

A STUDY ON DESTINATION HOSPITALITY: THE CASE OF TÜRKİYE

UM ESTUDO SOBRE A HOSPITALIDADE NO DESTINO: O CASO DA TURQUIA

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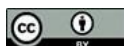
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Abstract

This study assesses the local community's perceptions of tourism hospitality in Türkiye and examines the predictive capacity of these perceptions on attitudes toward tourism effects. Addressing the cultural, social, and emotional dimensions of hospitality, this research posits that the tourism experience is underpinned not only by economic but also by socio-psychological foundations. This study used a quantitative, correlational survey method, collecting 523 online responses using the "Destination Hospitality" and the "Attitudes towards Tourism Effect" scales. The validity and reliability of both scales were evaluated using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The resulting fit indices indicated that the models demonstrated an acceptable level of fit within the Turkish sample. The data analysis involved several statistical techniques: descriptive statistics, regression, correlation, t-tests, and analysis of variance (ANOVA). Findings

Resumo

Este estudo avalia as percepções da comunidade local sobre a hospitalidade turística na Turquia e examina a capacidade preditiva dessas percepções sobre as atitudes em relação aos efeitos do turismo. Abordando as dimensões culturais, sociais e emocionais da hospitalidade, esta pesquisa postula que a experiência turística é sustentada não apenas por fundamentos econômicos, mas também sociopsicológicos. Este estudo utilizou um método de pesquisa quantitativo e correlacional, coletando 523 respostas online usando as escalas "Hospitalidade do Destino" e "Atitudes em relação ao Efeito do Turismo". A validade e a confiabilidade de ambas as escalas foram avaliadas usando análise fatorial confirmatória (CFA). Os índices de ajuste resultantes indicaram que os modelos demonstraram um nível aceitável de ajuste dentro da amostra turca. A análise dos dados envolveu várias técnicas estatísticas: estatística descritiva,



indicated that participants generally held moderate-to-high perceptions of destination hospitality and maintained positive attitudes toward tourism. Hospitality, particularly the dimensions of “hospitable behaviors” and “atmosphere and safety,” was found to significantly predict and enhance positive attitudes toward tourism. Conversely, the influence of the “infrastructure and service facilities” dimension was found to be minimal. Furthermore, demographic analysis revealed that younger, unemployed, and high-income individuals reported higher perceptions of hospitality and held correspondingly more positive attitudes toward tourism. These results underscore that destination hospitality functions as a potent variable in shaping societal attitudes toward tourism.

Keywords: Hospitality. Destination Hospitality. Destination Hospitality Scale. Attitudes Towards Tourism. Türkiye.

regressão, correlação, testes t e análise de variância (ANOVA). Os resultados indicaram que os participantes geralmente tinham percepções moderadas a altas da hospitalidade do destino e mantinham atitudes positivas em relação ao turismo. A hospitalidade, particularmente as dimensões de “comportamentos hospitaleiros” e “atmosfera e segurança”, foi considerada um fator significativo para prever e aumentar as atitudes positivas em relação ao turismo. Por outro lado, a influência da dimensão “infraestrutura e instalações de serviço” foi considerada mínima. Além disso, a análise demográfica revelou que indivíduos mais jovens, desempregados e com alta renda relataram percepções mais altas de hospitalidade e mantiveram atitudes correspondentemente mais positivas em relação ao turismo. Esses resultados ressaltam que a hospitalidade do destino funciona como uma variável potente na formação das atitudes sociais em relação ao turismo.

Palavras-chave: Hospitalidade. Hospitalidade do Destino. Escala de Hospitalidade do Destino. Atitudes em Relação ao Turismo. Turquia.

1 INTRODUCTION

Hospitality, a fundamental element of the tourism industry, is a multidimensional concept extending beyond mere economic activity to encompass cultural, social, and psychological phenomena (Lashley, 2000). Hospitality now functions as a critical component that shapes destination identity, tourist experiences, and the sustainable development of tourism. However, the existing literature has predominantly focused on the economic aspects of hospitality, often overlooking its profound cultural and social dimensions. This highlights the need for a comprehensive reassessment and reinterpretation of the concept within the tourism context. Contemporary tourist motivations are not limited to discovering natural or cultural attractions. Quite the contrary, they increasingly include a desire for authentic experiences and genuine social interaction with the local community. In this context, the communication between tourists and the local populace emerges as a factor directly influencing destination image, tourist satisfaction, and overall destination sustainability. Consequently, how local residents feel

about tourists is crucial for a destination's perceived hospitality, which greatly shapes the community's overall opinion on tourism (Gelbman, 2021; Xiong et al., 2021).

