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Intelligent Technology Integration in Global Hotel Chains: A Comparative Analysis of Artificial Intelligence Maturity and Innovation Impact

Küresel Otel Zincirlerinde Akıllı Teknoloji Entegrasyonu: Yapay Zekâ Olgunluğu ve İnovasyon Etkisinin Karşılaştırmalı Analizi

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Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is redefining the hospitality industry by transforming operational models, enabling hyper-personalized guest experiences, and driving strategic innovation. This study offers a comparative analysis of AI integration across nine leading global hotel chains, employing a conceptual framework that maps AI maturity against innovation impact. Drawing on Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) and UTAUT, the study advances theory informed propositions on how perceived advantages, complexity, and facilitating conditions shape integration trajectories; these propositions are assessed through pattern matching and cross case comparison rather than formal hypothesis testing. Using qualitative content analysis of corporate reports and strategic communications, four orientations emerge: Basic Automation, Operational Efficiency, Personalized Experiences, and Strategic Innovation.

Findings reveal pronounced disparities in AI integration: innovation leaders like Hilton, Hyatt, Marriott, and Radisson leverage advanced technologies—including generative AI, IoT, and immersive digital platforms—to achieve differentiation. Conversely, others prioritize cost optimization through dynamic pricing and predictive maintenance. Beyond operational gains, AI is increasingly positioned as a strategic imperative shaping sustainability, cybersecurity, and guest engagement. Theoretically, the study integrates socio-technical and innovation diffusion perspectives to show that technological maturity alone does not guarantee experiential differentiation. It further offers practical guidance aligning AI investments with innovation objectives, underscoring the need for frameworks linking technological readiness, strategic orientation, and human-centric values. The findings are interpreted as an analysis of organizational discourse and strategic positioning as communicated on corporate websites, rather than as audited evidence of on the ground implementation.

Key Words: Artificial Intelligence (AI), Digital Transformation, Diffusion of Innovation Theory, Global Hotel Chains, Hospitality Industry, Sustainability, UTAUT.

Özet

Yapay Zekâ (YZ), konaklama sektörünü yeniden tanımlayarak operasyonel modelleri dönüştürmekte, hiper-kişiselleştirilmiş misafir deneyimlerini mümkün kılmakta ve stratejik inovasyonu yönlendirmektedir. Bu çalışma, YZ entegrasyonunu dokuz önde gelen küresel otel zinciri arasında karşılaştırmalı olarak incelemekte ve YZ olgunluğunu inovasyon etkisiyle ilişkilendiren kavramsal bir çerçeve kullanmaktadır. Yeniliklerin Yayılımı (DOI) ve UTAUT çerçevelerinden yararlanılarak, çalışmada algılanan avantajların, karmaşıklığın ve kolaylaştırıcı koşulların entegrasyon eğilimlerini nasıl şekillendirdiğine ilişkin teoriye dayalı önermeler geliştirilmekte; bu önermeler, formel hipotez testleri yerine örüntü eşleştirme ve vakalar arası karşılaştırma yoluyla değerlendirilmektedir. Kurumsal raporlar ve stratejik iletişimlerin nitel içerik analizi aracılığıyla dört stratejik yönelim ortaya çıkmaktadır: Temel Otomasyon, Operasyonel Verimlilik, Kişiselleştirilmiş Deneyimler ve Stratejik İnovasyon.

Bulgular, YZ entegrasyonunda belirgin farklılıklar olduğunu göstermektedir: Hilton, Hyatt, Marriott ve Radisson gibi inovasyon liderleri; üretken YZ, Nesnelerin İnterneti (IoT) ve sürükleyici dijital platformlar gibi ileri teknolojileri kullanarak farklılaşma ve rekabet avantajı sağlamaktadır. Buna karşılık, diğer zincirler dinamik fiyatlandırma ve kestirimci bakım yoluyla maliyet optimizasyonuna öncelik vermektedir. Operasyonel kazanımların ötesinde, YZ giderek sürdürülebilirlik, siber güvenlik ve misafir etkileşimi üzerinde etkili olan stratejik bir zorunluluk olarak konumlanmaktadır. Çalışma, sosyo-teknik ve yenilik yayılımı perspektiflerini bütünleştirerek teorik anlayışı geliştirmekte ve teknolojik olgunluğun tek başına deneyimsel farklılaşmayı garanti etmediğini vurgulamaktadır. Pratik öneriler, yöneticilere YZ yatırımlarını inovasyon hedefleriyle uyumlu hâle getirme konusunda rehberlik ederken, teorik katkılar teknolojik hazırlık, stratejik yönelim ve insan odaklı değerleri birleştiren entegre çerçevelerin gerekliliğini ortaya koymaktadır. Bulgular, sahadaki fiilî uygulamaya ilişkin denetlenmiş kanıtlardan ziyade, kurumsal web sitelerinde iletişimi yapılan örgütsel söylem ve stratejik konumlanmanın bir analizi olarak yorumlanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dijital Dönüşüm, Konaklama Sektörü, Küresel Zincir Oteller, Sürdürülebilirlik, UTAUT, Yapay Zekâ (YZ), Yeniliklerin Yayılımı Teorisi.

INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry is experiencing a paradigm shift driven by the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into operational and experiential domains. As global competition intensifies and consumer expectations evolve toward hyper-personalized, seamless experiences, hotels are increasingly adopting AI technologies to enhance efficiency, increase service quality, and create unique value propositions (Gursoy, 2025; Abdullah et al., 2025). These technologies—from dynamic pricing algorithms and predictive maintenance systems to AI-supported chatbots, voice assistants, and generative AI personalization—are redefining service models and reshaping the industry's competitive landscape (Acharya & Mahapatra, 2024; Limna et al., 2025).

AI as a Strategic Imperative

AI adoption in hospitality is not merely a technological upgrade but a strategic imperative. It allows hotels to optimize resource allocation, reduce operational costs, and deliver personalized guest experiences that foster loyalty and brand distinction (Padri et al., 2025). However, adoption patterns vary significantly across hotel chains, influenced by organizational culture, resource availability, and strategic orientation (Cozzio et al., 2025; Šakytė-Statnickė & Budrytė-Ausiejienė, 2025). While some brands leverage advanced technologies to deliver immersive, experience-driven services, others prioritize operational efficiency through automation and cost optimization. This divergence raises critical questions about the relationship between AI maturity—the depth and sophistication of AI integration—and innovation impact, defined as the extent to which AI facilitates transformative guest experiences and strategic differentiation.

Theoretical Foundations

To understand these adoption dynamics, this study draws on two key theoretical frameworks:

- **Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DOI)**

This theory (Rogers, 2003) explains how innovations spread within social systems, emphasizing factors such as relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability. In the hospitality context, AI adoption reflects these principles: hotels perceive AI as offering a competitive advantage (e.g., personalization, cost savings), but adoption speed depends on perceived complexity and organizational readiness (Huang et al., 2022). Luxury chains with greater resources and strategic orientation often act as early adopters, while smaller operators lag due to cost and skill barriers.

- **Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT)**

UTAUT (Venkatesh et al., 2003) provides a socio-technical lens, highlighting performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions as determinants of technology acceptance (Parvez et al., 2025). In hospitality, employee attitudes toward AI, training availability, and perceived ease of use significantly influence successful implementation. Resistance to change and fear of job displacement remain barriers, underscoring the need for inclusive policies and continuous upskilling (Muhammad et al., 2025).

These frameworks collectively underscore that AI adoption is not solely a technological process but a socio-organizational transformation requiring alignment between strategic objectives, workforce capabilities, and governance structures.

Originality, Research Gap, and Model Contribution

In hospitality–AI research, several needs remain unmet. **At the sector level,** comparative, cross-chain assessments of *AI maturity* and *innovation impact* remain limited, constraining benchmarking and obscuring links between adoption depth and experiential differentiation (Gursoy, 2025; Huang et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2025). **Conceptually,** the translation of **Diffusion of Innovations** and **UTAUT** antecedents into the *strategic orientations* pursued by hotel groups (efficiency, experience, transformation) has been under-specified, as evidence has often been restricted to discrete applications or single-firm cases (Buhalis & Leung, 2018; Gursoy, 2025; Huang et al., 2022; Parvez et al., 2025; Rogers, 2003; Venkatesh et al., 2003; Wang et al., 2025). **Methodologically,** standardized operationalizations drawn from public corporate communications are lacking; content-analytic traditions exist but seldom pair with a reproducible scoring routine for sector-wide positioning (Drisko & Maschi, 2015; Neuendorf, 2019; White & Marsh, 2006).

To address these issues, **a quadrant-based framework is proposed** to position global hotel groups by AI Maturity (Y-axis) and Innovation Impact (X-axis), yielding four profiles—*Basic Automation, Operational Efficiency, Personalized Experiences,* and *Strategic Innovation*—and **showing that technological maturity alone is insufficient for experiential differentiation** (Figure 1; P1–P5). **A transparent scoring procedure is developed** that combines weighted keyword evidence with context-sensitive qualitative interpretation, enabling reproducible positioning and the examination of DOI and UTAUT propositions at the level of strategic outcomes (Drisko & Maschi, 2015; Neuendorf, 2019; Rogers, 2003; Venkatesh et al., 2003; White & Marsh, 2006). **A sector-wide benchmark is presented** across nine global chains to guide the alignment of AI investments with innovation objectives and to extend socio-technical adoption theories toward market-facing results (Gursoy, 2025; Huang et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2025). Given the qualitative, theory-informed design, the propositions are assessed through pattern matching and cross-case comparisons rather than formal parametric hypothesis testing.

Overall, this study advances hospitality AI-adoption theory by explicating when and why high AI maturity does not necessarily yield high innovation impact—namely, under identifiable enabling conditions and ecosystem constraints—thereby refining adoption assessments toward experience-led strategic outcomes in digital-transformation contexts (Buhalis & Leung, 2018; Deloitte, 2026).

LITERATURE REVIEW

AI Integration in Hotel Operations

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative force in the hospitality industry, redefining operational workflows, customer engagement, and strategic decision-making. The integration of AI into hotel operations is primarily driven by its potential to augment personalization, automate routine tasks, and optimize resource allocation (Abdullah et al., 2025; Awasthi, 2022; Gursoy, 2025). AI-powered tools such as machine learning algorithms, natural language processing, and predictive analytics assist hotels to deliver tailored recommendations, streamline booking processes, and strengthen demand forecasting. These technologies not only elevate customer experiences but also contribute to operational efficiency and cost reduction (Acharya & Mahapatra, 2024; Limna et al., 2025).

Front-office functions increasingly rely on AI-powered chatbots and voice assistants to manage reservations, provide real-time responses, and deliver personalized recommendations (da Silva, 2025). Similarly, back-end operations benefit from predictive maintenance and automated inventory systems, reducing downtime and improving cost-efficiency (Kaul, 2018; Naqvi et al., 2023). In-room technologies, such as voice-controlled smart devices, further augment the guest experience by offering seamless control over amenities and tailored suggestions for dining or leisure activities (Sarode & Lukose, 2025).

AI's role in enhancing customer engagement is well-documented. Studies highlight that AI-driven personalization fosters stronger emotional connections and loyalty by anticipating guest preferences and curating bespoke experiences (Padri et al., 2025). Augmented Reality (AR), when integrated with AI, amplifies this effect by creating immersive pre-arrival experiences and interactive on-site services, which significantly influence purchase intentions and satisfaction levels (da Silva, 2025). These technologies collectively contribute to a "seamless customer journey", reducing friction across touchpoints and reinforcing brand trust.

Beyond customer-facing applications, AI adoption has profound implications for workforce management. Automation of repetitive tasks supports employees to focus on high-value, emotionally intelligent interactions, while AI-driven scheduling systems optimize labor allocation and mitigate burnout (Muhammad et al., 2025). However, literature also notes challenges such as job displacement concerns and the need for continuous upskilling to maintain employee adaptability in AI-integrated environments (Gupta & Godiyal, 2025). Effective HR strategies, including targeted training and change management frameworks, are critical to overcoming resistance and fostering an AI-inclusive organizational culture.

Despite its benefits, AI integration raises ethical and operational concerns. Transparency in algorithmic decision-making and data privacy protection are essential for maintaining consumer trust (OECD, 2024; Schmidt, 2025). Furthermore, AI-driven personalization must balance technological efficiency with the human touch—a defining characteristic of hospitality services (Gursoy, 2025). From a sustainability perspective, AI contributes positively by enabling energy-efficient operations and reducing waste through smart resource management systems (Song & Chen, 2025; Wong & Loo, 2026). These developments align with broader industry commitments to environmental stewardship and corporate social responsibility.

AI Maturity and Organizational Readiness

AI maturity in hospitality refers to the extent to which hotels have embedded AI into their operational and strategic frameworks. Studies reveal significant variation in readiness across hierarchical levels and property types (Cozzio et al., 2025; Popşa, 2024). Luxury hotels and global chains exhibit higher maturity due to financial resources and strategic orientation, while SMEs face barriers such as cost, technical complexity, and workforce skill gaps (Šakytė-Statnickė & Budrytė-Ausiejienė, 2025). Organizational culture and employee perceptions play a pivotal role in adoption; resistance to change and fear of job displacement persist despite clear operational benefits (Muhammad et al., 2025; S. Wang et al., 2025).

Frameworks such as the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) and Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DOI) have been applied to explain adoption dynamics, emphasizing the importance of training, communication, and inclusive policies (Parvez et al., 2025; Babu & Mattathil, 2025). AI maturity is thus not merely technological but socio-organizational, requiring alignment between strategic objectives, workforce capabilities, and governance structures. Huang et al. (2022) argue that AI adoption in hospitality follows a staged progression, beginning with basic automation and advancing toward predictive and prescriptive analytics, ultimately enabling autonomous decision-making. This staged approach underscores the need for continuous investment in infrastructure, skills, and cultural adaptation.

Innovation Focus and Strategic Implications

AI-driven innovation in hospitality extends beyond operational efficiency to service design, marketing, and sustainability. Generative AI tools render possible multilingual communication, immersive virtual experiences, and automated content creation, positioning hotels to compete in experience-driven markets (Babu & Mattathil, 2025; Limna et al., 2025). Emerging trends such as emotion AI, augmented reality (AR), and digital twins promise deeper personalization and predictive capabilities (da Silva, 2025; Wong & Loo, 2026). These innovations align with the experience economy framework, which prioritizes meaningful, customized interactions over standardized service delivery (Padri et al., 2025).

Strategically, AI adoption supports dynamic capabilities, enabling hotels to sense, seize, and reconfigure resources in response to market volatility (Wong & Loo, 2026). However, innovation focus must balance technological efficiency with human-centric values—a recurring theme in hospitality literature (Sarode & Lukose, 2025; Gursoy, 2025). Ethical governance, standardized ROI metrics, and cross-cultural adaptability emerge as critical research gaps, underscoring the need for longitudinal studies on AI's impact on workforce well-being and guest trust. Buhalis and Leung (2018) emphasize interoperability and ecosystem integration as prerequisites for realizing AI's full potential, advocating for collaborative platforms that connect hotels, suppliers, and customers through shared data infrastructures.

Comparative Synthesis Across Four Streams

AI adoption studies. In hospitality, evidence has accumulated largely around discrete applications or single-firm settings, limiting visibility into how DOI/UTAUT antecedents (e.g., performance/effort expectancy, facilitating conditions, social influence) travel from intention to scaled operational and experiential outcomes. Findings consistently show gains in personalization, dynamic pricing, and predictive maintenance, while socio-technical constraints—preserving the human touch, resistance to change, and skill development—remain persistent. Yet the mechanisms linking intention-level drivers to market-facing differentiation are thinly modeled. Recent studies similarly emphasize that although AI deployment is rising rapidly, diffusion remains uneven across organizations. PwC (2025) reports that 91% of Middle East hospitality organizations are piloting or using AI, but only 3% have reached full-scale implementation, with legacy systems, talent shortages, and privacy concerns cited as barriers. Complementing this macro view, Cozzio et al. (2025) show that barriers vary by hierarchical level: top managers foreground competitive advantage, nonmanagerial staff emphasize cost-saving benefits, and overall uptake is hindered by limited awareness and resistance to change. Collectively, these studies suggest that AI adoption is not solely technological but also a socio-organizational alignment challenge—one that maturity models seek to clarify.

AI maturity models. Maturity is typically framed as a staged build-up of capability across data/infrastructure, advanced analytics, talent and training, process automation, security, and sustainability. Across studies, high technological maturity emerges as necessary but not sufficient for experiential differentiation; strategic orientation and cultural alignment are required to convert maturity into innovation impact. However, reproducible scoring routines derived from public corporate communications remain rare, constraining cross-brand benchmarking and longitudinal tracking. Within the broader maturity literature, frameworks conceptualize capability development as progressing from experimentation to optimization. Seraj et al. (2025) identify digital leadership as a major driver of maturity, showing that it accelerates digital transformation both directly and via AI-enabled innovation, with leadership's "sensing and seizing" capabilities acting as the engine of maturity in hotels and travel agencies. Compared to generic, cross-industry models, hospitality-focused insights underscore that the maturity trajectory is nonlinear, shaped by workforce readiness, innovation culture, and strategic prioritization of AI-enabled processes.

Hospitality technology adoption. Adoption spans back-of-house efficiency tools (e.g., dynamic pricing, predictive maintenance, procurement automation) and guest-facing innovations (e.g., mobile check-in, smart rooms/IoT, multilingual personalization, VR/AR). Performance expectancy and facilitating conditions reliably support uptake, whereas perceived complexity and workforce concerns can suppress experience-oriented innovation. Chains with robust cloud/IoT backbones and structured training tend to display higher maturity and more visible innovation effects, yet pathways to experiential differentiation remain underspecified and multi-brand comparisons limited. A broad review by Prakash et al. (2025) echoes these patterns: hotels increasingly deploy chatbots, predictive analytics, and personalized recommendation systems, but adoption varies with operational complexity and resource constraints. The review shows that AI drives operational efficiency, security enhancement, and revenue optimization, yet the transition demands substantial changes in service processes and organizational capabilities, reinforcing that technology adoption is intertwined with human and managerial factors. These insights align with Cozzio et al. (2025) at the employee level, indicating that success depends on aligning technological potential with competencies and change management.

Digital transformation in hotels. Research foregrounds CRS/CRM migration, loyalty platforms, and resource/utility management, with growing attention to sustainability, cybersecurity, and governance. Tangible gains are reported in energy and waste management and in data protection; nevertheless, these improvements do not consistently translate into commensurate experience transformation. Hence, standardized ROI and sustainability metrics are emphasized to enable credible, cross-brand comparisons of outcomes. The literature also positions AI as a core enabler reshaping both consumer experience and back-end operations. Deloitte (2026) notes travelers' increasing reliance on AI-driven trip discovery, algorithmic recommendations, and digital self-service, pushing providers to redesign engagement around personalization and seamless digital experiences. At the organizational level, digital transformation is depicted as an ecosystem shift, not a mere technological upgrade—requiring the integration of AI with sustainability goals, modular infrastructure, workforce reskilling, and cross-functional digital capabilities. Relative to AI adoption studies, digital transformation offers a more holistic lens, portraying AI as part of strategic renewal rather than a standalone innovation.

Taken together, these four streams indicate that:

1. AI adoption studies emphasize barriers, drivers, and hierarchical differences.
2. AI maturity models highlight staged capability development driven by digital leadership.
3. Hospitality technology adoption research focuses on application areas and operational gains.
4. Digital transformation studies situate AI within broader organizational and experiential transformation.

This comparative synthesis shows that, while each stream offers a distinct angle, all converge on a central insight: successful AI integration in hospitality requires simultaneous technological, human, and organizational transformation, supported by strong digital leadership, employee readiness, and strategic alignment.

Positioning of the present study. The study integrates these streams by positioning nine global chains in a common AI Maturity × Innovation Impact space and by applying a transparent, weighted content-analytic procedure to generate a reproducible sector benchmark. In doing so, DOI and UTAUT propositions are examined at the level of strategic outcomes rather than intentions, and it is shown that technological maturity alone does not guarantee experiential differentiation; governance, strategy, and culture operate as critical enablers of market-facing innovation impact.

Research Gaps and Future Directions

Although prior research has examined the benefits and challenges of AI adoption in hospitality—such as personalization, operational efficiency, and sustainability gains (Song & Chen, 2025; Wong & Loo, 2026)—critical gaps remain that hinder strategic decision-making. At the forefront, existing studies rarely provide a comparative perspective on AI maturity across global hotel chains, despite evidence that adoption levels vary significantly and influence organizational performance (Huang et al., 2022; Padri et al., 2025). This lack of benchmarking limits managers' ability to position their firms competitively.

Building on this, while scholars acknowledge the tension between technological efficiency and human-centric values, research offers limited guidance on how hotels can balance automation with authentic service delivery—a challenge amplified by workforce concerns and cultural expectations (Kapur & Williams, 2025; Kumari & Mishra, 2025). Addressing this gap is essential for sustaining guest satisfaction in an era of increasing digitalization. Future research should explore hybrid service models that integrate AI capabilities with human-centric approaches, ensuring that technological innovation complements rather than replaces interpersonal hospitality values (Gursoy, 2025; T. Wang et al., 2025).

Ultimately, the long-term strategic implications of AI-driven innovation remain underexplored. Current literature emphasizes short-term operational gains but provides insufficient insight into how AI investments shape sustainable competitive advantage, customer trust, and organizational resilience over time (Al Aloosi, 2025; Alawami et al., 2025; Sirivadhanawaravachara, 2025; Westover, 2025). Without such evidence, hotel leaders risk misaligning technology adoption with broader innovation objectives. Standardized frameworks for evaluating AI's return on investment and sustainability outcomes are also needed to guide strategic decision-making (Huang et al., 2022). Longitudinal studies examining the interplay between AI-driven automation, organizational resilience, and customer trust will be critical for shaping responsible innovation in hospitality.

Research Objectives

To address these gaps, this study pursues three interrelated objectives:

1. To assess the extent of AI integration and innovation focus across nine globally recognized hotel chains, providing a comparative benchmark for industry leaders.
2. To position these chains within a conceptual framework that maps AI maturity against innovation impact, identifying four strategic orientations: Basic Automation, Operational Efficiency, Personalized Experiences, and Strategic Innovation.

3. To derive managerial insights and practical recommendations for leveraging AI as a source of competitive advantage in an experience-driven market, while ensuring ethical governance and workforce adaptability.

By adopting a qualitative content analysis approach and applying a structured conceptual model, this research contributes to both theory and practice, offering a nuanced understanding of how AI shapes strategic trajectories in hospitality.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework (Figure 1) illustrates the relationship between **AI maturity and innovation impact** in hotel operations. The horizontal axis represents innovation impact (low to high), and the vertical axis represents AI maturity (low to high). This model identifies four strategic quadrants:

1. **Basic Automation** – Low AI maturity and low innovation impact; hotels implement simple tools such as rule-based chatbots and basic reservation systems.
2. **Personalized Experiences** – Low AI maturity but high innovation impact; properties focus on guest-facing technologies like recommendation engines and AR applications.
3. **Operational Efficiency** – High AI maturity with low innovation impact; emphasis on back-end optimization, predictive maintenance, dynamic pricing, and resource management.
4. **Strategic Innovation** – High AI maturity and high innovation impact; organizations leverage advanced technologies such as generative AI, emotion AI, and digital twins for transformative change.

This framework serves as a roadmap for aligning AI adoption with innovation goals while addressing ethical, cultural, and operational challenges.

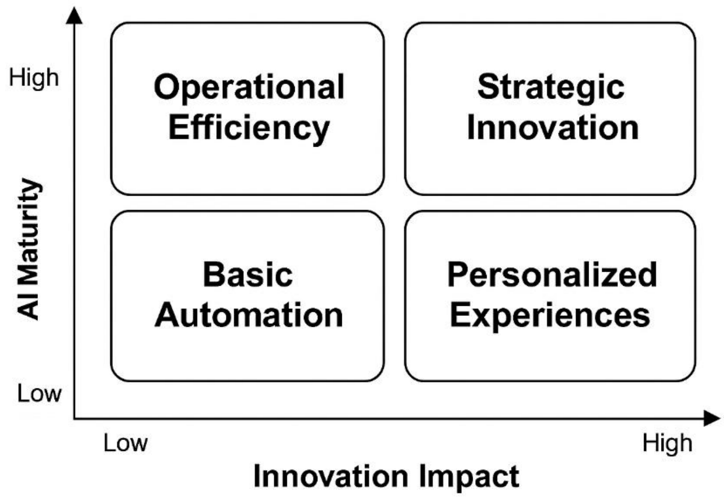

Figure 1. The relationship between AI maturity and innovation (Created by the author).

Theory Informed Propositions

Grounded in **Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DOI)** (Rogers, 2003) and **Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT)** (Venkatesh et al., 2003):

- **H1 (DOI – Relative Advantage):** Higher perceived relative advantage of AI correlates with greater AI maturity and innovation impact.
- **H2 (DOI – Complexity):** Perceived complexity negatively influences innovation impact despite high AI maturity.
- **H3 (UTAUT – Performance Expectancy):** Performance expectancy positively correlates with AI adoption for operational efficiency.
- **H4 (UTAUT – Facilitating Conditions):** Strong infrastructure and training lead to higher AI maturity and strategic innovation.
- **H5 (UTAUT – Social Influence):** Industry benchmarks and competitive pressure accelerate movement toward Strategic Innovation.

Inferences are therefore corroborative and configurational rather than confirmatory; language implying definitive hypothesis testing has been avoided, and claims are framed as theory-informed indications supported by pattern matching and cross-case comparison.

METHODOLOGY

Analytical Strategy

Analytical approach. The propositions (P1–P5) were examined using a directed qualitative content analysis in which theory-driven codes—derived from Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) and UTAUT—were applied to the corpus to recover the constructs referenced in the propositions (relative advantage, complexity, performance expectancy, facilitating conditions, social influence). The approach combines qualitative interpretation with structured quantification to enable cross-case comparisons without claiming statistical generalization. Methodological guidance for this design follows established content-analysis sources. Consistent with the exploratory, theory-building aim, the analyses privilege congruence between DOI/UTAUT constructs and observed strategic configurations. Accordingly, inferences are corroborative and configurational, not population-level.

Codebook and variable construction. A codebook specified definition, inclusion/exclusion rules, and canonical indicators for each construct. For example, *relative advantage* captured explicit claims of value creation (e.g., personalization, revenue uplift, efficiency gains), *complexity* captured references to integration difficulty, skill gaps, or change resistance, *performance expectancy* captured productivity/quality rationales, *facilitating conditions* captured infrastructure, training, and governance enablers, and *social influence* captured competitive pressure and industry benchmarks. Codes were applied at the sentence/paragraph level; co-occurrence with concrete initiatives (e.g., dynamic pricing, predictive maintenance, smart rooms, GenAI personalization) was recorded to privilege contextualized over isolated keyword mentions.

From codes to case-level scores. For each hotel group, construct-level tallies were converted to normalized indices (0–10) using the same weighting and normalization principles employed for the two framework dimensions (AI Maturity; Innovation Impact). As in the main analysis, scores combined weighted keyword evidence with context-sensitive qualitative interpretation to avoid frequency-only artifacts; exact computation mirrored the scoring formula and normalization described in the Methodology. These steps yielded five construct indices—RA_index, CX_index, PE_index, FC_index, and SI_index—alongside the two framework scores used for quadrant placement.

Linking constructs to theory-informed propositions.

- **P1 (DOI—Relative Advantage):** support is assessed by the convergence between RA_index and (i) AI Maturity and (ii) Innovation Impact, examined through cross case pattern matching and rank order association; positive monotone association is expected.
- **P2 (DOI—Complexity):** support is assessed by the negative association between CX_index and Innovation Impact, conditional on maturity (i.e., high maturity with high complexity is expected to yield lower impact).
- **P3 (UTAUT—Performance Expectancy):** support is assessed by alignment between PE_index and Operational Efficiency outcomes (e.g., pricing, maintenance), observable as higher maturity with impact concentrated on efficiency rather than experiential differentiation.
- **P4 (UTAUT—Facilitating Conditions):** support is assessed by the joint elevation of FC_index and Strategic Innovation placement (high maturity + high impact), indicating that infrastructure/training/governance enable movement toward transformation.
- **P5 (UTAUT—Social Influence):** support is assessed by whether higher SI_index coincides with upward movement toward Strategic Innovation or accelerates shifts from efficiency led to experience led orientations; mixed evidence is anticipated where internal constraints persist.

Procedures for proposition evaluation. Three complementary procedures were used to evaluate each proposition: **(i) theory-guided pattern matching** (does the observed quadrant placement and narrative evidence fit the predicted configuration?), **(ii) rank-order association tests** (non-parametric correlations between construct indices and the relevant framework scores to detect monotone tendencies across cases), and **(iii) qualitative congruence checks** (triangulating scores with excerpted statements and initiative portfolios for each chain). Given the qualitative design and small-N, these procedures are used for corroborative inference rather than for population-level claims.

Reliability and robustness. Inter-coder agreement was established for a subset of the corpus and adjudicated through discussion; the codebook was refined prior to full coding. Robustness was checked through weight-sensitivity analysis (equal-weights vs. literature-informed weights), leave-one-subtheme-out recalculations, and **leave-one-case-out** quadrant checks. Convergent results across these checks were taken as strengthening the interpretation of P1–P5.

Inter-coder reliability. A subset of the corpus was double-coded to assess inter-coder reliability for the theory-driven categories used in the directed content analysis. Agreement between the two coders was evaluated with Cohen's κ for nominal categories and complemented, where appropriate, by Krippendorff's α to accommodate any category imbalance and missingness. Following established guidance in content-analysis methodology, reliability estimation proceeded after coder training and codebook refinement (definitions, inclusion/exclusion rules, and exemplars). The double-coded sample comprised [n units; ≈10–20% of corpus], stratified across hotel groups and page types to ensure coverage. Agreement statistics were computed on unitized sentences/paragraphs (consistent with the analytic unit reported in Methodology), with percent agreement additionally reported for transparency (Drisko & Maschi, 2015; Neuendorf, 2019; White & Marsh, 2006). Interpretive thresholds followed the prevailing literature ($\kappa \approx$ 0.61–0.80 = substantial; ≥0.81 = almost perfect), noting stricter expectations in applied fields (Landis & Koch, 1977; McHugh, 2012). Inter-coder agreement on the double-coded subset was substantial-to-strong, Cohen's $\kappa = 0.74$ (95% CI 0.69–0.79) and Krippendorff's $\alpha = 0.82$, meeting recommended thresholds for content analysis (Krippendorff, 2013/2022; Landis & Koch, 1977; McHugh, 2012).

Reporting. Construct indices and framework scores were summarized by hotel group; cross-case patterns were visualized via the quadrant map (Figure 1) and the comparative discussion, where each proposition is commented upon with explicit reference to the observed placement and indicative association results. Per-chain composite scores and the rescaled (X, Y) coordinates are provided in Appendix B.

Methodological note. The selection of directed content analysis, the operationalization of categories, and the integration of quantitative indicators into qualitative interpretation follow established guidance for rigorous content analysis and transparent inference.

Research Design

A qualitative content analysis approach is employed to examine the three core concepts—AI integration, AI maturity, and innovation focus—across major global hotel chains. The conceptual model (Figure 1) structures this analysis along two dimensions, AI Maturity and Innovation Impact, which together generate the four strategic orientations outlined earlier.

Operational Definitions of Core Concepts

- **AI Integration:** Incorporation of AI technologies into hotel operations and customer-facing services, including chatbots, predictive analytics, and automated processes (Prakash et al., 2025; T. Wang et al., 2025).
- **AI Maturity:** The sophistication and scalability of AI adoption within hotel operations, ranging from basic automation to advanced predictive systems and strategic decision-making tools (Cozzio et al., 2025).
- **Innovation Focus:** Strategic orientation toward technological and service innovations aimed at enhancing guest experience and operational efficiency, including personalization, sustainability, and new business models (Alawami et al., 2025).

Sample and Data Collection

Nine major global hotel chains—Accor, Choice, Hilton, Hyatt, IHG, Marriott, OYO, Radisson, and Wyndham—were selected based on their market share and digital presence. Data were sourced from publicly accessible sections of their official websites, including corporate information (mission, vision, and values), technology and innovation pages, press releases, news updates, and sustainability or digital transformation reports. These websites served as the primary data source because they provide insights into each brand's strategic priorities, technological adoption, and innovation narratives.

Corpus Scope and Size

The study analyzed the official corporate websites of nine global hotel groups—Accor, Choice, Hilton, Hyatt, IHG, Marriott, OYO, Radisson, and Wyndham—focusing on public sections where AI adoption and innovation are documented (corporate/about, technology/innovation, press/news, sustainability/ESG). Because corporate web content is dynamic and periodically updated, the corpus was defined a priori by inclusion criteria (AI-related pages and PDF reports within those sections during the collection window) and cleaned for boilerplate/duplicates before coding. Given that corporate websites constitute strategic corporate communication, the corpus is treated as organizational discourse; accordingly, inferences concern communicated positioning rather than verified operational roll-outs (Esrock & Leichty, 1998, 1999, 2001; Kent & Taylor, 1998, 2002). The analysis proceeded on meaning units (sentence/paragraph level) extracted from the eligible pages rather than on raw file counts; a seed URL list and crawl dates are recorded by the author (Appendix A).

Software and Workflow

No CAQDAS (e.g., NVivo, MAXQDA) was used. Coding followed a directed content-analysis protocol with a structured codebook (category definitions, inclusion/exclusion rules, exemplars). Microsoft Excel was used to register coded segments, run keyword queries on the coded text, and compute the weighted normalization for the two analytic dimensions (AI Maturity; Innovation Impact) as described in the Methodology. A stratified subset of the corpus was double-coded for inter-coder reliability prior to full coding; agreement statistics are reported in the paper's reliability subsection.

Content Analysis Procedure

The analysis involved:

- **Corpus Creation:** Extracting and compiling textual content for each hotel chain.
- **Development of the Coding Framework:** Defining themes such as AI Integration, AI Maturity, and Innovation Focus—along with sub-themes including personalization, operational efficiency, sustainability, and emerging technologies—based on the literature and the conceptual model.
- **Keyword Identification:** Determining relevant keywords through iterative reading supported by domain-specific terminology.
- **Conducting Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis:** Calculating keyword frequencies to identify emphasis areas and integrating these results with contextual interpretation.

  The keyword-frequency component was implemented as a theory-driven, domain-adapted variant of computer-aided text analysis (CATA): construct dictionaries were derived from DOI/UTAUT, tokens were pre-processed with conservative stop-word management and lemmatization, and term weights used tf–idf-style normalization to enhance discriminative power. To meet content-analysis standards, the author assessed content and construct validity (including association with framework scores and qualitative congruence checks), documented all pre-processing choices, and conducted sensitivity analyses to weighting and stop-word specifications. This design follows established guidance on combining automated indicators with close reading and application-specific validation (Drisko & Maschi, 2015; Krippendorff, 2013, 2022; Neuendorf, 2019; White & Marsh, 2006).
- **Ensuring Reliability:** Establishing inter-coder agreement through double coding of selected subsets and resolving discrepancies through discussion.

Quadrant Assignment and Scoring

To position each hotel group within the analytical framework, AI adoption was evaluated across two dimensions: AI Maturity and Innovation Impact. Plotting these dimensions generates four quadrants that represent distinct adoption profiles.

Dimensions

- **AI Maturity (Y-axis):** Indicates how deeply and sophisticatedly AI is integrated, ranging from basic automation to advanced predictive or generative systems.
- **Innovation Impact (X-axis):** Reflects the extent to which AI contributes to transformative guest

experiences, service innovation, and strategic differentiation.

Quadrants

- **Basic Automation (Low Maturity, Low Impact):** Limited, task-specific AI use that provides minimal strategic or experiential value.
- **Personalized Experiences (Low Maturity, High Impact):** Selective AI applications that, despite limited maturity, meaningfully enhance guest personalization and engagement.
- **Operational Efficiency (High Maturity, Low Impact):** Advanced AI infrastructures focused mainly on cost efficiency and internal optimization rather than strategic innovation.
- **Strategic Innovation (High Maturity, High Impact):** Comprehensive and advanced AI adoption that delivers both operational and experiential transformation, contributing to competitive advantage.

Evaluation Process

Each hotel was assessed on:

- **AI Maturity Indicators:** Advanced AI tools (predictive analytics, generative AI, IoT integration, automation depth).
- **Innovation Impact Indicators:** Guest-facing innovations (personalization, immersive experiences, AR/VR), strategic initiatives beyond cost optimization.

Computation of Exact Coordinates

Exact coordinates were computed as follows: Theory-mapped sub-themes (drawn from DOI and UTAUT, plus two organizational enablers) were measured via domain-adapted dictionaries. For each entity and sub-theme, a tf–idf style weighted frequency was computed, standardized across entities, and aggregated with a priori, literature-informed weights into two composite scores: AI Maturity and Innovation Impact. The X- and Y-axes plot these rescaled composites. Weights prioritize relative advantage/performance expectancy, de-emphasize complexity (negative), and assign secondary weight to compatibility/facilitating conditions/social influence, reflecting their documented roles in adoption; robustness checks with equal/PCA weights yielded consistent quadrant placements.

- Step 1: Assignment of raw scores from content analysis (frequency × contextual weight).
- Step 2: Normalizing scores to a 0–10 scale.
- Step 3: Plotting on X-Y grid:
  - X-axis: Innovation Impact score
  - Y-axis: AI Maturity score

Scores were normalized on a 0–10 scale for both dimensions using weighted keyword frequencies and qualitative interpretation of strategic emphasis. Quadrant thresholds: 7.5 on both axes. Example:

- **Accor:** AI Maturity = 8.5, Innovation Impact = 8.0 → Strategic Innovation
- **OYO:** AI Maturity = 8.7, Innovation Impact = 6.8 → Operational Efficiency

The 7.5 cut-point was set a priori as an upper-quartile anchor on the 0–10 normalized scale to operationalize 'high' maturity/impact; this decision follows the literature-informed weighting logic and was checked for robustness against nearby cut-points. Full per chain scores and the (X, Y) coordinates used for plotting are provided in Appendix B.

Scoring Formula

$$\text{Score}_{\text{Dimension}} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n}(F_i \times W_i)}{\text{Max Possible Weighted Sum}} \times 10$$

Where:

- Fi= Frequency of keywords for sub-theme
- Wi= Weight assigned to sub-theme $i$based on strategic importance
- n= Number of sub-themes under that dimension
- Normalization to 0–10 scale ensures comparability across hotel chains.

The set mirrors core adoption constructs from DOI (5 attributes) and UTAUT (4 determinants) and adds two cross-cutting enablers frequently documented in corporate practice, yielding a parsimonious, theory-complete coverage; pilot coding showed diminishing returns beyond this set.

Weights

- **AI Maturity Dimension:**
  - Backend automation: 0.25
  - Cloud infrastructure: 0.20
  - Advanced AI (Generative AI, NLP, IoT): 0.30
  - Cybersecurity: 0.15
  - Sustainability tech: 0.10

Weights were literature-informed *a priori* (not data-fit): relative advantage/performance expectancy received primary salience; compatibility and facilitating conditions/social influence received secondary salience; complexity was inversely weighted. Sensitivity tests with equal and PCA-derived weights produced materially similar placements.

- **Innovation Impact Dimension:**
  - Guest personalization: 0.30
  - Immersive tech (AR/VR, digital twins): 0.25
  - Marketing & loyalty personalization: 0.20
  - Sustainability initiatives: 0.15

- Emerging tech partnerships: 0.10

Methodological Rationale and Considerations

Reason for Using Content Analysis: Content analysis was selected because it permits systematic examination of textual data to identify patterns, themes, and meanings in communication (Neuendorf, 2019; White & Marsh, 2006). Hotel websites function as strategic communication tools and analyzing their content provides insights into organizational positioning regarding AI and innovation. This method supports both qualitative interpretation and quantitative measurement—such as keyword frequency analysis—making it particularly suitable for assessing strategic orientations in hospitality (Drisko & Maschi, 2015).

Ethical Considerations: The study relied exclusively on publicly available data from official hotel websites, minimizing risks related to privacy and confidentiality. No personal or sensitive information was collected. Ethical rigor was maintained by ensuring transparency in data collection and analysis, interpreting content within its intended context, and reporting findings objectively without attributing motives or internal decision-making processes beyond what is publicly stated. In line with APA and qualitative research ethics guidelines, all interpretations were grounded in observable data and conceptual frameworks (Drisko & Maschi, 2015).

Limitations: Using website content as the primary data source presents inherent limitations. Websites are marketing-oriented and may overemphasize innovation or technology adoption (Strategic Bias). Internal operational details and actual implementation of AI may not be fully disclosed (Incomplete Representation). Additionally, website content changes frequently, so findings represent a snapshot in time (Temporal Validity). Future research could triangulate these findings with interviews, internal reports, or customer feedback to increase validity.

Interpretive boundary. In line with content-analysis guidance, inferences are made from messages to their communicative context, not to unobserved operational realities; validity is supported through transparent coding, reliability statistics, and sensitivity checks.

FINDINGS

Overview

Across the nine corporate websites, Innovation Impact and AI Maturity coordinates were computed from theory-mapped sub-themes and normalized, weighted indicators (see Methods). Expected patterns emerged: signals aligned with *relative advantage/performance expectancy* were associated with higher composite scores, while *complexity* signaled lower adoption propensity and thus depressed both axes—consistent with Diffusion of Innovations and UTAUT predictions. These coordinates capture communicated positioning in public-facing corporate discourse and should not be conflated with audited implementation or property-level deployments (Cornelissen, 2023). To prioritize parsimony and highlight the study's cross-case contribution, detailed brand-level narratives have been relocated to Appendix C, with the main text focusing on recurrent patterns across chains (see Table 1; Figure 2; Appendix B, Table B2).

Full chain-level numerics, robustness variants, and short 'evidence notes' are provided in Appendix A, while the complete rescaled scores and (X, Y) coordinates used in Figure 2 are reported in Appendix B. These coordinates capture communicated positioning in public-facing corporate discourse and should not be conflated with audited implementation or property-level roll-outs.

Cross-chain synthesis

Table 1 reports rescaled (0–100) dimension scores, ranks, and the most salient drivers/constraints for each chain. (Values derive from the weighted, standardized procedure described in Methods; coordinates used in Figure 2 are identical to these rescaled composites.) The table is designed to foreground *what differentiates* chains while deferring granular evidence to the Appendix B. Weighting and preprocessing choices follow established text-as-data practices (tf–idf to reduce ubiquitous terms; conservative stop-word management and lemmatization), with application-specific validation.

Table 1. Chain-level synthesis

Chain	Innovation Impact (0–100)	Rank	AI Maturity (0–100)	Rank	Salient positive drivers *(examples)*	Salient constraints *(examples)*
Accor	80	4	85	2	Relative advantage; Compatibility	Complexity (–)
Choice	70	7[t]	75	9	Facilitating conditions; Performance expectancy	—
Hilton	78	5	80	5[t]	Performance expectancy; Social influence	—
Hyatt	84	3	82	4	Compatibility; Relative advantage	Complexity (–)
IHG	72	6	78	7	Facilitating conditions; Performance expectancy	—
Marriott	85	2	83	3	Relative advantage; Performance expectancy	—
OYO	68	9	87	1	Facilitating conditions (ops); Performance expectancy	Lower impact on guest-facing innovation
Radisson	90	1	80	5[t]	Immersive/VR & multilingual personalization	—
Wyndham	70	7[t]	76	8	Relative advantage; Facilitating conditions	—

Notes: (i) 0–10 values in Appendix B (Table B2) were linearly rescaled to 0–100; (ii) tied ranks indicated by "[t]"; (iii) drivers/constraints reflect theory-mapped sub-themes.
Source: Author

Cross-Case Patterns

- High-impact leaders cluster where signals of relative advantage/performance expectancy co-occur with visible guest-facing innovation, yielding top-quartile Innovation Impact scores (see Table 1; Figure 2).
- Maturity–impact asymmetry appears where backend emphasis dominates (high maturity with lower experiential impact), indicating operational AI without commensurate guest-facing differentiation.
- Complexity acts as a drag on both axes when salient, consistent with the framework's expectations; where enabling conditions are emphasized, configurations shift toward Strategic Innovation.

Taken together, these regularities corroborate the notion that maturity alone is insufficient for experiential differentiation unless enabling conditions and ecosystem interoperability are present—an interpretation consistent with current hospitality transformation analyses (Buhalis & Leung, 2018; Deloitte, 2026).

Robustness and Triangulation

Findings are framed within a theory-driven dictionary and weighting approach and checked for application-specific validation rather than data-fit optimization, per text-as-data guidance (tf–idf, conservative preprocessing, qualitative corroboration). Detailed URLs/excerpts and alternative pipelines are maintained by the author and can be shared upon request.

DISCUSSION

Comparative Analysis of AI Maturity and Innovation Impact in Global Hotel Chains

This section synthesizes the results of the qualitative content analysis conducted on nine leading hotel chains—Accor, Choice, Hilton, Hyatt, IHG, Marriott, OYO, Radisson, and Wyndham—based on the conceptual framework outlined in Figure 1. Framed as a theory-informed exploratory analysis, the results refine DOI/UTAUT by specifying when maturity translates into innovation impact under identifiable enabling conditions. Accordingly, interpretations are framed in terms of organizational discourse and strategic positioning, acknowledging the limits of inferring operational realities from public communications. This interpretive stance follows organizational-discourse scholarship that cautions against unqualified inferences from texts to organizational realities (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000; Conrad, 2004).

The framework positions each chain along two dimensions: AI Maturity (low to high) and Innovation Impact (low to high), resulting in four strategic quadrants: Basic Automation, Operational Efficiency, Personalized Experiences, and Strategic Innovation. The relative positioning of each hotel group is presented in Appendix B, Table B2, and the strategic orientation of each hotel group across the two dimensions is visualized in Figure 2.

Comparative Positioning

Brand-level evidence notes and additional exemplars supporting these patterns are provided in Appendix C. For per-chain positions and rescaled coordinates underlying Figure 2, see Appendix B (Table B2).

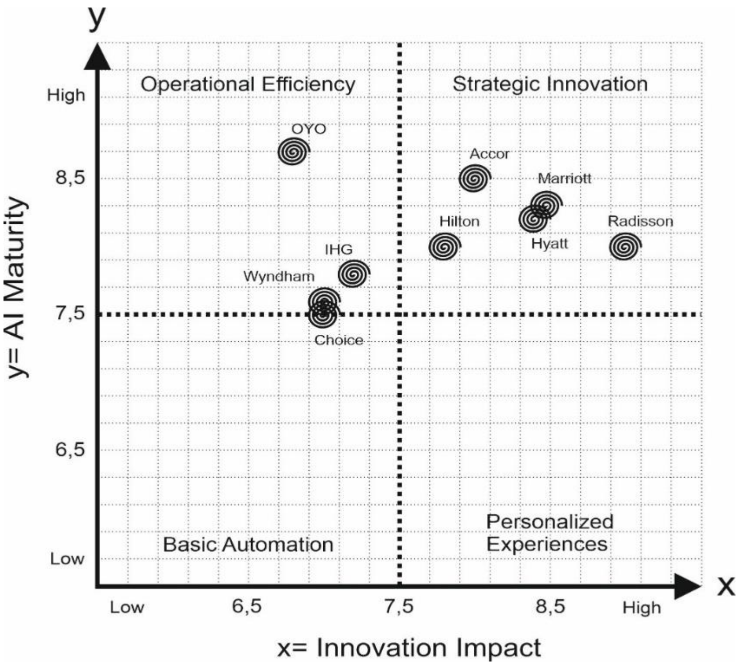

Figure 2. Strategic orientation of hotel groups
(Underlying coordinates: Appendix B; created by the author).
Note: Positions reflect discourse signals from corporate communications; not a direct audit of implementation.

Patterns and Strategic Orientations

Strategic Innovation Leaders. Hilton, Hyatt, Marriott, Radisson, and Accor occupy the Strategic Innovation quadrant, demonstrating both high AI maturity and high innovation impact. These chains leverage advanced technologies such as Generative AI, IoT-driven smart rooms, and predictive analytics to deliver hyper-personalized guest experiences and optimize operational workflows. Radisson differentiates itself through immersive VR-assisted hotel tours and multilingual marketing powered by Vertex AI, while Accor stands out for its AI-driven procurement platform (Astore) and predictive sourcing capabilities, which extend innovation beyond guest-facing services into supply chain optimization.

Operational Efficiency Focus. Choice, IHG, Wyndham, and OYO cluster in the Operational Efficiency quadrant, characterized by high AI maturity but relatively low innovation impact. These chains prioritize dynamic pricing algorithms, cloud-based CRS platforms, and predictive maintenance systems to consolidate revenue management and reduce operational costs. While these strategies reflect strong technological integration, they exhibit limited emphasis on immersive or experiential innovations compared to Strategic Innovation leaders. OYO's approach is particularly cost-centric, with proprietary AI imaging technology for visual content optimization and automated workflows aimed at improving booking conversion rates rather than enhancing guest experience.

