

Article

Evaluation of Host-Guest Interactions: Demographic Influences on Local Perceptions in Tourism

Gizem Özgürel¹, Afıtap Bulut², Özge Güdü Demirbulat³, Sadife Şimşek⁴, Aydın Ünal⁵

¹Balıkesir University, 10700 Balıkesir, Türkiye. ORCID ID: 0000-0002-1161-3721, ²Zonguldak Bülent Ecevit University, 67830 Zonguldak, Türkiye. ORCID ID: 0000-0003-2598-0781, ³Balıkesir University, 10700 Balıkesir, Türkiye. ORCID ID: 0000-0001-7652-7966, ⁴Sinop University, 57000 Sinop, Türkiye. ORCID ID: 0009-0006-5914-4027, ⁵Sinop University, 57000 Sinop, Türkiye. ORCID ID: 0000-0002-6377-8587

Correspondence: Aydın Ünal, ORCID ID: 0000-0002-6377-8587

Abstract

This study attempted to reveal the perceived benefits of local people hosting tourists in tourism destinations during their interactions with tourists. In order to achieve this aim, the quantitative research method was adopted in the study and the host-guest interaction scale developed by Su & Wall (2010) was adapted to Turkish. Validity and reliability analyses were conducted during the adaptation process of the scale to Turkish and the five-factor structure was confirmed as a result of the confirmatory factor analysis. According to the reliability analysis of the scale, the general internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) of the scale was found to be quite high ($\alpha=0,957$). The reliability coefficients of the sub-dimensions were also high: emotional uplift sub-dimension ($\alpha=0,941$), local pride sub-dimension ($\alpha=0,926$), altruism sub-dimension ($\alpha=0,918$), destination attractiveness sub-dimension ($\alpha=0,942$) and self-development sub-dimension ($\alpha=0,930$). 533 valid data were evaluated in a computer environment using the SPSS Statistics (22.0). When the distribution of the participants according to their descriptive characteristics was examined, it was determined that the majority were male ($n=268$) according to the gender variable, 33 years of age and above ($n=363$) according to the age variable and had a higher education degree ($n=461$) according to their educational status. The total HGI score average of the 533 participants in the study was 5,792 ($sd=0,807$), indicating that the participants generally perceived their interactions with tourists as positive and beneficial. The highest score among the sub-dimensions was 5,901 ($sd=0,919$) for the altruism sub-dimension. This situation shows that the local people find it important to help tourists and create a supportive environment. Destination attractiveness received the lowest score of 5,596 ($sd=0,916$), suggesting that tourists' interest in the region is not perceived as high as other factors. As a result, the research findings reveal that host-guest interactions differ significantly according to demographic variables such as age and education level, while variables such as gender and duration of residence have more limited effects. These findings necessitate the development of tourism policies that are sensitive to the characteristics of the local population, participatory, and culturally aware.

Keywords: Tourism, Locals, Interaction, Travel Behavior, Türkiye

Introduction

For tourism to develop sustainably in a destination over the long term, it is vital to have the support of the local population. The ongoing success of tourism is closely tied to how local people perceive and engage with the industry. Research indicates that tourism not only brings economic benefits to the areas where it thrives but also enhances the quality of life for local residents in meaningful ways. Therefore, incorporating the expectations and needs of local communities into tourism policy formulation is crucial for laying a strong foundation for social development (Sümbül & Erdem, 2022: 1201).

With the global expansion of tourism participation, there has been a notable rise in individuals engaging in touristic activities. This surge brings about various changes in the economic, social, and physical landscapes of destinations heavily impacted by tourism. Many developing countries prioritize tourism for its capacity to generate

foreign exchange earnings, create employment opportunities, and provide direct or indirect benefits to various sectors. However, the social and environmental implications of tourism are frequently overlooked, despite being as significant as its economic impacts. To truly achieve sustainability at a destination, it is essential to consider the environmental consequences of tourism holistically and ensure a balanced development approach that encompasses all aspects of the community (Çolak & Batman, 2021: 150).

Tourism is at the center of transformations in destinations through socio-cultural relationships and interactions. The issue of the interactions between those who visit the destination (guests) and those who live their daily lives in the destination (hosts) continues to attract the attention of academia. Whether the socio-interactions are positive or negative, both in terms of the relationships between the parties and the mutual effects they create are being researched and understood in the tourism literature. Local people/destination communities, which constitute a special and important part of tourism stakeholders play multiple roles in tourism and are constantly affected by tourism development (Su & Wall, 2010: 37-38). In this study, the benefits perceived by local people in tourist-host interaction were tried to be revealed. The scale developed by Su & Wall was adapted to the local people who undertake the hosting role in Türkiye. In this context, both the validity and reliability of the scale were determined, and the perceptions of local people in Türkiye, which attracts attention to its hospitality, regarding the benefits they derive from these interactions were determined. In the study, under the heading of the relevant literature, tourist-host relationships and interactions were tried to be explained, and in the following section, the study was completed by including the research method, findings, results, and discussion.

