

The Impact of Service Quality and Motivation Factors on Foreign Tourist Satisfaction and Loyalty in Istanbul

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Abstract

In order to investigate how service quality and motivational variables affect destination loyalty through satisfaction, this study looks at survey responses from 413 tourists. A variety of statistical techniques were used such as bootstrapping, confirmatory factor analysis, structural equation modeling, and one-way ANOVA. The results indicate that pull-type motivational factors, along with the five dimensions of service quality—tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy—significantly enhance tourist satisfaction. In contrast, push-type motivation shows no significant direct effect. Additionally, tourist satisfaction was found to fully mediate the relationship between the independent variables and destination loyalty. Different perceptions of service quality, motivation, satisfaction, and loyalty were observed across demographic groups. Overall, the study underscores the practical importance of understanding tourists' perspectives to improve service delivery and align destinations more closely with tourist expectations.

Keywords: Service quality, Motivation factors, Tourist satisfaction, Tourist loyalty

1. Introduction

Tourism has emerged as one of the most dynamic sectors of the global economy, accompanied by advances in transportation, rising incomes, and greater emphasis on leisure. As destinations compete internationally, attracting and keeping tourists has become a top strategic concern, and marketing strategies playing a key role in ensuring long-term success

(Som & Badarneh, 2011). Understanding how tourists perceive and evaluate services is essential for effective destination planning. Ryan (2002) identifies four stages of tourist behavior: pre-travel motivations, evaluation of service quality, post-experience satisfaction, and decisions about future trips. In order to stay competitive, countries have increasingly incorporated tourism into their goals to maintain the national development, requiring continuous service improvements to satisfy and meet tourists service demands (Tosun et al., 2003; Massidda & Etzo, 2012; Tfaily, 2018; Wright, 2006).

This study focuses on the relationships among tourist motivation, perceived service quality, satisfaction, and loyalty, as these elements have a direct impact on the social and economic results of destinations. Research shows that developing a strong, unique brand identity enhances competitiveness, and understanding tourists' perceptions is crucial for predicting behavioral responses (Usakli & Baloglu, 2011; Pan et al., 2017; Salehzadeh et al., 2016).

Istanbul serves as an ideal context for this investigation, offering variety of services, a vibrant cultural environment, a large resident population, and a significant number of foreign tourists. It is a great example of how motivation, service quality, satisfaction, and loyalty interact in a highly competitive tourism environment due to its wide market appeal. (Okumus & Cetin, 2018; Akgün et al., 2022)

1.1 Theoretical Background – Service Quality

Service quality is increasingly acknowledged because it enables businesses to differentiate their products while improving marketing and financial performance, service quality is becoming more widely recognized as a crucial source of competitive advantage in service industries (Smith et al., 2007). Parasuraman et al. (1988) define service quality as the gap between customers' expectations and their perceptions of the actual service received. According to Kotler and Keller (2009), services consist of intangible actions or performances exchanged between people without transferring ownership, highlighting important differences between services and tangible products. According to Sureshchandar et al. (2001), assessing service quality is difficult since services are ephemeral and cannot be saved or inspected before being used.

Wirtz and Lovelock (2016) stress the importance of supplementary services that support or improve the delivery of core services. Lewis (1991) suggests that service quality should be evaluated based on the degree to which organizations meet overall customer expectations. Both the American perspective (Parasuraman et al., 1985, 1988) and the Nordic perspective (Grönroos, 1982, 1984) rely on the disconfirmation paradigm, which compares expected performance with perceived outcomes to assess quality. Grönroos (1982) further introduced that the idea of perceived service quality is largely shaped by focusing on the interactions between service providers and customers. As shown in Figure 1 below, these ideas come together to show, in a straightforward way, how customer expectations, actual experiences, and provider–customer interactions collectively shape the overall perception of service quality.

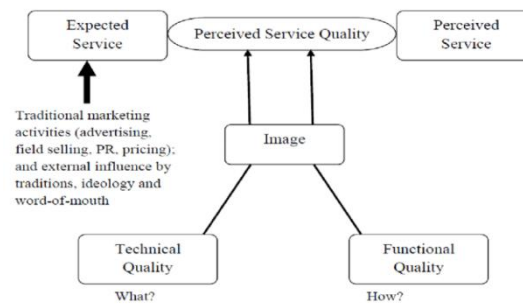


Figure 1. Technical and Functional Quality Model - Source: Grönroos, 1984

Grönroos (1984) proposed a foundational model of service quality identifying three key components: corporate image, functional quality, and technical quality. Functional quality—the way the service is delivered—has a stronger effect on customer perceptions and different than technical quality, which reflects the service outcome. Corporate image further shapes positive perceptions.