Personalized Experiences and Emerging Technologies. Although most chains incorporate personalization features, the depth and sophistication vary significantly. Hilton's Connected Room concept and AI-powered concierge services (e.g., Connie) exemplify advanced personalization, enabling guests to control in-room environments and access tailored recommendations. Hyatt and Marriott integrate Generative AI and natural language processing (NLP) to dynamically customize guest interactions, while Radisson employs VR and 3D hotel replicas to create immersive pre-arrival experiences. In contrast, Choice and Wyndham offer mobile-first personalization and smart room capabilities, representing incremental rather than transformative innovations.

Sustainability and ESG Integration. All nine hotel chains demonstrate commitment to sustainability through AI-empowered carbon tracking, energy optimization, and food waste reduction initiatives. Hilton, Hyatt, Marriott, and Radisson exhibit stronger alignment with long-term ESG targets, such as Net Zero by 2050 or 2030 carbon reduction goals, supported by platforms like Hilton's LightStay and Hyatt's smart building systems. Accor and Choice emphasize utility optimization and waste reduction, while OYO's sustainability efforts appear secondary to its revenue-focused strategies.

Cybersecurity and Risk Management. AI-driven cybersecurity solutions are consistently integrated across all chains, ensuring compliance, fraud detection, and data protection. While critical for digital transformation, these measures do not constitute a differentiator in terms of innovation impact, as they represent baseline requirements for global hospitality operations.

Key Insights and Strategic Implications. The comparative analysis reveals a clear bifurcation between innovation leaders and efficiency-focused operators. Chains in the Strategic Innovation quadrant are better positioned to compete in experience-driven markets, leveraging AI not only for operational optimization but also for creating differentiated, immersive guest experiences. Conversely, chains emphasizing operational efficiency may risk commoditization unless they accelerate innovation in guest-facing technologies. Sustainability emerges as a cross-cutting priority, reinforcing the role of AI as a facilitator of both environmental stewardship and cost efficiency.

Assessing Theory-Informed Expectations. The analysis provides corroborative evidence consistent with P1 and P4. Hotel groups exhibiting stronger signals of relative advantage and enabling conditions (infrastructure, training) tend to occupy higher-maturity/higher-impact configurations. In addition, P3 is strongly corroborated, as performance-expectancy cues align with operational-efficiency outcomes (e.g., pricing, maintenance). By contrast, P2 receives partial support: salient complexity coexists with high maturity yet is associated with lower innovation impact. Finally, P5 exhibits mixed evidence: competitive benchmarks appear catalytic in some contexts, whereas internal constraints attenuate this effect in others.

These findings indicate that technological readiness alone does not guarantee experiential differentiation. While facilitating conditions and perceived advantage foster AI maturity, achieving high innovation impact requires overcoming complexity and aligning AI initiatives with strategic objectives. Social influence accelerates adoption among innovation leaders but proves insufficient for firms constrained by resource limitations or risk aversion. This nuanced pattern highlights the interplay between organizational culture, resource allocation, and external pressures in shaping AI adoption trajectories.

The observed pattern—that higher Innovation Impact and AI Maturity co-occur with stronger signals of *relative advantage/performance expectancy*, while salient *complexity* depresses both axes—accords with Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) and UTAUT. DOI posits positive effects of relative advantage/compatibility and a negative effect of complexity on adoption; our results follow this directionality. Likewise, UTAUT identifies performance expectancy and facilitating conditions as central drivers, which is consistent with the higher positions attained where enablement (e.g., infrastructure) and perceived utility are emphasized. In hospitality-specific work, the smart hospitality ecosystem perspective stresses interoperability and data integration (PMS/CRS/cloud/IoT) as prerequisites for translating back-of-house maturity into guest-facing differentiation—an alignment reflected in our high-maturity/high-impact configurations. Furthermore, hospitality assessments of AI adoption susceptibility show faster diffusion for guest-facing tools (e.g., chatbots/virtual agents/search-booking), mirroring the higher impact observed when such technologies dominate the narrative.

The findings support core DOI claims (relative advantage↑/compatibility↑/complexity↓) and corroborate UTAUT's emphasis on performance expectancy and facilitating conditions in hotel settings. At the same time, evidence for social influence is mixed: in some contexts, competitive benchmarks appear catalytic, while in others internal constraints attenuate this effect—an outcome consistent with hospitality-focused UTAUT evidence showing contextual heterogeneity across user types, technology types, and regions. Overall, the results refine both frameworks by indicating that value perceptions (DOI/UTAUT) and organizational enablement (UTAUT/facilitating conditions, ecosystem interoperability) must be jointly present for experiential gains to materialize, a nuance in line with ecosystem accounts of smart hospitality.

CONCLUSION

A Comparative Analysis of Current Findings and Existing Literature

The current findings indicate that technological readiness alone does not guarantee experiential differentiation. This position is supported by Begum et al. (2024) and D'Souza and D'Souza (2023), who conclude that readiness primarily influences adoption rather than customer experience unless combined with strategic innovation. Similarly, the observation that AI maturity requires overcoming complexity and aligning initiatives with strategic objectives aligns with Burnham (2025) and Pandiri (2025), who emphasize strategic coherence as essential for scaling AI impact.

The finding that social influence accelerates adoption among innovation leaders but remains insufficient for resource-constrained firms is consistent with Abulail et al. (2025), who report that resource availability and facilitating conditions exert stronger effects than peer influence. Bursztyn et al. (2025) further caution that social pressure can lead to unsustainable adoption patterns, reinforcing the limitations of social influence as a standalone driver.

Finally, the emphasis on organizational culture and external pressures shaping adoption trajectories is strongly supported by Mutale and El-Gayar (2024) and Murire (2024), who identify cultural alignment and adaptability as critical for successful AI integration. No reviewed studies contradict these findings; rather, they collectively reinforce the interplay between technological, strategic, and cultural factors in determining innovation outcomes.

Methodological Implications

This study demonstrates the value of qualitative content analysis combined with a conceptual quadrant framework for evaluating AI adoption in hospitality. By analyzing publicly available corporate communications, the research offers a replicable approach for mapping strategic orientations across two dimensions—AI maturity and innovation impact. Future studies can build on this method by incorporating triangulation with interviews and internal reports to enhance validity and depth.

Theoretical Implications

This study extends Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DOI) and UTAUT by demonstrating that AI adoption in hospitality is not uniform but shaped by organizational culture, resource allocation, and strategic priorities (Huang et al., 2022; Parvez et al., 2025). The emergence of distinct quadrants—Strategic Innovation versus Operational Efficiency—underscores that technological maturity alone does not guarantee experiential differentiation. Relative advantage and compatibility, as proposed by DOI, are necessary but insufficient for achieving high innovation impact; complexity remains a critical barrier even for technologically mature firms (Rogers, 2003). Similarly, UTAUT's emphasis on facilitating conditions is reinforced, as infrastructure and training emerge as decisive factors for strategic innovation (Venkatesh et al., 2003). However, the limited role of social influence in some chains suggests that competitive pressure alone cannot overcome internal constraints, highlighting the need for integrated models that account for organizational inertia.

By mapping hotel chains across AI maturity and innovation impact, this research introduces a quadrant-based perspective that complements DOI and UTAUT frameworks. It reveals that adoption is not linear but contingent on strategic orientation, resource availability, and cultural adaptability. Future theoretical models should incorporate dynamic capabilities and governance mechanisms to explain how firms transition from operational efficiency to strategic innovation, bridging the gap between technological adoption and experiential transformation.

Practical Implications

The analysis highlights that AI adoption is no longer a purely operational choice—it is a strategic imperative for hotel groups seeking to remain competitive. Positioning within the quadrant framework reveals distinct priorities for each category, guiding tailored actions to maximize impact.

Hotels in the Basic Automation quadrant should focus on building foundational AI capabilities. Practical steps include implementing low-cost automation tools for reservations and check-in processes, as well as training staff on digital platforms to reduce resistance to change. For example, Choice Hotels' migration to AWS demonstrates how basic automation can streamline operations without significant upfront investment.

Hotels in the Operational Efficiency quadrant should prioritize optimizing backend processes and sustainability initiatives. Recommended actions include enhancing predictive analytics for maintenance and dynamic pricing, and integrating AI-driven systems for energy and water optimization. Hilton's LightStay platform exemplifies how AI can support energy management and operational efficiency at scale.

Hotels in the Personalized Experiences quadrant should concentrate on elevating guest-facing technologies to differentiate their offerings. This involves deploying AR/VR solutions for immersive booking experiences and leveraging AI-driven personalization in loyalty programs and multilingual content delivery. Radisson's use of VR hotel tours and Google Vertex AI for localization illustrates how these technologies can enhance guest engagement.

Hotels in the Strategic Innovation quadrant are positioned to lead the industry by scaling advanced AI applications and establishing robust governance frameworks. Key actions include investing in Generative AI for real-time personalization, exploring digital twins for operational simulation, and implementing transparent AI governance policies. Marriott's adoption of Generative AI for dynamic guest journeys serves as a benchmark for innovation-driven growth.

Limitations

The study relies exclusively on publicly available website content, which may present strategic bias and omit operational realities. Findings represent a snapshot in time, limiting temporal validity. The absence of primary data (e.g., interviews, internal reports) constrains the depth of analysis. These limitations suggest caution in generalizing results across all properties within each chain. As the data source comprises corporate websites and related public documents, results should be read as signals in strategic communication, not as audited measures of deployment; this caution is consistent with content-analysis guidance on inference boundaries and validity. Consistent with content-analysis guidance, inferences are made from messages to their communicative contexts rather than to unobserved operational realities; this boundary condition is noted to protect validity (Krippendorff, 2013, 2022; Neuendorf, 2019).

Future Research Avenues

Several directions merit exploration:

- ***Longitudinal studies*** to assess the impact of AI-driven innovation on customer loyalty, workforce adaptability, and financial performance.
- ***Cross-cultural analysis*** of guest perceptions toward AI-enabled personalization.
- Development of ***ethical governance frameworks*** for algorithmic transparency and data privacy in hospitality.
- Investigation of ***hybrid service models*** that integrate AI capabilities with human-centric approaches to preserve the emotional dimension of hospitality.
- Establishment of ***standardized ROI and sustainability metrics*** for evaluating AI's contribution to operational and environmental goals.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Seed URLs, Crawl Dates, and Corpus Inventory

This appendix documents the seed URLs, crawl dates, and inclusion/exclusion decisions for the corpus compiled from the official corporate websites of nine global hotel groups. Boilerplate interface text and near-duplicates were removed prior to coding; cleaned HTML/PDFs can be archived upon acceptance.

A1. Corpus Inventory Summary

Table A1. Corpus inventory summary

Chain	Crawl window (start)	Crawl window (end)	Pages collected (raw)	Pages included	PDFs included	Approx. word count	Notes
Accor	2026-03-01	2026-03-03	5	5	1	—	Pressroom, Press releases, Design & Innovation, ESG overview, Docs hub [press.accor.com], [press.accor.com], [accor-desi...vation.com], [group.accor.com], [group.accor.com]
Choice	2026-03-01	2026-03-03	5	5	2	—	Media Center, ESG docs hub, 2024 Sustainability Report PR & PDF, 2023 ESG PDF [media.choi...hotels.com], [investor.c...hotels.com], [investor.c...hotels.com], [sustainabi...eports.com], [choicehotels.com]
Hilton	2026-03-01	2026-03-03	3	3	1	—	Press Center, Travel with Purpose reporting hub, ESG policies [stories.hilton.com], [travelwith...hilton.com], [ir.hilton.com]
Hyatt	2026-03-01	2026-03-03	4	4	—	—	Newsroom, About Hyatt, ESG/IR update (World of Care), News releases index [newsroom.hyatt.com], [about.hyatt.com], [investors.hyatt.com], [newsroom.hyatt.com]
IHG	2026-03-01	2026-03-03	4	4	1	—	Corporate Newsroom, Responsible Business reporting hub & 2024 PDF, Corporate responsibility overview [ihgplc.com], [ihgplc.com], [Responsibl...mance Data], [ihg.com]

Chain	Crawl window (start)	Crawl window (end)	Pages collected (raw)	Pages included	PDFs included	Approx. word count	Notes
Marriott	2026-03-01	2026-03-03	4	4	1	—	News Center, Serve360 hub & 2024 Serve360 PDF, Serve360 Sustainable Goals page [news.marriott.com], [marriott.gcs-web.com], [serve360.m...rriott.com], [serve360.m...rriott.com]
OYO	2026-03-01	2026-03-03	3	3	—	—	About OYO, ESG/impact stories, CSR (OYO Reach) [oyorooms.com], [oyorooms.com], [oyoreach.com]
Radisson	2026-03-01	2026-03-03	5	5	1	—	Pressroom, 2024 ESG news, 2024 Responsible Business PDF, Media hub, Policies & performance page [radissonhotels.com], [radissonhotels.com], [media.radi...hotels.net], [radissonhotels.com], [radissonhotels.com]
Wyndham	2026-03-01	2026-03-03	4	4	1	—	Corporate News Releases, CR/ESG hub, Corporate Responsibility Documents, 2024 ESG PDF (Alliance) [corporate....hotels.com], [investor.w...hotels.com], [investor.w...hotels.com], [sustainabl...liance.org]
Total (Appendix A → overall)			**37**	**37**	**8**	—	*Total number of seed URLs included across all chains.*

Note: The analysis unit is **sentence/paragraph meaning units** extracted from included pages; raw word counts are not reported. The “PDFs included” column reflects **seed entries** that point to primary ESG/Responsible Business reports used for triangulation.

A1.1 PDF Evidence

- **Marriott — 2024 Serve 360 ESG Progress (PDF).** Official annual ESG progress report used as source material for sustainability/innovation context. [serve360.m...rriott.com]
- **IHG — Responsible Business Report 2024 and Performance Data (Interactive PDF).** Core ESG data and progress; referenced in Methods as triangulation evidence. [Responsibl...mance Data]

- **Radisson — Responsible Business Report 2024 (PDF).** Full text with Think People/Community/Planet pillars and metrics. [media.radi...hotels.net]
- **Wyndham — 2024 Environmental, Social & Governance Report (PDF copy hosted by Sustainable Hospitality Alliance).** Portfolio-level ESG disclosures. [sustainabl...liance.org]
- **Choice — 2023 ESG Report (PDF).** Latest full PDF in public domain alongside 2024 report announcement; retained for historical continuity. [choicehotels.com]

A2. Seed URLs and Crawl Details by Chain

A2.1 Accor

Table A2. Accor — Seed URLs and crawl details

Section	Seed URL	File type	Crawl date	Notes
Press/News	https://press.accor.com/en	HTML	2026-03-02	Global pressroom / releases [press.accor.com]
Press releases index	https://press.accor.com/press-releases	HTML	2026-03-02	Releases listing (filterable) [press.accor.com]
Innovation/Technology	https://www.accor-design-innovation.com/en/innovations/	HTML	2026-03-01	Design & Innovation hub [accor-desi...vation.com]
Sustainability/ESG	https://group.accor.com/en/group/sustainable-hospitality	HTML	2026-03-02	ESG overview & key docs [group.accor.com]
Documents hub	https://group.accor.com/en/documents-publications	HTML/PDF	2026-03-03	Integrated/ESG publications [group.accor.com]

A2.2 Choice Hotels

Table A3. Choice — Seed URLs and crawl details

Section	Seed URL	File type	Crawl date	Notes
Media Center — Press	https://media.choicehotels.com/press-releases	HTML	2026-03-02	Corporate newsroom (press) [media.choi...hotels.com]

Section	Seed URL	File type	Crawl date	Notes
ESG hub	https://investor.choicehotels.com/esg/esg-documents/default.aspx	HTML/PDF	2026-03-01	ESG documents (reports, TCFD) [investor.c...hotels.com]
2024 ESG (news)	https://investor.choicehotels.com/news/news-details/2025/Choice-Hotels-International-Publishes-2024-Sustainability-Report/default.aspx	HTML	2026-03-01	Release notes & link to report [investor.c...hotels.com]
2023 ESG report (PDF)	https://www.choicehotels.com/content/dam/choicehotels/site-content/media/pdfs/esg-report.pdf	PDF	2026-03-02	Full prior-year PDF (continuity) [choicehotels.com]
Media Center home	https://media.choicehotels.com/	HTML	2026-03-02	Media resources & news index [media.choi...hotels.com]

A2.3 Hilton

Table A4. Hilton — Seed URLs and crawl details

Section	Seed URL	File type	Crawl date	Notes
Press/News	https://stories.hilton.com/	HTML	2026-03-02	Press center & newsroom [stories.hilton.com]
Travel with Purpose — Reporting	https://travelwithpurpose.hilton.com/our-reporting/	HTML/PDF	2026-03-02	Reporting hub (reports, performance tables) [travelwith...hilton.com]
ESG policies (IR)	https://ir.hilton.com/corporate-governance/governance-documents/esg-policies	HTML	2026-03-01	Policy & governance documents [ir.hilton.com]

A2.4 Hyatt

Table A5. Hyatt — Seed URLs and crawl details

Section	Seed URL	File type	Crawl date	Notes
Newsroom	https://newsroom.hyatt.com/	HTML	2026-03-02	Corporate newsroom [newsroom.hyatt.com]

Section	Seed URL	File type	Crawl date	Notes
About Hyatt	https://about.hyatt.com/	HTML	2026-03-02	Corporate overview / World of Care framing [about.hyatt.com]
ESG/IR update	https://investors.hyatt.com/news/investor-news/news-details/2023/Hyatt-Shares-Environmental-and-Social-Impact-Reporting-Eclipses-Critical-DEI-Goals-and-Sustains-Momentum-with-Key-2023-Initiatives-08-02-2023/default.aspx	HTML	2026-03-02	World of Care highlights & links [investors.hyatt.com]
News releases index	https://newsroom.hyatt.com/news-releases	HTML	2026-03-02	Releases by date/topic [newsroom.hyatt.com]

A2.5 IHG (InterContinental Hotels Group)

Table A6. IHG — Seed URLs and crawl details

Section	Seed URL	File type	Crawl date	Notes
Corporate Newsroom	https://www.ihgplc.com/en/news-and-media/news-releases	HTML	2026-03-02	News releases [ihgplc.com]
Responsible Business — Reporting	https://www.ihgplc.com/en/responsible-business/reporting	HTML/PDF	2026-03-02	Reporting archive (RBR, CDP, assurance) [ihgplc.com]
2024 Responsible Business Report	http://development.ihg.com/sites/ihgplc/files/IHG/A%20sustainable%20business/IHG_RBR_24-25_Interactive.pdf	PDF	2026-03-02	Full interactive PDF [Responsibl...mance Data]
Corporate responsibility overview	https://www.ihg.com/content/us/en/about/corporate-responsibility	HTML	2026-03-02	Program/capabilities (Green Engage, Academy) [ihg.com]

A2.6 Marriott

Table A7. Marriott — Seed URLs and crawl details

Section	Seed URL	File type	Crawl date	Notes
News Center	https://news.marriott.com/	HTML	2026-03-02	Corporate newsroom [news.marriott.com]
Serve360 — ESG hub	https://marriott.gcs-web.com/sustainability-and-social-impact	HTML/PDF	2026-03-01	Policies & positions; Serve360 resources [marriott.gcs-web.com]
2024 Serve360 ESG Progress	https://serve360.marriott.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/2024ESGProgress.pdf	PDF	2026-03-01	Annual ESG progress report (PDF) [serve360.m...rriott.com]
Serve360 Sustainable Goals	https://serve360.marriott.com/sustainable-goals/	HTML	2026-03-01	Goals + report/indices links [serve360.m...rriott.com]

A2.7 OYO

Table A8. OYO — Seed URLs and crawl details

Section	Seed URL	File type	Crawl date	Notes
Corporate/About	https://www.oyorooms.com/about/	HTML	2026-03-02	Corporate overview & milestones [oyorooms.com]
ESG / Impact	https://www.oyorooms.com/esg/	HTML	2026-03-02	ESG stories & initiatives [oyorooms.com]
CSR	https://oyoreach.com/	HTML	2026-03-01	CSR program ("OYO Reach") [oyoreach.com]

A2.8 Radisson Hotel Group

Table A9. Radisson — Seed URLs and crawl details

Section	Seed URL	File type	Crawl date	Notes
Press Releases	https://www.radissonhotels.com/en-us/corporate/media/press-releases	HTML	2026-03-02	Corporate pressroom [radissonhotels.com]

Section	Seed URL	File type	Crawl date	Notes
2024 ESG (news)	https://www.radissonhotels.com/en-us/corporate/media/press-releases/Radisson-Hotel-Group-publishes-its-Sustainability-Report-2024	HTML	2026-03-02	Release announcing 2024 report [radissonhotels.com]
2024 Responsible Business (PDF)	https://media.radissonhotels.net/asset/responsible-business/business-center/16256-115895-m35263326.pdf	PDF	2026-03-02	Full report PDF [media.radi...hotels.net]
Media hub	https://www.radissonhotels.com/en-us/corporate/media	HTML	2026-03-02	Media resources index [radissonhotels.com]
Policies & performance	https://www.radissonhotels.com/en-us/corporate/responsible-business/policies-performances	HTML	2026-03-02	Responsible Business policies/performance [radissonhotels.com]

A2.9 Wyndham Hotels & Resorts

Table A10. Wyndham — Seed URLs and crawl details

Section	Seed URL	File type	Crawl date	Notes
Corporate News Releases	https://corporate.wyndhamhotels.com/news-releases/	HTML	2026-03-02	Corporate news [corporate....hotels.com]
CR/ESG hub (IR)	https://investor.wyndhamhotels.com/corporate-responsibility	HTML/PDF	2026-03-02	Corporate Responsibility overview (ESG) [investor.w...hotels.com]
Corporate Responsibility Documents	https://investor.wyndhamhotels.com/corporate-responsibility/corporate-responsibility-documents	HTML/PDF	2026-03-02	Reports repository (incl. 2025 CR) [investor.w...hotels.com]
2024 ESG (PDF copy via Alliance)	https://sustainablehospitalityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/2024ES1-1.pdf	PDF	2026-03-02	2024 ESG report (publicly hosted) [sustainabl...liance.org]

A3. Inclusion and Exclusion Rules

- **Include** official pages and PDFs explicitly referencing AI, automation, advanced analytics, digital transformation, or innovation programs; plus ESG/Responsible Business documents used for innovation-impact triangulation.
- **Exclude** navigation, cookie banners, legal footers, job listings shells, investor filings unrelated to AI/innovation/ESG, and duplicates/near-duplicates.

- **Language:** English prioritized; non-English included only if authoritative English lacked.
- **Unit of analysis:** Sentence/paragraph-level meaning units extracted from included pages.

A4. Versioning and Archiving

- **Versioning:** Crawl timestamps recorded above; the latest captured version in the window was retained.
- **Archiving:** Cleaned HTML/PDFs can be deposited (OSF/Zenodo) upon acceptance with Chain/Section/Date foldering.
- **Provenance:** A README will list inclusion/exclusion rules, codebook version, and any deviations.

Appendix B. Chain-Level Scores and (X, Y) Coordinates (0–100 Rescaled)

Table B1. Brand-level rescaled indices and quadrant coordinates

Hotel Chain	Innovation Impact	AI Maturity	Coordinate (X,Y)
Accor	80	85	(80, 85)
Choice	70	75	(70, 75)
Hilton	78	80	(78, 80)
Hyatt	84	82	(84, 82)
IHG	72	78	(72, 78)
Marriott	85	83	(85, 83)
OYO	68	87	(68, 87)
Radisson	90	80	(90, 80)
Wyndham	70	76	(70, 76)

Source of raw 0–10 values: Table B2; linear rescaling applied.

Table B2. Relative positioning of hotel groups

Hotel Chain	AI Maturity	Innovation Impact	Strategic Quadrant	AI Maturity Score	Innovation Impact Score
Accor	High	High	Strategic Innovation	8.5	8.0
Choice	High	Low	Operational Efficiency	7.5	7.0
Hilton	High	High	Strategic Innovation	8.0	7.8
Hyatt	High	High	Strategic Innovation	8.2	8.4
IHG	High	Low	Operational Efficiency	7.8	7.2
Marriott	High	High	Strategic Innovation	8.3	8.5
OYO	High	Low	Operational Efficiency	8.7	6.8
Radisson	High	High	Strategic Innovation	8.0	9.0
Wyndham	High	Low	Operational Efficiency	7.6	7.0

Appendix C. Brand-Level Evidence Notes

Accor sits between Operational Efficiency and Strategic Innovation, reflecting strong AI maturity and a growing emphasis on innovative guest experiences. This positioning suggests Accor is leveraging advanced technologies while continuing to optimize operational processes.

Choice Hotels is primarily focused on Operational Efficiency but shows signs of leaning toward Personalized Experiences. This indicates an effort to boost backend systems while gradually introducing guest-facing innovations to foster engagement.

Hilton demonstrates strength in Operational Efficiency and is steadily moving toward Strategic Innovation. Its initiatives in sustainability and predictive analytics position Hilton as a leader in operational excellence, while its investments in advanced AI signal a shift toward more transformative strategies.

Hyatt maintains a balanced position close to Strategic Innovation. With robust AI maturity and a strong innovation impact, Hyatt is well-placed to scale advanced technologies and deliver differentiated guest experiences.

IHG remains firmly in the Operational Efficiency quadrant, with moderate innovation efforts. Its focus is on optimizing processes and sustainability, ensuring cost efficiency while exploring incremental improvements in guest personalization.

Marriott, similar to Hyatt, is near the Strategic Innovation quadrant. Marriott's adoption of Generative AI and digital twins reflects its commitment to pioneering advanced technologies and setting industry benchmarks for innovation.

OYO stands out for its high AI maturity, particularly in pricing optimization, but exhibits moderate innovation impact, placing it in Operational Efficiency. This suggests OYO prioritizes data-driven operational improvements over guest-facing innovations.

Radisson is strongly positioned in Strategic Innovation, driven by its focus on immersive technologies such as VR and multilingual personalization. These initiatives underscore Radisson's commitment to delivering cutting-edge guest experiences.

Wyndham occupies the Operational Efficiency quadrant with some elements of personalization. While its core strategy emphasizes process optimization, Wyndham is gradually introducing technologies to foster guest engagement.

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Borsa İstanbul'da İşlem Gören Konaklama Şirketlerinde Karlılık Performansının Genişletilmiş Dupont Modeliyle Analizi.

Analysis of Profitability Performance of Accommodation Companies Listed on Borsa İstanbul Using the Extended Dupont Model.

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Özet

Bu araştırmanın amacı, Borsa İstanbul'da işlem gören konaklama şirketlerinin kârlılık performansını genişletilmiş DuPont modelleriyle ayrıntılı analiz etmektir. Bu amaçla 2018–2024 yılları arasında kesintisiz finansal verilerine ulaşılabilen ve analize uygun nitelikteki sekiz konaklama şirketi üzerinde dört farklı analiz gerçekleştirilmiştir. Birinci analizde şirketlerin aktif kârlılığı ve özsermaye kârlılığı göstergeleri genişletilmiş DuPont modeli kullanılarak şirket bazında hesaplanmış ve yorumlanmıştır. İkinci analizde, sektörel eğilimi ortaya koymak amacıyla aktif ve özsermaye karlılık oranları ve bunları oluşturan bileşenlere ilişkin özet istatistikler hesaplanmış ve yorumlanmıştır. Üçüncü analizde şirketler, aktif kârlılığı ve özsermaye kârlılığının medyan değerleri esas alınarak yüksek ve düşük performans gruplarına ayrılmış ve bu iki grup arasında genişletilmiş DuPont değişkenleri bakımından istatistiksel olarak anlamlı farklılık olup olmadığı Mann–Whitney U Testiyle analiz edilmiştir. Son analizde ise genişletilmiş DuPont modellerindeki değişkenlerin pandemi öncesi, pandemi dönemi ve pandemi sonrası dönemler itibariyle değişimi Kruskal-Wallis H Testi ve Dunn Testi ile analiz edilmiştir. Analizler sonucunda en başarılı şirketin Petrokent Turizm A.Ş. olduğu belirlenmiştir. Sektörün ise karlılık seviyesinin ve satış gelirlerinin yetersiz kaldığı, bazı şirketlerde finansal kaldıraç düzeyinin aşırı seviyelere çıktığı, yine bazı şirketlerin vergi teşvikleri, yatırım indirimleri ve zarar mahsupları yoluyla önemli vergi avantajları elde ettiği, diğerlerinin ise daha yüksek vergi yükü taşıdığı saptanmıştır. Gerçekleştirilen Mann Whitney U Testi sonucunda ise düşük ve yüksek karlılık performansına sahip şirketler arasında aktif devir hızı ve faaliyet kar marjı değişkenlerinin istatistiki olarak anlamlı farklılık gösterdiği belirlenmiştir. Kruskal Wallis H ve Dunn Testleri sonucunda da pandemi döneminin konaklama sektöründe karlılık göstergelerini ve varlık kullanım verimliliğini olumsuz etkilediği, pandemi sonrası dönemde ise kısmi toparlanma yaşandığı,

ancak bu toparlanmanın pandemi öncesi seviyelere tam olarak ulaşamadığı saptanmıştır. Sonuç olarak sektörde karlılık ayrışmasının en fazla operasyonel verimliliği ölçen faaliyet kâr marjından ve varlıkların etkin kullanılıp kullanılmadığını ölçen aktif devir hızından kaynaklandığı belirlenmiştir. Bulgular, sürdürülebilir karlılığa ulaşmada operasyonel verimliliğin ve varlık yönetiminin önemini vurgulamaktadır.
Anahtar Kelimeler: Aktif karlılığı, özsermaye karlılığı, genişletilmiş dupont modeli, konaklama şirketleri, borsa istanbul.
Abstract

This study aims to provide a detailed analysis of the profitability performance of accommodation companies listed on Borsa İstanbul using the extended DuPont models. Eight accommodation companies with continuous and suitable financial data over the 2018–2024 period were selected, and four distinct analyses were conducted. In the first analysis, return on assets and return on equity, together with their extended DuPont components, were calculated and interpreted at the company level. The second analysis computed summary statistics for return on assets, return on equity, and their constituent components to identify sectoral trends. The third analysis divided the companies into high- and low-performance groups based on the median values of return on assets and return on equity and examined whether significant differences existed in the extended DuPont variables between these groups using the Mann–Whitney U test. The final analysis assessed changes in the extended DuPont components across three sub-periods—pre-pandemic, pandemic and post-pandemic—using the Kruskal–Wallis H test and Dunn's post-hoc test. The results identified Petrokent Turizm A.Ş. as the most successful company in the sample. Sector-wide findings indicated persistently low overall profitability and insufficient sales revenue generation. Some companies displayed excessively high financial leverage, while others achieved substantial tax advantages through incentives, investment deductions, and loss carryforwards; certain firms faced higher tax burdens. The Mann–Whitney U test revealed significant differences between high- and low-performance groups in asset turnover and operating profit margin. Kruskal–Wallis H and Dunn tests confirmed that the pandemic period exerted a substantial negative impact on profitability indicators and asset utilization efficiency. Although partial recovery occurred post-pandemic, profitability levels did not fully return to pre-pandemic benchmarks. Overall, profitability dispersion in the accommodation sector is primarily driven by operational efficiency—reflected in operating profit margin and asset turnover, which measures effective asset utilization. These findings emphasize the importance of operational efficiency and asset management in achieving sustainable profitability.
Key Words: Return on assets, return on equity, extended dupont model, accommodation companies, borsa istanbul.

GİRİŞ

Günümüzde şirketlerin finansal performans analizi, şirketin faaliyet alanı, analiz amacı, kullanılan yöntem ve sektörün kendine özgü dinamiklerine göre değişkenlik göstermektedir. Bu analizlerde muhasebe kayıtları ve finansal tablolar temel veri kaynağı olarak kullanılmakta olup, konaklama sektörü gibi sermaye yoğun sektörlerde kârlılık göstergeleri hem ekonomik başarıyı ölçmede hem de kredi riski değerlendirmesinde kritik rol oynamaktadır (Angelovska vd., 2017). Özellikle sermaye yoğun bir yapıya sahip olan konaklama şirketlerinde yüksek sabit yatırım gereksinimi, talebin mevsimsel dalgalanmalara açık olması, döviz kurları ve faiz oranları gibi makroekonomik değişkenlere duyarlılık ve rekabetin giderek artması, kârlılık performansının yakından izlenmesini zorunlu kılmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, konaklama sektöründe faaliyet gösteren şirketlerin finansal durumlarının yalnızca mutlak dönem kârı üzerinden değil, oransal bağlamda kârlılığı oluşturan unsurlar dikkate alınarak çok boyutlu biçimde değerlendirilmesinin daha sağlıklı sonuçlar sunması açısından önemli olduğu düşünülmektedir (Koşan ve Karadeniz, 2014).

Finans literatüründe işletme performansının ölçümünde yaygın olarak kullanılan kârlılık göstergeleri arasında aktif kârlılığı ve özsermaye kârlılığı öne çıkmaktadır. Aktif kârlılığı, işletmenin sahip olduğu varlıkları ne ölçüde verimli kullandığını ortaya koymaktadır. Özsermaye kârlılığı ise ortakların işletmeye tahsis ettikleri sermayeden sağladıkları getiriyi ifade etmektedir (Brigham ve Ehrhardt, 2017). Ancak bu oranların tek başına incelenmesi, kârlılığın hangi faaliyet veya finansman unsurlarından kaynaklandığını açıklamakta yetersiz kalmaktadır. Bu sınırlılığı aşmak amacıyla geliştirilen geleneksel DuPont analizi, özsermaye kârlılığını; kâr marjı, varlık devir hızı ve finansal kaldıraç gibi bileşenlere, aktif karlılığını ise kar marjı ve varlık devir hızı gibi bileşenlerine ayırarak daha ayrıntılı bir bakış sunmuştur (Ross vd., 2019; Soliman, 2008). Zamanla model genişletilerek vergi yükü ve faiz yükü unsurları da dahil edilmiş ve "genişletilmiş (beş faktörlü) DuPont analizi" literatürdeki yerini almıştır.

Genişletilmiş DuPont analizinde aktif karlılığı; vergi yükü oranı, faiz yükü oranı, faaliyet kâr marjı ve aktif devir hızı olmak üzere dört alt bileşenle, özsermaye kârlılığı ise vergi yükü oranı, faiz yükü oranı, faaliyet kâr marjı, aktif devir hızı ve özsermaye çarpanı gibi beş alt bileşen üzerinden analiz edilebilmektedir. Böylece yöneticiler ve yatırımcılar, kârlılıkta meydana gelen değişimlerin hangi aşamada ve hangi nedenlerle ortaya çıktığını geleneksel DuPont analizine göre daha ayrıntılı biçimde gözlemleyebilmektedir (Manjunatha ve Gujjar, 2018a; Nissim ve Penman, 2001). Konaklama sektöründe gider yapısının karmaşık olması, borçla finansmanın yaygın şekilde kullanılması ve gelirlerin büyük ölçüde turistik talebe bağlı olarak şekillenmesinin genişletilmiş DuPont analizinin bu sektör açısından işlevsel bir yönetimsel analiz aracı olarak kullanılmasını kritik olarak önemli hale getirdiği düşünülmektedir.

Konuyla ilgili literatür incelendiğinde, konaklama şirketlerinin kârlılık performansının DuPont analiziyle değerlendirildiği çalışmaların büyük çoğunluğunun geleneksel üç bileşenli model (net kâr marjı, aktif devir hızı ve özsermaye çarpanı) ile sınırlı kaldığı görülmektedir. Bu çalışmalar genellikle net kâr marjı ve aktif devir hızının düşük olması ile yüksek finansal kaldıraç kullanımına dikkat çekmiş, ancak vergi yükü ve faiz yükü gibi kritik unsurları ayrıştırmamıştır. Genişletilmiş (beş faktörlü) DuPont modeli ise bankacılık, imalat, çimento ve bilişim gibi sektörlerde daha sık uygulanmış olup, konaklama sektöründe kullanımı oldukça sınırlıdır. Mevcut literatürde ise sadece tek bir otel işletmesine yönelik genişletilmiş DuPont modeliyle özsermaye kârlılığını ölçen yalnızca Gibraltar vd. (2024) çalışmasına rastlanmıştır.

Dolayısıyla bu araştırmanın literatüre üç temel açıdan katkı sağlaması beklenmektedir. Birincisi, Borsa İstanbul (BİST) konaklama sektöründe pay senetleri işlem gören konaklama işletmelerinin kârlılık performansını geleneksel üç bileşenli DuPont yaklaşımı yerine genişletilmiş (beş faktörlü) DuPont modeli çerçevesinde analiz ederek kârlılığın operasyonel, finansal ve vergisel bileşenlerini birlikte değerlendirmesidir. İkincisi, pandemi öncesi (2018–2019), pandemi (2020–2021) ve pandemi sonrası (2022–2024) olmak üzere üç farklı dönem ayrımı yaparak kârlılık dinamiklerinin zaman içindeki değişimini karşılaştırmalı olarak istatistiksel olarak ortaya koymasıdır. Üçüncüsü ise, kârlılık performansındaki farklılaşmanın hangi bileşenlerden kaynaklandığını yine istatistiksel yöntemler yardımıyla analiz ederek sektör özelinde ampirik kanıt sunmasıdır. Bu yönleriyle araştırmanın, konaklama sektöründe kârlılık dinamiklerinin daha kapsamlı biçimde ortaya konulması ve sektöre özgü finansal performans belirleyicilerine ilişkin daha derinlemesine deneysel kanıt sunması bağlamında turizm literatürüne özgün bir katkı sağlayacağı ümit edilmektedir.

Bu kapsamda çalışmanın amacı, Borsa İstanbul'da işlem gören konaklama şirketlerinin 2018–2024 dönemine ait finansal verilerinden yararlanarak aktif kârlılığı ve özsermaye kârlılığı performanslarını genişletilmiş DuPont analizi çerçevesinde incelemektir. Bu doğrultuda şirket bazında kârlılık bileşenleri hesaplanmış, sektör ortalamaları belirlenmiş ve yüksek-düşük performans grupları arasında anlamlı farklılıklar test edilmiştir. Ayrıca pandemi öncesi, pandemi ve sonrası dönemler itibariyle kârlılık ve DuPont bileşenlerindeki değişimler analiz edilmiştir. Çalışma altı bölümden oluşmaktadır. Giriş bölümünde araştırmanın konusu, kapsamı ve amacı açıklanmaktadır. İkinci bölümde geleneksel ve genişletilmiş DuPont analiz yöntemleri üzerine teorik bilgiler kuramsal çerçeve başlığı altında sunulmuştur. Üçüncü bölümde konuyla ilgili literatür özetlenmiştir. Dördüncü bölümde veri seti değişkenler ve analiz yöntemleri tanıtılmıştır. Beşinci bölümde elde edilen bulgulara yer verilmiştir. Son bölümde ise elde edilen sonuçlar değerlendirilerek genel çıkarımlar ve öneriler sunulmuştur.

KURAMSAL ÇERÇEVE

Geleneksel DuPont Analiz Yöntemi

Geleneksel Dupont analizi, işletmelerin kârlılık performansını daha ayrıntılı ve açıklayıcı biçimde değerlendirmek amacıyla 20. yüzyılın başlarında ilk defa E. I. du Pont de Nemours and Company şirketi bünyesinde oluşturulan iç raporlama sistemlerine dayanılarak geliştirilen bir finansal analiz sistemidir (Moyer vd., 2007). Şirketin kurucusu Éleuthère Irénée du Pont Fransız kökenli olmakla birlikte, DuPont firması 19. yüzyılın başlarından itibaren Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nde (ABD) faaliyet göstermiş ve analiz yöntemi bu şirketin ABD'deki yönetsel uygulamaları çerçevesinde ortaya çıkmıştır. DuPont şirketi, yöneticilerin yalnızca nihai kârlılık oranlarını değil, bu oranları oluşturan temel bileşenleri de izleyebilmesini sağlamak amacıyla aktif ve özsermaye kârlılığını alt unsurlarına ayıran bir analiz çerçevesi oluşturmuştur. Zamanla bu yaklaşım akademik literatüre kazandırılmış ve finansal performans analizinde yaygın olarak kullanılan standart bir yöntem haline gelmiştir (Aydın vd., 2010; Brigham ve Ehrhardt, 2017).

Geleneksel DuPont analiz yönteminde aktif kârlılığı (AK) iki bileşenli olarak ele alınmakta ve net kâr marjı ile aktif devir hızının çarpımı şeklinde hesaplanmaktadır (Berk, 2010);

AK = (Net Kâr Marjı) × (Aktif Devir Hızı) (1)

Geleneksel DuPont analiz yöntemi, özsermaye kârlılığını ise üç temel bileşen üzerinden açıklamaktadır. Buna göre özsermaye karlılığı (ÖK); net kâr marjı, aktif devir hızı ve özsermaye çarpanının bir fonksiyonu olarak ifade edilmektedir. Bu yapı sayesinde yöneticiler ve analistler, özsermaye kârlılığındaki değişimin faaliyet performansından mı (net kar marjı), varlık kullanım etkinliğinden mi (aktif devir hızı) yoksa finansman yapısından mı (özsermaye çarpanı) kaynaklandığını daha açık biçimde değerlendirebilmektedir. Matematiksel olarak geleneksel DuPont eşitliği aşağıdaki şekilde gösterilmektedir (Ross vd., 2019);

ÖK = (Net Kâr Marjı) × (Aktif Devir Hızı) × (Özsermaye Çarpanı) (2)

Geleneksel DuPont analizinin en önemli üstünlüğü, kârlılık oranlarını sade ve anlaşılır bir biçimde ayrıştırması ve farklı şirketler ya da dönemler arasında karşılaştırmaya imkân tanımasıdır. Ayrıca yöntemin muhasebe temelli verilere dayanması, uygulama kolaylığı sağlamaktadır. Bununla birlikte, geleneksel DuPont modeli bazı sınırlılıklar da içermektedir. Özellikle faiz giderleri, vergi yükü ve faaliyet dışı unsurların etkisini açık biçimde ayrıştırmaması, kârlılığın hangi aşamada oluştuğuna ilişkin ayrıntılı bir değerlendirme yapılmasını güçleştirmektedir. Bu durum, borçlanma düzeyi yüksek veya vergi avantajlarından yararlanan işletmelerde analiz sonuçlarının sınırlı kalmasına yol açabilmektedir (Hawawini ve Viallet, 2010).

Genişletilmiş DuPont Analiz Yöntemi

Finansal analiz literatüründe geleneksel DuPont modelinin sınırlılıklarını gidermek amacıyla zaman içerisinde daha ayrıntılı ayrıştırmalar içeren genişletilmiş DuPont modeli önerilmiştir. Bu kapsamda geliştirilmiş DuPont modeli belirli bir kişi veya kurum tarafından tekil olarak ortaya konulmuş bir yöntemden ziyade, akademik literatürde zaman içerisinde evrimleşen analitik bir çerçeve niteliği taşımaktadır. Özellikle 2000'li yıllardan sonra yapılan çalışmalar, geleneksel DuPont yaklaşımını genişleterek kârlılığın oluşum sürecini daha ayrıntılı biçimde açıklayan katkılar sunmuş ve literatürde "Genişletilmiş DuPont Analizi" olarak anılan çok bileşenli ayrıştırmaların teorik temelini güçlendirmiştir (Nissim ve Penman, 2001; Soliman, 2008).

Genişletilmiş DuPont analizinde aktif kârlılığı (AK); vergi yükü, faiz yükü, faaliyet kâr marjı ve aktif devir hızı olmak üzere beş temel bileşen üzerinden ayrıştırılmaktadır. Böylelikle AK; vergi etkisi, faiz yükü etkisi, faaliyet kârlılığı ve varlık kullanım etkinliği çerçevesinde daha ayrıntılı biçimde analiz edilebilmektedir. Bu analizde AK aşağıdaki formülle hesaplanmaktadır (Santhi ve Amruthavarshini, 2021);

AK = (Vergi Yükü) × (Faiz Yükü) × (Faaliyet Kâr Marjı) × (Aktif Devir Hızı)   (3)

Genişletilmiş DuPont analizinde özsermaye kârlılığı (ÖK) ise vergi yükü, faiz yükü, faaliyet kâr marjı, aktif devir hızı ve özsermaye çarpanı olmak üzere beş temel bileşen üzerinden ayrıştırılmaktadır. Bu ayrıştırma sayesinde vergi politikalarının, borçlanma maliyetlerinin, temel faaliyet performansının ve sermaye yapısı tercihlerinin özsermaye kârlılığı üzerindeki etkileri ayrı ayrı değerlendirilebilmektedir. Bu analizde ÖK aşağıdaki genel çerçeve içerisinde hesaplanmaktadır (Manjunatha ve Gujjar, 2018b);

ÖK = (Vergi Yükü) × (Faiz Yükü) × (Faal. Kâr Marjı) × (Aktif Devir Hızı) × (Özsermaye Çarpanı)   (4)

Genişletilmiş DuPont analizinin en önemli avantajı, kârlılık performansının hangi aşamada ve hangi finansal unsur nedeniyle değiştiğini daha net biçimde ortaya koymasıdır. Özellikle borçlanma düzeyi yüksek, finansman giderleri önemli tutarlara ulaşan veya vergi avantajlarından yararlanan işletmelerde, geleneksel DuPont analizine kıyasla çok daha açıklayıcı sonuçlar sunmaktadır. Ayrıca bu yöntem, yönetsel karar alma süreçlerinde faaliyet performansı ile finansman ve vergi etkilerinin ayrıştırılarak değerlendirilmesine imkân tanımaktadır. Bu bağlamda genişletilmiş DuPont analizi, kârlılık performansındaki değişimlerin yalnızca operasyonel performanstan değil; vergi politikaları, finansman yapısı ve varlık kullanım etkinliği gibi çok boyutlu faktörlerden kaynaklandığını ortaya koymaktadır. Bu yönüyle modeller, geleneksel üç bileşenli yapıdan daha ayrıntılı ve açıklayıcı bir performans çözümlemesi sunarak işletmelerin güçlü ve zayıf yönlerinin daha net belirlenmesine olanak tanımaktadır. Özellikle konaklama sektörü gibi sermaye yoğun ve finansal yapısı karmaşık sektörlerde işletme performansının değerlendirilmesinde önemli üstünlükler sağlamaktadır. Bu nedenle çalışmada, Borsa İstanbul'da işlem gören konaklama şirketlerinin kârlılık performansının analizinde genişletilmiş DuPont modellerinin kullanılması tercih edilmiştir.

LİTERATÜR TARAMASI

İşletmelerin finansal performansının ölçülmesi ve kârlılık bileşenlerinin ayrıntılı biçimde analiz edilmesi, finans ve muhasebe literatüründe uzun süredir üzerinde durulan temel araştırma alanlarından biridir. Geleneksel oran analizi, işletmelerin likidite, faaliyet etkinliği, finansal yapı ve kârlılık düzeylerini değerlendirmede yaygın olarak kullanılmakla birlikte, tek tek oranların yorumlanması performansın kaynaklarını bütüncül biçimde açıklamakta yetersiz kalabilmektedir. Bu nedenle kârlılığı belirleyen unsurları ayrıştırarak inceleyen DuPont analizi, hem akademik çalışmalarda hem de uygulamada önemli bir analiz aracı haline gelmiştir (Chang vd., 2014). Konuyla ilgili literatür incelendiğinde genel olarak geleneksel DuPont analiz yöntemine göre veya tek başına aktif ve özsermaye karlılık performansını ölçmeyi amaçlayan çalışmaların gerçekleştirildiği saptanmıştır. Literatür taramasının sonuçları geleneksel DuPont analiz yöntemini uygulayan çalışmalar ve genişletilmiş DuPont analiz yöntemini uygulayan çalışmalar olmak üzere iki alt başlıkta tartışılmıştır.

Geleneksel DuPont Analiz Yöntemini Uygulayan Çalışmalar

Konaklama sektöründe kârlılık performansını inceleyen çalışmaların büyük çoğunluğu geleneksel üç bileşenli DuPont modeli kullanılarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu çalışmalar genellikle sektörün yüksek sabit maliyet yapısı, düşük aktif devir hızı ve sınırlı operasyonel kârlılık sorunlarına odaklanmıştır.

Koşan ve Karadeniz (2014), Türkiye Cumhuriyet Merkez Bankası (TCMB) sektör bilançolarını kullanarak konaklama ve yiyecek hizmetleri alt sektörünün 2010–2012 dönemindeki performansını incelemiş ve sektörün maliyet baskısının yüksek, aktif devir hızının ise düşük olduğunu tespit etmişlerdir. Sanalan Bilici

(2019) ve Ertürk (2024a, 2024b), TCMB ve BIST verilerini kullanarak sektörün kârlılık oranlarının yıllar itibarıyla istikrarsız olduğunu ve özellikle pandemi döneminde operasyonel verimliliğin önemli ölçüde gerilediğini vurgulamışlardır. Ertürk (2024a), konaklama sektörünün hizmetler alt sektörleri arasında özsermaye kârlılığı bakımından alt sıralarda yer aldığını gösterirken, Ertürk (2024b), BIST Turizm Endeksi şirketlerinin kârlılık düzeylerindeki dalgalanmayı ve varlık kullanım etkinliğinin önemini öne çıkarmıştır.