Conceptual Framework

Tourist-Local Community Interaction

Every year, millions of people travel to different countries or destinations for a wide variety of reasons. It is inevitable for tourists to communicate directly or indirectly with local people in the places they visit, especially during these trips for vacation purposes. This leads to the evaluation of local people as communities that welcome tourists and generally live in a particular destination. Such interactions lead to the formation of different types of relationships between tourists and local people and these relationships produce various social outcomes. The type of relations between tourists and locals largely depends on the characteristics of the social environment common to both groups. Therefore, the intensity and form of interaction are influenced by the structure of that environment (Tekkeli, 2021: 28).

When any relationship between a tourist and a local is seen as an “exchange” and both parties feel that they benefit from the exchange, their willingness to interact increases. The items that are subject to exchange in this kind of interaction are quite wide-ranging. Money, products, services, information, data, and even abstract concepts such as love and kindness are involved in this process. What kind of benefits the individuals on both sides expect from this exchange depends on their intentions. In this process, social exchange theory reveals how it shapes and

sustains the relationship dynamics between tourists and locals (Tabaeeian et al., 2022: 408).

Tourism helps to create a mutual understanding between local communities and visitors through people-to-people communication and interaction. Visitors and local people interact with each other in many ways, ranging from tourists frequently coming together with local people for commercial purposes to simply being in the same place. This interaction can also take the form of travelers asking for information or advice from locals in public spaces such as streets, restaurants, shops, or museums during shopping, travel, or exploration (Shi et al., 2024: 2).

Social interaction refers to all the social connections that individuals share with each other. A large part of individuals' lives consists of different forms of social interaction and this interaction includes formal and informal relationships between individuals. In the tourism marketing process, social interaction consists of interaction between employees and tourists, interaction between tourists, and interaction between hosts and tourists. The important actors in host-tourist interaction are the owners of the destinations that tourists visit and the tourists who visit these destinations. Destination touristic activities include all areas such as eating, accommodation, and traveling. In this process, it is usually the hosts who make the first contact with tourists. Hosts in destinations are not only limited to individuals working in the tourism sector but also include local people who interact indirectly with tourists, although they are not directly involved in this sector (Zhou et al., 2020: 706).

Tourist Travel Behavior

Travel behavior is a concept that describes how tourists act and what kind of activities they participate in during their vacations. This concept covers the entire travel process, including tourists' attitudes and actions before and after their travel. Tourists' travel behavior is a unified examination of the habits of tourists during their travels and the attitudes they develop after their travels, starting from the stage of making a travel decision. From this point of view, the concept of travel behavior is accepted as a dynamic process that includes decision-making, experiencing, and evaluation stages (Demirci & Üstün, 2021: 6). Individuals who show great flexibility in their travel plans and freely determine their preferences within the destinations and tend to visit more than one town and city without being tied to a single area where they are located are defined as travel behavior in the literature (Harman, 2014: 109). The examination of travel motivations within the framework of tourist expectations is extremely important for understanding tourist behavior. Travel motivation is defined as the factors that trigger individuals' desire to travel or have a vacation experience. These motivations are generally explained in the literature with "push" and "pull" factors. Push factors refer to the socio-psychological needs of individuals, while pull factors refer to the attraction characteristics of a destination. A clear identification of tourists' travel motivations enables the development of touristic products that meet their expectations, and this enables the effective management of tourism supply. The demands and needs of tourist groups with different motivations vary. Therefore, the information obtained provides important contributions to marketing activities in product design and destination image-building processes. In addition, identifying tourist motivations in

advance plays a critical role in predicting future travel trends and creating effective marketing strategies (Ayaz & Apak, 2016: 29).

Tourism has become a strategic sector with its contribution to the economies of countries on a global scale and the employment it provides. This situation necessitates the examination of the characteristics and behaviors of tourists with different cultural backgrounds. From this perspective, it becomes possible for destination managers and tourism businesses to better understand the target market and to develop tourism products and services that meet the expectations and needs of tourists. When touristic destinations and businesses formulate strategies based on the trends and demands of tourists in their target markets, they have greater opportunities to increase their sustainability in the market and gain a competitive advantage. The success of this process largely depends on the regular analysis of tourists' profiles and travel behavior. The question "*How compatible is the destination I intend to visit with my needs and expectations?*", which is effective in tourists' choice of a destination and their purchasing decisions, constitutes an important part of this process. Therefore, determining tourist profiles in terms of demographic, geographical, psychological, and similar aspects not only contributes to the development of effective destination management and marketing strategies but also increases the preference rate of the destination and visitor satisfaction (Gezer, 2020: 55-56).

