors influence the relationship between travel motivation and destination loyalty, particularly in emerging markets. This can involve qualitative research methods such as interviews and focus groups to capture the perspectives of tourists from diverse cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, sustainability has become a critical concern in the tourism industry, with increasing pressure on destinations to adopt environmentally responsible practices. Future studies may investigate how sustainability initiatives influence destination image and loyalty, examining perceptions of eco-friendly practices and their effects on loyalty to sustainable destinations (Zulvianti et al., 2022).

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Induktivna raziskava s popotniki o zaznanih ovirah in gonilih za razvoj trajnostnega turizma v na naravi temelječi destinaciji
Kevin Fuchs

Vedno večja priljubljenost turizma v naravi poraja zaskrbljenost glede njegovih okoljskih in kulturnih vplivov ter s tem razpravo o diverzifikaciji in krepitvi gospodarskih strategij. To je še posebej pomembno v destinacijah, kot je Phuket, ki si prizadeva, da bi se uveljavil kot vodilna svetovna turistična točka, hkrati pa se pri ohranjanju otoškega gospodarstva močno zanaša na mednarodne turistične prihodke. Raziskava opredeljuje zaznane ovire in dejavnike, ki turistom preprečujejo in omogočajo sodelovanje pri praksah, ki podpirajo trajnost v naravnih destinacijah, kot je Phuket, ter osvetljuje temeljne dejavnike, ki vplivajo na vedenje turistov. Empirični podatki so bili zbrani z 38 polstrukturiranimi intervjuji s popotniki generacije Z in tematsko analizirani. Rezultati izpostavljajo ključne ovire – stroške, kulturne razlike in udobje namesto trajnostnega razvoja – ter dejavnike – družbeno odgovornost, podporo politike in večjo ozaveščenost –, ki vplivajo na razvoj trajnostnega turizma v Phuketu. Raziskava spodbuja razpravo o zapletenem prepletanju med posameznikovimi motivi, zunanjimi dejavniki in okoljsko stvarnostjo pri oblikovanju trajnostnega vedenja turistov. V članku so obravnavane teoretične posledice za raziskovalce turizma ter praktične posledice za oblikovalce politik in podjetja.

Ključne besede: zeleno vedenje potrošnikov, trajnost, okoljska ozaveščenost, razvoj turizma, turizem, trajnostni turizem
Academica Turistica, 17(3), 219–231

Namera za nadaljevanje uporabe mobilnih aplikacij za naročanje hrane v kavarnah
Rachel Dyah Wiastuti, Rivaldo Milnardi Omar, Stella Nathalia Ignacia, Sarim Sarim in Nurbaeti Nurbaeti

Namen te raziskave je ugotoviti namero za nadaljevanje uporabe mobilnih aplikacij za naročanje hrane (angl. *mobile food ordering apps* – MFOA) v kavarnah na podlagi značilnosti in zadovoljstva strank. Raziskava se osredotoča na kategorijo MFOA v lasti podjetja, prilagojeno za okolje kavarn v indonezijskem kontekstu, v nasprotju s predhodnimi raziskavami, ki poudarjajo MFOA v lasti tretjih oseb. Raziskava je razvila okvir UTAUT s poudarkom na modelu za okolje gostinskih storitev z eno vrsto ponudbe. Uporabljena je bila raziskava z vprašalniki. Pridobljenih je bilo 177 veljavnih odzivov, ki so bili nadalje analizirani s SEM z uporabo SmartPLS. Uporabljene so bile MFOA v lasti podjetja iz sedmih indonezijskih kavarniških blagovnih znamk. Izkazalo se je, da so med anketiranci najpogosteje uporabljene MFOA za kavarne aplikacije Kopi Kenangan, celo dvakrat pogosteje kot Starbucksove. Ugotovitve kažejo, da na zadovoljstvo strank pri uporabi MFOA vplivajo različni dejavniki samih atributov MFOA, predvsem spletno sledenje. Posledično bo to zadovoljstvo privedlo do uporabnikove namere za uporabo aplikacij tudi v prihodnje. Raziskava ponudi več praktičnih priporočil za kavarniška podjetja, da bi ta bolje razumela, kako lahko obstoj njihovih lastnih MFOA vpliva na zadovoljstvo strank in namero za nadaljevanje uporabe v prihodnosti.