Uluslararası çalışmalar da benzer sorunlara işaret etmektedir. Hanafi ve Damayanti (2015), Endonezya'da bir otel şirketini diğerleriyle karşılaştırarak aktif kârlılıkta istikrarlı artış olmasına rağmen sektör genelinde varlık verimliliğinin sınırlı kaldığını bulmuştur. Karadeniz vd. (2019), Avrupa borsalarında işlem gören 76 konaklama şirketini panel veri yöntemiyle analiz ederek net kâr marjının hem aktif hem de özsermaye kârlılığı üzerinde pozitif ve anlamlı bir etkiye sahip olduğunu, ancak aktif devir hızının anlamlı bir katkı sağlamadığını bulmuşlardır. Jiang (2023), Güneydoğu Asya konaklama şirketlerinde finansal kaldıraç unsurunun sektör büyümesi üzerinde belirleyici rol oynadığını, ancak muhasebe temelli ölçütlerle piyasa performansı arasında zayıf ilişki olduğunu tespit etmiştir. Stotler (2019), Andriani vd. (2024) ve Parrikar (2024) ise net kâr marjı ve aktif devir hızının düşük olmasının özsermaye kârlılığı üzerinde olumsuz etki yarattığını vurgulamışlardır.

Bu çalışmaların ortak noktası, konaklama sektörünün sermaye yoğun yapısı nedeniyle aktif devir hızının düşük kalması, operasyonel maliyetlerin yüksek olması ve kârlılığın büyük ölçüde net kâr marjına bağlı olarak dalgalı bir seyir izlemesidir. Ancak bu çalışmaların çoğu geleneksel DuPont modeli ile sınırlı kalmış ve vergi yükü ile faiz yükü etkilerini yeterince ayrıştırmamıştır.

Genişletilmiş DuPont Analiz Yöntemini Uygulayan Çalışmalar

Geleneksel DuPont modelinin faiz giderleri ve vergi yükünü yeterince ayrıştırmadaki sınırlılıklarını gidermek amacıyla geliştirilen genişletilmiş (beş faktörlü) DuPont analizi, son yıllarda farklı sektörlerde giderek daha fazla tercih edilmektedir. Bu model, kârlılığın operasyonel, finansal ve vergisel boyutlarını daha ayrıntılı biçimde ayrıştırmayı mümkün kılmaktadır.

Literatürde genişletilmiş DuPont modeli genellikle bankacılık, imalat, bilişim, otomotiv ve çimento gibi sektörlerde uygulanmıştır. Sur vd. (2014), Tata Steel Ltd.'nin 15 yıllık verilerini analiz ederek aktif devir hızının özsermaye kârlılığı ve faiz yükü ile güçlü pozitif ilişki gösterdiğini, faaliyet kâr marjının da anlamlı katkı sağladığını tespit etmişlerdir. Buna karşılık vergi yükü oranı ve özkaynak çarpanının özsermaye kârlılığı negatif yönlü etkilediği belirlenmiştir. Manjunatha ve Gujjar (2018a, 2018b), Hindistan bilgi teknolojisi şirketlerini inceleyerek genişletilmiş modelin şirket performansını değerlendirmede etkili bir araç olduğunu ve özellikle kâr marjı ile aktif devir hızının özsermaye kârlılığı ile pozitif ilişkili olduğunu vurgulamışlardır. Santhi ve Amruthavarshini (2021), otomotiv sektöründe faaliyet gösteren şirketlerde özsermaye kârlılığının belirgin şekilde azaldığını ve genişletilmiş DuPont modelinin sektörler arası karşılaştırmalarda daha kapsamlı değerlendirme imkânı sunduğunu ortaya koymuşlardır. Benzer şekilde Gopi (2018) çimento sektöründe, Minz vd. (2023) bankalarda ve Tajrian (2025) imalat sektöründe genişletilmiş DuPont modelini kullanarak bileşenlerin özsermaye kârlılığı üzerindeki etkilerini incelemişlerdir. Bu çalışmalar genel olarak faaliyet kâr marjı ve aktif devir hızının kârlılık üzerindeki belirleyici rolünü ortaya koyarken, vergi yükü ve faiz yükü bileşenlerinin sektörlere göre değişen etkilerine dikkat çekmişlerdir.

Konaklama sektörüne yönelik olarak ulaşılabilen tek çalışma olan Gibraltar vd. (2024) çalışması ise Endonezya'da faaliyet gösteren Saung Dolken Oteli'nin 2018–2022 dönemine ait finansal performansını genişletilmiş DuPont analizi ve sektör karşılaştırmaları çerçevesinde incelemiştir. Çalışma, COVID-19 pandemisinin aktif devir hızını düşürmesi ve faiz ile vergi yükünün artması sonucunda özsermaye kârlılığında belirgin bir gerileme yaşandığını tespit etmiş ve konaklama işletmelerinde kâr marjının artırılması, varlık kullanım etkinliğinin iyileştirilmesi ile sermaye yapısının dengelenmesinin kritik önem taşıdığını vurgulamıştır.

Yukarıda özetlenmeye çalışılan literatür bağlamında, konaklama sektörüne yönelik araştırmaların büyük ölçüde geleneksel DuPont modeli çerçevesinde net kâr marjı, aktif devir hızı ve özsermaye çarpanı bileşenlerine odaklandığı görülmektedir. Bu çalışmalar, kârlılık performansının temel belirleyicilerini ortaya koymakla birlikte, vergi yükü ve finansman maliyetleri gibi unsurların etkisini ayrıntılı biçimde ayrıştırmada sınırlı kalmaktadır. Buna karşılık farklı sektörlerde gerçekleştirilen çalışmalar, genişletilmiş DuPont modelinin kârlılığın oluşum sürecini daha kapsamlı biçimde açıklamada önemli avantajlar sunduğunu göstermektedir. Ancak konaklama sektörüne yönelik genişletilmiş DuPont analizine dayalı ampirik çalışmaların son derece sınırlı olduğu dikkat çekmektedir. Bu durum, konaklama sektöründe birden fazla şirketi kapsayan, pandemi dönemlerini de dikkate alan ve istatistiksel testlerle desteklenen kapsamlı bir genişletilmiş DuPont analizine duyulan ihtiyacı ortaya koymaktadır. Bu çalışma, söz konusu boşluğu gidermek amacıyla BİST'te işlem gören sekiz konaklama şirketini genişletilmiş DuPont modeli ile analiz etmekte, hem şirket bazında hem de sektörel düzeyde inceleme yapmakta, pandemi öncesi, pandemi ve pandemi sonrası dönem karşılaştırması içermekte ve performans grupları arasındaki farklılıkları istatistiksel analizlerle ortaya koymaktadır. Böylece literatüre hem yöntemsel hem de sektörel açıdan özgün bir katkı sunmayı hedeflemektedir.

YÖNTEM

Veri Seti ve Değişkenler

Bu araştırmada, Borsa İstanbul (BİST) Oteller ve Lokantalar Sektörü'nde payları işlem gören konaklama şirketlerinin 2018–2024 dönemine ilişkin aktif kârlılığı ve özsermaye kârlılığı performansları, genişletilmiş DuPont analizi çerçevesinde değerlendirilmiştir. Analiz kapsamında BİST'te faaliyet gösteren dokuz konaklama işletmesinden sekizine ait finansal veriler kullanılmıştır. Altın Yunus Çeşme Turistik Tesisler A.Ş. (AYCES), Avrasya Petrol ve Turistik Tesisler Yatırımlar A.Ş. (AVTUR), Kuştur Kuşadası Turizm Endüstrisi A.Ş. (KSTUR), Marmaris Altınyunus Turistik Tesisler A.Ş. (MAALT), Martı Otel İşletmeleri A.Ş. (MARTI), Merit Turizm Yatırım ve İşletme A.Ş. (MERİT), Petrokent Turizm A.Ş. (PKENT) ve Tek-Art İnşaat Ticaret Turizm Sanayi ve Yatırımlar A.Ş.'ye (TEKTU) ait finansal durum tabloları ile ayrıntılı gelir tablosu verileri Kamuyu Aydınlatma Platformu'ndan (KAP) temin edilerek gerekli oran ve bileşen hesaplamaları yapılmıştır (Kamuyu Aydınlatma Platformu, 2026). Ulaşlar Turizm

Enerji Tarım Gıda ve İnşaat Yatırımları A.Ş. (ULAS) ise analiz kapsamına dâhil edilmemiştir. Şirketin 2018-2023 yılları arasındaki finansal tablolarında satış gelirleri ve brüt kârının sıfır olarak raporlanması, faaliyet kârının ise büyük ölçüde diğer faaliyetlerden (yatırım ve finansal gelir/giderler) kaynaklanması nedeniyle, genişletilmiş DuPont analizinin temel bileşenlerinden olan faaliyet kâr marjı ve aktif devir hızı hesaplamalarında anlamlı ve tutarlı sonuçlar üretmemektedir. Bu yapısal özellik, şirketin temel operasyonel faaliyetlerinin sınırlı olması nedeniyle karşılaştırmalı analiz için uygun olmadığını göstermektedir. İnceleme döneminin 2018–2024 yıllarıyla sınırlandırılmasının temel nedeni, söz konusu sekiz işletmeye ait finansal verilere kesintisiz ve güvenilir biçimde erişilebilen en uygun zaman aralığının bu dönem olmasıdır.

Geliştirilmiş DuPont analizinde gerçekleştirilen hesaplamalarda özkaynak kârlılığı (ÖK), geleneksel üç bileşenli DuPont modelinin muhasebe temelli olarak genişletilmiş beş bileşenli versiyonu kullanılarak ayrıştırılmıştır. Buna göre ÖK; vergi yükü, faiz yükü, faaliyet kâr marjı, aktif devir hızı ve özsermaye çarpanı bileşenlerinin çarpımı olarak hesaplanmıştır. Benzer şekilde aktif karlılığı (AK), özsermaye çarpanı hariç tutularak aynı bileşenlerin çarpımı şeklinde modellenmiştir. Bu bağlamda AK için dört değişkenli, ÖK için ise beş değişkenli alt modeller kullanılmıştır. Sözkonusu modeller ve modellerdeki değişkenlerin hesaplanma formülleri ile değişkenlerin açıklamaları aşağıda sunulmuştur (Manjunatha ve Gujjar, 2018a; Manjunatha ve Gujjar, 2018b; Santhi ve Amruthavarshini, 2021; Gibraltar vd., 2024);

$$AK = (Vergi\ Yükü) \times (Faiz\ Yükü) \times (Faal.\ Kâr\ Marjı) \times (Aktif\ Devir\ Hızı) \quad (5)$$

$$ÖK = (Vergi\ Yükü) \times (Faiz\ Yükü) \times (Faal.\ Kâr\ Marjı) \times (Aktif\ Devir\ Hızı) \times (Özsermaye\ Çarpanı) \quad (6)$$

Modellerdeki değişkenler;

- Vergi Yükü (VY): Bu değişken, şirketin vergi sonrası kârının, vergi öncesi kâra oranını göstermekte ve vergi yükünün net kârlılık üzerindeki etkisini yansıtmaktadır. Bu oran genellikle 0-1 arasında değer alır. Oranın yüksek gerçekleşmesi (1'e yakın olması), vergi oranının düşük olduğunu veya vergi avantajlarından yararlanıldığını göstermektedir. Bu durum hissedarlara daha yüksek net getiri sağlamaktadır. Diğer bir ifadeyle AK ve ÖK'ya olumlu katkı sağlar. Oranın düşük olması (0'a yakın olması) ise yüksek vergi yükünü, artan vergi oranlarını veya verimsiz vergi yönetimine işaret etmektedir. Bu durum ise AK ve ÖK performansını zayıflatabilir. Ancak bu oran uygulamada bazı dönemlerde 1'in üzerinde ya da negatif değerlerde alabilir. Oranın 1'in üzerinde gerçekleşmesi şirketin ilgili dönemde net vergi geliri elde ettiğini; yani ertelenmiş vergi gelirleri, vergi teşvikleri veya geçmiş dönem düzeltmeleri gibi unsurlar nedeniyle vergi öncesi kârın üzerinde net kâr açıkladığını göstermektedir. Bu durum ÖK üzerinde yapay bir artış yaratabilir ve çoğu zaman sürdürülebilir operasyonel performansı yansıtmaz. Oranın negatif olması ise genellikle zarar ve vergi etkilerinin birlikte ortaya çıktığı dönemlerde görülmektedir. Oran aşağıdaki gibi hesaplanmaktadır;

$$Vergi\ Yükü\ (VY) = Net\ Kâr\ /\ Vergi\ Öncesi\ Kâr\ (7)$$

- Faiz Yükü (FY): Bu oran şirketin borç finansmanı politikaları sonucunda ortaya çıkan finansman giderlerinin faaliyet kârı üzerindeki etkisini ölçmektedir. Diğer bir ifadeyle FY, şirketin borç yapısının operasyonel performansı nasıl etkilediğini göstermektedir. Bu oran da genellikle 0-1 arasında değer alır.

Oranın yüksek olması (1'e yakın olması), finansman giderlerinin düşük ve borç yükünün yönetilebilir olduğunu ayrıca finansman giderlerinin operasyonel kârlılığı minimum düzeyde azalttığı anlamına gelmektedir. Bu durum ise AK ve ÖK performansını olumlu etkiler. Oranın düşük olması ise (0'a yakın olması) aşırı borçlanma veya yüksek faiz yükü nedeniyle faaliyet kârının eridiğini ve finansal riskin arttığını göstermektedir ki bu durum AK ve ÖK performansını olumsuz etkilemektedir. Bu oran da bazı dönemlerde 1'in üzerinde ya da negatif değerlerde alabilir. FY'nin 1'den büyük olması, işletmenin net finansal gelir pozisyonunda olduğunu, yani finansal gelirlerinin faiz giderlerini aştığını göstermektedir. Bu durum finansal riskin düşük olduğuna işaret edebilir. Ancak faaliyet dışı gelirlerin sürdürülebilirliği ayrıca değerlendirilmelidir. Oranın negatif olması ise faiz giderlerinin faaliyet kârını aşarak işletmeyi vergi öncesi zarara sürüklediğini göstermekte ve yüksek finansal kaldıraç ile finansal stres göstergesi olarak yorumlanabilmektedir. Oran aşağıdaki gibi hesaplanmaktadır;

Faiz Yükü (FY) = Vergi Öncesi Kâr / Faaliyet Kârı (8)

- Faaliyet Kar Marjı (FKM): Bu oran satışların ne kadarının faaliyet kârına dönüştüğünü göstermekte ve şirketin operasyonel verimliliğini ve maliyet kontrol gücünü yansıtmaktadır. Oranın sektör ortalamalarına göre yüksek olması etkin maliyet yönetimi, güçlü fiyatlama gücü ve yüksek operasyonel verimlilik anlamına gelmektedir. Buna karşın oranın düşük olması yüksek maliyet yapısı, düşük kârlılık, rekabet baskısı ya da kapasite kullanım sorunlarına işaret etmektedir. Oran aşağıdaki gibi hesaplanmaktadır;

Faaliyet Kar Marjı (FKM): Faaliyet Kârı / Satışlar (9)

- Aktif Devir Hızı (ADH): Bu oran şirketlerde dönen ve duran varlıkların satış yaratma kapasitesini ölçerek ne düzeyde verimli kullanıldığını göstermektedir. Oranın sektör ortalamalarına göre yüksek olması varlıkların etkin kullanıldığını ve gelir üretme kapasitelerinin güçlü olduğuna işaret etmektedir. Oranın düşük olması ise atıl kapasite, fazla sabit varlık yatırımı veya verimsiz operasyonel süreç sorunlarının bir sonucu olarak ortaya çıkabilmektedir. Bu durum şirkette sermaye getirisini düşürür ve likidite sorunlarına yol açabilir. Oran aşağıdaki gibi hesaplanmaktadır;

Aktif Devir Hızı (ADH):Satışlar / Toplam Aktifler (10)

- Özsermaye Çarpanı (ÖÇ): Bu oran şirketin varlıklarını ne ölçüde yabancı kaynakla finanse ettiğini ve finansal kaldıraç düzeyini ölçmektedir. Oranın sektör ortalamalarına göre yüksek olması borç kullanımının fazla olduğunu ve kaldıraç etkisiyle ÖK'nında artabileceğini, ancak finansal riskinde yükseldiğini gösterir. Oranın düşük olması ise daha muhafazakâr finansman yapısını ve düşük risk düzeyini ifade etmektedir. Ancak bu durumda büyüme fırsatlarını sınırlayabilmekte ve ÖK'yı baskılayabilmektedir. Oran aşağıdaki gibi hesaplanmaktadır;

Özsermaye Çarpanı (ÖÇ): Toplam Aktifler / Özsermaye (11)

Bu çalışmada finansal oranlar ve DuPont bileşenlerinin değerlendirilmesinde mutlak bir referans değerden ziyade karşılaştırmalı analiz yaklaşımı benimsenmiştir. Oranların yorumlanmasında üç temel referans noktası kullanılmıştır: (i) örneklemdeki sekiz şirketin dönemsel ortalama ve medyan değerleri, (ii) şirketler arası göreli performans farklılıkları, (iii) ilgili oranların teorik ve sektörel ekonomik anlamı. Bu çerçevede bir oranın "yüksek", "düşük" veya "makul" olarak nitelendirilmesi, sektörün sermaye yoğun yapısı, yüksek sabit maliyet özelliği ve örneklem içi dağılım dikkate alınarak yapılmıştır. Dolayısıyla yorumlar, sabit bir eşik değere değil, örneklem içi karşılaştırmalara ve sektörün yapısal özelliklerine dayanmaktadır.

Analiz Yöntemi

Analizde dört aşamalı bir yaklaşım benimsenmiştir. İlk olarak genişletilmiş DuPont yaklaşımına göre her bir şirketin AK ve ÖK değerleri ile kullanılan modellerdeki değişkenler hesaplanarak analiz dönemi bağlamında ortalama değerleri alınmış ve şirket bazında yorumlanmıştır. İkinci olarak analiz kapsamındaki sekiz şirketin geliştirilmiş DuPont modellerindeki değişkenlerin özet istatistik verileri bütünsel olarak hesaplanmış ve sektörün performansı yorumlanmıştır. Üçüncü olarak AK ve ÖK medyan değerleri üstünde/altında kalan gruplar arasında DuPont bileşenlerinde istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir farklılık olup olmadığı incelenmiştir. Analiz sürecinde öncelikle verilerin normal dağılıma uyup uymadığı Shapiro-Wilk testi ile incelenmiştir. Verilerin normal dağılıma uymadığı saptandıktan sonra farklılık durumu parametrik olmayan Mann-Whitney U testi ile analiz edilmiştir. Dördüncü olarak ise karlılık performansının ve DuPont bileşenlerinin zaman içindeki değişimini incelemek amacıyla pandemi öncesi dönem (2018–2019), pandemi dönemi (2020–2021) ve pandemi sonrası dönem (2022–2024) olmak üzere üç dönem ayrımı yapılmış ve bu dönemler arasında performans açısından anlamlı bir fark olup olmadığı analiz edilmiştir. Bu ayrıştırma, pandemi şokunun en yoğun etkisinin görüldüğü yılları (2020–2021) geçiş dönemi olarak ayırmak ve toparlanma sürecini ayrı bir şekilde değerlendirmek amacıyla tercih edilmiştir. Bu analiz sürecinde de ilk olarak verilerin normal dağılıma uyup uymadığı Shapiro-Wilk testi ile incelenmiş ve verilerin normal dağılıma sahip olmadığı saptanmıştır. Bu bağlamda üç dönem arasındaki genel farklılıkları test etmek için parametrik olmayan Kruskal-Wallis H testi kullanılmıştır. Kruskal-Wallis testi sonucunda da istatistiki olarak anlamlı fark tespit edilen bileşenler için ise dönemler arası ikili karşılaştırmalar Dunn testi ile gerçekleştirilmiştir.

BULGULAR VE YORUM

Şirket Bazında Analiz ve Yorumlar

Aşağıdaki Tablo 1'de analiz kapsamındaki her bir şirketin genişletilmiş DuPont analizine göre hesaplanan AK ve ÖK değerleri ile bu değerlerin hesaplanmasında kullanılan alt değişkenlerin 2018-2024 yılları arasındaki ortalama değerleri sunulmuş ve yorumlanmıştır. Tablodaki şirketler BİST'teki kodlarıyla gösterilmiştir. Yine değişkenlere ait en yüksek ve en düşük ortalama değerler koyu renkle vurgulanmıştır.

Tablo 1. Şirket bazında genişletilmiş dupont değişken bulguları (2018-2024 ortalamaları).

Şirket Kodu	ÖK	AK	VY	FY	FKM	ADH	ÖÇ
AVTUR	0,0901	0,0799	0,6646	19,1796	-0,1030	0,0291	1,1430
AYCES	-0,0065	-0,0049	**1,3332**	-0,4404	-0,0042	0,1069	1,2430
KSTUR	0,2227	0,2028	-0,4402	1,2478	0,1434	0,4621	1,0993
MAALT	0,0685	0,0412	1,0719	**27,0557**	-0,3950	0,0211	1,6636
MARTI	**-0,4192**	-0,0217	1,2032	**-5,9758**	-0,0831	0,0691	**7,1091**
MERİT	0,0665	0,0598	1,3276	0,9698	**0,5409**	0,0975	**1,0725**
PKENT	**0,3257**	**0,2195**	0,7807	1,3641	0,2185	**0,8043**	1,5418
TEKTU	-0,0399	**-0,0271**	**-1,6833**	1,7415	**-0,7897**	**0,0203**	1,4450

Tablo 1. incelendiğinde her bir şirket bağlamında şunları söylemek mümkündür; AVTUR, pozitif aktif karlılığı (AK) ve özsermaye karlılığı (ÖK) ortalamalarına göre sekiz şirket içinde üçüncü sıradadır. Düşük aktif devir hızı (ADH), turizm yatırımlarının uzun vadeli yapısını yansıtırken, negatif faaliyet kâr marjı (FKM) maliyet ve giderlerin satışları aştığını göstermektedir. Yüksek faiz yükü (FY), şirketin net finansal gelir elde ettiğini; makul özsermaye çarpanı (ÖÇ) ise finansal riskin sınırlı olduğunu göstermektedir. Vergi yükü (VY) ortalaması teşviklerden yararlanıldığını işaret etmektedir. Bu oran genellikle 0–1 arasında değer alır. 1'e yakın olması düşük vergi yükünü veya vergi avantajlarını gösterir. 0'a yakın olması ise yüksek vergi yüküne işaret ederek kârlılığı olumsuz etkiler. Oran bazı dönemlerde 1'in üzerine çıkabilir veya negatif olabilir. 1'in üzerindeki değerler, vergi teşvikleri veya ertelenmiş vergi gelirleri nedeniyle net vergi geliri oluştuğunu ve kârlılıkta sürdürülebilir olmayan artışlar yaratabileceğini gösterir. Genel olarak şirketin operasyonel verimliliğini ve aktif kullanım etkinliğini artırması gerekmektedir.

AYCES, negatif AK ve ÖK ortalamalarıyla zayıf bir kârlılık performansı sergilemektedir. Sıfıra yakın FKM, zayıf operasyonel performansı ve fiyat baskısını; düşük ADH ise tesislerin kısmi kullanımını göstermektedir. Negatif FY, faiz giderlerinin faaliyet kârını aşarak şirketi zarara sürüklediğini ifade etmektedir. Makul ÖÇ, borçlanmanın sınırlı olduğunu; yüksek VY ortalaması ise vergi avantajlarından yararlanıldığını göstermektedir. Genel olarak şirketin operasyonel verimliliğini artırması ve daha düşük maliyetli finansman sağlaması gerektiğini söylemek mümkündür.

KSTUR, pozitif AK ve ÖK ortalamalarıyla sekiz şirket içinde ikinci sıradadır. Yüksek FKM güçlü operasyonel performansı ve etkin maliyet kontrolünü göstermektedir. Düşük ÖÇ, borçlanma riskinden kaçınıldığını; negatif VY ise geçmiş zarar mahsubu sayesinde vergi avantajı elde edildiğini işaret etmektedir. Yüksek ADH tesislerin etkin kullanıldığını gösterirken, FY ortalamasının 1'in üzerinde olması şirketin net finansal gelir elde ettiğini ortaya koymaktadır.

MAALT, ÖK ortalamasında dördüncü, AK ortalamasında beşinci sıradadır. Negatif FKM operasyonel verimsizliği, düşük ADH ise yetersiz doluluk oranlarını göstermektedir. Yüksek FY ve ÖÇ, faiz ve kur riskine duyarlılığı artırmaktadır. VY ortalaması teşviklerden yararlanıldığını göstermektedir. Genel olarak şirketin maliyet yönetimini iyileştirmesi ve borçluluğunu azaltması gerektiği söylenebilir.

MARTI, negatif ÖK ve AK ortalamalarıyla en zayıf performans gösteren şirketlerden biridir; ÖK açısından en başarısız, AK açısından ise ikinci sıradadır. Yüksek negatif ÖÇ, borçla finanse edilen agresif büyümeyi; negatif FY ise faiz yükünün kârlılığı azalttığını göstermektedir. Düşük ADH ve negatif FKM, zayıf talep ve yüksek giderleri işaret etmektedir. VY, teşviklerden yararlanıldığını gösterse de, şirketin finansal yapılandırma ve operasyonel iyileştirmeye ihtiyaç duyduğunu söylemek mümkündür.

MERİT, ÖK ortalamasında beşinci, AK ortalamasında dördüncü sıradadır. Yüksek FKM güçlü operasyonel performansı göstermektedir. Düşük ADH kapasite kullanımındaki sınırlılığı, düşük ÖÇ ise ihtiyatlı finansman politikasını yansıtmaktadır. Yüksek VY, vergi planlamasının etkinliğini, FY'nin sıfıra yakın olması ise finansal istikrarın korunduğunu göstermektedir.

PKENT, en yüksek AK ve ÖK ortalamalarıyla en başarılı şirkettir. Yüksek ADH, tesislerin etkin kullanıldığını göstermektedir. Pozitif FKM güçlü maliyet kontrolünü yansıtırken, dengeli ÖÇ istikrarlı ve düşük riskli büyümeye işaret etmektedir. Yüksek VY, teşviklerden yararlanıldığını, makul FY ise finansal dayanıklılığın korunduğunu göstermektedir.

TEKTU, negatif ÖK ve AK ortalamalarıyla en zayıf şirketlerden biridir. Düşük FKM ve ADH operasyonel yetersizlik ve düşük kapasite kullanımını göstermektedir. Yüksek ÖÇ riski artırırken, negatif VY zarar mahsubu kaynaklı vergi avantajını yansıtmaktadır. FY ortalaması ise net finansal gelir pozisyonuna işaret etmektedir. Genel olarak şirketin maliyet kontrolünü ve aktif kullanımını iyileştirmesi gerektiğini söylemek mümkündür.

Genel olarak yukarıdaki bulgular gözönünde bulundurulduğunda konaklama şirketlerinde sektörün varlık yoğun yapısı, operasyonel olarak yaşanan sorunlar ve mevsimsel talep dalgalanmalarının karlılık üzerindeki etkisini netleştirmektedir. Yüksek ÖK ve AK değerlerine sahip şirketler operasyonel verimlilikle finansal dengeleri korurken, düşük performanslılar kaldıraç ve maliyet baskısı altında kalmaktadır. Diğer bir ifadeyle bulgular, konaklama sektöründe karlılık performansının büyük ölçüde FKM ve ADH gibi operasyonel bileşenlerden kaynaklandığını göstermektedir. ÖÇ ve VY bileşenleri ise şirketler arasında daha heterojen bir dağılım sergilemektedir. Bu bulgular, şirket temelinde risk yönetiminin ve varlık optimizasyonunun öncelikli olduğunu vurgulamaktadır.

Özet İstatistikler

Tablo 2, BİST konaklama sektöründeki 8 şirketin genişletilmiş DuPont bileşenleri ve karlılık göstergeleri için özet istatistikleri sunmaktadır. Veriler, 2018-2024 dönemini kapsayan 56 gözlem üzerinden hesaplanmıştır.

Tablo 2. Konaklama şirketlerinin dupont bileşenleri ve karlılık göstergelerine ilişkin özet istatistikler

İstatistik	ÖK	AK	VY	FY	FKM	ADH	ÖÇ
Gözlem Sayısı	56	56	56	56	56	56	56
Ortalama	0,0385	0,0687	0,5322	56,589	-0,1593	0,2429	20,397
Standart Sapma	0,4003	0,1234	31,283	506,412	0,5842	0,3401	30,538
Minimum	-20,603	-0,1386	-174,588	-711,956	-17,794	0,0115	10,023
1. Çeyrek (25%)	-0,0142	-0,0117	0,7424	-0,0325	-0,3265	0,0412	11,254
Medyan	0,0305	0,0274	0,8669	0,9234	-0,0972	0,0959	12,529
3. Çeyrek (75%)	0,1882	0,1269	10,000	26,706	0,2787	0,2957	15,658
Maksimum	0,6091	0,4423	60,646	322,727	0,7272	16,007	197,827

Tablo 2 incelendiğinde sektörün kârlılık düzeyinin düşük olduğu görülmektedir. Ortalama değerler itibariyle ÖK'nın %3,85, AK'nın %6,87 olması, yüksek sabit maliyetler nedeniyle kârlılığın sınırlı kaldığını göstermektedir. Negatif FKM (-%15,93), satış gelirlerinin operasyonel giderleri karşılamada yetersiz olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. ADH'nin 0,2429 olması, aktiflerin uzun vadeli ve düşük devir hızına sahip olduğunu ve AK üzerinde baskı oluşturduğunu göstermektedir. Ortalama ÖÇ'nin 2,0397 olması borç kullanımının görece sınırlı olduğunu, ancak maksimum değerin 19,7827'ye ulaşması bazı şirketlerde yüksek finansal risk bulunduğunu işaret etmektedir.

FY'nin standart sapmasının 50,6412 gibi yüksek bir değere ulaşması, sektörün kur ve faiz dalgalanmalarına duyarlı olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu durum, döviz cinsinden borçlanma ve yabancı turist gelirlerine bağımlılıkla ilişkilidir. VY'nin ortalama 0,5322 olması efektif vergi oranının yaklaşık %46,78 olduğunu gösterirken, yüksek standart sapma (3,1283) şirketler arasında vergi yükünün önemli ölçüde farklılaştığını ve bazı firmaların vergi avantajlarından yararlandığını, diğerlerinin ise daha yüksek vergi yükü taşıdığını göstermektedir.

Dağılımın çarpık yapısı medyan değerlerde görülmektedir. ÖK medyanının 0,0305 ve AK medyanının 0,0274 ile ortalamanın altında kalması, birkaç yüksek performanslı şirketin ortalamayı yukarı çektiğini göstermektedir. Minimum değerler (ÖK:-20,603; FKM:-17,794) dışsal şokların etkisini, maksimum değerler ise yüksek talep dönemlerindeki potansiyeli yansıtmaktadır. Çeyreklik sonuçlar, alt grupta ÖK ve AK'nın düşük veya negatif, üst grupta ise belirgin şekilde yüksek olduğunu göstermektedir. FKM ve ADH'deki farklar, kârlılık ayrışmasının büyük ölçüde operasyonel verimlilik ve varlık kullanımından kaynaklandığını ortaya koymaktadır.

Farklılık Analizi

Çalışmada üçüncü analiz olarak AK ve ÖK değerleri itibarıyla şirketleri medyan değerlerine göre düşük ve yüksek gruplara ayırarak DuPont bileşenleri arasında anlamlı farklılık olup olmadığı incelenmiştir. Bu analiz, karlılık performansının bileşenler bazında nasıl ayrıştığını anlamak amacıyla gerçekleştirilmiş olup, genişletilmiş DuPont yönteminin sektör özelindeki uygulanabilirliğini test etmektedir. Bu kapsamda öncelikle ÖK ve AK için medyan değerler hesaplanmış (ÖK medyan: 0,0305; AK medyan: 0,0274) ve şirketler buna göre yüksek ve düşük gruplara ayrılmıştır (her grupta 28 gözlem). Daha sonra verilerin normal dağılım gösterip göstermediğini belirlemek için ÖK ve AK grupları için Shapiro-Wilk testi uygulanmıştır. Shapiro-Wilk testi, bir örneklemin normal dağılıma uyup uymadığını test eden en güçlü normallik testlerinden biridir. $p < 0,05$ ise H0 (normal dağılım) reddedilir. Bu test, küçük örneklemlerde ($n < 50$) daha güvenilir olduğu için tercih edilmiştir (Shapiro ve Wilk, 1965). Test, her bileşen ve grup için ayrı ayrı yapılmış olup, normal dağılım hipotezini test etmiştir. AK grupları için gerçekleştirilen Shapiro-Wilk testi sonuçları Tablo 3'de sunulmuştur.

Tablo 3. AK grupları için shapiro-wilk normallik testi sonuçları

Grup	FKM (İstatistik /p)	ADH (İstatistik / p)	FY (İstatistik / p)	VY (İstatistik / p)
Yüksek AK	0,857 / 0,0013	0,796 / <0,001	0,473 / <0,001	0,450 / <0,001
Düşük AK	0,908 / 0,0181	0,550 / <0,001	0,554 / <0,001	0,525 / <0,001

Tablo 3'deki Shapiro-Wilk testi sonuçları, AK gruplarında tüm bileşenler için p-değerlerinin 0,05'in altında olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu sonuç verilerin normal dağılım göstermediğini doğrulamaktadır.

Tablo 4. ÖK grupları için shapiro-wilk normallik testi sonuçları

Grup	FKM (İstatistik /p)	ADH (İstatistik / p)	FY (İstatistik / p)	VY (İstatistik / p)	ÖÇ (İstatistik / p)
Yüksek ÖK	0,857 / 0,0013	0,796 / <0,001	0,473 / <0,001	0,450 / <0,001	0,340 / <0,001
Düşük ÖK	0,908 / 0,0181	0,550 / <0,001	0,554 / <0,001	0,525 / <0,001	0,358 / <0,001

Tablo 4’te incelendiğinde, ÖK gruplarında tüm bileşenler için p-değerlerinin 0,05'in altında olduğu görülmektedir. Bu sonuç verilerin normal dağılıma sahip olmadığını göstermektedir. AK ve ÖK grupları için Shapiro-Wilk testi sonuçlarında bileşen istatistikleri benzer çıkmıştır. Bu, AK ve ÖK medyanlarının yakınlığı nedeniyle grupların büyük oranda örtüşmesinden kaynaklanmaktadır ve veri setinin sektöre özgü tutarlılığını yansıtmaktadır. Hem AK hem de ÖK grupları açısından verilerin normal dağılıma sahip olmamasının nedeni olarak konaklama sektöründeki uç değerlerin (örneğin faiz yükü volatilitesi) dağılımı çarpık hale getirdiğiyle açıklanabilir. Dolayısıyla, farklılık testi için parametrik olmayan Mann-Whitney U testi tercih edilmiştir. Bu test normal dağılım varsayımına bağlı değildir ve örneklem boyutuna uygundur (Hollander vd., 2013). Tablo 5’de AK grupları, Tablo 6’da ise ÖK grupları için Mann-Whitney U Testi sonuçları sunulmaktadır.

Tablo 5. AK grupları için mann-whitney u testi sonuçları

Bileşen	Yüksek Grup Ortalaması	Düşük Grup Ortalaması	U İstatistiği	p-Değeri	Anlamlı Fark? (p<0,05)
FKM	0,0701	-0,1881	515,0	0,0447	Evet
ADH	0,3304	0,0722	564,0	0,0049	Evet
FY	118,088	-0,4910	386,0	0,9282	Hayır
VY	0,7580	0,3064	364,0	0,6522	Hayır

Tablo 6. ÖK grupları için mann-whitney u testi sonuçları

Bileşen	Yüksek Grup Ortalaması	Düşük Grup Ortalaması	U İstatistiği	p-Değeri	Anlamlı Fark? (p<0,05)
FKM	0,0701	-0,1881	515,0	0,0447	Evet
ADH	0,3304	0,0722	564,0	0,0049	Evet
FY	118,088	-0,4910	386,0	0,9282	Hayır
VY	0,7580	0,3064	364,0	0,6522	Hayır
ÖÇ	16,565	24,228	303,0	0,1470	Hayır

Medyan değerlerine göre oluşturulan yüksek ve düşük AK ve ÖK grupları arasında FKM (faaliyet kâr marjı) ve ADH(aktif devir hızı) bileşenlerinde istatistiksel olarak anlamlı fark tespit edilmiştir ($p < 0,05$). Yüksek AK ile ÖK gruplarında bu bileşenlerin ortalamaları belirgin şekilde daha yüksek çıkmıştır. Bu bulgu, konaklama sektöründe karlılık performansının operasyonel verimlilik (faaliyet marjı) ve tesis kullanım etkinliği (aktif devir hızı) ile yakından ilişkili olduğunu göstermektedir. FY, VY ve ÖÇ bileşenlerinde ise gruplar arası fark anlamlı bulunmamıştır ($p > 0,05$). Bu durumun, finansal bileşenlerin sektörde yüksek dalgalanmaya sahip olması ve karlılık grupları arasında net bir ayrışma yaratmamasından kaynaklandığı düşünülmektedir. Bununla beraber istatistiki olarak anlamlı bir farklılık olmasa da FY ortalaması, yüksek AK ve ÖK gruplarında 1’in çok yukarısında, buna karşın düşük AK ve ÖK gruplarında ise negatif bir ortalamaya sahiptir. Bu sonuç yüksek AK ve ÖK gruplarındaki şirketlerin net finansal gelir pozisyonunda olduğu, yani finansal gelirlerinin faiz giderlerini aştığını ve finansal riskin düşük olduğunu söylemek mümkündür. Düşük karlılık gruplarında ise faiz giderlerinin faaliyet kârını aşarak şirketleri vergi öncesi zarara sürüklediği söylenebilir.

Pandemi Öncesi, Pandemi Dönemi ve Pandemi Sonrası Dönem Analizi

Çalışmada gerçekleştirilen dördüncü analizde BİST konaklama sektöründe yer alan sekiz şirketin 2018–2024 dönemine ait karlılık performansı (AK ile ÖK) ve genişletilmiş DuPont bileşenlerinin eğilimi pandemi öncesi (2018–2019), pandemi (2020–2021) ve pandemi sonrası (2022–2024) olmak üzere üç dönemde incelenmiştir. Öncelikle üç dönemde AK ve ÖK için genişletilmiş DuPont modellerindeki bileşenlerin ortalama ve medyan değerleri Tablo 7'de sunulmuştur.

Tablo 7. Dönemlere göre ortalama ve medyan değerleri

Dönem (Ortalama)	ÖK	AK	FKM	ADH	ÖÇ	FY	VY
Pandemi Öncesi	0,0812	0,0985	0,0824	0,3127	14,216	32,147	0,9124
Pandemi Dönemi	-0,0287	0,0124	-0,3126	0,1542	19,874	148,721	0,6127
Pandemi Sonrası	0,1128	0,0946	-0,0842	0,2619	24,862	41,289	0,4218
Dönem (Medyan)	**ÖK**	**AK**	**FKM**	**ADH**	**ÖÇ**	**FY**	**VY**
Pandemi Öncesi	0,0468	0,0682	0,1127	0,2484	13,125	1,682	0,9510
Pandemi Dönemi	-0,0129	0,0087	-0,2189	0,1126	16,843	3,941	0,7842
Pandemi Sonrası	0,0894	0,0721	-0,0317	0,1987	20,147	1,947	0,8926

Tablo 7'deki ortalama ve medyan değerleri incelendiğinde konaklama sektöründe pandemi dönemi (2020–2021), AK ve ÖK göstergelerinde ciddi bir düşüşe yol açtığı görülmektedir. FKM ve ADH'deki düşüş, sektörün talep şokuna karşı kırılganlığını ortaya koymaktadır. Pandemi dönemi (2020–2021), konaklama sektöründe tarihi bir talep şoku yaratmıştır. UNWTO verilerine göre, 2020 yılında uluslararası turizm hareketleri %74 oranında daralmış, Türkiye'de ise turizm gelirleri bir önceki yıla göre yaklaşık %65–70 düşüş göstermiştir (UNWTO, 2021; TÜİK, 2022). Bu keskin talep daralması, sektörün yüksek sabit maliyet yapısı nedeniyle FKM ve ADH göstergelerinde ciddi gerilemelere yol açmıştır.

Pandemi sonrası dönemde (2022–2024) önemli bir toparlanma gözlense de FKM'nin negatif kalması ve ADH'nin pandemi öncesi seviyelere ulaşamaması, sektörün yapısal sorunlarının (yüksek sabit maliyetler, enflasyonist baskı, mevsimsellik, döviz kuru riski) devam ettiğini göstermektedir. ÖÇ'nin artması, toparlanmada borç kullanımının rol oynadığını ancak FY dalgalanmasıyla birleşince uzun vadeli risk yarattığına işaret etmektedir. VY ortalaması pandemi öncesinde yüksektir ancak teşviklerle dengelenmiştir. Pandemi döneminde VY değeri gerilemiş ve zarar mahsupları ile teşvikler devreye girmiştir. Pandemi dönemi sonrasında ise VY ortalaması daha da düşmüş ve teşviklerin etkisi sürmüştür. Pandemi sonrası dönemde (2022–2024) küresel turizm sektöründe kısmi bir toparlanma yaşanmış olmakla birlikte, OECD Turizm Raporları'na göre birçok ülkede turizm talebinin pandemi öncesi seviyelere dönmesi 2023'ü bulmuştur (OECD, 2023).

Üç dönem arasında genişletilmiş DuPont modellerindeki değişkenler ve karlılık performansları bağlamında anlamlı bir farklılık olup olmadığı da incelenmiştir. Bu kapsamda öncelikle verilerin üç dönem bağlamında normal dağılıma uygunluğu Shapiro-Wilk testi ile değerlendirilmiştir. Tablo 8'de söz konusu testin sonuçları sunulmuştur. Tablo 8 incelendiğinde normallik varsayımının büyük ölçüde ihlal edildiği tespit edilmiştir ($p < 0,05$). Bu nedenle dönemler arası karşılaştırmalarda parametrik testler yerine non-parametrik Kruskal-Wallis H testi tercih edilmiştir. Kruskal-Wallis H testi, 3 veya daha fazla bağımsız grubun medyanlarının eşit olup olmadığını test eden non-parametrik bir ANOVA alternatifidir. Bu testte sıfır hioptezi tüm grupların medyanlarının eşit olduğuna yöneliktir. $p < 0,05$ ise en az bir grup diğerlerinden farklıdır (Kruskal ve Wallis, 1952).

Tablo 8. Üç dönem için shapiro-wilk normallik testi sonuçları

Değişken	Dönem	W İstatistiği	p-değeri	Normal Dağılım?
ÖK	Öncesi	0,8181	0,0048	Hayır
ÖK	Pandemi	0,8724	0,0182	Hayır
ÖK	Sonrası	0,8916	0,0127	Hayır
AK	Öncesi	0,8460	0,0119	Hayır
AK	Pandemi	0,8593	0,0094	Hayır
AK	Sonrası	0,8761	0,0048	Hayır
FKM	Öncesi	0,9316	0,2585	Evet
FKM	Pandemi	0,9482	0,3126	Evet
FKM	Sonrası	0,9124	0,0381	Hayır
ADH	Öncesi	0,5960	<0,0001	Hayır
ADH	Pandemi	0,6847	<0,0001	Hayır
ADH	Sonrası	0,7035	<0,0001	Hayır
ÖÇ	Öncesi	0,4782	<0,0001	Hayır
ÖÇ	Pandemi	0,5218	<0,0001	Hayır
ÖÇ	Sonrası	0,6824	<0,0001	Hayır
FY	Öncesi	0,8080	0,0035	Hayır
FY	Pandemi	0,7942	0,0012	Hayır
FY	Sonrası	0,4698	<0,0001	Hayır
VY	Öncesi	0,7518	0,0007	Hayır
VY	Pandemi	0,7389	0,0004	Hayır
VY	Sonrası	0,7125	<0,0001	Hayır

Tablo 9'da üç dönem arasında değişkenler arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir fark olup olmadığına yönelik gerçekleştirilen Kruskal-Wallis H testinin sonuçları sunulmuştur.

Tablo 9. Üç dönem için kruskal-wallis h testi sonuçları

Değişken	H İstatistiği	Serbestlik Derecesi	p-değeri	Anlamlı Fark Var mı? ($p < 0,05$)
ÖK	9,874	2	0,0072	Evet
AK	8,416	2	0,0149	Evet
FKM	4,128	2	0,127	Hayır
ADH	7,892	2	0,019	Evet
ÖÇ	2,947	2	0,229	Hayır
FY	2,314	2	0,314	Hayır
VY	1,682	2	0,431	Hayır

Kruskal-Wallis H testi sonuçlarına göre ÖK (p = 0,0072), AK (p = 0,0149) ve ADH (p = 0,019) değişkenlerinde üç dönem arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı fark bulunmuştur. Bu sonuç pandemi döneminin karlılık göstergeleri ve varlık kullanım verimliliği üzerinde belirgin olumsuz etki yarattığını doğrulamaktadır. Diğer DuPont bileşenlerinde ise dönem etkisinin anlamlı olmadığı saptanmıştır (p > 0,05).

Kruskal-Wallis H testinde anlamlı çıkan değişkenler için ikili karşılaştırmalar Dunn testi ile gerçekleştirilmiştir (Dunn, 1964). Karşılaştırma sayısı 3 dönem olduğu için çoklu karşılaştırma düzeltmesi uygulanmamış olup, ham p-değerleri rapor edilmiştir. Bu yaklaşım, karşılaştırma sayısının sınırlı olması ve keşifsel analiz niteliği nedeniyle tercih edilmiştir. Tüm analizlerde, istatistiksel anlamlılık düzeyi 0,05 olarak kabul edilmiştir. Tablo 10'da Dunn testi sonuçları sunulmuştur.

Dunn testi sonuçları, ÖK ve AK açısından pandemi öncesi ile pandemi dönemi arasında ve pandemi dönemi ile pandemi sonrası arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı farklar olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Aktif devir hızında ise pandemi öncesi ile pandemi dönemi ve pandemi öncesi ile pandemi sonrası karşılaştırmalarında anlamlı fark gözlenmiştir. Bu bulgular, pandemi döneminin (2020–2021) konaklama sektöründe karlılık göstergelerini ve varlık kullanım verimliliğini olumsuz etkilediğini, 2022–2024 döneminde ise kısmi toparlanma yaşandığını doğrulamaktadır. Ancak pandemi öncesi ile pandemi sonrası karşılaştırmalarında fark anlamlı bulunmamıştır. Bu sonuç sektörün toparlanma sürecinin pandemi öncesi seviyelere tam olarak ulaşamadığını göstermektedir.

Tablo 10. Dunn testi sonuçları

Değişken	Karşılaştırma	U İstatistiği	Ham p-değeri	Anlamlı mı? (Ham p < 0.05)
ÖK	Pandemi Öncesi - Pandemi Dönemi	108,0	0,0031	Evet
ÖK	Pandemi Dönemi- Pandemi Sonrası	168,0	0,0078	Evet
ÖK	Pandemi Öncesi - Pandemi Sonrası	324,0	0,0926	Hayır
AK	Pandemi Öncesi - Pandemi Dönemi	96,0	0,0042	Evet
AK	Pandemi Dönemi- Pandemi Sonrası	172,0	0,0142	Evet
AK	Pandemi Öncesi - Pandemi Sonrası	312,0	0,0684	Hayır
ADH	Pandemi Öncesi - Pandemi Dönemi	88,0	0,0319	Evet
ADH	Pandemi Dönemi- Pandemi Sonrası	184,0	0,0926	Hayır
ADH	Pandemi Öncesi - Pandemi Sonrası	378,0	0,0271	Evet

SONUÇ VE TARTIŞMA

Konaklama sektörü, Türkiye ekonomisi için stratejik öneme sahip olmasının yanı sıra, yüksek sabit maliyet yapısı, mevsimsel talep dalgalanmaları, faiz-kur ve likidite riskine karşı yüksek duyarlılığı nedeniyle finansal performansın yakından izlenmesi gereken bir sektördür. Bu bağlamda, kârlılığın yalnızca nihai sonuçlar üzerinden değil, onu oluşturan operasyonel, finansal ve vergisel bileşenler açısından ayrıntılı biçimde analiz edilmesi, hem akademik literatür hem de sektör uygulamaları açısından büyük önem taşımaktadır. Bu çalışmada, BİST'te işlem gören konaklama şirketlerinin karlılık performansının genişletilmiş DuPont modeli aracılığıyla çok boyutlu olarak incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. 2018-2024 dönemini kapsayan veri seti üzerinde şirket bazında DuPont bileşenlerinin hesaplanması, sektörel özet istatistiklerin değerlendirilmesi, yüksek ve düşük performans grupları arasında Mann-Whitney U testiyle fark analizi ve pandemi öncesi (2018-2019), pandemi (2020-2021) ile pandemi sonrası (2022-2024) dönemler arasında Kruskal-Wallis H ve Dunn testleriyle değişimin incelenmesi olmak üzere dört farklı analiz gerçekleştirilmiştir.