The concept of destination hospitality refers to a comprehensive framework encompassing elements such as the friendly behavior of host communities, a safe and welcoming atmosphere, and the adequacy of service infrastructure. The effective integration of these elements both enhances the quality of the tourist experience and increases destination competitiveness. Therefore, hospitality should be conceptualized not only as an individual attitude but also as a strategic, destination-level element. Throughout its history, Türkiye has served as an area of interaction between diverse cultures and has traditionally placed hospitality at the center of its social values. This cultural context positions Türkiye as a significant case for examining destination hospitality, beyond its evident tourism potential. The local population's practice of hospitality directly shapes tourist perceptions of the country and contributes to the sustainable development of its tourism sector. This study aims to assess perceptions of destination hospitality among the local population in Türkiye and to examine the predictive capacity of these perceptions on attitudes toward tourism impacts. Through an approach that includes the cultural, social, and emotional elements of hospitality, this research addresses the tourism experience within a holistic framework, thereby aiming to contribute a socio-psychologically grounded perspective to the tourism literature.

2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 The concept of hospitality

The phenomenon of hospitality has been the subject of extensive interdisciplinary research for over three decades (Lashley & Morrison, 2000; O'Gorman, 2007: 189; Manfreda & Harkison, 2023: 59). Fundamentally, hospitality denotes the act of welcoming guests in a pleasant manner (Davari & Jang, 2021). The concept is multifaceted and has been defined as the act of providing for guests without expectation of return (Telfer, 2000); a personal virtue or character trait (Telfer, 2000); the emotional essence of the guest-host interaction (Lashley, 2000); and a complex socio-economic, socio-cultural, and/or socio-psychological phenomenon (Tasci & Semrad, 2015).

Narrowly defined, the concept of hospitality relates to the courteous treatment and accommodation of a guest within a house or host country. More broadly, the concept extends to encompass mutual relationships, exchange, sacrifice, and benevolent feelings. As an integral component of cultural heritage, hospitality behaviors facilitate social and cultural interaction, strengthening the bond between a society and its temporary guests.

Recognizing that hospitality transcends its common definition as a term or industry requires an analysis of the relationships it fosters and their consequences. Considering hospitality as an encounter between individuals in asymmetrical positions, governed by unwritten rules and aimed at exchanging experiences for socio-psychological support, highlights the critical importance of understanding the host's perspective (Mendes, 2024). Indeed, host characteristics and attitudes (e.g., sociability, interest, helpfulness, and generosity) are key determinants of guests' perceptions of local hospitality and significantly influence their overall experience (Altınay et al., 2023). This principle extends into the commercial domain, where hospitality involves providing friendly, courteous, and thoughtful service. When customers feel genuinely welcomed and respected, they report greater comfort and higher satisfaction with their experience (Ilham et al., 2023). Hospitality manifests as a lived experience, conceptualized as a present mutually divided between host and guest. According to O'Gorman (2007), the outcome of this interaction is an act of self-sacrifice, perceived by the guest that facilitates the temporary transformation of a stranger into a friend. Building upon this conceptual framework to clarify its empirical components, Pijls et al. (2017) operationalized the hospitality experience. They identified three core dimensions: the invitation experience (openness, freedom), the care experience (empathy, acceptance), and the comfort experience (being relaxed). Notably, Pijls et al. (2017) later found that the invitation dimension has the highest predictive value for the total hospitality experience.

2.2 Tourism and hospitality

Hospitality, a common phenomenon in spaces shared by residents and visitors, is a multifaceted concept studied across disciplines such as theology, anthropology, political science, philosophy, and tourism (Meagher, 2025). Within the tourism sector, hospitality is generally examined through commercial, social, and physical dimensions. Commercial

hospitality refers to the services provided by tourism-related enterprises, such as food and beverage, accommodation, and travel companies (Chau & Yan, 2021). Social hospitality, on the other hand, represents a universal, centuries-old value extended to visitors and tourists within a destination, operating beyond purely commercial transactions. Tourism destinations accommodate diverse groups, including day-trippers, temporary tourists, and migrants. Therefore, examining the hospitality phenomenon at the destination level, encompassing commercial, social, and infrastructural perspectives, enables a macro-level analysis through an integrated approach. In the tourism sector, hospitality, particularly destination hospitality, is often defined from the perspective of a service encounter within a commercial environment. This context frames it as a bilateral relationship between service providers (such as local residents or tourism workers) and service recipients (tourists) (Munasinghe et al., 2022). Commercial hospitality is, however, central to the tourism experience and, more broadly, the destination experience. In this connection, hospitality is frequently viewed as an ancillary service that supports the primary experiences sought at a destination (Osman et al., 2017). Concurrently, hospitality, in all its selective forms, definitively shapes tourist-destination interactions. Consequently, examining hospitality's various manifestations is crucial for understanding the processes that make up tourism experiences and their results. (Lugosi, 2021).

