

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

**The 7th Conference on Managing Tourism
Across Continents**

**April 29-May 02, 2026
Antalya - Türkiye**



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The 7th Conference on Managing Tourism Across Continents (MTCON'2026)

April 29-May 02, 2026

Antalya- Türkiye

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ISBN 978-625-93471-1-0

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Publishing 2026 - Date of Publishing: September, 2026

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MTCON has grown into one of the leading international platforms for scholars, practitioners, policymakers, and industry leaders to share research, exchange ideas, and foster collaborations that shape the future of tourism, hospitality, and events. The conference brought together over 600 participants from 50 countries.

The Book of Abstracts you hold reflects the diversity, interdisciplinarity, and contemporary relevance of the research presented at MTCON 2026. The contributions address a broad spectrum of topics, with particular emphasis on artificial intelligence and digital transformation, sustainability and green tourism practices, destination management and marketing, cultural heritage and gastronomy, community-based and rural tourism, tourist behaviour, hospitality and workforce issues, tourism policy and governance, as well as emerging areas such as wellness, sports, and technology-enabled tourism experiences. Collectively, these studies illustrate how tourism research is responding to rapid technological, environmental, social, and economic change while continuing to explore more sustainable, inclusive, innovative, and resilient pathways for destinations, organisations, communities, and travellers across continents.

We would like to thank all contributors, reviewers, and members of the scientific and organising committees for their dedication and support. A special note of appreciation goes to our partners, sponsors, Doğuş University, and İzmir Konak Vocational School, whose collaboration has made this event possible.

With warm regards,

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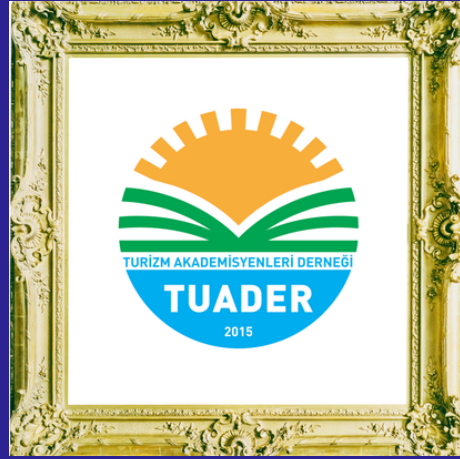
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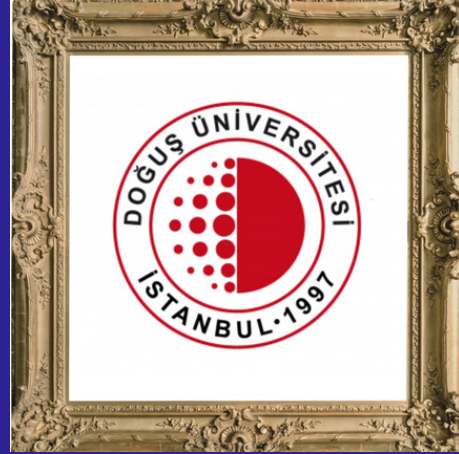


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Sustainable Tourism and Rural Empowerment (Re) as an Economic Driver for Local Development: Insight from South Africa (Sa)

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Abstract

Purpose: This study seeks to examine how sustainable tourism contributes to rural empowerment and serves as an economic driver for local development in South Africa. The study will also investigate the long-run and short-run relationships among sustainable tourism, rural empowerment as an economic driver for local development with a focus on income generation, employment creation, community participation, and capacity building.

Study design/methodology/approach: Drawing on annual data from South Africa covering the period 1980-2024. The study incorporates real GDP per capital, number of tourists on arrival, FDI, human capital, and entrepreneurial activities. Data is obtained from the World Bank indicators. The ARDL method is employed due to its ability to estimate both long-run equilibrium relationships and short-run adjustments among variables integrated of mixed orders.

Results: The empirical findings are expected to confirm the existence of a long-run cointegration relationship between tourism development and economic growth, supporting the tourism-led growth hypothesis under sustainability conditions. However, short-run results may reveal that tourism expansion increases rural empowerment. Tourism is expected to have a positive impact on rural empowerment in both the long-run and the short-run. FDI is expected to have a positive impact on economic growth. The primary significance of the study is to develop a broader understanding of the impact of tourism on economic growth.

Originality/value: Despite the growing body of literature on sustainable tourism, limited attention has been given to its role in fostering rural empowerment at the community level. In the context of South Africa, existing studies tend to focus on economic outcomes without adequately examining how tourism contributes to local empowerment, participation, and equitable benefit distribution. This study seeks to address this gap by exploring the relationship between sustainable tourism and rural empowerment as a driver of local development.

Keywords: Tourism; sustainability; Rural Empowerment; Economic Driver; South Africa.

Linking Tourist Lifetime Value to Destination Strategy: An Integration of Customer Lifetime Value in Bena Traditional Village, Ngada Regency, East Nusa Tenggara

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to identify tourists who provide the highest economic value and deserve additional marketing investment from attractions. In addition, this study aims to examine the attributes that influence the increase in the long-term value of tourist relationships, thereby providing a basis for formulating a more focused, value-based tourism development strategy.

Study design/methodology/approach: This study uses a descriptive, quantitative approach by combining Customer Lifetime Value (CLV) and Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) using tourist survey data and in-depth interviews with attraction managers and business actors.

Results: The analysis shows that tourists with a CLV of ≥ 3.1 million can be considered priority visitors to attractions, and retention is the main driver of CLV growth. The analysis continued with an IPA, which showed that attributes in quadrants A and B are most likely to increase CLV by boosting retention, tourist satisfaction, and loyalty when properly managed and maintained.

Originality/Value: The novelty of this research lies in integrating Customer Lifetime Value (CLV) and Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) simultaneously in the context of traditional villages, thereby connecting the long-term economic value of tourists with destination development priorities grounded in tourist perceptions.

Keywords: Customer Lifetime Value; Importance Performance Analysis; Retention Rate

The Effect of Hotel Kitchen Workers' Robotic Systems Risk Awareness on Job Insecurity, Perceived Usefulness and Intention to Use

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to understand and explain the behavior of hotel kitchen staff towards robotic systems by examining staff perceptions of these systems with respect to risk awareness, job insecurity, perceived benefits, and intention to use them.

Study design/methodology/approach: This study utilizes quantitative data. These data were collected from hotel kitchen staff in Antalya, Turkey, through a survey employing convenience and purposive sampling techniques. The data are analyzed using SPSS and SmartPLS, employing partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM).

Originality/value: This study is important and unique because it examines the adoption of robotic systems in hotel operations, robot-employee interactions, and the impact of RSRA on employee behavior; no previous RSRA study has examined hotel kitchen staff.

Keywords: Robots; Robotic systems risk awareness; Job insecurity; TAM; Hotel kitchen workers

Immersive Digital Tourist: Comparison between the Colosseum, Eiffel Tower and Château de Versailles Metaverses in the context of e-Tourism

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Abstract

Purpose: Digital transformation has emerged as a key element of competitiveness and sustainability in tourism. This study examines e-tourism strategies applied within metaverse environments, asking how these strategies contribute to the competitive and inclusive expansion of destination characteristics. Almeida and Almeida (2024) define this phenomenon as the “Immersive Digital Tourist”.

Study design/methodology/approach: A qualitative multiple case study was conducted based on documentary analysis of immersive experiences offered at the Colosseum, the Eiffel Tower, and the Château de Versailles. Official digital materials, VR/AR experience descriptions, and institutional sources were examined to identify immersive activation strategies, accessibility elements, and sustainability guidelines.

Results: Results show innovative practices that foster hybrid and potentially more sustainable tourism, alongside limitations in accessibility and inclusiveness. The study confirms the emergence of the Immersive Digital Tourist, who interacts with destinations through multidimensional digital layers, influencing decision-making and destination image formation.

Originality/value: The study highlights how global destinations are transforming their characteristics into immersive, interactive, and gamified experiences that shape visitor engagement before, during, and after travel. It also underscores the need for more inclusive and accessible immersive tourism practices, proposing a critical agenda for integrating digital competitiveness, sustainability, and universal accessibility into metaverse-based tourism strategies.

Keywords: E-Tourism; Tourism Strategies; Immersive Digital Tourist; Tourism Metaverse; Augmented Reality (AR)

Examining tourists' awareness, knowledge and perceptions of Marine Protected Areas in South Africa and Mozambique

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TREES, North-West University, South Africa

Abstract

Purpose: Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) were established to conserve marine ecosystems and mitigate threats to ocean resources but have evolved into shared socio-ecological systems supporting tourism and recreation. Their effectiveness depends on stakeholder acceptance and support, which are shaped by awareness, knowledge and perceptions. Tourists are a key stakeholder group due to their frequent use and economic contribution.

Study design/methodology/approach: The study used a questionnaire survey and convenience sampling of 504 tourists and recreationists at Maputo National Park (Mozambique) and the Table Mountain National Park Marine Protected Area (South Africa) in 2023 and 2024.

Results: Most participants were aware of MPAs and understood them as spatially designated marine areas governed by conservation-oriented rules and regulations. However, knowledge of socio-economic benefits was limited. Social media, word of mouth, and websites were the primary sources of information. Both samples supported MPAs and believed in the value and benefits of MPAs. While support for MPAs was high at both sites, South African respondents demonstrated greater understanding of MPA purposes and had better perceptions of national MPA effectiveness.

Originality/value: By comparing tourists' awareness and perceptions across two African contexts, this study informs communication, stakeholder engagement and the sustainable management of nature-based tourism and MPAs.

Keywords: Tourists; Awareness; Knowledge; Perceptions; Marine Protected Areas

Leveraging AI Literacy for Green Competitive Advantage: A Moderated Mediation Model of Employee Green Innovative Behaviour and Green Transformational Leadership

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Abstract

Purpose: This study investigates how Artificial Intelligence Literacy [AI-L] among tourism employees contributes to Green Competitive Advantage [GCA] in tourism organizations through Employee Green Innovative Behaviour [EGIB]. It further examines the moderating role of Green Transformational Leadership [GTL] in shaping the relationship between AI-L and EGIB.

Study design/methodology/approach: A quantitative research design will be employed using a survey method. Data will be collected from 199 employees working in tourism organizations, including hotels, travel agencies, and airline companies. Measurement items will be adapted from existing scales. The data analysis will be conducted using IBM SPSS 25, AMOS 24, and the Hayes PROCESS Macro to test the proposed moderated-mediation model. The relationship between the variables will theoretically be justified by the Knowledge-Based View and Innovation Diffusion Theory.

Results: The results are expected to show that AI-L will positively influence EGIB, which in turn will enhance GCA. GTL is expected to positively moderate the relationship between AI-L and EGIB, such that the effect will be stronger at higher levels of GTL. The findings further are expected to reveal a partial moderated-mediation mechanism, whereby EGIB partially mediates the effect of AI-L on GCA, and this will indirect that effect varies across different levels of GTL.

Originality/value: This study is among the first to demonstrate a moderated mediation mechanism linking employee AI literacy to green competitive advantage in the tourism industry.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; Green Innovative Behaviour; Green Transformational Leadership; Tourism Industry; Green Competitive Advantage

Consequences of Environmental Corporate Social Irresponsibility on Hotel Customers' Sustainable Behavioral Intentions: The Mediating Role of Environmental Self-Efficacy

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to investigate the relationship between Environmental Corporate Social Irresponsibility (ECSI) and customers' Sustainable Behavioral Intentions (SBI), and examines the mediating role of Environmental Self-Efficacy [ESE] between this link through the lens of Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Cognitive Dissonance Theory (CDT) in the hotel industry. SBI is conceptualized through Towel Reuse Intention (TRI), Energy Conservation Intention (ECI), and Water Conservation Intention (WCI).

Design/methodology/approach: A quantitative methodology will be employed with the utilization of the survey method. Data will be collected from at least 200 hotel customers. Aligned with prior studies, established measurement scales will be adopted, and all constructs will be measured using 5-point Likert scales.

Results (Work-in-progress): Based on the literature that has been covered and theoretical justifications, it is expected that ECSI will form a negative relationship with TRI, ECI, and WCI. In addition, ESE is anticipated to partially mediate the relationship between ECSI and SBIs.

Originality/value: This study addresses the contextual gap in research regarding the impact of ECSI on the small island destinations and examines the mediating role of ESE between ECSI and SBI, making it the first to explore this interplay.

Keywords: Environmental Corporate Social Irresponsibility; Sustainable Behavioural Intentions; Environmental Self Efficacy

The Knowledge Spiral: Analysing the Evolution of the Spanish Smart Tourism Destination Model through an Evidence-Based Policy Lens

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Abstract

Purpose: The extant literature on smart tourist destinations has hitherto neglected to address the question of how the relationship between science and policy is articulated in the formulation of protocols. The present study analyses the evolutionary trajectory of Smart Tourist Destinations in Spain from the perspective of Nutley et al.'s theory (2007). The objective of this study is to understand how the integration of government practice and academic evidence has led to a redefinition of the Spanish model over a period of twelve years (2012-2024).

Study design/methodology/approach: The case study of the Spanish experience is adopted, with a qualitative approach and documentary analysis of regulatory and technical frameworks between 2012 and 2024. The documents were categorised according to their scientificity, thereby identifying the role of academia and decision-makers in the systematisation of knowledge.

Results: The results obtained demonstrate a "DTI Knowledge Spiral" that subverts classical linear logic (Science, Policy, Practice) in favour of practice-based evidence. SEGITTUR functioned as a knowledge Broker, thereby transforming initial pragmatism into evidence-based management (UNE Standards). The dynamic adopted ultimately resulted in the international ex post scientific validation that was published in 2024.

Originality/value: The study demonstrates that the scientific nature of a public policy can be constructed iteratively and retrospectively. The present study contributes to the ongoing debate on the connection between political structures and research, and their potential to enhance the tangible impact of scientific knowledge on the tourism sector.

Keywords: Smart Tourism Destinations; Evidence-Based Policy; DTI Knowledge Spiral; Practice-Based Evidence; Knowledge Mobilization

Exploring the social marketing and consumer behavioural attitude factors of tourism in nature-protected areas

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Abstract

Purpose: The study sought to explain how social marketing influences consumer behaviour by examining the impact of the 4Ps of social marketing on domestic tourists' affective and cognitive-behavioural attitudes towards visiting nature-protected areas. The study's primary objectives were to explore the four dimensions of social marketing (product, price, place, and promotion) and their roles in shaping behavioural attitudes towards South African nature-protected areas.

Study design/methodology/approach: A quantitative approach was applied. The final sample comprised 466 domestic tourists who had visited or considered visiting South African nature-protected areas. Exploratory Factor Analysis and Multiple Regression Analysis were used to analyse the data to determine the underlying social marketing and attitude factors, and to test the hypotheses presented by the study, respectively.

Results: Social marketing influenced the behavioural attitudes of domestic tourists. Specifically, the Product, Price, and Place Social Marketing dimensions positively influenced both the affective and cognitive behavioural attitudes of domestic tourists towards tourism in nature-protected areas. Promotion did not affect the affective behavioural attitude but only the cognitive behavioural attitude. The results imply that social marketing generally influences consumer behavioural attitudes, and that social re-engineering can augment tourist behaviour in nature-oriented tourism. The results have important implications for domestic tourism practitioners and conservation-oriented place managers in nature-protected areas.

Originality/value: This study is important because it contributes to the existing knowledge of the influence of social marketing on consumer behaviour change. The relationship between social marketing and tourist's behavioural attitudes of tourists towards tourism in nature-protected areas has not been widely explored. This means that this study is one of the first in Africa to examine the 4Ps of marketing within social marketing and to apply it to exploring consumer behaviour change in domestic tourists.

Keywords: 4Ps of social marketing; behavioural attitudes; domestic tourism; nature-protected areas; social marketing

From Crisis to Resilience: Risk and Safety Management in South African Trail Running Events during COVID-19

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines how the COVID-19 pandemic affected trail-running events in South Africa, focusing on the risk and safety management strategies applied before, during and after the pandemic. As trail running represents a growing component of South Africa's sport tourism industry, the research aims to understand how event managers adapted to major disruptions and what operational lessons support future resilience.

Study design/methodology/approach: A qualitative research design was used, drawing on semi-structured interviews with 10 South African trail-running event managers. Participants were predominantly female, highly educated, and had an average of 5 years' experience in event management. Interviews explored organisational practices across three stages: pre-COVID, during COVID and post-COVID, to capture shifts in planning, decision-making and resource allocation.

Results: Findings show notable changes in management priorities. Before COVID-19, key elements included support staff, safety protocols, event coverage, community involvement and participant management. During the pandemic, managers strengthened risk planning, adjusted budgets and improved volunteer coordination. Post-COVID efforts focus on rebuilding event reputation, restoring participant confidence and managing finances more strategically. Recommendations include developing crisis management plans, expanding event reach, enhancing youth involvement, and securing additional sponsorships.

Originality/value: This study provides practical insights into crisis management in South African trail-running events and offers guidance to strengthen resilience and ensure sustainable sector growth.

Keywords: sport tourism; sport events; trail running; the COVID-19 pandemic; crisis and disaster management; resilience.

UNWTO Best Tourism Villages 2025: A Criteria-Based Analysis of Four Villages Selected from Turkey

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines four villages in Türkiye (Akyaka, Barbaros, Kale Üçağz, and Anıtlı) that received the “Best Tourism Villages” award from UNWTO in 2025 and aims to identify the main factors behind their success in terms of sustainability and rural development. It also discusses the role of community-based tourism within the framework of UNWTO criteria.

Methodology/Approach: The study adopts a qualitative document analysis approach. The villages are comparatively evaluated based on UNWTO’s criteria, using data obtained from official sources and media, focusing on natural resource management, cultural heritage preservation, community participation, economic diversification, and infrastructure. This assessment does not aim to provide an official ranking but offers an analytical and interpretative evaluation.

Results: The findings indicate that the villages differ in their level of adaptation to sustainable tourism practices. While Akyaka and Barbaros stand out with their strong environmental and community-based structures, Kale Üçağz and Anıtlı face development constraints mainly due to infrastructure limitations and early-stage tourism development. Overall, the results highlight the critical role of community-based approaches, local participation, and local ownership in achieving sustainable rural tourism.

Originality/Value: This study provides a comparative national-level assessment based on global sustainability standards and offers insights into the use of cultural and natural resources for sustainable rural development.

Keywords: Rural Tourism; Sustainable Development; Community-Based Tourism; Cultural and Natural Heritage; UNWTO Best Tourism Villages Initiative; Türkiye

GenAI vs. Human-Tour Guides: Competition or Complementarity?

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Abstract

Purpose: This study investigates whether generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) has the potential to eliminate the profession of tourist guiding by using AI itself as a tool of analysis.

Study design/methodology/approach: A qualitative case study design was adopted. Google Gemini and ChatGPT were selected as the study sample. The resulting outputs were analyzed using descriptive analysis to derive the study's conclusions.

Results: GenAI appears to be more complementary than threatening to tourist guiding; however, in some contexts it can compete with human guides. As technology advances, AI is still unable to replace several core aspects of what a guide does.

Originality/value: The limited research on tourist guiding in Türkiye supports the need for this study. Prior work indicates that one of the profession's biggest fears is replacement by AI, but this concern has generally been assessed using interviews with human guides. By examining outputs from GenAI systems directly, this study contributes a distinctive perspective.

Keywords: Tourism; Tourist Guiding; Artificial Intelligence; Google Gemini; ChatGPT

Health Tourism to Türkiye As Silent Digital Migration Under the Health Mobility Regime

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Abstract

Purpose: The main objectives of this paper are to analyse cross-border healthcare from the perspective of the European Union toward Türkiye, in the context of contemporary welfare-state infrastructure pressures, rather than migration or tourism in a traditional sense, while seeking to conceptualize such mobility in a broader transnational governance framework.

The design/methodology approach: The study uses a concept-dependent political economy lens, drawing on post-migration research and the welfare state literature, to develop a health-related conceptual understanding of a regime that enables us to study digitally mediated patient mobility, transnational hospital networks, insurance schemes, and states' health diplomacy.

Results: Analytical findings are directed toward how European care-welfare systems externalize the demand for care in semi-peripheral sites of care need, as a strategy that helps to manage the costs of care in the core.

Originality: The paper introduces a new concept, “silent digital migration,” to describe the digitized, repeated and non-settlement manifestation of healthcare mobility. The paper also contributes to tourism and mobility studies by framing medical tourism as a form of “post-migration” nested within wider transformations occurring in global welfare/service spaces.

Keywords: Cross-border healthcare; health mobility regime; silent digital migration; transformation of the welfare state; medical tourism; European Union; Türkiye

From Fear to Freedom: Empowerment, Digital Platforms, and Solo Female Travel in the Middle East

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to examine how fear is transformed into freedom, empowerment, and self-discovery among solo female travellers from Middle Eastern and Muslim-majority contexts. It further explores the role of digital platforms in shaping travel planning, safety management, and emotional support throughout the travel experience.

Study design/methodology/approach: The study will adopt a qualitative, multi-source design using triangulation. It will conduct 20 semi-structured interviews with women aged 21–45 who have traveled alone for leisure, recruited through purposive and snowball sampling from Iran, Türkiye, and Northern Cyprus. Interviews will be conducted online, recorded with informed consent, transcribed verbatim, and translated into English where necessary. In parallel, 40 online narratives will be collected from TripAdvisor, Reddit, and Travel ladies using keyword-based searches (e.g., solo female travel, safety, fear, empowerment) within the 2019–2025 timeframe, applying clear inclusion criteria (Middle Eastern women, solo leisure travel). Both datasets will be coded initially separately and then integrated during theme development. Data will be analysed using inductive reflexive thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke’s six-phase approach, supported by iterative coding, theme refinement, reflexive journaling, and peer debriefing to enhance credibility and dependability.

Results: Work in Progress

Originality/value: This study will address key gaps by examining solo female travel in underexplored cultural contexts, conceptualizing fear as a dynamic psychological process, and positioning digital platforms as active agents in shaping women’s mobility. Drawing on liminality and social support theory, it will offer a process-oriented understanding of digitally mediated empowerment.

Keywords: solo female travel; Middle Eastern tourism; gendered mobility; digital platforms in tourism; fear and empowerment

From Experience to a Sense of Belonging: Understanding Cultural Inclusion at a South African Arts Festival

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines how experiential and perceived festival-related factors shape attendees' sense of cultural belonging and inclusion at an arts festival operating in a multilingual, pluralistic societal context.

Study design/methodology/approach: A quantitative, cross-sectional research design was employed. Data were collected via self-administered questionnaires from attendees at the 2025 Toyota Stellenbosch Woordfees in South Africa ($n = 595$). Exploratory factor analysis was used to validate measurement constructs, followed by a stepwise multiple regression analysis to identify the key predictors of cultural belonging and inclusion.

Results: The findings reveal that cultural belonging and inclusion constitute a strong, unidimensional construct. Arts appreciation and programme distinctiveness emerged as the strongest predictors of belonging, followed by perceived contributions to social and cultural development, festival and destination loyalty, cultural and linguistic affirmation, and escape and social enjoyment. Nostalgia and cultural identity showed only a marginal effect once experiential and contribution-related factors were considered, suggesting that a sense of belonging is shaped more by contemporary, lived experiences than by retrospective memory alone.

Originality/value: The study advances festival and cultural tourism research by explicitly modelling cultural belonging as a distinct outcome rather than an implicit by-product of attendance. It offers transferable insights for arts- and language-linked festivals globally, demonstrating how inclusive belonging is co-produced through high-quality artistic experiences, visible social and cultural contributions, and experience-led festival design.

Keywords: Arts festivals; Cultural belonging; Festival experience; Multilingual societies; Cultural tourism

A Hybrid Approach to Tour Guiding Services: The Tasks Human Tour Guides Prefer to Delegate to AI to Enhance Job Performance

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Abstract

Purpose: Demanding tasks often overwhelm tour guides, leading to reduced motivation and the shirking of job-related responsibilities. At this point, task crafting through artificial intelligence (AI) integration offers an efficient strategy to manage job-related challenges and enhance employee performance. However, research examining tour guides' task crafting practices through AI integration remains scarce. To address the research gap, this study adopts the human-AI hybrid task crafting approach to identify the tasks that tour guides prefer to delegate to AI to enhance their job performance.

Study design/methodology/approach: Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews informed by the literature. The sample will include tour guides in Türkiye with diverse demographic and professional backgrounds. Following data saturation, a thematic analysis will be conducted to reach the findings.

Results: Utilizing the anticipated findings, routine, low-end, and repetitive tasks can be delegated to AI, providing human tour guides with greater flexibility and autonomy to focus on their primary tasks.

Originality/value: This study aims to explore tour guides' preferences for AI integration through the lenses of task crafting and performance enhancement. By adopting this novel focus, the study seeks to extend existing knowledge by proposing a comprehensive framework for hybrid tour guiding services.

Keywords: Tour guiding; Artificial intelligence; Task crafting; Performance; Hybrid services.

Echoes Between Life and Art: Artist Perspectives from Afrikaans Arts Festivals

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Abstract

Purpose: This study explores how Afrikaans arts festivals shape the creative identity, professional practices, and livelihood realities of Afrikaans-speaking artists, addressing a notable gap in South African festival research where artists' perspectives are often absent.

Design/methodology/approach: Artists who participated in the 2025 Aardklop and Woordfees festivals were invited to complete an online questionnaire. Owing to a small response rate ($n = 12$), the study applied qualitative, inductive content analysis of open-ended responses, supported by descriptive indicators and informed by Social Identity Theory and Cultural Identity Theory.

Findings: Afrikaans is experienced as a powerful expressive resource that enhances authenticity, emotional depth, and professional pride. Festivals function as critical career anchors, offering visibility, networks, and income opportunities. Artists also navigate linguistic flexibility, using both Afrikaans and English pragmatically. However, structural challenges such as limited funding and restricted access to mainstream performance spaces exist.

Originality/value: This study contributes to one of the few artist-centred analyses of Afrikaans arts festivals. It offers novel insight into how Afrikaans operates simultaneously as cultural identity, creative medium, and economic asset within a constrained and evolving festival environment.

Keywords: Afrikaans arts festivals; Creative identity; Creative economy; Artistic identity; South Africa

The Role of Information Sources in International Students' University Choice: A Qualitative Exploration

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Abstract:

Purpose: Understanding International Student (IS) decision-making procedure is crucial, especially as international competition for students continues to rise. This article analyses the university choice process of international students at the only public university at the same time the largest university. It analyses how students found out about this university, what information they considered, and which factors, whether academic, administrative, and positional, impacted their choice

Study design/methodology/approach: the paper assesses the roles of the social media, university-authorized recruiting agents, and personal networks play as a key role in this process, as well as the gaps between students' pre-arrival expectations and post-arrival realities. A qualitative methodology was adopted to study students lived experiences and reflections. The authors conducted 21 separate in-depth, semi-structured interviews with IS from various programs at this university. In this study authors employed an inductive thematic approach to analyse the completed interviews.

