

Travellers' Destination Attribute Preferences: A Choice-Based Conjoint (CBC) Analysis

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The study used a choice-based conjoint analysis to investigate Turkish travellers' preferences for destination choice based on five *attributes* (*destination type, distance, length of stay, season, and value for money*). Using purposive sampling, data were obtained from Turkish travellers in Istanbul with an experimental questionnaire between April and May 2019. The questionnaire included sixteen destination profiles produced using an orthogonal experimental design. *Travellers* had one go-to code for all profile cards from highest to lowest preference. The data were analysed with SPSS Conjoint. The findings revealed that destination type was the most important attribute, followed by the length of stay, season, distance, and value for money. T-test and ANOVA results showed that travellers' destination preferences also differed by their socio-demographic characteristics. The study provides an alternative perspective for future research by examining destination choice using an experimental approach. Furthermore, it offers practical implications for travel companies seeking to understand Turkish travellers' destination preferences.

Keywords: destination choice, destination preference, tourist behaviour, travel motivation, experimental design



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Introduction

Destinations, like other tourism businesses, can segment their visitors for more effective marketing (Denizci Guillet et al., 2015; Huertas Garcia et al., 2014). Destinations can implement basic socio-demographic segmentation by segmenting visitors based on several attributes. Tourists seek products that satisfy their demands (Wong & Yeh, 2009), therefore each destination's desirability is determined by how well its marketing elements meet those needs (Hanlan et al., 2006, p. 214). Tourists are also concerned about making bad choices that lead to a negative shopping experience. Destination marketing that is effective allows for a better grasp of the complexities involved in the destination decision process. The act of recognizing and selecting potential solutions to a problem is known

as decision-making (Al-Tarawneh, 2012). Many studies show that tourism suppliers need to understand tourist behaviour and travel motivation in order to meet demand and aid tourists in making decisions (Blasco et al., 2014; Decrop & Kozak, 2014; Yiamjanya & Wongleedee, 2014). Previous research has used conjoint analysis to investigate travel preference segmentation (Chiam et al., 2009; Nuraeni et al., 2015; Pai & Ananthakumar, 2017).

This study investigates the segmentation of Turkish travellers based on five attributes (destination type, distance, length of stay, season, and value for money) through a choice-based conjoint analysis. It segmented Turkish travellers' preferences for destination choice using an experimental method of conjoint analysis. The research can help travel companies figure out the

attributes and levels of destinations travellers prefer. As a result, the study offers a novel way of segmenting travellers. The experimental analysis can show travel companies new ways to reach target travellers.

Decision-Making and Destination Choice

Decisions are complex and multidimensional, while the travel decision-making process is intuitive and spontaneous (Smallman & Moore, 2010). Destination choice is affected by various factors (Buhalis, 2000; Hanlan et al., 2006; Hsu et al., 2009; Li et al., 2017; Oppewal et al., 2015; Pestana et al., 2020; Seyidov & Adomaitienė, 2017). Many studies draw attention to key aspects of the destination choice process and offer theoretical models (Cao et al., 2020; Dey et al., 2020; Hsu et al., 2009; Seddighi & Theocharous, 2002). Some studies have identified the factors and motivations affecting destination choice (Dey et al., 2020; Jang & Cai, 2002; Pawaskar et al., 2020; Qiu et al., 2018; Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005; Wong & Yeh, 2009). Experimentation using choice-based techniques has been employed in several destination studies (Hsu et al., 2009; Li et al., 2017; Oppewal et al., 2015). Sirakaya and Woodside (2005) incorporated major conceptual and empirical studies in their thorough qualitative evaluation of the tourist decision-making literature. They concluded that the Um and Crompton (1990) destination choice set model is theoretically more widespread and methodologically more robust than others in tourist decision research (Hsu et al., 2009). However, various destination choice models have also been proposed in the literature. Hong et al. (2006) stated that tourists compare and evaluate the attractiveness, accessibility, ease of travel, and varied infrastructure of the destination vis-à-vis alternatives, at the specific time, situation, and context of travel. In addition, Yoo et al. (2018) proposed the multinomial logit model (MNL) analysis to conclude that tourist psychographic types can be varied by their demographic pattern, travel type decisions, frequencies, duration of travel, purpose of visit, and destination setting.

Identifying and selecting among possible solutions to a problem is what decision-making entails (Al-Tarawneh, 2012). Choosing also comprises converting a motive into a purchase process, in which the

final purchasing decision is made after a multi-stage process (Hanlan et al., 2006, p. 10). As a result, research shows that motivations should be explored because they have the power to influence tourists' choices (Nikjoo & Ketabi, 2015; Pestana et al., 2020; Prayag & Ryan, 2011; Yiamjanya & Wongleedee, 2014).