The Effects of Tourist-Local People Interaction on Tourists' Travel Behavior

The interaction between host and tourist is a form of intercultural communication and forms the basis of tourism. These interactions occur due to the various roles of local people in tourism development. The frequency and quality of host-guest interactions depend on various factors on both sides (Qu et al., 2024: 2). Tourist interactions include relations between foreign individuals from different cultures and intercultural communication processes. Intercultural communication involves interactions between individuals from different cultural backgrounds. In this case, personal encounters that occur during international tourism activities are also recognized as intercultural interactions. Cultural contacts that occur in the field of tourism generally include interactions between tourists from different countries and with different cultural backgrounds (Emiroğlu, 2022: 2).

As one of the main elements of tourism, tourist-host interaction takes place through various activities such as tourists using accommodation services, buying local products and souvenirs, and visiting ethnic and cultural attractions. Academic studies generally examine these interactions in terms of interpersonal resource exchange. In this context, the services and products offered by local people provide them with economic benefits. However, these interactions are important not only in terms of economics but also in terms of social interaction. Therefore, tourism is also considered a social process that allows individuals to interact with different cultures and geographies and change their own and host community's attitudes, expectations, and lifestyles (Lastres & Cahyanto, 2020: 7). Tourists' travel purpose has been elaborated in several theories and theoretical approaches and is the focus of much research. Physical and cultural amenities, service quality, natural beauty, and image are considered attractive motivators. On the other hand, personal motives such as the desire to get away from daily life, the desire to have new

experiences, social interaction, and getting to know different cultures are becoming more prominent as push motivation factors. In particular, the image of the destination has an important position in the perception of tourists and can have a decisive effect on destination choice. Since tourists' satisfaction levels and preferences affect their future travel behaviors, regular measurement of these motivations and satisfaction factors is of great importance for effective destination planning and sustainable tourism management (Tatık, 2024: 61-62).

Related Research

Su (2010) examined the views of domestic tourists in China on interactions with their hosts and the effects of these interactions on their travel choices. The results of the study show that these interactions play an important role in tourists' evaluations of destinations and tourists' future travel choices. Çubukçu & Yaylı (2016) investigated the effects of hospitality perception in Anatolia on tourists' satisfaction and loyalty. As a result of the study, they emphasized that the individual, social, and economic aspects of hospitality are important for tourist satisfaction and loyalty, especially generosity and trust in the relationship between the host and the guest.

Köse & Özdemir (2019) examined the hospitality understanding of the residents of Seferihisar, Türkiye's first *cittaslow* destination, tourists' satisfaction, desire to revisit, and destination loyalty. As a result of the study, it was determined that the hospitality of the local people "*especially the elements of willingness and sincerity*" had positive consequences on tourist satisfaction and this satisfaction increased the desire to revisit and loyalty. Lehto (2020) evaluated the relationship between guests and hosts from the perspective of "*joyful tourism*" and emphasized the importance of mutual hospitality and happiness. The author also argued that local people should be at the forefront of organizing tourism experiences. Bi (2024) investigated the impact of host and guest interactions on tourists' citizenship attitudes. The study found that quality interactions increase tourists' positive behaviors through experiential value and destination loyalty.

Method

Data Collection of the Research

In this study, the Host-Guest Interaction Scale (HGI) was used as a data collection tool. The scale was developed to assess the benefits that local people perceive from their interactions with tourists and consists of five sub-dimensions: "*Emotional Uplift*", "*Local Pride*", "*Altruism*", "*Destination Attractiveness*" and "*Self Development*". The scale, which consists of a total of 25 items, is a seven-point Likert-type (1=Strongly Disagree, 7=Strongly Agree) measurement tool in which participants respond to each statement. The Emotional Uplift sub-dimension (HGI1-HGI7) consists of seven items focusing on interactions with tourists being relaxing, enjoyable, and interesting, positively affecting mood and providing a socially uplifting experience. The Local Pride sub-dimension (HGI8-HGI13) includes six items reflecting the perception that local people contribute to values such as promoting their culture, improving the image of their hometown, and breaking regional stereotypes. The altruism sub-dimension (HGI14-HGI17) consists of four items expressing the intention to help tourists, create a supportive atmosphere, and improve their experience. The Destination Attractiveness sub-dimension (HGI18-

HGI21) includes four items that assess tourists' positive perceptions and behaviours toward the destination and their propensity to spend and revisit. The Self Development sub-dimension (HGI22-HGI25) consists of four items evaluating the gains of the individual such as recognizing different cultures, learning new information, and expanding personal horizons through interaction with tourists.