Results : The most significant factors identified from the academic marketing perspective influencing student engagement were the academic offerings (i.e., range of programs, education quality, and level offered) of the institution and administrative and appropriate factors (i.e., admission, tuition and financial aid, scholarships, visas) outside the institution, and social media, Edu agents, families, and peers.

Originality/value: The originality of the research stems from the fusion of the digital marketing and student choice frameworks and the practical implications it has for EMU and like institutions. It calls for the necessity to develop, in practitioners, the ability to engage in unencumbered digital, open, student-focused, ethically driven recruitment, and marketing harmonized with the academic and social constituents of the students.

Keywords: Social Media; Experience and Expectation; International Student; Educational Destination; Digital Marketing

Women's Empowerment and Community-Based Tourism: A Qualitative Case Study of Hormozgan, Iran.

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to investigate how women experience empowerment through community-based tourism (CBT) in Hormozgan, Iran, by examining economic, social, psychological, decision-making, and culturally constructed norms within their local environment.

Study design/methodology/approach: This study utilizes an interpretivist perspective, employing a qualitative case study methodology focusing on community-based tourism (CBT) and women's empowerment in Hormozgan, Iran. This study is designed to capture the various dimensions of empowerment as expressed by the participants, rather than relying on a pre-structured, conventional model. The primary method of data collection is through open, in-depth, and semi-structured interviews with women practitioners of CBT. The interviews will allow exploration of the various dimensions of empowerment, including structural, economic, social, psychological, and political, as well as normative cultural dimensions. The study will employ thematic analysis to explore participants' empowerment within cultural, social, and institutional contexts and to develop an empowerment model based on women lived experiences.

Results: The results are expected to provide comprehensive insights into the economic, social, psychological, political, and culturally embedded normative elements related to women's empowerment through CBT.

Originality/value: Community-based tourism (CBT) has received criticism for not offering socio-empowerment for women, owing to some socially defined constructs, structural blockages, as well as women's peripheral involvement in decision-making. The case is also the same in Hormozgan, Iran, where CBT is developing without a clear understanding of the women participants and the degree of empowerment they deserve, such as economic, social, psychological, or political issues. The formulation of tourism policies and strategies needs to understand the experiences of women to ensure that tourism development is balanced and equitable, especially in underdeveloped countries.

Keywords: cultural norms; women empowerment; community-based tourism; Iran

From Algorithmic Transparency to Service Decision Quality: Trust Calibration and Human–AI Complementarity in Airport Service Operations

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Abstract

Purpose: This study develops and empirically tests a sequential model explaining how algorithmic transparency enhances service decision quality in complex service environments. Specifically, it examines the mediating roles of trust calibration and human–AI complementarity in airport service operations.

Study design/methodology/approach: Drawing on information processing theory and a sociomaterial perspective, the study proposes a process-based framework linking algorithmic transparency to service decision quality. Data will be collected from approximately 500 frontline and supervisory employees working in airport service operations in Türkiye using a three-wave, time-lagged survey design. Validated measurement scales will be employed, and covariance-based structural equation modelling (CB-SEM) and bootstrapped mediation analysis will be used to test the hypothesized relationships.

Results: As an extended abstract and work in progress, empirical results are not yet available. The proposed model anticipates that algorithmic transparency improves service decision quality indirectly through trust calibration and human–AI complementarity.

Originality/value: This study advances hospitality and tourism research by offering a process-oriented explanation of how transparent AI systems support, rather than constrain, human judgment. It reconceptualizes trust as a calibrated state and introduces human–AI complementarity as a critical mechanism linking transparency to decision quality in high-ambiguity service contexts.

Keywords: Algorithmic transparency; Trust calibration; Human–AI complementarity; Service decision quality; Airport operations

Exploring Aesthetic Labor in the Profession of Tourist Guiding: A Qualitative Research

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Abstract

Purpose: The present study aims to reveal the elements of aesthetic labour in the profession of tourist guiding and the effects of aesthetic labour on tourist guides.

Study design/methodology/approach: Within the scope of this study, data were obtained from 16 tourist guides. The data were collected using a semi-structured interview form and analysed using thematic analysis, one of the qualitative research analysis methods.

Results: Research findings reveal that tourist guides' perceptions of aesthetic labour are fundamentally shaped under the main themes of “static appearance” and “performative mannerism.” These two main themes are generally consistent with the aesthetic labour literature. However, due to the unique structure of the tourist guiding profession, it diverges from the findings in the field, particularly in terms of dress codes, challenges and effects. Furthermore, the findings show that tourist guides experience various psychological, physical, and financial effects related to aesthetic labour. In terms of psychological effects, it has been found that dressing well and personal care create a sense of happiness and increase self-confidence among guides. Physically, it has been revealed that maintaining a fit appearance requires time, effort, and physical challenges. Financially, it has been found that clothing expenses constitute a financial burden and that personal care is considered an additional cost factor for guides.

Originality/value: This study contributes to the aesthetic labour literature by focusing on professional tour guiding, a service profession that has received limited academic attention despite its intensive face-to-face nature. The study explores aesthetic labour within the theoretical framework of self-presentation and impression management, contextualizing the dimensions of static appearance and performative behaviour in the tourist guiding profession and revealing the psychological, physical, and financial effects of aesthetic labour.

Keywords: Aesthetic labour; tourist guiding; self-presentation; impression management; thematic analysis.

From Theory to Practice in Tourism Research: The Value of Qualitative Case Studies in Understanding Digital Transformation

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Abstract

Purpose: Despite growing theoretical advancements in tourism and hospitality research, a persistent gap remains between conceptual frameworks and their real-world organizational application. This study demonstrates how qualitative case study methodology bridges that gap, using a detailed hospitality case from Northern Cyprus to illustrate how digital transformation unfolds within actual organizational contexts.

Study design/methodology/approach: An exploratory qualitative research design will be adopted, grounded in a single-case study strategy focused on a five-star hotel in Northern Cyprus, selected for its advanced digital infrastructure. Data will be collected through participant observation and semi-structured interviews with staff across diverse departmental roles, including the front office, management, housekeeping, human resources, and executive leadership. The interview questions will be organized around three core themes: experiences with technological integration, digital competency and learning, and organizational culture and digital transformation. Ethical approval has been obtained from Eastern Mediterranean University, and all participants will complete informed consent forms and be assigned anonymized codes.

Result: work in progress

Originality: This study makes a methodological contribution by providing a transparent and replicable framework for conducting qualitative case study research in tourism. It empirically demonstrates how qualitative approaches capture organizational complexity, contextual richness, and human experience in ways that quantitative methods cannot. The study ultimately advances tourism as both an academic discipline and a field of professional practice, particularly in understanding how hospitality organizations navigate the challenges of digital transformation.

Keywords: Qualitative research; Digital transformation; Tourism and hospitality research; Theory–practice integration

Measuring What Matters: Visitor Satisfaction in Sustainable Tourism Monitoring in Batanes Islands, The Philippines

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines visitors' perceptions of their holiday experiences, highlighting their motivations, sense of place, and appreciation of the landscapes and seascapes that support the needs and aspirations of the Ivatans, the Indigenous People of Batanes. It underscores the significance of these perceptions for promoting sustainable tourism within protected area contexts.

Study design/methodology/approach: This study adopts a mixed-methods research design. Center to the qualitative component is the participatory development of survey questions through a series of consultations conducted from April to July 2024 with members of the technical working group, composed of representatives from municipal local government units, tourism offices, and the private sector. This collaborative process ensures that the survey items remain locally grounded, culturally sensitive, and aligned with the needs and priorities of the Ivatans in enhancing visitor experience. A pilot test was carried out from February to March 2025, followed by the full-scale survey implementation from April to May 2025. The instrument employed a 7-point Likert scale and included a socio-demographic section to provide insight into visitor profiles and enhance understanding of their characteristics. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, exploratory factor analysis, and OLS regression analysis to identify patterns, relationships, and variations in visitor satisfaction.

Results: Primary motivations included landscapes, natural beauty, friendly people, Ivatan culture, and a desire for peace and relaxation. Satisfaction was shaped by four themes: (a) landscape, culture, and safety, (b) food quality and service, (c) place attachment, and (d) high prices and early boat schedules, mitigated by perceived value for money.

Originality/Value: This research strengthens the role of monitoring within a small island, protected area context. By involving the Ivatans in the co-development of survey tool, the study ensures that local priorities and cultural values are embedded in the monitoring framework. This is critical, as host destinations play a central role in shaping positive visitor experiences, positioning Batanes as a model for participative and evidence-based sustainable tourism. The findings inform policy, planning, and governance, particularly in enhancing visitor satisfaction, while offering insights for other protected areas seeking to balance tourism development with long-term environmental and socio-cultural sustainability.

Keywords: Ivatan; Batanes Islands; Participatory Approach; UN Tourism INSTO

Illuminating Antiquity: The Impact of Night Museology on Visitor Numbers in Ephesus

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Abstract

Purpose: This study explores the concept of night museology as an innovation in cultural heritage management. Its primary objective is to establish a theoretical framework for this emerging practice and to reveal the current state of its implementation in Türkiye through official data. Rather than testing a specific hypothesis, the research aims to make the impact of nighttime opening visible within the broader context of heritage tourism.

Study design/methodology/approach: Utilizing an exploratory and descriptive design, the methodology is twofold. First, a narrative literature review synthesizes national and international perspectives. Second, official visitor statistics for the Ephesus Archaeological Site (2023-2025) were analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify trends, without applying inferential techniques.

Results: Results indicate that introducing night museology at Ephesus in 2024 created a distinct visitor segment. Rather than replacing daytime attendance, nighttime visits act as a complementary innovation. They expand the total visitor volume and distribute demand more effectively across different hours of the day.

Originality/Value: While night museology is a growing global trend, academic discourse regarding its application in Türkiye remains limited. This study addresses this gap by providing a foundational analysis of the Turkish experience, establishing a baseline for future policy discussions and further academic research in heritage management.

Keywords: Night museology; Ephesus; Visitor statistics; Descriptive analysis; Heritage innovation.

From Concept to Policy: Pathways of Community-Based Tourism Based on Brazilian Experiences

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines the theoretical perspective of Community-Based Tourism (CBT), which emerged in the 1970s, and its successful translation into practice and public policy in the Brazilian context.

Study design/methodology/approach: This study is a multiple case study involving three Brazilian community-based tourism networks - Batuc, Tucum, and Acolhida na Colônia - and the Uakari initiative, which represents a Community-Based Tourism (CBT) experience. A comparative analysis was conducted between the conceptual elements of CBT, relevant public policies, and data collected through in-depth interviews with local members of these CBT initiatives. The data were examined using thematic content analysis.

Results: The results show that the analytical categories underpinning the theoretical construct are evident in the practice of Community-Based Tourism (CBT), namely Community Protagonism, Self-Management and Collective Organization, Generation of Collective Benefits, Participation and Local Governance, and Sense of Belonging. Legal frameworks emerged through bottom-up processes led by local communities and formalize public policy instruments designed to guide social value generation. Local governance was the only theoretical element of CBT that was not identified in the legal texts.

Originality/Value: This study provides a valuable example of bottom-up public policymaking, developed through knowledge exchange and articulation between theory and practice.

Keywords: Community-Based Tourism; Well-being; Public Policies; Brazilian Context.

Smart Tourism and the Digital Detox Paradox: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

Purpose: This study critically examines the "connection paradox" in the 21st-century tourism industry, exploring the tension between the hyper-connectivity promised by the smart tourism ecosystem and tourists' increasing demand for digital detox and psychological well-being.

Study design/methodology/approach: To ensure transparency and reproducibility, a qualitative Systematic Literature Review (SLR) was conducted following the PRISMA 2020 protocol. Articles indexed in the Web of Science (WoS) Core Collection that met strict inclusion criteria were systematically analysed to synthesize the fragmented literature at the intersection of tourism technology, technostress, and digital disconnection.

Results: The findings reveal a paradigm shift from blind technological optimism toward a more critical perspective in the literature. Hyper-connectivity in smart destinations triggers "technostress" and "e-lienation," driving tourists toward mental escape and the "Joy of Missing Out" (JOMO). However, rather than seeking absolute digital seclusion, tourists experience "screen ambivalence" and engage in "connection negotiation." Consequently, a new hybrid tourist profile emerges, one that strategically utilizes digital tools to filter information flow and restrict continuous technology use.

Originality/value: This research bridges two previously isolated research streams to conceptualize the "Smart Detox" paradigm. The study provides a novel theoretical framework to the literature by redefining smart technology not merely as an infrastructure enabling constant connectivity, but paradoxically, as a protective mechanism for mental well-being and mindful disconnection through infrastructure-integrated "quiet zones" and gamified screen-time applications.

Keywords: Smart Tourism; Digital Detox; Technostress; Digital Well-being; Connection Paradox; Systematic Literature Review

Embracing opportunities and asserting entitlements to network-based resources: Insights from small enterprises in Indonesian tourism

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to explain how small enterprises in resource-constrained settings are able to participate in and benefit from the industry.

Study design/methodology/approach: This study employed a qualitative design, conducting 63 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with three groups of actors across three rural emerging tourist destinations in Indonesia that were heavily promoted through government-initiated programs.

Results: The findings show that small enterprises embrace market opportunities driven by the idiosyncratic features of individual entrepreneurial orientation, which drives subsequent actions to access and mobilize resources through networks. These actions are further revealed through a layer of entitlements to network-based resources, which enable access to and mobilization of these resources, thereby facilitating market participation in value co-creation and co-appropriating benefits from the industry.

Originality/value: The originality of this study lies in implementing the Resource-based View in resource-constrained settings by shifting the lens from internal resource ownership to entitlements to network-based resources. We show that small-scale businesses with limited internal resources can sustain a competitive advantage even without ownership of resources.

Keywords: small enterprises; resource-based view; entitlement; value co-creation; value co-appropriation

A New Paradigm in Wellness Tourism: Blue Zones and Türkiye's Potential

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Abstract

Purpose: This study proposes a strategic model for Türkiye's wellness tourism by examining the characteristics of Blue Zones (BZs), where populations live exceptionally long and healthy lives. It explores how BZ principles can be integrated into sustainable tourism investments to enhance Türkiye's brand identity as a wellness destination.

Study design/methodology/approach: A conceptual approach was employed, involving a narrative review of existing literature and secondary demographic data. The study traces the emergence of BZs, analyses their core lifestyle principles, and evaluates their applicability to Türkiye using recent data from the Turkish Statistical Institute.

Results: The findings indicate that Türkiye's traditional lifestyle, characterized by Mediterranean culinary habits and strong social networks, aligns closely with the core BZ Power 9 principles. Compared to examples in other countries, however, there is a significant gap in academic awareness and strategic branding in Türkiye.

Originality/Value: The originality of this research lies in its framework for transforming the Mediterranean diet from a mere nutritional list into an experiential tourism product and proposing longevity destinations as a sustainable investment model. Ultimately, this study provides a roadmap for integrating traditional lifestyle codes into modern wellness frameworks to enhance Türkiye's global competitiveness.

Keywords: Blue Zones; Longevity; Wellness Tourism; Competitiveness; Anatolia.

Uncertainty Transmission in Tourism Stock Markets: Evidence from the BIST Tourism Index

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Abstract

Purpose: This study investigates the impact of CBOE oil price volatility index (OVZ), volatility index (VIX), geopolitical risk (GPR), and climate policy uncertainty (CPU) on the returns of the BIST Tourism Index (XTRZM).

Study design/methodology/approach: To this end, monthly data spanning January 6, 2006, to December 1, 2025, are employed, and the relationships among the variables are examined using the novel Multivariate Wavelet Quantile Regression (MWQR) framework.

Results: The results reveal that the effects of uncertainty indices on XTRZM returns are heterogeneous across time-frequency dimensions and quantiles, indicating strong regime- and horizon-dependent dynamics. Specifically, CPU and GPR generate pronounced shock effects in the short term, exert systematic suppressive influences in the medium term, and produce regime-independent, persistent negative return pressures in the long term. In contrast, OVZ and financial market volatility exhibit asymmetric short-term effects, evolve into positive pricing dynamics in the medium term, and generate persistent positive return effects in the long term through risk premia, pricing power, and adaptive market mechanisms. These findings indicate that the BIST tourism sector displays a risk-return structure that is vulnerable to political and geopolitical uncertainties, yet adaptive and value-generating in response to financial and oil market-driven uncertainties.

Originality/value: From a portfolio management perspective, the results imply that the tourism sector requires risk-reducing positioning during periods of political and geopolitical instability, while offering opportunities for medium- to long-term strategic allocation, risk premium capture, and return optimization during episodes of financial and oil market volatility. The study further derives policy implications based on these empirical insights.

Keywords: Multivariate wavelet quantile regression; Climate policy uncertainty; Geopolitical risk; Tourism stock returns; Time-frequency dynamics

Visa regimes and destination choice: Exploring the influence of the South African visa regime on Indian tourists

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Abstract

Purpose: The study explored how South Africa's visa regime influences Indian tourists' perceptions of risk and destination choice, providing evidence-based insights for tourism and immigration policy improvements.

Study design/methodology/approach: A quantitative causal research design was used, and an online survey for Indian tourists was developed. The survey was conducted via QuestionPro, and the data were generated from an online panel of 660 Indian tourists and were analysed using Partial Least Squares - Structural Equation Modelling in SmartPLS 4 to examine the relationships between visa regime, psychological risk perception, visa exemption expectation, behavioural predictors, and destination choice.

Results: The results imply that the visa regime directly and indirectly influences destination choice through the Attitude-Norm-Control construct. An unexpected higher-order construct (ANC) emerged, providing a strong predictor of destination choice. Psychological risk perceptions showed a limited mediating impact, and visa exemption expectation does not moderate the relationship between visa regime and behavioural intentions.

Originality/value: The study elucidates psychological mechanisms linking visa policies to tourist behaviour, which illustrates the influence of visa facilitation on tourism demand through integrated attitudinal-normative control systems rather than risk reduction alone.

Keywords: Risk Perception; Visa Regime; Visa; Destination Choice; Visa Exemption

The Sound of Silence: A Comparative Analysis of Silence-Based Tourism in Finland and Türkiye

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines how two official tourism websites represent Finland's and Türkiye's positions within silence-based tourism through their marketing discourses, drawing on Hall's (1976) cultural dimensions theory as the analytical framework.

Study design/methodology/approach: This study employs a qualitative research approach, utilizing document analysis and a comparative case study design. The data consists of the official tourism promotion platforms of VisitFinland and GoTürkiye, which were analysed through thematic analysis.

Results: Findings indicate that silence is commodified differently in line with cultural context. Finland presents silence as an explicit, individual, and nature-based tourism product reflecting low-context, monochronic, and personal-space-oriented communication patterns, whereas Türkiye conveys silence implicitly through cultural heritage, collective experiences, and holistic narratives characteristic of high-context cultures.

Originality/value: This study addresses a gap in the literature by focusing on the marketing discourse that constructs silence as a form of cultural capital in Hall's (1976) cultural dimensions theory context.

Keywords: Silence-based tourism; destination marketing; cultural dimensions theory; commodification of silence

Understanding Conservation Awareness Campaigns in South Africa: Insights from Campaign Role Players

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Abstract

Purpose: Conservation awareness campaigns are effective communication tools used to inform, motivate, and encourage tourists, stakeholders, and the public to consider their harmful behaviours and prioritise pro-environmental efforts. The study indicates a gap in the conceptual understanding of what constitutes a conservation awareness campaign. Thus, the aim of this study was to investigate how South African practitioners define and perceive the value of campaigns within the context of nature-based tourism.

Study design/methodology: The study employed a qualitative approach. It utilised purposive and snowball sampling. Fourteen semi-structured interviews were conducted between October 2024 and September 2025, spanning seven provinces in South Africa to ensure geographical representation.

Results: The analysis indicated a shared understanding among role players of the value and purpose of conservation awareness campaigns; however, inconsistencies regarding their definition were noted.

Originality/value: This study provides valuable industry insights into the perceived understanding and importance of conservation awareness campaigns among campaign role players within the conservation sector in South Africa. The results indicate whether campaigns are understood and deemed a practical approach to sharing valuable conservation information with relevant stakeholders, tourists, and the public. A descriptive definition was developed from the literature, and empirical data were used to provide further insight.

Keywords: Awareness; Communication; Conservation; Conservation Awareness Campaign; Nature-Based Tourism.

Territorial brand and tourism competitiveness: A Systematic Literature Review 2013-2025

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Abstract

Purpose: The objective of this research was to analyse scientific production on territorial branding in the context of competitiveness among tourist destinations from 2013 to 2025.

Study design/methodology/approach: This article presents a systematic review of the extant literature, which is a qualitative study of a descriptive-explanatory nature. The data were collected from the Scopus database from 2013 to 2025, and narrative analysis was used to analyse them.

Results: A comprehensive analysis yielded the identification of five overarching thematic categories: immersive technologies, branding, sustainability, independent clusters, and destination competitiveness.

Originality/value: The originality of this study lies in its systematic comparison of the territorial brand with the competitiveness of territories. It clarifies the mechanisms through which the territorial brand acts as a strategic asset in promoting competitiveness, sustainability, and territorial differentiation.

Keywords: Territorial brand; competitiveness; tourism; destination; clusters.

Analysis of the Intellectual Structure of Tourism Policy and Planning Literature: Co-Word Analysis

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of this study is to outline the development of literature related to tourism policy and planning by revealing its intellectual evolution through a co-word analysis. Instead of aiming to be exhaustive, the objective is to discern the patterns and themes that facilitate an understanding of the state of the existing literature. This will facilitate the identification of trends, gaps, and potential bridges between the emerging themes.

Study design/methodology/approach: Bibliometric data were obtained from the WoS database. The Boolean operators were used to create a dataset encompassing different uses of tourism policy and planning. Subsequently, VosViewer was utilized for the co-word analysis of the bibliometric data.

Results: Based on the findings, a literature framework has emerged in tourism policy and planning studies, shaped by the principles of conservation, sustainability, development and monitoring of results, competitiveness, and planning.

Originality/value: There are studies in the literature that examine the literature related to tourism policy and planning using various bibliometric data. However, these studies have been conducted through co-word analysis for a single journal or concept. The present study is distinguished by its objective to provide a comprehensive overview of the intellectual development of literature.

Keywords: Tourism policy; tourism planning; intellectual structure; co-word analysis; bibliometric analysis

Visitor Engagement Under Differentiated Incentive Designs: Marketing Evidence from Monetary and Gamified Destination Campaigns

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of this longitudinal case study is to examine the strategic shift in marketing campaign approaches from monetary-based discounts to gamification in the context of the museum marketing domain. The study seeks to understand the impact of this strategic shift in campaign approaches on the co-creation of consumer value through an analysis of the gamified campaign of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IMM) Culture Co.

Study design/methodology/approach: The research is based on a qualitative research approach and relies on the Perceived Value theory. The 2024 monetary-based discount campaign and the 2025 gamified campaign were analysed using netnography and observational analysis. The 2024 monetary-based discount campaign was analysed using the Price Unfairness framework, while the 2025 gamified campaign was analysed using the Self-Determination Theory framework to determine the level of psychological need satisfaction.

Results: The research results indicate that the 2024 monetary-based discount campaign resulted in price unfairness, while the 2025 gamified campaign resulted in the satisfaction of the psychological needs of consumers, where engagement levels increased fifty times compared to the previous campaign.

Originality/value: The research provides an innovative approach to understanding gamified incentives in the context of consumer engagement prediction and presents a novel value transformation model.

Keywords: Visitor Engagement; Incentive Design; Gamification; Museum Marketing; Destination Campaign

New Forms of Slavery? Living in Staff Accommodation as a Tourism Worker: A Metaphor Analysis

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to examine how tourism workers who are employed in the tourism sector and live in staff accommodation provided by their employers perceive the experience of living in staff accommodation.

Study design/methodology/approach: This research adopted a phenomenological approach within the framework of qualitative research. Data were collected through an open-ended question in which participants were asked to complete the statement, “Staying in staff accommodation while working in tourism... because...”. The metaphorical expressions obtained were analysed using metaphor analysis.

Results: The analysis grouped the 19 metaphors produced by participants into five main categories: enclosure, servitude, endurance, uncertainty and ambivalence. The findings show that tourism workers predominantly evaluate their experience of living in staff accommodation negatively. These experiences are closely related to their perceptions of restricted freedom, blurred boundaries between work and private life, and psychological and physical fatigue. Depending on the facilities and conditions provided, staff accommodation was also described in ambivalent and context-dependent ways.

Originality/value: This study offers a critical perspective on employees’ housing conditions within the tourism sector in relation to internal stakeholder well-being and decent working conditions. Its originality lies in examining workers’ housing conditions, often relegated to the background in the literature, beyond physical elements, through employees lived experiences and everyday realities. The findings demonstrate that the spatial effects of living environments constitute a fundamental and significant dimension that must be considered in discussions of tourism labour. Within this framework, the study provides important insights into how employee housing opportunities can be reconsidered within tourism policies and human resources strategies.

Keywords: Tourism labour; Staff accommodation; Metaphor analysis; Working and living conditions; Decent work

Willing Hearts, Tied Hands: Constraints to Pro-Environmental Practices in South Africa's Accommodation Industry

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Abstract

Purpose: This paper critically examines the factors constraining the implementation of pro-environmental strategies in South African accommodation establishments, focusing on why willingness to act does not translate into sustained practice.

Study design/methodology/approach: Adopting an interpretivist paradigm, the study used a qualitative design. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 accommodation suppliers selected through purposive sampling. Data were analysed using thematic analysis.

Results: The findings reveal a strong intention–action gap, although all participants expressed willingness to adopt pro-environmental practices, implementation remained limited, fragmented, and reactive. The key barriers are structural rather than motivational, including limited financial capacity, infrastructural constraints, weak institutional support and a lack of accessible incentives. Suppliers most often implement sustainability actions reactively in response to crises such as energy and water insecurity, rather than proactively. These findings indicate that capacity constraints, rather than attitudes or awareness, are the primary reason for poor implementation.

Originality/value: The study reframes the intention–action gap as a capacity-dependent and context-specific phenomenon. By foregrounding structural feasibility in a developing-country context, it challenges voluntarist sustainability models and calls for locally grounded, institutionally supported approaches to tourism sustainability.

Keywords: Pro-environmental behaviour; Accommodation establishments; Sustainability implementation; Perceived behavioural control; South Africa

Reframing Phygital Tourism Experience through Digital Twin Technology: A Conceptual Framework

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Abstract

Purpose: The rapid pace of digitalization continues to reshape the tourism sector, giving rise to phygital transformation through the integration of digital technologies and physical experiences. While augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) have been widely explored in this context, digital twin technology has recently emerged as a promising yet under-theorized concept in tourism literature. This study aims to develop a conceptual framework that explains the relationship between digital twin technology and the phygital tourism experience.

Study design/methodology/approach: This study adopts a conceptual research approach by reviewing the existing literature on phygital tourism and digital twin technologies. Based on this review, a theoretical model is proposed to explain the role and interaction of digital twin systems within the phygital tourism experience. The framework focuses on system-level relationships while excluding operational and ethical dimensions.