2.3 Destination hospitality

Destinations function as venues that host tourist experiences. The core component of the destination experience is the creation of unforgettable encounters for tourists. Indeed, hospitality is argued to play a critical role in eliciting desirable positive emotional responses (Şahin & Güzel, 2018; Mody et al., 2019). Accordingly, hospitality forms the nucleus of tourist-local community relations and interactions in these experience destinations. The positive effect generated by the atmosphere and facilities offered to tourists demonstrates that the destination is truly hospitable, moving beyond the act of hosting. It is recognized that a destination's hospitality is delivered by numerous hosts or stakeholders (Park & Wiegerink, 2020; Wiegerink & Huizing, 2020). The quality of hospitality offered by a tourist destination is an increasingly valued factor in tourists' destination selection process (Santos et al., 2016). Moreover, since the hospitality at a

destination is a key indicator of its competitiveness, evaluating and monitoring it is crucial in today's increasingly competitive tourism market (Dwyer & Kim, 2003; Walters et al., 2021).

Hosting and hospitality extend beyond welcoming visitors; they involve shared experiences between tourists and the local community, rooted in cultural and traditional approaches (Santos et al., 2016). From this perspective, tourist satisfaction and positive attitudes toward the destination are contingent upon positive human-to-human interaction within tourist-local community relations (Özgürel & Kılıç Şahin, 2021). Ariffin & Maghzi (2012) conceptualize destination hospitality, which integrates concrete and abstract factors in host-tourist interactions, as an "enhanced service" focused on developing exceptional quality within personalized host-tourist relationships. In this context, destination hospitality can be evaluated on a spectrum, ranging from routine commercial transactions (e.g., accommodation and food services) to the development of unique, shared environments that foster powerful emotional connections between individuals and tourist communities (Lugosi, 2008).

3 METHOD

3.1 Research objective and model

The primary objective of this study is to determine the perceptions of destination hospitality among the local population in Türkiye and to examine the impact of these perceptions on attitudes toward tourism's effects. This research conceptualizes hospitality not only as an individual behaviour but also as a significant element shaping social attitudes toward tourism. Accordingly, the study employed a quantitative, correlational survey model, which was selected to ascertain the direction and strength of the relationships between the defined variables.

3.2 Sample and population

The population of the study consists of individuals aged 18 and over living throughout Türkiye. The sample was determined using the convenience sampling

technique, one of the non-probability sampling methods. This method allowed data to be collected from accessible participants. Data were obtained from a total of 523 participants. Demographics like the participants' age, marital status, employment status, gender, and income level were factored into the analysis as control variables

3.3 Data collection process and tools

Data for this study were collected in 2025 using an online survey form. The survey instrument comprised three sections: participant demographic information, the "Destination Hospitality Scale", and the "Attitudes towards Tourism Effect Scale". Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted on the two primary measurement tools. The findings for the "Destination Hospitality Scale" and the "Attitudes towards Tourism Effect Scale" are presented in Figure 1 and Figure 2, respectively. Both scales demonstrated a multidimensional structure consistent with their theoretical foundations, and the resulting model fit indices were within the accepted threshold values recommended in the literature. Detailed values regarding the CFA results are provided in Table 1.

Figure 1
Factor Structure of the Destination Hospitality Scale

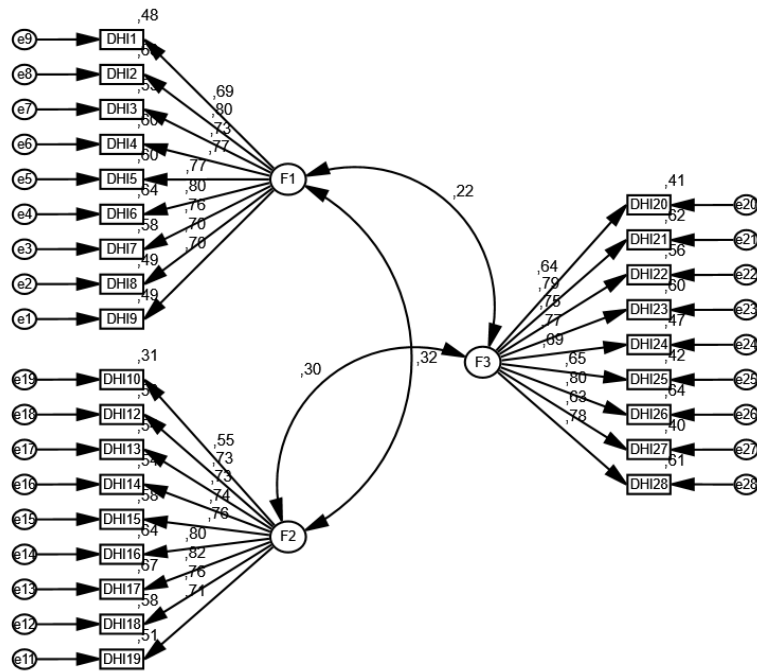
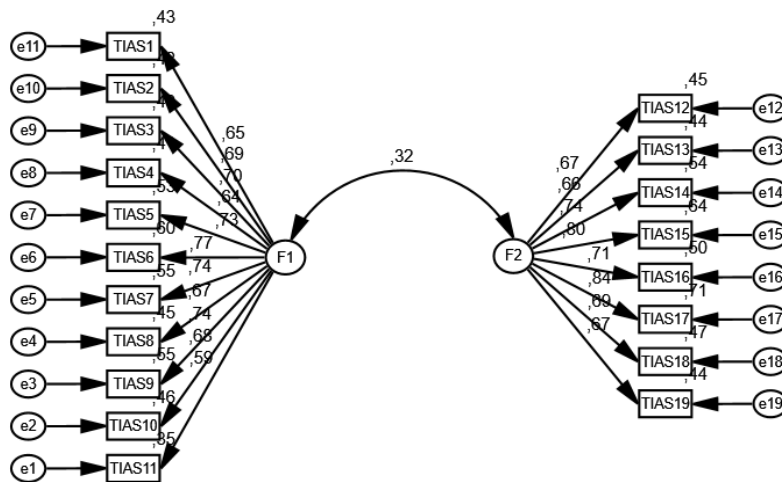