Ključne besede: namera za nadaljevanje, pričakovani vložek, e-zadovoljstvo, mobilna aplikacija za naročanje hrane (MFOA), pričakovana uspešnost
Academica Turistica, 17(3), 233–247

Raziskovanje razlik med luksuznimi in cenejših blagovnimi znamkami v smislu čustvenih ter funkcionalnih vrednosti, ki se uporabljajo v gostinstvu

Boris Marjanović

Raziskava luksuznih in cenejših blagovnih znamk v gostinstvu razkriva nasprotujoče si poglede na preference potrošnikov in vedenje pri nakupu. Medtem ko luksuzne blagovne znamke obljubljajo čustveno zadovoljstvo preko vrhunskih izkušenj, cenejše blagovne znamke stremijo k zadovoljevanju praktičnih potreb s stroškovno učinkovitimi rešitvami. Pričujoči članek preučuje kompleksnost razmerja med čustvenimi in funkcionalnimi vrednostmi, ki jih ponujajo te kategorije blagovnih znamk, z namenom razjasnitve njihovega vpliva na vedenje potrošnikov. Izvedena je bila kvalitativna analiza vsebine na desetih spletnih straneh luksuznih in cenejših blagovnih znamk v gostinstvu, da bi ugotovili razmerje med čustvenimi in funkcionalnimi vrednostmi, ki jih ponujajo. Analiza je razkrila vzorec obratnega razmerja med funkcionalnimi in čustvenimi vrednostmi v analiziranih luksuznih ter cenejših blagovnih znamkah. Posledično se predlaga teoretično razmerje 60 : 40 med funkcionalnimi in čustvenimi vrednostmi za obe kategoriji blagovnih znamk, luksuzno in cenejšo, ob upoštevanju ugotovljenega vzorca obratnega razmerja. Za potrditev teh ugotovitev in poglobitev razumevanja vrednosti blagovnih znamk v gostinstvu ter drugih sektorjih priporočamo nadaljnje empirične raziskave.

Ključne besede: cenejše blagovne znamke, luksuzne blagovne znamke, gostinstvo, funkcionalne vrednosti, čustvene vrednosti
Academica Turistica, 17(3), 249–265

Hrvaška lestvica TWS in napovedniki psihološkega počutja turistov

Paula Pedić Duić in Zvjezdan Penezić

Namen pričujoče razisakve je bil potrditi hrvaško različico Lestvice počutja v turizmu (Tourism Wellbeing Scale – TWS) in opredeliti potencialne napovednike psihološkega počutja turistov. Lestvica TWS temelji na teoretičnem okviru modela HOPE in meri psihološko počutje, ki je posledica turističnih dejavnosti in izkušenj. V raziskavi je preko obrazcev Google Forms sodelovalo 400 hrvaško govorečih odraslih, ki so izpolnili TWS, sociodemografski vprašalnik, lestvico življenjske uspešnosti in smisla življenja ter vprašalnik petih velikih faktorjev (Big Five Inventory –BFI). Konfirmatorna faktorska analiza je sprva pokazala, da se prvotni enofaktorski model TWS za obravnavani primer ni optimalen, vendar pa je bil potrjen po opravljenih korekcijah, kot so jih predlagali avtorji lestvice. Lestvica TWS je pokazala notranjo konsistentnost ter pozitivno korelacijo s smislom življenja in z uspešnostjo. Merilna invariantnost med biološkima spoloma je bila manjša of konfiguracijske, metrične in lestvične invariantnosti.

Glede napovednikov psihološkega počutja turistov je hierarhična regresijska analiza pokazala, da imata ekstrovertiranost in odprtost na to počutje pozitivne, nevroticizem pa negativne učinke. Poleg tega so oblike turizma, kot so »odklop«, prostovoljstvo, dobrodelna udejstvovanja ali obiski revnih predelov, pomembno pozitivno vplivale na psihološko počutje turistov. Starost, prijaznost in vestnost niso pomembno vplivale na psihološko počutje turistov. Naš prispevek k znanosti na področju turističnih študij je predvsem v validaciji lestvic, povezanih s turizmom, v različnih kulturnih in jezikovnih okoljih. S tem se spodbuja oblikovanje zanesljivih merskih instrumentov, ki omogočajo boljše primerjave psihološkega počutja turistov iz različnih okolij. Poleg tega daje opredelitev napovednikov psihološkega počutja turistov pomembne usmeritve za nadaljnje raziskave v gostinstvu.

Ključne besede: Lestvica počutja v turizmu, validacija, merilna invarianca, napovedniki, multivariatna regresijska analiza
Academica Turistica, 17(3), 267–278