Results: The proposed model consists of three main dimensions: (1) Digital Twin System, (2) Phygital Tourism Experience, and (3) Visitor Dimension. The model highlights the dynamic and cyclical interaction between physical and digital environments, where real-time data continuously updates the system and shapes visitor experiences across pre-, during-, and post-visit stages. Digital twin technology is positioned as a core system enabling adaptive, data-driven, and personalized tourism experiences.

Originality/value: This study contributes to the literature by introducing an early-stage conceptual framework that integrates digital twin technology into phygital tourism research. It offers a holistic, system-oriented perspective and addresses a significant gap by conceptualizing digital twins as a continuous and dynamic infrastructure shaping the visitor journey. The framework provides a theoretical basis for future empirical and experimental studies.

Keywords: Digital Twin Technology; Phygital Tourism Experience; Visitor Journey; Tourist Experience; Conceptual Framework

Exploring the key dimensions of internal brand management in hotels: an inductive approach

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Abstract

Purpose: Despite the growing importance of internal brand management in the service sector, it remains theoretically underdeveloped and conceptually ambiguous. This study aims to examine the key dimensions of internal brand management within the hotel sector.

Study design/methodology/approach: Adopting an interpretivist epistemological stance, the study employed a qualitative research design. Nine semi-structured interviews with hoteliers yielded rich empirical data, which informed the development of a measurement instrument.

Results: Results substantiated the widely recognised triad of brand-centred human resource, transformational leadership, and internal communication. Notably, the findings established organisational culture as a remarkably stable and foundational dimension of internal brand management. These findings offer a novel perspective by addressing conceptual complexity and delineating the key dimensions of internal brand management.

Originality/value: This study contributes to the literature by demarcating the specific sub-dimensions necessary for instilling brand values. By capturing these nuances, the study advances the development of a novel measurement instrument, offering a robust framework for both theoretical clarity and practical application.

Keywords: Internal Brand Management; Internal Branding; Organisational Culture; Transformational Leadership; Brand Co-creation

Hospitality as Social Regeneration: Stakeholder-Driven Landscapes in High-End Tourism

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Abstract

Purpose: This paper examines how hospitality, framed as a practice of social regeneration, can support stakeholder collaboration and cultural renewal in the context of high-end tourism. It explores hospitality not as an ancillary service, but as a dynamic platform for reconfiguring relationships between people, places, and traditions.

Study design/methodology/approach: The study draws on comparative qualitative research carried out between 2023 and 2026, focusing on two Brazilian initiatives, Radix and Identidade Gastronômica Paulistana, through interviews, fieldwork, and cultural mapping.

Results: The findings show that both initiatives foster social regeneration through cultural storytelling, stakeholder co-creation, and the reframing of high-end tourism as a vehicle for ethical engagement and territorial inclusion.

Originality/value: By positioning hospitality as a social force, the paper redefines high-end tourism as a field of relational care, cultural resilience, and shared authorship, capable of addressing systemic inequalities through the ethics of hosting.

Keywords: Hospitality; Social Regeneration; High-End Tourism; Stakeholders; Cultural Narratives.

A Bibliometric Analysis of Tourism-Related Gentrification Research: Intellectual Structure, Thematic Evolution, and Emerging Trends

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to systematically examine the intellectual structure, thematic evolution, and conceptual shifts within the literature on gentrification in the context of tourism. While early scholarship focused on local manifestations of urban change, recent debates have increasingly centered on planetary gentrification, platform economies, and displacement. This research seeks to map these trajectories to understand how the field has transitioned from descriptive case studies to critical political economy frameworks.

Study design/methodology/approach: A comprehensive bibliometric analysis was conducted using the Web of Science (WoS) database, covering 348 peer-reviewed articles published between 1979 and July 2025. The dataset was analysed using VOS viewer (version 1.6.20) and the Biblioshiny interface in R, focusing on co-authorship networks, citation impacts, and thematic evolution etc.

Results: The results reveal a significant surge in scholarly output post-2015, driven by the proliferation of short-term rentals (e.g., Airbnb) and overtourism protests in Southern Europe. The analysis identifies a paradigmatic shift in the literature: the conceptual focus has moved from “tourism development” and “urban regeneration” toward “touristification,” “housing financialization,” and “social justice.” Key theoretical pillars are anchored in the works of Gotham (2005) and Smith (1996), while contemporary debates are shaped by scholars like Cocola-Gant and Jover, who frame tourism as a primary agent of displacement.

Originality/value: By providing a longitudinal mapping of the field, this study demonstrates that tourism gentrification research has evolved into a distinct sub-discipline of critical urban studies. It highlights the growing dominance of “housing” and “environmental justice” as central themes, suggesting a future research agenda that bridges tourism management with urban political economy. Beyond its theoretical contributions, the findings provide critical insights for urban policymakers and planners by highlighting how tourism-led development increasingly functions as a driver of housing displacement and socio-spatial inequality, underscoring the need for integrated tourism, housing, and urban governance strategies.

Keywords: Gentrification; Tourism gentrification; Touristification; Bibliometric analysis; Thematic Analysis

Decent Work at the Workplace of Food and Beverage Services: An Interdisciplinary Approach for Effective Legal Actions

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Abstract

Purpose: This paper presents the findings from a pilot study as part of an ongoing research project. The aim of the project is to analyse the experiences of workers of the food and beverage services as a holistic phenomenon from decent work perspective including cases related to abuse, violence, harassment and discrimination and develop effective legal solutions for policy makers and practitioners to cope with and avoid such cases in Türkiye.

Study design/methodology/approach: The pilot study was conducted in December 2025 as qualitative research including two individual and two focus group interviews. Content analysis was applied to research data to reveal main themes.

Results: Female workers face psychological violence and sexual harassment where male workers experience physical and psychological violence. Discrimination is an attitude towards female workers and foreigners. Independent restaurants are more open to cases against decent work conditions where workers are in general left alone to find their individual ways to cope with. Hotels offer a more regulated environment to handle such cases in a more professional way of human resources procedures. A more structured legal and administrative framework of claim and handling in such cases is required to be complemented by awareness programs and training, practical guidelines and implementations.

Originality/value: The research project is a first to analyse abuse, violence, harassment and discrimination related cases at the workplace of food and beverage services to do due diligence in a holistic and interdisciplinary perspective.

Keywords: Food and beverage services; Decent work; Abuse; Harassment; Violence; Discrimination; Türkiye

A Web Content Analysis of Resort Hotels in Northern Cyprus': Observing Digital Sustainability Communication Strategies

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Abstract

Purpose: To evaluate how resort hotels in Northern Cyprus promote sustainable practices on their official websites. The study primarily aims to assess the degree of disclosure about environmental, social, and economic activities and highlight shortcomings in sustainability communication within the hospitality industry.

Study design/methodology: The official websites of twenty-five resort hotels in Northern Cyprus are examined in this study using qualitative web content analysis, with an emphasis on how they present sustainability data, certifications, and associated strategies.

Results: The results reveal significant flaws in sustainability communication. The majority of hotels don't explain their programs; they just advertise certifications. Out of twenty-five hotels, just four (about 16%) offered organized data regarding economic, social, and environmental efforts. Furthermore, crucial sustainability information was missing from 84% of website content.

Originality: This study adds to the hospitality literature by offering one of the few empirical analyses of online sustainability communication among Northern Cyprus resort hotels. It also provides guidance for managers and stakeholders seeking transparency, eco-conscious guests, and alignment with sustainable development goals in the region's rapidly expanding tourism market and future planning needs that are urgently needed for future success.

Keywords: Sustainability communication; resort hotels; Northern Cyprus; web content analysis; sustainable tourism; stakeholder engagement; sustainability

Comparative Analysis of Online Interest in Motorized and Non-Motorized Air Sports in Turkey Using Google Trends Data

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Abstract

Purpose: This study analyses online public interest in air sports in Türkiye over a decade and contrasts changes across powered and non-powered disciplines.

Study design/methodology/approach: Using Google Trends (web search) data for Türkiye (30 June 2015–30 June 2025), we compare five non-powered and five powered air-sport queries. Trends are evaluated via relative interest indices (0–100), focusing on seasonality, pandemic-related disruptions, and subregional concentration.

Results (indicative): Online interest demonstrates a significant decrease during the initial year of the Covid epidemic, thereafter, rebounding post-2021. Non-powered disciplines have pronounced seasonality, generally reaching their zenith in the summer, whereas powered disciplines demonstrate more erratic, event-dependent variations. Paragliding is the most prominent non-powered activity, whereas paramotoring is the leader in powered activities. Regional data indicate a concentration in locations with existing tourism and flight activity hubs.

Originality/value: The report provides a comparative analysis of motorized and non-motorized air sports in Türkiye, emphasizing how search-based indicators can aid in destination design, sport tourism investment, and policy coordination for long-term digital interest monitoring.

Keywords: Air sports; Google Trends; digital interest; Türkiye

From the Tourist Gaze to Platform-Mediated Gaze: Reconceptualizing Tourism Experience through the Case of Rumi's Mausoleum

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Abstract

Purpose: This paper reconsiders the tourist gaze under platformized destination visibility and the polysemy of heritage sites. It argues that gaze theory remains useful but requires re-specification when destinations are anticipated, ranked, circulated, and re-encountered through digital platforms.

Study design/methodology/approach: The article adopts a conceptual theory-refinement design, synthesizing tourist gaze theory, digital tourism research, platform studies, and heritage scholarship through the heuristic case of the Mausoleum of Rumi in Konya.

Result: The paper proposes the platform-mediated gaze as a conceptual extension that highlights anticipatory framing, performative encounter, metric cues, selective amplification, and recursive circulation. It introduces visibility governance as a heuristic for explaining how platforms shape the public salience of competing meanings. Using the Rumi case, it argues that polysemic heritage sites make platform selectivity especially visible because multiple narrative registers coexist without collapsing into a stable meaning.

Originality/value: The paper refines debates on digitally mediated tourism by foregrounding unequal conditions of discoverability, repetition, and public salience. Its contribution is to connect tourist gaze theory, platformized visibility, and polysemic heritage through visibility governance. It argues that platforms now warrant explicit theoretical attention within tourism's vocabulary of mediated seeing, without displacing earlier mediation regimes.

Keywords: tourist gaze; platform-mediated gaze; platformization; visibility governance; polysemic heritage

Mapping Artificial Intelligence (AI) Adoption Among Culinary Chefs: A Field Study in İzmir's Gastronomy Sector

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of this research is to map AI usage patterns among culinary chefs in İzmir's gastronomy sector. The study also addresses chefs' opinions about the benefits and barriers of using AI, and the future of AI in gastronomy industry.

Study design/methodology/approach: This study adopted a quantitative research design supported by structured survey data. Data was collected from twelve chefs who hold a decision-making role as part of their professions. A purposive sampling strategy was employed to reach those who actively own, manage, co-manage or counsel an establishment.

Results: The findings indicated that AI was mostly used for cost control and profitability, menu development and menu engineering, and concept and brand development purposes respectively. It was also expressed as an assistant for increasing their managerial efficiency, supporting creativity and decreasing operational stress. While it was not found as a threat to culinary arts; most mentioned their desire to use it more in the near future. Saving time, reducing costs and culinary innovation were mentioned as the perceived benefits whereas fear of losing authenticity and the concerns related to data privacy were expressed as the barriers preventing AI integration.

Originality/value: While research on AI usage is common across various professions, a knowledge gap exists regarding the experiences of culinary chefs. So the study explores emerging patterns, tendencies and conceptual directions to be a model for future larger-scale empirical research.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence; AI adoption in gastronomy; AI acceptance in food industry; culinary chef attitudes towards AI; gastronomy

Tourists' Emotional Intelligence as an Antecedent of Emotional Solidarity with Residents: Evidence from Alanya, Türkiye

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Abstract

Purpose: This study advances emotional solidarity (ES) theory by positioning tourists' emotional intelligence (EI) as a dispositional antecedent of tourists' affective bonds with residents (welcoming nature (WN), emotional closeness (EC), and sympathetic understanding (SU)) in a mature mass-tourism setting.

Study design/methodology/approach: A quantitative, cross-sectional survey was administered to tourists in Alanya, Türkiye (n = 364). EI was measured multidimensionally (mood regulation, appraisal of emotions, utilization of emotions, social skills) and ES was assessed using the Emotional Solidarity Scale (WN, EC, SU) on 7-point Likert items.

Results: The current study found significant relationships between emotional intelligence and emotional solidarity factors.

Originality/value: By integrating EI into ES frameworks, the study shifts solidarity research beyond contextual predictors toward a psychologically grounded explanation of why tourists differ in their capacity to form affective host–guest bonds, extending evidence in Mediterranean mass-tourism contexts.

Keywords: EI; ES; Host–Guest Relationships; Structural Equation Modelling; Tourists.

Evaluating Generative Artificial Intelligence in Destination Marketing: A Case Study on the Promotional Film “Türkiye: The Eternal Bridge (An AI Dream)”

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Abstract

Purpose: Destination marketing requires emotional atmosphere design where Generative AI currently shows unmeasured capacity. The promotional film "Türkiye: The Eternal Bridge (An AI Dream)" was examined to uncover such specific potential. Musical composition and cinematographic editing processes of the work were entirely realized by artificial intelligence tools.

Study design/methodology/approach: An autoethnographic and project-based research design was adopted. This framework allows for an in-depth analysis of creative processes and technological interactions. Tune AI designed the auditory universe of the film. Google DeepMind Veo tools were used for the visual editing process.

Results: Findings show that generative artificial intelligence can evoke international emotional resonance. It does this by processing local cultural codes. Empirical evidence suggests that AI-generated creative outputs achieve internationally recognized artistic competence when guided by human vision. Ideally, AI transitions from mechanical production to a narrative partner in reconstructing the spirit of place.

Originality/value: The evolution of the tourism marketer's role into "AI Curatorship" is identified in this study. Additionally, it is thought that this research establishes a pioneering benchmark as one of the first country promotional films featuring 100% AI-generated auditory and visual components which was a unique distinction on international digital platforms at the time of its release in November 2025.

Keywords: Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI); Destination Marketing; Human-AI Collaboration; AI Curatorship; Digital Narrative

Constraints on Adoption of Green Marketing Strategy by Tour Operators in Eastern Circuit, Tanzania

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of this study was to assess the constraints that are faced by tour operators in the Eastern tourist circuit of Tanzania in adoption of green marketing strategies.

Study design/methodology/approach: Triple Bottom Line and Marketing Mix theories were used. Methods used in data collection were quantitative, using a descriptive survey in a cross-sectional research design. Questionnaires were used in collecting data from 150 respondents from registered tour companies and a review of secondary data was done to obtain tourists' preference in tour arrangement and participation in eco-tours.

Results: The results from analysis showed that Limited budget, high level of competition and lack of appropriate policies were the highest constraints. Correlation analysis using chi square test showed a significant relationship between years of operation and eco-tourists demand ($p=0.013$) as well as limited budget ($p=0.032$).

Originality/value: The study implies the tour operators perceive green marketing positively. It concluded that tour operators in eastern tourist circuit of Tanzania are aware of green marketing and do face constraints in adapting green marketing strategies in different levels, and recommended policy implementations, tour operators setting aside budget for green marketing, as well as creating cost-effective green tour products among other recommendations.

Keywords: Green Marketing; Tourism; Constraints; Tour Operators; Tanzania

Media Framing of 2021 Turkish Wildfires: A Comparative Critical Discourse Analysis on Destination Image and Social Identity

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Abstract

Purpose: The main objective of this study is to analyse how the 2021 Türkiye wildfires were framed in national and international press and to reveal the discursive divide created between tourists and residents.

Study design/methodology/approach: This research employed qualitative and quantitative research methods to examine 109 Turkish and British news articles using MAXQDA. The methodology included quantitative word clouds alongside in-depth qualitative discourse analyses of news samples, grounded in the theoretical frameworks of Entman and Van Dijk.

Results: The analysis reveals that while international press portrayed the wildfires as a regional chaos and risk factor for tourism destinations, national press avoided political critique and framed the crisis as a technical struggle focused on the state's physical intervention capabilities. Also, the findings reveal an implicit “us versus them” distinction in media coverage, where different groups and priorities were highlighted depending on the target audience.

Originality/Value: This research provides an original contribution to the literature by comparatively revealing how destination image is discursively reconstructed across different media environment during crisis periods. Consequently, the paper concludes by offering practical suggestions for destination crisis communication.

Keywords: 2021 Turkish Wildfires; Destination Image; Social Identity Theory; Framing Analysis; Critical Discourse Analysis; Crisis Communication

Crafting luxury online: brand identity and differentiation in hospitality

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Abstract

Purpose: Hotel Marketing Consortia (HMCs) have emerged as a strategic response to global competition, enabling independent hotels to maintain autonomy while leveraging collective branding and distribution. This study examines how luxury identity is constructed and communicated in digital environments by HMCs, using The Leading Hotels of the World (LHW) as an illustrative case. It aims to analyse how LHW articulates its brand identity online and contributes to differentiation in the luxury hospitality segment.

Study design/methodology/approach: A qualitative digital content analysis, informed by netnographic principles, was conducted. Brand-generated content from LHW's website, blog/press area, and social media (Instagram, Facebook, X) was collected over three months and analysed in MAXQDA. The dataset was purposively sampled and coded deductively using Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism.

Results: LHW communicates a coherent luxury identity centred on heritage, cultural authenticity, curated exclusivity, and personalised relationships. Visual storytelling and relational mechanisms reinforce its positioning as a cultural mediator of luxury hospitality.

Originality/Value: The study extends Kapferer's framework to consortium-led branding, highlighting how HMCs sustain coherent luxury identities across digital touchpoints.

Keywords: hotel marketing consortia; luxury hospitality; brand identity; digital content analysis; digital branding

Where Space Meets People: Unpacking the Role of Airport Servicescapes in Passenger Loyalty

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines how physical and social dimensions of the airport servicescape influence passenger satisfaction and loyalty in a major Middle Eastern airport context.

Study design/methodology/approach: Survey data were collected from 1,193 passengers at King Abdulaziz International Airport, Saudi Arabia, using a structured questionnaire. Confirmatory factor analysis and regression-based analyses were employed to test the proposed direct relationships among airport servicescape dimensions, passenger satisfaction, and airport loyalty.

Results: The findings indicate that both physical and social servicescape dimensions have significant positive effects on passenger satisfaction. In turn, airport satisfaction strongly predicts airport loyalty. The results highlight the central role of both environmental design and social interactions in shaping passengers' evaluative and behavioural responses.

Originality/value: This study extends servicescape research by providing empirical evidence from a Middle Eastern airport context and demonstrates the importance of managing both physical and social service environments to foster passenger satisfaction and loyalty.

Keywords: Airport servicescape; Passenger satisfaction; Airport loyalty; Airport experience; Saudi Arabia

Tourism, Benefits, and Well-Being: Residents' Views from New Hasankeyf

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Abstract

Purpose: This study investigates how residents' positive perceptions of tourism development influence perceived benefits and quality of life in New Hasankeyf, Türkiye. By focusing on positive tourism impacts, the study aims to clarify the role of tourism development in enhancing residents' well-being within a heritage-sensitive destination that has undergone major spatial and socio-cultural transformation.

Study design/methodology/approach: Survey data were collected from 419 residents of New Hasankeyf using a structured questionnaire adapted from established tourism impact and quality-of-life scales. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was employed to assess construct validity, followed by reliability and discriminant validity tests. Direct relationships between positive natural, social, and economic tourism perceptions and perceived benefits and quality of life were examined using regression-based analysis.

Results: The findings indicate that residents' positive perceptions of tourism's natural, social, and economic impacts significantly enhance both perceived benefits and quality of life. Among the three dimensions, positive economic perceptions exert the strongest influence. All hypothesized direct relationships are positive and statistically significant, confirming the importance of tourism development in shaping residents' evaluations of personal and community well-being.

Originality/value: By isolating and empirically testing only positive tourism perceptions, this study contributes to resident-based tourism research by offering a parsimonious and policy-relevant model. The findings provide practical guidance for destination managers seeking to foster sustainable tourism development through resident well-being rather than solely economic growth.

Keywords: Tourism development; Resident perceptions; Perceived benefits; Quality of life; Community well-being; Hasankeyf

Guest perception of ESG shared online: What ESG means for hotel guests, and does it affect satisfaction?

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Abstract

Purpose: The objectives of this study are to i) identify the extent to which hotel guests reference ESG in reviews, ii) extract salient ESG themes, and iii) investigate the effect of ESG related experiences on review ratings.

Study design/methodology/approach: Hotel reviews from the Yelp Dataset Challenge were filtered and cleaned (N = 266,098). A two-step aspect extraction was used: an ESG dictionary followed by AI-based modelling (BART MNLI) to extract ESG aspects. IDA was then used to identify salient themes. Finally, sentiment analysis and regression were used to test their impact on review ratings.

Results (Optional): The BART MNLI model's F1 score is around 70%. ESG content appears in 4.39% of reviews. Social themes concentrate on community, staff, and safety. Environmental themes include wildlife and history tours, green operations, green hotel, waste and recycling, and experiencing nature. Governance themes include integrity and accountability, transparent investigation, and honesty. All three ESG aspects show a significant association with star rating.

Originality/value: While previous studies investigated ESG mainly from firm perspective, little is known about consumer perceptions of ESG in the hotel sector. This project is first to identify latent themes in ESG experiences and to show how ESG affects rating behavior.

Keywords: ESG; experiences; Online reviews; Sentiment Analysis; AI-based modelling

Algorithmic Trust for Sustainable Travel: How Information Quality, Ease of Adoption, Environmental Concerns, and Personal Values Shape Intentions to Follow Generative AI Recommendations

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Abstract

Purpose: This study develops and tests a parsimonious framework explaining tourists' intention to follow generative AI (GAI)-driven sustainable travel recommendations. The model proposes that perceived information quality, perceived ease of adoption, and environmental concerns predict trust in GAI recommendations, which in turn predicts intention to follow AI-driven sustainable recommendations. Personal values are proposed as a boundary condition that strengthens or weakens the trust-intention relationship.

Study design/methodology/approach: The proposed study will conduct a cross-sectional online survey with travellers familiar with GAI tools. Participants will be presented with a short scenario describing a GAI travel assistant giving sustainable recommendations. Data will be analysed via PLS-SEM to test mediation and moderation.

Results (Expected): It is expected that higher information quality, ease of adoption, and environmental concerns increase trust in GAI recommendations. Trust increases intention to follow sustainable recommendations and mediates the effects of the three antecedents. Personal values strengthen or weaken the trust-intention relationship.

Originality/value: The study advances emerging GAI-tourism research by specifying how trust in sustainability-oriented GAI recommendations is formed and when it becomes actionable intention. It integrates information-quality and technology adoption logics with sustainability motivations and value theory, offering a concise, empirically testable model and practical design implications for building trustworthy, feasible, and value-sensitive GAI systems that support sustainable tourist choices.

Keywords: Generative Artificial Intelligence; Sustainable Travel; Information Quality; Value Perception

When Service Attributes Fail: Customer Dissatisfaction in Airline Services

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Abstract

Purpose: This study explores how airline service attributes contribute to customer dissatisfaction when service performance fails. While prior airline research has predominantly focused on satisfaction and positive evaluations, this study adopts a dissatisfaction-oriented perspective to better understand service breakdowns from the customer's viewpoint.

Study design/methodology/approach: The study adopts a qualitative–analytical approach based on customer-generated online reviews of Pegasus Airlines, a major Turkish airline. Negative customer reviews are analysed to identify recurring dissatisfaction themes related to airline service attributes, capturing passengers' evaluative experiences in real-world service encounters.

Results: The findings reveal multiple dissatisfaction dimensions associated with airline services, including reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, tangibility, and accountability-related issues. These dimensions highlight critical points of service failure that shape negative customer evaluations and dissatisfaction.

Originality/value: By focusing explicitly on customer dissatisfaction rather than satisfaction, this study offers a failure-oriented perspective on airline services. Using customer-generated data from a Turkish airline, the study provides context-specific insights for service improvement and recovery strategies, while contributing to a more balanced understanding of customer evaluations in air transportation.

Keywords: Customer satisfaction; Service Attributes; Text mining

From Tourist Waste to Sustainable Destination Practices

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Abstract

Purpose: Tourism generates disproportionate waste pressure on destination systems through seasonal population surges, consumption-intensive holiday practices, and service formats that structurally induce waste generation. This paper advances an integrated behavioural and governance framework that addresses two analytically distinct yet interconnected problems: tourist waste production, encompassing single-use item consumption, amenity-related waste, and food waste in buffet and restaurant settings; and tourist waste disposal, including bin utilization, sorting compliance, and stream contamination.

Study design/methodology/approach: Building on the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and the Norm Activation Model (NAM), this study advances a conceptual model adapted to the travel context and synthesizes empirical evidence from previous research in tourism and hospitality, marketing, and consumer behaviour. It further proposes a multilevel empirical design that connects individual-level determinants with destination-level infrastructure and regulatory frameworks, focusing on two main activities: lodging and restaurants.

Originality/value: The framework explicitly links individual behavioural formation to policy instruments, including infrastructure provision, regulatory measures, enforcement mechanisms, inclusive communication strategies, and resilience planning, thereby advancing testable propositions and an applied research agenda.

Keywords: Governance and policy; NAM; TPB; Sustainable tourism; Tourist waste behaviour

Service Ecosystem in the Age of Twin Transition: on Wellness Tourism from the Perspective of Artificial Intelligence Ethics and Sustainability

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to examine the "twin transition" (green and digital transition) processes that are radically changing the tourism and service industry with a holistic approach focusing on artificial intelligence (AI) ethics, algorithmic discrimination, sustainability (greenwashing risk), and wellness tourism. The study questions the ethical blind spots created by technology while increasing operational efficiency and the reliability of sustainability claims.

Study design/methodology/approach: The research is a comprehensive qualitative case study based on sector reports (Global Wellness Institute, Precedence Research) covering the years 2020-2026, academic literature, national strategy documents (T.R. 12th Development Plan), and case analyses. Data were synthesized under the themes of "algorithmic justice," "regenerative tourism," and "digital wellness" using content analysis method. It has been determined that the global wellness economy reached \$6.8 trillion in 2024 and tourism played a critical role in this growth. However, findings show that digitalization (AI, biometric data, algorithms) creates new ethical problems such as "algorithmic discrimination" and "privacy violations," while on the sustainability side, the risk of "greenwashing" threatens consumer trust. It was concluded that Türkiye has a strong potential in this transformation with its thermal resources and health infrastructure, but ethical and legal regulations (KVKK, AI Act compliance) need to be developed.

Results: The future of tourism relies on a hybrid model where technology is used in a human-centric (high-touch) and inclusive manner, and environmental resources are managed with a "regenerative" approach, rather than solely economic growth.

Originality/value: This study possesses a unique quality by integrating the concepts of "digitalization" and "sustainability"—which are generally addressed independently within the tourism literature—under the framework of the "Twin Transition." It conducts a holistic examination of this transformation through the perspective of artificial intelligence ethics and wellness tourism.

Keywords: Twin Transition; Artificial Intelligence Ethics; Algorithmic Discrimination; Wellness Tourism; Sustainability.