Travel Motivation

It is crucial to figure out what influences people's destination choices in order to improve marketing efforts. Age, income, gender, personality, education, cost, distance, nationality, risk, and motivation are some of these determinants (Hsu et al., 2009). Motivation, which is an important research topic in the tourism literature, is a dynamic concept that varies between individuals and destinations. Several motivational theories have been proposed to understand travel motivation, such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Alderfer's existence theory, Herzberg's motivator-hygiene theory, and the push and pull theory (Vujičić et al., 2020). Undoubtedly, the most extensively used is Crompton's (1979) push and pull theory (Chen & Chen, 2015; Hsu et al., 2009; Nikjoo & Ketabi, 2015; Prayag & Ryan, 2011).

According to the push-pull theory, tourists are pushed to travel by internal desires or emotional factors and pulled by external factors like destination attributes (Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Cohen et al., 2014). Crompton (1979) identified seven push motives (escape from a perceived ordinary environment, exploration and evaluation of self, relaxation, prestige, regression, enhancement of kinship relationship, and facilitation of social interaction) and two pull motives (novelty and education). While there are a variety of theories for explaining tourist motivations, the push-pull theory is one of the most extensively addressed in the tourism literature (Güzel et al., 2020; Liro, 2020; Prabawa & Pertiwi, 2020).

There are various typologies of motivation factors for tourism. Hanqin and Lam (1999) identified five push factors (knowledge, prestige, enhancement of human relationships, relaxation, and novelty) and five pull factors (expenditure, accessibility, service attitude and quality, sightseeing variety, and cultural links). Jang and Cai (2002) also suggested six push fac-

tors (novelty experience; escape; knowledge-seeking; fun, and excitement; relaxation; family/friend togetherness) and six pull factors (natural and historic environment; cleanliness and safety; easy to access; economic deal; outdoor activities; sunny and exotic atmosphere). Confirming previous studies, Pearce and Lee (2005) argued for four push factors: novelty seeking, escape/relaxation, relationship enhancement, and self-development. Prayag and Ryan (2011) suggested push factors such as escape, novelty, social interaction, and prestige to describe the kind of experiences tourists are looking for.

Psychological characteristics determine the push factors, while destination attributes determine the pull factors, according to Yiamjanya and Wongleedee (2014). They identified the following push and pull factors: experiencing a foreign country, eating traditional food, learning about a new culture, relaxing in a foreign country, wanting to learn new things, being interested in local culture and traditional markets, escaping from routine daily life and enjoying activities, adventure, and good weather. Hsu et al. (2009) analysed tourist destination choice using the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) while incorporating Crompton's push and pull factors as internal and external forces, respectively. They identified four internal force factors (psychological, physical, social interaction, and seeking/exploration) and two external force factors (tangible and intangible).

Based on a literature review, Danthanarayana et al. (2020) concluded that tourists are influenced by the following push factors: motivation for romance, desire to escape, relaxation, expectations of different cuisines, prestige, income, personal safety, and excitement. They also identified the following pull factors: attractions, location and attributes, facilities and amenities, quality of accommodation, reasonable travel cost, the romance of the destination, advertising of the destination, shopping opportunities, climate, and tourist sites/activities. The push factors are useful for explaining travel intentions, whereas the pull factors help explain destination choice (Goossens, 2000; Hsu et al., 2009). In other words, tourists are pushed by travel needs and pulled by destination attributes (Cohen et al., 2014).

Tourists tend to select destinations based on their aims; therefore, destinations are attractive based on how well they meet those aims. From the past (Awaritefe, 2004; Jang & Cai, 2002) to the present (Awaritefe, 2004), travel motivation and destination choice have been researched extensively (Morris et al., 2021; Pawaskar et al., 2020; Pestana et al., 2020; Yoo et al., 2018). As a result, understanding destination attributes is essential for explaining travellers' destination choice behaviour.

Destination Attributes

Before making a final decision, destination attributes play a significant role in the information-gathering phase (Oppewal et al., 2015). Because destination selection is fluid, alternative approaches should be tested regularly (Deng et al., 2021). Alternative methods, such as the choice-based conjoint model (Hung et al., 2019; Lupu et al., 2020; Nuraeni et al., 2015; Suh & McAvoy, 2005) or AHP (Hsu et al., 2009) can be used to determine destination choice and destination attributes. Researchers can use these analyses to improve the attributes of a destination systematically. Push factors are linked to the origins and desires of travellers. The desire to escape, relax, experience adventure, and improve one's well-being are among them. Pull factors are linked to the attractiveness of a destination, such as diversity, uniqueness, accommodation, recreational facilities, and cultural and historical resources (Dwyer & Kim, 2003; Klenosky, 2002). Every destination has a unique set of attributes (Prayag & Ryan, 2011). As a result, travellers' evaluations of destination attributes and perceived utility values can be associated with destination choice (Suresh et al., 2021).

Pull factors, according to Hsu et al. (2009), are both tangible and intangible external factors. Tangible factors include transportation facilities; friendliness of people; quality and variety of food; accommodation facilities; personal safety; price; culture and historical resources; good shopping; environmental safety, and quality, whereas intangible factors include destination image and benefit expectations. Nuraeni et al. (2015) used four main attributes and 12 levels to examine the decision-making process using conjoint analysis. The attributes were: value for money (3 lev-

els), what the traveller looks for in the recreational site (5 levels), comfort during the holiday (2 levels), and distance from the place of origin (2 levels). Pai and Ananthakumar (2017) also applied conjoint analysis with six attributes and 30 levels to examine tourist preferences for travel packages. The attributes were price (5 levels), length of stay (5 levels), hotel rating (5 levels), season (5 levels), destination type (5 levels), and mode of transport (5 levels).

