

Research Article

A Neighborly Visit: A Qualitative Study on Understanding the Travel Motivations and Potential Travel Constraints of Turkish Tourists Travelling to Greece

Komşu Ziyareti: Yunanistan'a Seyahat Eden Türk Turistlerin Seyahat Motivasyonlarını ve Potansiyel Seyahat Engellerini Anlamak Üzerine Nitel Bir Çalışma

Merve DOĞAN

Asst. Prof. Dr., Bilecik Şeyh Edebali University

Faculty of Applied Science

merve.dogan@bilecik.edu.tr

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0695-4177>

Makale Geliş Tarihi	Makale Kabul Tarihi
17.01.2026	13.03.2026

Abstract

In recent years, Greece, with its extensive coastline and numerous islands, has emerged as one of the most popular vacation destinations in the Mediterranean Basin. Tourism statistics from Greece reveal a significant influx of visitors from Türkiye, one of its neighbouring countries, a trend that is also supported by Turkish tourism data. Accordingly, this study aims to explore the travel patterns and motivations of Turkish tourists who have previously visited Greece, using the Push and Pull Factors framework and a qualitative research approach. In addition, the study seeks to identify potential travel constraints among those who have travelled to Greece multiple times. The qualitative study involved 17 semi-structured interviews with Turkish travellers from diverse demographics, key push and pull factors influencing travel to Greece were identified. The main push factors include a sense of relief and freedom, a desire for variety, reconnecting with cultural or emotional roots, and visiting friends or family. Among main pull factors, affordability, gastronomic elements, proximity, reference groups, cultural similarities stand out. On the other hand, potential constraints affecting the intention to revisit Greece include rising travel costs, health or age-related issues, political tensions between Türkiye and Greece, the search for alternative destinations, and a perceived decline in travel satisfaction. Therefore, understanding both motivating factors and potential constraints is essential for developing strategies aimed at sustaining and enhancing Turkish tourists' intention to revisit Greece, while also providing insights for improving tourism destinations in Türkiye and encouraging domestic travel among Turkish tourists to similar destinations.

Keyword: Travel motivations, push and pull factors, travel constraints, Greece, Greek Islands

JEL Classification: Z32, L83

Öz

Yunanistan uzun kıyı şeridi ve çok sayıda adasıyla son yıllarda Akdeniz Havzası'nın en popüler tatil destinasyonlarından biri haline gelmiştir. Yunanistan'a ait turizm istatistikleri, komşu ülkelerden biri olan Türkiye'den gelen ziyaretçi sayısında belirgin bir artış olduğunu göstermekte; bu eğilim Türk turizm verileri

Önerilen Atf /Suggested Citation

Doğan, M., 2026, A Neighborly Visit: A Qualitative Study on Understanding the Travel Motivations and Potential Travel Constraints of Turkish Tourists Travelling to Greece, *Üçüncü Sektör Sosyal Ekonomi Dergisi*, 61(1), 1024-1047.

tarafından da desteklenmektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, daha önce Yunanistan'ı ziyaret etmiş Türk turistlerin seyahat örüntülerini ve motivasyonlarını İtici ve Çekici Faktörler çerçevesinde nitel araştırma yaklaşımı temelinde incelemektir. Ayrıca, Yunanistan'a birden fazla kez seyahat etmiş bireylerin gelecekteki potansiyel seyahat kısıtlarının belirlenmesi de hedeflenmektedir. Farklı demografik özelliklere sahip 17 Türk turist ile gerçekleştirilen yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmelere dayalı olarak, Yunanistan'a seyahati etkileyen temel itici ve çekici faktörler ortaya konmuştur. Başlıca itici faktörler; rahatlama ve özgürlük hissi, çeşitlilik arayışı, kültürel ya da duygusal köklerle yeniden bağ kurma isteği ile arkadaş ve akraba ziyareti olarak belirlenmiştir. Temel çekici faktörler arasında ise uygun fiyatlılık, gastronomik unsurlar, coğrafi yakınlık, referans grup etkileri, kültürel benzerlikler öne çıkmaktadır. Öte yandan, Yunanistan'ı yeniden ziyaret etme niyetini etkileyebilecek potansiyel kısıtlar arasında artan seyahat maliyetleri, sağlık veya yaşa bağlı sorunlar, Türkiye ile Yunanistan arasındaki siyasi gerilimler, alternatif destinasyon arayışı ve seyahat memnuniyetinde algılanan düşüş yer almaktadır. Bu bağlamda, motivasyon sağlayan unsurlar ile potansiyel kısıtların anlaşılması, Türk turistlerin Yunanistan'ı yeniden ziyaret etme niyetini sürdürmeye ve artırmaya yönelik stratejilerin geliştirilmesi açısından önem taşımakta; aynı zamanda Türkiye'deki turizm destinasyonlarının geliştirilmesi ve benzer destinasyonlara yönelik yurt içi seyahatin teşvik edilmesine de katkı sağlayabilecek içgörüler sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Seyahat motivasyonları, itici ve çekici faktörler, seyahat engelleri, Yunanistan, Yunan Adaları*

JEL Sınıflandırması: *Z32, L83*

1. Introduction

For decades, tourism scholars have sought to understand why people travel. It is often assumed that rest, relaxation, escape from everyday life are the main drivers of travel (Crompton, 1979). However, the complex nature of human behaviour, uncertain nature of decision processes, combined with the presence of a large number of exogenous factors, require a comprehensive perspective to understand the reasons behind tourists' travel behaviour. Furthermore, travel motivations can be easily influenced and changed by individuals' past experiences, popular culture, socio-economic conditions, technological opportunities, pandemics, disasters and similar extraordinary events (Carvache-Franco, Alvarez-Risco, Carvache-Franco, Carvache-Franco & Del-Aguila-Arcentales, 2022, p.337; Guo, Lu, Huang, Zhao & Zhao, 2024, pp.1-2) It is therefore difficult to provide a universal model of travel motivations for specific destinations or for specific types of tourism. The fact that tourism is considered a non-essential consumption context is an important obstacle to this universalism. For this reason, although the literature of travel motivations seems to be quite rich, there is always a need for a different perspective.

The remarkable tourism statistics of Greece, which has become a popular vacation destination within the Mediterranean Region in recent years, have led us to wonder what might be the motivations behind preference of Greece by tourists from certain countries. According to Institute of the Greek Tourism Confederation' (INSETE), the number of foreign visitors to Greece has increased significantly in recent years. Foreign visitors increased by 10.2% compared to 2023 and approached 38 million in 2024 (INSETE, 2024). The year 2024 marked a milestone for Greek tourism, with 38 million foreign visitors boosting country's tourism revenues to around 21 billion euros (GTP Editing Team, 2025). Similarly, data obtained from the Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK) reveal a comparable increase in outbound travel from Turkey to Greece, a neighboring country of Greece. According to TUIK data, the number of Turkish citizens travelling from Türkiye to Greece was approximately 467.000 in 2012, while it was reported to be over 1 million in 2023 and 2024 (TUIK, 2024). Moreover, the highest increase in terms of road arrivals (29%) was recorded in the number of visitors from Türkiye (Karabulut, 2025). It is known that Greece has become a popular destination for Turkish citizens, especially after COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, Türkiye is considered as an important target market for Greece (Uysal, 2025). Even though there is a wide range of studies on tourist motivations (Baloglu & Uysal, 1996; Crompton, 1979; Harman, Cakici & Akatay, 2013; Kim, Lee & Klenosky, 2003; Pearce & Caltabiano, 1983; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994; Wang, 2016) in the tourism literature, none has specifically examined the push and pull factors influencing Turkish travelers' motivation to visit Greece. However, destination-based motivation research has focused on visitors from non-European or distant markets. This is also the case for the few studies that have been conducted in terms of travelling to Greece. For instance, Assiouras, Skourtis, Koniordos & Giannopoulos (2015), compare the push and pull motivations of Japanese, Chinese, and Korean tourists traveling to Greece. In this case, Greece is a long-haul destination for those East Asian countries. Assiouras et al. (2015) suggested that travel motivations could serve as a basis for market segmentation across national contexts. However, they adopted quantitative methods and they

used questionnaires which contents the push and pull motivational items to explore travel motivations of Asian tourists to Greece. While numerous have examined tourist motivations in distant or generalized markets, empirical research focused specifically on motivations from geographically and culturally proximate countries such as Türkiye appears to be limited (Bozok & Köroğlu; Kalogirou & Velissariou, 2024; Mohammad & Som, 2010; Uysal, 2025). The current flow of visitors from Türkiye to Greece (TUIK, 2024), along with the increasing tendency of Turkish citizens to travel abroad (TUIK, 2026), serves as the push factor for this research, and the literature gap becomes even more apparent when considering the significant travel flow from Türkiye to Greece in recent years.