Validity and reliability analyses were conducted during the adaptation process of the scale into Turkish, and the five-factor structure was confirmed as a result of confirmatory factor analysis. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted with the maximum likelihood method and various fit indices were examined to evaluate the fit of the model. The values obtained as a result of the analysis are $\chi^2/df=3,654$, CFI=0,923, GFI=0,909, NFI=0,903, IFI=0,902, TLI=0,899, RMSEA=0,068 and RMR=0,036. These values are within acceptable limits and show that the model exhibits a good fit in general. In particular, CFI, GFI, NFI, and IFI values of 0,90 and above indicate that the model adequately overlaps with the sample data. In addition, RMSEA and RMR values below 0,08 indicate that the error terms of the model are at an acceptable level.

According to the reliability analysis of the scale, the overall internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) was found to be quite high ($\alpha=0,957$). The reliability coefficients of the sub-dimensions are also high: Emotional Uplift ($\alpha=0,941$), Local Pride ($\alpha=0,926$), Altruism ($\alpha=0,918$), Destination Attractiveness ($\alpha=0,942$) and Self Development ($\alpha=0,930$). These results indicate that the scale and its sub-dimensions are highly reliable. In line with the findings obtained, it can be said that the five-factor structure of the scale was confirmed and the measurement tool has structural validity. The diagram of the confirmatory factor analysis is presented in Figure 1.

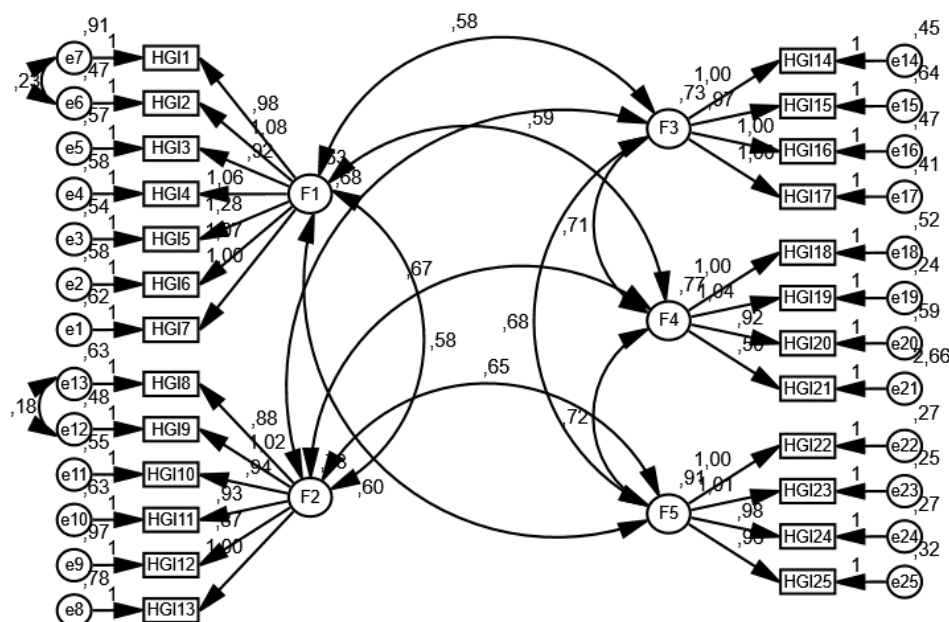


Figure 1. Diagram of Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Statistical Analysis of the Research

The data obtained in the study were evaluated in a computer environment through the SPSS 22.0 statistical program. Frequency and percentage analyses were used to determine the descriptive characteristics of the participants and mean and standard deviation statistics were used to analyze the scale. Kurtosis and Skewness values

were analyzed to determine whether the research variables were normally distributed. In the related literature, the results of kurtosis and skewness values of the variables between +1,5 and -1,5 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013), +2,0 and -2,0 (George & Mallery, 2010) are accepted as normal distribution. It was determined that the variables were normally distributed. Parametric methods were used to analyze the data. Independent groups t-test, ANOVA, and Post Hoc (LSD) analyses were used to examine the differences in scale levels according to the descriptive characteristics of the participants.

Findings

A total of 533 people participated in this study. Of the participants, %49,7 were female (n=265), and %50,3 were male (n=268). When the age distribution of the participants is analyzed, it is seen that %17,8 (n=95) are between the ages of 18-22, %14,1 (n=75) between the ages of 23-32, %35,6 (n=190) between the ages of 33-42, %22,3 (n=119) between the ages of 43-52 and %10,1 (n=54) between the ages of 53-62. In terms of educational status, %13,5 (n=72) of the participants had secondary education and below, %21,0 (n=112) had an associate's degree, %43,0 (n=229) had a bachelour's degree, and %22,5 (n=120) had a postgraduate degree. Regarding the length of residence of the participants, %53,5 (n=285) have lived for 1-5 years, %27,2 (n=145) for 6-10 years, and %19,3 (n=103) for 10 years or more.