Health, safety, travel time, and distance all influence destination choice (Bansal & Eiselt, 2004), as does value for money, which refers to 'what travellers get for the money' (Nuraeni et al., 2015, p. 315). Travel expenditure, length of stay, income, exploring new places, and/or things, getting away from the daily routine, stress, and troubles are also important factors for destination choice (Denizci Guillet et al., 2011). Attractions, natural beauty, safety and security, festivals, and events are crucial to attracting visitors to the destination (Dahiya & Batra, 2016).

The tourists' destination choice process is a functional or utilitarian decision-making process influenced by a variety of factors such as psychological, personal, socioeconomic, and travel characteristics (Pandey & Joshi, 2021). Destination attributes and tourist-specific features significantly affect destination choice (Seyidov & Adomaitienė, 2017; Qiu et al., 2018). The main factors are tourism activities (Awaritefe, 2004) and cost (Seddighi & Theocharous, 2002), although travel time and travel distance (Cao et al., 2020) also affect destination choice along with tourism areas and destination amenities (Nicolau & Más, 2006; Tseng et al., 2015). Climate and weather conditions also significantly impact destination choice, although mostly temporarily (Hamilton & Lau, 2006). Therefore, the first research question regarding destination attributes is as follows:

RQ1 Which attributes have more importance in travellers' preference for destination choice?

Some studies have shown that tourists' sociodemographic characteristics significantly influence their destination choice (Limtanakool et al., 2006). Characteristics such as income, education level, cost, distance, risk, and motivation are likely to influence destination

choices (Almeida-Santana & Moreno-Gil, 2018; Hsu et al., 2009; Kozak, 2002). This leads to the following research question:

RQ2 Do travellers' destination attribute preferences differ according to sociodemographic characteristics?

Methodology

Choice-Based Conjoint (CBC) Analysis

The study segmented Turkish travellers based on five attributes: destination type, distance, length of stay, season, the value for money, and sociodemographic variables using CBC analysis. The selection of attributes, design of profiles or choice sets, data collection, analysis methods, and usefulness of the results are all technical aspects of CBC analysis (Rao, 2014, p. 16), which has the following five stages (Rao, 2009):

1. Determine destination attributes and levels;
2. Design profiles;
3. Collect data;
4. Analyse data;
5. Determine part-worth values and attributes.

A higher part-worth utility value indicates a greater preference for that attribute level. Another key advantage is that the method uses preference simulators to answer 'what if' questions. These simulators rely on the findings of conjoint analysis data collected on both hypothetical and real alternatives (Rao, 2014, p. 8). Relative importance is a measure to evaluate the importance of each attribute for choice preferences (Orme, 2010). Therefore, this study applied CBC analysis to understand Turkish travellers' preferences for destination choice.

CBC involves offering respondents multiple hypothetical scenarios that include different combinations of preference attributes (Lee, 2016, p. 71). It is a multivariate approach used to explain consumers' preferences for products or services. Respondents evaluate the value of each product or service by combining different levels of each attribute. CBC analysis uses the following techniques (Rao, 2014, p. 19):

- A measurement technique: measuring purchaser values:

- An analytical technique: predicting the likely reaction of purchasers to new products;
- A segmentation technique: identifying groups of purchasers with similar interests;
- A simulation technique: assessing new products and services in a competitive market;
- An optimization technique: searching for product profiles offering the highest profit.

Each attribute in this study describes a destination characteristic, and the level represents a range of possible values for each attribute. As a result, levels in an attribute set based on a conjoint set characterize the destination combination. According to an *ORTHOPLAN* in conjoint analysis, the combination presents a preference list of destination options, comprising attributes and levels describing destinations. Travellers sequence levels of attributes from highest to lowest according to their preferences (Orme, 2002). For conjoint attributes, the part-worth represents the level's utility. Based on the levels of destination attributes, the part-worth utility values aid in determining which destination is highly preferred.

Attributes and Levels of the Research

CBC analysis is a suitable approach for examining travellers' destination preferences. The first thing to do is to describe the attributes and levels that indicate what travellers consider in their destination choices. The following five attributes (and fourteen levels) were identified for this study: destination type (3), distance (2), season (3), length of stay (4), and value for money (2) based on previous studies, as shown in Table 1 (Nuraeni et al., 2015; Pai & Ananthakumar, 2017). The attributes and levels for what travellers look for in destination (destination type), season, and length of stay were retrieved from Pai and Ananthakumar, while the distance from the place of origin and value for money were drawn from Nuraeni et al. (2015). Table 1 shows the full list of attributes and levels.