Figure 2
Factor Structure of the Attitudes towards Tourism Effect Scale



The fit indices obtained from the “Confirmatory Factor Analysis” (CFA) performed on the “Destination Hospitality Scale” ($\chi^2/df=1.587$, GFI=0.929, CFI=0.975, TLI=0.973, RMSEA=0.034, RMR=0.045) reveal that the model demonstrates an excellent level of fit. When compared to the threshold intervals specified by Kline (2016)

and Hu & Bentler (1999), these values indicate a high level of model fit. The scale's three-factor structure, comprising hospitable behaviors, infrastructure and service facilities, and atmosphere and security, was confirmed in the Turkish sample, with factor loadings ranging from 0.554 to 0.817. These values indicate that each item is highly associated with its respective dimension. The scale's overall reliability coefficient was found to be Cronbach's $\alpha=0.935$. The reliability coefficients for the sub-dimensions are also quite high: hospitable behaviors ($\alpha=0.933$), infrastructure and service facilities ($\alpha=0.920$), and atmosphere and security ($\alpha=0.915$). These findings demonstrate that the scale possesses high internal consistency, both overall and at the sub-dimension level.

Similarly, the "Confirmatory Factor Analysis" (CFA) findings regarding the "Attitudes towards Tourism Effect Scale" also indicate that the scale's two-dimensional structure (support for tourism development and contributions of tourism to society) is valid in the Turkish culture. The fit indices for the scale ($\chi^2/df=2.128$, GFI=0.936, CFI=0.964, TLI=0.959, RMSEA=0.046) are within acceptable limits and show that the model has a good level of fit. The factor loadings, ranging from 0.590 to 0.844, reveal that the items have a strong relationship with the factors to which they belong. The scale's overall reliability coefficient was calculated as Cronbach's $\alpha=0.937$. The sub-dimension reliability coefficients are $\alpha=0.928$ for support for tourism development and $\alpha=0.930$ for tourism's contributions to the community. These values demonstrate that the scale has high internal consistency and measures reliably.

Table 1

Fit Indices

Fit Indices	Fit Values of the Destination Hospitality Scale	Fit Values of the Attitudes towards Tourism Effect Scale	Threshold Values	Reference
χ^2	509,485	321,350		
df	321	151		
χ^2/df (CMIN/DF)	1.587	2.128	$0 \leq \chi^2/df \leq 5$	Kline (2016)
RMR	.045	.052	$0.05 \leq RMR \leq 0.08$	Hooper, Coughlan & Mullen (2008)
GFI	.929	.936	$0.80 \leq GFI \leq 0.95$	Kline (2016)
NFI	.936	.934	$0.90 \leq NFI \leq 1.00$	Hu & Bentler (1999)
RFI	.930	.925	$0.90 \leq RFI \leq 1.00$	Hu & Bentler (1999)
IFI	.975	.964	$0.80 \leq IFI \leq 1.00$	Hooper, Coughlan & Mullen (2008)
TLI	.973	.959	$0.80 \leq TLI \leq 1.00$	Hooper, Coughlan & Mullen

				(2008)
CFI	.975	.964	$0.90 \leq CFI \leq 1.00$	Hu & Bentler (1999)
RMSEA	.034	.046	$0.05 \leq RMSEA \leq 0.08$	Hu & Bentler (1999)

In conclusion, the CFA results for both scales show that the model fit indicators are within the acceptable limits suggested in the literature, the factor loadings are highly significant, and the scales are highly reliable. These findings confirm that the “Destination Hospitality Scale” and the “Attitudes towards Tourism Effect Scale” can be used as valid and reliable measurement tools in the Turkish sample.