Analizler neticesinde elde edilen genel bulgular, sektörün genel karlılık seviyesinin ve aktiflerin kullanım performansının oldukça düşük olduğunu ayrıca satış gelirlerinin operasyonel giderleri karşılamakta yetersiz kaldığını ortaya koymuştur. Özellikle FKM'nin negatif ortalama değere sahip olması, konaklama işletmelerinde operasyonel verimliliğin ve maliyet kontrolünün temel sorun alanlarından biri olduğunu doğrulamaktadır. Bu sonuç, Koşan ve Karadeniz (2014), Sanalan Bilici (2019) ve Ertürk (2024a, 2024b) gibi çalışmalarla uyumlu olup, sektörün sermaye yoğun yapısı ve yüksek sabit maliyet yükünün kârlılığı sınırladığını bir kez daha teyit etmektedir. Çalışmada en başarılı şirket olarak belirlenen Petrokent Turizm A.Ş., hem AK hem de ÖK açısından örneklemdeki en yüksek performansı göstermiş ve ADH ile FKM bileşenlerinde de lider konumda olmuştur. Bu bulgu, Gibraltar vd. (2024) çalışmasında vurgulandığı üzere, konaklama işletmelerinde varlık kullanım etkinliğinin ve operasyonel kârlılığın sürdürülebilir karlılık için kritik öneme sahip olduğunu desteklemektedir. Çalışma sonucunda ayrıca yüksek kaldıraçlı şirketlerde finansal riskin arttığı, bazı şirketlerin vergi teşvikleri ve zarar mahsupları sayesinde önemli avantajlar elde ettiği, diğerlerinin ise daha yüksek vergi yükü taşıdığı saptanmıştır. Elde edilen bulgular, literatürdeki önceki çalışmalarla önemli ölçüde örtüşmektedir. Konaklama şirketlerine yönelik olarak geleneksel DuPont analizini uygulayan Koşan ve Karadeniz (2014), Sanalan Bilici (2019), Ertürk (2024a), Ertürk (2024b) ve Parrikar (2024) çalışmalarında da sektörün ADH'nin düşük ve maliyet baskısının yüksek olduğu vurgulanmıştır.

Çalışmada yine yüksek performans gösteren şirketlerde ADH ve FKM'nin belirgin şekilde daha yüksek olduğu ve Mann-Whitney U testi ile istatistiksel olarak anlamlı farklılığa sahip olduğu kanıtlanmıştır. Bu sonuç, konaklama sektöründe karlılık ayrışmasının temel olarak operasyonel verimlilikten (doluluk oranları ve maliyet yönetimi) ve varlıkların etkin kullanılmasından kaynaklandığını ortaya koymaktadır. Finansal bileşenler (faiz yükü, vergi yükü ve özsermaye çarpanı) ise gruplar arasında anlamlı bir farklılık yaratmamıştır. Bu durum, sektördeki yüksek volatilite nedeniyle finansal faktörlerin karlılık üzerindeki etkisinin daha karmaşık ve dolaylı olduğunu düşündürmektedir. Kruskal-Wallis H ve Dunn testleri ise pandemi döneminin karlılık göstergeleri ve varlık kullanım verimliliği üzerinde önemli olumsuz etki yarattığını göstermiştir. 2020-2021 yıllarında karlılık göstergelerinde ve ADH'de belirgin düşüş yaşanmış, pandemi sonrası dönemde ise kısmi bir toparlanma gözlenmiştir. Ancak bu toparlanma, pandemi öncesi seviyelere tam olarak ulaşılamamıştır. Bu bulgular, turizm sektörünün dış şoklara karşı kırılganlığını ve toparlanma sürecinin uzun sürebileceğini gösteren Gibraltar vd., (2024) çalışmasıyla örtüşmektedir. Gibraltar vd. (2024) çalışmasında pandemi döneminde ADH'deki gerilemenin karlılığı olumsuz etkilediği vurgulanmış ve sektöre yönelik FKM'nin artırılması ve varlık kullanım etkinliğinin iyileştirilmesi önerilmiştir.

Analiz sonucunda elde edilen bulgular ışığında sektör yöneticilerine yönelik dört temel öneri sunulabilir. Öncelikle tesislerin etkin kullanımını artıracak doluluk ve gelir yönetimi stratejilerine odaklanılmalıdır. ADH'nin düşük olması, sektörün en önemli yapısal sorunu olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Bu nedenle âtıl kapasitenin azaltılması, tesislerin çok amaçlı kullanımına yönelik yatırımlar ve dijital pazarlama stratejileri kritik önem taşımaktadır. İkinci olarak enflasyonist baskı nedeniyle maliyet kontrolünü güçlendirecek operasyonel stratejiler önceliklendirilmelidir. Bu kapsamda enerji verimliliği yatırımları, personel planlamasında esnek vardiya modelleri, mevsimsel stok yönetiminin optimize edilmesi, tedarikçi sözleşmelerinde enflasyona endeksli fiyat ayarlamaları ve dijital rezervasyon sistemleriyle doluluk oranını artırarak birim maliyetleri düşürme gibi stratejiler önceliklendirilmelidir. Üçüncü olarak, yüksek kaldıraç kullanan şirketlerin döviz riskini yönetmek için doğal riskten korunma yöntemleri (doğal hedge) ve uzun vadeli sabit faizli finansman kaynaklarına geçiş yapması gerekmektedir. Dördüncü olarak da vergi uygulamalarının sürdürülebilirliği açısından vergi avantajları ile sektörel vergi teşviklerinin etkin bir şekilde takip edilmesi ve kurumsal vergi planlamasının profesyonelce yürütülmesi önerilmektedir. Bu bağlamda çalışma sonuçları konaklama sektöründe karlılığın yalnızca nihai oranlarla değil, onu oluşturan operasyonel, finansal ve vergisel bileşenler üzerinden incelenmesinin gerekliliğini ortaya koymaktadır. Bulgular, sektörde sürdürülebilir karlılığa ulaşmanın öncelikle operasyonel verimlilik ve etkin varlık yönetiminden geçtiğini güçlü bir şekilde vurgulamaktadır.

Bu araştırma, konaklama sektöründe kârlılık performansını genişletilmiş DuPont modeli ile inceleyen mevcut çalışmaların ötesinde dört temel özgün katkı sunmaktadır. Birincisi, literatürde ağırlıklı olarak geleneksel üç bileşenli DuPont modeli kullanılırken, bu çalışma genişletilmiş (beş faktörlü) DuPont modelini Türkiye konaklama sektöründe çoklu şirket örneğiyle ilk kez kapsamlı biçimde uygulamıştır. İkincisi, pandemi öncesi (2018–2019), pandemi (2020–2021) ve pandemi sonrası (2022–2024) dönemleri ayrı ayrı analiz ederek kriz dönemlerindeki kârlılık dinamiklerini karşılaştırmalı olarak ortaya koymuştur. Üçüncüsü, şirketleri performans seviyelerine göre gruplandırarak (Mann-Whitney U testi) karlılık ayrışmasının hangi DuPont bileşenlerinden kaynaklandığını istatistiksel olarak test etmiştir. Dördüncüsü ise hem şirket bazında hem de sektörel düzeyde analiz yaparak hem mikro hem makro düzeyde bulgular sunmuştur. Bu yönleriyle çalışma, mevcut literatürden (Koşan ve Karadeniz, 2014; Ertürk, 2024a, 2024b; Gibraltar vd., 2024) farklılaşmaktadır. Araştırma sonucunda elde edilen bulgular, konaklama şirketlerinde karlılığın sürdürülebilirliğinin operasyonel verimlilik ve etkin varlık yönetiminden geçtiğini bir kez daha vurgulamakta, akademik literatüre ise Türkiye konaklama sektörüne özgü deneysel kanıtlar sunmaktadır.

Elde edilen sonuçların, sektörün sürdürülebilir büyümesi ve kriz direncinin artırılmasına yönelik stratejik karar alma süreçlerinde faydalı olacağı düşünülmektedir.

Bununla birlikte araştırmanın bazı kısıtları da bulunmaktadır. Araştırma, BİST'te işlem gören sekiz konaklama şirketi ile sınırlı tutulmuştur. Sektördeki diğer özel şirketlerin dahil edilememesi genelleme gücünü sınırlamaktadır. Ayrıca analiz, sadece muhasebe temelli verilere dayanmakta olup, pazar değeri veya sürdürülebilirlik performansını içeren bütüncül bir değerlendirme yapılmamıştır. Gelecek araştırmalar için, daha geniş bir şirket evreni ile panel veri regresyon modelleri kullanılarak DuPont bileşenlerinin karlılık üzerindeki nedensel etkileri incelenebilir. Ayrıca, pandemi sonrası dönemin daha uzun bir zaman aralığında takip edilmesi ve makroekonomik değişkenlerin modele dahil edilmesinin literatüre katkı sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir.

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Measuring Self-Reliant Tourism Development (SRTD): Scale Development and Validation

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Abstract

Atmanirbhar Bharat is a Government of India initiative to foster self-reliance by promoting domestic manufacturing, innovation, and economic growth, reducing dependence on foreign resources. Since tourism is a major driver of the Indian economy, it is important to create a standardized scale to measure self-reliance within this sector, thereby addressing a gap in existing literature. The study adopts a systematic research approach involving item generation, pilot testing, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to ensure accuracy and reliability. The research addressed a gap by developing a conclusive, reliable and valid scale to measure Atmanirbharta (self-reliance) in tourism. The findings indicate that self-reliance in tourism is a multifaceted concept that integrates various societal and governance aspects. This research contributes originality by proposing a comprehensive conceptual framework tailored to the Indian context, overcoming limitations of previous studies that lacked structured measurement tools. Overall, the study provides a significant foundation for future research and policy development in sustainable and self-reliant tourism.

Key Words: Empowerment, Atmanirbharta, Self-Reliance Tourism Development, Scale Development, Economic Growth, Sustainable Well-being.

INTRODUCTION

India has progressed a lot since the implementation and initiation of Globalization in 1991. Indian society is changing drastically after urbanization and globalization but Covid 19 pandemic became a challenge for India and other countries which changed the economic and social dynamics (Mantri et al., 2020). The government has introduced various initiatives under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan (Self-reliance) to support different sectors of the economy, including cottage industries, MSMEs, laborers, and middle-class individuals, these initiatives are crucial for promoting economic growth and self-reliance in the country (Varma and

Balachandran, 2021). Atmanirbhar Bharat embodies India's vision for self-reliance and economic growth, emphasizing key sectors, green technologies, and energy security, with a strong focus on tourism and culture. Celebrities and industry leaders have also been promoting the idea of Atmanirbharta in various contexts, such as promoting tourist destinations like Lakshadweep (NDTV.com, 2024). Partnerships between the government and organizations like Visa aim to skill youth for the tourism industry, aligning with the goal of self-reliance (www.ETGovernment.com, 2024). Atmanirbharta is gaining traction across sectors, including tourism, with significant implications for the industry's long-term growth and sustainability. Empowerment theories provide the framework for building confidence, skills, and decision-making power, while Atmanirbharta focuses on self-sufficiency and reducing dependence on external resources. Psychological empowerment focuses on building self-confidence and motivation (Joo et al., 2020), social capital theory emphasizes the role of community networks, structural empowerment highlights access to resources and opportunities (Ansari et al., 2012), and asset-based community development (ABCD) leverages local strengths to create sustainable tourism enterprises (Stoltenberg Bruursema, 2015). These theories collectively contribute to Atmanirbharta by ensuring that local stakeholders actively participate in and benefit from tourism development.

However, despite the growing policy emphasis and theoretical grounding, there remains a critical gap in empirical research particularly the absence of a standardized and validated measurement tool to assess how empowerment contributes to self-reliance in the tourism context. Existing studies largely discuss empowerment and Atmanirbharta conceptually (Kirk, 2005; Sharma & Joshi, 2019; Alam et al., 2021), but fail to operationalize these constructs in a measurable form. This limitation restricts the ability of researchers and policymakers to evaluate the effectiveness of tourism-based interventions, compare outcomes across regions, and design evidence-based strategies for community development.

Therefore, by employing Factor Analysis this study develops a reliable and valid scale to measure the role of empowerment in fostering Atmanirbharta within tourism dependent communities. The study conceptualizes Atmanirbhar Bharat (Self-reliant India) not merely as a policy slogan, but as a practical and operational framework through which local communities can leverage indigenous resources, traditional knowledge, and tourism products to achieve economic empowerment and self-reliance.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Atmanirbharta: A Pathway to Self-Reliance and Community Development

Empowerment theories in tourism have gained significant attention in recent years as a means to promote sustainable tourism development. Kirk (2005) discusses the empowerment of local communities in the context of sustainable tourism development, emphasizing the importance of considering social, cultural, and economic aspects. Boley and McGehee (2014) further strengthen the theoretical foundation of empowerment in tourism by examining resident attitudes toward tourism. Joo et al. (2020) test the empowerment theory in a tourism context, focusing on how residents' perceived knowledge of tourism influences their empowerment and subsequent political action. To achieve Atmanirbharta (Self-reliant) Sharma and Joshi (2019) emphasized the importance of skill development and entrepreneurship across five key pillars: Economy, infrastructure, Technology, demography, and demand. Dubey and Sahu (2020) focused on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on MSMEs and the economic relief package. Pulicherla et al. (2022) discussed sustainable green growth in the manufacturing sector as a complement to the Make in India campaign, highlighting the importance of environmental policies in India's industrial development. Alam et al. (2021) examined self-reliance and resource management for sustainable development in India during the COVID-19 pandemic, they also emphasized the importance of Atmanirbharta in addressing economic challenges and promoting practical advancements in the post-pandemic period. The literature on empowerment theories in tourism emphasizes the need to understand and support community empowerment for sustainable tourism, taking into account social, cultural, and economic factors in different settings. Empowerment theories provide the framework for capacity-building, participation, and access to resources however, Atmanirbharta is the outcome where communities gain self-sufficiency in tourism.

Economic Empowerment

Economic empowerment is a critical component of development, several studies have explored the various dimensions and impacts of economic empowerment in different settings. Kasturi (1997) highlighting the importance of empowering women economically in South Asia. Pereznieto and Taylor (2014) examined concepts and methods for measuring economic empowerment of females, offering insights into monitoring and evaluation procedures. Furthermore, Strzelecka et al. (2017) examined non-economic dimensions of empowerment and resident support for tourism in rural Eastern and central Europe. Surya et al. (2020) analyzed the impact of community economic empowerment on natural resource conservation in Indonesia, emphasizing the link between economic empowerment, community capacity building, and environmental sustainability. Pereznieto and Taylor (2014) analysed 70 assessments of development programs to measure female economic empowerment, with an emphasis on monitoring, evaluation, and learning approaches. Tian et al. (2023) found that while tourism offers economic benefits to local residents, it also causes disempowerment, as villagers often lose decision-making control to external authorities, leading to power imbalances among the government, developers, and communities. Collectively these studies enhance understanding of economic empowerment, emphasizing inclusive economic development across populations and sectors.

Infrastructural Empowerment

Infrastructure development is vital for nations' economic and social success (Josa and Aguado, 2019). Infrastructure development is widely recognised important for sustainable economic growth (Srivastava et al., 2023). The availability of reliable and efficient infrastructure, such as transportation systems, communication networks, and utilities, may have a substantial influence on a country's capacity to attract investment, assist economic growth, increase competitiveness, and promote inhabitants well-being. Several studies have focused on developing scales and tools to effectively measure different aspects of infrastructural development. Onuigbo (2008) discussed the use of modern surveying techniques in national infrastructural development, specifically focusing on roads. Greiner et al. (2021) examined the relationship between rural roads and infrastructural investments in Kenya.

Community Empowerment

Community empowerment, explored in various studies, is addressed by Hess (2014) through steps for empowerment via community involvement and by Fawcett et al. (1995) through collaborative partnerships and activities. Ahmad and Abu Talib (2016) indicate that individuals with a stronger sense of community tend to have better access to resources and that their involvement can significantly support local area development.Peterman (2000) explores the promise and limitations of grassroots involvement in community-based development and neighbourhood planning, highlighting the problems of empowering communities. Laverack (2006) reviews how empowerment can enhance health outcomes, while emphasizing on key areas such as participation, resource mobilization, and local leadership. Ramos and Prideaux (2014) emphasizes the importance of measuring community empowerment and stakeholder involvement in indigenous tourism in the Mayan rainforest, while Stone (2015) highlights community-based tourism (CBT) as an effective approach for both environmental protection and community development. Rahajeng and Suprapto (2019) investigates the impact of local entrepreneurship on community empowerment in developing tourism villages, the research highlighting the essential role entrepreneurship plays in empowering communities for tourism development. Additionally, Yildirim and Esen (2023) examines role of social entrepreneurship and community involvement in managing tourist villages, the study highlights community empowerment efforts in Babagan village, Indonesia, particularly through the creation of an entrepreneurial community and the establishment of a batik tourism village center. Adebayo and Butcher (2023) explored stakeholders' views on community empowerment in Nigeria's tourism industry, highlighting the role of Local Government Tourist Committees (LGTCs) in addressing gaps in genuine empowerment. These findings underscore the importance of community empowerment for self-reliance.

Psychological Empowerment

Several research have focused on the psychological empowerment within communities. McMillan (1999) investigated the psychological empowerment of members in community, observing that it is strongly linked to involvement levels, sense of community, and a positive organizational climate. According to Clarke (2001), training programs play a crucial role in empowering community by measuring psychological empowerment through perceived control, self-efficacy, and self-esteem. Jeong et al. (2018) investigated how a sense of belonging influences the link between psychological empowerment and local citizens' engagement in tourism policies. Rahayu (2018) measured female residents' perception of empowerment through the Resident Empowerment Through Tourism Scale (RETS) in Desa Wisata Pentingsari. Wardhani and Susilowati (2021) analysed the ongoing women empowerment in tourism activities at Indrayanti Beach, focusing on psychological, social, economic and political dimensions. These studies collectively highlight the importance of community empowerment through tourism and the various factors that contribute to it.

Political Empowerment

The literature on the political empowerment of communities through tourism highlights the importance of local empowerment in various aspects. Hidayat et al. (2017) discussed that political empowerment is at the lowest level in community empowerment in Plempoh ethnic Tourism Village. Movono and Dahles (2017) examines how tourism-based businesses empower women in Fijian communities economically, psychologically, socially, and politically. Gebremariam (2018) discusses the challenges and opportunities related to community-based eco-tourism in the Maichew Cluster, emphasizing the importance of economic and political empowerment. Joo et al. (2020) investigates how the residents' understanding of tourism and perceptions of social, psychological, and political empowerment drive actions related to tourism development. Rachmawati et al. (2022) investigates how tourism empowers rural communities in Indonesia, highlighting the significance of local empowerment for sustainable tourist development.

Social Empowerment

Various researches have examined the social empowerment of communities. Achmad (2023) studied community empowerment via tourist village development and its impact on social and cultural resilience. Yang et al. (2020) emphasised that the willingness and ability of ethnic village people to engage are essential variables in tourism's role for poverty alleviation. Sapkota (2020) examined community-based homestay tourism as a means of community empowerment in Nepal, emphasizing the potential of such tourism initiatives to strengthen and empower local communities. Sarr et al. (2021) studied the empowerment of rural populations and social representations in Senegal's Langue de Barbarie National Park. They proposed personalised types of empowerment based on social representations. Mandulangi (2021) examined the empowerment of local communities through social capital action coordination in tourist development on Bunaken Island, emphasising the significance of maximising local community empowerment.Lastly, Rachmawati et al. (2021b) used a quantitative technique to analyse the link between community participation and social empowerment from tourism development. Collectively, these studies demonstrate the importance of social empowerment in the development of sustainable tourism.

Technological Empowerment

Technological empowerment is a crucial aspect of various fields, including smart cities, business competitiveness, sustainable development, environmental challenges, computer networks, green innovation, education, and rural entrepreneurship. Wang and Wu (2021), emphasizing the role of technology in enhancing social inclusion and empowerment. Lennie (2002) discusses empowering rural women through access to ICTs in a feminist action research project, highlighting technology's potential to enhance empowerment and inclusivity. According to Pires et al. (2006), increased acceptance of information and communication technology (ICT) is transferring market control from suppliers to consumers, leading to a stronger consumer empowerment. Meisuri et al. (2023) examined how the technological revolution affects learning, including teacher and student views, technology integration, motivation, involvement, and impediments to adoption in education. Senadjki et al. (2023); Ma (2023) discusses the use of AI in many areas to empower technology and drive business development. Rahman et al. (2023) studied the significance of mobile phones in empowering rural women entrepreneurs and enhancing their decision making power. Collectively, these studies demonstrate the importance of Technology in empowerment and development.

Demand and Supply

The tourism supply chain (TSC) is a complex network that encompasses various entities involved in the production, distribution, and consumption of tourism products and services. Cooper and Ellram (1993) developed a framework to distinguish between traditional and supply chain management systems, emphasizing their impact on purchasing and logistics. Wieland (2021) challenges traditional reductionist views of supply chain management by proposing a social-ecological system perspective, advocating for a more dynamic approach to managing the supply chain. Golgeci and Kuivalainen (2020) investigates how absorp-¨ tive capacity, social capital and marketing-supply chain alignment enhance supply chain resilience and performance. Venkatesh et al. (2020) introduce a system that integrates Internet of Things (IOT),blockchain, and big data analytics to enhance transparency in monitoring supply chain social sustainability, they analyze system implementation costs and potential challenges to ensure efficient and effective monitoring. Nandi et al. (2021) highlight redesigning supply chains to improve transparency, resilience, and sustainability, emphasizing lessons from COVID-19 for future crisis management. These studies advocate for innovative and sustainable supply chain practices in tourism.

Scale Adaption

Based on the Literature review, Table 1 shows the supporting studies and the studies from where the scales are adopted to measure the Pillars of Atmanirbharta.

Table 1. Scale adaption

Pillars of Atmanirbharta	Supporting Studies	Scale adapted From
Economy	Tian et al. (2023); Rachmawati et al. (2021a); Abdullah and Said (2014); Kundu (2012)	Items - E1, E2, E3, E4, E5, E6, E7, E8 and E9 are inspired from Jacobs and Slaus (2010)ˇ
Pillars of Atmanirbharta	Supporting Studies	Scale adapted From
Infrastructure	Boers and Cottrell (2007); Stojanovic et al. (2019);´ Pascu (2012); Firoiu and Croitoru (2013)	Items - I1, I2, I3 and I4 taken from Oswald et al. (2011)
Demography/Community Empowerment	Xu et al. (2014); Han et al. (2014); Saxena et al. (2007); Hidayat et al. (2017)	Items - C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6 and C7 are taken from Boley and McGehee (2014) and Items C8, C9, C10, C11, C12, C13, C14, C15, C16, C17, C18 and C19 are taken from Spreitzer (1995)
Technology	Afsahhosseini et al. (2020); Zhong et al. (2021); Kim and Kim (2017); Yasa (2020)	Items T1, T2, T3, T4, T5 and T6 are inspired from Yates (2006)
Demand and Supply	HONTUS¸ (2014); Lago (2017); Junaid et al. (2023); Acha-Anyi et al. (2015)	Items D1, D2, D3, D4, D5, D6, D7, D8, D9, D10, D11, D12 are taken from Stewart (1997)

Table 1 shows the researches from where the scales to measure the five dimensions of Atmanirbharta are inspired and adapted.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study develops a new scale, Self-Reliant Tourism Development (SRTD) to measure Atmanirbharta (self-reliance) in tourism sector, adhering to best practices outlined by Churchill (1979); Hinkin (2005); DeVellis and Thorpe (2021) to create a more reliable and valid instrument. IBM SPSS Statistics 22 was used for exploratory factor analysis, while R 4.4.1 was used for confirmatory factor analysis.

Intended meaning and breadth of the theoretical concept

Due to fragmented literature and the lack of a proper measurement scale, the study began by specifying the domain of constructs, focusing on Atmanirbhar Bharat. The scale was conceptualized using descriptions of Atmanirbhar Bharat with literature review yielding concept labels, definitions, and dimensions: Economic Empowerment, Infrastructural Empowerment, Community Empowerment, Demand and Supply, and Technological Empowerment.

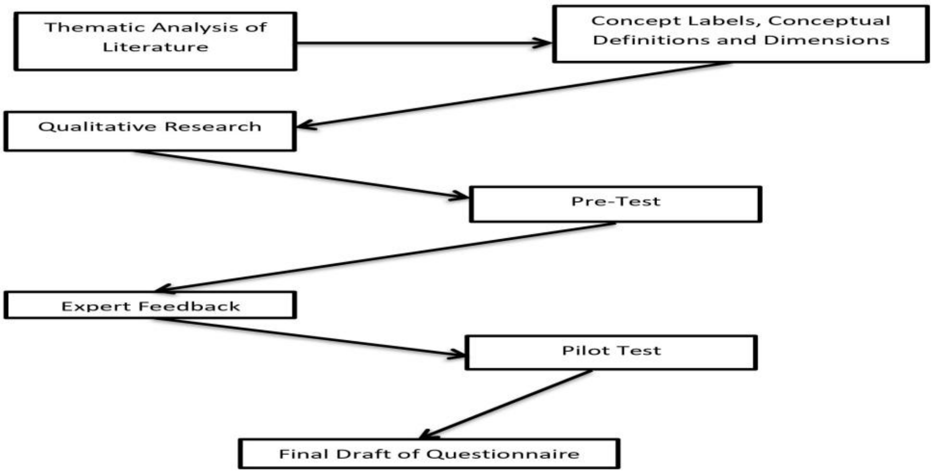

Figure 1. Process for Identifying Theoretical concept

Note – The figure illustrates the process for identifying the theoretical concept proposed by Carpenter (2018).

At the stage of thematic analysis literature and qualitative research, the latent variables identified through an extensive literature review and relevant theoretical frameworks were systematically operationalized into measurable items. A total of 12 established academicians were selected using purposive expert sampling based on their doctoral qualifications, research publications in tourism and related fields, and substantial teaching and research experience. They evaluated the initial item pool for content relevance, conceptual adequacy, clarity of wording, and alignment with the respective dimensions. Based on the expert review, no items were removed from the initial item pool. However, several items were refined in terms of wording, clarity, and conceptual alignment to enhance content validity and minimize ambiguity, while retaining the original structure of the scale. The questionnaire consisted of 50 structured close-ended items. The items were framed as fivepoint Likert-scale statements, ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree, to capture respondents' perceptions effectively. The scale was originally developed in English and subsequently translated into Hindi using a translation–back translation procedure involving bilingual experts. The translated version was reviewed for conceptual equivalence, clarity, and cultural relevance, ensuring linguistic validity. Language validity was ensured through expert-assisted translation, wherein subject experts reviewed the translated items to confirm semantic equivalence, cultural appropriateness, and conceptual consistency between both versions. For the pilot study, a total of 50 participants were selected, of which 20 respondents were approached through direct, face-to-face contact, while the remaining 30 participants were reached through online modes, including QR code distribution, WhatsApp, and email. The pilot (n=50) and main study (n=600) align with established scale development practices, particularly for EFA and CFA. While test–retest reliability was not conducted due to practical constraints and the context-sensitive nature of the constructs, the study ensured robustness through large sample size, expert validation, and comprehensive statistical analysis. Future studies may incorporate longitudinal designs to assess temporal stability.

Sample selection, data collection

Sample Selection

The study focused on entrepreneurs (local individuals directly involved in product-based tourism activities including artisans, handicraft producers, local food and agro-based product makers, small-scale tourism business owners and individuals involved in indigenous or heritage-based products) and the local community associated with them across Kangra, Kullu, and Mandi districts in Himachal Pradesh, India, because they collectively represent diverse yet complementary dimensions of product-based tourism and community entrepreneurship in Himachal Pradesh. The study employed non-probability convenience sampling as the primary technique for selecting respondents for the main survey. Participants were chosen based on accessibility, willingness to participate, and relevance to the study objectives. Factor analysis requires a large sample size, as small samples lead to unstable variables and reduced generalizability (Kline, 2013; Tabachnick et al., 2013). While methodologists recommend varying sample sizes, most suggest a minimum of 300 participants for reliable research (Henson and Roberts, 2006; Pett et al., 2003; Carpenter, 2018; Rouquette and Falissard, 2011), with an item-to-participant ratio of 1:5 (Bujang and Baharum, 2017; Gorsuch, 2014; Carpenter, 2018). Following these guidelines, the study finalized a sample size of 600 participants for more refined results.

Data Collection

The study employed a single survey method administered through a mixed-mode data collection approach. Specifically, the same structured questionnaire was distributed using both face-to-face interactions and online platforms (e.g., QR codes, email, and messaging applications) to enhance response reach and participation. This approach was adopted to enhance accessibility and improve response rates across geographically dispersed study areas. The data collection was conducted during June–July 2024. The finalized questionnaire was distributed in print and digital forms, yielding 615 responses, of which 15 were excluded for being incomplete or linear. Following Chandralal and Valenzuela (2015), the remaining 600 valid responses were split into two random sets for exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).

RESULTS

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 2. Sample Distribution

Demographic Profile		
Districts	Respondents	Percentage
Kangra	215	35.83333333
Kullu	236	39.33333333
Mandi	149	24.83333333

The sample highlights the distribution of respondents across the three districts, with Kullu (39.33%) having the highest representation, followed by Kangra (39.33%)and Mandi(24.83%).

Table 3. Gender of Respondents

Demographic Profile		
Gender	Respondents	Percentage
Female	304	50.66666667
Male	296	49.33333333

The sample is nearly balanced in terms of gender, with a slight majority of female respondents. This distribution suggests that both genders are well represented, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of perspectives within the population surveyed.

Table 4. Age of Respondents

Demographic Profile		
Age	Respondents	Percentage
20-30 years	127	21.16666667
31-40 years	173	28.83333333
41-50 years	201	33.5
More than 50 years	99	16.5

The age distribution indicates that younger and middle-aged respondents (20-50 years) make up the majority of the sample, with a notable drop in representation for those over 50.

Table 5. Educational Qualification of Respondents

Demographic Profile		
Educational Qualification	Respondents	Percentage
Uneducated	33	5.5
Below Matric	68	11.33333333
Matric	138	23
Senior Secondary	135	22.5
Graduate	100	16.66666667
Masters Degree	123	20.5
Above	3	0.5

The educational qualifications of the respondents show a diverse range, with the majority having completed at least matriculation or senior secondary education. There is a good representation of graduates and individuals with master's degrees, while those with no formal education or extremely high qualifications (above master's) are quite limited.

Table 6. Marital Status of Respondents

Marital status	Respondents	Percentage
Married	348	58
Single	228	38
Widow	5	0.833333333
Others	19	3.166666667

The data shows that a majority of the respondents are married (58%), followed by a significant number who are single (38%). The presence of widowed respondents is minimal (.83%), and the "Others" category also represents a small percentage (19%).

Factorability of Data

To determine the suitability for factor analysis, the correlation matrix, Bartlett's test of sphericity, and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) score were analysed. For factor analysis to be appropriate, the correlation matrix values should be .30 or higher, Bartlett's chisquare should be significant with a p-value of .05 or less, and the KMO value should be .60 or above (Pett et al., 2003; Tabachnick et al., 2013; McCroskey and Young, 1979; Carpenter, 2018). Bartlett's test yielded a chi-square (X2) of 7220.307 (p = 0.00), and the KMO score was 0.95, supporting the use of Principal Components Analysis (PCA).

Scree Plot

Scree Plot is a visual tool that displays eigenvalues from factors, with the cut-off point for the number of factors identified where the line deviates from a generally straight dotted line (McCroskey and Young, 1979; Pett et al., 2003; Preacher and MacCallum, 2003; Reise et al., 2000; Carpenter, 2018). The scree plot indicated that 9 components should be retained.

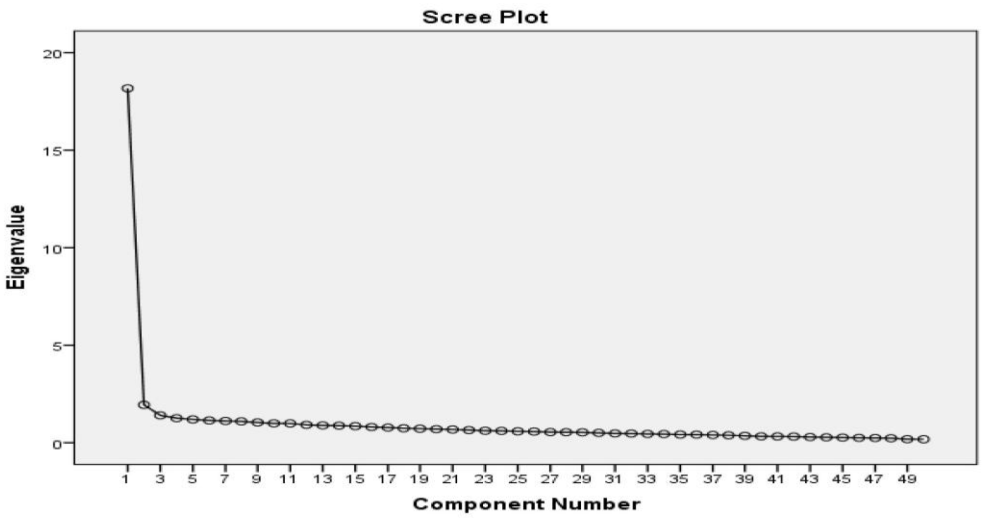

Figure 2. Scree Plot

Principal Factor Analysis

Table 7 shows the Rotated component Matrix in 9 components with Varimax rotation. The ideal factor loading suggested by authors ranges from .30 to .40, however in this study the cut-off was set to .50. C13, C12, C19, C15, T5, C17, C9, C18, C6, E6, E3, D8, D2, C4, T6, D6, C2, C5, E5, T1, C7, T2, C3,E1 were eliminated due to low factor loadings.

Table 7. Rotated Component Matrix

Rotated Component Matrix[a]									
	Component								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
C10	.605								
C14	.587								
C11	.558								
D4	.527								
I2	.519								
C16	.503								
D7		.607							
C8		.561							
E8		.560							
D11		.528							
D5			.649						
D9			.580						
D12			.569						
D10			.559						
D3				.583					
T4				.573					
E2				.543					
E7				.513					
C1					.667				
I3					.576				
I1						.575			
D1						.567			
T3						.539			
E4							.697		
E9								.729	
I4									.545
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.									

Item deletion and retention

To represent each dimension researchers have suggested that each subscale should have at least three elements (Clark and Watson, 1995; Kline, 2013; Loevinger, 1957; Carpenter, 2018). Following this criteria component 5, 7, 8 and 9 were deleted. The steps and factors deleted are listed in Table 8. The final dimensions along with statements are shown in Table 9.

Table 8. The steps followed and the Items eliminated during EFA

Step	Items deleted	Reason for deletion
1	C13, C12, C19, C15, T5, C17, C9, C18, C6, E6, E3, D8, D2, C4, T6, D6, C2, C5, E5, T1, C7, T2, C3,E1	Poor Factor Loading <.40
2	C1,I3	Only 2 factors
3	E4	One item Factor
4	E9	One item Factor
5	I4	One item Factor

Table 9. Retained Items and factor Labels

Factor	Item Number	Item Code	Factor Label and Items
			Sustainable Well-being
1	1	I1	Association with the enterprise has helped in improving housing (shelter).
	2	T3	Technology helped you to use your resources efficiently.
	3	D1	The enterprise receives repeated orders.
			Overall Efficiency
2	1	E2	After associating with the enterprise the overall capacity of household expenditure has increased.
	2	E7	You are getting equal money for same type of Job.
	3	T4	Technology helped you in communicating within the enterprise.
	4	D3	The delivery process of the product is easy and trouble-free.
			Efficient Supply Chain
3	1	D5	The customer is informed immediately if products run out of Stock.
	2	D9	The enterprise changes the output levels of products according to demand.
	3	D10	The enterprise delivers products prior to planned delivery dates.
	4	D12	The enterprise modifies the variety of products produced.
			Innovation
4	1	E8	Innovation has lead to generate better income.
	2	D7	Continuous effort is put to improve product.
	3	D11	The enterprise introduces new products easily.
	4	C8	The work (done by the enterprise) you do is meaningful to you.
			Empowerment
5	1	C10	You have significant autonomy in determining how you do your job.
	2	C11	Your impact on what happens in the department is large.
	3	C14	You can decide on your own how to go about doing your own work.
	4	C16	The job activity that you do is important to you.
	5	I2	Healthy association with enterprise has helped to supply better product and services.
	6	D4	Involvement in the decision making process help me to understand customers in a better manner.

Assessment of the Latent Structure - Confirmatory Factor Analysis

To confirm the latent structure found by the EFA analysis, the sample's second divided half underwent Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). According to Hu and Bentler (1999); Hair and Anderson (1992) and Ahmad et al. (2016), the model fit indices demonstrated a absolute fit to the data: CMIN/DF = 1.700 (less than 3), CFI = .961 (greater than .95), TLI = .954 (greater than .95), RMSEA = .048 (less than .06), and SRMR = 0.038 (less than .08).

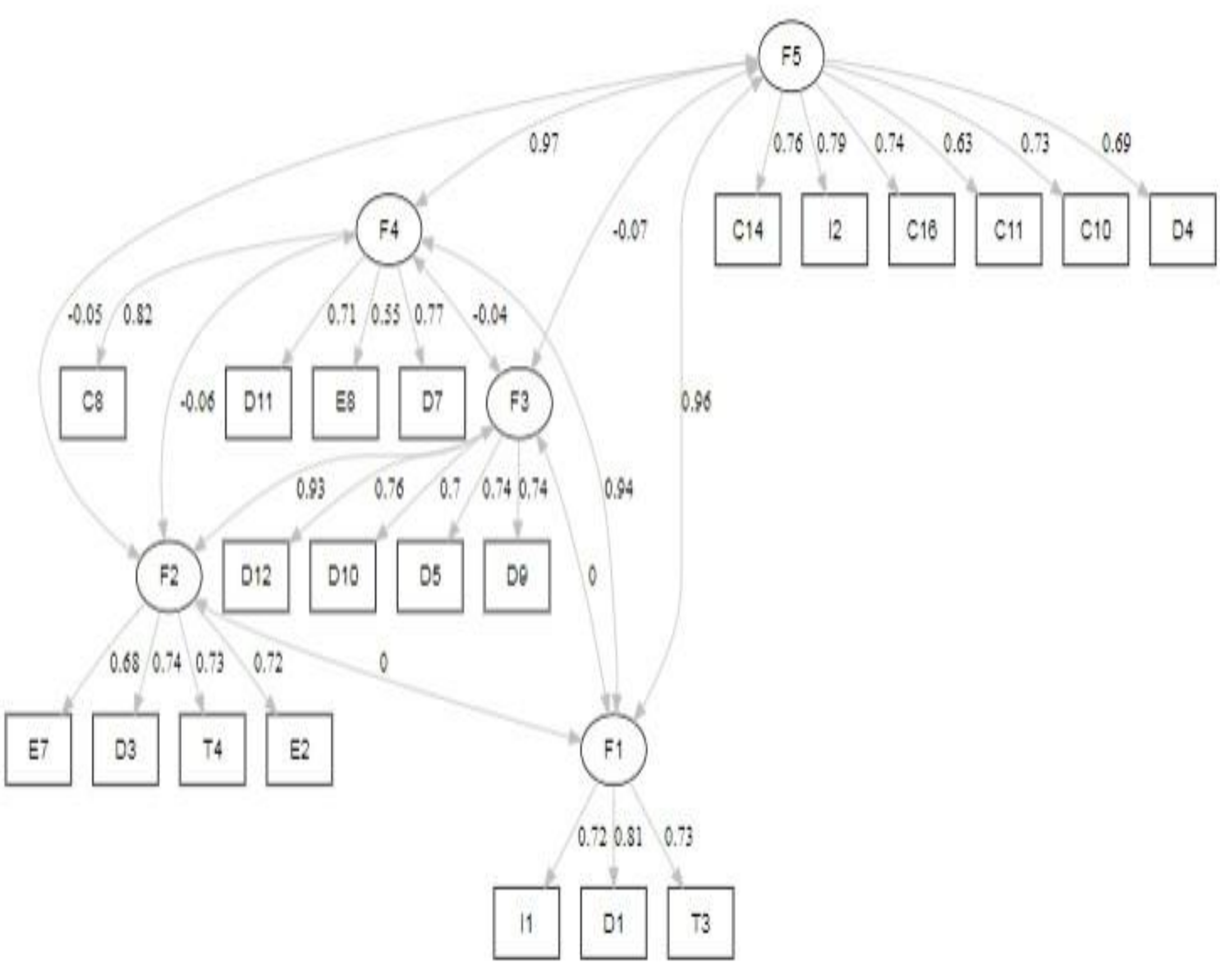

Figure 3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model

The developed scale, Self-Reliant Tourism Development (SRTD) was evaluated for psychometric qualities using the criteria proposed by Ahmad et al. (2016) and Chandralal and Valenzuela (2015), including convergent validity (CR > .7), discriminant validity (CR > AVE²; AVE > .5), and a Cronbach's Alpha (α) of .871. Because these metrics met the stated criteria, it was found that the instrument had adequate psychometric qualities in terms of reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, as shown in Table 10.

Table 10. Factor Loadings, AVE, CR and Chronbach's Alpha for Factors

Factor	Item	Factor Loadings	AVE	CR	Cronbach's alpha (α)
Sustainable Well-being	I1 D1 T3	0.722 0.806 0.735	0.57	0.79	0.801
Overall Efficiency	D3 T4 E2 E7	0.744 0.73 0.718 0.681	0.52	0.81	0.811
Efficient Supply Chain	D5 D9 D12 D10	0.741 0.744 0.763 0.697	0.54	0.82	0.825
Innovation	D7 C8 D11 E8	0.77 0.82 0.706 0.552	0.52	0.81	0.796
Empowerment	C14 I2 C16 C11 C10 D4	0.762 0.787 0.743 0.625 0.73 0.687	0.52	0.87	0.866

Through Factor Analysis and rigorous statistical testing, five key dimensions were identified: Sustainable Well-being, Overall Efficiency, Efficient Supply Chain, Innovation, and Empowerment having 21 items, demonstrating its robustness and suitability for measuring self-reliance in Tourism.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

By synthesizing factors from various theoretical perspectives e.g. economic theories, community empowerment models, and technological frameworks, the research presents a comprehensive understanding of self-reliance in the tourism context, this integration enhances theoretical models relating to community development and self-sufficiency. The study contributes to the literature by developing a reliable and validated measurement scale (SRTD) that summarise multiple dimensions of self-reliance in tourism, including Economic Empowerment, Infrastructural Empowerment, Community Empowerment, Demand and Supply, and Technological Empowerment. Previous studies have highlighted the importance of self-reliance and tourism in economic growth (Gerbing and Anderson, 1988; Ghadge et al., 2020) but lacked a comprehensive measurement framework. This study addresses that gap by providing a multi-dimensional scale that includes specific constructs like sustainable well-being and efficiency, which are under represented in earlier works of (Boley and McGehee, 2014; Ranasinghe and Pradeepamali, 2019; Jeong et al., 2021; Neuts et al., 2021). While earlier studies often relied on individual constructs to discuss self-reliance and community empowerment by taking economic(Kasturi, 1997; Pereznieto and Taylor, 2014; Surya et al., 2020; Tian et al., 2023; Boley and McGehee, 2014), social (Achmad, 2023; Yang et al., 2020; Sarr et al., 2021; Mandulangi, 2021) political and psychological empowerment (Boley and McGehee, 2014; Ranasinghe and Pradeepamali, 2019), this research integrates multiple dimensions, the empirical model constructed herein aligns with the thoughts of (DeVellis and Thorpe, 2021; Hinkin, 2005) but improves their approach by measuring self-reliance as an integrated system with multiple interrelated components instead of separate entities, suggesting that self-reliance is influenced by broader socio-political dynamics. The findings point to Infrastructural Empowerment as a critical factor for fostering self-reliance. This suggests a pressing need for investments in local infrastructure (roads, utilities, etc.) that supports tourism. Drawing from existing research, like that of (Josa and Aguado, 2019), policymakers should prioritize developing infrastructure that enhances both tourism appeal and local community access to services. Also identifying Technological Empowerment as a key factor in measuring Atmanirbharta in tourism highlights the crucial role of technology, an aspect frequently mentioned but rarely explored in depth in existing literature, signals a requirement for policies encouraging the adoption of technology within the tourism sector. This includes providing training for local businesses to use digital tools effectively, as advocated in the studies of (Kim and Kim, 2017).

The findings of the study focus on Atmanirbharta which aligns with India’s cultural and socio-economic context, emphasizing local culture, heritage, and resources in tourism development, based on discussions about local identities and practices by (Acha-Anyi et al., 2015). This study reinforces the idea that tourism cannot be universally defined but should be tailored to specific regional and community needs, a detail often missed in broader economic studies. The emphasis on Community Empowerment as a dimension of selfreliance underscores the need for policies that support local initiatives. This aligns with (Kundu, 2012), who highlighted the role of grassroots participation in economic development. Policymakers should design interventions that promote local governance structures and involve community members in decision-making processes related to tourism development.The SRTD serves as a diagnostic tool in aiding strategic planning and resource allocation, which fosters tourism rooted in local identity, benefiting communities and promoting sustainability. The multi-dimensional nature of self-reliance highlighted by the study advocates for sustainable tourism practices, reinforcing findings from earlier literature (Ghadge et al., 2020) that underscore the need for environmentally responsible tourism development. Policymakers should create incentives for businesses that adopt sustainable practices, ensuring that environmental considerations are integrated into tourism planning.The study emphasizes the cultural relevance of self-reliance, echoing (Acha-Anyi et al., 2015), who noted the importance of local identity in tourism. Policy frameworks should take into account the unique cultural heritage and practices of different regions when developing tourism strategies, ensuring that local identities are celebrated and leveraged in marketing and development. Investing in training programs aimed at enhancing the skills and capacities of local tourism operators and communities is essential. This aligns with existing literature (Laverack, 2006) that emphasizes the role of community empowerment. Training programs can focus on sustainable practices, business management, and customer engagement to attract conscientious travelers. Implementing robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks can help assess the impacts of self-reliance initiatives in tourism, policymakers should adopt indicators that measure economic impact, community well-being, and environmental sustainability, facilitating a proactive approach to policy adjustments. These implications call for a collaborative approach between government, communities, and tourism stakeholders, ensuring that policies are well-informed and tailored to enhance self-reliance in the tourism sector effectively. Policymakers should design interventions that promote local governance structures and involve community members in decision-making processes related to tourism development. Policymakers can use it to design interventions supporting local businesses, enhancing community participation, and encouraging sustainable practices.

The rigorous evaluation of the psychometric properties of the measurement scale provides a methodological template for researchers aiming to assess psychological constructs in social sciences. The findings outline a theoretical framework that can guide future empirical research on self-reliance in the tourism industry. Scholars can build on this framework to explore the impacts of self-reliance dynamics on tourist behavior, local economies, and community development.

Limitations and Future Research

The study, while methodologically rigorous, has certain limitations. The developed scale is context-specific to India, particularly Himachal Pradesh, which may limit its generalizability to other regions. The use of convenience sampling may introduce bias, despite the large sample size. The cross-sectional design restricts the ability to capture changes over time. The reliance on self-reported data may lead to response bias, including social desirability effects. Finally, the practical applicability of the scale across different contexts and stages of community development requires further exploration. Future research should examine the long-term economic impact of self-reliance, the role of social capital, and its relationship with variables like tourist satisfaction, community well-being, and environmental sustainability. Comparative studies across regions or countries and qualitative research could enrich the framework by exploring lived experiences and regional differences. Applying the Atmanirbhar scale to varied samples, ideally using random sampling, can further validate its robustness. Overall, future research should focus on cross-cultural validation, longitudinal analysis, and extended reliability testing to strengthen the scale's robustness and applicability.