According to Parasuraman et al. (1985, 1988), the gap between expected and perceived service determines the service quality, and dissatisfaction arises when expectations are not met. In a similar vein, Khafafa and Shafii (2013) and Selvakumar et al. (2018) emphasize that gap analysis can be used to identify mismatches between expectations and experiences, which can lead to satisfaction, disappointment, or unexpectedly positive outcomes.

Parasuraman et al. (1985) developed the Service Quality GAP Model, which identifies five key gaps in service delivery, based on observations from focus groups and interviews: Gap 1 (Knowledge Gap) – the difference between managers’ beliefs of customer expectations and real expectations of clients; Gap 2 (Policy Gap) – is the mismatch between client needs and service specifications; Gap 3 (Delivery Gap) is the difference between service standards and actual delivery; Gap 4 (Communication Gap) is the difference between client experience and external communication; and Gap 5 (Perception Gap) – the general difference between expectations and perceived service. These gaps greatly impact client evaluations. As shown in Figure 2 below, this model clearly illustrates how each gap contributes to shaping the customer’s final perception of service quality.

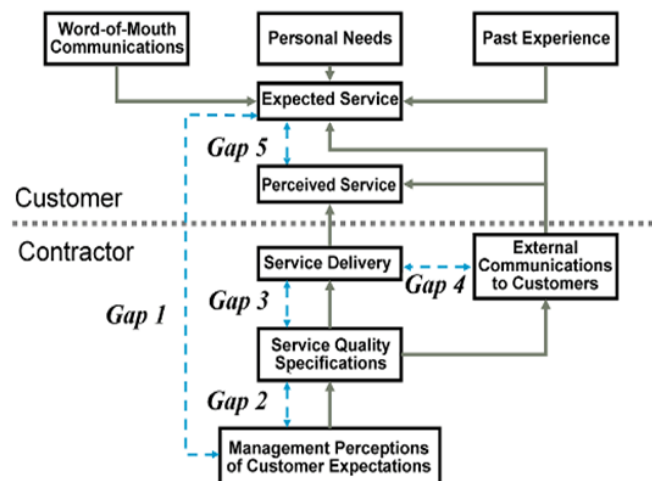


Figure 2. Service Quality GAP Model - Source: Parasuraman et al. (1985)

Lovelock et al. (2011) describe five dimensions for assessing service quality. Tangibility refers to physical components of service, including facilities, equipment, employee appearance, and supporting materials. Reliability reflects the organization’s ability to provide services consistently and as promised. Responsiveness referred to the willingness and promptness of staff to assist and help clients. Assurance involves client’s confidence by focusing on personal’s competency, professionalism, and kindness of employees. Empathy captures the individualized attention that clients receive, which make them feel recognized and valued.

When taken collectively, these dimensions cover both the human and physical elements of service quality in tourism and other service contexts.

1.2 Theoretical Background – Motivation Factors

Tourist motivation is a major topic in tourism research, because it helps explain why individuals choose specific places (Crompton, 1979; Pearce & Lee, 2005). Dann (1981) introduced a key framework for travel motivations, while Gray (1970, 1979, cited in Mansfeld, 1992) differentiated between “sunlust” tourists seeking relaxation and “wanderlust” tourists seeking novelty, adventure, and personal enrichment. These motivations align with Maslow’s hierarchy of human needs, highlighting desires for novelty, escape, personal fulfillment, and relaxation.

The popular push–pull model (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1977) distinguishes between internal drivers (push) such as self-development, prestige, or escape, and external attributes (pull) like climate, culture, geography, and facilities. Pearce and Lee (2005) improved these concepts via the Travel Career Patterns model, by combining 69 motivational factors into 14 core components. Research consistently demonstrates that travel motives influence satisfaction and destination evaluations (Crompton & McKay, 1997; Iso-Ahola, 1980, 1982; Uysal & Hagan, 1993) and that both push and pull factors jointly affect destination choice and return

intentions (Uysal & Jurowski, 1994; Baloglu & Uysal, 1996; Dann, 1977, 1981).

