ATTITUDE TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ACROSS GENERATIONS; A QUANTITATIVE APPLICATION ON X, Y, AND Z GENERATIONS

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Abstract

This study aims to identify the similarities and changes in attitudes towards sustainable tourism across generations and to detail the sources of sustainable tourism behaviors that generations possess. Another objective of this study is to determine the changes in attitudes towards sustainable tourism based on different demographic situations such as income, education, and gender. Material and Method: Based on these objectives, the study was conducted through an online survey application on individuals living in Turkey. According to the 445 surveys obtained from the research, a data set carrying strong reliability and validity elements has been formed. The obtained data were subjected to frequency analysis with the SPSS program to obtain descriptive outputs, and to T-test and ANOVA analyses to obtain relational outputs. Findings: Analysis of the obtained data reveals a positive perception of the sustainable tourism impact amongst consumers. Among Generation X, Y, and Z, Generation Y has the highest perception of sustainable tourism, followed by Generation Z and then Generation X. A significant difference was found between Generation Y and Generation Z after analysis, with Generation Y's view on sustainable tourism being higher than Generation Z's. On the other hand, no differences were found in sustainable tourism attitudes according to gender, education level, and income status. Results: The sustainable attitude between generations initially increased and then decreased over time, but the negative difference between Generation Y and Generation Z is more significant. Furthermore, it is shown that female individuals have a more positive and higher sustainable tourism attitude structure compared to males, the level of sustainable tourism attitude meaningfully increases positively as the level of education rises, and individuals with middle and upper-income levels are more positive compared to those with lower-middle income, as revealed after the analyses.

Keywords: Sustainability, Tourism, Generations X Y Z

Introduction

Sustainable tourism is based on the principle of preserving current resources for future generations. The local community, at the heart of tourism activities, is both affected by and affects these actions. In other words, the local community is directly exposed to the positive and negative outcomes of tourist activities. However, for tourism to be sustainable, the support of the community is necessary. The number of studies examining the attitudes of people towards tourism and its impacts has increased over the last 30 years. A review of the current literature reveals that the community is directly affected during the process of tourism development and thus plays a critical role in sustainable tourism (Ap, 1992). One of the most important factors supporting the touristic development of a destination is the support of the community. This is because the continuity and sustainability of tourism in destinations largely depends on the community's attitude towards tourism (Sümbül and Erdem, 2022). The community's positive approach to visitors and the development of tourism is considered a key element in attracting and satisfying visitors (Cooke,1982). In this context, for sustainable tourism to be effectively implemented in a tourism destination, proper planning is of great importance. Active participation of the community in this planning process is a factor that increases visitor satisfaction (Koçoğlu et al., 2020). The support of the community is of critical importance for sustainable development of tourism (Ramcander, 2004). The support of the local community for tourism is necessary for the development, sustainability, and successful implementation of tourism (Jurowski et al., 1997). When the community of a region has a positive attitude towards tourism, it will be a significant factor promoting tourism (Yoon et al., 2000). For tourism to reach

a sustainable dimension, approval and support from the local community are required, in terms of short or long-term planning, and the form, scale, and location of its development (Avcıkurt, 2015).

Tourist destinations rely on stakeholder support and tourism awareness for survival and growth (Bekci, 2018). Public attitudes towards sustainable tourism are influenced by factors like socioeconomic status, age, and lifestyle. Therefore, different research methods are required for various demographics. Understanding these attitudes is crucial for effective social, environmental, and economic activities. This study examined how Istanbul public's support for tourism development influences their attitudes towards sustainable tourism, considering demographic variables and generational structure. The findings provide insights for tourism activities, and the study contributes to raising public awareness about these variables.

This study examines the link between sustainable tourism attitudes and the local population's generation structure in tourism destinations. It assesses demographic influences on these attitudes and determines general sustainable tourism attitude levels. This information is crucial for destination development and situation analyses. The research may benefit local governments and industry stakeholders. While many studies have explored tourism's impact on sustainability attitudes, none have evaluated this on an inter-generational scale. Thus, this study, focusing on X, Y, and Z generations in Istanbul, Turkey, is pioneering. Istanbul was chosen for its cultural, sociological, and economic structure. A convenience sample was formed via an online survey among Istanbul's X, Y, and Z generations, reaching 445 voluntary participants.