Table 1. Distribution of Participants According to Descriptive Characteristics

Groups	Demographic Characteristics	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	265	49,7
	Male	268	50,3
Age	Between 18-22 Years	95	17,8
	Between 23-32 Years	75	14,1
	Between 33-42 Years	190	35,6
	Between 43-52 Years	119	22,3
	Between 53-62 Years	54	10,1
Education Status	Secondary Education and Below	72	13,5
	Associate Degree	112	21,0
	Bachelor's Degree	229	43,0
	Postgraduate Degree	120	22,5
Duration of Residence	1-5 Years	285	53,5
	6-10 Years	145	27,2
	10 Years and Above	103	19,3
	Total	533	100

The mean total score of the 533 participants was 5,792 (sd=0,807), indicating that the participants perceived their interactions with tourists as generally positive and beneficial. Among the sub-dimensions, the highest score belongs to the Altruism sub-dimension with 5,901 (sd=0,919). This indicates that local people find it important to help tourists and create a supportive environment. Destination Attractiveness received the lowest score with 5,596 (sd=0,916), suggesting that tourists' interest in the region is not perceived as high as other factors.

The other sub-dimensions of Emotional Uplift (5,782), Local Pride (5,854), and Self-development (5,805) were rated with high means, indicating that host communities generally view their interactions with tourists as an enjoyable, proud, and uplifting experience. The low standard deviation values suggest that similar evaluations were made among the respondents. These findings suggest that host communities' interactions with tourists offer a mostly positive and culturally enriching experience.

Table 2. Host Guest Interaction Score Averages

	N	Mean	sd	Min.	Maks.	Scale Ratio	Kurtosis	Skewness	Alpha
Host Guest Interaction Total	533	5,792	0,807	1	7	1-7	0,874	-0,274	0,957
Emotional Lift	533	5,782	0,894	1	7	1-7	1,021	-1,457	0,941
Local Pride	533	5,854	0,878	1	7	1-7	0,965	-1,045	0,926
Altruism	533	5,901	0,919	1	7	1-7	0,457	-1,074	0,918
Destination Attraction	533	5,596	0,916	1	7	1-7	0,684	-1,192	0,942
Self Development	533	5,805	0,980	1	7	1-7	0,874	-1,054	0,930

In this study, it was examined whether the total and sub-dimension scores of the host-guest interaction scale (HGI) differed according to gender, age, educational status, and duration of residence variables. According to the results of the independent samples t-test, no significant difference was found in the total scale and sub-dimension scores according to the gender variable ($p>0,05$). This result shows that female and male participants' perceptions of interaction with tourists are similar. Significant differences were found according to the age variable ($p<0,05$). In particular, the scores of the participants in the 18-22 age group were found to be lower compared to other age groups, while individuals in the 33-42 and 43-52 age groups received the highest scores. According to effect size calculations, it was determined that age had a small effect on Host-Guest Interaction Total ($\eta^2=0,054$), Emotional Lift ($\eta^2=0,054$), Local Pride ($\eta^2=0,054$), and Altruism ($\eta^2=0,051$) dimensions and a moderate effect on Destination Attraction ($\eta^2=0,143$). These findings suggest that interactions with tourists are perceived as more positive and beneficial as age increases.

Table 3. Differentiation of Host-Guest Interaction Scores According to Descriptive Characteristics

Demographic Characteristics	n	Host Guest Interaction Total	Emotional Lift	Local Pride	Altruism	Destination Attraction	Self Development
Gender		Mean± SD	Mean± SD	Mean± SD	Mean± SD	Mean± SD	Mean± SD
Female	265	5,763±0,729	5,722±0,846	5,855±0,846	5,908±0,821	5,537±0,843	5,777±0,940
Male	268	5,821±0,877	5,841±0,937	5,853±0,909	5,895±1,009	5,655±0,981	5,833±1,020
t=		-0,836	-1,529	0,019	0,163	-1,489	-0,655
p=		0,403	0,127	0,984	0,871	0,137	0,513
Age		Mean± SD	Mean± SD	Mean± SD	Mean± SD	Mean± SD	Mean± SD
18-22	95	5,449±1,234	5,381±1,339	5,532±1,281	5,571±1,375	4,897±1,197	5,876±1,498
23-32	75	5,780±1,006	5,869±0,962	5,720±1,101	5,800±1,131	5,637±0,999	5,837±1,185
33-42	190	5,952±0,484	5,953±0,629	6,025±0,553	6,084±0,628	5,878±0,644	5,783±0,680
43-52	119	5,892±0,577	5,837±0,720	6,014±0,704	6,042±0,659	5,723±0,736	5,826±0,745