The aim of this paper is twofold. First, it seeks to explore the travel patterns and motivations of Turkish tourists who have travel experience to Greece previously. Second, it aims to understand the potential travel constraints for whom have multiple travel experiences to Greece and those who intend to travel again. The current exploratory research is conducted based on qualitative methods. To this extend, semi-structured interviews were carried out with 17 Turkish nationals who had travelled from Türkiye to Greece within the previous year. Through thematic analysis, travel motivations to Greece were identified, classified and discussed in the context of push and pull travel motivations. In addition, the fact that most of the participants had travelled to Greece multiple times, provided a different perspective to the research. Namely, rather than focusing on revisit intentions solely, we examined the potential constraints that individuals would be discouraged from travelling to Greece. Based on the current visitor mobility from Türkiye to Greece, simultaneous examination of Turkish tourists' travel motivations and potential travel constraints may provide important outputs for destination management organizations and tourism industry of both countries. The findings are expected to contribute to key parameters in destination marketing, such as market segmentation, target market identification, and destination promotion strategies, for both Greece and comparable European destinations.

This paper is organized as follows. First, concepts of travel motivation and travel constraints are described and research questions are presented. Also, popularity of Greece as a vacation spot is highlighted. In the method, research approach and research design are described. Afterwards, descriptive findings and research questions related findings regarding are presented. Accordingly, it is discussed how the findings relate to the previous literature and their theoretical and managerial implications. Finally, research limitations and suggestions for further research are presented.

2. Conceptual Background

2.1. Travel Motivations

From the very beginning, people either adapted to the conditions necessary to meet their essential needs, such as food, shelter, security and worship, or relocated to reach favourable conditions. Namely, these movements which were formed the basis of travel, stemmed from obligatory circumstances. Over time, these were also carried out for cultural and recreational purposes through the impact of curiosity and discoveries. Due to the commercialization of the movements and the economic benefits it generates for destinations, these movements were included in the scope of tourism if met certain conditions (Urry, 2002). With the concept of travel acquiring a greater place in people's lives, the reasons behind people's travelling activities began to be investigated and the concept of travel motivation has emerged. Pearce (2011) defines travel motivation as a subset of human motivation shaped by biological and cultural forces that influence choice, behaviour, and experience. Motivation is a driving and pulling force behind all of an individual's behaviour and is considered to be an important variable that explains tourist behaviour as well (Iso-Ahola, 1982). In tourism research, motivation is a fundamental variable for a better understanding of tourists' travel and destination choices (Baloglu & Uysal, 1996). Essentially, travel motivations are the factors that stimulate people to go to different destinations (Pizam, Neumann & Reichel, 1979, p.195). The concept of travel motivation is an important determinant of tourists' decision-making and purchasing decision processes (Baloglu & Uysal, 1996; Kim, 2012) and can be defined as a set of various needs that lead people to a tourism activity (Crompton, 1979, p.410; Pizam et al., 1979 p.195). Motivation research in tourism and destination studies mostly aims to understand, analyze and interpret tourists' behaviours, make predictions about behaviours, and guide tourists' preferences and purchasing decision processes. However, given the complexity and versatility of human behaviour, no single model or approach has been sufficient to understand individuals' travel decisions

and motivations, and different perspectives have been needed over the years. Early studies on travel motivation, generally aimed to answer the question “why do people travel?” (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1981; Iso-Ahola, 1982). Push and Pull Factors approach is the common approach on travel motivation in the literature (Baloglu & Uysal, 1996; Kim et al., 2003; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994; Wang, 2016; Yuan & McDonald, 1990 etc.). According to this approach, travel motivations are the factors that push an individual to leave home and travel and that pull an individual to choose a particular destination (Huang & Hsu, 2009, p.32; Uysal, Li & Sirakaya, 2008). Recent research updates the conventional Push and Pull Factors approach and emphasizes that motivations for short-distance destinations such as safety, familiarity and economic accessibility have gained importance, especially in the post-pandemic period (Metaxas, Juárez & Andrinós, 2022; Wen & Huang, 2019).

Pull factors refer to destination related factors (Crompton, 1979, p.410). Cultural and historical landmarks, urban and architectural structure, natural beauty, diversity of flora and fauna, cleanliness of an environment, cultural characteristics of local people, accommodation and transportation facilities, recreation activities are known as the main pull factors of a destination. Furthermore, discounted flight tickets, visa facilities, or friends and relatives residing in the destination can play as a pull factor (Baloglu & Uysal, 1996; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Yuan & McDonald, 1990 etc.). The pull factors of a destination contribute to the preference of it and provide a competitive advantage among other destinations. Pull factors may differ from one country to another, as well as differ for destinations within the same country (Huang & Hsu, 2009). On the other hand, push factors are individual dependent factors that come before the choice of destination in a travel planning process. Escape, feeling of freedom, relaxation, having a fun, seeking novelty or adventure, socializing, personal development or achievement and similar intrinsic socio-psychological motives can be considered as push factor (Crompton, 1979; Lin & Nawjin, 2020; Pizam et al. 1979; Pearce & Lee, 2005; Yoo & Uysal, 2005)

To date, there appears to be no empirical research specifically examining the push and pull factors influencing Turkish tourists’ travel to Greece, highlighting the originality of this study. Within this context, the Push and Pull Factors approach is adopted, and travel motivation is defined as any factor that motivates residents of Türkiye to visit Greece. Accordingly, the current explanatory research aims to answer the following questions:

RQ1: What motivates Turkish tourists to travel to Greece?

RQ2: What are the push and pull factors influencing Turkish tourists’ decisions to visit Greece?

2.2. Travel Constraints

Travel motivations refer to the positive driving forces behind an individual's decision to travel. In other words, they encompass the social and psychological factors that contribute positively to the desire to engage in travel (Leong, Yeh, Hsiao & Huan, 2015, p.82). Meanwhile, travel constraints are the factors that negatively influence individuals’ travel decisions and serve as barriers that may hinder or prevent travel from taking place (Huang & Hsu, 2009, p.32). While individuals’ decisions to travel are influenced positively by push and pull factors that encourage travel; constraints influence travel decisions negatively. Despite the appealing aspects of a destination, constraints can adversely affect travel decisions and may lead to a decrease in revisit intentions (Harman, 2014). Regarding the term *constraints* (Crawford, Jackson & Godbey, 1991; Gilbert & Hudson, 2000; Hung & Petrick, 2010; 2012), there are different usages among researchers such as *risks* (Moutinho, 1987; Sonmez & Graefe, 1998), *inhibitors* (Um & Crompton, 1992), and *barriers* (Hsu & Lam, 2003). However, these terms are identical or very similar in terms of the underlying meanings. Travel constraints can be defined as factors that hinder the continuity of travel, limit the ability to engage in travel, prevent an increase in travel frequency or the maintenance of existing travel habits, and/or negatively affect the quality of the travel experience (Hung & Petrick, 2010, p. 207).

The inclusion of both positive (motivations) and negative triggers (constraints) regarding Turkish tourists’ travels to Greece within the same study is what makes this research original. It is believed that addressing both travel motivations and potential travel constraints in relation to a specific destination can provide valuable contributions to the tourism literature as well as practical insights for industry practitioners. In today’s increasingly competitive tourism environment, destination managers who seek to stand out and be preferred must not only understand individuals’ travel motivations but also recognize

the constraints that may hinder potential visitors from travelling. Effective management of a destination's image requires not only an understanding of travellers' motivations but also a comprehensive awareness of the constraints against destination preference. In this context, it is essential to develop destination marketing strategies aimed at transforming negative perceptions into positive ones and to implement preventive measures that address potential travel constraints (Lai, Li, & Harrill, 2013). Within the scope of this research, the term *constraint* refers to any perceived factor that prevents Turkish travellers from revisiting Greece despite their willingness to do so. Based on the conceptual background, this study sought to identify potential constraints to travel to Greece for individuals who have previously travelled to Greece and still intend to do so again. In this regard, the current research also aims to answer the following question:

RQ3: What are the potential constraints affecting Turkish tourists' travel to Greece?