Experimental Survey

Destination profiles were created and provided to travellers using the above attributes. Full factorial design profiles contain all combinations of attribute lev-

Table 1 Destination Choice Attributes and Levels

Sources	Attributes	Levels
Pai & Ananthakumar (2017)	What the traveller looks for in a destination	Nature, activity, and adventure Culture and heritage Sea, sand, and sun
Nuraeni et al. (2015)	Distance from the place of origin	Domestic trip International trip
Pai & Ananthakumar (2017)	Season	Spring or summer Autumn or winter Summer or autumn
Pai & Ananthakumar (2017)	Length of stay (days)	1–4 5–8 9–11 ≥12
Nuraeni et al. (2015)	Value for money	Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation, delicious food, and entertainment Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation and delicious food

els (Rao, 2014, p. 46). In this study, using all levels would have resulted in 144 (3x2x3x4x2) profiles. However, because the respondents did not have enough time to consider all profiles, the design was restricted to 16 destination options using an orthogonal experimental design (*ORTHOPLAN*) in *SPSS 22*. This method is commonly employed since it is difficult to use all conceivable combinations in a single experiment, and more advantageous findings can be acquired by analysing possible combinations. Because it more accurately mimics various real-life judgments and is compatible with random utility theory, the discrete choice method was applied to build preferences (Louviere et al., 2000).

As a result, the *CBC* questionnaire contained a combination of attributes and levels (16 destination choice cards and 4 simulation cards) based on an orthogonal experimental design (Appendix). Travellers assigned numbers to the profile cards, ranging from 1 (most preferred) to 16 (least preferred). There were

22 questions in the questionnaire, including 16 profile cards, 5 demographic questions (gender, age, marital status, working status, monthly income), and 1 for travel frequency.

Sample

The respondents were chosen through purposeful sampling. Turkish travellers who travel at least once a year met the eligibility criteria. Between April 15 and May 30, 2019, data were collected face-to-face from students and academics at a university in Istanbul, Turkey. Only 105 of the 120 questionnaires distributed were returned. However, 19 questionnaires were considered invalid due to repeated numbers, leaving 86 questionnaires to be examined.

Data Analysis

SPSS Conjoint was used to analyse the data. First, data were input along with the 16 combination cards and descriptive questions. Second, average utilities for the destination cards were calculated and the part-worth utility was determined. The data were drawn from a normal distribution, according to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test ($p > 0.05$), therefore, parametric tests were applied. Third, T-tests and ANOVA were employed to see if travellers had similar preferences for the relative importance of different destination attributes.

Findings

A total of 86 questionnaires that could be used were examined. The sample profile is shown in Table 2. Gender distribution was nearly equal. Most respondents were younger than 25 years old. Almost everyone was working, but they mostly had 1500 TRY and less monthly income. More than half of the respondents stated that they travel once a year.

The Pearson coefficient (0.816) showed that the results were highly significant (Rao, 2014). Similarly, a high Kendall coefficient suggests that observed and predicted preferences are highly correlated. Kendall's Tau value, which evaluates the model's representation strength, was 0.600 ($p = 0.000$), showing that the model was statistically significant. These values show that the model fit is satisfactory (Table 3). The high

Table 2 Sample Profile

Item		<i>n</i>	%
Gender	Female	40	46.5
	Male	46	53.5
Age (years)	18–19	10	11.6
	20–21	27	31.4
	22–24	20	23.3
	25–35	18	20.9
	36–46	7	8.1
	47–57	4	4.7
	57 or more	10	11.6
Marital status	Single	69	80.2
	Married	17	19.8
Working status	Working	42	48.8
	Not working	44	51.2
Monthly Income (TRY)	1500 or less	35	40.7
	1501–2500	12	14.0
	2501–3500	12	14.0
	3501–4500	17	19.8
	4501 or more	10	11.6
Travel Frequency	Once a year	50	58.1
	Twice a year	23	26.7
	Three times a year	7	8.1
	Four or more times a year	6	7.0

Notes $n = 86$.

Table 3 Model Fit

Item	Value	<i>p</i>
Pearson coefficient	0.816	0.00
Kendall's Tau	0.600	0.00

predictive accuracy and internal validity of a conjoint model are shown by its fit and efficiency (Tripathi & Siddiqui, 2010, p. 9).

A CBC analysis offers values of the utility of the relative importance of attributes. Figure 1 shows the measures of the relative importance of attributes based on the range of each part-worth function. Regarding RQ1, the respondents produced the following rank order of average attribute importance percentages: 29.93% for destination type, 26.30% for the length of stay, 26.97%

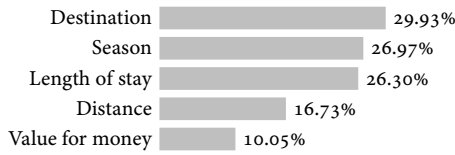


Figure 1 Relative Percentage Importance of Attributes

for the season, 16.73% for distance from the place of origin, and 10.05% for value for money.