Cultural, social, and experiential factors increasingly influence travel behavior, as tourists look for significant, culturally rich, and heritage-based experiences (Hollinshead, 1999; Hughes & Allen, 2005; Kozak, 2002; Funk & Bruun, 2007; Nuryanti, 1996).

1.3 Theoretical Background – Tourist Satisfaction Related to Service Quality

In destination marketing, tourist satisfaction is crucial because it affects choice, service usage, and intentions to return (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Bramwell, 1998). There are some of the models that measure satisfaction including the expectation-perception gap model (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985), Oliver's expectancy-disconfirmation theory (Pizam & Milman, 1993), Sirgy's congruity model (Sirgy, 1984; Chon & Olsen, 1991), and the performance-only model (Pizam, Neumann, & Reichel, 1978). Among these, expectancy-disconfirmation theory is widely applied, it links satisfaction to the alignment (or discrepancy) between expected and actual service. Oliver's (1980) model was expanded by Pizam and Milman (1993), enabling a dynamic analysis of disconfirmation effects in tourism.

Satisfaction is directly influenced by aspects of service quality, such as tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Lovelock et al., 2011). High-quality service delivery increases positive evaluations, while discrepancies between expectations and experiences can reduce satisfaction, highlighting the importance of managing both technical and functional aspects of service.

1.4 Theoretical Background – Tourist Satisfaction Related to Motivational Factors

Motivations have an impact on tourist satisfaction. Push factors (internal desires such as relaxation, social interaction, or self-actualization) and pull factors (external destination variables) jointly affect decision-making and satisfaction (Uysal, Jurowski, & McDonald, 1994; Correia & Pimpão, 2008; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Satisfaction arises when experiences align with tourists' expectations and desires, reflecting both cognitive and affective components (Oliver, 1993; Peter & Olson, 1999; Alegre & Garau, 2010).

Expectation theory and desire congruence are central to understanding satisfaction: while desires reflect internal motivations, expectations are tied to destination attributes (Bultena & Klessig, 1969; Reiss, 2004). Cultural and heritage tourism increasingly influence satisfaction, as tourists seek enriching and meaningful experiences, with higher-educated and higher-income visitors forming an attractive market segment (Funk & Bruun, 2007; Kozak, 2002; Maoz, 2007; Hollinshead, 1999; Hughes & Allen, 2005; Nuryanti, 1996).

1.5 Theoretical Background – The Relationship Between Tourist Satisfaction and Loyalty

Satisfaction has a significant impact on tourist loyalty, return visits, and positive word-of-mouth, which in turn affect destination profitability (Deng et al., 2013; Kärnä, 2014; Crosby, 1993; Akama & Kieti, 2003). Loyal tourists create positive recommendations, they are less price-sensitive, and they reduce acquisition costs (Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Hallowell, 1996; Petrick, 2004). Tourist satisfaction affects behaviors including destination choice, activity participation, intention to return, and recommendations (Gursoy et al., 2014; Bhat &

Qadir, 2013).

In order to reflect the complexity of tourist behavior, modern models of loyalty include factors such as service quality, motivation, perceived value, pricing, and demographics (Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Oh, 1999; Bigne et al., 2001; Mittal & Kamakura, 2001; Beerli & Martín, 2004).

Managers can enhance services and gain a competitive advantage by assessing tourists' emotional reactions after their visit (Fornell, 1992; Kotler, 1994; Peters, 1994).

2. Method

2.1 Research Model

The purpose of the research model is to investigate the connections between international visitors' opinions of service quality, reasons for travelling, contentment, and loyalty. As seen in Fig. 2, it is based on theories of consumer behavior such balance theory (Abdel et al., 2016). The model tests the causal effects of perceived service quality and motivational factors on satisfaction and loyalty through hypothesis testing.

According to the perceived service quality framework, satisfaction or dissatisfaction arises from the disconfirmation between expectations and actual performance (Weber, 1997). Higher performance relative to expectations leads to satisfaction, while lower performance results in dissatisfaction. Perceived service quality is considered favorable when actual services exceed tourists' anticipations; conversely, overly high expectations can lead to negative evaluations. Previous research suggests that expectations and motivational factors (push and pull) influence perceived quality: unrealistic expectations can negatively impact perceptions, whereas strong motivations enhance perceived service quality.

Nine dimensions were analyzed in this study: service quality (SERVQUAL), tangibility (TAN), reliability (REL), responsiveness (RES), assurance (ASS), empathy (EMP), motivational factors (MOV), push and pull factors, tourist satisfaction (TS), and tourist loyalty (TL). Descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis, and confidence intervals, were calculated. A Q-Q plot was used to evaluate normality for each dimension and the overall dataset.