,2.3. Greece As a Popular Destination

Tourism constitutes a key driver of economic development in Greece. For several decades, mass organized tourism has been the predominant growth model strategically adopted by most Greek destinations. Since the 1970s, with the onset of the "industrialisation" of the tourism product, tourism in Greece has become increasingly standardised and homogenised (Terkenli & Coccossis, 2024, pp.171-177). As a result, this process has hindered the country's ability to differentiate its tourism product over time. Intensifying competition has reshaped the dynamics of the global tourism market. In this context, Greece faces the challenge of strengthening its position internationally while addressing long-standing structural issues through a sustainable tourism development framework. (Tsartas, Papatheodorou & Vasileiou, 2014).

Greece is located in southeastern Europe, within the Mediterranean region. As of May 2025, Greece has a population of 9.949.911, according to Worldometer's analysis based on the most recent United Nations data (Worldometers, 2025). The country has a total area of 131.957 km², comprising three main geographical areas. The country's largest geographical component is its peninsular mainland, extending from Central Greece in the south to the region of Thrace in the north. In addition, the Peloponnese Peninsula forms a distinct area, separated from the mainland by the Corinth Isthmus Canal. Greece also comprises approximately 6.000 islands and islets dispersed across the Greek seas, of which only 227 are inhabited. The Greek coastline is highly diverse, featuring long stretches of beaches, sheltered bays and coves, sandy shores and dunes, pebble beaches, wetlands and deltas, sea-carved caves, and dark-coloured sands found in volcanic regions. (Visit Greece, 2025). On the other hand, approximately 80% of the country consists of mountains or hills, making Greece one of the most mountainous countries in Europe. Furthermore, Greece has a coastline of 16.000 km, 7.500 km of which surrounds the islands of the Greek archipelago (Tsartas et al., 2014). Some of the attractions and sources regarding Greek tourism are cultural attractions, sea, extensive coastline, local flora and fauna, natural reserves and protected areas, forests, lakes, traditional villages, castles, unique heritage sites recognised by UNESCO (Visit Greece, 2025; Discover Greece, 2025; Tsartas et al., 2014).

Greece and Türkiye, as two neighbouring countries located in the Mediterranean Basin, are both prominent tourism destinations that share similar characteristics in terms of their natural resources, cultural and historical heritage, and geographical location. Despite the notable similarities between the two countries in terms of their coastlines, cuisines, and many cultural traditions and customs, since 2012 and particularly in the post-pandemic period, there has been a steady increase in the number of Turkish tourists choosing Greece as an international travel destination (Anadolu Agency, 2024; OECD, 2024). In 2012, Greece introduced a visa-on-arrival or express visa scheme covering the islands of Rhodes, Kos, Kastellorizo (Meis), Chios, Samos, Symi, and Lesbos. In the following years, the visa-on-arrival scheme was extended to include the islands of Patmos, Symi, Leros and Kalymnos, thereby allowing Turkish tourists to travel to these islands by obtaining a visa upon arrival (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs-MFA, 2025). These types of visas are valid for a maximum of seven days and are limited to the specific island for which the application is made; it does not permitted travel to other islands or to mainland Greece. Regular ferry services, which operated on a daily basis or at varying frequencies depending on demand, connect several ports in Türkiye to nearby Greek islands. Specifically, ferries depart from İzmir, Ayvalık, and Çanakkale to Lesbos; from the Port of Çeşme

(İzmir) to Chios; from the Ports of Bodrum and Didim to Kos and Leros; from Bodrum to Kalymnos, Symi, and Patmos; from Bodrum, Marmaris, and Fethiye to Rhodes; and from the Port of Kaş (Antalya) to Kastellorizo (Meis). In 2024, a total of 8.629 ferry services operated from Ports of Türkiye to the Greek Islands, transporting approximately 1.153.727 Turkish tourists. This substantial increase, representing a 93% rise compared to the previous year, highlights a remarkable growth in cross-border tourism activity between the two countries, particularly in the context of short-haul travel facilitated by the visa-on-arrival policy and improved transportation infrastructure (SETE, 2024).

In addition, travelling by road from Türkiye to Greece is also very popular. According to Institute of the Greek Tourism Confederation' (INSETE) Statistical Bulletin for 2024, the number of visitors entering Greece from Türkiye's border gates increased by 29.5% in 2024 compared to the previous year (INSETE, 2024). The majority of entries from Türkiye to Greece occur through the Ipsala Border Gate, located in Edirne province, along with the Pazarkule Border Gate, which is primarily used for same-day visits. Turkish citizens can enter Greece without a visa if they hold a green (special), grey (service), or black (diplomatic) passport, while those with a burgundy (ordinary) passport are required to obtain a valid Schengen visa (MFA, 2025). Turkish travellers entering Greece by road most frequently prefer to visit the cities of Alexandroupoli, Kavala, and Thessaloniki. Among those travelling by air, the most frequently visited destination is the capital city, Athens (INSETE, 2024). While 447.908 Turkish citizens visited Greece in 2012, this number exceeded 1.5 million in 2024. Specifically, the number of Turkish tourists visiting Greece in 2024 rose by nearly 29% from the 1.17 million reported in 2023 (Yildiz, 2025). In the first ten months of 2024, Turkish tourists contributed approximately 810 million euros to the Greece economy (Turizm Aktuel, 2025).

Due to its geographical and cultural proximity, as well as the facilitation of visa procedures, Greece has become an increasingly popular alternative holiday destination to the Turkish coast for Turkish travellers in recent years. Moreover, the increasing prevalence of travel-related content about Greece shared by Turkish influencers on social media platforms (Uysal, 2025) such as YouTube and Instagram have generated positive word-of-mouth, thereby enhancing the destination's attractiveness (Blogger, n.d; Ceren Ceylan, 2023; Farklı Şeyler, 2024; Gezmeyi Bilican, 2023; Japon Hamza, 2024; Sayim, n.d; Uzunmakarna, 2024; Yilmaz, nd. Etc.). Based on the notable mobility from Türkiye to Greece and popularity of Greece as a destination, the current study aims to explore travel motives and motivations of Turkish tourists regarding travelling to Greece. Also, it is aimed to understand the potential barriers to visiting Greece of individuals who visited Greece multiple times and still have a revisit motivations.

3.Method

3.1. Research Design

The current study adopts a qualitative research design and is based on semi-structured interviews conducted by the author with Turkish nationals who had travelled to Greece within the previous 12 months. Given that the study focuses on the travel motivations of tourists from a specific country to a specific destination within a defined time period, a non-probability sampling approach was adopted. Accordingly, purposive sampling was used to identify participants. To enhance the reliability of the study and reduce potential recall bias, only individuals who had undertaken at least one leisure trip during this period were included. This criterion strengthened internal validity by ensuring the recency and accurate recall of participants' travel experiences. The interviews were conducted between 29/11/2025 and 20/12/2025. Prior to data collection, ethics approval for the study was obtained from the Bilecik Şeyh Edebali University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee on 27.11.2025 (Decision No. 26/3).

Interviews were conducted with 17 participants from diverse demographic backgrounds, each lasting between 20 and 30 minutes, and were carried out at a time and location convenient for the participants. Some participants were also given the option of a phone interview if they were not able to meet in person (Moylan, Derr & Lindhorst, 2015); thus 10 interviews were conducted in person and 6 interviews were conducted via mobile phone. Also, interviews were conducted and recorded in the native language (Turkish) of the interviews. The questions of the semi-structured interview were developed based on both the relevant literature and expert opinions. To establish the validity of the interview form, the preliminary draft was reviewed by five experts specializing in tourism and qualitative research, and the

instrument was refined based on their feedback. The current version of the questions consist of demographic identification questions (such as gender, age and occupation) and 8 main open-ended questions. The interview questions are presented at the Appendix.