Part-worth utility-a measure of relative desirability or worth-provides further insights into travellers' preferences, with a higher utility showing that a factor is more desirable in a traveller's choice (Orme, 2010). Part-worth means utilities of level for conjoint attributes. When multiple attributes come together to describe the total worth of the product, the utility values for the separate parts of the product are part-worth. Part-worth can be used to predict preferences for items in any choice set, while these estimates can be used to predict the customer's first choice and last choice (Rao, 2014, p. 19). In this study, part-worth is utilized to establish the intended destination attributes and levels, as well as their relative importance. The part-worth utilities for destination attributes are shown in Table 4. First, the sea, sand, and sun level contributed more to the total utility (0.5954) than the other levels for the destination type attribute, indicating that this level was preferred over the others in destination choice. Cultural and heritage had a negative utility (-0.6764), indicating that it was less desired than other levels of the same attribute.

Second, the domestic trip level had a higher utility score (0.1642) than the international trip level, indicating that it contributed more to the attribute's total utility. The utility for the international level was negative (-0.1642), indicating that international destinations were the least preferred by travellers. Third, the utility of the spring and summer level (0.2742) and autumn and summer level (0.2364) contributed more to the total utility than autumn or winter for the season attribute. As a result, the autumn or winter utility was negative (-0.5107). Fourth, the utility of staying for 12 days or more contributed more to total utility (0.1512) than the other levels, followed by 9-11 days (0.1134). As a result, stays of 9 or more days were more impor-

Table 4 Estimated Part-Worth Values for Destination Choice

Attribute	Level	Part-worth value
What traveller looks for in a destination	Culture and heritage	-
	Nature, activity, and adventure	0.6764
	Sea, sand, and sun	0.5954
Dist. from the place of origin	Domestic trip	0.1642
	International trip	-
Season	Summer or autumn	0.2364
	Spring or summer	0.2742
	Autumn or winter	-
Length of stay (days)	1-4	-
	5-8	-
	9-11	0.1134
	≥12	0.1512
Value for money	Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation, delicious food, and entertainment	0.0538
	Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation and delicious food	0.0538
Constant		8.622

Notes The highest score of each attribute is shown in bold.

tant than the other levels. The utility levels for 1-4 days (-0.0029) and 5-8 days (-0.2616) were also negative, indicating that travellers thought these lengths of stay were less desirable than the others. Therefore, the utility values of the longer stay levels were higher than the shorter stay levels.

Finally, the utility of the 'Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation and delicious food' level contributed more (0.0538) to the total utility of value for the money attribute than the other levels. Comfortable accommodation and delicious food are prioritized by travellers over comfortable accommodation, delicious food, and entertainment. In other words, tourists did not consider the expenditure on entertainment

Table 5 Differences in Attribute and Level Utility Score Averages by Socio-Demographic Variables

Attribute	Attribute level	Age			Income			Travel frequency		
		<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	Diff.	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	Diff.	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	Diff.
What travellers look for in a destination	Culture and heritage	1.377	0.24	–	2.170	0.08*	1.2<3	1.436	0.23	–
	Nature, activity, and adven.	1.545	0.18	–	2.225	0.07*	3<1.2	0.624	0.60	–
	Sea, sand, and sun	0.073	0.99	–	0.860	0.49	–	0.217	0.88	–
Dist. from the origin place	Domestic trip	2.844	0.02**	6.7<2.3	2.269	0.16	–	2.682	0.05**	1<3
	International trip	2.844	0.02**	2.3<6.7	2.269	0.16	–	2.682	0.05**	3<1
Season	Summer or autumn	1.158	0.33	–	.774	0.54	–	1.628	0.18	–
	Spring or summer	1.198	0.31	–	1.879	0.12	–	1.034	0.38	–
	Autumn or winter	1.305	0.27	–	1.847	0.12	–	1.031	0.38	–
Length of stay (days)	1–4 days	2.305	0.05**	2.3<6	1.900	0.11	–	1.072	0.36	–
	5–8 days	0.431	0.82	–	0.987	0.42	–	1.012	0.39	–
	9–11 days	2.501	0.03**	6<2.3	3.118	0.01**	3<1.2	0.103	0.95	–
	≥12 days	0.347	0.88	–	1.107	0.35	–	1.102	0.35	–
Value for money	Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation, delicious food, and entertainment	0.672	0.64	–	1.968	0.11	–	0.971	0.41	–
	Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation and delicious food	0.672	0.64	–	1.968	0.11	–	0.971	0.41	–

Notes Age (years): 1 – 18–19, 2 – 20–21, 3 – 22–24, 4 – 25–35, 5 – 36–46, 6 – 47–57, 7 – 57 or more. Income (TRY): 1 – 1,500 and less, 2 – 1,501–2,500, 3 – 2,501–3,500, 4 – 3,501–4,500, 5 – 4,501 or more. Travel frequency: 1 – once a year, 2 – twice a year, 3 – three times a year, 4 – four or more times a year. $n = 86$; * $p < 0.10$; ** $p < 0.05$.

at the destination. Rather, they preferred comfortable accommodation and delicious food to get value for money.