Burdur and Sports Tourism in the Media: A Study via the Google News Tab

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to examine how sports tourism activities in Burdur are represented in digital media and to determine how these representations contribute to the construction of the destination image. Specifically, the research focuses on online news content published under the Google News tab to explore the role of media discourse in shaping perceptions of an emerging sports tourism destination.

Study design/methodology/approach: study adopts a qualitative research design based on document analysis. Data were collected from online news articles related to Burdur and sports tourism published under the Google News tab. Through purposeful sampling, 51 relevant news items were selected from an initial pool of 150 items. The data were analysed using content analysis and descriptive analysis techniques. A total of 73 codes were generated and grouped into seven main themes: Concept, Structures, Branch, Organization, Region, Roles, and Supportive Elements. Intercoder reliability was ensured through independent coding and consensus-building between the researchers.

Results: The findings reveal that Burdur is predominantly represented positively in digital media as a sports tourism destination. The most frequently emphasized themes are Concept and Structures, highlighting the strategic importance of sports tourism and the role of infrastructure. The diversity of sports branches and the presence of national and international organizations further reinforce Burdur's image as a dynamic and multifunctional sports tourism destination. However, supportive elements such as wellness and recovery services receive limited attention in media representations. Overall, media discourse contributes significantly to constructing a favourable, infrastructure-oriented, and diversified destination image for Burdur.

Originality/Value: This study contributes to the sports tourism and destination image literature by addressing a notable gap regarding media representations of emerging sports tourism destinations. Unlike previous research focusing on resource-based potential, this study highlights the role of digital media in shaping destination image through discourse analysis. The findings provide both theoretical insights into media-driven destination image formation and practical implications for managing media strategies in sports tourism development.

Keywords: Burdur; Google News; Sport; Sport Tourism

Mapping the Conceptual Evolution of Creative Tourism

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Abstract

Purpose: The study objective is to analyse how literature presents the evolution of creative tourism (CT) regarding its practical application.

Study design/methodology/approach: It is a systematic literature review that analysed 75 peer-reviewed empirical articles to examine the evolution of CT's role from 2000 to 2026. A thematic content analysis was conducted within a Human–AI collaboration, following the protocol of Costa et al. (2025).

Results: The results indicate an evolution from a narrow classificatory definition to a multidimensional concept of CT, which reflects three movements: from classification to operationalization, from experience provision to policy relevance, and from tourism-centric to territorially embedded perspectives. There's no replacement of meaning but an accumulation with previous meanings remaining valid as new roles are added. Nowadays, CT operates as a platform that integrates cultural, social, and economic resources and aligns tourism practices with broader development goals, functioning less as a descriptive category and more as an instrumental framework.

Originality/value: This study provides a longitudinal mapping of the conceptual evolution of CT in empirical literature, based on its roles, showing how it has migrated from a small-scale workshop-based niche to a broader place-making and policy discourse.

Keywords: Creative tourism; Territorial development; Society–centric approach.

Beyond Indicators: Assessing Community Participation in Tourism Observatory Governance

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Abstract

Purpose: Participation is essential for sustainable tourism because it enables legitimate decisions aligned with local priorities and coordinated among stakeholders. Sustainable Tourism Observatories (STOs) support this process by monitoring indicators, tracking change, strengthening accountability, and informing governance and implementation. This study examines how STO documents represent key stakeholders and position local communities within tourism governance.

Study design/methodology/approach: Using mixed-methods content analysis of publicly available INSTO (International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories) initial reports (27), the study applies a theory-informed keyword framework covering five stakeholder dimensions: Local Community, Visitors, Tourism Industry, Governance Actors, and Knowledge & Support Actors. Keyword frequencies (per 1,000 words) and proportional distributions are calculated to compare stakeholder salience across cases, and text segments referring to local communities are extracted and assessed using Arnstein's (1969) Ladder of Citizen Participation, focusing on explicit evidence of participation mechanisms and governance functions (e.g., information provision, consultation, monitoring, and decision-making).

Results: STO consistently prioritise visitors and industry stakeholders, while local communities, governance actors, and especially knowledge/support actors are comparatively marginal. When local communities are included, their role is mainly consultative and data-providing rather than decision-making, indicating participation that largely sits at the "Tokenism" level.

Keywords: Tourism Governance; Sustainable Tourism Observatory; Content Analysis.

Municipal Tourism Demand Forecasting in Portugal: A Time-Series Approach

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Abstract

Purpose: Sustainable Tourism Observatories (STOs) support evidence-based destination management, yet limited data granularity, infrequent updates, and delayed releases often restrict timely action. This research integrates tourism demand forecasting into a municipal tourism monitoring platform to help reduce the data-to-action gap, using Ílhavo (Portugal) as the main case study.

Study design/methodology/approach: The study benchmarks time-series forecasting methods using official tourism statistics for coastal municipalities in the Centro region of Portugal. It forecasts monthly municipal overnight stays (January 2020– November 2025) with seasonal methods, such as seasonal naïve, ETS/Holt–Winters exponential smoothing, SARIMA, and Prophet, producing a 12-month horizon prediction. It forecasts annual overnight stays (2011 - 2024), both total and by the top 5 source markets, aligned with the regional tourism strategy, with non-seasonal approaches focused on trend, namely NAÏVE I and II, ARIMA, and ETS Holt trend models, generating a 3-year prediction. At this stage, the comparison remains exploratory and prioritises methodological suitability for municipal monitoring rather than formal out-of-sample validation.

Results: The study expects to identify variable-specific model candidates suitable for implementation and to describe demand trajectories for Ílhavo.

Originality/value: The study operationalises municipal-scale tourism forecasting for integration into a practical destination monitoring system.

Keywords: Sustainable Tourism Observatories; Tourism demand forecasting; Time-series models; Tourism Management.

Barriers and Enablers to UK Market Entry for Colombian Service Providers: A Case Study of 'Green Trails' in the Luxury Tourism Sector

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Abstract

Purpose: This paper examines the key enablers and barriers affecting the entry of Colombian service providers into the UK luxury tourism sector, using 'Green Trails' as a case study.

Study design/methodology/approach: Conducted as part of an Impact Consulting project where the author served as an International Business Consultant, the paper adopts a qualitative, interpretivist approach using secondary data analysis. The analysis is theoretically grounded in, and triangulates, the OLI paradigm, the Uppsala model, and Born Global theory to assess how economic, political, technological, and cultural factors shape market entry strategies for Colombian firms targeting the UK luxury segment.

Results: Findings indicate that unfamiliar cultural contexts, complex regulatory frameworks, and low brand recognition significantly constrain market success. Conversely, sustainability-led positioning, digital storytelling, and the development of strategic partnerships emerge as key enablers. The study proposes a hybrid internationalization approach that combines incremental learning with sustainability branding and digital agility to enhance Green Trails' competitiveness.

Originality/value: The paper's originality lies in applying established internationalization theories simultaneously to an emerging-market destination management company entering a mature luxury market, specifically the understudied Colombian-UK tourism corridor. The key contribution is bridging the gap between internationalization theory and sustainability-led service firm strategy in luxury tourism sector.

Keywords: Colombian service providers; UK luxury tourism sector; sustainability positioning; strategic partnership; digital strategy

Sustainable Tourism Practices in the Azores: The Role of Intangible Cultural Heritage and Community Involvement

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines how sustainable tourism practices that integrate intangible cultural heritage (ICH) and community engagement help preserve cultural authenticity while enhancing destination competitiveness, with a focus on the Azores.

Study design/methodology/approach: A qualitative case study is employed, combining a structured literature review with analysis of regional policy instruments, including PEMTA and EarthCheck certification criteria. Secondary data from tourism reports and selected empirical insights on community participation complement the analysis. This multi-source approach supports a cross-disciplinary perspective linking tourism management, cultural studies, and sustainability policy within the INTHRACE project (Erasmus+).

Results: The findings show that aligning ICH with sustainable tourism strategies generates mutually reinforcing outcomes. In the Azores, heritage-based practices are effectively embedded in tourism offerings, preserving authenticity while creating economic value. Community involvement emerges as a key success factor, strengthening legitimacy and ensuring culturally sensitive implementation. Policy frameworks, particularly EarthCheck certification, have institutionalized sustainability practices, with strong stakeholder alignment and measurable progress in environmental and socio-cultural indicators.

Originality/value: This study contributes by explicitly linking ICH preservation with destination sustainability certification. It provides a novel case illustrating how global sustainability standards and local cultural assets can be strategically aligned, offering practical insights for policymakers and destination managers.

Keywords: Sustainable Tourism; Cultural Heritage; Local Communities; Government policy

From AI Interaction to Revisit Intention: Examining WhatsApp-Based AI Concierge Services in Hotels

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Abstract

Purpose: The study aims to develop a comprehensive understanding of how consumers' perceptions of WhatsApp-based AI concierge services drive behavioural outcomes in the hospitality and tourism context. The study aims to examine how trust and anthropomorphic features of WhatsApp-based AI concierge influence revisiting intention.

Study design/methodology/approach: The study will be grounded on both the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model to investigate the impacts of consumers' perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived trust, and anthropomorphism on customer satisfaction and revisit intention in the hotel context. Data will be collected from hotel consumers who used a WhatsApp-based AI concierge during their stay. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) will be used to test the model.

Results: The study is expected to make a significant contribution to the literature by integrating the TAM and SOR frameworks to provide new insights into consumers' evaluations of AI-based systems encountered during their hotel stays.

Originality/value: This study will contribute to the literature on consumers' evaluation of AI-based technologies, such as WhatsApp-based AI concierge at hotels. The study's results will demonstrate how AI-Anthropomorphism fosters consumers' behavioural intentions.

Keywords: AI-based concierge; Trust; Revisit intention; Stimulus-organism-response; Hospitality industry

From immersive previews to generative worlds: the strategic role of generative artificial intelligence, augmented reality, virtual reality, and the metaverse in tourism and hospitality (in progress)

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Abstract

Purpose: This study explores how generative artificial intelligence, augmented reality, virtual reality, and metaverse environments are collectively transforming tourism and hospitality experiences, decision-making processes, and value creation. The study aims to move beyond tool-based discussions by examining immersive technologies as integrated service and marketing systems that shape consumer confidence, trust, and behavioural outcomes throughout the travel journey.

Study design/methodology/approach: Building on prior mixed-methods qualitative research, the study adopts an integrative conceptual approach that combines automated literature mapping with expert insights. The analysis synthesises recent developments in generative artificial intelligence, spatial computing, and immersive platforms to propose an expanded framework linking experiential immersion, personalisation, operational intelligence, and ethical governance.

Results: The findings indicate that immersive generative systems enhance perceived diagnosticity, reduce uncertainty, and support more confident travel decisions. Generative artificial intelligence serves as an enabling infrastructure that dynamically personalises immersive environments, while metaverse spaces extend tourism engagement beyond physical travel episodes.

Originality/value: This research advances tourism and hospitality scholarship by reconceptualising immersive technologies as generative, adaptive, and strategically embedded ecosystems rather than discrete innovations, thereby offering new theoretical and managerial insights for future tourism systems.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence (AI); augmented reality; virtual reality; metaverse; tourism and hospitality

Authenticity in Tourism Studies

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to explore the relationship between authenticity and tourism by conducting a literature review.

Study design/methodology/approach: It is aimed to address the relationship between tourism and authenticity. The studies regarding the relationship between authenticity and tourism seem to be quite limited. Therefore, it is aimed to shed light on the subject through a narrative literature review.

Results: A review of the literature reveals that authenticity is an indispensable yet controversial concept in tourism studies. Authenticity continues to play a central role in the interpretation of tourist experiences. This study demonstrates that treating authenticity in tourism studies solely as an objective reality-based characteristic is insufficient for explaining contemporary tourist experiences. A review of the literature shows that authenticity is a dynamic process that is constantly reconstructed through tourists' individual experiences, perceptions, and meaning making. The findings indicate that authenticity should be approached in tourism literature not as a fixed and measurable quality, but as a contextual, relational, and experiential phenomenon. In this respect, the study highlights the distinctions between existing theoretical approaches to the concept of authenticity and provides a conceptual framework for developing more holistic and process-oriented analyses in tourism research.

Originality/value: This study contributes to the literature by focusing on the concept of authenticity in tourism research and examining the relationship between travel and authenticity in depth.

Keywords: Authenticity; Tourism; Tourist Experience; Authentic Experiences

AI-Driven Experiences in Cultural Tourism: A Conceptual Framework for Museums and Cultural Heritage Sites

Eda Gurel

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to develop a conceptual framework for designing AI-driven visitor experiences in cultural tourism, with a specific focus on museums and cultural heritage sites. It addresses the need to move beyond technology-focused approaches by foregrounding visitor experience, ethical considerations, and cultural values within the context of Industry 5.0.

Study design/methodology/approach: The study is based on a systematic literature review conducted in accordance with PRISMA guidelines. A mixed-method approach was adopted, combining bibliometric analysis with qualitative content analysis. The Web of Science database served as the primary data source. The final dataset consists of 66 peer-reviewed articles published between 1975 and September 2024, covering research on AI, experience, and cultural tourism.

Results: The review shows that existing research largely concentrates on technological capabilities and system performance, while visitor experience outcomes remain underexplored. In response, this study proposes a three-layer conceptual framework integrating ethics by design, visitor experiential needs, and experiential dimensions. The framework highlights how AI can support engagement, learning, immersion, and transformation without undermining ethics by design, cultural integrity, or social values.

Originality/value: The study contributes to cultural tourism and service research by offering a visitor-centred and ethically grounded framework for AI-driven experience design. It provides conceptual clarity and practical guidance for museums, heritage sites, and destination managers seeking to adopt AI responsibly.

Keywords: cultural tourism; visitor experience; Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Monitoring Tourist Satisfaction Across Accommodation Services: A Three-Year Comparative Study

Cihan Yilmaz and Yavuz Selim Balcioglu

Doğuş University

Abstract

Purpose: This study investigates the temporal dynamics of tourist satisfaction across multiple service domains within a single accommodation establishment. Specifically, it aims to identify how satisfaction levels evolve over time in core service categories accommodation services, food and beverage operations, entertainment facilities, and guest experience management and to determine which services exert the greatest influence on the overall satisfaction performance of the facility.

Study design/methodology/approach: The study employs a three-year longitudinal quantitative design based on 7,732 post-stay guest evaluations collected between 2023 and 2025 through a standardized feedback system implemented within the accommodation facility. Descriptive statistics and comparative trend analyses were used to examine year-to-year satisfaction changes across service categories. In addition, a Weighted Satisfaction Index (WSI) was constructed by integrating satisfaction scores with evaluation frequency in order to identify service categories that combine high perceived quality with high guest interaction intensity.

Results: The analysis reveals heterogeneous satisfaction trajectories across service domains. Satisfaction with standard rooms increased significantly from 62.70% in 2023 to 70.58% in 2024, indicating substantial improvement in core accommodation quality. Food and beverage services maintained consistently high performance, with satisfaction levels remaining above 78% throughout the observation period. The most notable improvement occurred in the Mini Club service, where satisfaction increased by 18.51 percentage points between 2024 and 2025, representing the strongest quality improvement among all categories. The weighted satisfaction analysis further indicates that high-volume services such as accommodation and food and beverage operations exert a disproportionately greater impact on overall satisfaction performance compared with lower-frequency niche services.

Originality/value: This research contributes to hospitality literature by providing a longitudinal, service-level analysis of guest satisfaction within a single accommodation context, an approach rarely adopted in existing studies that typically rely on cross-sectional datasets or aggregated satisfaction metrics.

Keywords: Tourist satisfaction; Accommodation services; Longitudinal analysis; Service quality management

Green Robotics: Examining the Role of Artificial Intelligence and Automation in Achieving Sustainability Goals in Holiday Villages

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Abstract

Purpose: The primary objective of this study is to thoroughly examine the role of artificial intelligence (AI) and automation technologies in achieving the environmental sustainability goals of resorts, in light of the disciplines of “Green Robotics” and Industry 6.0. The study positions technology not merely as a tool for operational efficiency but as the key to an “eco-centric” transformation in energy, water, and waste management.

Study design/methodology/approach: As a method, a qualitative “Systematic Literature Review” covering academic studies and industry reports (WTTC, etc.) published between 2015 and 2025 was adopted. Data were analysed using the SPAR-4-SLR protocol.

Results: The findings show that AI-supported energy management systems achieve 15-45% savings in HVAC energy consumption, autonomous cleaning robots reduce water use by up to 85%, and AI-based image processing reduces food waste by 40%. It has also been determined that the sector is evolving towards Industry 6.0 autonomous systems that perform restorative tasks.

Originality/value: The original value of the study lies in presenting the concepts of sustainability, robotics, and Industry 6.0, which are usually addressed separately in tourism literature, within an integrated framework and in treating robots not only as a service tool but also as an “environmental actor” within the scope of “Green Robotics.”

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI); Green Robotics; Environmental Sustainability

Layered Retail Architectures in Airline Distribution: Interface-Level Coordination in the Era of Modern Airline Retailing

Burcu Sakiz

Ozyegin University

Abstract

Purpose: This study conceptualizes how Modern Airline Retailing (MAR) may reshape coordination structures within tourism ecosystems. The paper aims to develop a methodological framework capable of mapping airline–hotel–technology integration patterns, distinguishing static holiday packaging from dynamic retail architectures, and examining governance implications of airline-centered retail infrastructures.

Methodology: The research adopts an exploratory framework-development design combining conceptual analysis with preliminary structural mapping. The proposed methodology integrates tourism ecosystem theory, platform governance, and social network analysis (SNA). The framework suggests constructing longitudinal network matrices (2018–2026) capturing integration ties between airlines, hotels, intermediaries, and technology providers, complemented by retail architecture mapping of airline platforms.

Results: Preliminary observations indicate that airline retail architectures are evolving from static packaging toward dynamic offer construction enabled by API-based systems. Industry sources suggest increasing integration of accommodation within airline retail environments and expanding dynamic bundling capabilities.

Originality/Value: The study reframes airline retail modernization as a governance-relevant structural transformation rather than solely a commercial innovation. It introduces a replicable SNA-based framework for examining retail-driven ecosystem restructuring and contributes to policy-oriented discussions on tourism governance in digitally mediated distribution systems.

Keywords: Modern Airline Retailing; Retail Architecture; Airline Distribution; Tourism Governance; Digital Bundling

Homecoming turned popular tourism phenomenon: Do residents and hospitality workers support ‘Detty December’?

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²University of Plymouth

³University of Wolverhampton

Abstract

Purpose: The study interrogates the extent by which positive and negative perceptions and the degree of community participation influence overall support for Detty December in Lagos recognising safety concerns in the country.

Study design/methodology/approach: The study was underpinned by combination of social exchange theory, risk perception, and ladder of participation. With a survey of 1,063 residents and hospitality workers using path analysis; partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was used to test eight hypotheses.

Results: The results reveal that positive perceptions enhance participation and support for ‘Detty December’, while negative perceptions hinder both outcomes.

Originality/value: The findings are explained through a fresh knitting of social exchange, risk perception and ladder of participation theories.

Keywords: Detty December; Positive/Negative Perceptions; Community Participation; Perceived Safety; Lagos

Examining the role of Instagram Reels in shaping Travel Desire

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines the impact of Instagram Reels content on tourists' travel-related behavioural outcomes. It explores how Reels content influences online engagement (likes, shares, comments), positive emotions, and travel desire. Furthermore, the research investigates the relationship between these digital interactions and the intention to visit metropolitan destinations. A key contribution of this study is investigating Social Network Fatigue and Generation as moderators, examining how platform exhaustion and demographic differences affect the effectiveness of short form travel videos.

Study design/Methodology/Approach: This research adopts a quantitative survey-based methodology conducted over a three-month period. Data will be collected from a target sample of 600 active Instagram users across four major Turkish metropolitan hubs: İstanbul, Ankara, Antalya, and İzmir. To test the proposed conceptual framework and hypotheses, the data will be analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM).

Result: work in progress

Originality/Value: This research advances tourism marketing literature by developing a comprehensive framework that links specific Reels attributes to visitation intentions. By integrating Social Network Fatigue as a boundary condition, the study provides a timely perspective on how "digital burnout" affects the efficacy of social media marketing.

Keywords: Instagram Reels; Travel Behaviour; Reels content; Online Engagement; Destination Emotions

Space Gastronomy in the Context of Space Tourism: A Literature Mapping

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to provide a holistic perspective to the literature by revealing the current state, development, and trends in the academic knowledge accumulation within the field of space gastronomy through bibliometric analysis.

Study design/Methodology/Approach: In this study, 254 English-language articles on space gastronomy published in the Web of Science (WoS) database up to 2026 were examined. The data were collected using the keywords "space gastronomy," "space food," "space cuisine," and related terms, and analysed with VOSviewer bibliometric mapping software.

Results: The analyses indicate that research on space gastronomy has increased in recent years, establishing an academically expanding field of influence with an average annual growth rate of 3.2% and a high level of citations. It was determined that China, the United States, and Australia occupy central positions in space gastronomy research, with China Agricultural University being identified as the most productive institution. The key concepts representing studies in the field were found to be "space food", "microgravity" and "food packaging".

Originality/value: This study demonstrates that the concept of space gastronomy is situated within a multidimensional, multidisciplinary research area and presents clear research trends for future studies.

Keywords: space gastronomy; space food; space tourism; bibliometric analysis

The Role of the Tourism Sector in Employment of the Mediterranean Region

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¹Hatay Mustafa Kemal Üniversitesi

²Akdeniz University

European University of Lefke

Abstract

Purpose: This study analyses the structural characteristics, employment capacity, wage dynamics, and regional distribution of Türkiye’s tourism sector using official data for 2020–2024. It evaluates the sector’s recovery after recent global and economic shocks, its role in employment generation, and the structural challenges influencing sustainable and inclusive development.

Study design/methodology/approach: A quantitative and descriptive research design based on secondary data analysis is adopted. Official statistics were examined to identify trends in tourism enterprises, insured employment, firm size distribution, sub-sectors (accommodation, food and beverage, air transport), wage structures, employment types, gender-based wage gaps, and regional concentration.

Results: The findings indicate a general growth trend with a strong recovery after 2022. The number of enterprises and employees increased, strengthening employment capacity. The sector is dominated by micro and small enterprises, with employment concentrated in accommodation and food services. Air transport stands out with higher wages despite fewer firms. Wage inequalities persist across sub-sectors, employment types, and genders. Regionally, tourism is concentrated in the Mediterranean Region, especially Antalya.

Originality/value: The study offers an up-to-date, comprehensive assessment employment, wage, and regional dimensions. It contributes to tourism economics and regional development literature while providing policy-relevant insights for sustainable, inclusive, and balanced sectoral growth.

Keywords: Tourism Employment; Tourism Businesses; Mediterranean Region; Labor Market

Generative AI and Robotics in the Hospitality Workforce: Mapping the Intellectual Structure and Developing a Policy-Oriented Research Agenda

Nurgül Boz

Alanya Alaaddin Keykubat University

Abstract

Purpose: This study maps the intellectual structure and thematic evolution of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) and robotics research in the hospitality workforce, addressing the growing fragmentation of the literature and advancing a policy-oriented research agenda for workforce transformation and human–technology interaction.

Study design/methodology/approach: A bibliometric analysis of 502 Scopus-indexed articles (1966–2026) was conducted using the Biblioshiny interface of the Bibliometrix R-package. Performance analysis, citation structures, keyword co-occurrence networks, and thematic mapping techniques were employed to identify dominant research streams and emerging trajectories.

Results: Research output has increased markedly since 2018, reflecting the rapid integration of AI-driven technologies in hospitality. Three dominant themes robotics, automation, and artificial intelligence structure the field. Co-occurrence networks reveal strong interconnections between service robots, technology adoption, employment dynamics, and human-centered service design. Thematic evolution indicates a clear shift toward workforce impacts, service innovation, and decision-support applications.

Originality/value: By consolidating a fragmented body of knowledge, this study provides a comprehensive mapping and introduces a forward-looking policy agenda emphasizing reskilling, ethical governance, and sustainable human–robot collaboration.

Keywords: Generative artificial intelligence; Robotics; Hospitality workforce; Service robots; Policy agenda

When Intangible Cultural Heritage Meets Festival: The Strategic Role and Analysis of Festival Management in Sustaining Destination Identity

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Abstract

Purpose: This study seeks to reveal the role of festival management in preserving traditional Çanakkale ceramics and maintaining the destination's identity, and to develop a strategic framework through stakeholder analysis.

Study design/methodology/approach: This mixed-methods study draws on stakeholder and network theories and administers a stakeholder analysis form to determine the qualities, classification, and key roles of stakeholders in effective festival management. It further applies purposeful snowball sampling-based interviews and surveys, and festival management processes, their expectations, and the festival atmosphere.

Results: This study reveals that festival management significantly contributes to the revival of urban memory and the strengthening of cultural heritage. Providing a new perspective on festival management, stakeholder analysis offered valuable insights into relationships, enabled the objective selection of stakeholders, and developed a measurable, coordinated collaboration model for sustainability.

Originality/Value: The original value of this study lies in its examination of all stages of a first-ever festival through an exploratory approach and its serving as a model for the study of festival organizations. This study critically evaluates the pre-festival, in-flight, and post-festival phases, and also highlights research challenges. The findings shed light on strategic developments in complex, collaborative festival structures and help scholars classify and understand stakeholder roles.

Keywords: Destination identity; Festival management; Cultural heritage; Traditional Çanakkale ceramics; Stakeholder analysis

Acknowledgements: Figen Sevinç Başol greatly acknowledges the funding from the TUBITAK (Turkish Scientific and Technical Research Council). This paper has been produced with the support of TUBITAK-2218 National Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Program (Project No: 124C338). However, all responsibility for the paper rests with its author. The financial support received from TUBITAK does not imply that the scientific content of the paper has been approved by TUBITAK

Formulating Development Strategies for Community-Based Agritourism in Pujon Kidul Village, Malang Regency Using an AHP–SWOT Framework

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to formulate and prioritize development strategies for community-based agritourism in Pujon Kidul Village, Malang Regency, using an integrated AHP–SWOT framework to ensure sustainable and participatory rural tourism growth.

Study design/methodology/approach: A mixed qualitative–quantitative approach was applied. SWOT factors were identified through field observations, in-depth interviews with 61 informants, and a Focus Group Discussion involving key stakeholders. The Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) was employed to conduct pairwise comparisons, calculate local and global weights, and test consistency ($CR < 0.1$). Twelve alternative strategies were evaluated and ranked.

Results: Strength (0.485) and opportunity (0.297) emerged as the most influential groups. Key global factors include proximity to Batu City (0.140), village popularity (0.137), and social media growth (0.085). The highest-priority strategies are intensifying human resource capacity building (0.220), digitalization training for tourism actors (0.175), and empowering village MSMEs (0.127). Findings highlight the critical role of community participation and institutional strengthening in sustaining agritourism competitiveness.

Originality/value: This study demonstrates the effectiveness of integrating AHP and SWOT to generate objective, contextual, and actionable strategy priorities, offering a replicable model for sustainable community-based agritourism development in rural Indonesia.