Demographic differences were assessed using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with post-hoc Tukey HSD tests to identify groups contributing to observed discrepancies. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed in the final phase: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to assess the measurement model, followed by evaluation of the structural model to test the hypotheses. Bootstrapping and causal steps approaches were applied to examine the mediating role of tourist satisfaction.

In summary, Perceived service quality and tourist motivations are closely connected, and together they form the basis for the seven main hypotheses in this study. The research model examines how both service quality and motivation factors shape tourist loyalty, with tourist satisfaction acting as a mediating variable. Figure 3 presents this overall framework, showing the pathways through which these factors interact to influence loyalty.



Figure 3. Research Model

2.2 Hypothesis:

H1: Perceived Service Quality (SERVQUAL) positively affect Tourist satisfaction (T.S)

The relationship between perceived service quality (SERVQUAL) and tourist satisfaction (T.S.) has been confirmed by a number of research in the literature. For example, the SERVQUAL model was first presented by Parasuraman et al. (1988), demonstrating its importance in understanding customer satisfaction in the service industry. Additionally, a different study by Zeithaml et al. (1990) provided empirical support for the positive impact of perceived service quality on customer satisfaction in a variety of service industries. When taken as a whole, this research improves our comprehension of how perceived service quality influences tourist satisfaction.

H2: Motivation Factors (MOTIV) positively affect Tourist satisfaction (T.S).

Research by Crompton (1979) supports the theory that Motivation Factors (MOTIV) have a favorable impact on Tourist Satisfaction (T.S). In this study, Crompton explored the dynamics of push and pull motives in the travel industry, demonstrating the various ways in which motivation factors might affect travelers' satisfaction levels.

H3: Tourist satisfaction (T.S) positively affect Tourist Loyalty (T.L)

Research by Oliver (1999) supports the idea that tourist satisfaction (T.S.) impacts tourist loyalty (T.L.) in a beneficial way. Oliver explores the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty in a variety of contexts in this study, providing empirical evidence of the significant influence that customer contentment has in forming loyal behaviors.

H4: Perceived Service Quality (SERVQUAL) positively affect Tourist Loyalty (T.L)

Research by Caruana (2002) supports the idea that tourist loyalty (T.L.) is positively impacted by perceived service quality (SERVQUAL). Caruana's analysis provides insights into the impact of perceived service quality on customer loyalty by examining the relationship between customer loyalty and perceptions of service quality across several service dimensions.

H5: Motivation Factors (MOTIV) positively affect Tourist Loyalty (T.L).

Dann (1977) and Pearce and Lee (2005) conducted studies that look at the variables

influencing tourists' choices of destinations and their willingness to return.

H6: Perceived Service Quality dimensions (SERVQUAL) Positively indirect affect Tourist Loyalty (T.L)

A study by Spreng and Mackoy (1996) looks at how the Perceived Service Quality aspects (SERVQUAL) indirectly contribute to tourist loyalty (T.L.). They examine the ways in which varying perceptions of service quality impact tourist satisfaction, which in turn influences tourist loyalty.

H7: Motivation Factors (MOTIV) Positively indirect affect Tourist Loyalty (T.L)

Research on the indirect effects of Motivation Factors (MOTIV) on Tourist Loyalty (T.L.) was conducted by Kim et al. (2012). Kim et al. looked into how various motivational factors affect satisfaction with tourists, which in impacts tourist loyalty indirectly.

2.3 Research Methods

The study's target population for data gathering was a group of tourists to Istanbul. Non-probability sampling techniques such as Convenient Sampling and Purposive Sampling were employed, as they were intended to represent the current state of affairs in Istanbul in 2023. To verify and guarantee the validity of measurement items, a pilot survey was carried out with tourists arriving at Istanbul International and Sabiha Gokcen Airports between October 1 and October 30, 2023. The pilot survey results guided revisions and enhancements to the questionnaire. With the help of several Istanbul tourism bureaus, the completed questionnaire was given to international tourists. For this study, 450 questionnaires in total were delivered. 427 completed questionnaires were gathered from them. Following the removal of 14 incomplete questionnaires, 413 responses were included for the analysis. We performed frequency analyses encompassing a range of demographic factors, including gender, age, marital status, income, education level, and area, in order to evaluate the overall characteristics of our sample. 32.7% of the respondents indicated they were male. Regarding the age distribution, 35.1% of the population was between the ages of 18 and 35, and 33.9% was between the ages of 36 and 45. The respondents' marital status revealed that a significant majority, or 60%, were married. In addition, 69% of the sample indicated an average salary \$3000 and below, while 58.8% of the sample had a bachelor's degree. In terms of geographic distribution, 23% of responses were from Europe and 38% were from Asia. Table 1 summarizes these demographic details.