The significance of differences in utility score average of attributes and levels by sociodemographic variables was determined using the ANOVA test. The differences between homogeneous groups were defined using Post Hoc-LSDB (Table 5). The attribute of distance from the place of origin differed by age. That is, those aged 20–24 preferred domestic destinations over those aged 47 and older ($F = 2.844$; $p < 0.05$). Travellers aged 47–57 preferred to stay 1–4 days in a destination ($F = 2.305$; $p < 0.05$), whereas those aged 20–24 preferred to stay 9–11 days ($F = 2.501$; $p < 0.05$).

Tourists with an income of 2,501–3,500 TRY preferred a cultural and heritage destination more than those with an income of 2,500 TRY and less ($F = 2.170$;

$p < 0.10$). Those with an income of 1,501–2,500 TRY preferred nature, activity, and adventure more than tourists with an income of 2,501–3,500 TRY ($F = 2.225$; $p < 0.10$). Finally, those with an income of 2,500 TRY and less preferred to stay for 9–11 days more than those with an income of 2,501–3,500 TRY ($F = 3.118$; $p < 0.05$).

Travellers who travel three times a year preferred a domestic destination, whereas those who travel once a year preferred an international destination ($F = 2.682$; $p < 0.05$). Thus, in response to RQ2, destination choice attributes differed by sociodemographic variables, except for value for money. In particular, the levels of culture and heritage versus nature, activity, and adventure, domestic versus international trips, and 1–4 days versus 9–11 days differed by sociodemographic variables.

Table 6 Utility Score Average and *t*-Test Scores of Attitudes and Levels by Socio-Demographic Variables

Attribute	Level	Gender						Marital status						Working status					
		Female (n = 40)			Male (n = 46)			Single (n = 69)			Married (n = 17)			Working (n = 42)			Not working (n = 44)		
		M	SD	<i>t</i>	M	SD	<i>t</i>	M	SD	<i>p</i>	M	SD	<i>p</i>	M	SD	<i>p</i>	M	SD	<i>t</i>
What travellers look for in a destination	Culture and heritage	-0.24	2.32	-1.05	2.17	1.67	0.09*	-0.87	2.05	0.13	2.54	-1.66	0.09*	-0.34	2.66	-0.98	1.79	1.31	0.19
	Nature, activity, and adventure	-0.21	2.78	0.33	2.37	-1.00	0.32	0.46	2.53	-1.46	2.17	2.88	0.00**	-0.36	2.48	0.50	2.61	-1.56	0.12
	Sea, sand, and sun	0.45	2.78	0.71	2.38	-0.45	0.64	0.41	2.49	1.32	2.80	-1.31	0.19	0.71	2.67	0.48	2.48	0.40	0.68
Distance from place of origin	Domestic trip	-0.23	1.73	0.50	1.81	-1.92	0.05**	0.18	1.71	0.08	2.18	0.21	0.83	-0.13	2.00	0.45	1.55	-1.52	0.13
	International trip	0.23	1.73	-0.50	1.81	1.92	0.05**	-0.18	1.71	-0.08	2.18	-0.21	0.83	0.13	2.00	-0.45	1.55	1.52	0.13
Season	Summer or autumn	0.31	1.42	0.16	1.11	0.54	0.58	0.18	1.30	0.18	1.30	-0.81	0.41	0.34	1.06	0.13	1.43	0.77	0.43
	Spring or summer	0.12	1.55	0.40	1.35	-0.86	0.38	0.28	1.51	0.21	1.16	0.17	0.86	0.03	1.34	0.50	1.51	-1.52	0.13
	Autumn or winter	-0.44	1.44	-0.56	1.60	0.36	0.71	-0.46	1.56	-0.67	1.37	0.50	0.61	-0.37	1.38	-0.63	1.65	0.78	0.43
Length of stay (days)	1-4	-0.06	2.10	0.04	2.14	-0.24	0.80	-0.18	2.13	0.73	1.90	-1.62	0.10*	0.54	1.93	-0.52	2.16	2.42	0.01**
	5-8	-0.20	1.42	-0.30	1.47	0.33	0.74	-0.34	1.38	0.05	1.67	-1.02	0.31	-0.18	1.36	-0.33	1.53	0.48	0.63
	9-11	-0.15	2.15	0.34	1.94	-1.11	0.26	0.31	2.02	-0.69	1.97	1.83	0.07*	-0.48	1.87	0.68	2.05	-2.76	0.00**
	≥12	0.41	2.12	-0.08	1.63	1.23	0.22	0.21	1.87	-0.10	1.93	0.61	0.53	0.12	1.87	0.17	1.90	-0.12	0.90
Value for money	Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation, delicious food, and entertainment	-0.02	1.04	-0.08	1.21	0.24	0.80	-0.14	1.16	0.30	0.94	-1.48	0.14	0.09	1.07	-0.19	1.17	1.19	0.23
	Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation and delicious food	0.02	1.04	0.08	1.21	-0.24	0.80	0.14	1.16	-0.30	0.94	1.48	0.14	-0.09	1.07	0.19	1.17	-1.19	0.23

Notes The highest score of each attribute is shown in bold. n = 86; * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05.