Keywords: Community-based tourism; Agritourism; SWOT-AHP Analysis; Development Strategies

Examining the Differences in Chatbot Usage Among Tourism Employees Based on Demographic Variables

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines whether tourism employees' perceptions of chatbot usage differ according to demographic variables. The study is limited to tourism employees in Türkiye and relies on self-reported data collected through a cross-sectional survey design.

Study design/methodology/approach: A quantitative research design was employed. Data were collected from 282 employees working in accommodation, travel, and airline enterprises in Türkiye using the Chatbot Usage (CB) Scale. The data were analysed through SPSS using descriptive statistics, independent samples t-tests, and one-way ANOVA.

Results: The results indicate that chatbot usage perceptions significantly differ by age, education level, income level, actual chatbot usage, and perceived need for chatbot usage. No significant differences were found in terms of gender, marital status and job title. The findings suggest that tourism enterprises should consider demographic characteristics when managing digital transformation and implementing chatbot technologies.

Originality/value: This study contributes to the limited empirical literature on chatbot adoption in tourism by focusing on the employee perspective.

Keywords: Chatbot; Demographic Variables; Tourism Employee

Strategic Human Resource Management and Innovation Performance: Evidence from Food Manufacturing Firms

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines the impact of Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) on innovation performance in food manufacturing firms. This study grounded in the Resource-Based View and Dynamic Capabilities Theory. The study proposes that strategically aligned HR systems enhance firms' innovation capabilities.

Study design/Methodology/Approach: A quantitative research design was employed. Data were collected through simple random sampling from employees working in 12 different large-scale food manufacturing firms. Following a pilot study and data cleaning procedures, 242 valid questionnaires were analysed. SHRM was measured using Yıldırım's (2017) scale, and innovation performance was measured based on Henard and Szymanski (2001). All items were assessed using a 5-point Likert scale. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) path analyses was conducted to test the measurement and structural models. Reliability and validity were confirmed through Cronbach's alpha, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted. Harman's single-factor test indicated no significant common method bias.

Results: The model demonstrated excellent fit ($\chi^2/df = 1.045$; GFI = 0.988; RMSEA = 0.014). SHRM has a positive and significant effect on innovation performance ($\beta = 0.69$, $p < .001$), explaining 47.6% of variance in innovation outcomes.

Originality/Value: The study extends SHRM–innovation research to the food manufacturing sector and empirically demonstrates that strategically integrated HR systems function as a key organizational capability driving innovation performance.

Keywords: Strategic Human Resource Management; Innovation Performance; Food Manufacturing; Hospitality Supply Chain

Understanding residents' perceptions of destination attractiveness for the longevity of local tourism sites

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this research is to analyse residents' perceptions of destination attractiveness related to a local tourism site. Domestic tourism should carry local tourism attractions to ensure their longevity.

Study design/methodology/approach: The research focused on the case of Naval Hill, an urban nature reserve situated in the city of Bloemfontein (South Africa), the major city of the Free State (A province in this country). Quantitative data were collected via a structured questionnaire administered to residents of Bloemfontein, focusing on destination-attractiveness factors. Data are analysed using descriptive statistics (mean values and standard deviations) as an exploratory approach to inform future research.

Results: The results emphasise the importance of facilities, accessibility, ambience, destination environment and pricing as important factors influencing destination attractiveness. It is critical to optimise all these elements to ensure success for destinations.

Originality/value: Understanding destination attractiveness from a resident perspective contributes to the destination's growth by increasing awareness among other visitors.

Keywords: Destination attractiveness; Destination appeal; Naval Hill; Residents

Digital Twin Technology in the Sustainability of Fragile Cultural Heritage: A Conceptual Model Proposal for the Cappadocia Region

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to propose a conceptual “Cappadocia Heritage Digital Twin (CHDT)” model, integrating Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI), and cloud computing technologies, to ensure the sustainability of Cappadocia’s fragile cultural and geological heritage against the threats of climate change and overtourism.

Study design/methodology/approach: The research follows a qualitative design based on a comprehensive literature review and benchmarking of global best practices, such as Notre-Dame and Runkles. Instead of quantitative data collection, the study constructs a multi-layered conceptual management framework.

Results: The proposed CHDT model consists of four hierarchical layers: (1) Physical Asset, (2) Sensing and Data Acquisition, (3) Digital Core and Processing, and (4) Application and Service. This framework enables real-time monitoring of structural deterioration via sensors, predictive maintenance through AI simulations, and alternative tourism experiences using Virtual Reality (VR).

Originality/value: Unlike traditional reactive conservation methods, this study introduces a proactive, data-driven decision-support mechanism tailored specifically for Cappadocia. It uniquely combines the technical preservation of fragile structures with the managerial perspective of smart tourism destinations.

Keywords: Digital Twin; Fragile Cultural Heritage; Cappadocia; Sustainable Tourism; Smart Destination

Swiftflation: The Impact of Taylor Swift's Eras Tour on London Hotel Prices

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to test whether the “Eras Tour” particularly in London/Wembley, correspond to statistically and economically significant increases in hotel prices during the relevant concert period. It will address the “Swiftflation” phenomenon by examining the economic impact of Taylor Swift-related travel using a dataset of hotel nightly prices.

Study Design/Methodology/Approach: The study employs a two-sample, same-period design to hold seasonal conditions constant. Sample A (the treatment group) includes prices directly affected by the tour (in London and Wembley), while Sample B (the control group) uses a comparator market that is less affected by demand. The analysis prioritizes robust statistics, means/medians and distributional comparisons to capture price dispersion. Preliminary descriptive analysis indicates substantial price variability during the four-concert period (21-22 June and 16-17 August 2024) in London, UK.

Results: Results indicate substantial price variability during the defined concert period. The analyses indicate that the concert series contributed to inflationary pressure in local pricing in London.

Originality/Value: Thus, study lies in its approach of converting “Swiftflation” into a structured, empirical question using a transparent, two sample, same period comparison. The study transforms a public narrative into a structured, empirical question based on event tourism theory. It offers destination managers valuable insights into capacity planning and enables policymakers to assess the impact of local, time-bound events on service inflation.

Keywords: Swiftflation Phenomenon; Swiftonomics; Inflation; Mega events; London.

Environmental Concern, Destination Sustainability Perception, Ecorecreational Attitude, and Destination Brand Equity as Predictors of Behavioural Intentions

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to examine the relationships among environmental concerns, visitors' destination sustainability perception, eco-creational attitude, and destination brand equity influencing visitors' behavioural intentions in outdoor recreation areas in Balıkesir, Türkiye. In addition, we questioned how individual-level environmental concerns translate into behavioural intentions through brand-related mechanisms.

Study Design/Methodology/Approach: Across five outdoor recreation areas in Balıkesir, Türkiye, 528 participants completed a structured questionnaire. To test our hypotheses, partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) is performed in SmartPLS software.

Results: Findings show that destination brand equity is the strongest predictor of tourists' behavioural intentions. In addition, all other factors have had a positive and significant direct effect on behavioural intentions. In the indirect effects section, destination sustainability perception and eco-creational attitude significantly mediated the relationship between environmental concern and behavioural intentions. Furthermore, destination brand equity significantly mediated the effect of destination sustainability perception and eco-creational attitude on behavioural intentions.

Originality/Value: The findings indicate that aligning destination sustainability performance with branding strategies can be an effective path to enhance visitors' intentions in outdoor (nature-based) destinations.

Keywords: Eco-recreational attitude; destination perceived sustainability; destination brand equity; Environmental Concern; visitors' behavioural intentions

Decoding Tourist Experience at Crowded Attractions, Using Large Language Models: Evaluating the Explanatory Power of Theories

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¹Radford University

²University of Massachusetts

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Abstract

Purpose: The study evaluates which theoretical frameworks best explain tourist experience evaluations at crowded attractions. It compares the explanatory power of Expectancy–Disconfirmation, Stimulus Overload, Flow, and Place Attachment theories to address the lack of an integrated framework for understanding overtourism’s experiential impacts.

Design/methodology/approach: Using Large Language Models (LLMs) as narrative detectors, the study converts qualitative insights from 10,000+ TripAdvisor reviews into quantitative measures. The sample includes highly visited U.S. attractions (urban landmarks and natural sites). A multi-phase workflow integrates expert coding, prompt engineering, LLM narrative detection, and statistical validation to ensure validity and reliability measures. The models detect theoretical constructs and analyze patterns while controlling for site type and ratings.

Results: The analysis reveal distinct patterns in how the theoretical constructs manifest in online reviews while evaluating the explanatory power of these theories. The relevance of the results lies in the study’s ability to identify the most influential theories underlying the narration and evaluation of the tourist experience. The findings support the construction of a data-driven theoretical framework.

Originality/value: The study advances tourism theory by empirically testing competing frameworks at scale and pioneering LLM-assisted narrative detection to build a data-driven, integrated model of crowded destination experiences.

Keywords: Large Language Models (LLM); Stimulus Overload Theory; Expectancy–Disconfirmation Theory; Place Attachment; Flow

How Airline Social Media Communications Shape Destination Perceptions: The Case of Turkish Airlines

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Abstract

Purpose: Using Turkish Airlines as a case study, this study attempts to investigate how airline social media messages affect travel intentions and destination views. More scholarly attention should be paid to airlines' involvement in influencing the perception of destinations through digital platforms as they increasingly serve as cultural storytellers and destination promoters.

Study Design/Methodology/Approach: International tourists who are following Turkish Airlines on social media platforms will be surveyed online as part of the study's quantitative research approach. To investigate the connections among airline social network content quality, emotional reactions, destination image, and readiness to visit, data will be gathered using approved assessment scales and analysed using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM).

Results: Since this is ongoing research, the empirical findings will be published later. The airline social media communications are expected to indirectly increase travel intentions through emotional engagement and have a favourable impact on the construction of destination images.

Originality/Value: By merging airline branding with destination marketing ideas in the context of social media communication and conceptualizing airlines as powerful destination image producers, this study adds to the literature on tourism and aviation.

Keywords: Airline social media; destination image; travel intention; aviation marketing; digital tourism

From Information Provider to Meaning Maker: The Role of Storytelling Expertise from the Perspective of Future Tourist Guides

Grant Taskin

Aksaray University

Abstract

Purpose: Tourist guiding as a profession has been standardized through various rules and regulations in many countries. However, an important question remains: should qualified guides further specialize in certain areas? This study aims to examine whether a "storytelling specialization program" is necessary for tourist guides when delivering information.

Study design/methodology/approach: To explore the need for a storytelling specialization program, semi-structured interviews were conducted with tourist guide candidates. This approach seeks to determine whether future guides feel the need for additional training beyond what they have already received.

Results: According to prospective tour guides, possessing knowledge is essential; however, the way this knowledge is communicated is even more important. It is particularly emphasized that while historians tend to present information in a more uniform manner, guides are expected to convey it through engaging stories that capture attention and prevent boredom.

Originality/value: This study contributes to the literature by highlighting the perceived importance of storytelling as a distinct competency in tourist guiding and evaluating the potential need for specialized training in this area.

Keywords: Tourist Guiding; Storytelling; Specialization; Future Tourist Guides; Tourism Education

Digital Energy Transparency in TRNC Tourism: Consumer Awareness and Green Choices

Elif Senyücel

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to examine the effects of digital energy transparency on consumer awareness and green choice behaviours in the tourism sector of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus from a cross-cultural perspective.

Study design/methodology/approach: Using a quantitative cross-sectional research design, data were collected through a survey from 171 participants (126 foreign tourists and 45 Turkish/TRNC tourists) across three destinations in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (Kyrenia, Famagusta, and Iskele). The research model, based on the integration of the Theory of Planned Behaviour and the Technology Acceptance Model, was analysed using SPSS 28.0

Results: Multiple regression analysis showed that the model explained 63.4% of the variance in green choice behaviours ($R^2=0.634$, $p<0.001$). Environmental awareness had the strongest effect ($\beta=0.523$), while digital energy transparency ($\beta=0.187$) and technology acceptance level ($\beta=0.198$) showed significant positive effects. Foreign tourists scored significantly higher than TRNC/Turkish tourists in perception of digital energy transparency ($p=0.003$) and green choice behaviours ($p=0.002$).

Originality/value: This study is the first to comprehensively address the concept of digital energy transparency in the context of tourism in the TRNC and offers unique strategic recommendations for sustainable tourism in island economies dependent on energy imports.

Keywords: Digital Energy Transparency; Sustainable Tourism; Green Voting Behaviours; Cross-Cultural Comparison; Tourism in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

Forecasting Tourism Demand in Türkiye

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¹İzmir Katip Çelebi Üniversitesi

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Abstract

Purpose: Tourism demand forecasts are crucial for tourism stakeholders, local community, and the policy makers in planning future tourism activities. This study aims to forecast tourism demand in Türkiye for the next 12 months to ensure realistic and reliable planning.

Study design/methodology/approach: This study adopts a quantitative approach by utilising monthly tourist arrivals to Türkiye as a proxy of tourism demand covering the period between 2012M1 to 2025M11. The secondary data of monthly Turkish tourist arrivals are analyzed by seasonal time series regression with Fourier terms. The regressions are tested with constant, additive trend with constant, and multiplicative trend with constant models. The models are computed by including at most $s/2$ harmonics into the equations until statistically insignificant trigonometric terms are obtained.

Results: The RMSE, MAE, MAPE, U1 and U2 values are compared for the appropriate models with constant, additive trend with constant, and multiplicative trend with constant. Therefore, the final best-fitting model for the observed time series are selected. The results indicate that the model estimated with the constant and trend additive method provides best-fitting for the monthly tourist arrival data. Accordingly, the forecasting is realized by implementing this model which is more appropriate. Thus, the forecasted values of the seasonal tourist arrivals series and the graph is provided.

Originality/value: The originality and value of this study is applying harmonic regression approach that captures seasonality by combining Fourier terms for forecasting the monthly tourist arrivals in Türkiye. Thus, the harmonic regression approach provides better forecasted values than traditional seasonal exponential smoothing approaches.

Keywords: Demand; demand modelling; outbound tourism demand; Türkiye

Cultural Festivals as Narrative Infrastructure: Invented Tradition, Place Branding and Identity-Building

Elaine Rust

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Abstract

Purpose: This paper examines how fabricated historical narratives that are embedded within cultural festivals contribute to place identity, brand legitimacy and socially sustainable tourism development. It addresses a gap in place branding and tourism scholarship by conceptualising invented tradition as a productive resource rather than an authenticity deficit.

Study design/methodology/approach: An interpretive single-case study is undertaken, focusing on the Beggars Fair in Romsey, Hampshire, UK. Data collection combines documentary analysis, participant observation, semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders and questionnaire surveys. Narrative and thematic analysis are used to examine how historical references are constructed, repeated and embedded within place identity.

Results: Preliminary results indicate that the festival's medieval origin narrative – while archivally unverified – functions as a place-branding anchor, generating symbolic continuity between past and present. Through repetition and stakeholder co-creation, the narrative becomes naturalised, reinforcing belonging, cohesion and place attachment. The festival operates as a form of governance infrastructure, aligning community identity with tourism strategy.

Originality/value: The study advances theory by positioning invented tradition as a strategic resource in relational place branding. It demonstrates how narrative practices contribute to governance, identity formation and social sustainability, offering policy-relevant insights for community-led tourism development.

Keywords: place branding; cultural festivals; invented tradition; place identity; social sustainability

From cultural assets to sustainable tourism: Using creative tourism as a development approach for rural tourism

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Abstract

Purpose: This study explores creative tourism as a sustainable development approach through the lens of Alternative Development Theory. Creative tourism is particularly relevant for rural villages and townships in the post-COVID-19 context, as it prioritises sustainability, community participation, capacity building, and the preservation of local culture and heritage while addressing social, economic, and environmental challenges.

Study design/methodology/approach: An exploratory quantitative research design was employed using a self-administered questionnaire to collect primary data. The study was conducted in the Capricorn District Municipality in Limpopo Province, South Africa, focusing on four local municipalities: Blouberg, Lepelle-Nkumpi, Molemole, and Polokwane. A stratified random sampling technique ensured representation across municipalities. A total of 386 respondents were included to enable generalisation of the findings.

Results: The findings indicate that local communities possess strong awareness of their cultural and heritage assets, alongside creative skills such as cooking, dancing, writing, and singing that are crucial for creative tourism development. High willingness to participate, particularly in sharing intangible cultural experiences, was evident. However, limited institutional support, socio-economic constraints, and infrastructure challenges may restrict full participation if left unaddressed.

Originality/value: This study contributes original empirical insights into the potential of creative tourism in Limpopo's villages and townships and offers practical guidance for policymakers and communities seeking sustainable, community-centred tourism strategies in the post-COVID era.

Keywords: Creative tourism; Alternative Development Theory; tourism development; culture and heritage; sustainable tourism.

The Effect of Food Neophobia and Food Involvement on Local Food Consumption Value: A Comparison of Domestic and Foreign Tourists

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to examine the effect of food-related personality traits on tourists' local food consumption value. The study also examines whether the food-related personality traits of domestic and foreign tourists differ in terms of their appreciation of local cuisine.

Study design/methodology/approach: Within a quantitative research design, data were collected through online and face-to-face surveys in field research conducted in Antalya with 606 domestic and foreign tourists.

Results: The findings indicate that food neophobia, one of the food-related personality traits, has a significant effect on tourists' local food consumption value. In contrast, no statistically significant effect of food involvement on local food consumption value was detected. Domestic tourists had significantly higher levels of food neophobia than foreign tourists, whereas foreign tourists had significantly higher levels of food involvement. Foreign tourists' perceptions of the value of local food consumption were also significantly higher than those of domestic tourists.

Originality/value: Revealing the negative effect of food neophobia on the value of local food consumption is noteworthy, showing that this personality trait is associated with lower perceived value in the tourist context.

Keywords: Food neophobia; Food involvement; Local food consumption value; Gastronomic tourism; Tourist behaviour.

Repeat or Not Repeat? Beyond the Algorithm: Decoding Guest Loyalty Signals with Explainable AI and Bayesian Networks

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to understand the behavioural loyalty of repeat hotel guests with the help of digital footprints. It proposes a new 4S-4SI (Social Noise, Pattern, Meaning, Decision) framework to address the “Black Box” problem of machine learning (ML) and structurally compares the loyalty mechanisms of city hotels and resort hotels.

Study design/methodology/approach: The study used a dataset of 75,166 Portuguese hotel reservations obtained from Kaggle. Using a methodological triangulation approach, the study employed XGBoost for effective pattern recognition, SHAP analysis to identify drivers based on signaling theory, and Bayesian networks to uncover probabilistic dependencies and formulate strategic "what if" scenarios.

Results: Findings revealed that “lead time” (booking window) was the primary determinant of loyalty in both segments. However, probabilistic dependencies differed significantly: In city hotels, loyalty was found to be more utilitarian, structurally linked to B2B corporate channels, single business trips, and non-refundable cancellation policies. In contrast, loyalty in resort hotels was understood to have a more hedonistic structure, related to family/couple stays, proximity to the local market, flexible policies, and special requests.

Originality/value: Our study plays a pioneering role in integrating the novel 4S-4SI framework into hospitality research, successfully transforming raw data into strategic wisdom.

Keywords: Guest Loyalty; Explainable AI (XAI); Bayesian Networks; Signalling Theory; Behavioural Loyalty

Electric Vehicle Travel as an Opportunity to Create New Forms of Tourism

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines electric vehicle (EV) travel as a process paving the way for the emergence of new forms of tourism and reveals how electric vehicles, beyond being a low-carbon transportation option, reshape tourism products, experiences, and the tourists' connection with place.

Study design/methodology/approach: The research is an integrative literature review based on conceptual framing and thematic synthesis (Snyder, 2019; Rocco & Plakhotnik, 2009). The existing literature on sustainable mobility, self-driving tourism, low-carbon tourism mobility, and emerging EV tourism practices has been thematically classified and synthesized along with country experiences, sectoral statistics, and policy documents.

Results: EV travel creates unique travel behaviours that are slow-paced, route-oriented, and centred around charging points. These behaviours are opening the door to new tourism opportunities through electric vehicle routes with natural beauty, charging-focused destination clusters, and slow mobility experiences that highlight local culture and nature (Ashkrof et al., 2020; Daze, 2024). Infrastructure deficiencies, range anxiety, and governance gaps stand out as structural barriers to this potential.

Originality/Value: This study conceptualizes electric vehicle travel not only as a technical component of decarbonization but also as a tangible opportunity structure for tourism innovation, offering an integrative conceptual framework for destination planning studies and future empirical research.

Keywords: Electric vehicle travel; self-drive tourism; sustainable mobility; tourism innovation; low-carbon tourism

Building Soft Power Through Taste: An Analysis of Türkiye's Gastronomy Cities in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network from a Gastrodiploamacy Perspective

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Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakıf University, Vocational School, Tourist Guiding Programme, Turkey

Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to explore Türkiye's soft power potential by analyzing the geographically indicated gastronomic products of Gaziantep, Hatay, and Afyonkarahisar-cities included in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in the field of gastronomy-from a gastrodiploamacy perspective.

Study design/methodology/approach: Using qualitative content analysis, 213 documents from official institutional websites were analysed, generating 2024 codes grouped under six themes: cultural heritage, stakeholders, place in events, economic development, global branding, and gastronomic diversity.

Results: Findings reveal that gastronomic products are closely associated with local identity, historical continuity, traditional production, and authenticity. Their active presence in social rituals such as weddings, festivals, and religious celebrations demonstrates gastronomy's role in strengthening cultural continuity and social cohesion. The involvement of municipalities, chambers of commerce, universities, and other public institutions in certification and monitoring processes indicates that gastronomic heritage is maintained through a multi-stakeholder governance structure. However, the limited visibility of economic development and global branding themes suggests that this cultural potential has not yet been fully transformed into strategic international value.

Originality/value: The study contributes to the literature by positioning geographically indicated gastronomic products as city-based soft power resources within the framework of gastrodiploamacy.

Keywords: UNESCO; Creative Cities; Network; Gastrodiploamacy; Soft Power

The Effect of Teamwork Practices on Workplace Relationships: Evidence from the Food Sector

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Abstract

Purpose: This study investigates how the frequency of distinct teamwork types influences interpersonal relationships among employees in the food sector. Grounded in Social Exchange Theory, the research explores whether seven teamwork types differentially predict two dimensions of workplace relationships: Positive Affective Experience and Perceived Relationship Quality.

Study design/methodology/approach: A quantitative cross-sectional survey was conducted with 237 employees from food production companies in Konya, Turkey, selected via simple random sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire comprising the Workplace Friendship Scale and Teamwork Practices Scale. Exploratory factor analysis with Oblimin rotation confirmed the relational dimensions, and multiple regression was used to test the effects of teamwork frequencies on interpersonal relationship outcomes.

Results: Both measurement scales exhibited good reliability. EFA indicated a two-factor structure explaining 59.98% of the variance. Regression results showed that the overall model for Positive Affective Experience was not statistically significant, although work teams had a positive effect. In contrast, the model for Perceived Relationship Quality was significant, with virtual teams contributing positively. Overall, the findings indicate partial support for the proposed hypothesis. Effect sizes were modest, suggesting teamwork is one of several influences on workplace relationships.

Originality/value: This study contributes by empirically differentiating how specific teamwork configurations relate to affective and cognitive aspects of workplace relationships, offering nuanced insights for organizational behaviour research and practical team design in industrial settings.

Keywords: Teamwork Types; Workplace Relationships; Workplace Friendship; Food Sector; Social Exchange Theory

Uncovering the Motivational Factor Structure of Recreational Fishing Tourism: A Case of Korean Tourism Market

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Abstract

Purpose: This study investigated the underlying motivational dimensions associated with participation in recreational fishing tourism in South Korea. Drawing on established motivation theories, the study sought to identify the multidimensional factor structure of fishing tourism motivation through a large-scale national survey.

Study design/methodology/approach: In 2024, an online survey was administered to 1,000 Korean adults. Twenty-one motivation items, rated on a seven-point Likert scale, were analysed using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with principal component analysis and Varimax rotation. One cross-loading item was excluded, resulting in 20 items for the final analysis

Results: The EFA identified three distinct motivation factors: Novel Experience (10 items, $\alpha = .920$), Relaxation (8 items, $\alpha = .908$), and Social Bonding (2 items, $\alpha = .801$). Collectively, these factors explained 64.89% of the total variance (KMO = .928; Bartlett's test, $p < .001$).

Originality/value: This study provides an empirical factor structure for recreational fishing tourism motivation within the Korean context. The identification of a large integrative factor (Novel Experience), which includes both hedonic and eudaimonic elements, indicates that traditional domain-level distinctions may not be entirely applicable to fishing tourism. These findings establish an exploratory basis for future confirmatory research and inform the development of fishing village tourism strategies.

Keywords: recreational fishing tourism; tourism motivation; exploratory factor analysis; push–pull theory; hedonic–eudaimonic motivation

Do Experience-Based Sustainability Practices Matter More? A Comparative Study of Green Airline Image and Sustainable In-Flight Catering Perception

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines whether passengers' perception of sustainable in-flight catering exerts a stronger influence on overall flight satisfaction and reflight intention than general green airline image.

Study design/methodology/approach: Grounded in the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework and Signaling Theory, the study proposes a comparative conceptual model in which green airline image and sustainable catering perception function as environmental stimuli influencing passenger satisfaction, which in turn predicts reflight intention. Data will be collected from international leisure passengers through a structured questionnaire. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) will be used to test the proposed relationships.

Results: It is anticipated that sustainable catering perception, as a tangible and directly experienced sustainability practice, will demonstrate a stronger effect on satisfaction and subsequent behavioural intention than general green airline image.

Originality/value: The study contributes to tourism and aviation literature by distinguishing between macro-level environmental positioning and micro-level service-based sustainability experience, offering practical insights for airline sustainability strategy.

Keywords: Sustainable Tourism; Airline Management; In-Flight Catering; Passenger Satisfaction; Signaling Theory

AI-Integrated Blockchain Traceability in Food Systems Derived from Smart Aquaculture: Applications in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry

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Abstract

Purpose: As big data (large-scale information analysis) and artificial intelligence (AI, computer systems simulating human learning and reasoning) drive smart aquaculture innovation, blockchain technology (BT, a digital system for securely recording transactions) has emerged as a prerequisite for delivering trustworthy production information to end consumers in the hospitality and tourism industry. This study estimates Korean consumers' willingness to pay (WTP) for a blockchain-based traceability system in sustainable aquaculture.

Study design/methodology/approach: A nationwide online survey of 1,000 Korean consumers (aged 20–69, seafood purchasers) was conducted. A double-bounded dichotomous choice contingent valuation method (CVM, a survey-based economic technique to determine consumer value) with eight bid levels (KRW 2,500–20,000) was employed, and WTP determinants were estimated using Stata 18's doubled command (a statistical tool for analysing such data).

Results: The mean WTP was estimated at KRW 7,719.59. Two behavioural variables were statistically significant: online shopping frequency and seafood consumption frequency. However, traditional socioeconomic variables — income, age, education, marital status, family size, and smartphone proficiency — were not statistically significant.