53-62	54	5,631±0,703	5,643±0,743	5,654±0,721	5,667±0,737	5,500±0,779	5,671±0,887
F=		7,498	7,501	7,470	7,055	22,059	0,432
p=		0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,786
PostHoc=		2>1, 3>1, 4>1, 3>5, 4>5 (p<0.05)	2>1, 3>1, 4>1, 3>5 (p<0.05)	3>1, 4>1, 3>2, 4>2, 3>5, 4>5 (p<0.05)	3>1, 4>1, 3>2, 3>5, 4>5 (p<0.05)	2>1, 3>1, 4>1, 5>1, 3>2, 3>5 (p<0.05)	
Education Status		Mean± SD	Mean± SD	Mean± SD	Mean± SD	Mean± SD	Mean± SD
Secondary Education and Below	72	5,806±0,441	5,738±0,536	5,968±0,565	5,840±0,598	5,778±0,612	5,674±0,629
Associate Degree	112	5,861±0,821	5,902±0,860	5,941±0,891	5,960±0,965	5,647±0,901	5,788±1,062
Bachelor's Degree	229	5,679±0,933	5,644±1,015	5,716±1,006	5,813±1,050	5,424±1,034	5,808±1,096
Postgraduate Degree	120	5,935±0,671	5,960±0,810	5,968±0,712	6,050±0,736	5,769±0,785	5,896±0,828
F=		3,069	4,204	3,367	2,014	5,311	0,786
p=		0,028	0,006	0,018	0,111	0,001	0,502
PostHoc=		2>3, 4>3 (p<0.05)	2>3, 4>3 (p<0.05)	1>3, 2>3, 4>3 (p<0.05)		1>3, 2>3, 4>3 (p<0.05)	
Duration of Residence		Mean± SD	Mean± SD	Mean± SD	Mean± SD	Mean± SD	Mean± SD
1-5 Years	285	5,824±0,798	5,837±0,881	5,883±0,853	5,941±0,908	5,654±0,903	5,768±0,965
6-10 Years	145	5,834±0,762	5,778±0,842	5,907±0,818	5,941±0,831	5,779±0,871	5,769±0,884
10 Years and Above	103	5,645±0,883	5,635±0,988	5,701±1,009	5,733±1,049	5,177±0,897	5,959±1,134
F=		2,140	1,927	1,993	2,141	14,985	1,566
p=		0,119	0,147	0,137	0,119	0,000	0,210
PostHoc=						1>3, 2>3 (p<0.05)	

F: Anova Test; t: Independent Groups T-Test; Post Hoc: Tukey, LSD

In the analyses conducted in terms of educational status, significant differences were observed in Host-Guest Interaction Total ($\eta^2=0,017$), Emotional Lift ($\eta^2=0,023$), Local Pride ($\eta^2=0,019$), and Destination Attraction ($\eta^2=0,029$) scores ($p<0,05$). In particular, the scores of associate degree and postgraduate graduates were found to be higher than those of bachelor's degrees. This suggests that increasing educational levels may increase the perceived benefits of interaction with tourists.

A significant difference was found in the Destination Attraction sub-dimension according to the length of duration of residence ($p<0,05$, $\eta^2=0,054$) but no significant difference was found in other sub-dimensions ($p>0,05$). According to the post-hoc analysis, the Destination Attraction scores of individuals who have lived in the same region for 1-5 years and 6-10 years are significantly higher than those of individuals who have lived in the same region for ten years or more. This result suggests that individuals who have lived in the same region for a long time consider the contribution of tourists to the region less important.

Discussion and Conclusion

Research findings show that host communities generally evaluate interactions with tourists positively. The high total Host-Guest Interaction (HGI) score average

(mean=5,792) reveals that hosts perceive their interactions with tourists as satisfactory, meaningful, and useful. This finding is consistent with the findings that host communities achieve positive social outcomes such as cultural enrichment, social belonging, and self-development, which are frequently emphasized in the tourism literature (Zhang et al., 2006; Styliadis, 2016). The high scores obtained in the Self Development (mean=5,805) and Emotional Lift (mean=5,782) sub-dimensions show that relationships with tourists contribute emotionally to hosts and are personally developing. This result supports studies emphasizing that meaningful host-guest relationships, in particular, offer individual benefits in terms of hospitality and mutual learning (Lynch, 1999; Wu et al., 2023). The highest mean score obtained in the Altruism sub-dimension (mean=5,901) shows that local people are willing to help tourists and see hospitality as a social responsibility. This finding is consistent with research showing that hosting is perceived not only as an economic but also as an interaction that strengthens social solidarity (Su & Wall, 2010).