T-tests revealed differences in attitude and level utility score averages by gender, marital status, and working status (Table 6). Regarding gender, female travellers preferred cultural and heritage destinations more than males ($t = 1.67$; $p < 0.10$). Male travellers tend to prefer domestic destinations ($t = 1.81$; $p < 0.05$) while females prefer international destinations ($t = 1.81$; $p < 0.05$). Regarding marital status, married travellers preferred cultural and heritage destinations ($t = -1.66$; $p < 0.10$), whereas single travellers preferred nature, activity, and adventure destinations ($t = 2.88$; $p < 0.05$). Married travellers preferred to stay for 1–4 days ($t = -1.62$; $p < 0.10$), whereas single travellers preferred 9–11 days ($t = 1.83$; $p < 0.10$). Regarding working status, working travellers preferred to stay for 1–4 days ($t = 2.42$; $p < 0.05$), and non-working travellers preferred to stay for 9–11 days ($t = -2.76$; $p < 0.05$).

As a result, in response to RQ2, these findings show that travellers' destination preferences differ by attributes and levels based on sociodemographic factors. More specifically, destination type preferences vary by gender and marital status; distance preferences vary by gender, and length of stay varies by marital and working status.

Discussion and Conclusion

Destination choice is a popular study issue. The study focuses on destination attributes to understand travellers' destination preferences. Travellers are prone to prioritizing essential destination attributes while planning a trip. Destination choice behaviour is affected by several internal and external factors, but mostly by basic attributes such as destination type, distance, season, length of stay, and value for money. Although the decision-making process in tourism has been extensively studied, few studies have attempted to use conjoint analysis to identify the priority of attributes and levels of destination choice. As a result, using a CBC analysis, this study attempted to fill this gap by revealing how travellers make destination choices. The purpose of this study was to figure out which attributes travellers prioritize the most when choosing where to travel. Quantitative data were collected by a conjoint method offering multiple hypothetical scenarios and examined based on a multivariate approach. Con-

joint analysis was utilized to understand more about tourists' preferences for destination choice. Overall, Turkish travellers mostly prefer domestic destinations of sea, sand, and sun for 9–11 days in spring or summer, while focusing on comfortable accommodation and delicious food. By investigating destination choice from a different perspective, this study contributes to the literature by examining the priority attributes of destination choice. Using CBC analysis, this empirical study identified the importance of the attributes and levels in travellers' destination choices. As a result, by offering an experimental perspective, the work aids future research. It also offers a variety of practical implications for how tourism destinations might strengthen their product offerings.

Theoretical Contributions

Theoretically, this study can help clarify unexplored aspects for further research into the attributes and levels of destination choice. Destination choice research will continue to increase in popularity in the future, thus researchers should focus on using choice-based tests to better understand tourists' preferences. Card-7 was shown to be the most popular destination profile among travellers. The part-worth utility of its attributes proves that Turkish travellers prefer domestic sea, sand, and sun destinations in spring and summer for nine or more days while focusing on comfortable accommodation and delicious food. As seen in the study by Pai and Ananthakumar (2017), spring is the most favourite season for travelling. However, length of stay varied, as longer stays were preferred over medium or shorter holidays. Turkish travellers have different preferences for length of stay than Indians, and they have different preferences for distance from their origin than Indonesians. As a result, the attributes and levels of destination choice differ depending on the tourists' nationality (e.g. Nuraeni et al., 2015; Pai & Ananthakumar, 2017). This is an interesting finding for future research.

Indirect methodology-based studies have utilized conjoint analysis to investigate tourists' preferences for accommodation and tour packages (Chiam et al., 2009; Denizci Guillet et al., 2011, 2015; Huertas Garcia et al., 2014; Pai & Ananthakumar, 2017; Tripathi

& Siddiqui, 2010), and to investigate the travel preferences of youths (Nuraeni et al., 2015; Vukic et al., 2015). However, comprehensive research on the factors that influence destination choice for people of different backgrounds is still needed. This research implemented an experimental approach to determine which destination attributes and levels travellers prefer most when choosing a destination, and then examined these attributes and levels in light of travellers' sociodemographic characteristics.

This study highlights three main contributions of the conjoint approach. First, it has not been much used previously to explore destination choice, although this has shown that it is well suited to this research field. Thus, this approach can be very useful for evaluating and understanding destination preferences. Second, the factors that travellers pay attention to in their destination choice were presented based on choice profiles. Third, travellers' preferences were segmented based on sociodemographic characteristics.

Practical Implications

The results have significant managerial implications for travel companies. According to the findings, focusing on destination attributes can accurately predict Turkish travellers' preferences. The study, like the study by Qiu et al. (2018), reveals that people with different aims prefer to choose different destinations. The findings also show that Goossens' (2000) push factors, or destination attributes, have an impact on destination choice. Furthermore, the research uncovers useful information about destination attribute preferences.