Originality/value: This study estimated consumer WTP for blockchain-based seafood certification using the CVM. By revealing that technology familiarity and product involvement, rather than socioeconomic status, determine WTP, the findings offer targeted policy guidance for integrating blockchain traceability into the smart aquaculture–hospitality value chain.

Keywords: blockchain; sustainable aquaculture; willingness to pay; contingent valuation method; seafood traceability

Surveying Recreational Fishing Catch from Charter Boats in South Korea: A Methodological Overview

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²Korea Fisheries Resources Agency, South Korea

Abstract

Purpose: This paper presents a methodological overview of South Korea's recreational fishing catch survey from charter boats, a government-administered system designed to provide scientific evidence for total allowable catch (TAC) management and sustainable fisheries governance.

Study design/methodology/approach: The survey, administered by the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries (MOF) as nationally approved statistics, targets 3,887 registered charter fishing vessels across 11 provinces. A sample of 1,000 vessels is selected through stratified size-proportional systematic probability sampling. Korea Fisheries Resources Agency (FIRA) field investigators conduct monthly face-to-face interviews with vessel operators, collecting catch data alongside biological microdata for key species. A three-stage weighting procedure produces province-level and species-level catch estimates.

Results: The survey framework demonstrates strengths in registry-based probability sampling, a high sampling rate (approximately 25.7%), and monthly temporal coverage. Recognized limitations include restriction to charter vessels, potential recall bias from operator self-reporting, and exclusion of freshwater fishing. Structural comparison with the United States Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) highlights the system's single-frame design characteristics.

Originality/value: This study provides the first English-language scholarly description of South Korea's charter vessel catch survey methodology, contributing an Asian case to the international comparative basis for recreational fishing monitoring and informing catch quota policy development.

Keywords: recreational fishing; catch survey; charter vessel; sustainable fisheries management

Designing a National Survey for Marine Recreational Fishing Efforts and Expenditures: A Methodological Framework from South Korea with Comparisons to the U.S. NOAA Approach

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Abstract

Purpose: This paper presents the survey design and methodology of South Korea's first national-level survey on marine recreational fishing (MRF) efforts and expenditures, conducted annually since 2022 as a subsidiary component of the national fishing catch survey, and discusses its distinctive features through comparisons with the U.S. NOAA Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP).

Study design/methodology/approach: The survey employs a structured questionnaire targeting adults who used commercial fishing boats for MRF. The instrument comprises three parts covering fishing experiences, activities, and expenditures across seven core questions. A comparative analysis is conducted with the NOAA expenditure survey structure.

Results: The Korean survey incorporates three design features absent in Western counterparts: a Korea-specific definition of fishing boats, a dual classification of direct on-board fishing and offshore rock fishing, and an explicit separation of per-trip variable costs and annual fixed costs.

Originality/value: This study provides the first systematic academic report on a national MRF survey methodology from a non-Western country, offering a reference model for countries seeking to establish similar survey systems in the future.

Keywords: marine recreational fishing; survey methodology; fishing effort; fishing expenditure; NOAA MRIP

A Study on Iranian Consumers' Purchase Intention Toward Medical Tourism Services in Türkiye

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to examine the determinants influencing international consumers' purchase intention toward medical tourism services in Türkiye. Specifically, it investigates the effects of country awareness, country image, and price perception on purchase intention. In addition, the moderating roles of digital literacy and consumer ethnocentrism are evaluated to understand how individual characteristics shape decision-making in the context of international healthcare services.

Study Design/Methodology/Approach: The research adopts a quantitative explanatory design. Data were collected through a structured online questionnaire distributed to Iranian adults who reside outside Türkiye and have the intention or opportunity to travel abroad for medical services. A total of 254 valid responses were obtained using convenience sampling. The measurement scales were adapted from established instruments and analysed using SPSS and SmartPLS. Reliability and validity were assessed through measurement model evaluation, and the hypotheses were tested using regression and structural modeling techniques.

Results: The findings indicate that country awareness, country image and price perception all have significant positive effects on purchase intention of Iranian citizens toward medical tourism services in Türkiye. Among these predictors, price perception demonstrates particularly strong influence, highlighting the importance of affordability in shaping international patients' decisions. The moderating analysis reveals limited effects of digital literacy and consumer ethnocentrism, suggesting that pragmatic healthcare needs and economic considerations may outweigh cultural biases and digital competencies when evaluating medical tourism destinations.

Originality/Value: This study develops and empirically validates an integrated model explaining international patients' purchase intentions in medical tourism by combining branding, service evaluation, and socio-cultural factors. By focusing on foreign consumers' perceptions of Türkiye as a medical tourism destination, the research contributes to the literature on medical tourism marketing and provides practical insights for policymakers and healthcare providers seeking to strengthen Türkiye's global competitiveness in the health tourism sector.

Keywords: Medical tourism; purchase intention; country awareness; price perception

Examining the Relationship Between Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry Through Meta-Analysis

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to determine the average effect size of the relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction, as well as between affective commitment and job satisfaction, within the hospitality and tourism industry. Given the labour-intensive nature of the industry, understanding the relationship between commitment and satisfaction is critical for improving employee attitudes and organizational performance.

Study design/methodology/approach: A meta-analysis was conducted according to PRISMA guidelines to synthesize findings from independent and individual empirical studies. A systematic search was conducted across the Scopus and Web of Science databases for relevant research published through December 2025, yielding an initial pool of 381 studies. After applying inclusion and exclusion criteria, the final analysis included 43 studies with a total sample size of $N=16.649$. Effect sizes were calculated using a random-effects model and Fisher's model. To facilitate statistical synthesis, Comprehensive Meta-Analysis (CMA) software was utilized.

Results: The meta-analysis yielded an overall mean effect size of 0.789 for the relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction. The study highlights that content overlaps in global measurement scales often artificially inflate the correlation between job satisfaction and organizational commitment, leading to a potential statistical illusion at the general level. In contrast, the analysis identified a robust effect size of 0.624 for the relationship involving affective commitment, which is considered a more reliable and theoretically precise measure due to its lack of conceptual redundancy.

Originality/value: This research addresses a significant gap in the literature by focusing solely on the hospitality and tourism industry through a sector-specific meta-analysis. Unravelling the relationship between job satisfaction and different dimensions of commitment, it provides managers with a timely insight into predicting employee behaviour and achieving goals in service environments where satisfaction is subject to immediate feedback.

Keywords: Organizational commitment; affective commitment; job satisfaction; hospitality and tourism; meta-analysis.

Dark Gastronomy: Food in Times of Sadness and Famine

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² Anadolu University

³ Sakarya Uygulamalı Bilimler University

Abstract

Purpose: The aim of this study is to examine how people nourished themselves and what foods they consumed in order to survive during periods of famine that arose throughout history due to wars, migrations, epidemics, and scarcity.

Study design/methodology/approach: This study examines the recording of events during challenging times, such as war, migration and comprehensive records, using qualitative measurements and document analysis.

Results: With this study, it has been found that during extraordinary periods such as war, migration, famine, poverty, and epidemics, food transforms into a purely survival-oriented practice, and the types of food people consume to survive during these difficult times are highlighted.

Originality/value: This study is significant because it offers an alternative perspective to the dominant literature that addresses food solely through the lens of pleasure, aesthetics, and experience. While much of the existing research evaluates food within the framework of consumer culture and gastronomic appeal, negative contexts such as famine, war, forced migration, and poverty are often neglected. The unique value of this research lies in its exploration of the dark or melancholic aspect of food and in bringing a two-dimensional perspective to the one-dimensional approach in literature that focuses solely on the aesthetic dimension of food.

Keywords: Dark gastronomy; Scarcity meals; Sad meals

Impact of AI-Driven Marketing Tools on SME Growth and Competitive Advantage in Germany

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Abstract

Purpose: Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are considered a vital component in the German economy. Despite this, they are often faced with challenges in terms of resources and competition. This study aims to examine the influence of digital marketing through artificial intelligence (AI) adoption on the growth and competitive advantage of small and medium-sized enterprises. In particular, the study aims to examine personalization, automation, predictive analytics, and AI-driven customer engagement in terms of influence on the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises.

Study design/Methodology/Approach: A structured questionnaire was used to obtain data from 300 small and medium-sized enterprises in the manufacturing sector, services sector, retail sector, and technology sector. To analyze the data, descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis were conducted.

Results: The findings revealed that all dimensions of AI adoption influence the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises. In particular, personalization and predictive analytics are considered strong influences. SME growth, in turn, mediates the association between AI adoption and competitive advantage in terms of differentiation, customer retention, and positioning. The research also found that firm size, industry sector, and digital maturity are crucial moderating factors in AI adoption in SMEs. The research results emphasize the importance of AI marketing in helping SMEs overcome resource limitations while increasing competitiveness.

Originality/value: The research also contributes to the practical implications of AI adoption in promoting sustainable growth in Germany's digital economy.

Keywords: AI-driven marketing; SMEs; Germany; personalization; predictive analytics; competitive advantage

Neuroethics in Digital Tourism: A Conceptual Roadmap for Responsible Innovation in Experience Design

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¹Kapadokya University

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to develop a conceptual roadmap for the ethical integration of neuro-based technologies within digital tourism environments. As immersive technologies and neuroscientific tools increasingly enable the measurement of tourists' cognitive and emotional responses, important ethical questions emerge regarding cognitive privacy, autonomy, and the responsible use of neuro-data. The study therefore seeks to provide a structured framework that addresses these ethical concerns while supporting the responsible development of neurotourism practices.

Study design/methodology/approach: The study adopts a conceptual research design grounded in interdisciplinary literature from neuroethics, tourism experience design, and responsible research and innovation (RRI). Through a systematic synthesis of these theoretical perspectives, the study develops a conceptual framework that maps the ethical governance of neuro-based technologies across different stages of digital tourism experience development.

Results: The study proposes a four-stage conceptual roadmap consisting of neuro-data ethics, neuro-design ethics, responsible innovation, and policy and governance. The framework illustrates how ethical considerations should be embedded throughout the lifecycle of neuro-data use in tourism, from data collection and experience design to technological implementation and regulatory oversight. The model further emphasizes the importance of feedback mechanisms that support adaptive and responsible governance.

Originality/value: This study contributes to the emerging neurotourism literature by introducing an integrated ethical framework that connects neuroscience, experience design, and innovation governance in tourism. By offering a structured roadmap for the responsible use of neuro-data, the study provides guidance for researchers, technology developers, and policymakers seeking to balance technological innovation with the protection of tourists' cognitive rights and experiential well-being.

Keywords: Neurotourism; Neuroethics; Digital Tourism; Experience Design; Responsible Innovation

The nexus between advertising and financial performance: The role of ESG performance

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Boğaziçi University

Abstract

Purpose: This study investigates the impact of advertising on both short term and long-term financial performance of hotel firms along with the moderating effect of ESG performance.

Study design/methodology/approach: A panel data set of publicly listed US hotel firms was analysed by fixed-effects regression estimations.

Results: The findings reveal that the level of advertising expenditure enhances both return on equity and market value measures of hotel firms. The results further show that firms with higher ESG performance benefit more from the positive effect of advertising on long-term financial performance.

Originality/value: The results contribute to existing literature by proving evidence for both short term and long-term effects of advertising on firm financial performance. Hence, the findings go beyond accounting measures that are extensively analysed by prior research. Moreover, this study extends the limited literature on potential moderators and introduces ESG performance as a contingency factor on the nexus between advertising and financial performance.

Keywords: Financial performance; Advertising; ESG performance

An Investigation of the Digital Activities of Health Tourism Intermediary Organizations in Turkey

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Abstract

Purpose: The internet presence of intermediary health tourism organizations in Turkey is examined in multiple dimensions in this study. It seeks to compare the online experiences of foreign patients with company marketing promises.

Study design/methodology/approach: A multi-stage design that combines quantitative and qualitative methodologies is used in the study. 936 active agencies were first digitally mapped in a descriptive manner. The websites of 31 chosen organizations and 342 patient reviews were then subjected to a qualitative content analysis using MAXQDA.

Results: The two most popular social networking sites are Facebook and Instagram. Hair transplants, dental procedures, and aesthetics are the main areas of interest for organizations. There is a large gap between expectations and results; although agencies promote a smooth, opulent experience, surpassing operational capacity results in severe reputational problems.

Originality/Value: The study shows that transforming quality perception, rather than only cost advantage, is the foundation of contemporary medical tourism. It emphasizes the need for capacity-compatible marketing in the digital environment and shows that employees' emotional labour is just as important as medical intervention.

Keywords: Health tourism; intermediary organizations; digital accessibility; social media usage; Turkey

Tourism Diplomacy as Discursive Power: A Multi-layered Hegemonic Nation Branding Model for Turkey

Çağlar Selçuk

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Abstract

Purpose: This study reconceptualizes tourism diplomacy beyond its conventional framing as a soft power instrument by positioning it as a mechanism of discursive power that produces and stabilizes hegemonic representations of national identity. Focusing on Turkey, the study examines how institutional narratives construct and normalize meanings within global tourism discourse.

Study design/methodology/approach: The research adopts a qualitative document analysis of institutional materials produced by the Tourism Promotion and Development Agency (TGA) and disseminated via the GoTürkiye platform between 2019 and 2025. The analysis combines thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) with critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995; Wodak & Meyer, 2016), grounded in discourse theory, hegemonic theory, and nation branding literature.

Results: The findings reveal a coherent discursive architecture structured around three dominant narrative nodes—cultural heritage, hospitality, and geopolitical centrality. These narratives function as stabilizing anchors and are continuously reproduced across institutional and digital layers, generating discursive saturation that limits alternative representations.

Originality/Value: The study contributes to the literature by conceptualizing tourism diplomacy as a system of discursive governance rather than a promotional tool and proposes a multi-layered analytical model for examining hegemonic nation branding in the digital age.

Keywords: Cultural Diplomacy; Discursive Power; Hegemonic Discourse; Nation Branding, Tourism Diplomacy; Turkey

Designing Effective Gamified Onboarding: Why Trainer Involvement Matters More Than Game Type

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²University of South Carolina

Abstract

Purpose: This study examines how game type (individual vs. team-based) and trainer involvement (active vs. passive) jointly influence employees' emotional commitment and willingness to participate in future training within gamified orientation programs.

Study design/methodology/approach: Using a 2×2 between-subjects experimental design, data were collected from 633 participants through vignette-based scenarios simulating organizational onboarding experiences. The data were analysed using multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to assess both main and interaction effects.

Results: The results indicate that trainer involvement has a significant and consistent effect on both emotional commitment and willingness to participate, while game type shows a more limited and outcome-specific impact. Additionally, significant interaction effects suggest that the effectiveness of game type depends on the level of trainer involvement.

Originality/value: This study contributes to the literature by demonstrating that gamified training effectiveness is shaped not only by game design but also by trainer facilitation, highlighting the importance of integrating structural and social elements in onboarding experiences.

Keywords: gamification; training; orientation; experimental design; trainer involvement

Ecotourism Awareness of Tourists Visiting Manavgat (Antalya, Türkiye)

Zeynep Dilber-Özer, Arya Kutbay, Güney Deniz Gök and Pınar Kaya Dinçtürk

Manavgat Bilim ve Sanat Merkezi

Abstract

Purpose: The aim of this study is to determine the ecotourism awareness levels of domestic and international tourists visiting Manavgat (Antalya, Türkiye) and to examine the demographic and behavioral factors influencing this awareness.

Study design/methodology/approach: The study was conducted using a quantitative research approach and a descriptive survey model. Data were collected from 134 tourists staying in five-star hotels through a questionnaire adapted from Chandran and Bhattacharya (2024). The questionnaire was translated into four languages and validated through expert review. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent samples t-test, and ANOVA.

Results: The findings revealed that 53.7% of the tourists have a high level of ecotourism awareness. Female tourists, those who visit natural areas more frequently, and those who read environment-related magazines more often have significantly higher awareness levels ($p < 0.05$). The most disturbing issues reported by tourists were noise (30.6%) and environmental pollution (29.1%).

Originality/value: This study provides one of the first empirical findings on tourists' ecotourism awareness in Manavgat and contributes to the literature by linking awareness with behavioural factors. The findings offer practical implications for sustainable tourism planning in the region.

Keywords: Ecotourism; Ecotourism Awareness; Tourists; Manavgat; Sustainable Tourism

From Service Robot Interaction Experience (HGRIE) to Behavioural Intention: The Mediating Role of the Technology Acceptance Model

Necibe Şen

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Abstract

Purpose: In the tourism and hospitality sector, the use of service robots is increasing day by day in parallel with technological developments. In developing cities, customer reaction and experience with service robots, a technological product, is a subject of interest. The aim of this study is to examine the direct and mediating effect of the Technology Acceptance Model on the relationship between HGRIE (Hotel–Restaurant/Guest–Robot Interaction Experience) and behavioural intention in restaurant.

Study design/methodology/approach: The research was conducted with customers who received service robot service at a restaurant in Erzincan, Turkey. This study is important in terms of revealing findings regarding technology acceptance and service robot experience in developing cities. The research sample consists of customers who visit the only restaurant in the city that uses a delivery robot. A quantitative method was adopted in the research. Convenience sampling was preferred in sample selection. The dataset was created from 391 people who agreed to complete the survey form.

Results: The research results show that the hotel-restaurant/guest-robot interaction experience (HGRIE) variable produces significant and strong effects on both technology acceptance (TAM) and behavioural intention (BI). HGRIE has a direct and significant effect on BI. Furthermore, Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) functions as a mediating variable in the relationship between HGRIE and Behavioural Intention (BI).

Originality/value: TAM is a model that has yielded very strong results regarding how technological developments are accepted by people, examined from many angles. In this study, the relatively new HGRIE (Hotel-Restaurant/Guest-Robot Interaction Experience) model has added innovation to the literature by presenting the perspective of restaurant customers, alongside hotel-focused studies. Furthermore, it was concluded that the service robot's role in customer interaction experience directly and indirectly influences behavioural intention along with technology acceptance. This finding, supported by the Theory of Reasoned Action and the Theory of Planned Behaviour, contributed to positive behavioural outcomes.

Keywords: Technology Acceptance Model (TAM); HGRIE, Behavioural intention; the Theory of Reasoned Action; the Theory of Planned Behaviour

From Message Framing to Communication Strategy: A Conceptual Framework Based on Communication Model for Effective Sustainability Communication in Tourism

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Abstract

Purpose: This study conducts an integrative systematic review of how message framing has been applied in tourism sustainability communication and develops an integrative, theory-driven conceptual framework that uses McGuire's communication model, integrated with marketing communications, as an organizing template for message framing in tourism.

Study design/methodology/approach: This systematic literature review synthesizes empirical studies that use message-framing interventions as promotional tools for sustainability in tourism and related domains, following the PRISMA guidelines. Studies are organized using McGuire's communication model as a conceptual framework, focusing on the source, message, channel, receiver, and effects.

Results: The review identifies profound theoretical fragmentation, a limited behavioural focus (e.g., towel reuse), and a predominant emphasis on isolated message elements (e.g., gain/loss frames), while neglecting the integration of source, structure, format, and channel characteristics. Single frames show inconsistent effects, whereas combinations with other variables (e.g., source credibility) are more reliable. The proposed framework maps message-framing strategies across McGuire's communication model to specify where existing studies cluster and where critical gaps remain in the literature.

Originality/value: This study moves beyond a theoretical, message-level diagnostic approaches by offering a process-oriented, multi-theoretical framework that explains how and why message framing can more effectively influence sustainable decision-making in tourism and provides actionable guidance for campaign design and evaluation.

Keywords: Message framing; Tourism sustainability communication; Marketing communications; McGuire's communication model; Systematic literature review

A Bibliometric Study on the Role of Sustainability in Destination Management Literature

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to examine the current state of sustainability in the literature, along with its environmental, socio-cultural, and economic dimensions, as it is an important concept in terms of destination development and management.

Study design/methodology/approach: Within the scope of this study, bibliometric analysis was used to identify key trends, knowledge gaps, and research deficiencies. During the analysis process, a total of 786 research articles published in the Web of Science database between 1999 and 2025 were examined. Data analysis was performed using VOSviewer and the Biblioshiny extension of R Studio, with the evaluations conducted under eight headings.

Results: The findings reveal that the concept of “sustainability” has been addressed only at the title level in many studies. It has been determined that the topics of “destination management” and “sustainability” have become crucial since 2021. The fact that the number of studies addressing destination management and sustainability sub-dimensions together is limited to only 108 indicates that there is a significant research gap in the field.

Originality/value: The fact that the number of studies examining the environmental dimensions of destination management and sustainability is higher than that of other dimensions reveals a need for research on other dimensions of sustainability and destination management.

Keywords: Destination Management; Sustainability; Environmental Sustainability; Social Sustainability; Economic Sustainability

Designing Culinary Experiences in Tourism: Creating Unforgettable Gastronomic Experiences

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Abstract

Purpose: Gastronomic experiences are among the key factors determining destination preferences and visitor satisfaction in the tourism sector. The aim of this study is to examine, using quantitative data, the effects of dining experience design in tourism on visitor satisfaction, intention to revisit and destination loyalty. The study examines the following elements of experience design: sensory stimuli (taste, smell, visual appeal), service quality, perceived authenticity, venue atmosphere and storytelling.

Study design/methodology/approach: As part of the research, data was collected via a questionnaire from 412 domestic and international tourists visiting various tourist destinations. The data obtained was analysed using structural equation modelling (SEM) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The findings indicate that all dimensions of the dining experience design have a positive and significant effect on visitor satisfaction. In particular, it was found that the dimensions of perceived authenticity and sensory experience have the strongest influence on satisfaction.

Results: it is recommended that tourism businesses and destination managers adopt a holistic design approach to dining experiences, focusing particularly on authenticity and sensory elements. This study empirically supports the importance of experience design by presenting quantitative findings in the field of gastronomic tourism and contributes to the international literature.

Originality/value: This study offers an original contribution by taking the concept of the ‘dining experience’—frequently addressed in the literature on gastronomic tourism—beyond a purely consumption-focused approach and examining it as a holistic model from the perspective of experience design. Whilst gastronomic experiences are predominantly examined in the context of products, destinations or satisfaction in the existing literature, this study positions culinary experiences as a designable, measurable and reproducible experience system.

Keywords: Gastronomy tourism; experience design; culinary experience; sustainable gastronomy; tourist experience

Do our ratings and feelings echo the same? Unmasking the Rating-Sentiment Gap in Robot-Staffed Service Counters

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Abstract

Purpose: As humanoid robots enter service counters, understanding the nuances of guest feedback is essential for service excellence. Yet a significant research gap remains regarding whether traditional performance metrics, such as numerical star ratings, truly capture consumers' complex affective reactions.

Study design/methodology/approach: Drawing on expectation-confirmation theory, the research treats online reviews as external signals that convey a guest's internal process of expectation confirmation or disconfirmation. The study employs a multi-stage computational methodology spanning a longitudinal period (2015–2026), utilising natural language processing (NLP) and latent Dirichlet allocation (LDA) to identify dominant topics. Subsequently, fine-grained emotion analysis using the NRC Lexicon and VADER sentiment analysis traces evolutionary trajectories, identifying shifts from early novelty to contemporary functional utility.

Results: The study identified five distinct themes using LDA topic modelling and showed how these topics evolved, along with their relationships with ratings and emotions. The research findings also indicated that the confirmation (the rating) is consistent with the responsive signal (the review text), which helps determine whether consumers truly rely on their instant emotional reactions when assigning numerical ratings.

Originality/value: The study provides a dynamic perspective on consumer identity at robotic service points, offering actionable insights and a strategic roadmap to prioritise emotional drivers over mere technological presence for sustained service excellence.

Keywords: Humanoid Robots; Consumer Perception; Topic Modelling (LDA); Sentiment Analysis; Expectation-Confirmation Theory; Ratings-Emotion Gap

Green Leadership and Green Employee Behaviour: The Roles of Green Organizational Support and Environmental Consciousness

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Abstract

Purpose: This study proposes a conceptual research framework to examine the effect of perceived green leadership (PGL) on green employee behavior (GEB) in hotel enterprises, focusing on the sequential mediating roles of perceived green organizational support (PGOS) and environmental consciousness (EC).

Design/Methodology/Approach: A conceptual research proposal design is adopted. Theoretical links among the variables are synthesized from the literature to formulate hypotheses. The proposed model is planned to be empirically tested through structural equation modeling (SEM) using quantitative survey data collected from hotel employees.

Expected Findings: It is hypothesized that PGOS and EC will sequentially mediate the relationship between PGL and GEB among hotel staff. Specifically, perceived green leadership is expected to enhance organizational support, which in turn fosters individual environmental consciousness and ultimately drives proactive green employee behavior in the workplace.

Originality/Value: By simultaneously addressing organizational support and individual environmental consciousness within a sequential mediation model tailored to the hospitality context, this study offers a robust theoretical framework and actionable hypotheses for both green organizational behavior literature and hotel management practices.

Keywords: Green Leadership, Environmental Consciousness, Perceived Green Organizational Support, Green Employee Behavior, Hotels, Research Proposal

From Event to Ecosystem: Leveraging Birmingham Tech Week as a Catalyst for Knowledge Exchange and Business Tourism

Katharine Fuller

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Abstract

Purpose: This paper examines how business tourism events can act as intentional infrastructure for knowledge exchange, international collaboration, and regional economic development. Birmingham Tech Week (BTW) and its Global Growth Agenda (GGA) are used as a case study to explore how curated event design supports knowledge flows and longer-term relational value, while highlighting limitations in impact measurement, inclusion, and sustainability practices.

Study design/methodology/approach: A qualitative case study approach was used. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with organisers, policymakers, and delegates; informal participant conversations; document analysis; participant observation; and attendee data. Thematic analysis focused on knowledge exchange, network formation, international engagement, and evidence of longer-term impact.

Results: BTW's Global Growth Day operated as a structured platform for knowledge exchange and international network-building. Outcomes included memoranda of understanding with Ulsan and Beijing, two trade missions, and the planned Beijing–Birmingham Tech Week. International attendees comprised 26% of participants. However, evidence of long-term impact remains limited due to short follow-up periods and reliance on self-reported outcomes. These constraints are recognised by organisers, who aim to strengthen longitudinal tracking and develop more robust evaluation approaches, including improved data on sustainability, accessibility, and inclusion.

Originality/value: The paper reframes business events as ecosystem infrastructure rather than isolated visitor activity, arguing that their relational and policy value requires stronger, more inclusive evaluation frameworks addressing sustainability and equity.

Keywords: Business tourism; knowledge exchange; innovation ecosystems; business events; regional development; inclusion; sustainability

Polymaking As Part of Place Identity Dialogue: The Case of Mazandaran Province in Iran

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Abstract

Purpose: Current study theorizes how place identity formation interactions proposed by Kavaratzis and Hatch alter the meaning of the place, transform the policy-making process, and consequently shape the place. The current study takes up a social constructivist perspective and relies on Prerace et al eight premises on social construction and policy design to explain the consequences of the place identity formation dialogue for the socially constructed tourism policymaking.