The high score observed in the Local Pride sub-dimension (mean=5,854) shows that tourism creates a sense of belonging and pride in the local culture in hosts. This result is parallel to the literature emphasizing that destination image and local identity are strengthened through interaction with tourists (Styliadis, 2016). However, the lowest mean observed in the Destination Attraction sub-dimension (mean=5,596) suggests that hosts do not perceive tourists' interest in the destination as high as other dimensions. This may indicate that some hosts question the contributions of tourism to the region or see social benefits before financial contributions (Jiang et al., 2024).

When evaluated according to demographic variables, the fact that there is no significant difference in terms of gender reveals that female and male individuals perceive interactions with tourists in a similar way. This finding is parallel to the results that there is no significant difference based on gender in the context of homestay-type accommodation (Lynch, 1999). The significant differences obtained according to age groups show that host-guest interactions are perceived more positively as age increases. The fact that individuals between the ages of 33-52 gave higher scores suggests that these individuals are more satisfied with social relations and cultural encounters (Su & Wall, 2010). The results obtained according to education level are also significant. The fact that associate and postgraduate graduates have higher HGI scores than undergraduate graduates indicates that more educated individuals approach intercultural interactions more openly and understandingly. This situation is also emphasized in studies suggesting that the level of education can increase the quality of social interactions (Tran & Nguyen, 1994). In terms of the duration of residence variable, a significant difference was found only in the Destination Attraction dimension. The lower scores of individuals who have lived in the same region for ten years or more may indicate that long-term residents have become more critical or accustomed to tourism impacts (Jiang et al., 2024). As a result, the research findings reveal that host-guest interactions differ significantly according to demographic variables such as age and education level, while variables such as gender and duration of residence have more limited effects. These findings necessitate the development of tourism policies that are

sensitive to the characteristics of the local people, participatory, and based on cultural awareness.

This research has contributed to the literature by gathering information about the experiences of host communities regarding their interactions with tourists from a theoretical perspective. It has also helped clarify the important aspects of the socio-cultural relations and interactions that have attracted increasing interest from researchers in tourism, in the context of the perception of local people hosting tourists in Türkiye. In this context, the findings of the research offer important results for both researchers and stakeholders in order to strengthen and sustain the interaction between hosts and tourists. Indeed, the existence of positive relations between host communities and tourists is very important in the long-term development of destinations in terms of tourism. In addition, in the tourism sector, which represents a dynamic process as both a communication and interaction element between the host community and the tourist, the evaluation of local people as a part of tourism will make it possible to support tourism development policies and programs. In line with the findings obtained from this research, the five-factor structure of the research scale has been verified and it has been determined that the measurement tool has structural validity. Therefore, based on the results of the research, it can be said that it is possible to use the Host-Guest Interaction Scale-HGI to collect data from host communities in the context of tourist communication and interaction specific to destinations. This research approaches the interaction between host communities and tourists in the context of perceived benefits based on local people. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies should be conducted in which host-tourist interaction can be evaluated from all aspects (economic factors, cultural change/development elements, social costs, environmental factors, etc.) and both positive and negative perspectives. In addition, when the spatial characteristics of a destination are considered an important factor in the interaction between host communities and tourists, it necessitates studies specific to destinations. The relationship and interaction of host communities with tourists is also important within the scope of whether or not it coincides with the expectations of the local people. It is believed that the contribution of studies that consider this situation to the determination of the supporting and hindering factors in these relationships will fill the gap in the relevant literature.

References

- Ayaz, N. & Apak, Ö. C. (2016). Kış Turizmine Katılan Yerli Ziyaretçilerin Seyahat Davranışları: Erciyes Kayak Merkezi Örneği. *Erciyes Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*, 49, 27-43.
- Bi, J., Wang, B. & Lu, F. (2024). Does Host-Guest Interaction Stimulate Tourists' Citizenship Behavior? *Forest Perception and Ecotourism*, 15(7), 1156.
- Çolak, O. & Batman, O. (2021). Turizmin Sosyo-Kültürel Etkileri: Taraklı'da Bir Araştırma. *Güncel Turizm Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 5(1), 149-174.
- Çubukçu, K. & Yaylı, A. (2016). Turistlerin Anadolu Misafirperverliği Algısının Müşteri Memnuniyeti ve Müşteri Sadakatine Etkisi. *İşletme Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 8(1), 282-307.
- Demirci, B. & Üstün, S. (2021). Covid-19 ve Seyahat Riski Algılarının Seyahat Davranışına Etkisi. *Business and Management Studies An International Journal*, 9(4), 1270-1285.