3.4 Data analysis

The data obtained in the study were analyzed using the SPSS 22.0 statistical program. Frequency and percentage analysis were used to determine the descriptive characteristics of the participants, and mean and standard deviation statistics were utilized in the examination of the scale. To determine whether the research variables exhibited a normal distribution, Kurtosis and Skewness values were examined (Table 3). The variables were determined to be normally distributed, with skewness and kurtosis values meeting the criteria set by Tabachnick & Fidell (2013) and George & Mallery (2010) (between +1.5 and -1.5 or +2.0 and -2.0). This allowed for the use of parametric tests. The analysis involved Pearson correlation and linear regression to assess relationships between scale dimensions. Additionally, t-tests, ANOVA, and post hoc (Tukey, LSD) analysis were used to test for differences based on the employees’ descriptive characteristics.

4 FINDINGS

4.1 Demographic findings regarding participants

Of the participants in the study, 47.8% were 30 years and under, 62.9% were female, 65.2% were single, 50.3% were not working and 65.2% were in the middle-income group (Table 2).

Table 2*Demographic Characteristics of Participants (n= 523)*

Groups	(n)	(%)	Groups	(n)	(%)
Age			Employment Status		
30 years and under	250	47.8	Related to tourism	60	11.5
31-40 years old	86	16.4	Not related to tourism	155	29.6
41-50 years old	134	25.6	Retired	45	8.6
51 years and over	53	10.1	Not working	263	50.3
Gender			Income Status		
Male	194	37.1	Low-income	127	24.3
Female	329	62.9	Middle-income	341	65.2
Marital Status			High-income		
Married	182	34.8		55	10.5
Single	341	65.2			

4.2 Findings regarding descriptive statistics

The overall mean for the Destination Hospitality Scale was determined to be 3.92 ± 0.94 . When the sub-dimensions are examined, it is seen that the “Atmosphere and Security” dimension has the highest mean at 3.96 ± 1.02 , while the “Infrastructure and Service Facilities” dimension has the lowest mean at 3.87 ± 1.06 . The mean for the “Hospitable Behaviors” dimension is 3.94 ± 1.02 , showing a distribution parallel to the overall mean. The overall mean for the Attitudes towards Tourism Effect Scale was calculated as 4.36 ± 1.22 . When viewed from the perspective of sub-dimensions, the “Support for Tourism Development” dimension has the highest value, with a mean of 4.77 ± 1.40 . In contrast, the mean of 3.99 ± 1.35 obtained in the “Contributions of Tourism to Society” dimension (Table 3).

Table 3*Mean Scores for Destination Hospitality and Attitudes towards Tourism Effect (n= 523)*

	Mean	Sd.	Min.	Max.	Scale range	Kurtosis	Skewness
Destination Hospitality Overall	3.924	0.936	1.210	7.000	1-7	0.854	1.392
Hospitality Behaviors	3.942	1.016	1.000	7.000	1-7	0.156	1.228
Infrastructure and Service Facilities	3.872	1.058	1.000	7.000	1-7	0.639	1.180
Atmosphere and Security	3.964	1.022	1.440	7.000	1-7	-0.563	1.033
Attitudes towards Tourism Effect Overall	4.357	1.224	1.000	7.000	1-7	-0.158	0.471
Support for Tourism	4.767	1.397	1.000	7.000	1-7	-1.174	0.108

Development							
Contributions of Tourism to Society	3.988	1.353	1.000	7.000	1-7	0.370	0.593

4.3 Findings regarding correlation analysis

The correlation analysis confirmed a positive and significant relationship between Destination Hospitality and Attitudes towards Tourism Effect ($p < 0.01$). A moderate-to-strong positive correlation ($r = 0.563$) was found between the overall Destination Hospitality score and the overall Attitudes towards Tourism Effect score. When examined at the sub-dimension level, similarly positive and significant relationships were identified between all dimensions; hospitable behaviors ($r = 0.505$), infrastructure and service facilities ($r = 0.469$), and atmosphere and security ($r = 0.561$), with tourism attitudes. These findings indicate that as the perceived level of hospitality in destinations increases individuals' attitudes towards tourism also strengthen (Table 4).

Table 4

Correlation Analysis between Destination Hospitality and Attitudes towards Tourism Effect

		Destination Hospitality Overall	Hospitality Behaviors	Infrastructure and Service Facilities	Atmosphere and Security
Attitudes towards Tourism Effect Overall	r	0.563**	0.505**	0.469**	0.561**
	p	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Support for Tourism Development	r	0.432**	0.377**	0.347**	0.457**
	p	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Contributions of Tourism to Society	r	0.566**	0.518**	0.484**	0.540**
	p	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