Conceptual Framework
Concept of Sustainability and Attitude Towards Sustainability in Tourism
Sustainability is an expanding and prevalent concept, with over 500 definitions identified within particular disciplines and fields (Young and Dhanda, 2013). In general, sustainability expresses the ability to maintain a situation or process for an indefinite period (WordNet, 2024) and therefore can be understood in various ways. Primarily, sustainability is seen as the capacity to continue the functions, processes, and efficiency of ecological systems into the future (Chapin, Torn, and Tateno, 1996). Sustainability has often been discussed alongside economic concepts, thus sustainability and sustainable development are frequently used synonymously. According to the definition made by the World Commission on Environment and Development, sustainable development means "meeting current human needs without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (UN, 1987). Upon reviewing different definitions, it is observed that the terms "sustainability" and "sustainable development" are interchangeably used in the literature. However, while sustainability signifies the ultimate goal or desired outcomes, sustainable development describes the process of reaching these goals (Akpulat, 2019). According to the 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development definition, sustainable development means "meeting our present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". Examining the historical development of the concepts of sustainability and sustainable development, it initially appears that the concept of sustainability took the forefront. Initially, environmental sustainability was the priority; however, over time, it has been understood that environmental sustainability alone is not sufficient, and the necessary benefit can be achieved when it is considered together with economic and social sustainability. Sustainable development theory integrates the concept of sustainability with the theory of development (Sharpley, 2000:3).

The irregular growth of tourism carries the potential to threaten human structure and the ecosystem. This growth process might deviate from sustainability in case factors that could negatively impact tourism development (Sirakaya, Jamal, and Choi, 2001). In order to minimize the negative impacts of tourism, all stakeholders in the tourism sector need to make joint decisions and implement these decisions effectively. The development process of tourism can negatively affect many different sectors in a region. Among these sectors, the local community is the most affected group in terms of cultural and life interaction. Therefore, gaining the support of the local community is of critical importance for tourism to develop in a region (Güneş et al., 2020). Another significant mistake in tourism development plans is neglecting the sensitivities

and cooperation of the local community. Investments in infrastructure or new technologies can help eliminate certain deficiencies, but individuals are fragile entities that need to be handled carefully. In other words, it is quite challenging to eliminate the negative perceptions of local populations against tourism. Studies on the effects of tourism on the local community (Ko and Stewart, 2002; Lee et al., 2007; Chen, 2011; Andereck and Nyaupane, 2011; Biçici, 2013; Boğan and Sarıışık, 2016; Işık and Turan, 2018) indicate that including the local community in the planning process of sustainable tourism and the joint decisions taken in this process bring success for long-term tourism development (Bramwell and Sharman, 2002).

Concept of Generations
Generations signify groups that encompass a specific timeframe, uniting around similar experiences and traditional values, and generally exhibiting homogeneous attitudes (Howe and Strauss, 1991). The relationship and interaction between these groups differ depending on the dynamics of the period they lived in. Generations are analyzed within the framework of certain characteristics and behavior patterns, with these analyses usually based on a 30-year period. The classification of generations is grounded on the priorities, values, characteristic features, and general mindset of that period (Törőcsik Mária, 2014). Generations are usually categorized based on age, owing their sustainability to the transformation of age (Baysal, 2015).