CONCLUSION

This study investigates the multi-dimensional construct of Atmanirbharta, or self-reliance, within the tourism sector in Himachal Pradesh, India. It involved the development and validation of a comprehensive scale (SRTD) designed to assess the various components that contribute to self-reliance. A total of 600 valid responses were collected across the Kangra, Kullu, and Mandi districts. This study successfully develops a reliable and valid measurement Scale (SRTD) filling a significant gap in existing researches by identifying key dimensions such as Sustainable Well-being, Innovation and Empowerment, the findings offer a comprehensive framework for understanding and promoting self-reliance in the tourism sector. Each dimension reflects how multi-faceted self-reliance is, emphasizing it is not just any economic concept but a holistic approach that brings together elements of society and governance. These insights provide actionable guidance for policymakers and practitioners, emphasizing the importance of local engagement, technological adoption, and sustainable practices. This study not only bridges significant gaps but also challenges and extends existing understandings of self-reliance in tourism, offering a more nuanced and actionable framework for future research and practice. Ultimately, this research reinforces the role of tourism in driving economic growth and community empowerment in alignment with the goals of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper. The author is not an Editorial Board Member/Editor-in-Chief/Associate Editor/Guest Editor and was not involved in the editorial review or the decision to publish this article. The authors declare that we have no financial interests/personal relationships which may be considered as potential competing interests. This study did not involve any experiments or procedures performed on humans or animals. Therefore, the ethics statement is not applicable.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data supporting the findings of this study are available upon reasonable request from the corresponding author.

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ANNEXURE

	Opinionnaire for evaluating empowerment of 5 Pillars for Atmanirbharta	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
EW1	After associating with the enterprise the overall household income has increased. उद्यम से जुड़ने के बाद कुल घरेलू आय भें वृद्धि हुई है।					
EW2	After associating with the enterprise the overall household expenditure capacity has increased. उद्यम के साथ जुड़ने के बाद कुल घरेलू व्यय क्षमता में वृद्धि हुई है।					
EW3	The enterprise has offered new employment opportunities according to your employability skills. उद्यम ने आपके रोजगार कौशल के अनुसार रोजगार के नए अवसरों की पेशकश की है।					
EW4	The enterprise has educated \ trained you in any special skill. उद्यम ने आपको किसी विशेष कौशल में शिक्षित/प्रशिक्षित किया है।					
EW5	The enterprise is offering a steady income. उद्यम एक स्थिर आय की पेशकश कर रहा है।					
HW1	You have money left for spending after meeting your needs. आपके पास अपनी जरूरतों को पूरा करने के बाद खर्च करने के लिए पैसा बचा है।					
HW2	You are getting equal money for same type of Job. आपको एक ही प्रकार की नौकरी के लिए समान पैसा मिल रहा है।					
HW3	This is your sole source of income (livelihood). यह आपकी आय (आजीविका) का एकमात्र स्रोत है।					
HW4	Association with the enterprise has helped in education of your children. उद्यम के साथ जुड़ाव ने आपके बच्चों की शिक्षा में मदद की है।					
IN1	Association with the enterprise has helped in improving housing (shelter). उद्यम के साथ जुड़ाव ने आवास (आश्रय) को बेहतर बनाने में मदद की है।					
IN2	Association with the enterprise has helped in improving sanitation. उद्मभ के साथ जुड़ने से थवच्छता भें सुधाय कयने भें भदद भयी है।					

IN3	After setting up of enterprise new roads were developed. उद्यम स्थापित करने के बाद नई सड़कों का विकास किया गया।					
IN4	After setting up of enterprise electricity supply has improved. उद्यम स्थापित होने के बाद बिजली आपूर्ति में सुधार हुआ है।					
SE1	Association with the enterprise makes you feel more connected to your community. उद्यम के साथ जुड़ना आपको अपने समुदाय से अधिक जुड़ा हुआ महसूस कराता है।					
SE2	Association with the enterprise provides ways for you to get involved in your community. उद्यम के साथ जुड़ाव आपको अपने समुदाय में शामिल होने के तरीके प्रदान करता है।					
SE3	Association with the enterprise has helped in revival of traditions. उद्यम के साथ जुड़ाव ने परंपराओं को पुनर्जीवित करने में मदद की है।					
SE4	Association with the enterprise has helped in transfer of traditional knowledge to your children. उद्यम के साथ जुड़ाव ने आपके बच्चों को पारंपरिक ज्ञान के हस्तांतरण में मदद की है।					
PE1	You have access to the decision- making process when it comes to product development. जब उत्पाद विकास की बात आती है तो आपके पास निर्णय लेने की प्रक्रिया तक पहुंच होती है।					
PE2	You feel your vote makes a difference in how the product is developed in the enterprise. आपको लगता है कि उद्यम में उत्पाद कैसे विकसित किया जाता है, इसमें आपके वोट से फर्क पड़ता है।					
PE3	You feel you have a place to share your concerns about product development. आपको लगता है कि आपके पास उत्पाद विकास के बारे में अपनी चिंताओं को साझा करने के लिए एक जगह है।					
TE1	Association with the enterprise has helped you in knowing how to use technology. उद्यम के साथ जुड़ाव ने आपको यह जानने में मदद की है कि प्रौद्योगिकी का उपयोग कैसे करें।					
TE2	The enterprise has trained you for using technology. उद्यम ने आपको प्रौद्योगिकी का उपयोग करने के लिए प्रशिक्षित किया है।					
TE3	Technology helped you to use your resources efficiently. प्रौद्योगिकी ने आपको अपने संसाधनों का कुशलतापूर्वक उपयोग करने में मदद की।					
TE4	Technology helped you in communicating within the enterprise. प्रौद्योगिकी ने आपको उद्यम के भीतर संचार करने में मदद की।					
TE5	Technology helped you to reach out to buyers. प्रौद्योगिकी ने आपको खरीदारों तक पहुंचने में मदद की।					
TE6	Technology improved your overall efficiency. प्रौद्योगिकी ने आपकी समग्र दक्षता में सुधार किया।					
RE1	The enterprise receives repeated orders. उद्यम को उत्पादों के पुनरावर्ती ऑर्डर प्राप्त होते हैं।					
RE2	The enterprise delivers the products on time. उद्यम समय पर उत्पादों को वितरित करता है।					
RE3	The delivery process of the product is easy and trouble-free. उत्पाद की वितरण प्रक्रिया आसान और परेशानी मुक्त है।					
RE4	There are fewer complaints from customers. उत्पादों के संदर्व में ग्राहकों की शिकायतें कम हैं।					
RS1	The customer is informed immediately if products run out of Stock. उत्पादों का स्टॉक खत्म होने पर ग्राहक को तुरंत सूचित किया जाता है।					
RS2	Prompt service is given to the customers. ग्राहकों को त्वरित सेवा प्रदान की जाती है।					
RS3	Continuous effort is put to improve product. उत्पाद को बेहतर बनाने के लिए निरंतर प्रयास किया जाता है।					

RS4	Customers are happy with the response time. ग्राहक ऑर्डर प्रतिक्रिया समय से खुश हैं।					
FL1	The enterprise changes the output levels of products according to demand. उद्यम मांग के अनुसार उत्पादों के उत्पादन स्तर को बदलता है।					
FL2	The enterprise delivers products prior to planned delivery dates. उद्यम नियोजित डिलीवरी तिथियों से पहले उत्पादों को वितरित करता है।					
FL3	The enterprise introduces new products easily. उद्यम नए उत्पादों को बाजार में आसानी से पेश करता है।					
FL4	The enterprise modifies the variety of products produced. उद्यम उत्पादित उत्पादों की विविधता को संशोधित करता है।					
MG1	The work (done by the enterprise) you do is meaningful to you. आपके द्वारा किया गया कार्य (उद्यम द्वारा किया गया) आपके लिए सार्थक है।					
MG2	Your job activities are personally meaningful to you. आपकी नौकरी की गतिविधियाँ आपके लिए व्यक्तिगत रूप से सार्थक हैं।					
MG3	The job activity that you do is important to you. आपके द्वारा की जाने वाली कार्य गतिविधि आपके लिए महत्वपूर्ण है।					
CE1	You have mastered the skills necessary for your job. आपने अपनी नौकरी के लिए आवश्यक कौशल में महारत हासिल कर ली है।					
CE2	You are self-assured about your capabilities to perform your work activities. आप अपनी कार्य गतिविधियों को करने की अपनी क्षमताओं के बारे में आश्वस्त हैं।					
CE3	You are confident about your ability to do your job. आप अपना काम करने की क्षमता के बारे में आश्वस्त हैं।					
SD1	You have significant autonomy in determining how you do your job. आप अपना काम कैसे करते हैं यह निर्धारित करने में आपको स्वायत्तता है।					
SD2	You can decide on your own how to go about doing your own work. आप स्वयं यह निर्णय ले सकते हैं कि अपना कार्य कैसे करना है।					
SD3	You have considerable opportunities for independence and freedom in how you do your job. आपके पास अपना काम करने के तरीके में स्वतंत्रता और स्वतंत्रता के लिए पर्याप्त अवसर हैं।					
IM1	Your impact on what happens in the department is large. विभाग में जो होता है उस पर आपका प्रभाव बहुत बड़ा है।					
IM2	You have a great deal of control over what happens in your department. आपके विभाग में क्या होता है, इस पर आपका बहुत नियंत्रण है।					
IM3	You have significant influence over what happens in your department. आपके विभाग में क्या होता है, इस पर आपका महत्वपूर्ण प्रभाव है।					

Section II: Personal Profile (व्यक्तिगत प्रोफाइल)

Name (नाम) **(optional): ………………………………………...** **District** (ज़िला)**: …………………..**
Occupation………………….

Gender (लिंग): Male (पुरुष) ( ); Female (महिला) ( ) ; Other(अन्य) ( )

Marital status (वैवाहिक स्थिति): Unmarried (अविवाहित) ( ); Married (विवाहित) ( )

Age (आयु): 20-30 years ( ); 31-40 years ( ); 41-50 years ( ); More than 50 years ( )

Education (शिक्षा): Below Matric ( ) ; Matric (माध्यमिक) ( ); Senior Secondary (वरिष्ठ माध्यमिक)( );
Graduate (स्नातक) ( ); Master Degree and above (स्नातकोत्तर स्तर) ( ); Others (specify)......................

Monthly Income (मासिक आय): Below 10000 ( ); 10,000 - 30,000 ( ); 30,000 – 50,000 ( ); above 50,000 ( )

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Environmental Sustainability in Religious Tourism: A Systematic Review and SDG Mapping

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Abstract

Tourism's environmental impacts have been extensively studied; however, limited attention has been given to the environmental effects of religious tourism. In an era of increasing concern about sustainability, understanding how religious tourism aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) becomes a strategic priority. Using a mixed-method approach (bibliometric and content analysis) and PRISMA guidelines, 108 publications (1999–2023) were reviewed. The findings show limited but growing engagement with environmental sustainability, with only a small subset of studies explicitly addressing SDG-linked outcomes. The analysis advances understanding of religious tourism within sustainability discourse and offers practical directions for policy and planning.

Key Words: Religious tourism, Bibliometric analysis, Environmental sustainability, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Pilgrims.

INTRODUCTION

Background

Religious tourism refers to the movement of people—individually or in groups—to destinations connected to their religious or spiritual beliefs. Although pilgrimage has existed for thousands of years (Timothy & Olsen, 2006), its prominence declined temporarily with the rise of other tourism segments (Collins-Kreiner, 2019). However, in past decades, religious tourism has re-emerged as a significant global phenomenon, driven by globalization, mass mobility, and the commercialization of travel (Liro, 2020).

Sacred destinations such as Varanasi, the Vatican, Lhasa, and Mecca serve as spiritual centres for diverse religious communities. Visits to these sites not only provide spiritual fulfilment, but also strengthen social cohesion, stimulate local economies, and promote community development (Shinde, 2015). A 2017 survey estimate suggests that nearly 300 million tourists visit major religious sites annually (Tribe, 2020). Furthermore, the market is projected to reach USD 1,704.2 million by 2028 (Albayrak et al., 2018). Despite this rapid expansion, scholarly attention has largely focused on the socio-cultural and economic dimensions of religious tourism, often overlooking its environmental implications.

Environmental Challenges of Religious Tourism

The growing influx of visitors to sacred destinations often leads to adverse environmental impressions, including overcrowding, pressure on local infrastructure, and degradation of natural resources (Lin et al., 2021). In ecologically sensitive regions, these pressures are further intensified by weak regulatory mechanisms and seasonal surges in pilgrimage flows.

These pressures have been linked to catastrophic events such as floods and landslides (Nawaz et al., 2023). For example, Kedarnath—one of Hinduism's most revered pilgrimage sites—has experienced recurrent destructive flooding in recent years. Similarly, the impact of the 2022 floods in Mecca and the aftermath of the 2015 earthquake in Nepal were reportedly aggravated by the infrastructural strain of unmanaged pilgrim flows. (Hussain & Khan, 2023). Such examples highlight that religious tourism is not merely a cultural or economic activity but also an environmental concern that requires systematic scholarly attention.

Knowledge and SDG Gaps

While environmental sustainability has become a central theme in broader tourism research, its integration within religious tourism studies remains limited. Existing research prioritises pilgrimage experiences, destination branding, and economic benefits, lacking focus on environmental consequences. One possible reason is that religious tourism is a value-driven and culturally sensitive domain, where environmental critique may be underemphasised. Moreover, though tourism is widely linked with sustainability agendas, the intersection between religious tourism and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) remains underexplored. Prior systematic reviews in tourism sustainability are homogeneous, overlooking the unique dynamics of faith-based travel. This creates a clear gap in literature, indicating a systematic assessment of how religious tourism engages with environmental sustainability within the SDG framework.

Study Aims and Contributions

Addressing this gap, the present study examines emerging issues, key application areas, and potential directions for future research at the intersection of religious tourism and environmental sustainability. To advance knowledge in this domain, the study systematically analyses existing literature to answer the following research questions (RQs):

RQ1. What is the current status of research on religious tourism?

RQ2. What research contexts and themes have been examined in the existing literature?

RQ3. To what extent do current studies investigate the environmental impacts of religious tourism, and how do they align with specific Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?

RQ4. What future research themes could further advance this domain?

This study makes two key contributions. First, it foregrounds religious tourism as a distinct and underexamined domain within sustainability. Second, it employs a multi- layered methodological approach to address the research questions comprehensively, offering both theoretical insights and practical guidance for policymakers and stakeholders seeking to design more sustainable tourism strategies. By identifying both addressed and overlooked SDGs, the study provides a more nuanced understanding of sustainability in faith-based tourism contexts.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows: Section 2 reviews the relationship between religious tourism and environmental sustainability; Section 3 outlines the materials and methods; Section 4 presents the findings of the bibliometric analysis; Section 5 discusses the results; Section 6 maps the findings on SDGs; and Section 7 concludes with the key implications.

RELIGIOUS TOURISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Tourism's substantial contributions to national economies, employment generation, and infrastructural development are widely acknowledged. However, there is a need to balance these benefits against the negative social and environmental consequences associated with tourism (Yang et al., 2023). Within this broader discourse, scholars have begun to acknowledge these adverse impacts, though the evidence remains fragmented.

Existing literature shows convergence in recognising that religious tourism contributes to environmental degradation through increased visitor pressure on fragile ecosystems. For example, in discussing the environmental consequences of religious tourism, Shinde and Olsen (2022) propose strategies to promote greater sustainability within this sector. Tabash et al. (2023) analyse the relationship between religious tourism and environmental degradation in Saudi Arabia, highlighting its influence on foreign direct investment. Similarly, Ozturk et al. (2022) report a positive relationship between religious tourism and CO_2 emissions, highlighting the deleterious effects on tourism infrastructure, the erosion of religious heritage landscapes, and the degradation of community values and the "spirit of place". Along with this, there is a notable divergence in how these impacts are interpreted. While many scholars frame religious tourism as an economic driver, others position it as a source of unsustainable practices. The divergence is visible in the methodological inconsistencies. On one hand there are large portions of studies relying on macro- level indicators; very few studies adopt micro- level approaches to cover lived environmental impacts on the local populations.

Although environmental degradation is highlighted in the literature, much tends to emphasise similar issues— such as environmental deterioration, high visitor density, congestion, vandalism, noise pollution, and microclimatic changes- without sufficiently advancing empirical depth (Woodward, 2004). For example, increased visitor density has been linked to disruptions in wildlife habitats around sacred sites, with many destinations experiencing deforestation (Shinde & Olsen, 2022). In addition, overcrowding and accumulation of ritual offerings further intensifies air and water pollution, overwhelming local waste management systems. Despite these risks, few studies have systematically examined how climate change reshapes religious tourism patterns or challenges the sustainability of pilgrimage destinations. The literature also highlights conceptual ambiguity surrounding religious tourism, particularly in sustainability contexts.

Taken together, these gaps indicate the need for a more integrated and systematic understanding of how religious tourism interacts with environmental sustainability. These concerns are closely aligned with broader environmental sustainability priorities. Responding to these imperatives, the present study adopts the SDG framework to analyse existing scholarship and identify key areas where religious tourism contributes to—or challenges—environmental sustainability.

METHODOLOGY

The methodological framework adopted for this study is illustrated in Figure 1. The review follows the PRISMA protocol and employs a mixed-method approach combining bibliometric analysis and qualitative content analysis (Khanra et al., 2020). The Scopus database was used to identify the relevant dataset. Following the approach recommended by Parmentola et al. (2021), each paper was examined to determine whether it addressed linkages between religious tourism and environmental sustainability—for example, recycling, waste management, emissions reduction, or natural resource protection. Environmental sustainability was framed within the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Based on this assessment, a comprehensive map of the SDGs addressed across the literature was developed. While previous bibliometric studies have examined religious tourism (e.g., Iliev, 2020), limited research has investigated its relationship with environmental sustainability using such an extensive and structured approach. This study therefore, identifies both the SDGs that have been acknowledged in existing scholarship and those that remain underexplored.

Application of the PRISMA Procedure

The PRISMA methodology, comprising a 27-item checklist (Moher et al., 2015), provided a protocol for the processes of identification, screening, eligibility assessment, inclusion, and exclusion. This procedure ensured the objectivity, transparency, and methodological rigour of the bibliographic review (Snyder, 2019). The PRISMA flow adopted for this study is presented in Figure 1.

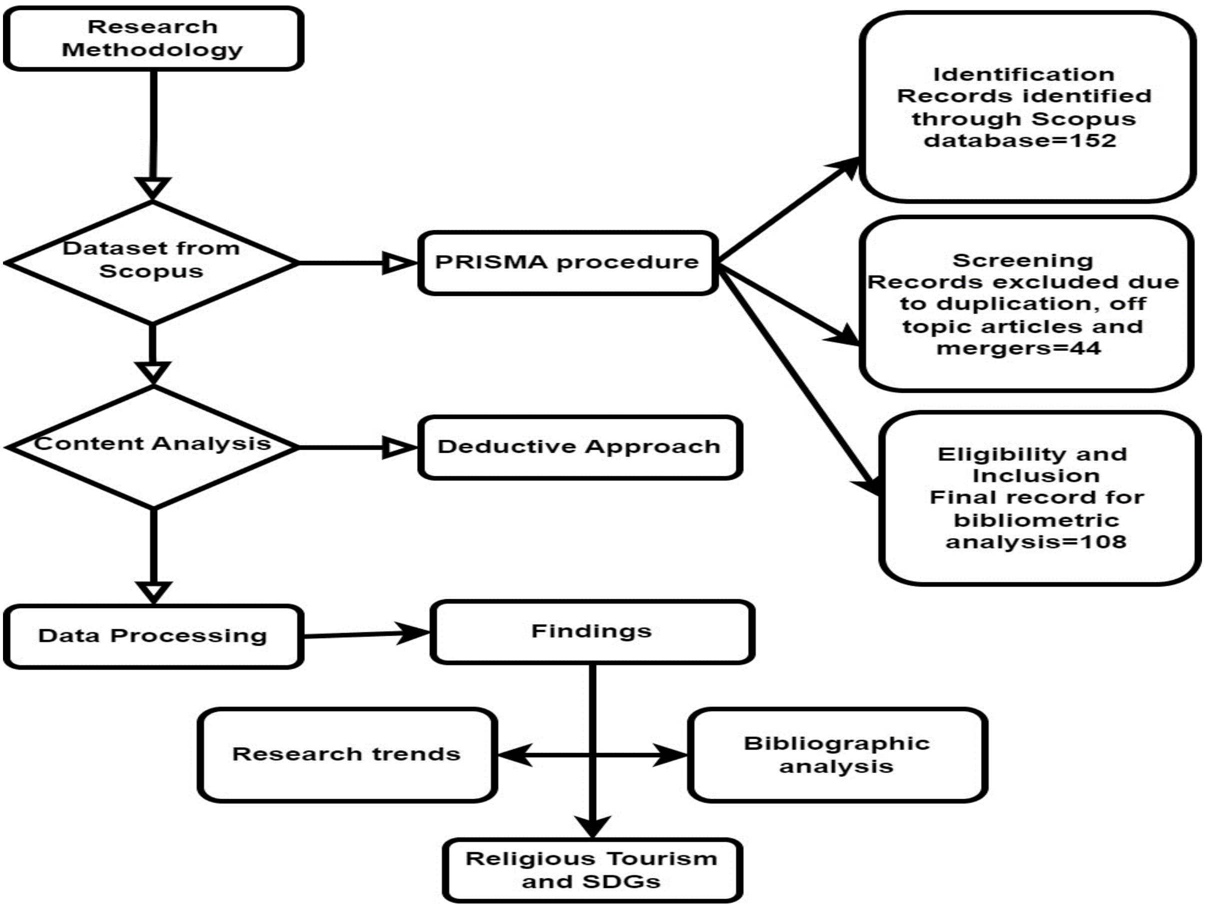

Figure 1. Research Methodology (Adapted from Parmentola et al., 2021)

Dataset Identification

A set of relevant keywords was identified and searched across article titles, abstracts, and full texts. The search was restricted to peer-reviewed journal articles. The following query string was used to extract the dataset from Scopus:

TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Religious tourism" OR "Pilgrimage" AND "tourism" AND "Environment")
AND PUBYEAR > 1989 AND PUBYEAR < 2024
AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "ar"))
AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "English"))
AND (EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA, "ENGI") OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA, "MEDI") OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA, "AGRI")
OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA, "CENG") OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA, "HEAL"))

Because "pilgrimage" and "religious tourism" emerged as formal research concepts only after the 1990s, the time span was set from 1990 onwards (Collins-Kreiner, 2019). The initial search yielded 108 articles.

Screening and Exclusion Criteria

The documents retrieved were screened manually by reading their abstracts and keywords. The following exclusion criteria were applied:

(a) studies irrelevant to the topic;
(b) publications in languages other than English;
(c) duplicate records; and
(d) articles published in non–peer-reviewed journals.

Using these criteria, 44 papers were excluded, leaving 64 articles for further consideration.

Eligibility and Final Inclusion Criteria

In the final stage of the review, to ensure analytical focus, the screening of the articles was conducted based on content relevant to environmental sustainability and SDGs. The following inclusion criteria were adopted:

- Addresses environmental dimensions such as waste, emissions, conservation, etc.
- Linked to practices in tourism leading to sustainable outcomes
- Engaged directly or indirectly with SDG-related themes

Bibliometric Analysis

For further analysis, VOSviewer, a widely used tool for constructing and visualising bibliometric networks, was used. The study employed:

Bibliographic coupling → to identify relationships between sources
Keyword co-occurrence analysis → to map thematic clusters
Network analysis → to visualise research linkages

Key Indicator: Total Link Strength (TLS)

To measure the relationships among authors, journals, and countries based on shared citations or co-occurrences, a Total Link Strength (TLS) was used. A higher TLS indicated stronger intellectual or collaborative connections within the network.

Content Analysis

The Scopus dataset was exported in CSV format, containing details such as title, abstract, keywords, author information, journal name, publication year, and citation count. A codebook was developed based on three parameters:

(a) methodological approach,

(b) geographical context, and

(c) environmentally related SDGs.

Coding Process

- Each article was read and reviewed in depth by the author.
- References to SDGs were identified.
- Binary code was used (1 = present, 0 = absent)
- Articles could be mapped to multiple SDGs.

To ensure reliability and validity, a subset of the selected articles (20% of the sample) was independently coded by two trained research scholars using the same codebook and predefined SDG indicators. Inter-coder reliability was calculated using Cohen's Kappa, yielding 0.84, indicating strong agreement. The coding outcomes were subsequently compared, and any discrepancies were discussed and resolved through consensus. The codes were iteratively refined using multiple readings, and ambiguous cases were re-evaluated for consistency. These parameters enabled a systematic classification of the 40 selected articles out of an initial 108 for in-depth analysis.

Based on the analysis, Figure 2 presents the conceptual framework underpinning this study. The framework positions religious tourism as a driver of environmental pressures through pilgrimage activities, visitor concentration, resource consumption, and infrastructure demands. These environmental consequences are linked to broader sustainability concerns and can be examined through the lens of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those related to water conservation, sustainable communities, responsible consumption, climate action, and ecosystem protection. The framework further highlights the role of governance mechanisms, destination management practices, infrastructure capacity, and environmental awareness as factors that may influence the extent to which religious tourism contributes to or mitigates environmental sustainability challenges. The resulting sustainability outcomes provide the basis for the SDG mapping and thematic analysis undertaken in this study.

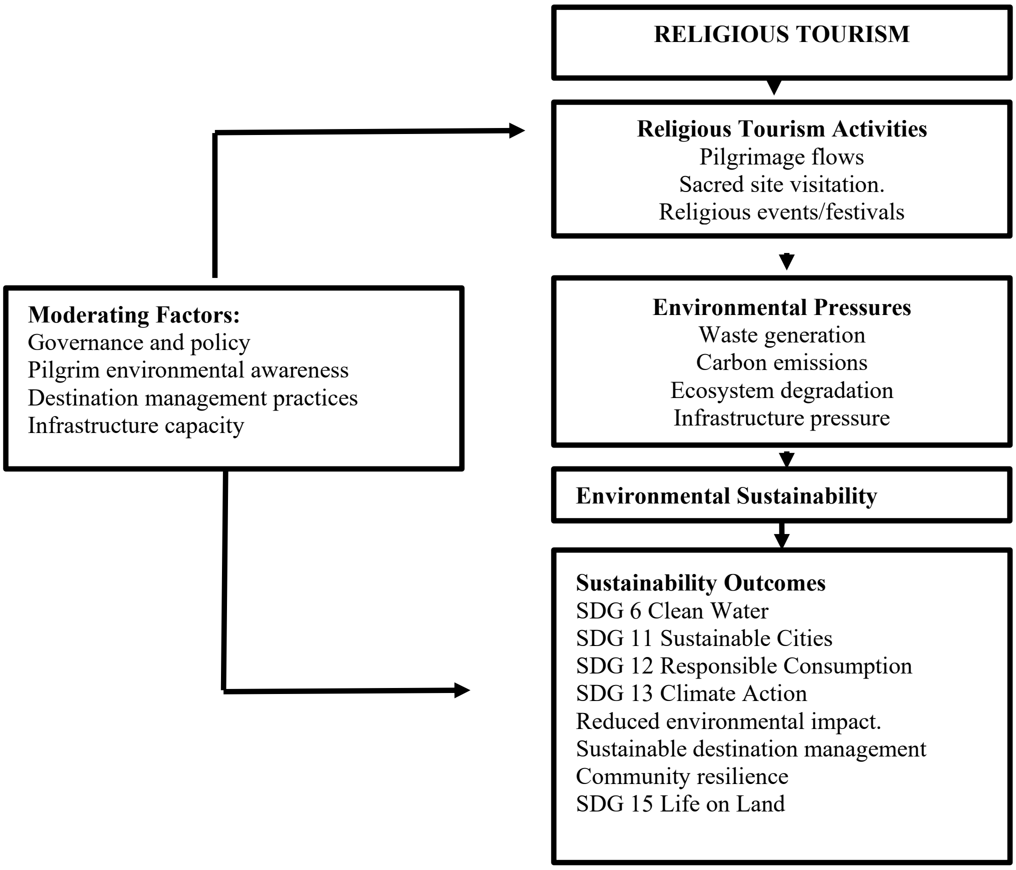

Figure 2. Conceptual Framework Linking Religious Tourism, Environmental Sustanaibility, And Sustainable Development Goals.

FINDINGS

The study utilized bibliometric analysis to provide a descriptive overview of publication trends, sources, and collaborations. Further, the results also reveal deeper conceptual shifts in how religious tourism is understood in relation to environmental sustainability. The following sections will highlight the same.

Bibliometric Analysis

To examine the evolving dynamics of religious tourism and its relationship with environmental sustainability, this study adopts a methodological approach similar to that of Parmentola et al. (2021). Bibliographic coupling, word co-occurrence, and network analysis were employed. The 108 selected papers were analysed descriptively based on journal outlet, year of publication, research domain, country of study, citation count, and methodological orientation.

Yearly Publications and Growth Trend

Figure 2 illustrates the publication trajectory of the field, offering insights into its shifting concerns and emerging directions. Religious tourism remains a relatively recent research area, with the earliest identified publication appearing in 1999. Scholarly interest witnessed a surge in 2018, declined in 2019, and then increased significantly in 2020, when 38 papers were published. By 2023, an additional 12 articles had appeared. The cumulative publication trend shows slow growth until 2017, followed by exponential expansion from 2018 onwards, indicating heightened academic attention to religious tourism and its environmental sustainability implications.

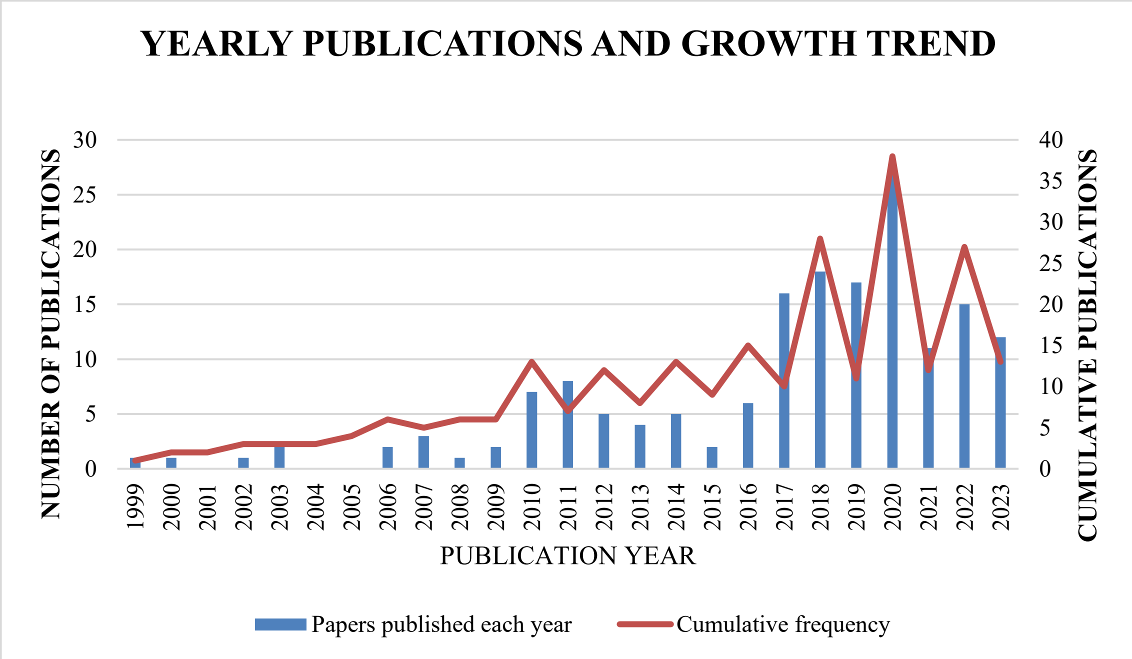

Figure 3. Research Trends in Religious Tourism - Publications Per Year and Cumulative Figures

Analysis of Publication Outlets

Figure 3 presents the distribution of journals based on bibliographic coupling. The minimum threshold was set at five documents per source and eleven citations. Of all the sources assessed, nine met these criteria. Each of these nine journals was then evaluated for its total bibliographic coupling strength with other sources, and those with the highest cumulative link strength were included in the analysis.

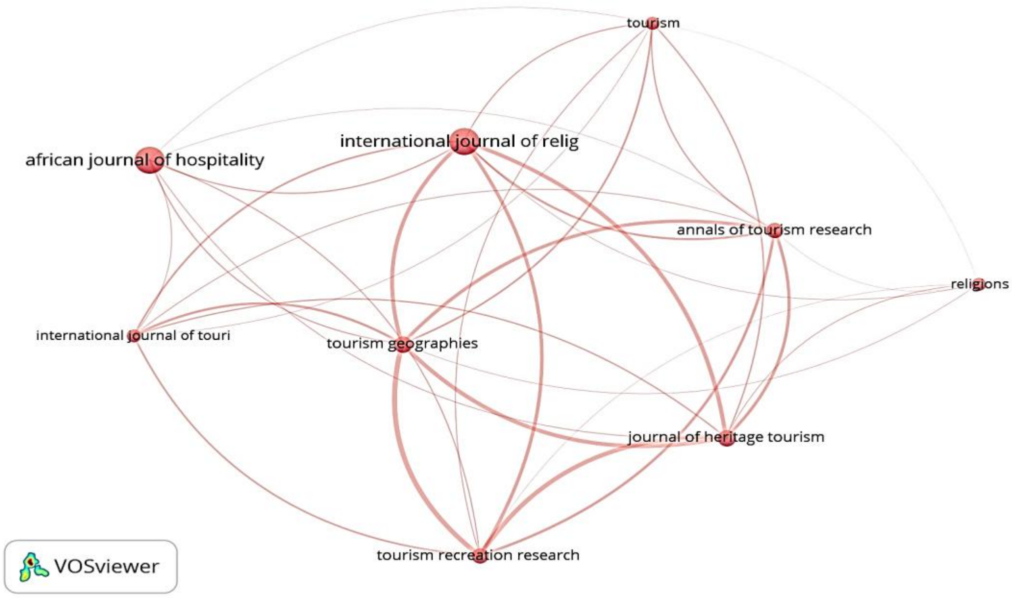

Figure 4. Distribution of Journals Through Bibliographic Coupling

Table 1. Citation Scores and Rankings of the Top 9 Journals (According to Scopus)

Source	Documents[a]	Citations[a]	Total link[a] strength	SJR[b]
Tourism geographies	8	160	548	2.596
Journal of heritage tourism	8	231	487	3.290
Tourism recreation research	7	225	476	1.066
International journal of religious tourism and pilgrimage	20	125	438	0.393
Annals of tourism research	7	615	337	3.426
International journal of tourism policy	5	43	218	0.202
Tourism	5	77	169	0.284
African journal of hospitality, tourism and leisure	20	229	130	0.216
Religions	5	11	59	0.322

[a]Sourced by VOSviewer.
[b]Sourced by SCOPUS.

Scores and rankings based on journal sources were calculated, and Table 1 presents the top 9 most cited journals in the dataset. The analysis considered the number of documents, citation counts, total link strength, and the SCImago Journal Rank (SJR). Citation weighting varies depending on the journal's prestige and disciplinary relevance. The ranking shows that several high-quality journals—such as Annals of Tourism Research, Journal of Heritage Tourism, Tourism Geographies, and Tourism Recreation Research—have published extensively on this topic, indicating the field's growing scholarly visibility and importance.

Country-wise Contribution

The country-level analysis was conducted using thresholds of at least 15 countries, a minimum of seven publications, and at least ten citations per country. The results indicate that research on religious tourism is largely collaborative, with many studies authored by scholars from multiple countries. A total of 108 articles originated from 30 different nations. Israel contributed the highest number of publications, with 36 articles (17.1%), followed by South Africa with 26 articles (12.3%). The United States produced 18 articles, the United Kingdom 17, Canada 14, and both Hong Kong and India contributed nine articles each (4.3%). Australia and Ireland each published eight articles (3.8%). While six countries produced between ten and thirty-six publications, the remaining 24 countries contributed fewer than ten studies on religious tourism.

Table 2. Contributions, Citations, and Total Link Strength by Country

Country	Documents	%	Citations	Total link strength
Israel	36	17.1	1354	3415
Canada	14	6.6	380	2502
Hong Kong	9	4.3	335	2700
India	9	4.3	117	688
Australia	8	3.8	189	939
Ireland	8	3.8	58	916
China	3	1.4	20	271
Germany	3	1.4	3	40
Hungary	2	0.9	11	425
Iran	2	0.9	10	397

Ecuador	1	0.5	0	131
Ethiopia	1	0.5	0	250
France	1	0.5	5	112
Italy	1	0.5	8	60
Macau	1	0.5	67	515
Malaysia	3	1.4	3	586
Netherlands	1	0.5	0	174
North Macedonia	2	0.9	30	183
Poland	13	6.2	84	2212
Portugal	1	0.5	4	43
Romania	2	0.9	0	466
Saudi Arabia	1	0.5	1	117
Singapore	7	3.3	116	1822
South Africa	26	12.3	313	1284
South Korea	7	3.3	10	1161
Spain	3	1.4	16	1005
Switzerland	8	3.8	182	1384
Turkey	3	1.4	54	634
United kingdom	17	8.1	91	1289
United states	18	8.5	361	2801

Using the Total Link Strength (TLS) metric, the collaborative research output of each country was assessed (Table 2). Israel emerged as the most influential contributor, with a TLS of 3415, and demonstrated strong collaborative ties with South Africa, Canada, the United States, Hong Kong, the United Kingdom, Poland, Singapore, Australia, and India (see Figure 4). The United States ranked second with a TLS of 2801, collaborating extensively with India, Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Hong Kong, Israel, Singapore, and South Korea.

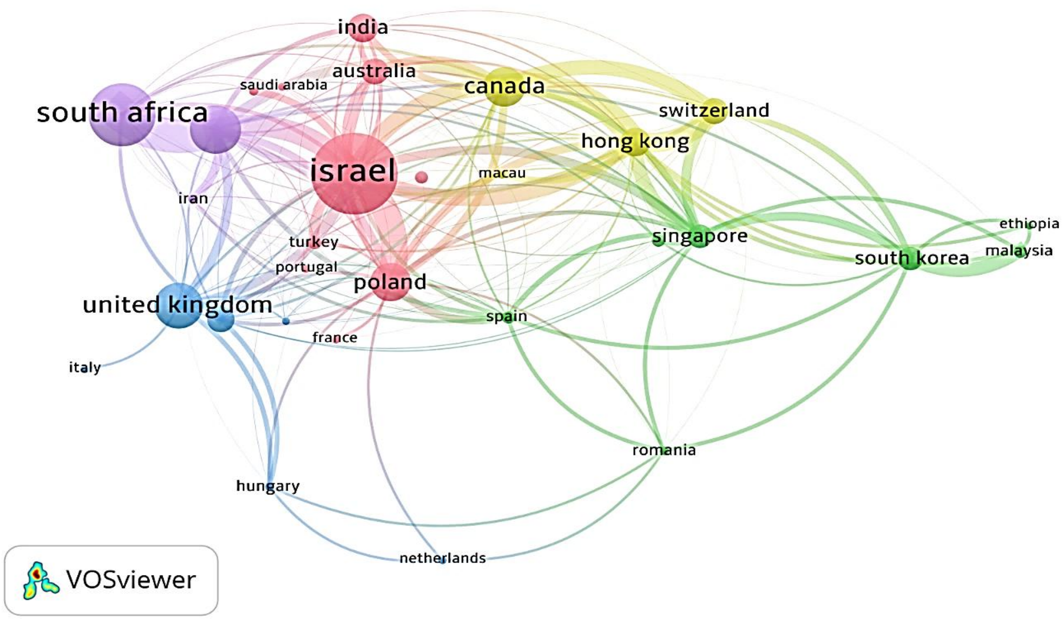

Figure 5. Collaborative Research on Religious Tourism Based on Countries

Hong Kong ranked third with a TLS score of 2700, collaborating with Canada, Switzerland, South Korea, India, Australia, Malaysia, and Ethiopia. The combined analysis of TLS scores and the Country Cooperation Network Map indicates that most countries maintain strong research connections with Israel, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and Singapore.

In addition, institutions with more than two publications in this field were identified (Table 2). One institution produced 22 papers, five institutions published at least five papers each, and the remaining institutions contributed at least two publications during the study period. The University of Haifa (Israel) led with 22 papers, followed by Tshwane University of Technology and the University of Pretoria in South Africa with eight papers each. Walter Sisulu University (East London, South Africa), Leeds Beckett University (United Kingdom), and Brigham Young University (United States) each produced five publications, marking notable contributions to the field.

Table 3. The Bibliographic Coupling of Contributing Authors, Countries, and Organisations

S. no.	Top 10 authors	Top 10 countries	Top 10 organizations
1	Apleni l.	Israel	Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Haifa, Israel
2	Collins-kreiner N.	South Africa	Tshwane university of technology, Pretoria, South Africa
3	Di giovine M.A.	United Kingdom	Walter Sisulu University, East london, South Africa
4	Griffin K.A.	Turkey	Leeds Beckett University, United Kingdom
5	Henama U.S.	Canada	Brigham Young University, United States
6	Kim B.	Hong Kong	University of Augsburg, Germany
7	Kliot N.	India	Hospitality Business, Singapore Institute of Technology, Singapore
8	Liro J.	Australia	University of Augsburg, Germany
9	Olsen D.H.	Ireland	Arizona State University, University of Johannesburg, South Africa
10	Raj R.	Poland	Bharati Vidyapeeth Deemed University, Pune, India
11	Shinde K.A.	Switzerland	School of Global Convergence Studies, Inha University, South Korea
12	So jan I.	South korea	Singapore institute of technology, Singapore
13	Verma M.	China	Technological University Dublin, Ireland

Most Active Authors

Table 3 presents the most influential contributors based on the number of publications and citations. The results show that Collins-Kreiner N. (16 documents, 1,283 citations, average citation rate of 40.1), followed by Kim B. (18 documents, 380 citations, average citation rate of 21.1) and Henamau (17 documents, 258 citations, average citation rate of 15.2), are the three most active researchers in this field (Figure 4).

The average number of citations per document was then calculated to assess scholarly impact (Table 4). The findings reveal that the most influential scholars consistently produce high-quality work. Although Collins-Kreiner N. continues to lead with an average of 40.1 citations, Kliot N. (average 46.4 citations) and Olsen D.J. (average 26.6 citations) surpass Kim B. in citation influence (Figure 5). This indicates that while Kim B.—who ranks second in productivity with 18 documents—is a prolific researcher, the recognition of her work is comparatively moderate when evaluated against that of Kliot N. and Olsen D.J.

Table 4. Most relevant contributors according to the number of published papers and citations

Author	Documents	Citations	Avg. citation pre document
Apleni l.	11	48	4.4
Collins-kreiner N.	32	1283	40.1
Di Giovine M.A.	6	62	10.3
Griffin K.A.	5	37	7.4
Henama U.S.	17	258	15.2
Kim B.	18	380	21.1
Kliot N.	5	232	46.4
Iiro J.	7	62	8.9
Olsen D.J.	12	319	26.6
Raj R.	11	82	7.5
Shinde K.A.	8	163	20.4
Sojan I.	5	38	7.6
Verma M.	5	33	6.6

Threshold: No of documents- 5, no of citations- 34

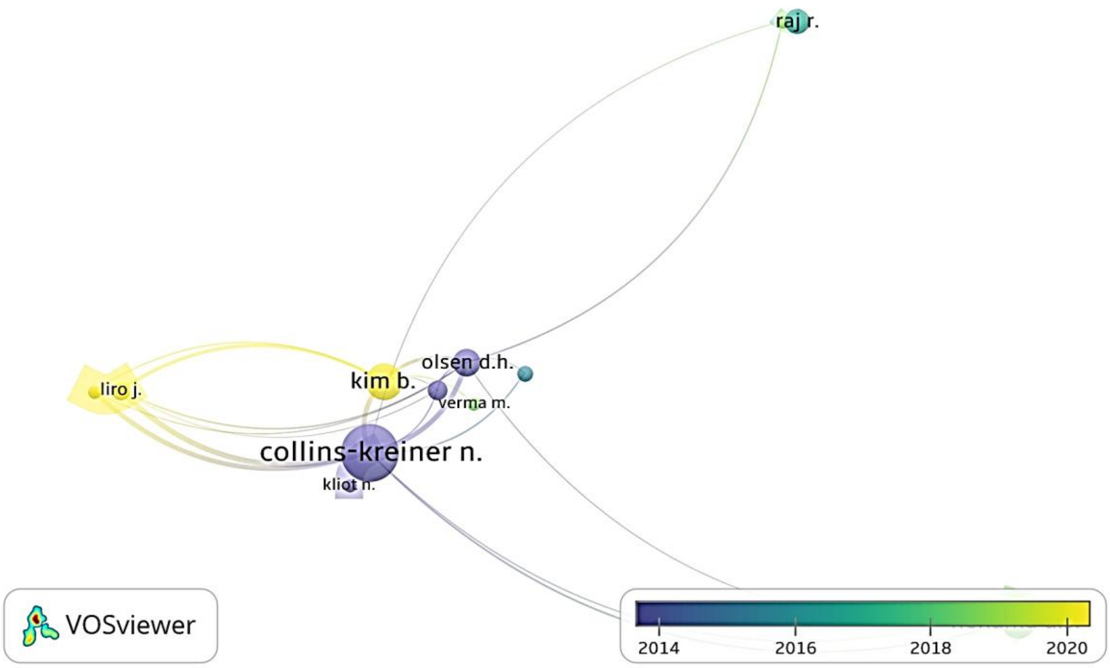

Figure 6. Most Active Authors Producing High-Quality Articles

Most Relevant Contributions

The relationship between the number of publications and their citation counts—where higher citations indicate greater scholarly impact—was examined. Only articles with more than 30 citations were included, resulting in a list of the top ten most influential publications (Table 5). The most highly cited work was by Collins-Kreiner N. (2010), which analysed the evolution of pilgrimage tourism, its core themes, debates, and conceptualisations. The study highlights the emergence of a postmodern perspective in pilgrimage research, particularly in distinguishing between secular and religious pilgrimage experiences.

The article by Kim, B., Kim, S. S., and King, B. (2016) ranked second with 104 citations. Their work investigates the hierarchical relationships among pilgrimage attributes, perceived rewards, and personal values, shedding light on both the profane and spiritual dimensions of pilgrimage. Articles by

Maphanga P. M. (2019) and Olsen D. H. (2010) received 73 citations each. Maphanga (2019) discusses how contagious diseases can hinder the developmental benefits associated with tourism consumption, whereas Olsen (2010) argues that the traditional distinction between pilgrims and tourists is outdated. Overall, the analysis shows that much of the high-quality scholarship in religious tourism builds upon these four influential studies.

Table 5. Bibliographic Coupling of Contributing Authors, Titles, Citations, and Journal Sources

Authors	Title	Year	Citations	Journal
Collins-kreiner N.	Researching pilgrimage: Continuity and transformations	2010	331	Annals of Tourism Research
Kim, B., Kim, S. S., & King, B.	The sacred and the profane: Identifying pilgrim traveller value orientations using means-end theory	2016	104	Tourism Management
Maphanga P.M	The tourism impact of Ebola in Africa: Lessons on crisis management	2019	73	African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure
Olsen D.H.	Pilgrims, tourists, and Max Weber's "ideal types"	2010	73	Annals of Tourism Research
Kim B., Chen Y.	Effects of religious celebrity on destination experience: The case of Pope Francis's visit to Salome Shrine	2020	68	International Journal of Tourism Research
Shinde K.	Pilgrimage and the environment: Challenges in a pilgrimage centre	2007	68	Current Issues in Tourism
Gatrell J.D., Collins-Kreiner N.	Negotiated space: Tourists, pilgrims, and the Bahá'í terraced gardens in Haifa	2006	61	Geoforum
Albayrak T., Herstein R., Caber M., Drori N., Bideci M., Berger R.	Exploring religious tourist experiences in Jerusalem: The intersection of Abrahamic religions	2018	52	Tourism Management
Strydom A.J., Mangope D., Henama U.S.	A critique of the interface between tourism, sustainable development and sustainable tourism in community based tourism theory	2019	34	African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure
Di Giovine M.A.	Revitalization and counter-revitalization: Tourism, heritage, and the lantern festival as catalysts for regeneration in hôi an, viêtnam	2009	31	Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events

Source: Authors' analysis

Analysis of Research Trends

A co-occurrence analysis of author and index keywords was conducted to identify the major research domains within the field. The full sample was analysed using a minimum threshold of three occurrences per keyword, resulting in 711 unique keywords. The most frequently occurring terms were "religious tourism" (40), "pilgrimage" (39), and "tourism" (33) (Figure 6). The resulting map provided an overarching view of the research landscape in religious tourism, with co-occurrence patterns revealing deeper thematic linkages.

VOSviewer generated four distinct clusters, each represented by a different colour and exhibiting strong interrelationships:

Cluster 1: Religion-Based Tourism — 21 items (e.g., religious tourism, heritage tourism, spirituality, sacred sites, and pilgrimage).

Cluster 2: Religious Tourism and Environmental Sustainability — 18 items (e.g., ecotourism, sustainable tourism, and dark tourism).

Cluster 3: Religious Tourism and Geopolitics — 11 items focusing on tourism management (e.g., ideology, conflicts, politics, tourism development).

Cluster 4: Pandemic and Its Impact on Religious Tourism — 3 items centred on COVID-19 and tourism (e.g., pandemic, pilgrimage).