Table 1. Demographic Result

Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage (N = 384)
Gender	Male	135	32.7
	Female	253	61.3
	Others	25	6.1
age	From 18 to 35 Years	145	35.1
	From 36 to 45 Years	140	33.9
	From 46 to 64 Years	48	11.6
	65 years and older	80	19.4
Marital status	Single	125	30.3
	Married	248	60.0
	Other	40	9.7
Educational level	High School or Less	74	17.9
	College Level	51	12.3
	Bachelor's Degree	243	58.8
	Master's Degree or above	45	10.9
Monthly income	Less than 1000\$	30	7.3
	From 1001 to 2000\$	95	23.0
	From 2001 to 3000\$	200	48.4
	3001\$ or more	88	21.3
Region	Africa	45	10.9
	Eastern Europe	55	13.3
	Asia	158	38.3
	Australia	10	2.4
	Europe	95	23.0
	North America	35	8.5
	South America	15	3.6

2.4 Measures

The measurements were adapted from the theories discussed in the literature review above and included the following 36 items (Table 2): perceived service quality (20 questions), tourist motivations factors (8 questions), tourist satisfaction (4 questions), and tourist loyalty (4 questions). The questionnaire included questions regarding the demographic characteristics of respondents. The items were scored on a five-point Likert scale according to whether respondents agree or disagree with each statement. Bhat et al. (2013) and Leo et al. (2021). Four of the headings measured overall tourist satisfaction, while the remaining four measured tourist loyalty (Rodger et al., 2015). On a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting strongly disagree and 5 denoting strongly agree, each item in this section was assessed. The participants' age, gender, level of education, income, and region were among the demographic data that was collected in the second section. Four academics in the field of tourism reviewed and revised the study instrument before data collection.

Table 2. Items for variables

variables	Items
Service quality	
Tangibility (TAN)	Modern and technologically relevant transportation.
	Appealing accommodation facilities
	Overall cleanliness of the destination.
	High-quality meals
Reliability (REL)	Performing the service/s at the promised time
	Performing the service/s right the first time.
	Meeting the tour schedule.
	No sudden increase in tour cost.
Responsiveness (RES)	Provision of information on tourism sites.
	The staff responds to tourists' requests quickly.
	Cultivation of friendly relationship with tourists
	Sincere interest in problem-solving of tourist's
Assurance (AS)	Employees are credible and courteous with tourists
	Experienced and competent tour and hotel escorts
	Willingness to help tourists and advice on how to use free time
	Fluent and understandable communication with tourists.
Empathy (EMP)	The employee quickly apologized when service mistakes are made.
	The employee listened carefully when you complain
	Employees understand the customer's requirements
	Employees give you individual attention
Motivation factors	
Push factors (PUSH)	I can spend time with family and friends while at the fair
	Visiting place, I can talk about when I get home
	Going places, I have never visited
	Opportunity to increase one's knowledge
Pull factors (PULL)	To accompany friends/family.
	to visit historical, archeological, buildings and places
	To meet different culture
	Outstanding natural scenery and landscape
Tourist satisfaction (T.S)	I am satisfied with my visit to this destination
	My visit to this destination was exactly what I needed
	I perceived degree of method of service
	Satisfied with the culture and history and landscape
Tourist Loyalty (T.L)	I recommend my friends and relatives to visit this destination
	I will say positive things about this destination to other people
	I am looking to visit this destination again
	I am willing to pay more than planned to experience

3. Results

3.1 Descriptive Statistics

To assess scale reliability, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated using SPSS 22.0. All scales exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978), confirming strong internal consistency. Validity was examined through exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using AMOS.

The EFA results (Table 3) showed factor loadings above 0.50 and extracted variances above

0.60, indicating solid convergent validity (Hair et al., 1998). Oblique rotation was used, acknowledging the potential correlation among factors. The CFA results (Table 4) further supported model adequacy, with high factor loadings, acceptable GFI values (≥ 0.90), and RMSEA within recommended limits (Smith & McMillan, 2001).