** < 0.01 ; Pearson correlation analysis

4.4 Findings regarding regression analysis

In the first model, the Overall Destination Hospitality Score was included as the independent variable, and the Overall Attitudes towards Tourism Effect Score was the dependent variable. According to the results, destination hospitality is a significant predictor of attitudes towards tourism ($B = 0.736$, $\beta = 0.563$, $t = 15.532$, $p < 0.001$). The model's explanatory power (R^2) is 0.315, which indicates that destination hospitality

explains approximately 31.5% of the variance in attitudes towards tourism. The Durbin-Watson coefficient of 1.844 shows that there is no autocorrelation problem in the model. These findings reveal that an increase in the overall level of hospitality in destinations strengthens individuals' positive attitudes towards tourism. In the second model, the dimensions of hospitable behaviors, infrastructure and service facilities, and atmosphere and security were collectively included in the analysis. According to the regression results, the model was found to be significant overall ($F=90.443$, $p<0.001$), and it was determined that the independent variables together explain 34% ($R^2=0.340$) of the attitude towards tourism. When evaluated at the sub-dimension level, the variables of hospitable behaviors ($B=0.293$, $\beta=0.243$, $p<0.001$) and atmosphere and security ($B=0.509$, $\beta=0.425$, $p<0.001$) were found to have a positive and significant effect on attitudes towards tourism. In contrast, the effect of the infrastructure and service facilities dimension was not statistically significant ($B=-0.044$, $p=0.548$) (Table 5).

Table 5

The Effect of Destination Hospitality on Attitudes towards Tourism Effect

Independent Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p	%95 Confidence Interval	
	B	SE	β			Lower	Upper
Destination Hospitality Overall	0.736	0.047	0.563	15.532	0.000	0.643	0.829
*Dependent variable=Overall attitudes towards tourism effect, $R=0.563$; $R^2=0.315$; $F=241.229$; $p=0.000$; Durbin-Watson Value=1.844							
Hospitable Behaviors	0.293	0.065	0.243	4.531	0.000	0.166	0.420
Infrastructure and Service Facilities	-0.044	0.072	-0.038	-0.601	0.548	-0.186	0.099
Atmosphere and Security	0.509	0.070	0.425	7.239	0.000	0.371	0.647
*Dependent variable=Overall attitudes towards tourism effect, $R=0.586$; $R^2=0.340$; $F=90.443$; $p=0.000$; Durbin-Watson Value=1.870							

4.5 Difference test analysis results of the research

According to the ANOVA results by age group, statistically significant differences were found in the dimensions of hospitable behaviors ($p=0.014$) and contributions of tourism to society ($p=0.005$). Post-hoc analysis showed that participants aged 30 and under had significantly higher scores in both dimensions compared to other age groups. This indicates that younger individuals have a more positive perception of

hospitality in destinations and more positive attitudes regarding the contributions of tourism to society. In the t-test results based on the gender variable, no significant differences were detected in any dimension ($p > 0.05$). This finding shows that male and female participants have similar evaluations regarding both destination hospitality and attitudes towards tourism. Analysis based on the marital status variable also found no significant differences in any sub-dimensions ($p > 0.05$). This result indicates that married and single participants have similar levels of perception and attitudes concerning destinations and tourism (Table 6).

ANOVA results according to the employment status variable revealed significant differences in all sub-dimensions ($p < 0.05$). Specifically, it was determined that unemployed individuals had higher mean scores in both the overall destination hospitality score and its sub-dimensions compared to those working in non-tourism-related fields. Furthermore, tourism sector employees also have high scores in some dimensions. This result shows that individuals who are actively involved in the tourism sector or are unemployed approach tourism and destination hospitality more positively.

In the analysis by income level, significant differences were found in the dimensions of overall destination hospitality ($p = 0.026$), infrastructure and service facilities ($p = 0.043$), atmosphere and security ($p = 0.032$), overall attitudes towards tourism effects ($p = 0.002$), support for tourism development ($p = 0.034$), and contributions of tourism to society ($p < 0.001$). According to post-hoc analysis, participants in the high-income group had significantly higher scores in terms of both destination hospitality and attitudes towards tourism effects compared to low and middle-income groups. This finding indicates that as income level increases, individuals' perceptions and attitudes towards tourism strengthen positively.

When evaluated generally, participants' attitudes towards destination hospitality and tourism effects differ significantly according to age, employment status, and income level; however, they show similarity based on gender and marital status. It was concluded that young, unemployed, and high-income individuals, in particular, evaluate tourism more positively and have higher perceptions of hospitality in destinations.