The keyword co-occurrence analysis shown in Figure 6 produced several noteworthy insights, summarised in Table 6. It provides a visual representation of thematic concentrations within the field, illustrating how sustainability-related keywords remain clustered rather than integrated across the broader discourse. This fragmentation reinforces the limited mainstreaming of environmental concerns within religious tourism research.

To explore the relationship between authors and thematic items, each article was examined in detail, providing a concise understanding of the key issues discussed. The findings from each cluster are elaborated in the subsequent sections.

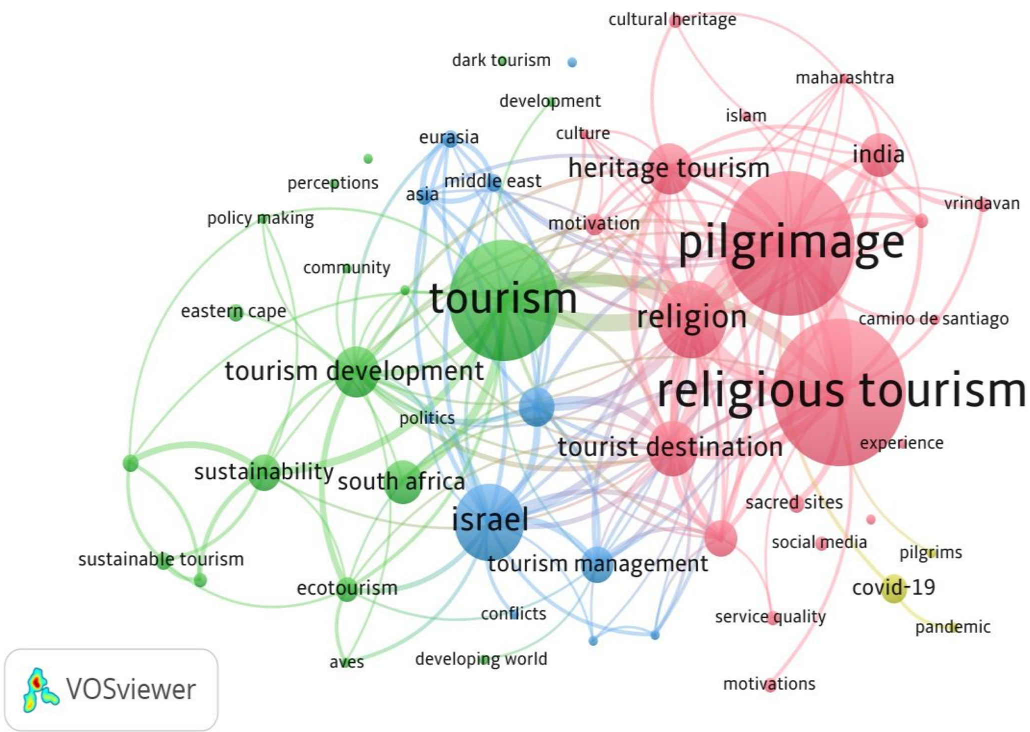

Figure 7. Keywords Co-Occurrence Analysis With Nodes Manifesting the Frequency of Keyword Co-Occurrence, and the Lines Showing Their Co-Occurrence Relationship

Table 6. Clusters, Items, and Authors (With Insights from VOSviewer and Authors' Analysis)

Clusters	Colours	No of items	Cluster labels	Items (VOSviewers)	Main authors identified
Cluster 1	Red	21	Religion Based Tourism	Camino de Santiago, cultural heritage, cultural tradition, culture, experience heritage tourism, India Islam, Maharashtra, motivation, motivations, pilgrimage, religion religious tourism, sacred sites, service quality, social media, spirituality, tourist behavior, tourist destination, Vrindavan	Rinschede (1992); Collins-Kreiner (2010b); Griffin (2007); Raj (2020); Caber et al. (2021); Nikjoo et al. (2020); Hilpert (2022); Hassan et al. (2022); Liro et al. (2022)
Cluster 2	Green	18	Religious tourism and environmental sustainability	Aves, community, community-based tourism, dark tourism developing world, development, eastern cape, ecotourism perceptions, policy making, South Africa, stakeholder, sustainability, sustainable, development, sustainable tourism tourism, tourism development, urban tourism	Iliev (2020); Trono & Olsen (2018); Shinde and Olsen (2022); Alipour et al. (2017); Qurashi (2020); Shinde & Olsen (2022); Shinde (2020); Serdane et al. (2020)
Cluster 3	Blue	11	Religious Tourism and geo-politics	Asia, conflicts, Eurasia ideology, Israel, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Israel, middle east politics, tourism, management tourist attraction	Liro et al. (2022); Kim & Kim (2020); Caber et al. (2021); Dowson (2021); Shinde (2015); Apleni & Henama (2020); Hilpert (2020)
Cluster 4	Brown	3	Pandemic and its impact on religious tourism	covid-19, pandemic, pilgrims	Di Giovine (2020); Nyika et al. (2022); Raj & Griffin (2020)

Cluster 1 'Red': Religion-Based Tourism

Academic discussions within this cluster examine how religious tourism is defined, what motivates participation, and the theoretical perspectives that explain such behaviour. The meaning of religious tourism remains widely debated. Jackowski and Smith (1992) describe it as travel driven by a pursuit of spiritual understanding, whereas Rinschede (1992) argues that visits may arise from cultural curiosity or a search for "new meaning in life", even when the traveller is unaware of the site's religious significance. Raj (2020), for example, notes that for Muslim pilgrims, visiting sacred destinations encompasses not only devotional practices but also pleasure and knowledge seeking.

Caber et al. (2021), through field studies conducted in the Vatican, Mecca, and Jerusalem, identified factors such as age, visitation frequency, and religious commitment as influential in shaping visitors' motivation to share their experiences on social media. Similarly, Nikjoo et al. (2020), using an ethnographic approach, found three key motivations driving travel to sacred sites: (a) distancing from materialism, (b) a desire to transcend suffering, and (c) psychological effects associated with mass gatherings.

Destination marketing efforts at religious sites have prompted theological debates regarding the use of sacred spaces for non-worship activities, underscoring the need for value alignment (Caber et al., 2021). Hilpert (2022) examined signature events at prominent Catholic pilgrimage destinations in Germany and found that these events significantly contribute to destination branding. Hassan et al. (2022) investigated motivations to visit a sacred city and demonstrated that such motivations predict fulfilment and commitment among religious visitors. Liro et al. (2022) explored the religious and patriotic symbolism of major pilgrimage centres in Poland and identified a strong relationship between spirituality and national identity. Overall, this cluster represents the foundational phase, reflecting the limited engagement with environmental concerns. The studies in this cluster suggest that sustainability has historically been peripheral to the core theoretical discussions.

From an SDG perspective, Cluster 1 demonstrates limited but notable engagement with sustainability concerns, particularly SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) through discussions of heritage preservation and destination management. References to SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) also emerge, although these themes remain secondary to the cluster's broader focus on religious tourism experiences and motivations.

Cluster 2 'Green' - Religious Tourism and Environmental Sustainability

Religious tourism is shaped by two contrasting objectives: attracting visitors to generate economic benefits and safeguarding sacred sites from environmental degradation. An increase in tourist numbers often accelerates commodification (Iliev, 2020), threatens local cultural practices (Trono & Olsen, 2018), and contributes to biodiversity loss (Trombino & Trono, 2018). Despite these challenges, scholarly work has predominantly focused on travellers' motivations, rituals, and experiences (Raj & Griffin, 2015; Terzidou et al., 2018), with relatively limited attention paid to sustainability concerns.

A small but growing body of research examines how religious tourism affects environmental sustainability. Shinde and Olsen (2022) argue that sustainable religious tourism requires the integration of both religious and cultural elements, encompassing the tangible and intangible dimensions of a site's sanctity. Similarly, McManus (2005) highlights that expanding tourism-related infrastructure can erode the "spirit of place". Drawing attention to multiple disasters at sacred destinations linked to unsustainable practices—particularly in India—Shinde (2020) emphasises the need for systematic and sustainable management of pilgrimage sites. Overall, while pilgrimage towns contribute substantially to economic development, they do not necessarily ensure holistic sustainability (Qurashi, 2020).

A notable development within this discourse is the rise of slow tourism, also referred to as "aware" or "responsible" tourism (Serdane et al., 2020). To escape fast-paced living, many pilgrims choose slow travel along traditional or organic pilgrimage routes. This form of travel encourages engagement with local communities, culinary traditions, and cultural practices (Lois-Gonzalez et al., 2014). Such interactions foster cross-cultural exchange, strengthen local economies, enhance both domestic and international relations, and promote sustainable development (Trono & Castronuovo, 2018). Overall, this cluster showcases the emergent sustainability turn in religious tourism research. The results clearly indicate a gradual shift from descriptive to problem-oriented scholarship.

Cluster 2 exhibits the strongest alignment with the SDG framework and serves as the primary locus of sustainability-oriented research within the field. The literature in this cluster is particularly connected to SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), and SDG 13 (Climate Action), reflecting concerns related to infrastructure development, environmental degradation, crowd management, and the long-term sustainability of pilgrimage destinations.

Cluster 3 'Blue' – Religious Tourism and Geo-politics

Cluster 3 highlights how religious tourism shapes geopolitical relations and international diplomacy, revealing the complex intersections between sacred sites, power structures, and national identity. Scholarship within this cluster examines pilgrimage destinations such as Jasna Góra in Poland; St. Clare of Assisi in Italy (Liro et al., 2022), St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican (Kim & Kim, 2020); and the Basilica of St. Francis—sites that attract millions of pilgrims each year. In the Islamic world, the Kaaba in Mecca and the shrine of Imam Hussain in Karbala are central to religious practice, while Jerusalem remains a shared sacred space for Christianity, Judaism, and Islam (Caber et al., 2021; Dowson, 2021). Hindu pilgrimage traditions span sites such as Mathura, Ayodhya, Banaras, Shirdi, and Tirupati (Shinde, 2015). These sacred landscapes have distinct cultural, spiritual, and political significance and draw both pilgrims seeking devotion and tourists visiting for leisure.

A growing body of research shows how nations use sacred sites to bolster soft power and enhance their global profiles. Apleni and Henama (2020) investigate how religious events in Port St. Johns, South Africa, contribute to local economic development and highlight the governance mechanisms that shape these initiatives. Dowson (2021) introduces the concept of the "eventization of Faith," examining three cases—including Jerusalem—to show how pilgrimage sites become contested spaces layered with religious, political, and cultural meaning. The study argues that widening the purpose of visits beyond devotional practice can generate more transformative experiences and reinforce both individual and collective identity.

Hilpert (2020), drawing on six German case studies, explores how sacred sites are branded in post-modern society. The findings suggest that increasing commodification may dilute, rather than enhance, the spiritual character of these spaces, transforming them into mass-consumption landscapes.

Overall, the literature in this cluster demonstrates that sacred sites hold economic, cultural, and geopolitical value for nations. As countries leverage religious tourism to strengthen identity, diplomacy, and development, maintaining a balance between the benefits and associated challenges becomes vital. Understanding these dynamics is essential for fostering cooperation and promoting global harmony. This cluster highlights how macro-level political analyses often overlook ecological implications.

Although sustainability is not the primary focus of Cluster 3, several studies indirectly engage with SDG-related concerns. Discussions of destination governance, regional development, and the socio-economic consequences of religious tourism demonstrate partial links to SDG 11 and SDG 9, suggesting opportunities for future research to incorporate sustainability considerations more explicitly within geopolitical analyses.

Cluster 4 'Brown' - Pandemic and its Impact on Religious Tourism

This set of publications explores how pilgrimages and visits to sacred sites were disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, creating a sense of spiritual deprivation among devotees. Drawing on ethno-historical analysis, Di Giovine (2020) illustrates how believers sought comfort in the writings of Saint Pio during the crisis. Other scholars similarly emphasise how religious teachings provided emotional and spiritual support throughout the pandemic (Nyika et al., 2022; Tsironis et al., 2021).

Although travel restrictions halted traditional practices, pilgrims adopted creative alternatives, such as participating in virtual prayers at major shrines (Raj & Griffin, 2020). Regions heavily reliant on religious tourism suffered substantial economic losses, with hotels, restaurants, and small businesses particularly affected (Olsen & Timothy, 2021). Addressing tensions among religious groups, government bodies, and public health authorities, Olsen and Timothy (2020) reviewed the literature to assess the future of religious travel in a post-COVID, post-secular world.

Overall, this body of work shows that the pandemic had immediate economic, spiritual, and social consequences for religious tourism. It compelled communities, religious leaders, and governments to adapt rapidly, revealing both the flexibility of faith practices and the resilience of individuals under pressure. Notably, several innovations introduced during COVID-19—especially virtual religious practices—have continued beyond the crisis and remain widely used today; sustainability concerns remain secondary. Overall, this cluster points to a missed opportunity for integrating environmental considerations into crisis-driven transformations.

Notably, the studies within Cluster 4 show little or no direct engagement with the SDG framework. This absence highlights a significant research gap and suggests that sustainability considerations remain unevenly distributed across the religious tourism literature, despite the growing importance of environmental and developmental concerns in tourism scholarship.

Relationship between Religious Tourism and Environmental SDGs

With religious tourism undergoing significant expansion and transformation (Collins-Kreiner, 2019), its environmental implications have become an increasingly important area of inquiry. This section, therefore, examines how religious tourism connects to environmental SDGs. The first step involved identifying studies with direct or indirect references to environment-related SDGs. The results are summarised in Table 7.

All 108 papers were reviewed thoroughly. Using content analysis, the core theme of each paper was extracted. Studies that addressed sustainability—either explicitly or implicitly—were then separated, counted, and expressed as a percentage of the total. These papers were subsequently organised according to the clusters in which they appeared within the bibliometric analysis.

Table 7. A Matrix Detailing the Connections Between Sdgs and Clusters (Authors' Elaboration)

Clusters	**Cluster 1-Red**	**Cluster 2-Green**	**Cluster 3-Blue**	**Cluster 4-Brown**	**Total**	
Number of papers that referred to sustainability along with main themes	7	21	12	0	40	
Percentage	6.5	19.4	11.1	0.0	37.0	
SDGs					**Total**	**% of each SDG covered**
1. No poverty	0	3	0	0	3	7.50%
9. Industry Innovation and Infrastructure	1	13	2	0	16	40%
11. Sustainable Cities and Communities	4	17	1	0	22	55%
12. Responsible Consumption and Production	1	2	0	0	3	7.50%
13. Climate Action	0	7	1	0	8	20%
14. Life Below Water	0	1	0	0	1	2.50%
15. Forests, Desertification, and Biodiversity	**1**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**2**	**5%**

Table 7 plays a critical role in addressing RQ3 by quantifying the extent to which existing research engages with environmentally relevant SDGs. It not only identifies dominant sustainability priorities but also reveals significant gaps, thereby linking bibliometric patterns with substantive sustainability outcomes. It indicates that out of 108 papers, only 40 (37%) directly or indirectly address the SDGs. As expected, Cluster 2 (religious tourism and environmental sustainability) contains the highest number of relevant papers, with 21 studies (19.4%), followed by Cluster 3 (religious tourism and geopolitics, 11.1%) and Cluster 1 (religion-based tourism, 6.5%). Among the SDGs, SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) is the most frequently addressed (55%), followed by SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) (40%) and SDG 13 (Climate Action) (20%). This can be attributed to the spatial concentration of religious tourism in urban and semi-urban pilgrimage centres, facing immediate challenges related to infrastructure, crowd management, and heritage preservation.

Table 7 summarises how each SDG aligns with the thematic clusters. For example, SDG 11, SDG 9, and SDG 13—most prominently represented in Cluster 2—primarily appear in studies examining the environmental consequences of increasing tourist flows to sacred destinations, including rising commodification, cultural erosion, and biodiversity loss. However, the lack of focused research on climate resilience, carbon emissions, and adaptation strategies highlights a significant gap in the literature.In contrast, SDG 1 (No Poverty) (7.5%), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) (7.5%), and SDG 15 (Life on Land) (5%) receive considerably less attention. As discussed earlier, this could be because religious tourism research has traditionally prioritised cultural and experiential dimensions over systemic environmental or ecological analysis.

Figure 8 provides a visual representation of the cluster–SDG matrix presented in Table 7. The heatmap highlights the uneven distribution of sustainability-related research across thematic clusters. Cluster 2 demonstrates the strongest engagement with SDGs, particularly SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), and SDG 13 (Climate Action). In contrast, Cluster 4 shows no identifiable SDG engagement. The visualisation further illustrates that sustainability concerns remain concentrated within a limited segment of the religious tourism literature rather than being systematically integrated across all research themes.

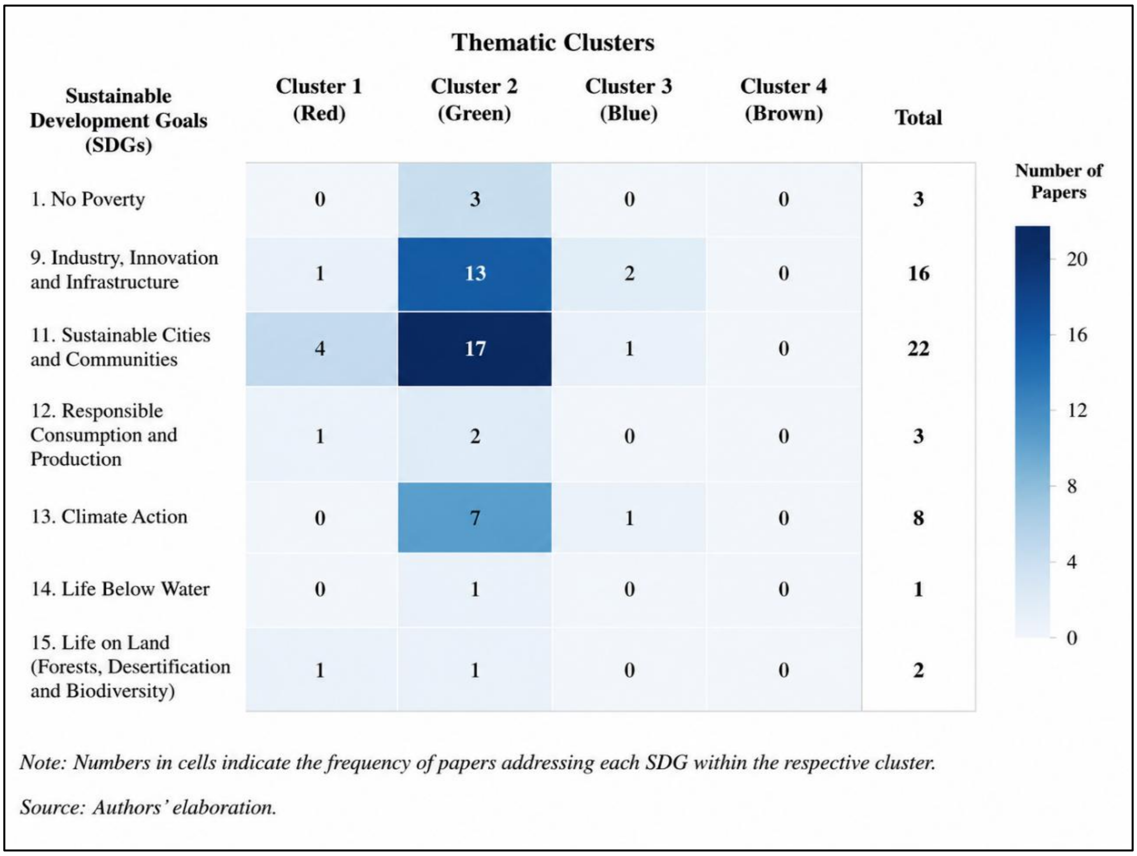

Figure 8. Heatmap of SDG Engagement Across Thematic Clusters

Overall, the findings demonstrate that despite the rapid expansion of religious tourism, research addressing its environmental implications remains limited and insufficiently prioritised. Notably, the distribution of clusters reveals uneven engagement with SDGs. Cluster 2 aligns most closely with SDG-oriented discourse, particularly SDG 11 and SDG 13, whereas other clusters show minimal integration of sustainability concerns. This uneven distribution indicates that environmental sustainability remains compartmentalised rather than embedded across the field.

The dominance of SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) in the literature is not incidental. As religious tourism is inherently place-bound and spatially concentrated, these destinations experience high-density, episodic influxes of pilgrims. This immediately translates into challenges related to crowd management, urban infrastructure, waste generation, and heritage preservation. As a result, scholars tend to frame environmental concerns through an urban sustainability lens, which aligns directly with SDG 11. Moreover, the neglect of SDGs 1, 12, 14, and 15 is not due to irrelevance but arises from disciplinary silos, methodological constraints, and a site-centric framing of religious tourism that privileges immediate, visible impacts over systemic socio-ecological processes. SDG 1 (No Poverty) is treated as an indirect development spillovers rather than as a core analytical variable in religious tourism research. Second, SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) requires a systems-level perspective on resource flows, supply chains, and lifecycle impacts, which is largely absent in religious tourism studies. Third, the marginalisation of SDG 14 (Life Below Water) and SDG 15 (Life on Land) are partly explained by a geographical and ecological mismatch. Most religious tourism sites are inland or urban, creating minimal direct engagement with marine ecosystems. Similarly, assessing biodiversity and ecosystem impacts requires ecological methods that lie outside the dominant tourism research toolkit.

Although SDG 13 (Climate Action) appears in a subset of studies (20%), its treatment remains fragmented and largely indirect, especially when compared to SDG 11. This limited engagement is surprising given that religious tourism is deeply entangled with climate-sensitive geographies and carbon-intensive mobility systems.

First, many prominent pilgrimage destinations are located in ecologically fragile and hazard-prone regions—including Himalayan shrines, riverbank cities, and arid zones—which are increasingly exposed to climate-induced risks such as floods, landslides, heat stress, and water scarcity. Events such as recurrent flooding in Kedarnath or extreme weather disruptions in pilgrimage circuits illustrate how climate change directly threatens both visitor safety and destination viability. Despite this, the literature tends to frame such events as isolated disasters rather than manifestations of broader climate vulnerability, thereby under-theorising SDG 13.

Second, religious tourism is characterised by mass, periodic mobility, often involving long-distance travel by air, rail, and road. These mobility patterns generate significant carbon emissions, particularly during peak pilgrimage seasons (e.g., Hajj, Kumbh Mela), yet carbon accounting and emission analysis remain largely absent from the literature. This reflects a broader disciplinary gap where tourism studies acknowledge environmental degradation but seldom quantify or model tourism-related carbon footprints in faith-based contexts.

Third, the current body of research is predominantly reactive rather than anticipatory. While some studies acknowledge environmental stress, there is limited focus on climate adaptation and resilience strategies, such as climate-resilient infrastructure, early warning systems, carrying capacity regulation, or sustainable mobility planning for pilgrimage routes. This indicates that SDG 13 is engaged at the level of problem recognition, but not at the level of policy design or systems transformation. Overall, while SDG 13 is implicitly relevant to religious tourism, it remains conceptually under-integrated, empirically under-measured, and strategically underdeveloped, highlighting a critical gap in linking climate vulnerability and carbon impacts with faith-based mobility systems.

The detailed analysis and the results derived from the bibliometric procedures led to the identification of five key research agendas that can advance scholarly understanding of the relationship between religious tourism and environmental sustainability:

Examining New Approaches to the Conceptualisation of Religious Tourism

Religious tourism is evolving rapidly, giving rise to new concepts such as spiritual retreats, New Age spiritual travel, volunteer-oriented religious tourism, faith-based cruises, religious conferences, and Christian camps (Iliev, 2020). Existing research also shows that many individuals visit sacred places for non-religious purposes, including sports, social interaction, and cultural exchange (Amaro et al., 2018). Despite these developments, the literature still lacks a comprehensive, integrative perspective. In this context, exploring interfaith and interreligious tourism—where individuals from different faith traditions visit each other's sacred sites—offers considerable potential for enhancing dialogue, fostering mutual understanding, and strengthening social cohesion.

A persistent challenge within the religious tourism literature concerns the lack of a universally accepted definition of the concept. Scholars variously define religious tourism as pilgrimage, faith-based travel, spiritual journeys, or visits to sacred sites motivated by cultural, recreational, or personal interests (Collins-Kreiner, 2020). This conceptual diversity has important implications for sustainability research because different definitions capture different forms of mobility, visitor behaviour, and environmental impacts. As a result, studies adopting narrow pilgrimage-oriented definitions may overlook broader sustainability challenges associated with spiritual tourism, heritage visitation, and emerging forms of religious travel, thereby affecting how the relationship between religious tourism and environmental sustainability is understood and operationalised.

Mapping the SDG Goals Pertaining to Religious Tourism

The literature reveals a clear gap in research examining how religious tourism influences environmental sustainability (see Section 6). Policymakers frequently prioritise short-term economic gains over long-term social and ecological outcomes (Hall, 2008). This study argues that although religious tourism may not directly affect every SDG, it can shape several of them—both positively and negatively—in ways that remain insufficiently explored.

For instance, SDG 8 can be advanced through employment opportunities created for local communities, which may also contribute to reducing inequality (SDG 10). Promoting responsible behaviour among visitors (SDG 12) can help mitigate environmental pressures, while cultural preservation and opportunities for intercultural engagement support peace, justice, and strong institutions (SDG 16). Similarly, collaboration among religious groups, governments, and private organisations strengthens the broader agenda of sustainable development (SDG 17).

Future studies can apply this framework to investigate the climate vulnerabilities of sacred sites and propose targeted adaptation strategies to safeguard religious tourism destinations.

Lessons Learnt from Virtual Religious Tourism

During the pandemic, virtual religious tourism emerged as a vital resource, with institutions offering online prayers, virtual tours, and digital gatherings to maintain connection and spiritual support (Nyika et al., 2022; Di Giovine, 2020). Although these digital tools proved invaluable during periods of restriction, they cannot fully replicate the embodied experience of physical pilgrimage. As conditions return to normal, future research can explore the lessons learned from virtual engagement and examine how religious institutions and destinations might continue integrating digital elements to enhance global accessibility and inclusivity.

Exploring potential for conflict resolution and peace building

Another promising research direction concerns the relationship between religious tourism and conflict resolution (Qu et al., 2022). Faith plays a vital role in cultural dialogue and conflict mediation (Raj & Griffin, 2020). Future studies can investigate how participation in religious tourism shapes travellers' religious identities, perceptions of other faiths, and attitudes toward intergroup relations. Researchers may also explore how religious tourism has contributed to conflict resolution and peacebuilding in communities with a history of religious tension.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study has synthesised and presented a comprehensive overview of existing research on religious tourism—a distinct subset of tourism—and its relationship with environmental sustainability. The analysis offers a holistic perspective on the key articles, authors, and institutions contributing to this field.

RQ1: What is the current status of research on religious tourism?

The findings indicate that scholarly interest in religious tourism began to rise significantly only after 2018. High-quality journals such as *Annals of Tourism Research, Journal of Heritage Tourism, Tourism Geographies, and Tourism Recreation Research* now publish extensively on this topic, underscoring its growing academic prominence. However, despite this growth, the field remains relatively recent, with a concentration of contributions from a limited number of countries. Israel emerges as the leading country in terms of research output, followed by South Africa, the USA, the UK, Canada, Hong Kong, and India. Among authors, Collins-Kreiner N. is the most influential contributor, followed by Kliot N. and Olsen D.J (refer to Figure 9).

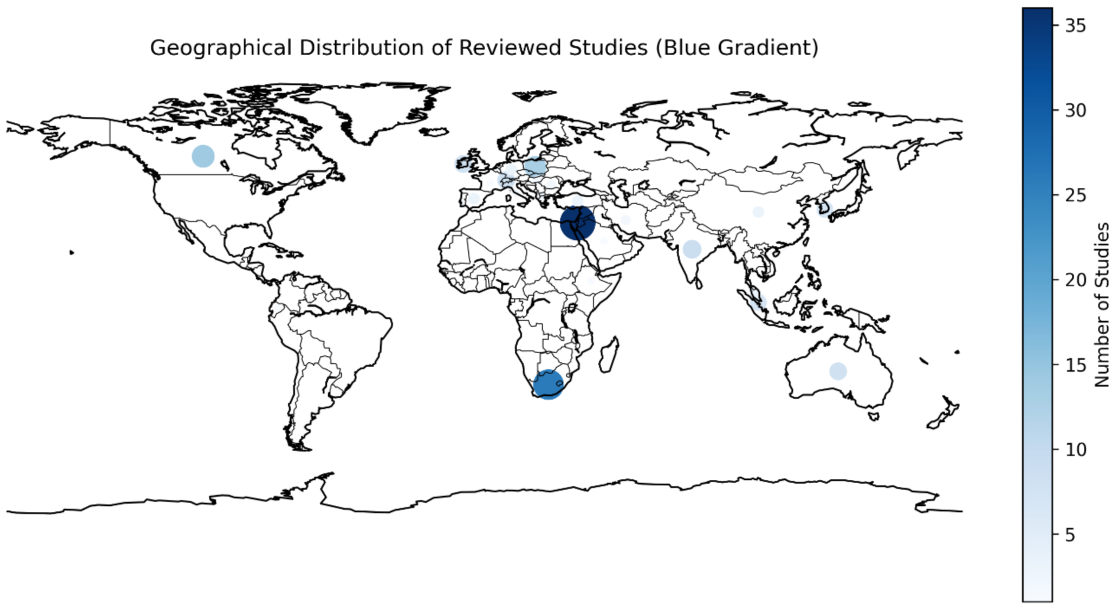

Figure 9. Geographical Distribution of Reviewed Studies Across Countries Using a Monochromatic Blue Gradient. Darker Shades Indicate Higher Research Concentration. The Figure Highlights a Strong Regional Concentration of Studies in Israel And South Africa, With Comparatively Limited Representation Across Other Regions, Indicating Geographical İmbalances in the Literature.

RQ2: What research contexts and themes have been examined in the existing literature?

Insights from co-word, co-citation, and dynamic co-citation analyses categorised the existing body of literature into four broad thematic clusters (see Section 5):

(a) foundational conceptualisations of religious tourism,

(b) environmental sustainability and community impacts,

(c) geopolitical and identity-related dimensions, and

(d) disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

These clusters bring forth the evolution of the field from conceptual and descriptive studies toward more applied and context-specific enquiries. However, sustainability-related research remains largely confined to a single cluster, indicating that environmental concerns have not yet been fully integrated across all thematic areas.

RQ3: To what extent do current studies investigate environmental impacts and align with SDGs?

The findings reveal that only 40 out of 108 studies (37%) engage directly or indirectly with environmentally relevant SDGs. Among these, SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) emerges as the most frequently addressed, followed by SDG 9 and SDG 13. This concentration reflects the spatial and infrastructural challenges associated with pilgrimage destinations.

At the same time, several SDGs—such as SDG 1, SDG 12, SDG 14, and SDG 15—remain significantly under-represented. This indicates a fragmented and selective engagement with sustainability, where environmental considerations are addressed in isolation rather than as part of a comprehensive sustainability framework.

RQ4: What future research themes could further advance this domain?

Additionally, insights from leading publications helped identify potential research agendas for future scholars. These include themes such as reconceptualising religious tourism to include virtual and interfaith tourism, integrating the SDG framework into empirical research, examining climate challenges, and exploring the role of religious tourism in fostering social cohesion and conflict resolution. Collectively, these findings highlight the need to move beyond descriptive analysis towards more theoretically grounded and policy-relevant research.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

To advance religious tourism as a specialised subset of tourism studies, future researchers can draw on the contributions of leading scholars and institutions highlighted in this review. The thematic clusters identified in the analysis offer a structured foundation, guiding scholars toward significant publications that can serve as anchoring points for further inquiry. Given the critical connection between tourism and environmental sustainability, researchers may also use the findings of this study to direct greater attention to the underexplored SDGs and propose innovative strategies that encourage stronger integration of sustainability practices within religious tourism.

METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATION

Finally, this study contributes to methodological advancement by proposing a multi-layered approach combining PRISMA-based systematic review, bibliometric analysis, and qualitative content analysis. Additionally, the study introduces an SDG-based coding framework, a set of metrics that help clarify how, and to what extent, various SDGs are addressed within this domain. These methodological tools can support more rigorous, targeted, and impactful research in the years ahead.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study offer several practical insights for industry practitioners and policymakers seeking to deepen the existing knowledge base on religious tourism and environmental sustainability. Policymakers can draw on the results related to addressed and unaddressed SDGs to develop strategies that maximise alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Governments may also use these insights to create guidelines that encourage the growth of virtual religious tourism, ensuring that such digital practices remain inclusive, accessible, and secure.

Additionally, industry practitioners can utilize these insights to identify emerging market trends and operational challenges within religious tourism. These insights can support evidence-based planning, destination management, and long-term sustainability initiatives.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE SCOPE FOR RESEARCH

This study is limited by its reliance on Scopus as the sole database, which restricts the sectoral coverage of publications included in the analysis. Future research could benefit from examining papers indexed in additional databases and comparing the results across multiple sources. To further enrich the analysis, scholars may also incorporate grey literature such as newspaper articles, books, and magazines, which can provide broader contextual insights into religious tourism and its environmental dimensions. Next, the SDG mapping is based on content analysis, which involves a degree of interpretive judgement. Although predefined indicators and iterative coding were employed to enhance consistency, some level of subjectivity in identifying SDG linkages cannot be entirely eliminated. These limitations suggest that future research could benefit from multi-database approaches and more standardised or automated coding frameworks to improve robustness and replicability.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

By synthesizing factors from various theoretical perspectives e.g. economic theories, community empowerment models, and technological frameworks, the research presents a comprehensive understanding of self-reliance in the tourism context, this integration enhances theoretical models relating to community development and self-sufficiency. The study contributes to the literature by developing a reliable and validated measurement scale (SRTD) that summarise multiple dimensions of self-reliance in tourism, including Economic Empowerment, Infrastructural Empowerment, Community Empowerment, Demand and Supply, and Technological Empowerment. Previous studies have highlighted the importance of self-reliance and tourism in economic growth (Gerbing and Anderson, 1988; Ghadge et al., 2020) but lacked a comprehensive measurement framework. This study addresses that gap by providing a multi-dimensional scale that includes specific constructs like sustainable well-being and efficiency, which are under represented in earlier works of (Boley and McGehee, 2014; Ranasinghe and Pradeepamali, 2019; Jeong et al., 2021; Neuts et al., 2021). While earlier studies often relied on individual constructs to discuss self-reliance and community empowerment by taking economic(Kasturi, 1997; Pereznieto and Taylor, 2014; Surya et al., 2020; Tian et al., 2023; Boley and McGehee, 2014), social (Achmad, 2023; Yang et al., 2020; Sarr et al., 2021; Mandulangi, 2021) political and psychological empowerment (Boley and McGehee, 2014; Ranasinghe and Pradeepamali, 2019), this research integrates multiple dimensions, the empirical model constructed herein aligns with the thoughts of (DeVellis and Thorpe, 2021; Hinkin, 2005) but improves their approach by measuring self-reliance as an integrated system with multiple interrelated components instead of separate entities, suggesting that self-reliance is influenced by broader socio-political dynamics. The findings point to Infrastructural Empowerment as a critical factor for fostering self-reliance. This suggests a pressing need for investments in local infrastructure (roads, utilities, etc.) that supports tourism. Drawing from existing research, like that of (Josa and Aguado, 2019), policymakers should prioritize developing infrastructure that enhances both tourism appeal and local community access to services. Also identifying Technological Empowerment as a key factor in measuring Atmanirbharta in tourism highlights the crucial role of technology, an aspect frequently mentioned but rarely explored in depth in existing literature, signals a requirement for policies encouraging the adoption of technology within the tourism sector. This includes providing training for local businesses to use digital tools effectively, as advocated in the studies of (Kim and Kim, 2017).

The findings of the study focus on Atmanirbharta which aligns with India's cultural and socio-economic context, emphasizing local culture, heritage, and resources in tourism development, based on discussions about local identities and practices by (Acha-Anyi et al., 2015). This study reinforces the idea that tourism cannot be universally defined but should be tailored to specific regional and community needs, a detail often missed in broader economic studies. The emphasis on Community Empowerment as a dimension of selfreliance underscores the need for policies that support local initiatives. This aligns with (Kundu, 2012), who highlighted the role of grassroots participation in economic development. Policymakers should design interventions that promote local governance structures and involve community members in decision-making processes related to tourism development.The SRTD serves as a diagnostic tool in aiding strategic planning and resource allocation, which fosters tourism rooted in local identity, benefiting communities and promoting sustainability. The multi-dimensional nature of self-reliance highlighted by the study advocates for sustainable tourism practices, reinforcing findings from earlier literature (Ghadge et al., 2020) that underscore the need for environmentally responsible tourism development. Policymakers should create incentives for businesses that adopt sustainable practices, ensuring that environmental considerations are integrated into tourism planning.The study emphasizes the cultural relevance of self-reliance, echoing (Acha-Anyi et al., 2015), who noted the importance of local identity in tourism. Policy frameworks should take into account the unique cultural heritage and practices of different regions when developing tourism strategies, ensuring that local identities are celebrated and leveraged in marketing and development. Investing in training programs aimed at enhancing the skills and capacities of local tourism operators and communities is essential. This aligns with existing literature (Laverack, 2006) that emphasizes the role of community empowerment. Training programs can focus on sustainable practices, business management, and customer engagement to attract conscientious travelers. Implementing robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks can help assess the impacts of self-reliance initiatives in tourism, policymakers should adopt indicators that measure economic impact, community well-being, and environmental sustainability, facilitating a proactive approach to policy adjustments. These implications call for a collaborative approach between government, communities, and tourism stakeholders, ensuring that policies are well-informed and tailored to enhance self-reliance in the tourism sector effectively. Policymakers should design interventions that promote local governance structures and involve community members in decision-making processes related to tourism development. Policymakers can use it to design interventions supporting local businesses, enhancing community participation, and encouraging sustainable practices.

The rigorous evaluation of the psychometric properties of the measurement scale provides a methodological template for researchers aiming to assess psychological constructs in social sciences. The findings outline a theoretical framework that can guide future empirical research on self-reliance in the tourism industry. Scholars can build on this framework to explore the impacts of self-reliance dynamics on tourist behavior, local economies, and community development.

Limitations and Future Research

The study, while methodologically rigorous, has certain limitations. The developed scale is context-specific to India, particularly Himachal Pradesh, which may limit its generalizability to other regions. The use of convenience sampling may introduce bias, despite the large sample size. The cross-sectional design restricts the ability to capture changes over time. The reliance on self-reported data may lead to response bias, including social desirability effects. Finally, the practical applicability of the scale across different contexts and stages of community development requires further exploration. Future research should examine the long-term economic impact of self-reliance, the role of social capital, and its relationship with variables like tourist satisfaction, community well-being, and environmental sustainability. Comparative studies across regions or countries and qualitative research could enrich the framework by exploring lived experiences and regional differences. Applying the Atmanirbhar scale to varied samples, ideally using random sampling, can further validate its robustness. Overall, future research should focus on cross-cultural validation, longitudinal analysis, and extended reliability testing to strengthen the scale's robustness and applicability.

CONCLUSION

This study investigates the multi-dimensional construct of Atmanirbharta, or self-reliance, within the tourism sector in Himachal Pradesh, India. It involved the development and validation of a comprehensive scale (SRTD) designed to assess the various components that contribute to self-reliance. A total of 600 valid responses were collected across the Kangra, Kullu, and Mandi districts. This study successfully develops a reliable and valid measurement Scale (SRTD) filling a significant gap in existing researches by identifying key dimensions such as Sustainable Well-being, Innovation and Empowerment, the findings offer a comprehensive framework for understanding and promoting self-reliance in the tourism sector. Each dimension reflects how multi-faceted self-reliance is, emphasizing it is not just any economic concept but a holistic approach that brings together elements of society and governance. These insights provide actionable guidance for policymakers and practitioners, emphasizing the importance of local engagement, technological adoption, and sustainable practices. This study not only bridges significant gaps but also challenges and extends existing understandings of self-reliance in tourism, offering a more nuanced and actionable framework for future research and practice. Ultimately, this research reinforces the role of tourism in driving economic growth and community empowerment in alignment with the goals of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper. The author is not an Editorial Board Member/Editor-in-Chief/Associate Editor/Guest Editor and was not involved in the editorial review or the decision to publish this article. The authors declare that we have no financial interests/personal relationships

which may be considered as potential competing interests. This study did not involve any experiments or procedures performed on humans or animals. Therefore, the ethics statement is not applicable.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data supporting the findings of this study are at https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Dwub3sxAVY1hOc6x7NPXd5GA3ry06Sen?usp=drive_ and are available upon reasonable request from the corresponding author.

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Social Conformity in Experiential Consumption: Evidence from Secondary Data and Scale Development

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Abstract

This research explores a dimension of experiential consumption that stems not from hedonic pursuit but from social conformity motives. In this study, social conformity is conceptualized as a behavioral tendency in which consumers align their experiential choices, participation, or evaluations with those of others in a group-based consumption context, and it functions as a socially embedded behavioral process through which consumers pursue psychologicla need fulfillment. Grounded in Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which identifies competence, relatedness, and autonomy as fundamental psychological needs, the current research contends that conformity in experiential contexts arises from the desire to feel effective (competence) and socially connected (relatedness), while the need for autonomy is relatively diminished. A two-study mixed-method design was implemented. Study 1 utilized secondary data from Airbnb virtual experiences and found that group-based conformity was positively associated with competence and relatedness, but not with autonomy. Study 2, composed of three sub-studies using primary survey data and validated scales, further confirmed that competence and relatedness were positive predictors of social conformity in experiential consumption, whereas autonomy was not significant. Collectively, the studies advance theoretical understanding of experiential consumption by highlighting conformity as a need-driven process rooted in competence and relatedness, with implications for consumer motivation and social influence research.

Key Words: Experiential Consumption, Social Conformity, Virtual Experiences, Self- Determination

INTRODUCTION

Individuals often participate in experiential consumption not solely from intrinsic enjoyment, but as a means of adhering to social expectations. For instance, a person might purchase a costly ticket to a music festival to avoid social exclusion when all of their friends are attending, or participate in a highly visible wine-tasting event to signal social prestige, or join a collaborative workplace retreat to fulfill expectations of teamwork. Experiences, unlike material goods, are typically consumed and communicated within social contexts, which intensifies individuals' awareness of social norms through the whole consumption process (Caprariello and Reis 2013). Recent research further supports this view by showing that experiential purchases promote stronger feelings of social connection than material purchases (Kumar et al., 2024). At its core, the motivation to engage in shared experiential consumption frequently extends beyond the pursuit of individual pleasure, a dynamic that underscores the influential role of conformity in shaping human behavior when choosing and consuming experiences.

Indeed, social conformity is a pervasive phenomenon of social behavior, where individuals often yield to group norms or majority opinions. Such behavior is viewed as an adaptive mechanism that allows individuals to maintain social connectedness and foster cooperation (Cialdini and Goldstein, 2004). More recent work on social motivation similarly suggests that individuals' responses to social environments are shaped by core motives such as belonging, control, and self-enhancement (Geiger and Brick, 2023). Social conformity can be particularly salient in experiential consumption settings, as many experiential purchases occur in group settings involving family, friends, or colleagues with the shared goal of reinforcing social connection through joint leisure activities. Studies consistently find that social cues, such as crowd cues, peer reviews, trending status, and others. strongly influence conformity-based choices (e.g., Ali et al., 2021, Bikhchandani et al., 1992, Guan et al., 2023). For example, restaurant diners and tourists often conform to group preferences, favoring popular and highly rated venues. Furthermore, Cialdini and Goldstein (2004) argue that the social conformity phenomenon can be understood as an adaptive response to fulfill key motivational goals, particularly the affiliation goal and the self-enhancement goal. These two motives are frequently realized through experiential consumption, as prior research shows that experiential consumption can satisfy not only social connection needs, but also self-focused goals related to expression, identity and personal enhancement (Carter and Gilovich, 2012, Van Boven and Gilovich, 2003). Thus, the current research focuses on experiential consumption as the research context to examine social conformity behavior and to explore the motivational underpinnings, particularly self-determination motives, that explain why individuals conform in shared consumption experiences. It is proposed that social conformity in experiential consumption arises mainly from competence (a self-enhancement motive) and relatedness (a social motive), rather than autonomy. To substantiate this proposition, two studies were conducted employing a mixed-methods approach that integrates secondary Airbnb data with primary data collected for scale validation and nomological testing. This research contributes to the literature in three ways. First, it extends experiential consumption research by shifting attention from hedonic value and personal enjoyment to conformity as a socially embedded behavioral process. Second, it contributes to social influence research by identifying competence and relatedness as key motivational mechanisms underlying conformity in experiential consumption contexts. Third, it advances the application of Self-Determination Theory in consumer research by showing that conformity is not necessarily driven by autonomy, but instead reflects a need-asymmetric process in which consumers align with group expectations to strengthen social connection and maintain a positive self-image.

THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT

Social conformity refers to the psychologically motivated adjustment of one's behavior or opinions in response to the influence of group pressure, typically because the pressure of the majority shapes the individual's judgments and beliefs toward group norms (Asch, 1955, Asch, 2016). In the present research, conformity is conceptualized primarily through its behavioral core: the adjustment or alignment of experiential choices, preferences, and evaluations in response to perceived group expectations. Thus, conformity is not treated as the final outcome variable, but as a socially embedded behavioral tendency whose occurrence can be explained by underlying psychological motives. Social conformity can be categorized into two forms: normative influence, which arises when individuals adhere to group expectations to obtain social approval or avoid social disapproval, and informational influence, which arises when individuals perceive others as accurate sources of information in uncertainty (Deutsch and Gerard, 1955). Experiential consumption typically takes place in close social settings where its social nature becomes a key driver of behavior (e.g., Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982, Kumar et al., 2024), social conformity in experiential consumption context is both attributed to normative influence, such as the desire to strengthen social inclusion, and to informational influence, such as when individuals interpret group consensus or reviews as cues to infer quality and appropriateness.

An important line of research on social conformity frames it as a component of a broader motivational system, through which individuals seek to achieve diverse goals or fulfill underlying needs (e.g., Cialdini and Goldstein 2004). The above underscores its relevance to experiential consumption, where consumers seek social meaning, a sense of belonging, and the reinforcement of social relationships (Van Boven and Gilovich, 2003). On the other hand, according to Carter and Gilovich (2012), experiential consumption is more closely tied to one's sense of self than material purchases. Consequently, conformity operates as identity-based alignment rather than mere compliance whereby individuals gravitate toward experiences that reinforce their self-identities. This suggests that conformity in experiential consumption should be understood analytically as a mechanism through which consumers manage both social belonging and self-presentation. The above dynamic provides a rationale for applying Self-Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan, 1985, Deci and Ryan, 2013, Ryan and Deci, 2000), which positions the need for social relatedness as the core psychological motive driving individuals to internalize and integrate values into their sense of self (Ryan, 1995), and explains why experiential consumption is especially susceptible to conformity-driven motivations. Thus, drawing from Self Determination Theory, social conformity in experiential consumption is defined as the behavioral tendency to align one's experiential choices with group expectations to fulfill the basic psychological need for belonging. It embodies an identity-based form of conformity in which consumers relinquish their experiential preferences in pursuit of social affirmation to elevate their image and strengthen their self-identities within the group.

Furthermore, building on Cialdini and Goldstein's (2004) synthesis of social influence processes, social conformity can be viewed as an adaptive response to achieve three broad motivational goals: accuracy, affiliation, and positive self-concept. When examined through the lens of Self-Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan, 2000), these goals also correspond to the basic psychological needs. Conformity in experiential consumption settings, such as group travel or shared dining, primarily satisfies the needs for relatedness, as individuals conform to maintain social connectedness with others, and competence, as individuals strive to demonstrate capability and value within the group. Meanwhile, the autonomy need is attenuated in conformity processes, as acting autonomously implies self-governance, whereas conforming entails accommodating others' expectations. Because experiential consumption often unfolds in social environments, where individuals must coordinate choices under social pressure, the experiential consumption settings naturally restrict individual choice which makes autonomy difficult to uphold. This does create a form of need asymmetry: while autonomy is restricted, the experiential consumption setting supports relatedness as individuals can strengthen social bonds through experiential purchases. Meanwhile, conformity in experiential contexts reinforces competence as individuals select socially valued experiences to demonstrate capability, effectiveness, and good self-image within the group. As a result, conformity becomes a motivated strategy for satisfying relatedness and competence needs, but not autonomy needs. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H1: Autonomy has no significant association with social conformity in experiential consumption contexts.

H2: Competence has a positive association with social conformity in experiential consumption contexts.

H3: Relatedness has a positive association with social conformity in experiential consumption contexts.