At the beginning of interview, each participant was informed about the research, asked whether participate or not and the consent form approved so that voice recording the interview. This step is important in terms of increasing the construct validity of qualitative research (Yin, 2003). To ensure reliability criteria, variation were provided among the participants in terms of their demographics (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Interview were transcribed manually the author. Data was analysed using thematic analysis. According to Bryman (2012), thematic analysis is widely used to gain a theoretical understanding of one's data. The insights obtained, then, contribute to existing literature. Thematic analysis involves several analytical steps, starting with an immersive review of the data by the researchers to generate initial codes. These codes were then expanded into themes, which were subsequently checked with the codes and raw data to determine and define the final themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Based on the expert opinions and discussions among the authors related to consensus and disagreements on the data, transcripts revised, organized simplified for coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Miles & Huberman, 1994). To process the data of interviews into the related themes, categories and codes so that attain the study's objectives, MAXQDA 24 data analysis software which is data analysis program for qualitative and mixed methods was used. Regarding content analysis of the data findings are presented in the following section.

3.2. Findings

The findings are presented across two sections. First, the descriptive findings, including demographics and travel patterns to Greece, are presented. Second, the findings related to research question and objectives, including motivations, intentions to revisit, and barriers to revisit regarding travelling to Greece, are presented.

3.2.1. Descriptive Findings

3.2.1.1. Demographics of Participants

Some basic demographic information about the participants is presented in Table 1. Regarding the gender distribution of the participants, 37.5% were male and 62.5% were female. Participants' ages ranged from 35 to 63; with an average age of approximately 48 years. In terms of occupation, efforts were made to achieve maximum variation; however due to the authors' social networks, the sample included a relatively higher number of academics and civil servants.

Table 1. Demographic Findings

Number of Participants	Gender	Age	Occupation
Participant 1	Female	47	Academician
Participant 2	Male	39	Engineer
Participant 3	Male	58	Academician
Participant 4	Female	40	Civil servant
Participant 5	Female	55	Nurse
Participant 6	Female	41	Housewife
Participant 7	Female	44	Astrologist
Participant 8	Female	62	Accounted
Participant 9	Male	35	Lawyer
Participant 10	Female	44	Financial Consultant
Participant 11	Female	36	Credit Manager
Participant 12	Female	35	Teacher
Participant 13	Male	63	Retired

Participant 14	Male	56	Academician
Participant 15	Female	59	Retired
Participant 16	Male	60	Civil Servant
Participant 17	Female	35	Social Media Influencer

3.2.1.2. Travel Patterns of the Participants

Based on the data, travel patterns of participants are presented on Table 2. In addition, a word cloud illustrating the most frequently preferred destinations is presented in Figure 1. As seen on the table, all the participants visited Greece within 2025. It is supposed that the current limitation of date strengthens the reliability of data regarding participants' memories regarding experiences and travel motivations. Additionally, participants were asked about their general preferred time of year to travel to Greece. Accordingly, summer and late summer emerged as the most preferred periods. The findings show that *july*, *august* and *september* are the popular months among the participants. There are often family or friends accompanied to the participants. Travelling to Greece alone is not preferred (except Participant 5 & 13). Since Turkish culture is a collective and interdependent, this finding is not surprising. In terms of visit repetition, all participants (Except Participant 7) travelled to Greece multiple times. This finding strengthens basis of motivations travel to Greece. Also, we asked participants' purpose of visit Greece. Answers were *for vacation purposes* mostly. Besides, some of the participants state various purposes such as shopping, transit, job related, family / friends visit, cultural etc.

Table 2. Travel Patterns

Number of Participant	Number of Visits to Greece	Travel Companion	Preferred Transportation	Type of Visa/Passport	Date of Recent Travel
Participant 1	3	Family, Friends	Car, Ferry	Green Passport	September, 2025
Participant 2	20	Family, Friends	Car	Schengen Visa	September, 2025
Participant 3	3	Alone, Family	Car, Ferry	Green Passport	August, 2025
Participant 4	2	Family, Friends	Ferry	Green Passport	July, 2025
Participant 5	4	Family, Friends, Alone	Car	Schengen Visa	November, 2024
Participant 6	6	Family, Friends	Ferry, Plane	Schengen Visa	May, 2025
Participant 7	1	Family	Plane	Schengen Visa	July, 2025
Participant 8	3	Alone, Friends	Plane, Ferry	Green Passport	August, 2025
Participant 9	5	Family	Car	Schengen Visa	December, 2024
Participant 10	3	Family	Car, Plane	Schengen Visa	August, 2025
Participant 11	2	Family, Friends	Car, Ferry	Schengen Visa	July, 2025
Participant 12	4	Family	Car	Schengen Visa	August, 2025
Participant 13	10	Alone, Family	Car	Schengen Visa	September, 2025
Participant 14	4	Family, Friends	Car, Ferry	Green Passport	August, 2025
Participant 15	4	Family, Friends	Car, Bus, Ferry	Green Passport	September, 2025
Participant 16	2	Family, Friends	Car, Bus, Ferry	Green Passport	October, 2025
Participant 17	5	Alone, Friends	Car, Plane	Schengen Visa	November, 2025

Within the scope travel patterns, word cloud was created by MAXQDA 24 data analysis software regarding popular destinations visited (Figure 1). Considering that participants predominantly preferred travelling to Greece during the summer months, it is not surprising that the destinations highlighted in the word cloud are mainly islands and summer holiday destinations.



Figure 1. Word Cloud* for Popular Destinations of Greece

**Limited by minimum 2 repeats and 8 words*

3.2.2. Findings Related to Motivations, Revisit Intention and Constraints to Revisiting

Following the descriptive questions, participants were asked about their motivations for travelling to Greece and their intention to revisit. The final question focused on potential constraints affecting revisit intentions; accordingly, participants were asked under which circumstances they would be unwilling to revisit Greece (see Appendix). Based on the thematic analysis, travel motivations to Greece were classified into 11 themes, which are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Travel Motivations

Research Theme: Travel Motivations	
Sub-Theme	Codes
Costs	→Cheaper than Türkiye, free of charge beaches, affordable in general, affordable in terms of food/accommodation, shopping for less.
Gastronomy-	→Large portion size, high quality food, delicious food, diversity of sea food, price-performance ratio in food
Feeling of relief/freedom	→Being free, relief, peace of mind, calmness, being free from haste, simplicity, free from exaggeration
Cultural Similarity	→Natives have similar behaviours such as being friendly and helpful, similarity to Turkish foods, similarity of taste, comfort in speaking Turkish, being understand in Turkish
Reference Groups	→ Recommendation of friends, popular in social media, popular destination among family & friends
Interpersonal Relationship	→Tracing family roots, fun with family/friends, visiting family members/ friends
Close Distance	→ Close /near to Türkiye, neighbour, easy to reach, convenient transportation
Natural Beauty	→Beauty of nature, beauty of sea, cleanliness of sea & beaches
Diversity Seeking	→Visiting different places, alternative to the coasts of Türkiye, experiencing different cultures
Historical & Cultural Attractions	→museums, exhibitions, historical heritage, Greece culture, historical/cultural treasures
Resident Attitudes	→Helpful, hospitality, friendly, warm, kind

The findings indicate that Turkish tourists have various motivations for travelling to Greece. It is noticed that cost related motivators are the most influential ones. That is each participants stressed on

affordability compared to Türkiye. As well known, accommodation, dining, beaches, shopping etc. are the essential parts of a vacation. Participants confirm that Greece is an affordable destination in terms of vacation expenses. Some of the answers in relation to costs as a travel motivation are as follows:

“...I went there to be happy with my money. The first time I went there was 11 years ago. When Turkish Lira was strong in terms of exchange rate; Greece was in a difficult economic situation. So everything was cheap there. However, Euro is stronger than Turkish Lira recently, it is still cheaper compared to Türkiye. (Participant 1)”

“...Once I experienced Greece, I realized that we get worse service for more money in Türkiye. Compared to our county, you have to go to very expensive beach club for the same standards with Greece. Price- performance ratio of services is better there. I can enjoy my vacation without going to very expensive places.(Participant 2)”

“Prices are very reasonable for the islands. It is affordable not only in terms of food and drink but in every aspect. Compared to Türkiye in terms of accommodation, transportation, sightseeing, eating and drinking, many things that concern tourists are affordable...(Participant 8)”