Table 6

Differences in Destination Hospitality and Attitudes towards Tourism Effect Scores based on Descriptive Characteristics

Demographic characteristics	n	Destination hospitality overall	Hospitable behaviors	Infrastructure and service facilities	Atmosphere and security	Attitudes towards tourism effect overall	Support for tourism development	Contributions of tourism to society
Age		Mean. ± SD	Mean. ± SD	Mean. ± SD	Mean. ± SD	Mean. ± SD	Mean. ± SD	Mean. ± SD
30 and under	250	4.04±1.03	4.09±1.12	3.95±1.10	4.08±1.07	4.42±1.25	4.66±1.34	4.21±1.38
31-40	86	3.84±1.05	3.83±1.14	3.84±1.22	3.86±1.16	4.33±1.36	4.91±1.44	3.80±1.56
41-50	134	3.84±0.74	3.81±0.82	3.86±0.95	3.84±0.87	4.24±1.16	4.80±1.46	3.74±1.17
51 and over	53	3.74±0.63	3.74±0.57	3.58±0.76	3.90±0.85	4.39±1.03	4.94±1.39	3.89±1.16
F=		2.565	3.557	1.786	2.237	0.642	1.094	4.398
p=		0.054	0.014	0.149	0.083	0.588	0.351	0.005
Post Hoc=			1>2, 1>3, 1>4 (p<0.05)					1>2, 1>3 (p<0.05)
Gender		Mean. ± SD	Mean. ± SD	Mean. ± SD	Mean. ± SD	Mean. ± SD	Mean. ± SD	Mean. ± SD
Male	194	3.90±0.91	3.96±1.03	3.80±1.01	3.94±0.98	4.33±1.15	4.63±1.38	4.06±1.23
Female	329	3.94±0.95	3.93±1.01	3.92±1.08	3.98±1.05	4.38±1.27	4.85±1.40	3.95±1.42
t=		-0.534	0.329	-1.265	-0.396	-0.452	-1.788	0.880
p=		0.593	0.742	0.207	0.692	0.652	0.074	0.362
Marital Status		Mean. ± SD	Mean. ± SD	Mean. ± SD	Mean. ± SD	Mean. ± SD	Mean. ± SD	Mean. ± SD
Married	182	3.88±0.79	3.86±0.80	3.86±1.03	3.91±0.88	4.36±1.19	4.88±1.38	3.88±1.33
Single	341	3.95±1.01	3.99±1.11	3.88±1.07	3.99±1.09	4.36±1.25	4.71±1.41	4.05±1.37
t=		-0.856	-1.386	-0.192	-0.840	-0.026	1.396	-1.343
p=		0.358	0.127	0.848	0.401	0.979	0.163	0.180
Employment Status		Mean. ± SD	Mean. ± SD	Mean. ± SD	Mean. ± SD	Mean. ± SD	Mean. ± SD	Mean. ± SD
Related to tourism	60	3.87±0.49	3.82±0.60	3.75±0.46	4.05±0.77	4.64±1.09	5.25±1.27	4.09±1.14
Not related to tourism	155	3.71±0.83	3.75±0.86	3.65±0.99	3.73±0.98	4.27±1.27	4.75±1.48	3.84±1.38
Retired	45	3.82±0.78	3.87±0.96	3.93±1.05	3.65±0.63	3.95±0.93	4.44±1.35	3.51±0.89
Not working	263	4.08±1.06	4.10±1.15	4.02±1.17	4.14±1.11	4.41±1.25	4.72±1.37	4.13±1.43
F=		5.728	4.255	4.585	7.040	3.176	3.311	3.660
p=		0.001	0.006	0.004	0.000	0.024	0.020	0.012
Post Hoc=		4>2 (p<0.05)	4>2 (p<0.05)	4>2 (p<0.05)	1>2, 1>3, 4>3 (p<0.05)	4>2, 1>2, 1>3, 4>3 (p<0.05)	1>2, 1>3, 1>4 (p<0.05)	4>2, 1>3, 4>3 (p<0.05)
Income		Mean. ± SD	Mean. ± SD	Mean. ± SD	Mean. ± SD	Mean. ± SD	Mean. ± SD	Mean. ± SD
Low-income	12	3.95±0.94	3.99±1.07	3.88±1.00	4.00±1.02	4.30±1.26	4.64±1.38	4.00±1.41

Middle-income	7 34 1	3.87±0.89	3.88±0.94	3.82±1.05	3.90±1.00	4.29±1.19	4.74±1.40	3.88±1.28	
High-income	55	4.23±1.12	4.20±1.27	4.20±1.16	4.28±1.14	4.91±1.24	5.21±1.35	4.64±1.51	
F=		3.678	2.519	3.165	3.450	6.467	3.414	7.805	
p=		0.026	0.082	0.043	0.032	0.002	0.034	0.000	
Post Hoc=		3>2 (p<0.05)		3>2 (p<0.05)	3>2 (p<0.05)	3>1, 3>2 (p<0.05)	3>1, 3>2 (p<0.05)	3>1, 3>2 (p<0.05)	3>2

F: ANOVA Test; t: Independent Samples T-Test; Post Hoc: Tukey, LSD

5 CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

This study sought to reveal the perceptions of destination hospitality among the local population in Türkiye and to examine the decisive role of these perceptions on attitudes toward tourism's effects. The findings indicate that hospitality functions not only as an individual behavior but also as a social element shaping the tourism experience. According to the analysis, participants perceived the overall level of destination hospitality as moderate to high. Assessments of the "atmosphere and safety" dimension were highest, followed by the "hospitable behaviors" and "infrastructure and service facilities" dimensions, respectively. This finding reveals that a safe, warm, and friendly social environment is considered a primary indicator of hospitality. In contrast, evaluations of "physical infrastructure and services" were relatively lower. When examining attitudes toward the effects of tourism, participants generally demonstrated a positive outlook. The high mean score in the "support for tourism development" dimension, in particular, indicates strong valuation of tourism's economic and social sustainability and support for increasing tourism activities. A relatively more cautious approach was observed in the "contributions of tourism to society" dimension, suggesting that while the positive effects of tourism are recognized, some reservations persist.