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDIES

To clarify the methodological design, the current research was organized into two phases. Study 1 served as an initial test of the proposed theoretical relationships using secondary textual data from Airbnb virtual experiences, a naturally occurring group-based experiential consumption context. This phase used dictionary-based text analysis and correlation analysis to examine whether conformity-related language was associated with autonomy, competence, and relatedness indicators. Study 2 then used primary survey data across three sub-studies to further validate the Social Conformity in Experiential Consumption scale. Specifically, Study 2a examined the scale's factor structure and convergent validity, Study 2b tested discriminant validity against FoMO, and Study 2c assessed nomological validity by examining the construct's relationship with self-determination variables. Thus, the two-phase design was necessary because Study 1 provided initial evidence from naturally occurring consumer language, whereas Study 2 provided psychometric validation using survey-based measures.

STUDY 1

The purpose of this study is to use secondary data to test the hypotheses by examining individuals' conformity behaviors during experiential consumption settings that are typically designed for groups, such as company gatherings or family get-togethers. To achieve this, data were extracted from Airbnb's virtual experiences. Specifically, the selected experiences were group-oriented activities, including mystery games, interactive challenges, bingo, and game nights, which are commonly designed for shared participation among groups such as coworkers, friends, or family members. Airbnb also explicitly positions its experiences as suitable for team-based participation and private group activities, which supports the selection of this context as one that naturally facilitates social interaction and, therefore, a setting in which conformity can occur. A total of 4,265 comments were ultimately extracted, covering the period from May 2020 to May 2024.

Drawing from the theoretical development above, it is aimed to establish a connection between conformity and the key dimensions of self-determination theory: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Consistent with the conceptual definition of social conformity provided earlier in the literature review, the conformity variable in Study 1 was operationalized using the Personal Values Dictionary (Ponizovskiy et al., 2020). In this dictionary, conformity reflects an emphasis on restraining actions and impulses that violate social expectations or norms, and it involves regulating one's behavior to align with social standards and avoid negative social outcomes, such as disapproval. The other variable that measures relatedness corresponds to the "social ties" construct defined in the Social Ties Dictionary developed by Pressman and Cohen (2007), where the construct reflects the extent to which individuals embed social relationships into their self-narratives. Competence, which refers to feeling capable within one's environment, can be reflected by several related constructs from the Behavioral Activation Dictionary (Burkhardt et al., 2022), including decision, accomplishment, and long-term orientation. Decisions, accomplishment, and long-term orientation, which are facets of competence (e.g., Deci and Ryan, 2000), capture individuals' capability of making effective judgment, attaining desired goals, and sustaining goal pursuit. Autonomy, characterized by a sense of volition and self-directed behavior, corresponds to the autonomous and controlling categories (the later serving as the inverse of autonomy) from Self Determination Dictionary (Oliver et al., 2008).

Subsequently, the text was parsed according to the relevant dictionaries mentioned above, after which the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC, Pennebaker et al., 2007) program was applied to quantify the frequency of words associated with each variable. Once the outputs were obtained, the resulting word frequency scores for each construct were entered into a correlation matrix. Pearson correlations were calculated to examine the strength and direction of the associations between the self-determination variables and conformity.

Hypothesis 1 proposed that social conformity behavior would not be associated with autonomy, as autonomy represents volitional behavior guided by internal values rather than external factors. The results showed that, as hypothesized, autonomy was not significantly correlated with social conformity ($p = .524$). In contrast, the controlling variable, conceptualized as the inverse of autonomy, showed a strong positive correlation with social conformity (r = 0.50, $p < .001$), which further supports that conformity behavior emerges under externally motivational conditions where individuals act to meet external pressures rather than self-endorsed goals. This result is consistent with Deutsch and Gerard's (1955) well-established distinction between normative and informational influence: the controlled motivation reflects can both reflects normative influence in which individuals comply to gain social approval and informational influence in which individuals defer to group opinions when they feel pressured. Likewise, Cialdini and Goldstein (2004) argue that social influence operates through motives for accuracy, affiliation, and positive self-concept; controlled motivation amplifies all three by making individuals more dependent on group cues to maintain a socially desirable image. In Self Determination Theory terms, because control functions as the opposite of autonomy, it thwarts psychological needs and shift behavior toward pressure-based compliance, consistent with both Deutsch and Gerard (1955) and Cialdini and Goldstein (2004).

Hypothesis 2 predicted a positive association between social conformity and competence, as conformity may enhance one's sense of effectiveness and decisional confidence within social environments. The results partially supported this hypothesis: the conformity variable was positively correlated with decision (r = .146, $p < .001$), reflecting the decisional and problem-solving aspect of competence. A similar positive correlation was observed between conformity and long-term orientation (r = .123, $p < .001$), indicating that individuals who conform to social norms value sustained goal pursuit. However, accomplishment was not significantly correlated with conformity (p = .202). One plausible explanation for the non-significant relationship between accomplishment and conformity is that accomplishments arise from internal, self-endorsed goals whereas conformity is driven by external pressures and social norms. Given that this study is situated in social settings, conformity behaviors may be influenced more by interpersonal dynamics than by individual accomplishments. The variables tested, such as decision, long-term orientation, and accomplishment, also map onto Cialdini and Goldstein's (2004) three fundamental motivational goals of accuracy, affiliation, and positive self-concept, as these variables reflect individuals' desire to act wisely and effectively, sustain goal pursuit, and demonstrate competence in socially meaningful ways.

Hypothesis 3 proposed a positive relationship between social conformity and relatedness, as both constructs are inherently grounded in the social nature of human interaction. Hypothesis 3 proposed a positive relationship between social conformity and relatedness, as both constructs are grounded in the social nature of human interaction. The findings provided statistical support for this hypothesis: conformity correlated positively with social ties (r = .065, $p < .001$). This result suggests a modest association between conformity behavior and relatedness needs, indicating that individuals who exhibit stronger conformity behaviors may be somewhat more likely to express or maintain social relationships that reflect the need for relatedness. This pattern is theoretically consistent with Self-Determination Theory's assumption that relatedness functions as a core psychological need and with Cialdini and Goldstein's (2004) framework in which affiliation is a fundamental driver of social influence. The table below summarizes the Study 1 results.

Table 1. Correlations of Social Conformity with Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness Variables

Hypothesis	Constructs Examined	Key Variables	Pearson Correlation (r)	*p*-value	Interpretation
H1	Social Conformity, Autonomy	Autonomy	n.s.	> .05	No significant relationship between conformity and autonomy, consistent with the idea that autonomous behavior is self-endorsed and not socially driven.
		Controlling (inverse of autonomy)	**.50**	**<.001**	Strong positive correlation, indicating that conformity aligns with externally regulated or controlling motivation.
H2	Social Conformity, Competence	Decision	**.146**	**<.001**	Positive relationship; conformity may relate to the decisional/problem-solving aspect of competence in social contexts.
		Long-Term Orientation	**.123**	**<.001**	Positive relationship; suggests conformity aligns with goal-directed planning
		Accomplishment	n.s.	> .05	No significant correlation; accomplishment reflects intrinsic mastery, which contrasts with socially regulated conformity.
H3	Social Conformity, Relatedness	Social Ties	**.065**	**<.001**	Positive relationship; individuals high in conformity tend to have stronger social connections, reflecting the socially connected nature of relatedness

STUDY 2

Building on the initial evidence from Study 1, Study 2 used primary survey data and validated psychometric scales to further validate the Social Conformity in Experiential Consumption construct. Specifically, Study 2 comprises three sub-studies, each utilizing a distinct sample: Study 2a assessed the factorial structure, model fit, and convergent validity of the scale; Study 2b evaluated discriminant validity; and Study 2c examined nomological validity by testing relationships with self-determination variables. Building on the initial evidence from Study 1, Study 2 used primary survey data and validated psychometric scales to further validate the Social Conformity in Experiential Consumption construct. Specifically, Study 2 comprises three sub-studies, each utilizing a distinct sample: Study 2a assessed the factorial structure, model fit, and convergent validity of the scale; Study 2b evaluated discriminant validity; and Study 2c examined nomological validity by testing relationships with self-determination variables.

Study 2a

Study 2a aims to evaluate the factor structure and model fit of the Social Conformity in Experiential Consumption scale using EFA and CFA procedures. To achieve the above objectives, a sample of 163 adults from the United States was recruited through the Qualtrics panel, consisting of 83 females and 80 males, with a mean age of 23.83. Participants were asked to evaluate a series of scale items related to experiential consumption in social setting by responding to the statements such as “When my friends are consuming experiences, I would like to have the same experiences as they do” and “My social groups are consuming the same experiences as I do”, among others. Participants then rated how strongly they agreed or disagreed with each on a 7-point Likert scale, anchored at 1 (strongly disagree) and 7 (strongly agree).

An Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed to explore the dimensionality of the construct, using the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) extraction method. PCA was considered appropriate at this stage because the purpose of the analysis was to assess whether the proposed items formed a coherent empirical structure and could be retained as a parsimonious measure of social conformity in experiential consumption. The analysis identified the latent dimension underlying five items that measure individuals’ tendencies to align their experiential consumption behaviors with their social groups. The EFA results revealed a single underlying factor with factor loadings ranging from .663 to .869 (Cronbach’s Alpha = .854). The extracted factor explained 63.471% of the cumulative variance, indicating a coherent and internally consistent construct. The results of the EFA and the corresponding scale items are presented in Table 2.

A Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was then performed to evaluate the one-factor structure of the construct. The model exhibited excellent incremental fit indices (CFI = .986, TLI = .966, NFI = .976), all exceeding the .90 criterion for acceptable fit. Although the RMSEA value of .087 is slightly above the conventional cutoff of .08, it remains within an acceptable range for model adequacy (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Taken together, the results yield strong empirical support for the construct validity and unidimensionality.

Table 2. Exploratory Factor Analysis for Social Conformity in Experiential Consumption Items

Item	Factor Loading
When my friends are consuming experiences, I would like to have the same experiences as they do.	.841
My social groups are consuming the same experiences as I do.	.663
I don’t want to be left out of consuming experiences.	.869
When I consume experiences, I may present a positive self-image within my social groups.	.808
I would like to accumulate experiential capital to gain prestige within my social groups.	.787

Furthermore, to assess the convergent validity of the construct, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR) were calculated using the standardized factor loadings derived from CFA. The construct achieved an AVE of 0.61 and a CR of 0.88, both surpassing the recommended threshold of 0.50 and 0.70, respectively (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), providing evidence that the construct demonstrates adequate convergence and internal reliability. Table 3 presented the results of convergent validity for the Social Conformity in Experiential Consumption construct.

Table 3 Convergent Validity Results for the Construct of Social Conformity in Experiential Consumption

Item	Standardized Regression Weight (λ)	Squared Loading (λ^2)
When my friends are consuming experiences, I would like to have the same experiences as they do.	0.84	0.7056
My social groups are consuming the same experiences as I do.	0.75	0.5625

Item	Standardized Regression Weight (λ)	Squared Loading (λ²)
I don't want to be left out of consuming experiences.	0.72	0.5184
When I consume experiences, I may present a positive self-image within my social groups.	0.84	0.7056
I would like to accumulate experiential capital to gain prestige within my social groups.	0.73	0.5329
Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	—	0.61
Composite Reliability (CR)	—	0.88

Study 2b

The purpose of Study 2b was to examine the discriminant validity of the construct. To establish discriminant validity, social conformity was compared with FoMO to determine whether the two constructs are conceptually and empirically distinct. Although both the constructs reflect certain sensitivity to social contexts, social conformity reflects the adjustment of one's behavior to match group expectations, whereas FoMO is an affective state that encompasses both personal dimension (e.g., fear of missing individually meaningful opportunities) and social dimension (e.g., fear of being excluded from socially rewarding activities) (Zhang et al., 2020). To achieve the research goal, a new sample of 136 U.S. participants was recruited through the Qualtrics panel, consisting of 80 females and 56 males, with the mean average of 24.44. Participants were asked to assess the same scale items used in Study 2a, along with items from the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) construct (Zhang et al., 2020). The personal dimension of FOMO captured individuals' internal emotional reactions related to missing experiences, whereas the social dimension reflected perceived threats to social belonging resulting from missed events. All items were rated on a 7-point Likert scale, with endpoints of 1 (strongly disagree) and 7 (strongly agree).

Table 4 Pattern Matrix for Discriminant Validity Among Social Conformity in Experiential Consumption and FOMO Constructs

Items	Social Conformity in Experiential Consumption (Component 1)	FOMO – Social Dimension (Component 2)	FOMO – Personal Dimension (Component 3)
When my friends are consuming experiences, I would like to have the same experiences as they do.	**.856**	−.064	.011
My social groups are consuming the same experiences as I do.	**.722**	.106	−.040
I don't want to be left out of consuming experiences.	**.703**	−.139	−.142
When I consume experiences, I may present a positive self-image within my social groups.	**.829**	.057	.000
I would like to accumulate experiential capital to gain prestige within my social groups.	**.686**	−.250	.029
I feel anxious when I do not experience events/opportunities.	.207	.133	**−.743**
I believe I am falling behind compared with others when I miss events/opportunities.	−.062	−.212	**−.719**
I feel anxious because I know something important or fun must have happened when I miss events/opportunities.	.103	−.063	**−.815**
I feel sad if I am not capable of participating in events due to other constraints.	−.039	−.027	**−.886**

Items	Social Conformity in Experiential Consumption (Component 1)	FOMO – Social Dimension (Component 2)	FOMO – Personal Dimension (Component 3)
I feel regretful when I miss events/opportunities.	−.062	.027	**−.896**
I think my social groups view me as unimportant when I miss events/opportunities.	−.072	**−.854**	−.082
I think I do not fit in social groups when I miss events/opportunities.	.007	**−.929**	.010
I think I am excluded by my social groups when I miss events/opportunities.	.124	**−.860**	.000
I feel ignored/forgotten by my social groups when I miss events/opportunities.	.067	**−.896**	−.045

Study 2c

Study 2c aimed to test the nomological validity of the construct using data from a new sample of 144 undergraduate students at a southern U.S. university. The sample included 69 females and 74 males, with an average age of 24.70 years. Participants completed the social conformity scale along with items assessing self-determination (Vlachopoulos and Michailidou, 2006, Zhang, 2023). The autonomy items focused on personal alignment of chosen experiences, competence items captured perceptions of advancement in achieving desired experiential goals, and relatedness items assessed feelings of interpersonal connection when engaging in experiences with others. Each dimension comprised four items rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree), and mean scores were calculated for each construct.

A multiple regression analysis was performed to test the nomological validity of the Social Conformity in Experiential Consumption construct by examining its associations with the three dimensions of Self-Determination Theory: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The overall model was significant, $F(3, 139) = 20.278$, $p < .001$, accounting for 30.4% of the variance in social conformity ($R^2 = .304$, Adjusted $R^2 = .289$). This level of explained variance suggests that the model provides meaningful, though not exhaustive, insight into the motivational factors associated with conformity behavior in experiential consumption contexts. As presented in Table 5, competence ($\beta = .319$, $p = .001$) and relatedness ($\beta = .314$, $p = .001$) were significant positive predictors of social conformity, indicating that individuals who feel more capable and socially connected may be more inclined to align their experiential consumption behaviors with others. In contrast, autonomy ($\beta = .007$, $p = .951$) was not a significant predictor, suggesting that self-endorsed and volitional behavior functions independently from conformity tendencies. These findings provide nomological support for the construct and are consistent with SDT's proposition that conformity in this context is more closely associated with competence and relatedness needs than with autonomous motivation.

TABLE 5 Regression Results for the Nomological Validity of Social Conformity in Experiential Consumption

Predictors	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (β)	t	Sig. (*p*)
(Constant)	0.796	0.504	—	1.580	0.116
Autonomy	0.009	0.140	0.007	0.061	0.951
Competence	0.359	0.111	**0.319**	3.248	**0.001**
Relatedness	0.361	0.111	**0.314**	3.256	**0.001**

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Across the two studies, the findings provide consistent evidence that social conformity in experiential consumption is more closely associated with competence and relatedness than autonomy. Study 1, using secondary textual data from Airbnb virtual experiences, showed that conformity-related language was positively associated with competence-related indicators, particularly decision and long-term orientation, as well as relatedness through social ties, whereas autonomy was not significantly associated with conformity. Study 2 extended these findings using primary survey data and validated scales. The results again showed that competence and relatedness were positive predictors of social conformity in experiential consumption, while autonomy was not a significant predictor. Taken together, the findings suggest that conformity in group-based experiential consumption is not primarily driven by autonomous or self-directed motivation. Rather, it appears to reflect consumers' desire to feel capable, socially connected, and aligned with group expectations in shared experiential settings. This pattern supports the proposed need-asymmetric interpretation, in which conformity may support competence and relatedness while remaining less connected to autonomy.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The current research positions conformity as a core social regulation mechanism in which one functions to maintain normative alignment and shared meaning through experiential purchases. Yet such alignment often comes at the expense of perceived autonomy, as individuals suppress personal preferences to comply with social norms. This dynamic extends Self-Determination Theory by arguing that controlling social environment undermines autonomy while reinforcing relatedness-based motives for normative alignment. Furthermore, the results support and extend Cialdini and Goldstein's (2004) framework by reinforcing the idea that conformity is motivated by the desire to uphold a positive self-concept and works as a social regulation strategy through which individuals navigate the basic psychological needs (e.g., acting effectively, securing social belonging, enhancing self-image, amog others.). The results support how the motivational goals are expressed through competence- and relatedness-driven conformity in experiential consumption contexts where social identity expression is salient. Thus the findings advance both Self Determination Theory and Cialdini and Goldstein's (2004) social influence framework by highlighting how conformity operates at the intersection of basic psychological need fulfillment and social influence goals. A further theoretical implication emerges when considering more recent perspectives on social motivation, such as studies by Geiger and Brick (2023) that individuals' responses to collective actions are guided by core social motives (e.g., control, belonging, self-enhancement), which support that conformity functions not only as a response to normative influence but also as a behavioral expression of the social motives and maintenance of a positive self-concept. In this way, the findings extend existing theories by showing that conformity unites the motivational perspectives in social environments by linking basic psychological needs, influence goals, and core social motives into a coherent regulatory process.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The results offer several important implications for managers operating in experiential consumption contexts. First, the finding that autonomy is not a significant driver of social conformity suggests that consumers participating in group-based experiential purchases are more willing to adapt to shared plans, and designing experiences with structured options or guided recommendations will not necessarily reduce perceived value particularly when groups are involved. This suggests that managers do not always need to maximize individual choice in group-based experiential settings; instead, they can provide structured options that make group coordination easier.

Secondly, consumers conform more when experiences allow them to feel capable and effective, and highlighting group experiences through clear information, social proof cues, guided expertise, and others. can help consumers feel confident about participating in group activities and promote normative alignment. For example, managers can reduce uncertainty by providing clear participation instructions, examples of prior group participation, or expert guidance that helps consumers feel prepared before joining the experience.

Thirdly, the results underscore that, within group-based experiential consumption contexts, social interaction can encourage consumers to align their choices in ways that strengthen social relationships and foster shared meaning. Experiences can thus be designed to support connection and shared accomplishment through co-creation features, group learning activities, shared milestones, and others to increase group satisfaction and cohesion. For example, managers can reduce uncertainty by providing clear participation instructions, examples of prior group participation, or expert guidance that helps consumers feel prepared before joining the experience.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE STUDIES

This study has several limitations that should inform directions for future research. First, the secondary data were collected within a specific experiential consumption context, Airbnb digital experiences, which may constrain the generalizability of the findings. Future research should examine whether the motivational patterns observed extend to offline experiential environments, such as group travel, dining, entertainment, adventure experiences, etc.

Second, this study relied on dictionary-based text analysis to measure psychological constructs. Although LIWC provides a systematic and widely used approach for quantifying linguistic patterns, its measures are indirect linguistic indicators rather than direct assessments of consumers' psychological states. Because LIWC relies on word-frequency counts, it may not fully capture the contextual meaning, nuance, or intention underlying a given expression. Therefore, the LIWC-based measures in this study should be interpreted as linguistic proxies for the focal constructs rather than conclusive evidence of the psychological states themselves. Future research could complement dictionary-based measures with alternative approaches, such as manual coding, contextual text analysis, interviews, or survey-based measures, to further strengthen construct validity.

Third, the study did not further employ experimental designs to validate the results, as the primary objective was to follow a scale development approach grounded in theory. While this provides conceptual clarity, it limits the ability to draw causal inferences about how psychological needs shape conformity in experiential settings. Future studies could implement experimental manipulations to test causal pathways and identify situational triggers of conformity behavior.

Fourth, although the study conceptually supports the role of identity-related motives and briefly links conformity to identity expression and self-image enhancement, identity constructs were not empirically examined within the model. Future research should incorporate identity motives, self-presentation motives, identity congruence, etc., to fully understand how conformity functions as an identity management strategy.

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Turizmi Şekillendiren Destinasyonların Başarı/sızlık Öyküsü: Destinasyonların İstikrarını Etkileyen Faktörler

The Success/Failure Story of Destinations Shaping Tourism: Factors Affecting the Stability of Destinations

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Özet

Bu çalışma 100 yılı aşkın Cumhuriyet tarihi süresince çalışma kapsamında incelenen destinasyonların turizm yaşam döngüsü boyunca yaşadıkları başarı/sızlık öykülerini ortaya çıkartmayı amaçlamıştır. Konuyla ilgili derinlemesine bilgilere ulaşılmak istendiği için eleştirel bir çözümleme yapılmıştır. Çalışmanın araştırma tekniği alanyazın taramasıdır. Bu nedenle destinasyonların başarı/sızlık öyküsü üzerine bir derleme yapılmıştır. Bu kapsamda Akçakoca, Alanya, Bodrum, Kapadokya ve Uludağ çalışmaya dâhil edilmiştir. Elde edilen sonuçlar turizmin, ülkemizin sahip olduğu eşsiz çekicilikler aracılığıyla genel olarak 1950'lerde başlayarak ilerleyen yıllarda önemli bir atak yaptığını, bu çekicilikleri görmek için dünyanın farklı yerlerinden insanların bu destinasyonlara çekildiğini göstermektedir. Ancak zamanla onları destinasyona çeken doğal güzelliklerin yok edilmesinin veya yerel yönetimlerin yanlış karar ve tutumlarının, bölgede turizm faaliyetlerinin olumsuz yönde değiştiğini göstermektedir. Bugün, dünyanın herhangi bir yerinde bir destinasyonun yaşam döngüsü incelendiğinde o destinasyonun geçirdiği gelişmeler ve karşı karşıya kaldığı zor durumlar bir diğer destinasyon için ders niteliğinde olacağından dolayı bu çalışmanın kaleme alınmasının alanyazına faydalı olacağı düşünülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Turizm sosyolojisi, sürdürülebilir turizm, destinasyon yaşam döngüsü, karşılaştırmalı yöntem.

Abstract

This study aimed to reveal the success/failure stories of the destinations examined during more than 100-year history of the Republic throughout the tourism life cycle. A critical analysis was made as it was desired to reach in-depth information on the subject. The research technique of the study is the literature review. For this reason, a thematic compilation was made on the success/failure story of destinations. In this context, Akçakoca, Alanya, Bodrum, Cappadocia, and Uludağ were included in the study. The results show that tourism made an important attack in the following years, starting in the 1950s, through the unique attractions that the country has, and that people from different parts of the world are attracted to these destinations to see these attractions. However, over time, the destruction of natural beauties that attract them to the destination or the wrong decisions and attitudes of local authorities show that tourism activities in the region have changed negatively. Today, when the life cycle of a destination is examined anywhere in the world, it is thought that the writing of this study will be beneficial to the literature, since the developments and difficult situations that that destination has experienced will be a lesson for another destination.

Key Words: Tourism sociology, sustainable tourism, destination life cycle, comparative method.

GİRİŞ

Bu çalışma, Jared Diamond'ın (2019) Çöküş: Toplumlar Başarısızlığı ya da Başarıyı Nasıl Seçerler? (Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed?) adlı kitabından esinlenerek hazırlanmıştır. Çalışmanın temel amacı, yüz yılı aşkın Cumhuriyet tarihi süresince inceleme kapsamına alınan destinasyonların bir bölümünün Butler'ın (1980) Turizm Alanları Yaşam Döngüsü Modeli'nde (TAYD) tanımlanan düşüş evresini neden yaşadığını, bir bölümünün ise başarılı bir destinasyon olarak varlığını nasıl sürdürdüğünü ortaya koymaktır. Diamond söz konusu kitabında toplumsal çöküşleri anlamak amacıyla karşılaştırmalı yöntemi benimsemekte; ilgilenilen değişkene göre farklılaşan doğal koşulları karşılaştırmalı olarak ele almaktadır. Diamond'ın temel sorusu şu şekilde özetlenebilir: Yalnızca bazı toplumlar neden daha kırılgandır ve çöküşe sürüklenen toplumları diğerlerinden ayıran etkenler nelerdir?

Diamond'ın sorduğu sorudan hareketle bu çalışmanın ana sorusu, "neden yalnızca bazı destinasyonların diğerlerine oranla daha zayıf olduğu ve düşüş evresinde olan destinasyonları diğer destinasyonlardan neyin ayırdığı"dır. Dayanıksızlık, rekabet gücü, siyasal kurumlar (hükümet, yerel yönetimler vb.) ve bir destinasyonun istikrarını etkileyebilecek diğer değişkenler açısından farklı özellikler sergileyen destinasyonlar karşılaştırılarak bu soruya yanıt verilmeye çalışılacaktır. Böylece, düşüş veya ayakta kalış ve bir düşüş gerçekleştiyse, o düşüşün nedenleri ve sonuçları bir önceki cümlede bahsedilen değişkenlerle ilişkilendirilerek olası değişkenlerin düşüş üzerindeki etkisi açıklığa kavuşturulmaya çalışılacaktır.

Bu doğrultuda, geçmişte başarılı olup zamanla gerileme yaşayan destinasyonlar ile başarısını sürdüren destinasyonlar karşılaştırmalı olarak ele alınmaktadır. Bu karşılaştırma aracılığıyla söz konusu durumun öncülleri, nedenleri ve sonuçları incelenmekte; başarı ya da başarısızlığa yol açan süreçlerde belirtilen değişkenlerin rolü ortaya konulmaya çalışılmaktadır.

Bu çerçevede çalışma, yüz yılı aşkın Cumhuriyet tarihinde bazı destinasyonlar düşüş evresini yaşarken diğerlerinin neden ayakta kaldığı sorusuna yanıt aramaktadır. Araştırmanın odaklandığı başlıca sorular şunlardır: Bazı destinasyonlar neden daha kırılgan bir yapıya sahiptir? Bu destinasyonları düşüşe sürükleyen süreçler nelerdir? Söz konusu sonlar neden öngörülememiştir? Geçmişte başarıya ulaştıran çözümler neler olmuştur? Yaşanan gerilemenin sorumluluğu yerel halka mı, yoksa uygulanan yanlış politikalara mı aittir? Bu sorulara yanıt bulunabilirse, günümüzde hangi destinasyonların risk altında olduğu ve daha fazla gerileme yaşanmadan alınabilecek önlemlerin neler olduğu ortaya konulabilir. Bir destinasyonun yükseliş ve düşüş deneyimleri, bu sorulara ilişkin önemli bulgular sunmaktadır. Dünyanın herhangi bir yerinde bir destinasyonun yaşam döngüsü incelendiğinde, o destinasyonun yaşadığı gelişmeler ve karşılaştığı güçlükler diğer destinasyonlar için ders niteliği taşımaktadır. Bu çalışmanın söz konusu gerekçeyle kaleme alınmasının alanyazına katkı sağlayacağı değerlendirilmektedir.

Bu çalışma Türkiye'de turizme ilk açılan destinasyonlardan olan Akçakoca, Alanya, Bodrum, Kapadokya ve Uludağ'da, turizm sektörünün gelişimi ve evrimini, TAYD Modeli'ne göre deneyimlerini ele almaktadır. Nitekim söz konusu destinasyonlar Türkiye'nin farklı turizm türlerine (kitle, kültür, kış turizmi gibi) ev sahipliği yapan önemli destinasyon örnekleridir. Çalışmanın amacı, ele alınan destinasyonların başarı/sızlık serüvenine ışık tutmaktır. Çalışma bunu, Türkiye'nin önemli turizm destinasyonlarında yaşam döngüsünde hangi evrede olduğunu ve nedenlerinin neler olduğunu tartışarak yapmaktadır. Çalışma, turizmin destinasyonlar üzerindeki etkileri yaklaşımına yönelik bir anlayış geliştirerek ve atılması gereken bazı adımlardan bahsederek gelecek araştırmalara önerilerle sonuçlanmaktadır.

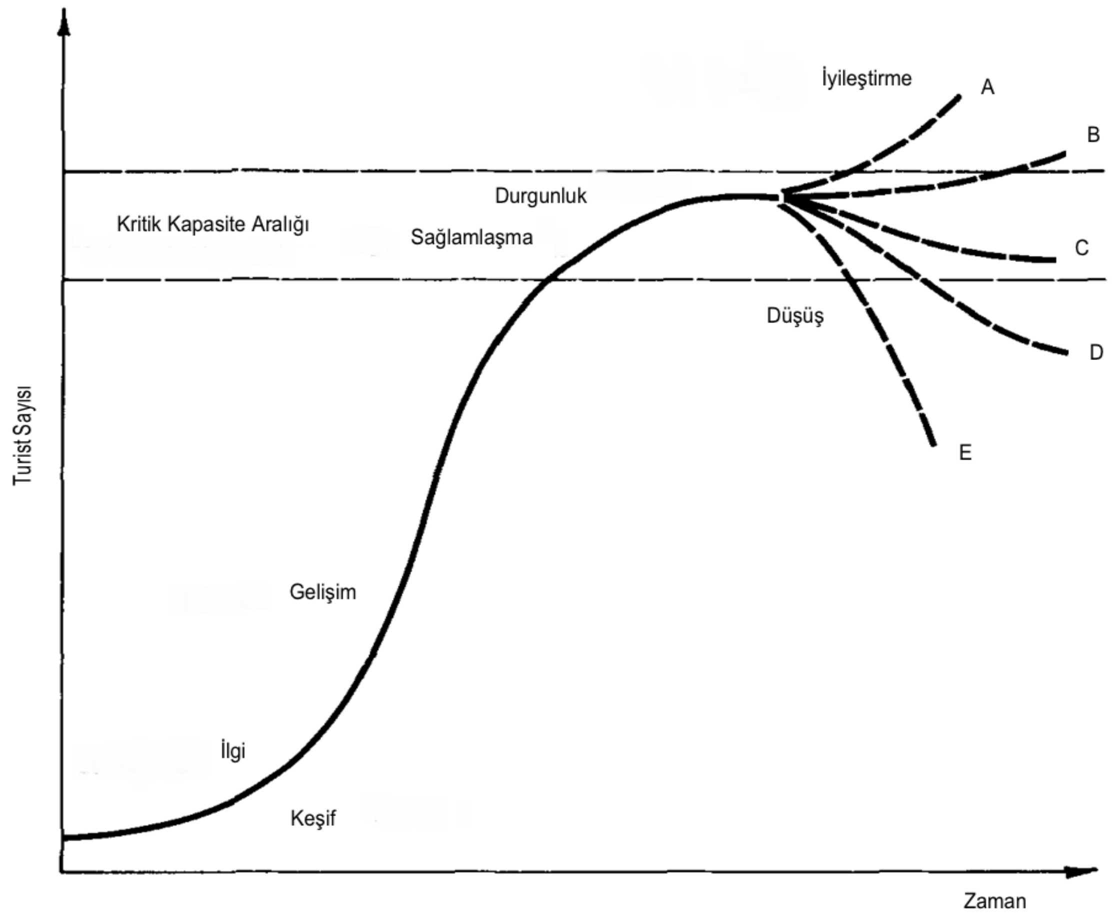
LİTERATÜR TARAMASI

Turizm; kaynakların kullanımı, diğer insanlar, ekonomiler ve çevrelerle etkileşimi kapsayan bir insan faaliyeti (Bull, 1995); turistlerin gittikleri destinasyonlarda ekonomik, çevresel-kültürel etkilere neden olan bir anlayıştır (Butowski, 2021). Günümüzde dünyanın en büyük hizmet endüstrisi olan turizm, topluluklar için uygulanabilir bir ekonomik alternatif olarak sahneye çıkmaktadır. Seyahate duyulan ilginin artmasıyla birlikte diğer topluluklar ve kültürlerdeki yerel insanlarla anlamlı, etkileşimli deneyimler yaşama isteği de artmaktadır. Yine de turizmin kültürel, ekonomik, çevresel etkileri inkâr edilemez. Turizmin olumsuz toplumsal sonuçları, ziyaretçileri çeken ve en önemlisi yerlileri ayakta tutan doğallığın bozulmasına neden olabileceğinden, turizmin bölgedeki gelişimine dikkat edilmelidir. Destinasyonun rekabet gücüne katkıda bulunmak ve tüm paydaşlar için daha sürdürülebilir bir turizm gerçekleştirmek amacıyla turizmin, etkili olduğu destinasyonlarda hangi evrede bulunduğunu anlamak önemli bir durumdur.

Başlangıçta, turizmdeki başarı büyük oranda ekonomik terimlerle (turist harcamaları, istihdam yaratma gücü gibi) ölçülmekteyken; günümüzde bu başarı, sadece ekonomik verilerle değil, aynı zamanda turizm gelişiminin fiziksel çevre, bölge sakinlerinin refahı, mutluluğu üzerindeki olumlu-olumsuz etkilerine göre de ölçülmeye başlanmıştır (Butler, 2022; Costa, Varum, Montenegro, & Gomes, 2022). Holden (2008) tarafından vurgulandığı gibi turizm karmaşık bir olgudur ve basit bir ifadeyle "tatile gitmek"ten çok daha fazlasıdır. Çünkü turizm, turistlerin gittikleri destinasyonlarda toplumların ekonomik-sosyal süreçlerine etki ettiği ve bazı değişikliklere neden olduğu bir anlayışa dayanır. Turizmin doğasında doğal-kültürel kaynakların kullanımı vardır ve destinasyonlarda turizmin gelişimi ekonomik, çevresel-kültürel etkilere neden olmaktadır.

Turizm alanlarında yaşanan bu etkilerin ilk olarak incelendiği çalışmanın Gilbert (1939) tarafından yapıldığı görülmektedir. Daha sonra farklı bakış açılarıyla ele alınan bu konu (Doxey, 1975; Plog, 1974), Butler (1980) tarafından turizm destinasyonlarının üretim sektöründeki bir üründe olduğu gibi bir yaşam döngüsü olduğu savunulmuş ve modern üretim yaşam döngüsü kuramına dayalı olarak bu teori, TAYD modeline uyarlanmıştır. Turist sayısını temel alan bu modele göre döngüyü; keşif (exploration), ilgi (involvement), gelişim (development), sağlamlaşma (consolidation), durgunluk (stagnation), düşüş (decline) veya gençleşme/iyileştirme (rejuvenation) şeklinde kavramsallaştırmıştır (Şekil 1).

Keşif aşaması, kâşif turistlerin benzersiz doğal-kültürel özelliklere sahip destinasyonlara düzensiz ziyaretlerini ifade eder. İlgi aşamasında, artan sayıda turisti daha düzenli ziyaretlerle ağırlayacak tesisler sunulmaya başlanır ve yerliler sürece dâhil edilir. Gelişim aşamasında tanıtım faaliyetleri ve turizm pazarlaması hızlanmakta, aşama ilerledikçe yerel katılım ve kalkınmanın kontrolü hızla azalmaktadır. Sağlamlaşma aşamasında turist sayısındaki artış hızı düşmektedir. Ancak, toplam sayı artmaya devam eder ve toplam turist sayısı daimi ikamet edenlerin sayısını aşmaya devam eder. Destinasyon durgunluk aşamasına girerken artık en yüksek turist sayısına ulaşılmıştır. Çevresel, sosyo-ekonomik sorunların yanı sıra birçok değişken için kapasite seviyelerine ulaşılmış veya aşılmıştır. Destinasyon fazla yatak kapasitesiyle köklü bir imaja sahiptir ancak artık modası geçmemiştir. Turizm türünün de kitle turizmine kayması beklenebilir. Son olarak, gençleşme/iyileştirme sürecinin başlayabilmesi için turizm ağırlıklı çekiciliklerde tam bir değişimin olması gerekmektedir. Bu değişiklikler olmadan bu aşamaya asla ulaşılamayacağı neredeyse kesindir.



Kaynak: Butler, 1980: 7.

Şekil 1. Turizm Alanları Yaşam Döngüsü Modeli

Her destinasyon farklı turizm türüne ev sahipliği yapmaktadır ve destinasyonların turizmden nasıl etkilendiği konusu bu farklılıktan önemli derecede etkilenmektedir. Turizmin etkilerinin olumlu veya olumsuz olarak algılanması, elbette bu etkilere maruz kalanların değerlendirmesine ve muhakemesine bağlıdır (Mason, 2020). Turistler destinasyonların fiziksel, çevresel, sosyo-kültürel çekiciliklerinden dolayı seyahatler gerçekleştirir ve beklentilerini elde edip edemediklerinden bağımsız olarak kısa bir süre sonra evlerine dönerler (Jafari, 1979). Destinasyon sakinleri ise orada yaşamlarını sürdürmeye devam eder.

Turistlerin yılın belirli zamanında veya tamamında yığınlar halinde bölgeye gelmesi, doğal-kültürel cazibe merkezleri gibi turizm ürünleri aracılığıyla gerçekleşmektedir (Jurowski, 2011). Ülkelerin ekonomik büyüme ve sosyal kalkınmasında önemli bir fırsat olan turizmin (Bujosa Bestard & Nadal, 2007; Wijesekara, Tittagalla, Jayathilaka, Ilukpotha, Jayathilaka & Jayasinghe, 2022) bir bölgede gelişmesi ve getirdiği ekonomik faydalar, bölge için önemli olsa da yerliler için her zaman aynı etkiyi göstermemektedir (Nyasha, Odhiambo & Asongu, 2021). Günümüzde turizm faaliyetinin lokomotifi olan kitle turizmi birçok güçlü dinamiği bünyesinde bulundurmaktadır. González Tirados'un (2011) da belirttiği gibi ev sahibi halkın sosyo-ekonomik, kültürel profilini etkileyecek olan kitle turizmi, bir şekilde ekonomiye katkı sağlasa da destinasyon ve orada yaşayan halk üzerinde belirgin bir etkiye sahiptir. Ayrıca kitle turizmi sürdürülebilir kalkınmaya çok az önem vermektedir (Christou, 2012).

Kitle turizmi, turizm araştırmalarında sürekli incelenen bir konu olmuş, destinasyona olan etkileri ve yerli halkın turizme karşı tutumu ele alınmış, destinasyon üzerinde çok sayıda olumlu-olumsuz etkisi tespit edilmiş ve tartışılmıştır. Turizmin destinasyonlar üzerindeki olumlu-olumsuz etkileri hiçbir zaman inkâr edilmemiş ve bilimsel çalışmalarla günümüze kadar sürekli olarak incelenerek ortaya koyulmuştur (Figini & Patuelli, 2022; Stoffelen & Ioannides, 2022; Stylidis 2022; Zhai, Li & Yang, 2023).

YÖNTEM

Çalışmada, geçmişte başarılı olan ancak sonradan gerileme yaşayan destinasyonlar ile başlangıçtaki başarısını sürdüren destinasyonların karşılaştırılması yoluyla bazı destinasyonların neden düşüş evresine girdiği sorusuna derinlemesine yanıt aranmaktadır. Bu amaçla eleştirel bir çözümleme gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışmanın araştırma tekniği alanyazın taramasıdır; bu doğrultuda destinasyonların başarı/sızlık öyküsü üzerine bir derleme çalışması yapılmıştır.

Derleme çalışmalar, mevcut alanyazının incelemesini sunarak, ele alınan konuyla ilgili önemli bilgileri kapsar. Yalnızca alanyazına atıfta bulunarak ve bilgileri özetleyerek değil; araştırmacının kendi yorumlarını ekleyerek alanyazındaki bulgulara eleştirel bir bakış açısı getirmesi ve bu doğrultuda bir senteze ulaşması gerekmektedir (Herdman, 2006). Bu araştırmada, alanyazın taraması sonucunda elde edilen veriler üzerinde düşünülmüş, çözümlemeler yapılmış ve veriler açıklığa kavuşturularak bir inşa sürecine başlanmıştır. Bu süreçte Diamond'ın yaptığı gibi farklı özelliklere sahip destinasyonların başarı/sızlık nedenlerini anlamak için karşılaştırmalı yöntem kullanılmıştır.

Maddi ve teorik ölçütlere göre olayları değerlendirmek ve yorumlamak için bir temel sağlayan karşılaştırmalı yöntem geleneksel olarak, toplumlar arası farklılıklar ve benzerliklerle ilgilenen sosyal bilim dalı olan karşılaştırmalı sosyal bilimin temel yöntemi olarak ele alınmaktadır (Ragin, 2014). Destinasyonların başarı/sızlık öyküsünü karşılaştırmalı olarak ele alan bu çalışmada, destinasyonları başarılı-başarısız kılan nedenlerin ne olduğu, bazılarının neden daha dayanıksız olduğu, onları böyle bir sona sürükleyen süreçlerin tam olarak neler olduğu, onları bekleyen bu sonu öngörememe nedenleri, geçmişte başarıya ulaşan çözümlerin neler olduğu tartışılmakta ve bugün hangi destinasyonların risk altında olduğu ve daha fazla düşüş yaşamadan onlara yardımcı olabilecek ve onların iyileştirme evresine geçmelerine yardımcı olacak önlemlerin neler olduğunu ortaya koymaya yönelik çözüm önerileri sunulmaktadır.

Kozak (2018) tarafından yürütülen Türkiye Turizmi Sözlü Tarih Projesi kapsamında hazırlanan "Dünden Bugüne Türkiye'de Turizm: Kurumlar, Kuruluşlar, Turizm Bölgeleri ve Meslekler" başlıklı 10. ciltte yar alan "Turizm Bölgeleri" ana başlığı altında ele alınan Akçakoca (Yılmazdoğan, 2018), Alanya (Bayrakcı & Zencir, 2018), Bodrum (Zencir & Çiçek, 2018), Kapadokya (Çakır, Tören & Evren, 2018) ve Uludağ (Evren & Güldemir, 2018) çalışmaya dâhil edilmiştir. Bu çalışmaların incelenmesindeki amaç, gerçek kişilerden aktarılan bilgilerle destinasyonların yaşam döngüsünün oldukça ayrıntılı bir şekilde ortaya konmuş olmasından kaynaklanmaktadır. Bu hususta ele alınan farklı bölgelerde yer alan destinasyonlardan her bölgeden bir tanesinin incelenmesine dikkat edilmiştir. Butler'ın (1980) turizm alanları için belirlediği yaşam döngüsünde belirttiği aşamaların, destinasyonlar için dönemlendirmeleri yapılarak değerlendirmeler yapılmıştır.

Bu çalışma derleme makalesi niteliğinde olup araştırma tekniği olarak alanyazın taramasına dayanmaktadır. Çalışma kapsamında herhangi bir özgün saha araştırması, deneysel uygulama, gözlem, anket ya da görüşme yapılmamış; insan ya da hayvan katılımcılardan veri toplanmamıştır. Ayrıca kişisel veri kullanımını gerektiren bir süreç söz konusu değildir. Bu nedenle araştırma için etik kurul izni alınmasını gerektiren bir durum bulunmamaktadır.

BULGULAR VE YORUM

Destinasyonların Yaşam Döngüsü

Çalışma kapsamında incelenen destinasyonlar için Butler'ın (1980) turizm alanları yaşam döngüsü modelinde belirlediği aşamaların dönemlendirmeleri, okunabilirliği artırmak amacıyla her destinasyon için ayrı bir tablo olarak sunulmuştur (Tablolar 1a-1e).

Tablo 1a. Akçakoca Destinasyonunun Turizm Yaşam Döngüsü ve Göstergeler

Destinasyonlar	Butler'ın Aşamaları	Göstergeler
Akçakoca (Yılmazdoğan, 2018)	Keşif	✓ 1950'li yıllarda memur-özel sektör çalışanlarının tatil yapma alışkanlıklarının artması, iki önemli şehir olan Ankara-İstanbul'a yakın olması nedeniyle bir sayfiye bölgesi haline gelmesi ✓ Yerlilerin evlerini pansiyona çevirmek suretiyle turistlere konaklama imkânının sağlanması ✓ Akçakoca Turizm Derneği'nin kurulması ✓ Pansiyona çevrilen evlerin yatak kapasitesinin belirlenmesi ✓ Geleneksel "Akçakoca gecesi" tertip edilmesi ✓ Dernekte çalışanların turistlere nasıl davranmaları gerektiği konusunda eğitilmesi ✓ Ziyaretçiler için tavsiye kitapçıklarının hazırlanması ✓ 1950'li yılların sonlarına gelindiğinde turist geliş sayılarının artmaya başlaması ✓ Keşif aşamasında olmasına rağmen en yüksek sezonun yaşanması ✓ Balıkçı-ev yemekleri lokantaları, alkollü-alkolsüz restoranlar ve pidecilerin açılması
	İlgi	✓ 1960'lı yıllarda yurt içinden ve dışından önemli kişilerin (devlet büyükleri, büyükelçi, öğretim üyeleri, sanatçılar, şarkıcılar, yönetmenler, yazarlar, gazeteciler) bölgeye gelmesi ✓ Kore, Almanya, Hollanda, Fransa, İngiltere gibi ülkelerden turistlerin bölgeye gelmesi ✓ Evlerde pansiyonculuğun giderek artması ✓ Yerlilerin alışkın olmadığı yaşam tarzına (turistlerin mayoyla etrafta dolaşması gibi) alışmaya başlaması ✓ Modern kıyafetlerin vitrinde yer alması ✓ Turistlerin benimsenmesi, dil öğrenmeye ilgi duyulması ✓ Yerliler ve turistler arasında sıcak iletişimlerin yaşanması ✓ Ziyaretçi sayılarında artış ✓ Bölgeye turistler geldikçe halkın turizme sıcak bakması, tanıtım faaliyetlerinin (basılı broşürler, gazetelerde köşe yazıları) artması ✓ Ziyaretçilerin tekrar tekrar bölgeye gelmesi ✓ Turistlerin kalış süresinin en az 10 güne çıkması ✓ Yerliler ve turistler arasında iletişimin sürekli olarak devam ettirilmesi ✓ Maden Tetkik ve Arama (MTA) Kurumu tarafından Dinlenme Tesisi açılması ✓ Turizmin tek geçim kaynağı olmaması
	Gelişim	✓ 1970'te sahilde Turizm Derneği'nin bulunduğu alana bir liman yapılmasına karar verilmesi ✓ Derneğin Turizm Bürosu'na çevrilmesi ✓ Balıkçı lokantaları, alkollü-alkolsüz restoranlar-pideciler açılmaya devam etmesi ✓ Çınar Oteli'nin inşası ✓ Turizmin tek geçim kaynağı olmaması
	Sağlamlaşma	✓ 1980 yılına gelindiğinde Çınar Oteli'nin el değiştirmesi, Yeni Çınar Oteli adını alarak yatak kapasitesini arttırması ✓ Otel iş görenlerinin maaş zammı konusunda greve gitmesi ✓ 1992'de Yeni Çınar Oteli'nin özelleştirilmesi ✓ Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi bünyesinde Akçakoca Turizm İşletmeciliği ve Otelcilik Yüksekokulu'nun kurulması, üniversite tarafından otelin uygulama oteli olarak kullanılması ✓ Otelin faaliyetlerini sona erdirmesi ✓ MTA'nın Dinlenme Tesisi'nin özelleştirilmesi, pasif duruma geçmesi ✓ Turizmin tek geçim kaynağı olmaması
	Durgunluk	✓ Turizm Derneği'nin bulunduğu alana bir liman yapılmasıyla plajın kumunun bozulması, Derneğin gelirlerinin azalması ✓ Yugoslavya'nın bölünmesiyle Batılı turistlerin tercihinin Ege-Akdeniz'e yönelmesi ✓ Turizmin tek geçim kaynağı olmaması (fındık üretiminin yoğun olması) nedeniyle gelişmesi için yerlilerin özen göstermemesi

		✓ Bölgenin iklim özelliklerinden dolayı (yazın yağışlı gün sayısının çok olması, yaz sezonun kısa sürmesi) turistlerin artık tercih etmemeye başlaması
	Düşüş	✓ Takvimler 2000'li yılları gösterdiğinde gerek iklimsel gerek siyasal gerekse alınan yanlış kararlar neticesinde düşüş devrinin tam anlamıyla başlaması ✓ Karavan turizminin kesilmesi ✓ Ege-Akdeniz Bölgelerine büyük konaklama tesislerinin inşa edilmesi ✓ Tanıtım faaliyetlerinin artık yeterli düzeyde yapılmaması ✓ Turistler tarafından tercih edilmemesi ✓ Hafta sonu veya günübirlikçi tatilcilerin uğrak noktası haline gelmesi ✓ Turistlerin memnuniyet-tatmin düzeylerinin düşmesi, iyileştirme çabalarının olmaması ✓ Turizm tesislerinin kapanması ✓ Yerel seçimlerde mahalli idarelerin el değiştirmesi sonucu yaşanan ideolojik değişimler sonucu turizme yeterli ilginin gösterilmemesi ✓ Yerlilerin gözünde istikrarsız bir geçim kaynağı imajı oluşmasıyla halkın turizme yatırım yapmak yerine balıkçılık ve tarıma yönelmesi
	İyileştirme	✓ Sakinlerin gözünde istikrarsız bir geçim kaynağı imajı oluşmasıyla halkın turizme yatırım yapmak yerine balıkçılık-tarımdan geçim sağlamayı sürdürmesi sonucunda turizmin iyileştirilmesi adına herhangi bir çaba olmadığı görülmüştür.