“...Similar concept beaches in Türkiye charge inflated entrance fees. Whereas in Greece, entrance fee is not requested for most beaches, rather they are operated with a spending limit...(Participant 11)

Gastronomic elements are the other most driven motivators to travel Greece. To elaborate, satisfactory portion sizes, variety of sea foods, price-performance ratio of foods are the featured attractive in terms of gastronomy. Some of the answers given by the participants in relation to culinary are as follows:

“...Another thing that motivates me is food. There are delicious and rich food varieties in almost every restaurant. Greece is especially rich in seafood...(Participant 12)”

“...Especially the affordability of food and drink is an important motivation for us. In addition, portions are large, dishes are delicious, and foods are suitable for the Turkish palatal delight...(Participant 10)”

The fact that Greece is one of the neighbours of Türkiye, motivates Turkish tourists to travel both in terms of closer distance and cultural similarities. Moreover, residents’ attitudes to Turkish tourist is one of the motivator related to neighbourhood. Some of the answers confirm that as follows:

“...Its distance is another reason for preference. It's nice to be able to go to abroad by car. Since it is closeness, I would like to go more often if I had get a chance. If I had time, I would go Alexandroupoli every weekend, enjoyed foods and came back...(Participant 14)”

“...There are also similarities with Turkish culture. For example, the food culture is very similar to ours, and it is similar in terms of hospitality and helpfulness...(Participant 8)”

“...It is an advantage that it is close distance. After a short trip, we are in a different country...(Participant 9)”

“..I can't speak foreign language. But there are so many Turkish people both working and living there that we do not have any difficulties in communication. There is always someone who understands our language and helps us. Even Greeks know a little Turkish. Natives are helpful and friendly to Turkish people. Once there was no available seating in a restaurant and we were about to leave. One of Greek staff realized that we're Turkish and he immediately arranged a table by the sea and put an additional table. We liked it very much...Participant 13)”

“Natives are helpful, friendly and warm. They have similar behaviours to Turkish culture. Also, foods are similar to Turkish foods...(Participant 10)”

One of the key motivational themes emerging from the interviews is the influence of reference groups. Participants frequently referred to recommendations and experiences shared by close social circles, as well as the visibility of destinations on social media platforms (Uysal, 2025), as important factors shaping their motivation to travel to Greece. These references functioned as trusted sources of information, reducing perceived risk and enhancing destination attractiveness. The following excerpts from the interviews illustrate how reference group influence contributed to participants’ travel motivations.

“...It aroused my curiosity because many people around me had visited Greece, and it also appeared frequently on my social media feeds. Its popularity attracted my attention...(Participant 15)”

“...Many people around me had visited Alexandroupoli and spoke highly of it. I also saw on social media that it is a beautiful city. Both its frequent appearance on social media and the positive comments from people in my close circle motivated me to visit...(Participant 16)”

Natural environment, historical and cultural heritage of a destination are the essential pull factors in the context of travelling abroad or international tourism (Mohammad & Som, 2010; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994; Uysal, McGehee & Loker-Murphy, 1996; Yuan & McDonald, 1990 etc.). Based on the data, two sub-themes (natural beauty, historical & cultural attractions) were generated in relation to these pull factors. Some of the answers given by the participants within the scope of these motivations are as follows:

“I went to Greece both for a vacation and cultural experience purposes. Also, visiting ceramic exhibitions was another motivation for me...(Participant 1)”

“Sea and beaches are beautiful, also very clean...(Participant 5)”

“We preferred Athens to see historical features of the country. However, If I go again, I will go to the islands and coasts to see the nature...(Participant 7)”

Escaping from daily life and relief are the main push factors for every kind of tourism activity (Cha, McCleary & Uysal, 1995; Crompton, 1979; Fodness, 1994; Josiam, Smeaton & Clements, 1999; Som, Marzuki, Yousefi & AbuKhalifeh, 2012; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Wang, 2016). Some answers are presented below regarding feeling of relief/freedom:

“...There is simplicity, peace and happiness. Nobody has any problems with anybody. Peace and serenity in Greece is pleasant for me. People in Türkiye can't get into the holiday mindset. There is an effort to be extravagant even on a vacation...(Participant 1)”

“...Vacation is something we go to relax from the everyday pressures. But it is impossible to relax due to attitudes of staff at expensive beach clubs in Türkiye especially in Bodrum. Also, sun-beds are too close to each other. There is no privacy. Whereas both staff and tourists respect each other. No selling pressure on the beach clubs. I can relief literally there...(Participant 2)”

“.. Another motivation is that I feel free there. More precisely, you feel alone in the crowd. There is a feeling of freedom because it is a different country, a different language. That makes me relieved without thinking others...(Participant 6)”

People often make travel decisions for interpersonal motivators as such demand to make friends, share experiences, exchange ideas with others and so on (Su, Johnson & O'Mahony, 2020). Existing literature points that socialization, maintaining or strengthening existing relationships or establishing new relationships can be motivators to travel (Cha et. Al 1995; Jang & Cai, 2002; Shi, Cole & Chancellor, 2012; Sirakaya, Uysal & Yoshioka, 2003; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Wang, Fong & Law, 2015; Wang, 2016). Sub-theme of interpersonal relationship is generated which is one of the other noticeable motivation to travel Greece. Based on the data, this motivation covers tracing family roots, visiting places where family members used to live, visiting friend and family who live in Greece, going on a vacation with family/friend to Greece etc. Accordingly, some of the answers are presented as follow:

“Curiosity about my roots was the primary motivation to travel Greece. I've heard about Lesvos since I was a child. My grandmother's side was from there. Due to they migrated from that island. I always curious about it. In fact, I always feel a historical connection, a warmth to Greece. That's why Lesvos was one of the first places I visited in Greece...(Participant 3)”

“...I am curious about Greece because it is the country where my roots originate, and this motivates me to visit. Both my maternal and paternal families migrated from Greece as part of the population exchange. My maternal grandfather was from Thessaloniki, and my paternal grandfather was from Drama...(Participant 15)”

In terms of revisit intention to Greece, all the participants have positive opinion about revisiting Greece as soon as possible. Moreover, some of them have already plans especially for the following summer

(Participants 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16,17).

Travel decisions are two-sided. While one side triggers individuals' motivation to travel, the other acts as an inhibiting factor in the form of barriers or constraints. From this point of view, some potential constraints to revisit to Greece may exist. To explore these, the last question was asked: "Under what circumstances would you decide not to travel to Greece again? / What potential travel constraints might affect your intention to revisit ?" The theme of travel constraints consist of situations may become a barrier against revisit intention to Greece. Based on the data, revisit barriers contains rising costs, health/age issues, political issues, reduction of pleasure. These are shown in Figure 2.

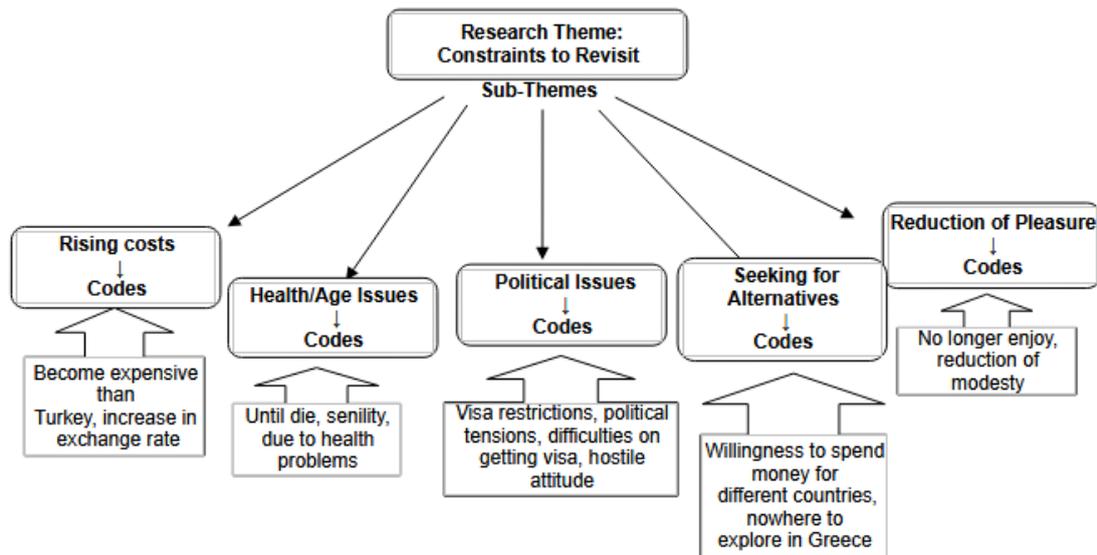


Figure 2. Constraints to Revisiting Greece

Crawford et al., (1991) developed the leisure constraint framework which consists of intrapersonal, interpersonal and structural dimensions. On the basis of findings, tourist derived constraints such as health and age issues, alternative seeking, lacking of pleasure can be categorized as intrapersonal constraints, Destination derived constraints as such rising costs and political issues can be categorized as structural constraints. Increases of costs in Greece in the future is a primary constraint to revisit, as most participants prefer Greece due to low travel costs. Also, visa requirements, conflicts between Türkiye and Greece are political related constraints. To illustrate intrapersonal constraints, selected participant responses are presented below.