Raziskave akulturacije v rezidenčnem turizmu

Gabriela Uslu Cibere, Kemal Kantarcı, Murat Alper Basaran in Yakup Uslu

Cilj: Zaradi pomanjkanja predhodnih raziskav prevzemanje predpostavk in metod splošne teorije akulturacije v rezidenčnem turizmu prinaša veliko tveganje poenostavitve ter napačne interpretacije rezultatov. Članek poudarja pasti raziskav o akulturaciji v rezidenčnem turizmu, ki jih je treba upoštevati, in predstavlja vzorčno raziskavo.
Metode: Med rezidenčnimi turisti v Alanyi je bila izvedena raziskava z vprašalnikom. Vključenih je bilo 489 anketirancev iz več kot 12 držav, ki odražajo segment rezidenčnih turistov v Alanyi. Preferenca določene strategije akulturacije je bila preverjena glede na različne dejavnike in stopnjo zadovoljstva z življenjem na destinaciji.
Ugotovitve: Mednarodni rezidenčni turisti so se v največjem številu odločili za strategijo vključevanja, ki sta ji sledili asimilacija in marginalizacija. Na izbiro strategije so vplivale demografske značilnosti, dejavniki počitniškega vedenja, značilnosti drugega doma, osebnostne lastnosti in raven znanja o turški kulturi. Splošna stopnja zadovoljstva z življenjem je bila 4,3 od 5, kar kaže na visoko stopnjo zadovoljstva, tako pri strategiji vključevanja kot tudi pri strategijah asimilacije in marginalizacije.
Zaključki: Članek razkriva pasti izbranega področja raziskave in predlaga primernejši pristop k raziskovanju akulturacije na področju rezidenčnega turizma. Pričujoča raziskava razkrije nekatere rezultate, ki nasprotujejo splošni teoriji akulturacije, in poziva k nadaljnjim raziskavam.
Ključne besede: rezidenčni turizem, akulturacija, Alanya, akulturacija v turizmu, akulturacija rezidenčnih turistov

Academica Turistica, 17(3), 279–293

Avtentičnost in komercializacija: netnografska raziskava turističnih izkušenj v Mawlynnongu v Indiji
Abhisek Porya, Sweety Mishra, and Nimit Chowdhary

Raziskava raziskuje dinamično prepletanje avtentičnosti in komercializacije v podeželskem turizmu s poudarkom na Mawlynnongu v Indiji, znanem kot najčistejša vas v Aziji. Z netnografsko analizo 359 ocen na TripAdvisorju iz obdobja od 2012 do 2024 raziskava preučuje turistične zaznave avtentičnosti in komercializacije ter razvija okvir avtentičnosti in komercializacije za podeželski turizem. Pozitivne teme vključujejo čistočo, naravno lepoto, gostoljubnost skupnosti in kulturno udejstvovanje preko bivanja pri domačinih. Te značilnosti prispevajo k privlačnosti vasi kot avtentične podeželske destinacije. Kljub temu so turisti izrazili tudi zaskrbljenost glede prekomerne komercializacije, vključno s pretirano gradnjo, prenatrpanostjo, previsokimi cenami in z omejenimi stiki z lokalnim prebivalstvom. Raziskava poudarja dvojno vlogo komercializacije, ki spodbuja gospodarski razvoj in turistično infrastrukturo, hkrati pa lahko ogroža kulturno in doživljajsko avtentičnost. Raziskava prispeva k teoretičnemu diskurzu o podeželskem turizmu z vključevanjem trajnosti v okvir avtentičnosti in komercializacije. Praktične implikacije vključujejo potrebo upravljavcev destinacij po uravnoteženju turistične rasti s kulturno ohranitvijo in z avtentičnostjo.
Ključne besede: podeželski turizem, turistična izkušnja, komercializacija, avtentičnost, podeželska interakcija, netnografija

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Vloga motivacije za potovanje in podobe destinacije pri spodbujanju zvestobe destinaciji
Muhammad Abbas, Kashif Hussain, Sami Ullah Bajwa, Muhammad Athar Rasheed in Samer Yaghmour

Ta razsikava preučuje vpliv motivacije za potovanje na zvestobo destinaciji preko mediacijske vloge podobe destinacije in moderacijski vpliv zadovoljstva z destinacijo, pri čemer uporablja teorijo »potiska in potega«. Podatki so bili zbrani od 209 lokalnih obiskovalcevev, ki so obiskali dolino Kaghan, ki se nahaja na severnem območju Pakistana, z uporabo vprašalnika, ki so ga izpolnili sami. Za preverjanje vpliva hipotez je bila uporabljena metoda strukturnega modeliranja z delnimi najmanjšimi kvadrati (PLS-SEM). Rezultati kažejo, da ima motivacija za potovanje pozitiven vpliv na zvestobo destinaciji, pri čemer podoba destinacije pomembno mediira ta odnos. Rezultati nadalje razkrivajo nepomemben moderacijski vpliv zadovoljstva z destinacijo na odnos med podobo destinacije in zvestobo destinaciji. Raziskava ponuja smernice oblikovalcem politik za sprejemanje strategij, specifičnih za določene destinacije, z namenom krepitve turistične industrije v Pakistanu.
Ključne besede: motivacija za potovanje, podoba destinacije, zadovoljstvo z destinacijo, zvestoba destinaciji, Pakistan

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