Study design/methodology/approach: A historical case study design is used for the study, with Mazandaran Province in Iran as the case. Historical documents and observational data were used for the purpose of the study. Given its distinct tourism regulations that showcase the shifting nature of policy structures and subsystems during the ongoing creation of regional identity, the Mazandaran example is well-suited for investigating the research problem.

Results: The study shows that, first, individual patterns of decision-making suggested by Pierce et al. (2014) have changed in the province. Second, the change in the belief system and the interpretation of policymakers and subsequently the policies changed the power constellation. Third, alterations also limited the expression of urban identity among citizens, which subsequently not only reduced the opportunities for urban tourism development but also acted as constraints on the multifaceted development of the community as an urban society.

Originality/value: By integrating identity-centred place branding into the analysis of how tourism policies are socially constructed, this paper offers a new perspective to the field.

Keywords: Identity-based place brand; social construction of tourism policy; Mazandaran Province

Blockchain Technology as a Catalyst for Tourism Investment in Africa: A Machine Learning Simulation Using Monte Carlo Methods and Reinforcement Learning

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Abstract

Purpose: This paper examines blockchain technology's potential to overcome structural barriers to tourism investment in Africa including investor opacity, intermediary inefficiencies, and systemic trust deficits and its capacity to catalyse sustainable foreign and domestic investment.

Study design/Methodology/Approach: A computational simulation framework integrating Monte Carlo stochastic simulation and Deep Q-Network Reinforcement Learning was employed. The Monte Carlo engine modelled up to 2,000 investment trajectories over a twenty-year horizon using geometric Brownian motion, with blockchain adoption as a structural variable.

Results: Higher blockchain adoption reduces portfolio volatility while amplifying returns, consistent with distributed ledger transparency and disintermediation. The RL agent showed accelerated reward convergence under blockchain-enabled regimes. Blockchain delivers an average revenue uplift of 3–12 percentage points depending on market maturity.

Originality/Value: This study makes an original contribution at the intersection of financial technology, tourism economics, and computational social science by applying Monte Carlo simulation and DQN Reinforcement Learning to model blockchain's investment impact across African.

Keywords: blockchain technology; tourism investment; Africa; Monte Carlo simulation; reinforcement learning; smart contracts; financial technology; sustainable tourism; emerging markets.

Tourism: The Underrated Giant – Why Is It Still Undervalued?

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²Arkin University of Creative Arts and Design

³ Near East University Northern Cyprus

Abstract

Purpose: The paper explores contradiction between tourism’s significant global economic and social contributions and its persistent undervaluation in policymaking, public perception, and academic discourse.

Study design/Methodology/Approach: The study adopts a qualitative, conceptual approach, drawing on global economic data and a critical review of existing scholarly literature to analyse the historical, structural, and perceptual factors shaping tourism’s positioning.

Results: The analysis reveals that despite contributing around 10% to global GDP and employment, tourism is frequently marginalized due to its characterization as a “soft” industry. This perception, reinforced by fragmented industry structures and limited theoretical consolidation, undermines its legitimacy in both policy and academia.

Originality/Value: The paper adds on to the body of knowledge by critically cross-examining the systemic biases that devalue tourism and by proposing pathways to reposition it as a strategic economic sector and a credible, knowledge-producing academic discipline.

Keywords: Tourism Studies; Tourism Policy; Economic Legitimacy

**From Culinary Heritage to a Technology-Enabled Living Gastronomy Laboratory:
Experimental Food Practices, Community Co-Creation, and Regenerative Gastronomic
Tourism Systems in the Troy Region**

Mehmet Çekirge
Özyeğin University

Abstract

Purpose: This paper presents a research project that conceptualizes a living gastronomy laboratory, as a regenerative tourism institute in the Troy region. The study explores how place based culinary and craft knowledge can be translated into community participation and experiential tourism within a regenerative rural development framework.

Study design/Methodology/Approach: The research adopts a conceptual case study. Drawing on living laboratory theory, regenerative tourism scholarship, and resident tourist value co-creation frameworks, the study outlines the structure and governance of a gastronomy cantered living lab. And discusses possible its benefits through previous correlating examples.

Results: As an exploratory study, results are conceptual. The paper proposes an interactive gastronomy laboratory model that facilitates knowledge creation and exchange among local communities, researchers, and institutions, while allowing tourism to be integrated within ongoing processes of experimentation and production rather than positioning it as a stand-alone consumption activity. According to the research it is evident that a place-based gastronomy living laboratory could also be beneficial to the overall tourism in regenerative concept.

Originality/Value: The study extends regenerative tourism research by demonstrating how gastronomy and craft practices can function as central mechanisms for an alternative tourism development model

Keywords: Regenerative tourism; Living laboratories; culinary heritage; Knowledge co-creation; Rural development

Analysing Safety and Security in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro (NMBM)

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines safety and security conditions in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro (NMBM) in South Africa as a tourism destination. While tourism contributes significantly to GDP and employment, destinations characterised by safety and security challenges risk reduced competitiveness and visitors' confidence. Using NMBM as a case study, the study aims to generate insights into the safety and security issues faced by emerging urban tourism destinations.

Study design/methodology/approach: A mixed-methods research design was employed, integrating quantitative and qualitative data from public- and private-sector stakeholders. Data was collected through 286 structured questionnaires administered to private-sector role players and eight semi-structured interviews with public-sector stakeholders. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS, while qualitative data were analysed thematically using ATLAS.ti.

Results: Findings indicate that safety and security in NMBM are perceived as average, with tourist scams identified as the most prevalent form of crime affecting visitors. These findings reflect broader safety challenges commonly reported in urban tourism destinations in emerging economies.

Originality/value: Beyond its local focus, this study contributes to tourism safety and security literature by providing empirical insights applicable to urban destinations facing similar socio-economic and crime-related challenges. The findings offer transferable lessons for destination managers and policymakers seeking to enhance tourist safety, destination image, and competitiveness in comparable contexts.

Keywords: Safety and security; Nelson Mandela Bay Metro; Tourist destinations

Integration of Renewable Energy Sources into Sustainable Tourism Policies: International Models and Strategic Insights

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines how renewable energy sources (RES) can be integrated into sustainable tourism policies through international models and governance frameworks. The research aims to explore the environmental, economic, and social contributions of renewable energy adoption in tourism destinations and to identify strategic pathways toward net-zero tourism development.

Study Design/Methodology/Approach: The study employs a mixed-methods research design combining qualitative case study analysis with secondary quantitative panel data evidence. International examples from island economies, urban sustainable destinations, and nature-based tourism regions were comparatively analysed. The research focuses on financial and institutional incentives, technological integration and energy independence, and multi-level governance structures.

Results: Findings indicate that increased renewable energy use contributes to lower CO₂ emissions and enhances destination attractiveness. Case studies demonstrate that renewable energy integration supports operational cost reduction, local employment creation, community resilience, and sustainable destination branding. Models such as Green Energy Zones, participatory climate action plans, and climate-smart finance mechanisms were identified as effective policy tools.

Originality/Value: This study contributes to the literature by integrating perspectives from both developed and developing destinations and by combining quantitative evidence with qualitative governance analysis. It also highlights the importance of participatory governance, just transition principles, and technology leapfrogging in achieving sustainable and resilient tourism systems.

Keywords: Renewable Energy; Sustainable Tourism; Net-Zero Destinations; Climate-Smart Finance; Governance

From Surface Acting to Deep Acting: An Embodied Emotion Regulation Perspective on Emotional Labor and Burnout in Tourism Employees

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Abstract

Purpose: This study reconceptualizes emotional labour in tourism service contexts—where continuous customer interactions and high emotional demands intensify burnout risk—by introducing an embodied emotion regulation perspective and examining how interoceptive awareness shapes employees’ regulatory strategies and burnout outcomes.

Study design/methodology/approach: Building on the Stimulus-Organism-Response model and Emotion Regulation Theory, this study develops a theory-driven conceptual model in which emotional job demands function as stimuli, interoceptive awareness represents the core organismic mechanism, and emotional labour strategies (surface acting vs. deep acting) together with burnout constitute behavioural responses.

Results: The framework proposes that interoceptive awareness enables the early detection of physiological signals, thereby facilitating antecedent-focused regulation strategies such as cognitive reappraisal (deep acting). In contrast, insufficient interoceptive awareness generates body–mind dissonance, systematically increasing reliance on response-focused strategies such as expressive suppression (surface acting), which in turn elevates burnout risk.

Originality/value: This study advances emotional labour research in tourism by shifting from a predominantly cognitive perspective to an embodied framework. It identifies interoceptive awareness as a key underlying mechanism explaining the transition between maladaptive and adaptive regulation strategies and provides a process-based foundation for designing interventions to reduce burnout in high-demand service environments.

Keywords: Emotional Labor; Interoceptive Awareness; Employee Burnout

How 360-Degree Virtual Tours Shape Hotel Booking Intentions through Immersion, Trust, and Risk Perception

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Abstract

Purpose: Rapid technological advancements in tourism and hospitality have transformed how consumers search for, evaluate, and select accommodation options. Hotels increasingly adopt immersive tools such as 360-degree virtual tours to enhance interactivity and informational richness. Unlike static images, these tours enable users to actively explore environments, fostering experiential value, reducing uncertainty, and supporting decision-making in online booking contexts.

Study design/methodology/approach: This qualitative study is based on semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 14 participants experienced in online hotel booking. Using purposive sampling, participants interacted with a hotel website featuring a 360-degree virtual tour. Data were transcribed and analysed through inductive thematic analysis.

Results: Three key themes emerged: immersion, risk reduction, and trust. Participants reported a strong sense of telepresence (“being there”), enhancing emotional and cognitive engagement. Virtual tours reduced perceived risk by providing comprehensive visual information and increased trust by signalling transparency and credibility.

Originality/value: This study contributes by integrating cognitive and emotional mechanisms within a single framework and offering process-oriented qualitative insights into how 360-degree virtual tours influence consumer decision-making in hospitality contexts.

Keywords: immersion; trust; perceived risk; virtual tours; booking intention

Generation Z and the Ethics of Dark Tourism: Interpreting Perceptions Through Virtue Ethics, Deontology, and Consequentialism

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines how Generation Z evaluates dark tourism through three ethical paradigms: virtue ethics, deontology, and consequentialism. It aims to identify ethical frameworks shaping moral reasoning toward visiting sites associated with tragedy and remembrance; how ethical outlooks influence attitudes and behavioural intentions; and how these insights support destination management practices.

Study design/methodology/approach: A mixed-methods research design is employed. Quantitative data are collected from university students in Ankara, measuring ethical orientation, as well as attitudes, and behavioural intentions toward dark tourism. The PPIMT assesses the three ethical paradigms. Qualitative analysis complements survey findings through thematic evaluation of discourse surrounding dark tourism including social media platforms.

Results: Preliminary findings suggest that Generation Z does not rely exclusively on one ethical paradigm. Responses indicate a hybrid moral framework combining empathy, authenticity, and respect for victims, commitment to historical truth and moral duty, and awareness of educational and societal outcomes.

Originality/value: This study contributes to dark tourism literature by integrating moral philosophy with generational analysis. Practical insights for destination managers include interpretative ethical strategies, responsible storytelling, and culturally sensitive visitor experiences balancing remembrance, education, and sustainable development.

Keywords: Dark tourism; Generation Z; Virtue ethics; Deontology; Consequentialism; Social media

State, Governance and Tourism Economics: A Political Analysis from a Sustainable Development Perspective

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Abstract

Purpose: This study investigates the nexus of tourism, state policy, and sustainable development.

Study design/methodology/approach: Employing a mixed-methods approach and Critical Document Analysis (CDA), we evaluate master plans, zoning amendments, and environmental reports from mass tourism destinations.

Results: A political economy thematic analysis highlights the disconnect between macro level sustainability rhetoric and micro level implementation, coded under "Rent-Seeking Networks," "Spatial Dispossession," and "Democratic Showcase." Findings reveal that direct state interventions rather than invisible market forces drive the tourism economy. State-led, unchecked growth targets precipitate overtourism, local displacement, and housing crises, exposing a stark contradiction between official sustainability commitments and destructive economic expansion. We argue that genuine sustainable tourism requires holistic public policies balancing economic growth, social equity, and ecological integrity.

Keywords: Tourism; Sustainable development; Political Economy; State; Policy

What do Stakeholders Need Digitally and Technologically? A Cross-Country Needs Analysis

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Abstract

Purpose: Tourism faces challenges in sustainability, digital transformation, and equitable growth. Skill gaps hinder professionals' ability to implement sustainable practices, limiting local economic benefits and causing environmental and cultural issues. Initially developed as an Erasmus+ KA220-VET project, this study examines digital literacy, barriers to technology adoption, and training needs through a multi-country needs analysis. It also highlights how such analyses support knowledge exchange among academia, industry, and policymakers.

Study design/methodology/approach: The study combines primary and secondary data. Primary data derives from a quantitative needs analysis using an open-ended 10-question form with 115 participants from Türkiye, Austria, Greece, and Spain. Stratified purposive sampling ensured diverse stakeholder input, including professionals, communities, youth, policymakers, industry actors, educators, and NGOs. Secondary data includes literature, policy documents, and reports. Data were analysed collaboratively, and a final report has been produced.

Results: Findings emphasize the growing importance of digital literacy and persistent skill gaps. Many participants lack knowledge in AI, VR/AR, data analysis, and digital marketing. Key barriers include limited access to education, resistance to change, time constraints, high costs, and inadequate infrastructure. Blended learning emerged as the preferred training model. Strong institutional support and stakeholder collaboration were identified as essential for sustainable digital transformation.

Originality/value: The study approaches digital skills as a multidimensional issue shaped by governance and policy. Based on multinational Erasmus+ data, it offers practical, context-sensitive insights. It integrates diverse stakeholders into one framework and demonstrates how collaborative projects can bridge theory and practice while supporting sustainable digital transformation in tourism.

Keywords: Digital skills; Needs analysis; Erasmus+ driven capacity building; Technology adoption; Multinational comparison

A Bibliometric Analysis of Digitalization and Smart Tourism Applications in Tourism

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Atılım University

Abstract

Purpose: The tourism sector was influenced by 21st-century technologies and diversified through rapid digital developments. With Industry 5.0, the trend toward digitalization accelerated, leading to the emergence of concepts such as digital tourism, smart tourism, and Tourism 5.0. In this study, these concepts were examined through a comprehensive bibliometric analysis focusing on digitalization and smart tourism applications. Data were collected from the Web of Science database using the keywords “digital tourism” and “smart tourism” and were analysed using Biblioshiny software in R.

Study design/methodology/approach: In this study, a bibliometric analysis of research on digitalization and smart tourism in tourism studies was presented. Leading national and international journals, the most frequently cited authors, and the main themes and concepts widely used by researchers in this field were identified.

Results: Research productivity was found to increase significantly, especially in 2022 and 2023, due to post-pandemic digital transformation processes. Studies were mainly published in interdisciplinary journals focusing on sustainability, innovation, and technology. Certain universities emerged as prominent contributors, indicating strong research capacity and influence in these areas. The study found that the most common themes were AR, VR, personalized services, and competitive advantage; it also determined that smart technologies enhance efficiency and the customer experience in the tourism sector.

Originality/value: In this study, current trends, key sources, and the development direction of digital and smart tourism literature were revealed, providing a valuable reference framework for researchers and guiding future academic studies in this rapidly evolving field.

Keywords: Digitalization; Digital Tourism; Smart Tourism

Green Human Resource Management and Turnover Intention in Hospitality: A Preliminary Model Proposal

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of this study is to propose a conceptual model that links green human resource management practices with employees' tendency to leave work in hospitality organisations. The proposed model is examined at a preliminary level in order to evaluate its conceptual coherence and empirical feasibility.

Study design/methodology/approach: The study employs a quantitative research design, deriving from survey data collected from hospitality employees. The pilot dataset consists of responses obtained from 198 participants. The preliminary phase of the study was designed in two parts: First, the validity and reliability of the measurement instruments were assessed. Second, an initial empirical test of the proposed research model was conducted in order to evaluate the suitability of the theoretical framework prior to the full-scale study.

Results: Exploratory factor analysis results indicated adequate sampling and a clear factor structure for the green human resource management, green transformational leadership, and environmental organisational citizenship behaviour scales. The tendency to leave work scale, which consisted of three items, was validated using confirmatory factor analysis. All measurement instruments demonstrated acceptable reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. Following the measurement validation procedures, structural equation modelling was conducted to examine the relationships between the constructs included in the proposed model.

Originality/value: This study provides preliminary empirical evidence on how environmentally oriented human resource practices and green transformational leadership may influence employees' green behaviours and retention-related outcomes in hospitality organisations. The study contributes to the literature on green human resources management and sustainable organisational behaviour by integrating human resource practices, leadership processes, and employee behavioural outcomes within a single conceptual framework. Considering the relatively limited sample size, the analysis was conducted as a pilot study aimed at evaluating the feasibility of a more complex research model rather than testing definitive hypotheses

Keywords: Green human resource management; Green transformational leadership; Environmental organisational citizenship; Turnover intention; Hospitality management

Navigating The Sustainable Tourism Paradoxes for SMEs In Türkiye: Mediation of Micro-Level Survival and Macro -Level Environmental Protection

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²Cappadocia University

Abstract

Purpose: The aim of this study is to examine the sustainability paradoxes faced by SMEs in Turkish tourism, to highlight the tension between micro-level economic survival and cumulative macro- level environmental degradation, and to offer strategies to solve these paradoxes.

Study design/methodology/approach: Adopting a paradoxical perspective, this conceptual study synthesizes Institutional Theory and Resource-Based View, critically assessing the tensions of the system in small Turkish hotels navigating mandatory national sustainability transitions, such as the GSTC-approved certification program.

Results: The analysis discovers the 'SME impact paradox', reflecting the massive role of small businesses in cumulative environmental degradation. Severe resource constraints forces SMEs to focus on prioritizing short-term economic survival, which worsens sociocultural inconsistencies and undermining environmental strategies. To solve these structural obstacles, the findings suggest that to successfully navigate the paradoxes of sustainable tourism, SMEs, Institutional Actors and Government authorities need to take simultaneous action. At the micro level, SME leaders need to develop a holistic approach by having paradoxical lens. Currently SMEs in Türkiye faces a dual challenge; while they need to balance leveraging existing efficiencies for immediate financial survival, they also have to explore eco-innovations for long-term sustainability. Overcoming the “Challenges of Being Small” in Turkish tourism requires more than regulatory mandates at macro-level; it demands targeted financial supports and capacity building programs which recognize financial fragility and inflationary pressure currently squeezing the SMEs.

Originality/Value: This paper clarifies the micro-macro sustainability disconnect and provides a context-specific theoretical framework for Turkish tourism SMEs to transition from short-term financial survival to long-term sustainable competitiveness. In the specific context of Türkiye’s volatile economy, this research discovers that sustainability is no longer a choice but a survival strategy that requires an interdependent relationship between visionary, paradox-embracing SME leadership and resource providing public policies to prevent mass closure of SMEs in resource-constrained environments.

Keywords: Sustainability paradox; Turkish tourism SMEs; resource-based perspective; corporate theory; cumulative environmental impact

A New Paradigm in Higher Tourism Education: Analyzing the Integrated Tourism and Gastronomy Management Model in Türkiye

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Abstract

Purpose: The tourism and hospitality sector is experiencing rapid transformation, increasing the need for graduates who possess both theoretical knowledge and practical competencies. Conventional education models have been widely criticized for their limited ability to respond to industry expectations. Similarly, in Türkiye, long-established traditional tourism education has increasingly been recognized as requiring transformation in order to respond to contemporary industry dynamics and emerging global standards. In this context, the Department of Tourism and Gastronomy Management Programs in Türkiye, first officially introduced in December 2024, represents an emerging initiative aimed at addressing these challenges. The program has been launched as a pilot initiative across nine universities in Türkiye. The program began admitting its first cohort of students in the Fall semester of the 2025-2026 academic year and includes a compulsory English preparatory year. This study aims to examine this program as an innovative, industry-integrated higher education model.

Study design/methodology/approach: A qualitative case study approach is adopted, relying on document analysis of curriculum structures, policy frameworks, and program implementations across nine pilot universities in Türkiye.

Results: The analysis demonstrates that the program introduces a structurally integrated model in which industry experience is embedded within the curriculum. The model is supported by multilingual education, extended vocational training, and state coordination.

Originality/Value: This study presents a state-supported education model that directly aligns academic structures with industry needs, offering a scalable framework for tourism education reform.

Keywords: Tourism Education; Industry Integration; Gastronomy Management; Higher Education; Türkiye

Is zero waste fostering the destination of Amalfi?

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Abstract

Purpose: This study explores whether zero-waste management can foster destination image in the case of the Amalfi Coast, a mature coastal destination facing significant tourism-induced environmental pressures. The study examines how waste governance and sustainability initiatives contribute to perceptions of environmental responsibility and destination attractiveness.

Study Design/Methodology/Approach: A multi-qualitative design was adopted, combining tourism policy analysis and systematic destination observation. Regional and municipal policy documents, sustainability strategies, and publicly available reports were reviewed to identify zero-waste commitments and governance mechanisms. In parallel, on-site observations documented waste infrastructure, cleanliness conditions, environmental signage, and tourist behaviour across key locations on the Amalfi Coast. Data were analysed thematically.

Results: The findings indicate that while several recycling initiatives and environmental awareness measures have been introduced, the implementation of zero-waste practices remains fragmented across municipalities. Structural barriers such as limited space, high operational costs, and coordination challenges hinder comprehensive implementation. Nevertheless, zero-waste initiatives appear to enhance destination image by improving cleanliness, signalling responsible governance, and strengthening sustainability-oriented place branding.

Originality/Value: This study contributes to the tourism literature by conceptualizing zero-waste management as both an environmental governance mechanism and a symbolic resource that shapes destination image. It offers insights for destination managers seeking to balance environmental sustainability with long-term competitiveness.

Keywords: Zero-waste management; Destination image; Sustainable tourism; Amalfi Coast; Environmental governance

Future-Ready Tourism and Hospitality Education? A Curriculum Analysis

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to examine the extent to which the world's leading tourism and hospitality schools are preparing students for the technological future of tourism sector. Specifically, the study analyses the presence and thematic focus of technology-related courses within undergraduate tourism and hospitality curricula to understand future-ready education.

Study design/methodology/approach: The research is based on a descriptive qualitative content analysis of bachelor-level programs offered by the top 20 institutions identified by the QS World University Rankings by Subject. Data were collected from official institutional websites, focusing on program structures and course descriptions.

Results: While information for some universities was unavailable, others offered either no related courses or only a limited number of them. Digitalization and innovation emerged as the most common themes, whereas AI-related courses remained relatively rare. In conclusion, the transformation remains fragmented and lacks institutional standardization, highlighting the need for more technology-integrated curricula.

Originality/value: This study contributes to the tourism and hospitality education literature by providing a systematic and up-to-date overview of technology integration in undergraduate tourism and hospitality curricula among the world's top-ranked institutions. The study reveals not only the extent of technological inclusion but also its strategic positioning within tourism and hospitality education.

Keywords: Tourism Education; Technology Integration

Is it worth telling? The Effect of Perceived Price and Service Value on Digital Storytelling Experience, Satisfaction, and Revisit Intention

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²Baskent University

Abstract

Purpose: Building on Stimulus, Organisms, and Response -SOR- Model and Narrative Transportation Model, this study will examine the impacts of Perceived Service Quality (PSQ), Digital Storytelling (DST), and Customer Satisfaction (CS) on Revisit Intention (RVI) as well as the moderation effect of perceived price value (PPV) on the relationship among PSQ, DST, CS, and RVI.

Study design/methodology/approach: The study will adopt a quantitative research design aiming to test structural relationship between PSQ, DST, and CS on RVI as well as the moderation effect of PPV on the relationship among PSQ, DST, CS, and Revisit Intention. The sample will be consisted of museum visitors who visited a museum in the past year. Smart-PLS 4 and Statistical Program for SPSS will be used to analyse the structural model. First, descriptive data will be generated through SPSS. PLS-SEM will be used to analyse the structural model. Moreover, moderation effect of Perceived PPV will be tested.

Results: work in progress

Originality/Value: From practical perspective, the findings of this study will help service providers in various hospitality services to establish a strategically successful promotion and management processes to increase revisit intention and strengthen satisfaction.

In addition, the findings will also set guidelines to consider perceived price as an essential moderator in various kinds of relationships; in other words, price perception should be the focus of attention when deciding the short- and long-term strategies.

Keywords: digital storytelling; service quality; perceived price value; revisit intention

Carrying Capacity and Sustainability in Tourism Destinations: A Study on the Case of Manavgat

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Abstract

Purpose: This research employs qualitative research methods and involves a comprehensive literature review. The study focuses on the concept of carrying capacity, frequently used in the tourism sector, examining its physical, environmental, social, and economic dimensions in detail. Accordingly, the impacts of tourism activities on a destination are evaluated, and the importance of carrying capacity for sustainable tourism planning is highlighted. The theoretical framework of the research was established by analysing academic studies, reports, and relevant sources found in the literature.

Study design/methodology/approach: The study also utilized a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis method to holistically assess the current state of the destination and identify its potential and the risks it faces. This analysis method was used as an important tool because it provides guiding data for destination management and sustainable tourism planning.

Results: In addition, various comprehensive data were utilized to reveal the demographic structure, physical characteristics, tourism resources, and current offerings of the Manavgat district. Through these data, the population structure, infrastructure capacity, number of tourist facilities, and overall tourism potential of the region were analysed, contributing to the identification of opportunities for improvement.

Originality/Value: By evaluating all the obtained data together, the current situation of the Manavgat destination in terms of tourism and the opportunities for improving its carrying capacity were comprehensively presented.

Keywords: Tourism Carrying Capacity; Sustainable Tourism; Manavgat; Physical Carrying Capacity; SWOT Analysis

Sporting Events, Impacts, and Key Stakeholders: A Bibliometric Analysis

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Abstract

Purpose: The success of sporting events is measured by their economic, sociocultural, and ecological impacts. Previous studies have mostly relied on cross-sectional designs, with less attention given to longitudinal impacts and to how these are perceived by different stakeholders. The purpose of this paper is to systematically analyse the literature on the impacts of sporting events on local communities and changes over time.

Study design/methodology/approach: This study employs a thematic analysis of articles indexed in the Web of Science (WoS) database. The database was searched using a predefined set of keywords, including “sport* events*”, “support*”, “impact*” or “effect*”, and “legac*”. In total, 496 publications in English were analysed. VOSviewer software was used to conduct co-occurrence networks of keywords, providing a structural representation of relationships between research topics.

Results: The co-occurrence analysis identified three main thematic clusters: athlete well-being and performance, sustainability-oriented support behaviours, and tourism and community-related socio-economic impacts of sporting events. Residents are moderately satisfied with the economic benefits of sporting events but are highly sensitive to quality of life and environmental impacts. Entrepreneurs support sporting events more than residents, viewing them as economic opportunities. After the event, stakeholders' perceptions of impact decline.