"I never give up travelling to Greece. I have strong ties there , so I'll go as long as my health allows me to travel abroad." (Participant 5)

"That question is a bit difficult, I don't think I'll give up travelling to Greece. But only if when I get very old, when I die."(Participant 13)

"Health and age-related limitations would significantly reduce my willingness to travel to Greece..."(Participant 16)"

4. Discussion

The current study investigated travel motivations and revisit constraints of Turkish tourists travelling to Greece, in light of increasing touristic mobility between two neighbouring countries with strong cultural and geographical ties. Utilizing a qualitative approach and framed by the widely adopted Push and Pull Factors approach (Baloglu & Uysal, 1996; Crompton, 1979), this study contributes empirical insights into how individual psychological impulses and destination-related features jointly shape tourist travel behaviour.

Turkish tourists' travel motivations were interpreted using the Push and Pull Factors approach, which classifies travel motivations into two broad categories. As already mentioned, push factors are internal, socio-psychological drivers encouraging people to travel. In this study, push factors manifested through

feeling of relief/freedom, diversity seeking, interpersonal relationship, more specifically tracing roots, rediscover cultural or emotional ties with Greek destinations or meeting with family/friends. The findings echo prior studies (Pearce & Lee, 2005; Yoon & Uysal, 2005), which highlight emotional and relational aspects of travel behaviour. Pull factors, in contrast, are external attributes of a destination that attract travellers. In the context of Greek destinations, affordability relative to domestic Turkish alternatives, short travel distances, gastronomic elements, shared cultural elements due to cultural similarity emerged as significant pull factors. Moreover, effects of reference groups, destination attractions such as natural beauty, historical and cultural attractions are other pull factors. These findings are consistent with existing literature (Kim, 2010; Mohammad & Som, 2010; Ridderstaat, Croes & Nijkamp, 2016), affirming that value-for-money and emotional familiarity serve as strong incentives for regional travel. Assiouras et al. (2015) found that East Asian tourists who have travel experience to Greece were less motivated by push factors than those who have no travel experience. Parallel findings were obtained in this study. It has been observed that people who have visited Greece more than once are mostly motivated by pull factors such as low cost, food and closer distance. Moreover, the increasing popularity of Greece on social media platforms has been identified as an important driver of tourist mobility from Türkiye, particularly through user-generated content and online interactions (Uysal, 2025). Consistent with this perspective, the findings of the present study show that social media posts shared by friends, relatives or influencers significantly motivate Turkish tourists to visit Greece.

Recent economic developments in Türkiye, including supportive monetary policy and expected fiscal consolidation (OECD, 2025) may have contributed to shifts in travel preferences toward Greece. Rising inflation, currency depreciation, and the declining purchasing power of the Turkish Lira appear to have increased the relative cost of domestic tourism for many Turkish citizens. In particular, higher accommodation prices and rising costs of food and services may have made holiday expenses within Türkiye less affordable for some travellers. Official statistics also indicate a notable increase in domestic tourism expenditures, suggesting growing cost pressures in the sector (TÜİK, 2026). Consequently, some Turkish travellers may be more inclined to consider cost-effective alternatives abroad, including neighbouring Greece. For instance, Greek Islands such as Lesbos, Chios and Kos, where are reachable by short ferry rides offer competitive prices, quality services, and a familiar Mediterranean experience. Greece, in this context, presents a favourable destination with relatively lower prices. Economic attractiveness is further reinforced by the short distance, easy visa procedures (such as the regional visa scheme for nearby Greek islands), and cultural similarities. This paradoxical situation, where international travel becomes more affordable than domestic travel, reflects the broader economic pressures faced by Turkish consumers and underscores the strategic appeal of Greece as a tourism alternative. That is to say, these factors make Greece not only financially viable but also emotionally and logistically accessible, positioning it as a rational alternative to domestic holidaying.

The findings of the current research may be valuable for Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) of comparable European destinations (such as Croatia and Albania), as well as those in Türkiye, along with practitioners in the tourism industry. Each motivational factor that emerges from this research can be utilized as a benchmarking factor. For example, costs related motivations may provide an opportunity to benchmark in terms of price-performance arrangements. Being aware of travel motivations of Turkish tourist for Greece destinations may play a preventive role regarding keeping target market segments in destinations of Türkiye. Tourism businesses in Greece must also ensure sustainability in service quality to retain current tourist flow from Türkiye. When thinking about the question of “*why people travel abroad?*” quick answers that come to mind are to get to know different cultures, to see new places, to experience new flavours. However, the responses of individuals who have multiple travel experience from Türkiye to Greece are different. The findings highlight affordability as a primary motivation. Facilities which are currently available in Türkiye (sea, nature, seafood, etc.) are more affordable in Greece; accordingly, vacation for less make Greece attractive for Turkish tourists. In addition, while getting to know different cultures is considered to be an important source of motivation in foreign travel (Harman, 2014); the current study indicates that similar cultural characteristics of Greece and Türkiye are among the pull factors that motivate Turkish tourists to travel there.

Repeated visits and revisit intentions to Greece of Turkish travellers are among the noteworthy findings. Tourists with multiple prior experiences in Greece expressed stronger emotional connections to the

destination, reinforcing their revisit intentions. These outcomes correspond with literature emphasizing the value of repeat visitors as a cost-effective market segment with higher destination loyalty and promotional potential (Gretzel, Yuan & Fesenmaier, 2000; Huang & Hsu, 2009; Lau & McKercher, 2004; Oppermann, 1998). As Oppermann (1998) proposed that to attract previous customers cost effective 5 or 6 times more than it is to gain new ones. Conversely, repeat visitors constitute not only a reliable source of tourism income but also serve as informal information conduits, organically connecting destinations with networks of friends, relatives, and other prospective travellers (Lau & McKercher, 2004). That is to say, these often serve as informal brand ambassadors and are more likely to share positive destination experiences within their networks. Nevertheless, certain potential constraints were observed that may reduce the likelihood of repeat visits. The findings obtained in the context of travel constraints to Greece which are basically rising costs, seeking for alternatives, reduction of pleasure, health and political issues, are in parallel with the literature. These constraints align with the leisure constraint framework proposed by Crawford et al. (1991), categorizing constraints as intrapersonal, interpersonal, or structural. It is previously addressed that costs or expensiveness as a travel constraints in terms of destination choose behaviour (Um & Crompton, 1992; Hsu & Lam, 2003; Floyd et al., 2004 etc.). Also, health and age depended constraints are the most salient ones especially among senior travellers (Fleischer & Pizam, 2002; Floyd et al. 2004).

4.1. Theoretical Contributions and Managerial Implications

The present study contributes to the tourism literature by offering both theoretical and practical insights. Theoretically, it enriches the travel motivation literature by introducing a destination-specific and revisitation-oriented perspective. Unlike the majority of existing studies, which predominantly adopt quantitative methodologies and focus on general travel motivations, this research employs a qualitative approach to examine Turkish tourists' motivations and constraints in the context of repeated visits to Greece. The dual focus on both motivational drivers and perceived constraints among experienced travellers constitutes a notable contribution, as it highlights the dynamic nature of travel behaviour over time. Moreover, the findings may serve as a foundational basis for the development of a destination-specific motivation scale in future studies.