Drawing clear lines of distinction between generations may not always be possible. However, noticeable differences can be seen between older groups such as the Silent and Baby Boomer generations and younger generations like X, Y, and Z, who are newly entering the workforce. In Turkey, generational classifications usually take significant political events as their basis (Aka, 2018). While there are different views regarding the years each generation encompasses, it has been observed that individuals born in the same time period do not exhibit the same characteristics in every country. Therefore, there may be discrepancies between international and Turkish data regarding the birth years and characteristics of generations (Öz, 2015). Generations can generally be explained as follows: the term **"Silent Generation"** is used to describe individuals born between 1925-1945. Individuals in this generation are described as disciplined and conservative (Patalano, 2008). They appreciate formality and show serious commitment to the hierarchical command chain. They usually utilize past experiences in decision-making processes. Additionally, these individuals prefer to save money and exhibit great dedication in the work environment, making them compatible with teamwork. Because of these characteristics, they are generally identified as a loyal workforce. When it comes to communication, they show great respect in the relationships they establish with each other (Tolbize, 2008); **the Baby Boomer Generation** consists of individuals born between 1946-1959. This generation, having witnessed harsh war conditions, has facilitated the transition to a democratic and peaceful way of life in society. Also, this generation, conscious of human rights and individual freedoms, emphasizes the importance of societal values. Individuals of this period have developed themselves in areas such as entertainment, sports, education, travel, and culture, and are known for their emotional structures (Şan, 2018; Şalap, 2016); **Generation X** refers to individuals born between 1960-1979. According to a study by Coupland (1989, p.83), Generation X individuals have generally positioned themselves outside society. This generation generally establishes corporate connections but attributes less value to hierarchy and status compared to earlier generations. They react positively to corporate policies. If they cannot find continuous learning and development opportunities in their work environments, this reduces their job satisfaction. The creation of opportunities and autonomy are the most important corporate rewards for Generation X. These are seen not only as rewards but also as factors that make this generation happy and productive in the workplace (Kyles, 2005); **Generation Y** encompasses individuals born between 1980-1999. The technological evolution and transformations experienced during the formative years of this generation have influenced their innovative and creative characteristics. Compared to Generation X, Generation Y tends to adapt more quickly to technology (Cran, 2010). Generation Y is known for its intense interest in knowledge and experience, and its fondness for traveling and entertainment. In other words, they have become a generation that knows when to work and when to have fun. In this context, they have widely benefited from the opportunities offered by technology (Pendergast, 2009); **Generation Z** defines individuals born after the year 2000. The characteristic feature of this generation is their mastery of technology. Generation Z closely follows technological

advancements and quickly adapts to innovations (Singh, 2014). Despite their strong connection with the virtual environment, this generation is also smart, flexible, and open to innovations. Generation Z, who grew up with technological norms, usually meets their social needs via internet technologies. They easily adapt to changes in their lives and quickly access the information they want with the help of technology (Andrea et al., 2016; Lachmann, 2018).

There are noticeable differences in lifestyle and approach to innovations among the demographic groups defined as Generation X, Y, and Z. Generation X generally leads a life deeply connected to traditions. Generation Y, while accepting traditions, also strives to adapt to innovations and changes. When it comes to Generation Z, this group continues their lives by adopting innovations and making them a part of their lives. The approaches of each generation to innovations, habits, and traditions determine the unique characteristic features of the generation (Gürocak, 2013).

Material and methods
Based on the literature review conducted to identify scales for use in the research, it was decided to conduct the study with pre-designed and tested scales. The scale developed by Choi and Sirakaya (2005) was used to test the attitudes towards the impact of tourism on sustainability. Exploratory testing showed the sustainable tourism attitude scale to be normally distributed, with close mean (3.7096) and median (3.7500) values, and skewness (-0.490) and kurtosis (0.663) within acceptable range (+1 / - 1). These results fit the criteria for parametric tests. Table 1 reveals Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.70, indicating internal consistency. Factor analysis using the Varimax method clarified data and caused some item distribution changes.

Tab. 1: Reliability Analysis of Sustainable Tourism Attitude Scale

Cronbach's Alpha	N. Scale Items
,935	44

In order to make the data more explicable and meaningful, factor analysis was conducted using the Varimax method. Consequently, the distribution of items across the dimensions in the ethical and work value scales differed from their original states. Upon examining the variance and eigenvalue coefficients of the scales, it was found that their factorial explicabilities were at a very good level.In the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, coefficients of 0.943 for the scale. The significant value of the scales (0.000) indicates the appropriateness of the data set distribution for the research.