- Emiroğlu, B. D. (2022). Factors Affecting Interactions Between Tourists. *Journal of Gastronomy Hospitality and Travel*, 5(3), 1035-1055.
- George, D. & Mallery, P. (2010). SPSS for Windows Step by Step: A Simple Guide and Reference, 17.0 Update. (10. Edition). Boston: Pearson.
- Gezer, Ö. (2020). Çinli Turist Profili ve Davranışları Türkiye Örneği. *Turizm Çalışmaları Dergisi*, 2(2), 53-64.
- Harman, S. (2014). Bağımsız Seyahat Eden Yerli Gezginlerin Seyahat Motivasyonları Üzerine Bir Araştırma. *Uluslararası Yönetim İktisat ve İşletme Dergisi*, 10(21), 107-128.
- Jiang, X., Li, Y., Yang, J., Wang, S. & Han, C. (2024). Host-Guest Interaction and Sustainable Consumption Behaviour on Sharing-Accommodation Platforms: Using A Big Data Analytic Approach. *Sustainability*, 16(13), 5423.
- Kehto, X., Davari, D. & Park, S. (2020). Transforming the Guest-Host Relationship: A Convivial Tourism Cities, *International Journal of Tourism Cities*, 6(4), 1069-1088.
- Köse, H. H. & Özdemir, E. (2019). Sakin Şehirde Yaşayanların Misafirperverlik Anlayışlarının Yerli Turistlerin Tatmini Tekrar Ziyaret Niyeti ve Sadakati Üzerindeki Etkisi: Seferihisar Örneği. *Türk Turizm Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 3(4), 1371-1389.
- Lastres, B. & Cahyanto, I. P. (2020). Exploring the Host-Guest Interaction in Tourism Crisis Communication. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 24, 2097-2109.
- Lynch, P. (1999). Host Attitudes Towards Guests in the Homestay Sector. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 1(2), 119-144.
- Qu, Y., Zhou, Q. & Cao, L. (2024). How do Positive Host-Guest Interactions in Tourism Alter the Indicators of Tourist General Attachment Styles? A Moderated Mediation Model. *Tourism Management*, 105, 104937.
- Shi, F., Han, X. & Chavez, C.E.S. (2024). Residents Perceived Benefits of Host-Guest Interaction: Scale Development and Validation. *Journal of Travel Research*, 4(2).
- Stylianidis, D. (2016). The Role of Place Image in Tourist Destination Choice: Evidence From A Mediterranean Destination. *Tourism Management*, 52, 456-466.
- Su, M. & Wall, G. (2010). Implications of Host-Guest Interactions for Tourists Travel Behaviour and Experiences. *International Interdisciplinary Journal*, 58(1), 37-50.
- Su, M. & Wall, G. (2010). Implications of Host-Guest Interactions for Tourists' Travel Behaviour and Experiences. *Tourism: An International Interdisciplinary Journal*, 58, 37-50.
- Sümbül, G. & Erdem, B. (2022). Turist Yerel Halk Etkileşimi Açısından Duygusal Dayanışma Ölçeğinin Türkçeye Uyarlanması: Geçerlik ve Güvenirlilik Çalışması. *Türk Turizm Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 6(4), 1199-1216.
- Tabachnick, B. G. & Fidell, L. S. (2013). *Using Multivariate Statistics*. (6th Edition). Boston: Pearson.
- Tabaeian, R., Yazdi, A., Mokhtari, N. & Khoshfetrat, A. (2022). Host- Tourist Interaction, Revisit Intention and Memorable Tourism Experience Through Relationship Quality and Perceived Service Quality in Ecotourism. *Journal of Ecotourism*, 22(3), 406-429.
- Tatık, E. (2024). Turistlerin Seyahat Motivasyonlarının Destinasyon İmajı ve Davranışsal Niyetleri Üzerindeki Etkisi. *Turizm ve Araştırma Dergisi*, 13(1), 61-62.
- Tekkeli, A., (2021). A Qualitative Study on the Interaction Between Tourists and Local People. *Journal of Education and Social Sciences Research*, 2(1), 26-34.
- Tran, T. & Nguyen, T. D. (1994). Gender and Satisfaction with the Host Society Among Indochinese Refugees. *International Migration Review*, 28(2), 323-337.

-
- Wu, X., Han, X. & Moon, H. (2023). Host-Guest Interactions in Peer-to-Peer Accommodation: Scale Development and Its Influence on Guests' Value Co-Creation Behaviors. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 113, 103447.
- Zhang, T., Inbakaran, R. J. & Jackson, M. S. (2006). Understanding Community Attitudes Towards Tourism and Host-Guest Interaction in the Urban-Rural Border Region. *Tourism Geographies*, 8(2), 182-204.
- Zhou, G., Cao, X. & Ling, J. (2020). *The Influence of Host and Guest Interaction on Tourists Loyalty-Taking the Ancient City of Guanxian County as an Example*. International Conference on Social and Human Sciences, 705-713.
-

Publisher's Note/Disclaimer: The statements, opinions, and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of NJH. NJH disclaims responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions, or products referred to in the content.