Correlation and regression analysis revealed a strong, positive, and significant relationship between destination hospitality and attitudes toward tourism. Specifically, the "hospitable behaviors" and "atmosphere and safety" variables were found to be significant predictors of tourism attitudes. Conversely, the effect of the "infrastructure and service facilities" dimension was not statistically significant. This key finding indicates that positive attitudes toward tourism are shaped primarily by human interactions, the social atmosphere, and perceptions of safety, rather than by physical

infrastructure.

Analysis of demographic variables revealed that age, income level, and employment status yielded significant differences in both hospitality perceptions and attitudes toward tourism. Specifically, younger individuals, unemployed participants, and those in the high-income group demonstrated more positive tourism attitudes and reported higher perceptions of hospitality. In contrast, gender and marital status were not found to be statistically significant factors.

Evaluating the results holistically, destination hospitality emerges as a strong determinant of positive attitudes toward tourism. The helpfulness, sincerity, and trust-based behaviors exhibited by the local community were found to enhance supportive attitudes toward tourism activities. Therefore, hospitality should be conceptualized not only as an individual-level attribute but as a critical element that strengthens a destination's social capital and contributes to the success of sustainable tourism policies.

In the Turkish context, given the cultural origins of hospitality, it can be argued that this value holds significant strategic potential for the socio-cultural sustainability of tourism. Practices that promote the active participation of the local populace in tourism processes and foster mutual interaction with tourists will both strengthen the destination image and enhance destination loyalty.

In conclusion, this study has demonstrated that destination hospitality is a fundamental variable that shapes both the quality of the tourism experience and societal attitudes towards tourism. To develop the competitive power of tourism destinations and support sustainable development, hospitality must be embraced as a core value, not only within the service sector but at the entire local community level.

The findings of this study indicate that destination hospitality is a significant element that shapes the tourism experience and strengthens societal attitudes towards tourism. The findings largely parallel the studies in the existing literature. Specifically, the approach by Tasci and Semrad (2015), which defines hospitality as a socio-psychological construct that arouses an emotional response, supports the results obtained in this research. The fact that participants' positive attitudes towards tourism are directly related to the dimensions of hospitable behaviors and social atmosphere reveals that the emotional and social aspects of hospitality are more effective than its economic components. Similarly, Lugosi (2021) and Mendes (2024) evaluate destination hospitality

as an element that determines the quality of cultural interactions between the local populace and tourists. In this study, it was concluded that trust-based, warm, and sincere relationships increase the perceived attractiveness of the destination. Therefore, destination hospitality is a factor that affects not only tourist satisfaction but also social sustainability in tourism. Another important finding from the research is the limited effect of physical infrastructure and service facilities on attitudes towards tourism. This situation indicates that in modern tourism, visitors evaluate their experiences not only based on physical conveniences but also on social relationships, cultural authenticity, and the quality of human contact. Consequently, in destination management, priority should be given not only to infrastructure investments but also to programs aimed at increasing the local populace's hospitality awareness and capacity for social interaction.

This study focused solely on the perspective of the local community, and the perceptions of tourists as well as the direct observation of tourist-local interactions were not included. In light of these limitations, future research should be conducted with larger and more representative samples, employing multi-method data collection approaches to enable a more comprehensive assessment of destination hospitality and attitudes toward tourism. Comparative destination hospitality analysis could be conducted between different regions or cultures. By using qualitative research methods (e.g., in-depth interviews or focus group studies), the social foundations and emotional dimensions of hospitality can be examined more deeply. Structural equation models can be created to test the indirect effects of hospitality perception on tourist satisfaction, destination loyalty, and brand loyalty. Furthermore, forms of virtual hospitality displayed in digital environments (e.g., in social media interactions) could be evaluated as a new area of research. In conclusion, this research has proven, in the Turkish sample, that hospitality is a fundamental element of cultural capital that supports the social sustainability of tourism. Increasing the level of hospitality among the local populace will both enrich the tourists' destination experience and support the long-term development of tourism. Therefore, addressing the phenomenon of hospitality within a holistic framework when planning tourism policies is of critical importance for the competitiveness and cultural continuity of destinations.

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Authors' Contribution

All authors contributed equally to the development of this article.

Data availability

All datasets relevant to this study's findings are fully available within the article.

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