Discriminant validity was evaluated through correlation analysis among latent variables. Since all correlations were significantly below 1.0, the measures demonstrated adequate discriminant validity (Table 5).

Table 3. Measurement properties of variables

Variables	Items	Loadings	Cronbach a	Mean	Std. deviation
Service quality					
Tangibility			.863		
	TAN1	.726		4.0024	.95911
	TAN2	.715		3.8523	.98532
	TAN3	.697		3.8668	.97003
	TAN4	.695		3.9080	.95595
Reliability			.854		
	REL1	.705		3.9274	.86997
	REL2	.767		3.9128	.95894
	REL3	.834		3.9104	.98000
	REL4	.742		3.9976	.95404
Responsiveness			.855		
	RES1	.763		3.9201	.92480
	RES2	.758		3.8983	.97757
	RES3	.715		3.9031	.91126
	RES4	.733		3.8789	.99018
Assurance			.828		
	AS1	.700		3.8281	.99122
	AS2	.730		3.8717	.97318
	AS3	.692		3.8692	.96660
	AS4	.708		3.8838	.98091
Empathy			.814		
	EMP1	.705		3.9637	.97101
	EMP2	.743		3.9201	.99314
	EMP3	.688		3.8717	.98557
	EMP4	.741		3.8765	.95111
Motivation factors					
PUSH			.818		
	PUSH1	.598		3.9540	.97309
	PUSH2	.663		3.8814	.97192
	PUSH3	.732		3.9322	.96806
	PUSH4	.819		4.0048	.93735
PULL			.823		
	PULL1	.758		3.9370	.99069
	PULL2	.709		3.9758	.92137
	PULL3	.687		3.9709	.99471
	PULL4	.701		3.9370	.92217
Tourist satisfaction			.853		
	T.S1	.750		3.9831	.89345
	T.S2	.758		4.0605	.93669
	T.S3	.794		3.9346	.91804

	T.S4	.773		4.0121	.94886
Tourist Loyalty			.816		
	T.L1	.649		4.0315	.86264
	T.L2	.752		4.0436	.89391
	T.L3	.783		3.9903	.93989
	T.L4	.689		4.0194	.88658

After establishing convergent validity through assessments of discriminant validity and internal consistency reliability (Hair et al., 2014), the structural model was tested to determine the significance of the hypothesized relationships. As part of this stage, the overall model fit was evaluated using widely recognized goodness-of-fit indices and compared against recommended thresholds (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Bentler & Pavlovic, 1989).

The findings, presented in Table 4, show that both the measurement and structural models fit the data exceptionally well. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI = 0.964) and Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI = 0.956) exceed the commonly accepted cut-off point of 0.95, indicating that the proposed model provides a strong improvement over the null model and avoids unnecessary complexity. Similarly, the Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI = 0.984) surpasses the 0.95 benchmark, demonstrating that the model successfully explains a large proportion of the variance in the observed data. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA = 0.046) falls below the recommended threshold of 0.06, signaling a very close fit to the population covariance structure, while the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR = 0.048) remains well under the limit of 0.08, reflecting minimal differences between predicted and observed relationships.

Together, these indicators offer clear evidence of excellent model performance.

- CFI shows how much better the model fits compared to a model with no assumed relationships; values approaching 1 indicate strong improvement.
- TLI adjusts for model complexity, and values above 0.95 suggest that the model achieves good fit without overfitting.
- GFI reflects how much of the observed variance the model can reproduce; values near 1 show a very strong match.
- RMSEA captures the model’s approximation error in the population, with low values indicating high accuracy and generalizability.

Overall, the results confirm that the measurement model has solid construct validity and reliability, and that the structural model provides a coherent and accurate representation of the relationships proposed in this study. The strong values across CFI, TLI, GFI, and RMSEA collectively reinforce the robustness and credibility of the model.

Table 4. Statistical Model Goodness of Fit

Fit Index	Measurement Model (CFA)	Cut-off Criteria
X ²	55.060	
Df	24	
CFI	.963	CFI>0.95
GFI	.984	GFI>0.95
TLI	.956	TLI>0.95
RMSEA	.046	RMSEA<0.5
SRMR	.048	SRMR<0.08

Note. χ^2 = chi-square; df = degree of freedom; CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis fit index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; SRMR = standardized root mean residual Source: Hu & Bentler (1999).