Originality/value: This paper conceptually delineates the dimensions of perception between residents and entrepreneurs and their evolution over time, thus offering an analytical framework that enables a more precise understanding of the mechanisms of support for sporting events.

Keywords: Sporting events; Stakeholders; Community development; Local community impacts

Ethical Leadership: Equality of challenges and safety in Management

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Abstract

Purpose: Advance towards conventional passivity, safeguard and courteousness to each worker & stakeholders with protection methods through the combination of diversity and equity enclosure are prioritize exclusive undertaking to Ethical Leadership.

Study design/methodology/approach: The methodology of the study mainly oversees through Literature review concluded thematic analysis and word cloud. Furthermore, a brief sample survey conducted with 25 students/ learners' responses on corporate social responsibility (CSR) and the ethical and economic responsibility of leadership in the workplace were gathered.

Results (Optional): To gather and analyse data for this study, the null hypothesis is rejected if the Two-Tail P-value is less than the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$), indicating a significant difference between the two population means. To assess the difference between learner experience samples, an ANOVA was conducted. According to the above figure ~ it indicates strong evidence against the null hypothesis, suggesting the observed data is unlikely to have occurred if the null were true

Originality/value: This study identifies priority reforms in profitability and moral commitments are balanced by ethical leadership, which underlines a long-term perception that connects sustainable practices to financial success. This study identifies priority reforms in profitability and moral commitments are balanced by ethical leadership, which underlines a long-term perception that connects sustainable practices to financial success.

Keywords: Ethical leadership; ethical workplace climate; organization's safety culture; CSR; ANOVA

The Role of Green Technologies in Sustainable Tourism: A Conceptual Analysis from the Perspective of Smart Destinations

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²Libertas International University

Abstract

Purpose: The tourism industry presents a major area of debate regarding sustainability due to its potential for energy consumption, intensive water use, carbon emissions, food consumption, and waste generation. The main purpose of this study is to examine green technologies within the tourism industry from a sustainability perspective and to assess their integration into destination processes

Study design/methodology/approach: This study is designed as a conceptual framework based on a systematic literature review. The study will analyse national and international research published on green technologies and smart destination management within the context of sustainable tourism. This study aims to present a theoretical assessment by systematically analysing findings from the existing literature. In this context, the study seeks to provide a conceptual framework for how green technologies can support the transformation of sustainable tourism.

Results: It is stated that the upcoming study will reveal that green technologies are linked to sustainable tourism from environmental, economic, and managerial perspectives. A key point emphasized in the literature is that green practices, particularly those that enhance energy and resource efficiency, play a significant role from an environmental perspective

Originality/value: This study offers a conceptual contribution by examining the role of green technologies in smart destinations within the context of sustainable tourism. Smart destinations and sustainable tourism are topics that have been extensively studied in the literature. This study, however, brings these two fields together specifically through the lens of green technologies, revealing a strategic relationship between them.

Keywords: Green Technologies; Sustainable Tourism; Smart Destinations; Digital Sustainability

The Role of Social Media Influencer Credibility in Shaping Tourist Behaviour

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Abstract:

purpose: This study examines how social media influencer credibility shapes consumer destination choice behaviour, with particular focus on intentions to visit London. The research addresses a gap in tourism and influencer marketing literature by investigating the influence of five credibility dimensions: trustworthiness, expertise, similarity, attractiveness, and likability.

Study design/methodology/approach: A quantitative research design was employed using a structured questionnaire distributed to 400 respondents. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation analysis, and multiple regression in SPSS.

Results: The findings indicate that respondents held moderate perceptions of influencer credibility, with similarity recording the highest mean score. Reliability analysis demonstrated strong internal consistency across all credibility constructs, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.907 to 0.926. Correlation analysis revealed statistically significant positive relationships among all credibility dimensions, with coefficients ranging from $r = 0.681$ to $r = 0.821$. Regression analysis further demonstrated that influencer credibility significantly influences destination choice behaviour. Trustworthiness emerged as the strongest predictor, followed by similarity, indicating that authenticity and relatability are the most influential factors shaping travel decisions. Expertise, attractiveness, and likability also showed significant but comparatively weaker effects.

Originality/value: The study contributes to Source Credibility Theory by extending its application to digital tourism environments and demonstrating that influencer effectiveness is driven by both cognitive trust and emotional connection. Practically, the findings provide valuable insights for tourism marketers and destination management organizations seeking to develop more authentic and effective influencer marketing strategies.

Keywords: Social media influencers; influencer credibility; destination choice; tourism marketing; London tourism

The Role of Artificial Intelligence-Generated Visuals in Reconstructing the Digital Detox Tourism Experience

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines the effects of AI-generated images on individuals' processes of recalling, interpreting, and evaluating their digital detox experiences

Study design/methodology/approach: Within the scope of the study, prompts based on key concepts in digital detox tourism literature were developed, and two AI-generated images were created using ChatGPT and Gemini. These two images were shown to 10 participants who had previously undergone a digital detox while traveling, followed by semi-structured interviews. The interviews were structured around six conceptual dimensions: sense of reliving, perceived authenticity, emotional response, experience interpretation, self-connection, and behavioural intention.

Results: The findings indicate that AI-generated images can trigger participants' experiential memory and create a sense of reliving the experience. Participants stated that the images reminded them of past experiences, mentally evoked certain spatial and emotional elements, and partially reproduced the feeling of “being there.” Images are perceived as both realistic and artificial, but this did not diminish their emotional impact. These images evoked positive emotions such as peace, tranquility, happiness and freedom while also promoting relaxation and a temporary escape from digital overload. Additionally, they supported participants' interpretive process, strengthening their connection to themselves. Furthermore, the findings suggest that such images may contribute to participants' willingness or intention to repeat their digital detox experience.

Originality/value: This study offers a unique contribution to the literature, particularly by integrating a generative artificial intelligence perspective into experiential memory literature, revealing that the tourism experience is not a fixed memory but rather a dynamic process that may be reconstructed through technological mediation.

Keywords: Digital detox; Recollection of experience; Generative AI; Photo-elicitation

A Comparative Analysis of Tourists' Perceptions of Turkey Across Different Nationalities

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to investigate how tourists from different nationalities perceive Turkey as a travel destination and to analyse how these perceptions collectively shape the country's destination image.

Study design/Methodology/Approach: A qualitative research design was employed, combining semi-structured interviews and metaphor analysis. Data were collected from 25 tourists representing five nationalities — Chinese, Japanese, Russian, German, and Australian — at the ancient city of Ephesus. Participants completed open-ended statements relating to their general associations with Turkey, its symbolic representations, social media impressions, and both positive and negative experiences. The collected data were coded and analyzed using MAXQDA software through thematic analysis.

Results: Findings reveal distinct perceptual patterns across nationalities. Chinese tourists strongly associate Turkey with hot air balloons and a romantic atmosphere; Japanese tourists emphasize historical heritage and tranquillity; Russian tourists prioritize sea, sun, and leisure; German tourists value cultural diversity and hospitality; while Australian tourists' perceptions are shaped by the historical significance of Gallipoli. Cappadocia emerged as a universally shared visual icon. Negative experiences commonly reported across groups included high prices and overcrowding.

Originality/Value: This study provides a novel cross-cultural and qualitative examination of Turkey's destination image through metaphor analysis — a methodology rarely applied in comparative tourism perception research. The findings contribute to both theory and practice by demonstrating the culture-bound nature of tourist perceptions and offering actionable insights for the development of nationality-specific destination marketing strategies.

Keywords: tourist perception; destination image; metaphor analysis; cultural tourism; destination marketing

The Qualitative Analysis of Stakeholders' Perceptions Towards the Barriers and Challenges to Airbnb

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Abstract

Purpose: This paper aimed to investigate the barriers and challenges to the use of Airbnb as a sharing economy platform in two of the most popular destinations in Türkiye, Antalya and İstanbul.

Study design/methodology/approach: The current qualitative research examined the obstacles as well as the reasons impeding the use of Airbnb in Antalya and İstanbul. These two destinations were selected as they host more than 65% of international arrivals in total visiting the country. The unit of analysis, which was based on a purposive sampling technique, consisted of key tourism stakeholders in the two selected destinations. Based on a multiple case study approach as a research design, data were gathered through in-situ interviews and analysed using qualitative content analysis.

Results: The study findings based on the views of informants, revealed the multilayered effects towards the challenges and barriers to the sharing economy in tourist destinations. These were grouped into two main themes, namely *regulations (taxation)* and *socio-cultural (rental crisis, security issues, cost of housing and cultural norms)* facets. The findings also support that the lack of necessary policy and managerial regulations hinders the liveability of residents, which may potentially precipitate social tensions between locals and tourists.

Originality/value: The originality of the current research lies in its theoretical perspective, as it is among the first to relate liveability theory to the sharing economy from multiple perspectives. It also extends our understanding towards major current challenges to the potential use of Airbnb in tourist destinations, while providing a distinct perspective to the current knowledge.

Keywords Sharing economy; Peer-to-peer accommodation; Airbnb; Liveability; Stakeholders

Evaluation of the Social, Economic, and Environmental Impacts of Rural Tourism Activities in the Canyon Region from the Perspectives of Hosts and Visitors

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Abstract

Purpose: The main aim of this research is to objectively reveal the social, economic, and environmental impacts of nature-based rural tourism activities, specifically in the districts of Azdavay and Pınarbaşı of Kastamonu Province.

Study design/methodology/approach: This research is a qualitative case study. A study group was formed, consisting of both hosts and visitors. Two methods were used to analyse data obtained through a combined face-to-face, offline, and drop-off approach. Data obtained from local people, defined as hosts, were analysed using descriptive analysis. In contrast, data obtained from visitors were analysed using the MAXQDA 2020 qualitative data analysis program, within the framework of main themes and sub-themes created for sub-problems.

Results/Findings: Descriptive analysis of data obtained from the host study group revealed that hosts in the canyon region are highly sensitive to social, economic, and environmental aspects. This result suggests that hosts are aware of sustainable tourism, while visitors are less sensitive to the potential social, economic, and environmental impacts of their visits to the region.

Originality/Value: Although numerous quantitative and qualitative studies have been conducted on the tourism attractions and activities of the canyon region, no research has been found regarding the potential social, economic, and environmental impacts of this mobility. Furthermore, the fact that this research focuses on the social, economic, and environmental components—defined as the three fundamental pillars of sustainability—and measures potential impacts from both host stakeholders' and visitors' perspectives is considered the research's original value.

Keywords: Sustainability; rural tourism; sustainable rural tourism; Azdavay; Pınarbaşı; Kastamonu

An Evaluation of Traditional Food Products on the Verge of Being Forgotten in Turkish Cuisine Through Academic Literature

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²Sakarya Uygulamalı Bilimler University

Abstract

Purpose: This study examines traditional food products in Turkish cuisine whose production and consumption have significantly declined or are on the verge of being forgotten, based on their representation in academic literature. The aim is to identify dominant research themes, cultural contexts, and scholarly tendencies related to these products and to contribute to discussions on the sustainability of gastronomic heritage.

Study design/methodology/approach: The research adopts a qualitative approach and employs document analysis. Academic articles, theses, and scientific publications focusing on Turkish culinary culture and traditional food products were systematically reviewed. The selected sources were analysed through analytical synthesis in terms of product definitions, cultural meanings, regional characteristics, and the contexts in which these foods are discussed.

Results: The findings indicate that traditional food products facing decline are predominantly addressed within the framework of cultural heritage and regional cuisine. However, academic studies focusing on sustainability, revitalization, and contemporary adaptation remain limited. Most products are discussed descriptively rather than being examined through systematic analytical frameworks.

Originality/Value: By synthesizing fragmented academic knowledge, this study provides a comprehensive overview of traditional food products at risk of being forgotten and offers a theoretical foundation for future research on the preservation and sustainability of Turkish culinary heritage.

Keywords: Turkish Cuisine; Traditional Foods; Cultural Heritage

Influence of Artificial Intelligence Service Quality on Perceived Usefulness, Customer Satisfaction, and Electronic Loyalty in Online Food Delivery Platforms

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³Siirt University

Abstract

Purpose: Developments in information and communication technologies have converted online meal delivery systems into service platforms rather than just order delivery systems. The incorporation of artificial intelligence, recommendation systems, interactive tools, and process management software now directs consumer choices and influences service perceptions. The current work mostly focuses on these effects as direct, with minimal consideration of the customer evaluation process. This study attempts to elucidate how the relationship between AI-driven service quality and e-loyalty is influenced by perceived usefulness and customer satisfaction in online food delivery services.

Study Design/Methodology/Approach: The research model employs a quantitative framework that combines the utility-based principles of the Technology Acceptance Model with the process-oriented approach of the Stimulus–Organism–Response framework. The quality of AI-based services is regarded as an antecedent that affects perceived usefulness, which then influences customer satisfaction and finally results in e-loyalty. Data will be gathered via a survey of active users and analysed with structural equation modeling.

Results: Data collection is in progress; hence, empirical conclusions are currently unavailable. Nonetheless, the theoretical framework indicates that this link is indirect, functioning sequentially through perceived usefulness and customer satisfaction as mediating variables. The results indicate that platform managers must not concentrate exclusively on technology infrastructure, as technological capacity alone does not provide e-loyalty.

Originality/Value: The study departs from direct-effect methodologies, situating this link within the consumer evaluation process and reconceptualizing service quality as influenced by consumer assessments rather than solely by technical performance.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence-based service quality; perceived usefulness; customer satisfaction; e-loyalty; online food ordering

The Transformative Effect of Video Games and Immersive Technologies on Tourist Behavior: A Conceptual Review

Ziyad Guliyev

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to examine in depth the transformative effect of video games, gamification, E-sports, and immersive technologies (AR/VR/Metaverse) on tourists' travel motivations, destination image perceptions, and purchase intentions within the framework of the Cognitive-Affective-Conative (CAC) model and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). The study aims to reveal how experiences acquired in the virtual world transform into tourism demand in the physical world and how these technologies can be used as a strategic tool in destination marketing with theoretical and practical dimensions.

Study design/Methodology/Approach: The study is comprehensive conceptual research based on a systematic review of current national and international literature on the subject. A holistic theoretical framework was created by synthesizing empirical studies and case analyses in the fields of video game-induced tourism, e-sports events, and digital cultural heritage (e.g., Assassin's Creed, GTA V, Euro Truck Simulator 2, E-sports events in Turkey). The study identifies gaps in the existing literature and provides a roadmap for future research.

Results: Research findings show that the high interaction and immersion features offered by video games create a strong "sense of place" and "telepresence" in the user. These virtual experiences shape the cognitive maps of potential tourists by increasing familiarity with destinations and positively affect the destination image. It has been determined that e-sports events have created a new tourist typology called "Es-tourist," especially on Generation Z, who are tech-savvy and have high spending potential. Gamification applications have been observed to strengthen brand loyalty, make the tourist experience more enjoyable, and increase the intention to revisit. In addition, it has been concluded that virtual experiences offered by immersive technologies such as AR and VR are a strong "try-before-you-buy" and marketing tool that encourages physical travel rather than replacing it.

Originality/Value: The most original aspect of this study is that it combines the concepts of video game tourism, e-sports, and gamification, which are generally handled separately in the literature, with a holistic marketing and tourist behaviour perspective. The study provides significant added value to the existing literature and destination marketing practices, especially in terms of bringing an interdisciplinary perspective to the "game motivation and travel intention" relationship, which has not yet been sufficiently examined in the context of Turkey, and providing a solid theoretical ground for innovative digital tourism strategies aimed at Generation Z.

Keywords: Video Game-Induced Tourism; Virtual Reality (VR); Augmented Reality (AR); Tourist Behaviour; Cognitive-Affective-Conative Model.

From Diagnosis to Delivery: Digital Capacity Building for Women Entrepreneurs in Post-Earthquake Hatay

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines the digital capacity needs of women entrepreneurs in Hatay, Türkiye, following the February 2023 earthquakes, and investigates how these findings informed a practical training intervention.

Study design/methodology/approach: A mixed-methods design was employed, combining a survey of 835 women entrepreneurs with 31 semi-structured interviews. Quantitative data were analysed through descriptive statistics and cross-tabulations; qualitative findings were examined thematically. The study further draws on project training documentation to trace how research findings were translated into a practical capacity-building intervention.

Results: Women entrepreneurs in Hatay are not reluctant to engage with digital tools; rather, their digital participation is constrained by damaged infrastructure, insufficient digital skills, lack of confidence, financial pressure, and care responsibilities. The majority preferred face-to-face workshops and live online sessions over self-paced courses. The sample was dominated by micro and small enterprises in food and beverage, services, accommodation, and tourism-related activities.

Originality/value: The study argues that digital capacity building in post-disaster settings should be understood as part of the wider recovery infrastructure, not merely as skills training. It provides a replicable model demonstrating how needs-assessment research can be directly translated into locally grounded, gender-sensitive training delivery.

Keywords: women entrepreneurs; post-disaster recovery; digital capacity building; Hatay; tourism and hospitality

Digital Ethics, Data Governance and Technology Adoption in Tourism and Hospitality.

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Southern Academy of higher Education

Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to examine how digital ethics and data governance influence the adoption of digital technologies in the tourism and hospitality sector. While technologies such as artificial intelligence, analytics, and smart systems offer significant operational and experiential benefits, ethical concerns and governance challenges increasingly shape organizational adoption decisions and stakeholder trust.

Study design/methodology/approach: This study adopts a conceptual research approach based on a structured review and synthesis of peer-reviewed literature published between 2020 and 2026. Drawing on the Technology-Organization-Environment framework and institutional theory, the study analyses how ethical considerations and data governance mechanisms interact with organizational capabilities and environmental pressures to influence technology adoption in tourism and hospitality contexts.

Results: Indicative findings suggest that strong data governance practices and clearly articulated ethical principles enhance organizational legitimacy and trust, thereby supporting technology adoption. In contrast, privacy concerns, ethical ambiguity, and weak governance structures increase perceived risk and act as barriers to adoption. Regulatory and institutional pressures further moderate these relationships.

Originality/value: This study contributes to the tourism and hospitality literature by positioning digital ethics and data governance as central determinants of technology adoption rather than secondary compliance concerns. It provides a structured theoretical perspective to support responsible and sustainable digital transformation in tourism and hospitality organisations.

Keywords: Digital ethics; Data governance; Technology adoption; Tourism and hospitality; Trust

How Do Restaurant Service Failures Shape Tipping Behaviour? An Experimental Model Based on Failure Magnitude and Customer Satisfaction

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines how restaurant service failures influence customers' tipping behaviour. Drawing on the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework, the research investigates whether perceived failure magnitude and customer satisfaction mediate the relationship between service failure and tipping behaviour. By integrating service failure theory, expectancy–disconfirmation theory, and equity theory, the study seeks to explain the psychological mechanisms through which service failures lead to reductions in tipping.

Study design/methodology/approach: A between-subject experimental design was employed. Participants were randomly assigned to one of five restaurant service scenarios: no failure, waiting delay, overcooked food, billing error, and combined failures. Data were collected from 176 restaurant customers through Prolific. Failure magnitude and customer satisfaction were measured using established seven-point Likert scales, while tipping behaviour was assessed through tip percentage intention. General Linear Model (GLM) analyses and Hayes' PROCESS Macro with 5,000 bootstrap samples were used to test direct, mediation, and serial mediation effects.

Results: Service failure significantly influenced tipping behaviour. Customers in the no-failure condition reported the highest tipping intentions, whereas tipping decreased substantially in the overcooked food, billing error, and combined failure conditions. Waiting delays did not significantly differ from the no-failure condition, indicating greater customer tolerance for delays than for core service breakdowns. Both failure magnitude and customer satisfaction significantly mediated the relationship between service failure and tipping behaviour. Furthermore, a significant serial mediation effect was identified, demonstrating that service failures increase perceived failure magnitude, reduce customer satisfaction, and ultimately decrease tipping intentions.

Originality/value: This study contributes to the tipping literature by providing a mechanism-based explanation of how service failures influence tipping behaviour. It demonstrates that tipping is not solely a social norm but also a performance-sensitive behavioural response shaped by customers' cognitive and affective evaluations of service encounters.

Keywords: Service Failure; Tipping Behaviour; Failure Magnitude; Customer Satisfaction; Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) Framework

Unveiling the Power of Voiceover Type: Experimental Evidence on Consumer Perception and Hotel Booking Intention

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines the role of voiceover type in hotel promotional videos and its influence on consumers' booking intentions. Drawing on the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework, voiceover type is conceptualized as an auditory stimulus that affects booking intention through perceptual and advertising-related mechanisms. The study compares four voiceover types: original human voiceover, neural text-to-speech (NTTS), AI-generated voiceover, and robotic voiceover.

Study design/Methodology/Approach: An experimental design was employed using 404 participants recruited through Prolific. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four voiceover conditions and viewed the same hotel promotional video, with only the voiceover manipulated. Speech quality was assessed through intelligibility and naturalness, while advertising effectiveness was evaluated through advertising attitude, believability, irritation, and value. Booking intention was measured using established hospitality scales. Data were analysed using factor analysis, ANOVA with Scheffé post hoc tests, and mediation analysis through Hayes' PROCESS macro.

Results: The results indicate that voiceover type significantly influences intelligibility, naturalness, advertising evaluations, and booking intention. AI-generated voiceover achieved the highest intelligibility scores, while original human and NTTS voiceovers generated the strongest booking intentions. Perceived naturalness did not significantly differ between original human and NTTS voiceovers. In contrast, robotic voiceover produced the lowest evaluations and the highest level of advertising irritation. Mediation analyses confirmed that intelligibility, naturalness, advertising attitude, believability, irritation, and value significantly influenced booking intention.

Originality/Value: This study is among the first to experimentally compare four technologically distinct voiceover types within hotel promotional videos and to model their indirect effects on booking intention through layered perceptual and advertising-related mediators. By integrating technological voice origin into tourism marketing theory, the research deepens understanding of technology-mediated auditory persuasion.

Keywords: Voiceover Type; Hotel Promotional Videos; Booking Intention; Advertising Effectiveness; Auditory Marketing.

Tourism as Drawn by Children: A Semiotic Analysis of Tourism Perception Through Visual Representations

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines children's perceptions of tourism through their drawings and analyses these representations from a semiotic perspective to reveal the meaning-making processes of tourism in children's minds. Tourism is a multidimensional phenomenon shaped by individuals' experiences, age, and social environment. While tourism perception has been widely studied among adults, limited research has explored how children conceptualize tourism. Therefore, this study seeks to understand how tourism is represented in children's drawings and what meanings and thematic structures emerge from these representations.

Study design/Methodology/Approach: This study was conducted within a qualitative research framework. The data consisted of 63 tourism-themed drawings created by children using purposive sampling. Participants were asked to draw pictures reflecting their understanding of tourism. The drawings were analysed using a semiotic approach focusing on visual elements, denotative meanings, and connotative meanings. Thematic analysis was subsequently employed to identify recurring patterns and dominant themes across the drawings.

Results: The findings reveal that children's perceptions of tourism are mainly associated with entertainment, relaxation, and happiness. The most frequently depicted elements were the sea, sun, hotels, swimming pools, and recreational facilities. Water-related elements reflected leisure and enjoyment, while the sun symbolized warmth and positive experiences. Hotels indicated that tourism is perceived as an organized activity. Recreational features emphasized active participation and enjoyable experiences. Although some drawings included destination names and cultural landmarks, these representations were limited, suggesting that children primarily perceive tourism as a recreational rather than a cultural activity.

Originality/value: This study is original in that it examines children's perceptions of tourism through their own visual productions. It contributes to the tourism literature by providing insights into how tourism perceptions are formed at an early age. The findings also offer practical implications for tourism education, highlighting the need to incorporate sustainability, cultural diversity, and environmental awareness into early learning processes. Overall, the study provides both theoretical and practical contributions by revealing how tourism is represented and internalized in children's cognitive and cultural frameworks.

Keywords: Children's Drawings; Tourism Perception; Semiotic Analysis; Tourism Experience; Visual Representation.

Why Do We Consume Coffee? Is Coffee Drinking a Culture or a Form of Consumption?

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Abstract

Purpose: Although coffee functions as a tangible commodity, it possesses profound cultural significance globally. Coffee culture has developed distinct characteristics across diverse societies and epochs. Through variations in preparation, presentation, and consumption rituals, coffee has been an indispensable part of popular culture alongside the expansion of globalization. Accordingly, the objective of this study is to investigate the socio-cultural, psychological, experiential, and behavioural dimensions of coffee consumption practices. It aims to position coffee as a phenomenon of cultural consumption by interpreting the symbolic meanings ascribed to it by individuals.

Study design/Methodology/Approach: Utilizing a qualitative methodological framework, face-to-face interviews were conducted with 54 participants. The resulting data were subjected to content analysis using MAXQDA software. The analysis yielded a total of 1,015 codes, 12 themes, and 4 categories: perceptions of coffee culture, motivations for consumption, temporal preferences, and behavioural changes in practices. Consequently, this study assesses participants' attitudes and motivations; the temporal and spatial determinants of consumption; the socio-cultural function of coffee in interpersonal dynamics; and the interplay between global trends and local practices.

Results: The study suggests that coffee is far more than a simple consumable; rather, it serves as a cultural artifact deeply rooted in social interaction, heritage, personal identity, and sensory enjoyment. The findings indicate that coffee is an integral part of consumption habits for all participants, with a notable 72.22% favouring coffee chains. The study observed that consumption habits evolve over time; while the majority perceive coffee primarily as a culture, others conceptualize it as both a cultural value and a form of consumption.

Originality/Value: In conclusion, the study emphasizes the dual necessity of preserving and transmitting traditional Turkish coffee culture while ensuring that coffee chains, products of popular culture, operate with social responsibility. Consequently, the study offers various recommendations for consumers, policymakers, and practitioners.

Keywords: Popular Culture; Coffee Habits; Coffee Consumption Practices; Components of Coffee Culture

A Hybrid Approach to Tour Guiding Services: The Tasks Human Tour Guides Prefer to Delegate to AI to Enhance Job Performance

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Abstract

Purpose: Demanding tasks often overwhelm tour guides, leading to reduced motivation and the shirking of job-related responsibilities. At this point, task crafting through artificial intelligence (AI) integration offers an efficient strategy to manage job-related challenges and enhance employee performance. However, research examining tour guides' task crafting practices through AI integration remains scarce. To address the research gap, this study adopts the human-AI hybrid task crafting approach to identify the tasks that tour guides prefer to delegate to AI to enhance their job performance.

Study design/methodology/approach: Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews informed by the literature. The sample will include tour guides in Türkiye with diverse demographic and professional backgrounds. Following data saturation, a thematic analysis will be conducted to reach the findings.

Results: Utilizing the anticipated findings, routine, low-end, and repetitive tasks can be delegated to AI, providing human tour guides with greater flexibility and autonomy to focus on their primary tasks.

Originality/value: This study aims to explore tour guides' preferences for AI integration through the lenses of task crafting and performance enhancement. By adopting this novel focus, the study seeks to extend existing knowledge by proposing a comprehensive framework for hybrid tour guiding services.

Keywords: Tour guiding; Artificial intelligence; Task crafting; Performance; Hybrid services.