The results of the relational and descriptive analysis are presented in the following section. Variables were also examined according to demographic expressions. The research hypotheses formed accordingly are as follows:

- H1: The attitude towards sustainable tourism differs according to the generation groups of the participants.
- H2: The attitude towards sustainable tourism varies according to the demographic characteristics of the participants.
- Sub-hypotheses H2 a,b,c: The attitude towards sustainable tourism varies among the participants' a) gender b) education c) income groups.

The testing of the hypotheses and the interpretation of the analyses are provided below;

- In the analysis conducted based on the generation groups of the participants, the obtained homogeneity coefficient (0.005) was not within the required range (P>0.05) to ensure homogeneity. In the analysis conducted to detect the significance difference, the Sig (P=0.034) value met the required value (P<0.05). Therefore, the H1 hypothesis was accepted. Dunnett's C Post Hoc analysis, which is used in non-homogeneous data to determine which variables have differences, was applied. The analysis found a high

difference and significant disparity between individuals in the Generation Z group and those in the Generation Y group.

- Upon examining the T-test analysis, it was observed that the Levene value (0,881) is at the expected value for homogeneity (P>0.05). In the significance analysis, the Sig (P=0.009) value met the necessary coefficient (P<0.05). Accordingly, the H2a hypothesis was accepted. In light of this situation, considering the mean differences formed in the analyzed tables, it is observed that female individuals have a significantly higher positive attitude towards sustainable tourism compared to male individuals.

- In the analysis conducted on the education of the participants, the homogeneity coefficient obtained (0.324) is within the required range (P>0.05) to ensure homogeneity. In the analysis conducted to detect significance difference, the Sig (P=0.000) value met the required value (P<0.05). Accordingly, hypothesis H2b was accepted. To determine in which variables there are differences, TUKEY HSD and Scheffe Post Hoc analysis, which is used in homogenous data, was applied. In the analysis, it was determined that there is a significant difference between individuals belonging to the group with high school or lower education level and individuals with Associate and Bachelor's education level. This significant difference shows us a differentiation that is positive as the education level increases.

- In the analysis conducted on the income groups of the participants, the homogeneity coefficient obtained (0.000) did not fall within the required range (P>0.05) to ensure homogeneity. In the significance difference detection analysis, the Sig (P=0.027) value met the required value (P<0.05). Accordingly, the H2c hypothesis was accepted. Dunnett's C Post Hoc analysis, used on non-homogeneous data to determine which variables had differences, was applied. The significant difference obtained after the analysis shows us a difference that is increasing and positive as income level increases. However, there seems to be no difference in the attitudes of individuals with medium, good, and very good income levels after the medium income level.

Results, Discussion and Conclusion

The sustainable tourism approach aims to minimize the negative impacts arising from multidimensional and reciprocal interactions between local populations, visitors, the tourism industry, and the environment. This approach encompasses efforts for the quality and continuity of natural and human-made resources (Paskaleva-Shapira, 2001). On the other hand, while aiming to reduce environmental and social impacts from tourism, sustainable tourism attitudes are important in increasing interactions between local people and tourists, ensuring local people benefit economically from tourism, and involving local people in tourism planning (Patterson, 2016). Many studies have been conducted demonstrating the importance of local attitudes for sustainable tourism development (Choi & Murray, 2010; Dağlı, 2018; Duran, 2013; Huayhuaca et al., 2010; Lee, 2013). This study presents important and original results in terms of comparing the sustainable tourism attitudes of people representing different generations. As a result of descriptive and relational analyses, it was seen that the group with the highest perception of sustainable tourism was the Y generation, followed by the Z generation, and lastly, the X generation. It was found that there was a significant difference between people in the Y generation and the Z generation, with the Y generation's perspective on sustainable tourism being higher than the Z generation. It was detected that the sustainable attitude between generations initially increased and then began to decrease; however, the negative difference was more pronounced between people in the Y generation and the Z generation. In this case, ensuring communication between generations, where losses are as minimal and transitions are as smooth as possible, carries significant importance for sustainability in terms of preserving and transmitting tangible and intangible heritage. Sarıbaş et al. (2016) in a similar study, examined the perceptions of young people in the Z generation about the environment and sustainable development, and found that this young generation was distant to many sustainability concepts included in the study questions. However, a positive approach to sustainable development and sustainable tourism can settle with societal awareness. This awareness can be provided with education given at young ages. Investment in and transfer to the Z generation will take them away from life where consumption occurs without production, and it will create a value with awareness. The study analyzed whether there were differences in the sustainable tourism attitudes of the participants according to gender, income level, and