The results in Table 5 show how the main variables in the study relate to each other. While the correlations are significant—meaning the variables are meaningfully connected—they are still far from the value of 1.0. This is important because it shows that none of the variables are overlapping or measuring the same thing. Instead, each construct, such as service quality, motivation, satisfaction, and loyalty, keeps its own distinct meaning. These results confirm that the model is statistically sound and that the variables work together in a logical way, without losing their individuality.

Table 5. Correlation analysis among inherent variables

	Tan	Rel	Ress	As	Em	Push	Pull	T. S	T. L
Tan	1								
Rel	.775**	1							
Ress	.607**	.686**	1						
As	.637**	.658**	.676**	1					
Em	.665**	.718**	.381**	.667**	1				
Push	.658**	.758**	.698**	.326**	.485**	1			
Pull	.486**	.597**	.455**	.368**	.431**	.685**	1		
T. S	.297**	.332**	.335**	.225**	.326**	.254**	.232**	1	
T. L	.287**	.291**	.307**	.222**	.317**	.102*	.243**	.709**	1

3.2 Test of Research Hypotheses

The study produced several key findings. First, the results show that perceived service quality has a clear positive effect on tourist satisfaction. This was confirmed through Hypothesis 1, where the path coefficient reached 0.325 (T = 6.965), and the p-value (0.000) fell well below the 0.05 significance level. In other words, tourists who felt they received high-quality service were more satisfied with their experience.

Second, the analysis of Hypothesis 2 demonstrated that motivational factors also play a meaningful role in shaping satisfaction. The path coefficient for this relationship was 0.172 (T = 3.550), with a p-value of 0.000, supporting the hypothesis. This means that stronger travel motivations—whether push or pull—are associated with higher levels of satisfaction.

Third, the results strongly supported Hypothesis 3. Tourist satisfaction showed a substantial positive effect on tourist loyalty, with a path coefficient of 0.709 ($T = 20.375$) and a highly significant p-value (0.000). This confirms that satisfied tourists are far more likely to return and recommend the destination to others.

Fourth, the findings also showed that perceived service quality directly contributes to tourist loyalty. Hypothesis 4 was supported with a path coefficient of 0.308 ($T = 6.566$) and a p-value of 0.000. This means that even before considering satisfaction, service quality alone still plays an important role in shaping loyal behaviors.

Fifth, the results of Hypothesis 5 indicated that motivational factors have a positive direct impact on loyalty as well. The path coefficient was 0.188 ($CR = 3.877$) with a p-value of 0.000, supporting the hypothesis. Tourists who feel internally or externally motivated to travel are more likely to develop loyalty toward the destination.

Sixth, the study examined the indirect effect of service quality on loyalty through satisfaction. Hypothesis 6 was supported, showing a positive indirect effect with a path coefficient of 0.242 and a p-value of 0.002. This indicates that service quality enhances loyalty not only directly but also indirectly by increasing satisfaction.

Finally, Hypothesis 7 explored whether motivational factors indirectly influence loyalty through satisfaction. The results confirmed this relationship as well: the path coefficient was 0.125, and the p-value (0.001) was below the significance threshold. This means that motivations shape loyalty both directly and indirectly through their effect on satisfaction.

Together, these findings—summarized in Table 6—highlight the central role of both service quality and motivation in shaping tourist satisfaction, which in turn strongly drives loyalty.

Table 6. Results of Path Analysis

Path to	Path from	Ha	Std. Coeff.	t-value	P-value
Direct Effects					
Tourist satisfaction	H1: Service Quality	H1: Supported	.325	6.965	.000**
	H2: Motivation Factors	H2: Supported	.172	3.550	.000**
	Tangibility	H1 _a : Supported	.297	6.302	.000**
	Reliability	H1 _b : Supported	.332	7.145	.000**
	Responsiveness	H1 _c : Supported	.335	7.197	.000**
	Assurance	H1 _d : Supported	.225	4.692	.000**
	Empathy	H1 _e : Supported	.326	6.980	.000**
	Push	H2 _a : Not Supported	.086	1.741	.082
	Pull	H2 _b : Supported	.232	4.839	.000**
Tourist Loyalty	H3: Tourist satisfaction	H3: Supported	.709	20.375	.000**
	H4: Service Quality	H4: Supported	.308	6.566	.000**
	H5: Motivation Factors	H5: Supported	.188	3.877	.000**
	Tangibility	H4 _a : Supported	.287	6.081	.000**
	Reliability	H4 _b : Supported	.291	6.161	.000**
	Responsiveness	H4 _c : Supported	.307	6.564	.000**
	Assurance	H4 _d : Supported	.222	4.625	.000**
	Empathy	H4 _e : Supported	.317	6.773	.000**
	Push	H5 _a : Supported	.102	2.086	.038*
	Pull	H5 _b : Supported	.243	5.084	.000**
Indirect Effects					
Path to	Path from through Tourist Satisfaction				
Tourist Loyalty	H6: Service Quality	H6: Supported	.242		.002**
	H7: Motivation Factors	H7: Supported	.125		.001**