Practically, the insights obtained have significant implications for tourism practitioners in both Greece and Türkiye, as well as in other competing destinations with similar regional characteristics. The findings are expected to contribute to key parameters in destination marketing, such as market segmentation, target market identification, and destination promotion strategies for those. Greek tourism authorities and destination managers may utilize these findings to enhance visitor satisfaction and foster loyalty among Turkish tourists. Given the geographical, climatic, and cultural similarities between the coastal regions of Türkiye and Greece, the growing preference of Turkish tourists for Greek destinations, while beneficial for Greece, may indicate a potential loss for domestic tourism in Türkiye. From this perspective, the study also provides critical input for Turkish destination managers and tourism stakeholders to better understand and address the factors leading to outbound travel among domestic tourists. By identifying both the motivations that attract tourists to Greece and the constraints that may hinder repeat visits, the findings offer strategic insights for improving competitiveness, retaining local demand, and guiding policy development aimed at strengthening regional tourism.

5. Limitations and Recommendations For Future Research

As is common in exploratory qualitative research, the current study has certain inherent limitations. First of all, the findings are based on a relatively small sample of Turkish tourists who have travelled to Greece within the past year, which may not capture the full diversity of motivations and constraints experienced by the broader Turkish population. Furthermore, due to researchers' social environment and convenience of access to sample, participants live in Eskişehir and Bursa. These cities are located on western side of Türkiye and have similar distances (Appx. 365 km to 510 km) to the closest border (Kipoi) of Türkiye and Greece. Accordingly, perceived distance to Greece may be different for individuals who lives in different cities especially who lives in the eastern side of the country. Future research should aim to expand the sample size and demographic diversity to include a broader representation of Turkish travellers, including different age groups, residency, income levels, and travel histories. The study's reliance on self-reported data may introduce bias, including memory recall

limitations or social desirability effects. By its nature, the qualitative design restricts generalisability and findings should be interpreted as indicative rather than definitive. Future studies may adopt a mixed-methods design, integrating quantitative data to confirm the themes identified and to facilitate broader population-level generalisations. Meanwhile, Greece is facing with natural disasters such as possibility of volcanic explosions and earthquakes recently (Papanikolaou & Greenall, 2025; Gencturk, 2025). However, none of the participants mentioned it as a travel constraint. Accordingly, future research should focus specifically on natural disasters as a travel barrier to Greece.

From a different view point, a comparative approach examining travel motivations of Turkish tourists to other European or neighbouring countries could offer valuable insights into regional travel behaviours. For example, Türkiye's other neighbours such as Georgia, Bulgaria and Iran also have touristic potential and there is noteworthy demand from Türkiye. Future research may explore and compare travel motivations to these countries. Moreover, longitudinal studies could track changes in motivation and constraint patterns over time, particularly in response to economic shifts or geopolitical developments.

General travel motivation scales are available in the literature, however destination specific motivation scales might be developed for popular destinations. Regarding, the current study could provide a useful basis for developing "Greece Travel Motivation Scale". Besides, each motivation components obtained as a result of this study could be the subject of a further research. For example, economic dimension of motivation could be studied interdisciplinary. Finally, social media posts about Greece can also be considered as a pull factor. Researchers are also encouraged to explore the role of digital media and influencer marketing in shaping travel motivation, as well as how cultural proximity impacts destination loyalty in the context of repeat visitation.

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Appendix

Semi-Strcutured Interview Questions

1. Please tell me your age and your occupation?
2. Have you visited Greece before? When was the last time you visited? What type of visa or passport did you use to travel to Greece? How did you get there? Who did you travel to Greece with (e.g., alone, with family, with friends, with a partner)?
3. How many times have you travelled to Greece before?
4. Which months do you prefer (or have preferred) to travel there?
5. Which places have you visited in Greece? (Islands, cities, regions, etc.)
6. What were your purposes for travelling to Greece?
7. What are your motivations for travelling to Greece? (What reasons led you to choose Greece for your trip?)
8. Are you planning to travel to Greece again/soon?
9. Under what circumstances would you decide not to travel to Greece again? What potential travel constraints might affect your intention to revisit?

Arastırma Makalesi

A Neighborly Visit: A Qualitative Study on Understanding the Travel Motivations and Potential Travel Constraints of Turkish Tourists Travelling to Greece

Komşu Ziyareti: Yunanistan'a Seyahat Eden Türk Turistlerin Seyahat Motivasyonlarını ve Potansiyel Seyahat Engellerini Anlamak Üzerine Nitel Bir Çalışma

Merve DOĐAN

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi, Bilecik Şeyh Edebali Üniversitesi

Uygulamalı Bilimler Fakültesi

merve.dogan@bilecik.edu.tr

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0695-4177>

Genişletilmiş Özet

Turizm literatüründe bireylerin neden seyahat ettikleri sorusu uzun yıllardır araştırmacıların temel ilgi alanlarından biri olmuştur. Dinlenme, rahatlama ve günlük yaşamdan kaçış gibi nedenler seyahatin temel güdüleri arasında sayılmakla birlikte, insan davranışlarının karmaşık yapısı, karar verme süreçlerindeki belirsizlikler ve çok sayıda dışsal faktör, seyahat motivasyonlarının çok boyutlu bir bakış açısıyla ele alınmasını gerekli kılmaktadır (Crompton, 1979). Ayrıca geçmiş deneyimler, popüler kültür, sosyo-ekonomik koşullar, teknolojik gelişmeler, pandemiler ve krizler gibi olağanüstü durumlar bireylerin seyahat motivasyonlarını zaman içinde önemli ölçüde etkileyebilmektedir (Carvache-Franco vd., 2022; Guo vd., 2024). Turizmin zorunlu olmayan bir tüketim türü olarak değerlendirilmesi de evrensel bir seyahat motivasyonu modeli geliştirilmesini güçleştirmektedir. Bu nedenle, mevcut literatür zenginliğine rağmen destinasyon ve pazar özelinde yeni bakış açılarına her zaman ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır.

Son yıllarda Akdeniz Bölgesi'nde önemli bir tatil destinasyonu hâline gelen Yunanistan'ın turizm istatistikleri, ülkeye gelen yabancı ziyaretçi sayısında kayda değer bir artış olduğunu göstermektedir. Yunan Turizm Konfederasyonu Enstitüsü (INSETE) verilerine göre 2024 yılında yabancı ziyaretçi sayısı bir önceki yıla kıyasla %10,2 artarak yaklaşık 38 milyona ulaşmış, turizm gelirleri ise 21 milyar avro seviyesine çıkmıştır (INSETE, 2024; GTP Editing Team, 2025). Benzer bir artış eğilimi Türkiye'den Yunanistan'a yönelik seyahatlerde de gözlemlenmektedir. Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu (TÜİK) verilerine göre, 2012 yılında yaklaşık 467 bin olan Türkiye'den Yunanistan'a seyahat eden kişi sayısı, 2023 ve 2024 yıllarında 1 milyonun üzerine çıkmıştır (TÜİK, 2024). Ayrıca kara yolu ile gelen ziyaretçiler arasında en yüksek artış oranının Türkiye kaynaklı olduğu belirtilmektedir (Karabulut, 2025). Bu gelişmeler, özellikle COVID-19 pandemisi sonrasında Yunanistan'ın Türk turistler açısından giderek daha önemli bir hedef pazar hâline geldiğini göstermektedir (Uysal, 2025).