education level. In variability by gender, it was seen that women have a higher sustainable tourism attitude than men. When data were analyzed according to the education level, it was observed that as the education level of people increased, the sustainable tourism attitude increased positively. Finally, the relationship between the participants' sustainable tourism attitudes according to their income level was analyzed. As a result of the analysis, it was found that the sustainable tourism attitude of those with high income level increases significantly and positively compared to low-income individuals. It was found that there was no difference in sustainable tourism attitudes of people with medium, good, and very good income levels after the middle-income level. In similar studies, Dağlı (2018) examined the sustainable tourism attitudes of the local population according to their ages and found that the Y generation had positive and high-level views in all dimensions of sustainable tourism compared to others. Güneş et al. (2020) in their study in which they researched the attitudes of the local population living in Fethiye towards sustainable tourism, found that there was no significant difference between sustainable tourism attitudes according to gender and education levels of the participants, but there was a difference according to income level. The sustainability of natural and cultural resources and their transmission to future generations is of vital importance for the tourism industry. Therefore, examining the attitudes of the local population in tourism destinations towards sustainable tourism and researching their knowledge and interest levels are recommended for future studies. The views of the local population should be considered when forming tourism policies and planning sustainable development. In future studies, attitudes of tourists visiting the destination towards sustainable tourism can be examined. In addition, projects on the theme of "sustainability" can be proposed with the participation of educators and local administration. Studies comparing the sustainable tourism attitudes of the local population between different destinations can be planned.

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Souhrn

Cílem této studie je zjistit podobnosti a změny v postojích k udržitelnému cestovnímu ruchu napříč generacemi a podrobně popsat zdroje chování v oblasti udržitelného cestovního ruchu u jednotlivých generací. Dalším cílem této studie je zjistit změny v postojích k udržitelnému cestovnímu ruchu na základě různých demografických situací, jako je příjem, vzdělání a pohlaví. Materiál a metoda: Na základě těchto cílů byla studie provedena prostřednictvím online dotazníkové aplikace na jednotlivcích žijících v Turecku. Podle 445 dotazníků získaných z výzkumu byl vytvořen soubor dat nesoucí silné prvky reliability a validity. Získaná data byla podrobena frekvenční analýze pomocí programu SPSS pro získání popisných výstupů a T-testu a analýze ANOVA pro získání relačních výstupů. Zjištění: Z analýzy získaných dat vyplývá, že spotřebitelé pozitivně vnímají dopady udržitelného cestovního ruchu. Mezi generacemi X, Y a Z vnímá udržitelný cestovní ruch nejlépe generace Y, následuje generace Z a poté generace X. Po analýze byl zjištěn významný rozdíl mezi generací Y a generací Z, přičemž názor generace Y na udržitelný cestovní ruch je vyšší než názor generace Z. V případě generace Z byl zjištěn významný rozdíl mezi generací Y a generací Z, kdy generace Y vnímá udržitelný cestovní ruch lépe než generace Z. Na druhou stranu nebyly zjištěny žádné rozdíly v postojích k udržitelnému cestovnímu ruchu podle pohlaví, úrovně vzdělání a příjmové situace. Výsledky: Postoje k udržitelnému cestovnímu ruchu mezi generacemi se zpočátku zvyšovaly a poté se v průběhu času snižovaly, ale negativní rozdíl mezi generací Y a generací Z je výraznější. Dále se ukázalo, že jedinci ženského pohlaví mají pozitivnější a vyšší strukturu postojů k udržitelnému cestovnímu ruchu ve srovnání s muži, úroveň postojů k udržitelnému cestovnímu ruchu se významně pozitivně zvyšuje s rostoucí úrovní vzdělání a jedinci se střední a vyšší příjmovou

úrovní jsou pozitivnější ve srovnání s jedinci s nižšími středními příjmy, jak se ukázalo po analýzách.

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