4. Discussion and Comparison with Previous Studies

The structural causal model was analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM), allowing the study to evaluate both the overall model fit and the relationships among the key variables. The findings align well with previous research. Yoon and Uysal (2005) found that pull motivations can increase both tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty, while push motivations primarily influence loyalty. Similarly, Chi (2005) showed that destination image affects loyalty indirectly through perceived quality, and that both service quality and loyalty are closely linked to satisfaction.

These findings are also supported by other researches. Hu et al. (2010) assured that tourists' perceptions strongly influence their intention to return and make purchases, indicating that perception plays an important role in shaping future behavior. Research by Huang and Su (2010), Song et al. (2011), and Chen and Chen (2010) demonstrated that tourists are likely more satisfied when they believe the quality of service, they receive is worth more than what they paid. Ljubica et al. (2009) also confirmed that destination image directly affects how tourists evaluate their visit and whether they plan to return.

The current study further found that perceived service quality positively influences tourist loyalty, with satisfaction acting as a mediator (H3). This is consistent with Pratminingsih et al. (2014), who reported that satisfied tourists are more likely to revisit and recommend a

destination. In the same line, Som and Badarneh (2011) emphasized that satisfaction raises the possibility of returning, it is a key factor for building loyalty in a variety of industries, including tourism.

Furthermore, Hansemark and Albinsson (2004) argued that loyalty—which is crucial for keeping clients and growing market share—is directly influenced by customer satisfaction. Finally, the findings are consistent with those of Kozak (2001), which support Hypothesis 2 of the present study by demonstrating a direct cause-and-effect relationship between travel satisfaction and destination loyalty, as well as between motivation and satisfaction.

Recommendations

- Conducting ongoing market research to understand and meet the changing demands of tourists by examining their motives and service quality.
- To attract tourists, the Turkish Tourism Authority should openly promote Turkey's attractions. To retain tourists, push factors should be addressed.
- To increase Turkish tourism market share, tourism marketers should carefully study tourists' behavior and opinions concerning Turkey as a tourism destination and use this information to improve service quality.
- Employees must receive ongoing training to handle different tourists' patterns and needs in order to retain their loyalty.
- Assessing tourist satisfaction must be a basic criterion for assessing the performance of destination products since it plays a major role in developing marketable tourists goods and services for destinations.
- It is advised to continuously monitor tourist satisfaction. Its findings could be used to inform trend analysis and strategic decision-making
- Marketers could draw attention to various activities and attractions that might increase tourists' motives to visit Turkey. Tourists should be aware that Turkey offers a variety of tourism options.

5. Conclusion

The results of this study show clearly that all the proposed hypotheses were supported. Both perceived service quality and tourists' motivation had a strong influence on how satisfied tourists felt during their visit. In turn, motivation, service quality, and satisfaction all played an important role in shaping tourist loyalty. This means that when tourists feel motivated, receive excellent service, and leave satisfied, they are more likely to revisit or suggest the destination to others.

Even though the findings were strong, the study has a few limitations. The accuracy of the results may occasionally be impacted by tourists giving answers they believe the researcher desires. Furthermore, concepts like satisfaction and loyalty are complex, and using only one research method makes it harder to fully understand them. That's why in order to obtain a more comprehensive image, future research should integrate both quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

For future research, it would be useful to look at additional factors such as tourists' previous experiences, what they learned before the trip, and their expectations before visiting. These factors might help explain why tourists feel satisfied after the visit. It's also important to examine how perceived service quality might act as a link between satisfaction and loyalty, helping us understand more clearly why satisfied tourists become loyal ones.

Authors contributions

Dr Majdi Alhusaini was responsible for statistical analysis and drafting the manuscript. Dr Hiba mefleh contributed to the literary and textual sections and assisted in distributing the survey questionnaires. Dr Hiba mefleh has agreed to be listed as a co-author. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

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