Turizm literatüründe seyahat motivasyonlarına ilişkin çok sayıda çalışma bulunmasına rağmen (Baloglu ve Uysal, 1996; Crompton, 1979; Harman vd., 2013; Kim vd., 2003; Pearce ve Caltabiano, 1983; Uysal ve Jurowski, 1994; Wang, 2016), Türkiye'den Yunanistan'a seyahat eden turistlerin motivasyonlarını doğrudan inceleyen çalışmalar oldukça sınırlıdır. Mevcut çalışmaların büyük bir kısmı, Yunanistan'ı ziyaret eden uzak pazarlardaki turistlere odaklanmaktadır. Örneğin Assiouras ve arkadaşları (2015), Yunanistan'ı ziyaret eden Japon, Çinli ve Koreli turistlerin itici ve çekici motivasyonlarını karşılaştırmış ve seyahat motivasyonlarının ulusal sınırları aşan bir pazar bölümlendirme temeli oluşturabileceğini ileri sürmüştür. Ancak bu çalışma nicel yöntemlere dayalı olup, uzak pazarlara odaklanmıştır. Coğrafi ve kültürel açıdan Yunanistan'a yakın bir ülke olan Türkiye bağlamında gerçekleştirilen ampirik çalışmaların sınırlı olması, bu araştırmanın temel çıkış noktasını oluşturmaktadır.

Bu alıřmanın amacı iki ynldr. İlk olarak, daha nce Yunanistan'ı ziyaret etmiř Trk turistlerin seyahat rntlerini ve seyahat motivasyonlarını, yaygın olarak kabul gren itici ve ekici faktrler erevesinde derinlemesine incelemek amalanmaktadır. Bu kapsamda, bireylerin isel gdlerinden kaynaklanan itici faktrler ile destinasyonun sahip olduđu zelliklerden kaynaklanan ekici faktrlerin, Yunanistan'ın tercih edilmesindeki rol nitel bir bakıř aısıyla ortaya konulmaktadır. İkinci olarak ise, Yunanistan'a birden fazla kez seyahat etmiř bireylerin yeniden ziyaret niyetlerini etkileyebilecek potansiyel seyahat kısıtlarının belirlenmesi hedeflenmektedir. Bu bađlamda alıřma, yalnızca yeniden ziyaret niyetini lmekle sınırlı kalmayıp, bireyleri yeniden seyahat etmekten alıkoyabilecek yapısal, kiřilerarası ve bireysel nitelikteki kısıtları da kapsamlı biimde ele almaktadır.

Arařtırma, keřfedici bir yaklařımla tasarlanmıř olup nitel arařtırma yntemi kullanılarak gerekleřtirilmiřtir. Bu yaklařım, Trk turistlerin Yunanistan'a ynelik seyahat deneyimlerini, algılarını ve deđerlendirmelerini kendi bađlamları iinde derinlemesine anlamayı mmkn kılmaktadır. Arařtırma kapsamında, son 12 ay ierisinde Trkiye'den Yunanistan'a en az bir kez turistik amala seyahat etmiř 17 Trk vatandařı ile yarı yapılandırılmıř grřmeler yapılmıřtır. Katılımcılar, arařtırmanın amacına uygun bilgi sađlayabilecek bireylerin seilmesine imkn tanıyan amalı rneklem yntemi kullanılarak belirlenmiř; rneklemde yař, cinsiyet ve meslek gibi demografik zellikler aısından eřitlilik sađlanmasına zen gsterilmiřtir. Grřmeler Kasım–Aralık 2025 tarihleri arasında gerekleřtirilmiř olup, katılımcıların tercihleri dođrultusunda yz yze ve telefon aracılıđıyla yrtlmřtr. Tm grřmeler katılımcıların ana dili olan Trke yapılmıř ve katılımcıların onayı alınarak ses kaydı ile kayıt altına alınmıřtır. Grřme soruları, ilgili literatr ve uzman grřleri dođrultusunda hazırlanmıř ve aık ulu yapısıyla katılımcıların deneyimlerini ayrıntılı biimde aktarmalarına imkn tanımıřtır. Arařtırma srecinde etik ilkelere titizlikle uyulmuř; alıřma iin Bilecik řeyh Edebalı niversitesi Bilimsel Arařtırma ve Yayın Etiđi Kurulu'ndan 27.11.2025 tarihli ve 26/3 sayılı karar ile etik kurul onayı alınmıřtır.

Toplanan veriler tematik analiz yntemiyle analiz edilmiř; kodlama ve tema geliřtirme srecinde Braun ve Clarke'nın (2006) yaklařımı benimsenmiř, analiz srecinde MAXQDA 24 veri analizi yazılımından yararlanılmıřtır. Elde edilen bulgular, Trk turistlerin Yunanistan'a ynelik seyahat motivasyonlarını ve yeniden ziyaret kısıtlarını btncl bir bakıř aısıyla ortaya koyacak řekilde yorumlanmıřtır.

Arařtırma bulguları, Trk turistlerin Yunanistan'a ynelik seyahat motivasyonlarının itici ve ekici faktrlerin etkileřimiyle řekillendiđini ortaya koymaktadır. İtici faktrler arasında rahatlatma ve zgrlk hissi, gnlk rutinden kaıř, eřitlilik arayıřı ve kiřilerarası iliřkiler ne ıkmaktadır. Bazı katılımcılar iin Yunanistan, kltrel ve duygusal kklere yeniden bađlanma ya da aile ve arkadař ziyaretleri gibi anlamlar tařımaktadır. Bu bulgular, duygusal ve iliřkisel motivasyonların seyahat davranıřındaki nemini vurgulayan nceki alıřmalarla paralellik gstermektedir (Pearce ve Lee, 2005; Yoon ve Uysal, 2005).

ekici faktrler bađlamında ise, Yunanistan'ın Trk turistler aısından zellikle fiyat avantajı, kısa mesafeler, gastronomik unsurlar ve kltrel benzerlikler nedeniyle cazip bir destinasyon olduđu grlmektedir. Bunun yanı sıra referans gruplarının etkisi ve sosyal medyanın rol dikkat ekicidir. Yunanistan'ın sosyal medyada artan poplaritesi, kullanıcı tarafından retilen ierikler ve evrim ii etkileřimler yoluyla seyahat motivasyonlarını glendirmektedir (Uysal, 2025). Bu alıřmanın bulguları da, arkadařlar, akrabalar ve influencer'lar tarafından paylařılan sosyal medya ieriklerinin Trk turistlerin Yunanistan'ı ziyaret etme motivasyonunda nemli bir rol oynadıđını gstermektedir. Arařtırmada ayrıca, Yunanistan'ı birden fazla kez ziyaret etmiř katılımcıların motivasyonlarının zamanla deđiřtiđi gzlemlenmiřtir. Tekrar eden ziyaretlerde itici faktrlerin grece nemini yitirdiđi, ekici faktrlerin ise daha baskın hle geldiđi belirlenmiřtir. Bu bulgu, Assiouras ve arkadařlarının (2015) tekrar ziyaretlerde ekici faktrlerin nem kazandıđına iliřkin tespitleriyle rtřmektedir.

Seyahat kararları, bir yandan seyahate ynelik motivasyonu tetikleyen unsurlardan, diđer yandan ise seyahati engelleyici nitelikte olan bariyerler veya kısıtlardan etkilenmektedir. Bu bakıř aısından hareketle, Yunanistan'ı yeniden ziyaret etmeye ynelik bazı potansiyel kısıtların varlıđı da gz nnde bulundurulmuř ve yeniden ziyaret niyetini olumsuz etkileyebilecek eřitli seyahat kısıtları tespit edilmiřtir. Artan seyahat maliyetleri, alternatif destinasyon arayıřı, azalan tatmin dzeyi, sađlık ve yařa bađlı sorunlar ile iki lke arasındaki politik gerilimler bu kısıtlar arasında yer almaktadır. Bu bulgular,

seyahat kısıtlarını bireysel, kişilerarası ve yapısal boyutlarda ele alan Crawford ve arkadaşlarının (1991) çerçevesiyle uyumludur ve önceki çalışmalarla paralellik göstermektedir (Um ve Crompton, 1992; Hsu ve Lam, 2003; Floyd vd., 2004; Fleischer ve Pizam, 2002).

Sonuç olarak bu çalışma, Türkiye'den Yunanistan'a yönelik artan turistik hareketliliđi nitel bir bakış açısıyla ele alarak, Türk turistlerin seyahat motivasyonlarını ve yeniden ziyaret kısıtlarını bütüncül biçimde ortaya koymaktadır. Çalışma, destinasyona özgü ve tekrar ziyaret odaklı yaklaşımıyla literatüre kuramsal katkı sunarken, Yunanistan ve Türkiye'deki destinasyon yönetim örgütleri ve turizm paydaşları için de önemli uygulamaya dönük çıkarımlar sağlamaktadır.