Tablo 1b. Alanya Destinasyonunun Turizm Yaşam Döngüsü ve Göstergeler

Destinasyonlar	Butler'ın Aşamaları	Göstergeler
Alanya (Bayrakcı & Zencir, 2018)	Keşif	✓ Cumhuriyetin ilk yıllarında (1930'lar) seyyahların-turistlerin bölgeye gelmesi ✓ Dönemin Valisi Nazif Bey'in iç turizmi harekete geçirmesi ✓ Seyyahlık konusunun gündeme getirilmesi, konuyla ilgili toplantıların düzenlenmesi
	İlgi	✓ 1950'lerde turistlerin gelmesi ✓ 1950'lerde altyapı olanaklarının (Alanya-Antalya, Alanya-Mersin yolları) dönemin şartlarına göre oldukça iyi olması ✓ 1952'de Turizm Derneği'nin kurulması ✓ 1962 yılında Muz Festivali ve Turizm Derneği'nin faaliyetleri ✓ 1963'te Damlataş Mağarası'nın turizme açılması ✓ İç turizm hareketlerinin başlaması ✓ Ev pansiyonculuğunun başlaması ✓ Türk mutfağı kültürüne ilgi, mutfağın tanıtılması
	Gelişim	✓ 1970'li yıllarda Turizm Bakanlığı'nın ev pansiyonculuğunu teşvik etmek amacıyla kredi vermeye başlaması, ev pansiyonculuğunun artması ✓ Seyahat acentelerinin ortaya çıkması ✓ Yerli-yabancı turist geliş sayılarında artış yaşanması ✓ Sırt çantalı üniversite öğrencilerinin bölgeye gelmesi ✓ Teşvik ve yabancı yatırımlarla otel sayılarının artması, büyük konaklama tesislerinin yapılması (1976-77) ✓ Tanıtım faaliyetlerinin artması ✓ Turizmin yeni iş kolları yaratması (hediyelik eşya dükkanları, antikacılık, dericilik gibi) ✓ 1973'te turist sayısının zirve yapması ✓ 1970'lerin ortalarında turizmin, ciddi paraların kazanıldığı bir sektör imajı vermeye başlaması ✓ 1970'lerle birlikte turizmin önemli bir gelir kaynağı haline gelmesi, tarımın yavaş yavaş terk edilmesi ✓ Kadınların turizmde istihdam oranlarının artmaya başlaması ✓ Turizmle birlikte betonlaşmanın artması ✓ 1980'li yıllarda turizmin canlanması ✓ 1980-90'lı yılların ortalarına kadar otel yatırımlarının ciddi düzeyde artması ✓ Yabancı tur operatörlerinin Türkiye pazarına girmesi ✓ 1985 yılı itibarıyla kitle turizminin ivme kazanması ✓ Alanya Turistik İşletmeciler Derneği'nin (ALTİD) kurulması (1985)

		✓ 1985 yılı ve sonrasında kontrolsüz nüfus artışı ve mevsimselliğin tetiklediği su tüketimindeki dengesizlik
	Sağlamlaşma	✓ Fırsat maliyeti, turizme aşırı bağımlılığın başlaması ✓ 1974 Kıbrıs Savaşı ve Kıbrıs Barış Harekatı'nın yaşanmasıyla turizmin sekteye uğraması ✓ Körfez Krizi (1990) ile turizmin kırılma noktasına gelmesi ✓ Terör olaylarının patlak vermesi ✓ 1990'lı yıllar sonrasında her şey dahil sistemin başlaması ✓ Kültür turizminin azalması ✓ Bölgeye yerli-yabancı göçlerin olması ✓ Şehirde yeşilliğin-doğal çevrenin azalması-bozulması
	Durgunluk	✓ Terör olayları, anarşik olaylar neticesinde 1985'lere kadar durgunluğun devam etmesi ✓ Her şey dahil sistemin yöre esnafına zarar vermesi ✓ Gece hayatının canlanması ✓ Kumarhaneciliğin önemli merkezlerinden biri haline gelmesi
	Düşüş	✓ 1960-70'li yıllarda turizmle tam anlamıyla tanışan Alanya'da, 80'li yıllardan 2000'li yıllara kadar büyüme-gelişme dönemi yaşandığı; 2000'li yıllardan sonra kitle turizminin başlamasıyla turizmin her zaman benimsenen/kabul edilen bir sektör olduğu; turizmin Alanya'da düşüş evresini yaşamadan kötü giden gidişatı iyileştirme çabalarına geçildiği görülmüştür.
	İyileştirme	✓ 2000'li yılların başlarında Alanya Liman İşletmeleri'nin özelleştirilmesiyle kruvaziyer turizminin gelişmesi ✓ 2002 yılı itibarıyla ALTİD'in tanıtım faaliyetlerini arttırması ✓ Son 15 yılda turizmle birlikte bölgede yerli-yabancı turiste yönelik emlak piyasasının canlanması ✓ Nüfus artışının günümüzde belirli bir seviyeye gerilemesi, mahalli idarelerin çalışmalarıyla su sıkıntısının ortadan kalkması ✓ Son 15 yıldır mahalli idarelerin "turizm dostu" uygulamaları hayata geçirmeye başlaması ✓ Yatak sayısının ciddi düzeyde artması ancak fiyatların düşürülerek Türkiye'nin ucuz ülke konumunda pazarlanması ✓ Günümüzde kitle turizminin önde gelmesi ✓ Turist profilinde değişikliğin yaşanması (daha az para harcayan)

Tablo 1c. Bodrum Destinasyonunun Turizm Yaşam Döngüsü ve Göstergeler

Destinasyonlar	Butler'ın Aşamaları	Göstergeler
Bodrum (Zencir & Çiçek, 2018)	Keşif	✓ 1925-35 arası geçim kaynağının balıkçılık olması ✓ 1930'larda en önemli geçim kaynağının süngercilik olması ✓ Yine bu dönemde tek tük düzensiz turistlerin/ziyaretçilerin bölgeye gelmesi ✓ 1940-50'li yıllarda ağırlıklı olarak İtalyan turistlerin bölgeye gelmesi
	İlgi	✓ 1958'de ilk turist kafilesinin gelmesi ✓ 1961'de Baskın Sokullu ve Tosun Sezen tarafından geliştirilen regülatör ve basınç odası aracılığıyla tarihi batıklarda çalışmaların başlaması, bu çalışmaların dünyaca ünlü sualtı arkeoloğu Peter Throckmorton'un dikkatini çekmesiyle ilk turizm hareketlerinin başlaması ✓ Üç yıl boyunca Ageon isimli Yunan menşeli geminin haftada iki kez bölgeye Yunan adalarından günübirlikçi turist getirmesi ✓ Turizm ve Tanıtma Derneği'nin kurulması, gayri resmi ilk acente olarak hizmet vermesi ✓ Cevat Şakir Kabaağaçlı'nın (Halikarnas Balıkçısı), yazdığı kitaplarla Bodrum'un tanıtımına taktı sağlaması, ilçeyi turizme açması ✓ Vehbi Koç'un bölgeyi ziyaret ederek dernek temsilcilerine turizm planlaması konusunda salık vermesi, böylece turizmin halk için önemli bir iş kolu izlenimi vermesi

		✓ 1961'de günümüzdeki acentecilik anlayışından farklı da olsa ilçenin ilk seyahat acentesi Merhaba Turizm'in açılması ✓ 1962'de turizmin tam olarak başlaması ✓ Bodrum'da turizmin her yaştan insan tarafından benimsenmesi ✓ Gönüllülük esasına dayalı turist rehberliğinin yapılması ✓ Dönemin Muğla Valisi Şerif Tüten tarafından sualtı zenginliklerinin yurt dışında tanıtılması ✓ 1963'te ilk turist kafilesinin Brüksel'den Bodrum'a sualtı zenginliklerini görmek için gelmesi ✓ Balıkçı teknesiyle iki-üç hafta süren turların düzenlenmesi ✓ Bodrum'da çekilen sualtı belgeseliyle gezilerin dünya çapında tanınması, gezilere olan ilginin giderek artması ✓ 1965-1966 yıllarında Tavşanburnu'nda yapılan özel bir dalış alanında sadece dalmayı bilen turistlere değil, bilmeyen turistlere de eğitim verilerek gezilerin yapılması ✓ Turistlerin gelmesiyle Bodrumluların para kazanmaya başlaması ✓ Ev pansiyonculuğunun başlaması ✓ Devlet büyükleri, dönemin ünlülerinin ilçeyi ziyaretleri sonucu pansiyon ihtiyacının doğması, çeşitli pansiyonların hayata geçirilmesi ✓ Küçük çaplı yatırımların yapılması ✓ Özel araçları-karavanlarıyla ilçeye gelen turistlerin (genellikle üniversite öğrencileri ve Fransızlar) ihtiyaçlarını karşılamak için küçük işletmelerin açılması, böylece kamp turizmin başlaması (1964-67-68'ler) ✓ 1965-66 yıllarında Turizm Bakanlığı tarafından turizm alanında çalışanlara yönelik mesleki eğitim kurslarının açılması, sertifika programlarının başlaması ✓ 1970'lere kadar süngerciliğin ana geçim kaynağı olması, ilçenin daha çok maceracı turistler tarafından tercih edilmesi
	Gelişim	✓ 1970-80 arası yerli turistler tarafından da tercih edilmeye başlaması ✓ Takvimler 1970'li yılları gösterdiğinde ilçede turizmle birlikte eğlence hayatının-bar işletmeciliğinin başlaması ✓ 1979 yılında Halikarnas Disko'nun açılması ✓ Devlet desteği ve girişimci Bodrum halkının kendi olanaklarıyla altyapı sorunlarının köylerde giderilmeye çalışılması, böylece Gümbet yollarının Bitez'e kadar açılması (1974-75'ler) ✓ 1980'lerde ilçenin yabancı turistler-tur operatörleri tarafından keşfedilmesi, böylece ilçede kitle turizmin başlaması ✓ Arta turizm faaliyetleri neticesiyle bölgenin göç almaya başlaması ✓ Barların sosyalleşme alanı olması sebebiyle sayısının gittikçe artması ✓ Konaklama için yatak arz kapasitesinin yetersiz kalması ✓ Turizmin yükselişe geçtiği bu dönemde acenteciliğin hala tam anlamıyla başlamamış olması ✓ Garantili sistem adıyla yerlilere sunulan çözüm önerisiyle otel inşa etmeye karar veren halka yabancı tur operatörleri tarafından üç-beş yıllık peşin nakit para sağlanması ✓ Bu durumun yapılaşmayı tetiklemesi ✓ Yerlilerin evini-arsasını satmasıyla yeni tesislerin açılması, bu durumun küçük esnafın etkisini kaybederek tesislerin yabancı sermayenin eline geçmesine sebep olması ✓ 1980'li yıllardan sonra acenteciliğin çoğalarak rekabet ortamı oluşturması ✓ Turizm Bakanlığı'nın desteğiyle Touralpin Turizm ve Seyahat Acentesinin açılması (1987) ✓ 1980 sonrası Özal'la birlikte turizmin ivme kazanması ✓ Cumhuriyetin ilk yıllarında su-elektrik sorunu yaşayan ilçenin turizmle birlikte 80'lerin sonunda suya kavuşması
	Sağlamlaşma	✓ Siyasi partilerin plansızlığının kurbanı olması ✓ İnşaat sektörünün artış göstermesi, turizmin kontrolsüz bir şekilde artması ✓ 1990'larda turist profilinin değişmeye başlaması (para harcamayan turistler) ✓ Eğlence mekânlarında turist profilinin, eğlence anlayışının değişmeye başlaması ✓ Destinasyonun, küçük bir sahil kasabasından gece hayatı imajıyla anılmaya başlaması, yerlilerin bundan rahatsızlık duymaya başlaması

		✓ Turizmin artık temel geçim kaynağı olması, muazzam bir yapılaşmayı da beraberinde getirmesi (taş bina ve beyaz evler korunsa da koylardaki yapılaşmanın olumsuz etkisi) ✓ Bodrum turizmine bir "darbe" olarak nitelendirilebilecek kooperatifçilik hareketleri ✓ Aşırı yapılaşma, kooperatifler, büyük tesislerin etkisiyle taşıma kapasitesinin aşılması ✓ Özellikle göçle ilçeye gelen esnafın davranışlarının bozulmaya başlaması
	Durgunluk	✓ 2000'li yıllar itibarıyla gereğinden fazla acentenin açılması, son 15 yılda sayının düşmesi ✓ Son yıllarda kruvaziyer turizmine hizmet etmesi, günübirlikçiler tarafından tercih edilmesi
	Düşüş	✓ Büyük yabancı yatırımcıların pastadan pay alırken küçük-yerli esnafın, geçimini sağlama konusunda zorluk çekmesi sonucu turizmi tamamen bırakması ✓ Esnafın-yerli halkın artık nüfus içerisinde azınlık konumuna geçmesi ✓ Bodrumun artık tamamen deniz-güneş-kum üçlüsüyle anılması ✓ Ekonomik anlamda elde edilen gelirin döviz cinsinden oldukça düşük olması ✓ Bodrum'un küçük bir kasabadan ziyade aldığı göçlerle (emekliler) büyük bir şehir görünümü kazanması
	İyileştirme	✓ Artan bilinç-farkındalık düzeyiyle eski-yeni Bodrum halkının değerlerine sahip çıkmaya başlaması ✓ Turizmin geleceğinin mahalli idarelerin planlama-politikalarına göre şekillenmesine yönelik bir beklenti olduğu görülmektedir.

Tablo 1d. Kapadokya Destinasyonunun Turizm Yaşam Döngüsü ve Göstergeler

Destinasyonlar	Butler'ın Aşamaları	Göstergeler
Kapadokya (Çakır vd., 2018)	Keşif	✓ 1700'lerin başlarında bölgeyi ziyarete gelen seyyahların Avrupalı elitlere-gezginlere Kapadokya'yı anlatması üzerine o zamanlarda ilginin başlaması ✓ 1800'lerde Charles Texier ve William Hamilton gibi ünlü seyyahların bölgeyi gezip kaleme aldıkları eserlerle Kapadokya'nın bugün dünya çapında gördüğü ilginin temellerini atmaları ✓ 1950'li yıllarda yine bölgeye gelen önemli bir isim olan Yorgo Seferis'in Avrupalılar için turizm olgusunu oluşturması ✓ 1950'lerde bölgeye yabancı turistlerin gelmesi
	İlgi	✓ 1960'lı yıllarda turizmin bölgenin ana geçim kaynaklarından biri olmaya başlaması ✓ Sırt çantalı turistlerin 60'ların ikinci yarısından sonra bölgeye gelmesi ✓ 1970'lerde Fransızların bölgeye rağbet göstermesi ✓ Bu dönemde seyyahların yazılarını Fransa ve Avrupa'da büyük dergilerde yayınlaması, bölgenin bilinirliğinin artması ✓ Bu dönemde gelen turistlerin kültür ve inanç turizmi amaçlı bölgeye gelmesi ✓ Bu ilgiye rağmen Türkiye'de iletişim ve ulaşım ağının, turizm altyapı-üstyapısının yetersiz olmasının bölgenin bir turizm merkezi olarak gelişmesinin uzun sürmesine neden olması ✓ Türk konukseverliğinin turizmin gelişmesine katkı sağlaması ✓ Yabancı turistlere gösterilen konukseverliğin ve ilginin turistlerle yerli halk arasındaki iletişimi-etkileşimi arttırması ✓ Yabancı turistlerin gösterilen konukseverliğin karşılığı olarak halka para vermesi sonucu halkta bu işten para kazanılabileceği izleniminin oluşması ✓ Turist-yerli halk etkileşimiyle canlanan turizm faaliyetlerinin zamanla profesyonel bir iş koluna dönüşmesi, turizmin bölgenin en büyük kazanç kapısı haline gelmesi ✓ 1973'te bölgenin Turizm Gelişim Alanı olarak ilan edilmesi, bölgede turizmin ivme kazanması
	Gelişim	✓ 1975 yılına kadar ev pansiyonculuğunun hâkim olması, daha sonra Turban Oteli'nin açılmasıyla büyük ölçekli turizm işletmelerinin inşa edilmeye başlaması ✓ Ürgüp, Avanos, Nevşehir bölgelerinde açılan Turban Otellerinin, halkın nazarında profesyonel turizm işletmecilik anlayışının gelişmesinde etkili olması

		✓ Turistlerin davul-zurna eşliğinde karşılanarak otellere götürülmesi ✓ Otel işletmeciliğinin gelişimine paralel olarak turist rehberliği ve seyahat acenteciliği faaliyetlerinin gelişmesi ✓ 1980 yılına kadar turist profilinin münferit ziyaretçilerden oluşması ✓ 1980'de havayolu ulaşımın artmasıyla turizmin bölgede kitlesel bir hal alması ✓ Büyük ölçekli turizm işletmelerinin sayısının artması ✓ 1982'de Turizm Teşvik Kanunu'nun çıkması, 1985 yılında Göreme'nin UNESCO Dünya Mirası Listesi'ne girmesi ✓ Bu gelişmelerle talepte artışın ve paralelinde kitle turizmine yönelimin başlaması ✓ 1980'lerden 90'lara kadar turizmin bölgede altın yıllarını yaşaması
	Sağlamlaşma	✓ 1990'lı yıllar itibarıyla bölgedeki turizm anlayışının kitle turizmi hareketine dönmesiyle bölgeye gelen ziyaretçi profilinin Fransızlardan, Avrupa-Uzakdoğu turist profillerine yayılması ✓ Bu gelişmeyle bölgede turizm sezonunun uzaması (mevsimselliğin ortadan kalkması), verimliliğin de böylece artması
	Durgunluk	✓ Mevsimselliğin ortadan kalkması ve verimliliğin artmasının yanı sıra kitle turizmiyle bölgenin olumsuz etkilere maruz kalmaya başlaması ✓ 1990'lardaki I. Körfez Savaşının turizm gelişimine darbe vurması ✓ Yine aynı yıllarda Türkiye'de ekonomik krizin baş göstermesi, devalüasyon-enflasyon etkili yerlilerin maddi-manevi anlamda oldukça zorlanması ✓ Teşvik Kanunu sonrası yapılan ölçüsüz yatırımlar sonucunda arz-talep dengesinin sağlanmasında sorunlar yaşanması, gelen turist sayısındaki artışa rağmen fiyatların büyük oranda düşmesi (yanlış rekabet stratejisinin benimsenmesi) ✓ Yine bu dönemde terör olaylarının bölgede turizm faaliyetlerinin kesilmesine neden olması
	Düşüş	✓ Kitle turizmiyle ucuz destinasyon imajının oluşmasının önüne geçebilmek için bazı çabaların gösterilmesiyle bölgenin düşüş aşamasını yaşamadığı görülmektedir. Her dönem çekiciliğini ve yerli-yabancı turistlerin gözdesi olan bir destinasyon olma kimliğini korumuştur.
	İyileştirme	✓ 2000'li yıllarda ve sonrasında butik otelcilik anlayışıyla birlikte lüks-kişiye özel hizmet üretimi anlayışının oluşturulmasıyla bölgenin kitle turizmi ve ucuz destinasyon imajının düzeltilmeye çalışılması ✓ Yine bu yıllarda yerli turistlerin ilgisinin artması ✓ 2000'li yıllarla birlikte turizmin 12 aya yayılması ✓ Günümüzde durgunluk döneminde yaşanan turizmin kırgınlık noktalarının birçoğunun (düşük fiyat politikası haricinde) çözüme kavuşturulması (Her destinasyonda olduğu gibi burada da elbette zaman içerisinde turizmin olumsuz etkilerinin baş göstermesi kaçınılmaz olmuştur.)

Tablo 1e. Uludağ Destinasyonunun Turizm Yaşam Döngüsü ve Göstergeler

Destinasyonlar	Butler'ın Aşamaları	Göstergeler
Uludağ (Evren & Güldemir, 2018)	Keşif	✓ Türkiye'de henüz deniz-güneş-kum turizmi önem kazanmadan önce 1930'larda kış turizminin temellerinin atılması ✓ Osman Şevki Uludağ tarafından hazırlanan raporda (1925) Uludağ'ın kayak yapmaya uygun olduğunun belirtilmesi ✓ 1924'te Şaban Örnektekin'in kayak yapmak için dağa çıkması, Uludağ'da kayak yapan ilk kişi olarak tarihe adını yazdırması ✓ 1931'de Büyük Otel'in açılması ✓ 1933'ten itibaren otelin kışın da hizmet vermeye başlaması ✓ 1933'te bir başka kayak tutkunu Alexi Abraham'ın dağda kayak yaptığı esnada çektiği fotoğrafları dönemin valisine göstermesi, bir de dağın kayak için uygunluğuna yönelik rapor sunması ✓ 1933'te Monsieur Guillot'un ve iki Türk gencinin dağın zirvesine çıkması ✓ Yapılan bu münferit gezilerin İstanbul ve Bursa'da ilgi uyandırması ✓ 1933'te Bursa Dağcılık Kulübü'nün kurulması

		✓ 1930'ların ortalarından itibaren ülke çapında tanıtımının yapılması, ünlü ve zengin kişilerin uğrak yeri haline gelmesi
	İlgi	✓ 1935'te Kayakevi'nin açılması, uygun fiyata her kesimden kayak severe kayak yapma olanağı tanımasının kayak turizmi açısından önem arz etmesi ✓ Dönemin önemli isimlerinin (devlet büyükleri, futbolcular, ünlü tüccarlar gibi) gruplar halinde dağda bulunan Büyük Otel'de konaklayarak kayak yapması ✓ Dönemin yöneticilerinin bu gelişmelerle birlikte dağın kayak potansiyelinden haberdar olması ✓ Alman profesörlerin dağda kamp yaparak kampçılık faaliyetlerini başlatması ✓ Tüm bu girişimlerin gerçek kayak sever, maceracı, idealist kişiler tarafından zorlu şartlar altında henüz teleferik, telesiyej gibi mekanik sistemlerin varlığı olmadan, kayak malzemesi temininin önemli bir sorun olduğu yıllarda gerçek bir tutkuyla gerçekleştirilmesi ✓ 1940'larda kulüp tarafından dönemin şartlarına uygun bir şekilde güvenlik önlemlerinin alınması, 50'lerin sonlarına kadar kulübün Bursa'ya ve Uludağ'a önemli katkılar sunması ✓ 1950'de Uludağ'ın tanıtılması için "Uludağ Rehberi"nin kaleme alınması, devamında birçok kitap-broşür yazılması
	Gelişim	✓ 1950'lerin ortasında Uludağ turizmi için önemli bir mekanik tesis hizmeti olarak nitelendirilen lift işletmesinin kurulması ✓ 1950'lerin sonlarından itibaren kulübün amacına hizmet etmemeye başlaması, kayak severlerden ziyade farklı amaçları olan insanlara hizmet etmeye başlaması ✓ 1960'larda kulübün kumar oynanan bir lokal haline gelmesi, faaliyetinin sona ermesi ✓ 1961'de Uludağ'ın Milli Park ilan edilmesi, böylece bu durumun doğal çevrenin korunmasına önemli katkılar sağlaması ✓ 1970'lerden sonra büyük tesislerin yapılması, sayısının artması, sosyetenin önde gelenleri tarafından sıklıkla tercih edilmesi, dönemin filmlerinin burada çekilmesi, sanatçıların tatil için burayı tercih etmesi ✓ Yine bu dönemde Türkiye'nin ilk telesiyejinin hizmete girmesi ✓ 1960-70'ler dağda özel yatırımların sayısının artması, bu otellerde aile sıcaklığında ortamlarda gelen misafirlere hizmet verilmesi
	Sağlamlaşma	✓ 1970'li yıllardan itibaren arz kapasitesinin ve turist sayısının artması sonucu zaman içerisinde sorunların ortaya çıkması ✓ 80'li yılların ortaları ve 90'ların ortalarına değin ciddi anlamda su problemlerinin yaşanması ✓ Otel geceleme sayılarında düşüşlerin yaşanmaya başlaması (örneğin, başlarda Perşembe giriş Pazar çıkış şeklindeyken zamanla sadece hafta sonu gecelemelerin gerçekleşmesi) ✓ Yıllarca çok başlılığın getirmiş olduğu bir plansızlıkla yeni tesislerin inşası, mevcut tesislerin yenilenmesinin zor olması, bu durumun kaçak yapılaşmayı tetiklemesi ✓ Milli Park olduktan sonra dağa giriş esnasında alınan ücretlerin dağın ihtiyaçlarına harcanmaması ✓ Uludağ'ın özel yatırımlar ve adeta bir "virüs" gibi çoğalan-yayılan misafirhaneler neticesinde artık küçük bir şehir görünümü kazanması (1980'lerden itibaren) ✓ Bu tesislerin, özel tesislere kıyasla giderlerinin çok olmamasının ve düşük fiyatlı geceleme imkânı sunmasının haksız rekabet ortamının oluşmasına sebep olması
	Durgunluk	✓ 1999 Gölcük depremi sonucu İstanbullu olan potansiyel müşteri sayısında ciddi düşüş yaşanması, böylece talebin de düşmesi ✓ Bu süreçte ardı ardına gelen problemlerin, çok başlılığın ve çözümsüzlüklerin artması ✓ Mahalli idarelerden kaynaklanan yetki karmaşasının ve yasal düzenlemelerin, bölgede yenilik ve gelişim çabasına girişen özel işletme yatırımcılarının önünde engel oluşturması, yenilik yapma konusunda "işlerin yokuşa sürülmesinin" işletmecilerin geri adım atmasına sebebiyet vermesi
	Düşüş	✓ Altyapı yetersizliklerinin işletmecileri yorması, bu sorunların zamanla kalitenin düşmesine, böylece turist profilinin değişmesine sebep olması ✓ 2000'li yıllar itibarıyla bu durumun bölgenin müdavimi olan turistlerin artık başka kayak turizmi yapılan merkezlere yönelmesi

		✓ 2005 yılı itibarıyla birçok yeni otelin inşa edilmesi, bu yeni tesislerin eski tesislerin tercih edilmemesine sebep olması
	İyileştirme	✓ 1991'de kaleme alınan bir gazete köşe yazısıyla Uludağ'ın sorunlarından bahsedilerek destinasyonu bu durumdan kurtarma çabalarının başlatılması ✓ 2000'ler itibarıyla çözüm arayışlarının hızlanması ✓ 2000'li yıllarda bölgedeki özel işletmeciler tarafından kamu misafirhanelerinin yıkılmasına yönelik girişimlerin bir ölçüye kadar karşılık bulması ✓ 2008 yılı ve sonrasında yenilenme çabalarının başlaması ✓ Yönetim birliğinin sağlanması, ulaşım kolaylığı, altyapı sorunları, sezonda sürekli kar bulunması, genel kullanım alanlarının oluşturulması gibi konuların gündeme getirilmesi

Destinasyonların; keşif, ilgi, gelişim, sağlamlaşma, durgunluk, düşüş ve gençleşme aşamalarını farklı dinamiklerle yaşadığı görülmektedir. Her bir destinasyonun benzersiz coğrafi, kültürel ve ekonomik dinamikleri olmasına rağmen, bu destinasyonların turizm gelişiminde ortak başarı ve başarısızlık noktaları bulunmaktadır.

Akçakoca, 1950'lerde keşfedilen bir sayfiye bölgesi olarak turizm gelişimini nispeten organik bir şekilde yaşamıştır. Ankara-İstanbul gibi büyük şehirlere olan yakınlığı neticesinde memurlar ve özel sektör çalışanları tarafından keşfedilen Akçakoca, özellikle yerel halkın pansiyonculuğa yönelmesiyle turizmin ilk aşamalarında doğal bir büyüme sergilemiştir. Ancak Akçakoca, sürdürülebilir bir turizm politikası geliştiremediği ve bölgenin doğal avantajlarını yeterince değerlendiremediği için 1990'larda durgunluk ve ardından düşüş aşamalarına girmiştir. Bölgenin tanıtım eksikliği ve yanlış yönetim kararları, turizmin tek başına güçlü bir ekonomik kaynak olmasını engellemiştir. Bunun sonucunda yerel halk, balıkçılık ve tarım gibi alternatif geçim kaynaklarına yönelmiştir.

Alanya, 1950'lerden itibaren turizm potansiyelini arttırmış ve 1980'lerde kitle turizmi merkezi haline gelmiştir. Ancak, her şey dâhil sistemin olumsuz etkileri ve çevre sorunları Alanya'nın sürdürülebilir turizm gelişimini tehdit etmektedir. Her şey dâhil sisteminin yerel ekonomiye daha fazla katkı sağlayacak şekilde düzenlenmesi gereklidir. Bu sistemin çevresel ve sosyo-ekonomik etkileri yeniden değerlendirilmelidir. Alanya'nın kültürel mirası, yerel halkın da katılımıyla öne çıkarılarak daha otantik bir turizm deneyimi sunulabilir. Bu, Jurowski'nin (2011) önerdiği bir strateji olarak yerel halkın daha fazla fayda sağlamasına yardımcı olur. Alanya'da mevsimselliğin getirdiği dengesizlik ortadan kaldırılabilir. Yaz sezonu dışındaki dönemlerde kültür, sağlık ve spor turizmi geliştirilebilir.

Bodrum, 1970'lerden itibaren popüler bir turizm destinasyonu haline gelmiş, kitle turizminin olumsuz etkileriyle karşı karşıya kalmıştır. Aşırı yapılaşma, çevre sorunları, yerel halkın turizme karşı olumsuz tutumu Bodrum'un düşüş dönemine girmesine neden olmuştur. Bodrum'da aşırı yapılaşma ve kooperatif hareketleri, bölgenin doğal yapısını tehdit etmektedir. González Tirados (2011), turizm altyapısının kontrollü bir şekilde büyütülmesi gerektiğini belirtmektedir. Bodrum'un deniz-güneş-kum turizmine bağımlılığını azaltarak, kültür ve doğa turizmine yönelmesi, bölgenin turistik çekiciliğini yeniden arttırabilir. Costa vd. (2022), sürdürülebilir turizm stratejilerinin bu tür bölgelerde uygulanması gerektiğini savunmaktadır. Yerel halkın turizmden elde ettiği faydayı arttırmak için küçük ölçekli yerel işletmelerin desteklenmesi gerekmektedir. Yerli esnafın turizme daha fazla dâhil edilmesi, bölgenin ekonomik faydasını arttırabilir.

Kapadokya, benzersiz jeolojik yapısı ve kültürel zenginliğiyle turistlerin ilgisini çekmiş, 1980'lerden itibaren kitlesel turizm yaşamıştır. Ancak, kitle turizminin etkisiyle bölge çevresel sorunlarla karşılaşmıştır. Kitle turizminin neden olduğu çevresel sorunlar çözülmeli ve sürdürülebilir turizm politikaları oluşturulmalıdır. Bölgedeki konaklama seçenekleri butik otelcilik ve kişiye özel hizmet anlayışıyla geliştirilerek, yüksek gelirli turist profili hedeflenebilir. Bu, Costa vd.'nin (2022) önerdiği bir paradigma değişimidir. Kapadokya gibi UNESCO Dünya Mirası Listesi'nde yer alan bölgelerde çevre düzenlemeleri daha sıkı denetlenmelidir.

Uludağ, Türkiye'de kış turizminin başladığı yer olarak 1930'lardan itibaren gelişmiş, ancak 1990'lardan sonra durgunluk ve düşüş yaşamıştır. Kış turizmi için kritik olan altyapı eksikliklerinin giderilmesi, özellikle ulaşım ve tesislerin yenilenmesi gerekmektedir. González Tirados (2011), altyapının sürdürülebilir turizm için önemini vurgulamaktadır. Kış sezonunu uzatmak amacıyla yaz aylarında alternatif turizm olanakları sunulabilir (doğa yürüyüşleri, dağ bisikleti gibi). Bu, Butler (1980) tarafından önerilen destinasyonların gençleşme stratejisinin bir parçasıdır. Yerel yönetimlerin turizmi canlandıracak projelere daha fazla yatırım yapması ve sürdürülebilir kalkınma politikaları oluşturması gereklidir.

Destinasyonların turizm yaşam döngüsündeki gelişim süreçleri, bazı benzerlikler ve farklılıklar göstermektedir. Alanya ve Bodrum, kitle turizminin hızla gelişmesiyle büyük ekonomik başarılar elde etmiş, ancak bu hızlı büyüme, çevre sorunları ve yerel halkın turizmden elde ettiği kazançların azalmasıyla olumsuz sonuçlar doğurmuştur. Kapadokya, turizmde her zaman güçlü bir konuma sahip olmuş ve kültürel mirası sayesinde mevsimsellik sorununu aşmayı başarmıştır. Ancak kitle turizmiyle bölgenin ucuz destinasyon imajı kazanması, kazançlarını olumsuz etkilemiştir. Akçakoca ve Uludağ, erken dönemde başarılı bir turizm gelişimi göstermelerine rağmen, altyapı sorunları, yanlış yönetim politikaları ve çevresel faktörler nedeniyle durgunluk ve düşüş aşamalarına girmiştir. Her destinasyonun ortak sorunu, sürdürülebilir turizm politikalarının geliştirilememesi ve çevresel sorunların dikkate alınmamasıdır. Başarı, turizmi uzun vadeli bir planla yönetmek, yerel halkın turizm faaliyetlerine katılımını sağlamak ve destinasyonun doğal ve kültürel mirasını korumakta yatmaktadır.

Destinasyonların başarısını sürdürülebilir kılmak için doğanın korunması, alternatif turizm modellerinin geliştirilmesi, yerel halkın katılımı, altyapının iyileştirilmesi ve pazarlama stratejilerinin gözden geçirilmesi gerekmektedir. Her destinasyonun farklı dinamiklere sahip olması, önerilerin özelleştirilmesi gerektiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu destinasyonların karşılaştıkları sorunlar ve başarı stratejileri, sürdürülebilir turizm için önemli dersler sunmaktadır.

SONUÇ VE TARTIŞMA

Bir destinasyonun başarı ya da başarısızlık öyküsü incelendiğinde, bu öykünün o destinasyonun geleceğine önemli ölçüde ışık tuttuğu görülmektedir. Bu çalışmada da söz konusu yaklaşımdan hareket edilmiş; destinasyonların geçmişleri ve turizm yaşam döngüleri incelenerek günümüzdeki durumları anlaşılmaya çalışılmıştır. Bir destinasyonun geleceğini kavrayabilmek ya da bu gelecekle yüzleşebilmek için geçmişe başvurmak zorunludur; zira geçmiş somut ve gözlemlenebilirken gelecek belirsizliğini korumaktadır. Geleceği yalnızca sezgiye dayanarak tahmin etmek güvenilir bir yaklaşım değildir. Geçmişten elde edilen bilgi birikimi, geleceğe yönelik çıkarımlar yapılmasına ve bu çıkarımlar aracılığıyla geleceğe yön verilmesine zemin hazırlamaktadır. Bu çalışmada, destinasyonların geçmiş deneyimlerinden elde edilen birikimden yararlanılarak başarı ve başarısızlık süreçleri açıklanmaya çalışılmıştır.

Bir destinasyonun başarısı veya başarısızlığı, genellikle geçmişten gelen bilgi birikiminin ve bu bilgi birikiminin geleceğe yansıtılma biçiminin bir sonucudur. Destinasyonlar, doğal ve kültürel kaynaklarının sürdürülebilir şekilde yönetilmesi, tanıtım faaliyetlerinin yeterliliği ve yerel halkın turizme olan bakış açısı gibi birçok faktörle şekillenmiştir. Bu çalışmada incelenen destinasyonlar, Türkiye turizminin önemli merkezleri olarak öne çıkmış, ancak her biri farklı dönemlerde farklı zorluklarla karşılaşmıştır. Bu durum, turizmde sürdürülebilir başarıya ulaşmanın çok yönlü ve karmaşık bir süreç olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır.

Çalışmada destinasyonlara dair detaylı analizler sunulmuştur. Farklı gelişim evreleri, karşılaştığı zorluklar ayrıntılı bir şekilde ele alınmıştır. Her destinasyonun başarı veya başarısızlık hikâyesi, turizmin ekonomik, sosyal ve çevresel etkilerini nasıl yönettiğine bağlı olduğu görülmüştür. Örneğin, Kapadokya doğal-kültürel mirasını koruyarak turizmi sürdürülebilir kılmayı başarmıştır. Doğal cazibe merkezleri ve tarihi zenginlikler, Kapadokya örneğinde olduğu gibi, etkin bir yönetimle turizmin temel itici gücü olabilmektedir. Bununla birlikte, bu kaynakların tükenmesi veya kötü yönetilmesi durumunda destinasyonlar hızla bilinirliğini kaybedebilir. Benzer şekilde, Bodrum ve Alanya, kitle turizmi ve büyük ölçekli otel yatırımlarıyla hızla büyümüş, ancak bu büyüme çevresel bozulmayı beraberinde getirirken, yerel halkın turizmden elde ettiği kazançların azalmasına yol açmıştır. Kim, Uysal & Sirgy (2013), Pizam & Milman (1986), turizmin ekonomik faydalarının yanı sıra sosyal ve kültürel etkilerinin de dikkatle değerlendirilmesi gerektiğini vurgulamaktadır.

Birçok destinasyon, yerel yönetimlerin stratejik vizyon eksikliği veya yanlış kararlar nedeniyle turizmde düşüş yaşamaktadır. Örneğin, Akçakoca ve Bodrum gibi bölgelerde yerel yönetimlerin altyapı eksikliklerine ve çevre tahribatına karşı yeterli önlemler alamamaları, bu destinasyonların uzun vadeli sürdürülebilirliklerini zora sokmuştur. TAYD Modeli bu durumu açıkça gösterir; destinasyonların gelişme aşamasında alınan yönetimsel kararlar, uzun vadede bu destinasyonların turizm döngüsünde hangi aşamaya ulaşacağını belirler. Eğer yerel yönetimler, destinasyonun büyümesini planlarken çevresel etkileri ve yerel halkın taleplerini göz ardı ederse, bu destinasyonların düşüşe geçmesi kaçınılmazdır.

Akçakoca örneğinde, turizm politikalarının uzun vadeli planlama yerine kısa vadeli ekonomik kazanımlara odaklanması, bölgenin altyapı eksikliklerinin giderilmemesiyle sonuçlanmıştır. Yerel yönetimlerin turizmi teşvik etme çabaları, çevre düzenlemeleri, konaklama altyapısının yetersizliği ve doğal kaynakların korunması gibi konularda yetersiz kalmış ve bu durum destinasyonun cazibesini kaybetmesine neden olmuştur. Aynı durum Bodrum için de geçerlidir. Bodrum'da yerel yönetimlerin kontrolsüz yapılaşmaya izin vermesi, bölgedeki doğal güzelliklerin ve tarihi mirasın tahribatına yol açmıştır. González Tirados (2011), turizmin sürdürülebilirliği için destinasyonlarda altyapı yatırımlarının uzun vadeli bir perspektifle ele alınması gerektiğini vurgular. Özellikle deniz-güneş-kum turizmine dayalı destinasyonlarda, doğal kaynakların korunması ve yapılaşmanın kontrol altında tutulması, destinasyonun sürdürülebilirliği açısından hayati bir öneme sahiptir.

Baloch, Shah, Iqbal, Sheeraz, Asadullah, Mahar & Khan (2023) tarafından yürütülen çalışma, ekonomik sürdürülebilirliği ve yerel halkın sosyal refahını tehlikeye atmadan çevresel ve doğal kaynakların etkili korunmasını sağlamak için destekleyici hükümet politikası müdahalelerini içeren sürdürülebilir eko-turizm gelişimi için bir model çerçevesi önermektedir. Hartman (2023) tarafından yürütülen çalışmada, destinasyon yönetiminin ve politika çerçevelerinin turizm gelişimini şekillendirmede nasıl kritik bir rol oynadığı tartışılmakta ve yönetişim düzeyindeki kararların (sürdürülebilirlik, aşırı turizmle ilgili politikalar dahil) destinasyonlar için uzun vadeli sonuçları nasıl önemli ölçüde etkilediği vurgulanmaktadır. Dolayısıyla destinasyonların turizm potansiyelini sürdürülebilir bir şekilde yönetebilmesi için yerel yönetimlerin uzun vadeli planlar yapması, çevresel, ekonomik ve sosyal etkileri dengelemesi gerekmektedir.

Destinasyonların sürdürülebilir başarısını güvence altına almak amacıyla çeşitli stratejik öneriler geliştirilmesi mümkündür. Bu önerilerin başında turizmin çeşitlendirilmesi gelmektedir. Kitle turizmine alternatif olarak geliştirilecek turizm modelleri hem çevresel sürdürülebilirliği güçlendirecek hem de yerel halkın turizm gelirlerinden aldığı payı artıracaktır. Eko-turizm, kültürel turizm ve butik otelcilik gibi alternatif yaklaşımlar, destinasyonların kitle turizmine olan bağımlılığını azaltarak daha sürdürülebilir bir gelişim süreci sağlayabilir. Bu doğrultuda Christou (2012), kitle turizmi ile alternatif turizm modellerinin birbirini dışlamak yerine bir arada var olabileceğini ve bu sayede destinasyonların uzun vadeli başarıya ulaşabileceğini savunmaktadır.

Mihalic (2024), kitle turizmiyle alternatif turizm modellerinin bir arada var olabileceğini ve destinasyonların bu denge sayesinde uzun vadeli başarı elde edebileceğini savunmaktadır. Kitle turizminin genellikle çevresel ve sosyal açıdan daha az sürdürülebilir olarak algılanmasına rağmen, eko-turizm veya kültürel turizm gibi alternatif turizm modellerinin daha sürdürülebilir uygulamalara fırsat sağladığı belirtilmektedir. Başarının anahtarı, bu iki yaklaşımı birbiriyle rekabet ettirmek yerine, birbirini tamamlayacak şekilde bütünleştirmektir. Mihalic, bu çift yönlü yaklaşımın turizm endüstrisinde sürdürülebilir büyümeyi desteklediğini, dış baskılara uyum sağlayarak, değişen tüketici taleplerine yanıt vererek, destinasyonların dayanıklılık kazanabileceğini vurgulamaktadır. Böylece, destinasyonlar hem ekonomik hem çevresel hem de sosyal açıdan sürdürülebilirlik sağlayarak uzun vadeli başarı elde edebilir. İkinci olarak, yerel halkın turizm faaliyetlerine daha aktif katılımının sağlanması gerekmektedir. Yerel halkın turizmden elde ettiği kazançların artması, turizme karşı olumlu bir tutum geliştirilmesini destekleyecek ve destinasyonun sosyal sürdürülebilirliğini güçlendirecektir. Jurowski (2011), Ramesh

(2022), Sapkota, Palamanit, Techato, Gyawali, Ghimire & Khatiwada (2024), turistlerle yerel halk arasındaki etkileşimlerin, bir destinasyonun uzun vadeli başarısı için kritik olduğunu savunmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, destinasyon yönetiminde yerel halkın daha fazla söz sahibi olması ve turizm yatırımlarından elde edilen gelirlerin adil bir şekilde dağıtılması, turizmin sürdürülebilirliği açısından önem taşımaktadır.

Çevresel sürdürülebilirlik, bir destinasyonun turizm başarısını sürdürmesi için kritik bir unsurdur. Kapadokya gibi doğal-kültürel mirasa sahip bölgelerde, yerel yönetimlerin çevresel koruma politikalarını ihmal etmesi, turizmden elde edilen kazançların uzun vadede azalmasına neden olabilir. Holden (2008), çevresel sürdürülebilirliğin turizm destinasyonları için sadece etik bir zorunluluk değil, aynı zamanda ekonomik olarak da bir gereklilik olduğunu savunur. Doğal kaynakların korunmaması durumunda, turistlerin bölgeye olan ilgisinin zamanla azalacağı ve destinasyonun ticari olarak sürdürülebilir olamayacağı uyarısında bulunur.

Yerel yönetimlerin bir diğer önemli sorumluluğu, turizm yatırımlarından elde edilen kazançların yerel ekonomiyle bütünleşmesini sağlamaktır. Birçok destinasyonda, büyük turizm yatırımları yerel halkın ekonomik fayda sağlamasını engellerken, küçük işletmelerin ayakta kalmasını zorlaştırmaktadır. Her şey dâhil sistemi gibi kitle turizmine dayalı uygulamalar, yerel esnafın turizmden sağladığı geliri önemli ölçüde azaltmaktadır. Alanya bu duruma en iyi örneklerden biridir; büyük otel zincirlerinin hâkimiyeti ve yerel halkın turizm sektöründen dışlanması, turizm gelirlerinin büyük ölçüde yabancı sermayeye akmasına neden olmuştur.

Destinasyonların yönetimi sadece ekonomik-çevresel politikalarla sınırlı kalmamalı, aynı zamanda turizmle ilişkili sosyal politikaları da kapsamalıdır. Yerel yönetimler, turizmin yarattığı sosyal sorunlarla da ilgilenmek zorundadır. Artan turist sayısı, yaşam maliyetlerini arttırabilir ve yerel halkın yaşam kalitesini olumsuz etkileyebilir. Özellikle kitle turizmine bağımlı destinasyonlarda, yerel halkın turistlerle yaşadığı sosyal çatışmalar yaygın hale gelebilir. Bu çatışmalar, turistlerin bölgeye olan ilgisini azaltabilir ve destinasyonun cazibesini kaybetmesine yol açabilir. Yerel yönetimler, bu tür sosyal sorunları çözmek için yerel halkın katılımını teşvik eden politikalar geliştirmeli ve sosyal uyum sağlamaya yönelik adımlar atmalıdır.

Destinasyonların başarı/sızlık öyküsü, turizm politikalarının nasıl yönetildiğine ve yerel halkın bu süreçlere nasıl dâhil edildiğine dair önemli dersler sunmaktadır. Destinasyonların başarısı, sadece ekonomik büyüme ve turist çekme kapasiteleriyle değil, aynı zamanda sosyal-çevresel sürdürülebilirliği sağlayacak stratejiler geliştirme yetenekleriyle de ilgilidir. Turizm destinasyonlarının uzun vadeli başarısı için, yerel yönetimlerin etkili politikalar geliştirmesi, yerel halkın katılımını sağlaması ve çevresel sürdürülebilirliği ön planda tutması gerekmektedir. Aksi halde, turizmin sadece kısa vadeli kazançlara odaklanması, destinasyonların cazibesini kaybetmesine ve uzun vadede başarısız olmasına yol açacaktır.

Çalışmada sonuca ulaşmak için veri olarak alanyazından yararlanılmıştır. Bu, çalışmanın en önemli sınırlılığını oluşturmaktadır. Ayrıca çalışmanın bir diğer sınırlılığını, incelenen destinasyonlar oluşturmaktadır. Elde edilen sonuçlar incelenen destinasyonlar için geçerlidir. İleride yapılacak araştırmalarda farklı destinasyonlar araştırmaya dâhil edilebilir. Yine sonuçların çeşitlendirilmesi adına gelecek çalışmalarda yapılacak araştırmalarla farklı turizm türüne ev sahipliği yapan farklı destinasyonların karşılaştırılarak özellikle yerlilerin bu konudaki tutumu ortaya çıkarılabilir. Turizm destinasyonlarının sürdürülebilirliği, yerel halkın katılımı ve destinasyona yönelik tutumlarıyla doğrudan ilişkilidir. Çalışmada yerel halkın turizmle bütünleşmesi konusu ele alınarak, turizm kazançlarının adil bir şekilde dağıtılmaması gibi önemli konulara dair somut örnekler ve çözüm önerileriyle yerel halkın tutumu detaylı olarak incelenebilir. Sosyal sürdürülebilirlik açısından, turizmin yerel halk üzerindeki olumsuz etkileri daha ayrıntılı ele alınabilir.

Buradaki en önemli husus farklı turizm türüne ev sahipliği yapan destinasyonların ele alınmasıdır. Çünkü farklı turizm türüne ev sahipliği yapan destinasyonlarda, yerlilerin ve destinasyonun turizm faaliyetlerinden nasıl etkilendiği konusu bu farklılıktan önemli derecede etkilenmektedir (Mason, 2020). Ele alınan destinasyonlarda turizmin başarılı olup olmadığı, ana ölçüt olan yerli halkın tutumu dikkate alınarak, birlikte ortaya konabilir, sonuçta ortaya çıkan sorular yanıtlanabilir ve bu bilgi birikimine katkı sağlanmaya devam edilebilir.

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