Travellers aged 20–24 prefer domestic destinations, while those aged 47 and over prefer international destinations, according to the findings. Those with low incomes prefer nature, activity, and adventure destinations more than those with high incomes. Another interesting finding is that those who travel three times a year travel more domestically than people who only travel once a year. International destinations are prioritized by Turkish travellers who travel at least once a year. Younger travellers (20–24 years old) want to stay for 9 days or more, whereas elder visitors (47–57 years old) want to stay for 1–4 days. Females prefer international cultural and heritage destinations, while males

prefer the opposite. Single travellers prefer to stay 9–11 days in nature, activity, and adventure destinations, whereas married travellers prefer to stay 1–4 days in cultural and heritage destinations. Travellers who are working prefer a shorter stay than those who are not. Thus, these findings support arguments that sociodemographic characteristics affect destination choice.

Given these findings, travel companies could create diverse tour packages based on sociodemographic factors to increase product quality and sales, as destination choice decisions play a significant role in tour planning and marketing. Travel companies should, for example, offer tour packages with lengthier domestic stays for young Turkish travellers (20–24 years old) and shorter international stays for older Turkish travellers (47–57 years old). They should suggest international cultural and heritage destinations for females, but domestic non-cultural and heritage destinations for males. Short-stay tour packages to cultural and heritage destinations should be geared toward married travellers, while longer-stay nature, activity, and adventure destinations should be geared toward singles. Finally, travel companies should provide both short-stay and long-stay tours for working and non-working travellers.

Limitations and Future Research

The study contains four major shortcomings. First, 86 questionnaires were analysed for research. The small sample size is a limitation; Pai and Ananthakumar (2017) analysed 150 questionnaires, while Lee (2016) only received 117. Although the sample size is small in conjoint analysis, it has a representative feature. Researchers can use conjoint analysis for even the smallest samples if they access enough respondents to adequately represent the population (Orme, 2010, p. 62). Second, because the importance of attributes differs by country, the results are particular to Turkish travellers. As a result, future research should investigate the relationship between sociodemographic factors and destination choices in various countries. Following Deng et al. (2021), tourists' preferences can be researched by age, profession, education, gender, and living environment to develop a clearer understanding of destination choice. Third, this study was limited to de-

termining Turkish travellers' destination preferences based on five attributes. Multivariate techniques could be used in future studies to investigate more attributes and levels that potentially influence destination choice decisions. Fourth, because understanding destination choice is crucial, tourism scholars are attempting to identify the key factors that influence these decisions or preferences. As a result, future research could focus on essential aspects of the issue.

Appendix 1 Destination Attributes Profiles/Cards

1. Domestic trip to a place that is nature-based, activity, and adventure for 9–11 days in spring or summer. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation and delicious food.
2. International trip to a place that is nature-based, activity and adventure for 9–11 days in autumn or winter. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation, delicious food, and entertainment.
3. Domestic trip to a place that is cultural and heritage for 9–11 days in summer or autumn. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation and delicious food.
4. Domestic trip to a place that is nature-based, activity, and adventure for 5–8 days in summer or autumn. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation and delicious food.
5. Domestic trip to a place that is cultural and heritage for 9–11 days in spring or summer. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation, delicious food, and entertainment.
6. International trip to a place that is cultural and heritage for 5–8 days in summer or autumn. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation and delicious food.
7. Domestic trip to a place that is sea, sand, and sun for more than 12 days in summer or autumn. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation, delicious food, and entertainment.
8. International trip to a place that is sea, sand, and sun for 1–4 days in spring or summer. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation and delicious food.
9. Domestic trip to a place that is cultural and heritage for 1–4 days in autumn or winter. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation and delicious food.
10. International trip to a place that is sea, sand, and sun for 9–11 days in summer or autumn. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation and delicious food.
11. Domestic trip to a place that is cultural and heritage for 1–4 days in summer or autumn. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation and delicious food.
12. Domestic trip to a place that is sea, sand, and sun for 5–8 days in autumn or winter. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation, delicious food, and entertainment.
13. International trip to a place that is cultural and heritage for more than 12 days in summer or autumn. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation, delicious food, and entertainment.
14. International trip to a place that is nature-based, activity and adventure for 1–4 days in summer or autumn. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation, delicious food, and entertainment.
15. International trip to a place that is cultural and heritage for more than 12 days in autumn or winter. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation and delicious food.
16. International trip to a place that is cultural and heritage for 5–8 days in spring or summer. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation, delicious food, and entertainment.

Appendix 2 Simulation Cards

1. Domestic trip to a place that is sea, sand, and sun for 9–11 days in summer or autumn. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation and delicious food.
2. Domestic trip to a place that is nature-based, activity and adventure for 1–4 days in autumn or winter. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation, delicious food, and entertainment.
3. Domestic trip to a place that is nature-based, activity, and adventure for 9–11 days in summer or autumn. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation and delicious food.
4. Domestic trip to a place that is cultural and heritage for 9–11 days in summer or autumn. Expenses focus on comfortable accommodation, delicious food, and entertainment.

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