

# THE IMPORTANCE OF SECURITY ON TOURISM

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**Abstract.** *Tourism is one of the sectors that has a very important place due to its significant contributions to both national and international economies. The economic importance of this sector brings the importance of security, which is an important factor in tourism, to the forefront. Research shows that safety and security are becoming increasingly important during destination selection and holiday experiences. Today, in the tourism sector, safety and security are prioritized alongside price and quality. Essentially, safety and security are critical factors in determining a country's competitiveness in the travel and tourism sector. The success or failure of a tourism destination is closely related to providing tourists with a safe and secure environment. In the future, safety and security will be among the elements that promote tourism. This study aims to examine the importance of safety in tourism, address issues related to tourism safety and security, and evaluate what can be done in this field. Accordingly, after establishing a conceptual framework, the literature was reviewed, focusing on the relationship and importance of tourism and security. Finally, recommendations were presented based on the significance of safety in tourism.*

**Keywords:** Tourism, Tourist, Security, and Safety

## 1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the sectors that has a very important place due to its significant contributions to both national and international economies. Tourism is an important global industry that contributes significantly to the economic growth and development of nations. This interaction creates a very sensitive structure that can be affected by external and internal factors. The economic importance of this sector brings the importance of security, which is an important factor in tourism, to the forefront. Studies show that safety and security are becoming increasingly important during destination selection and holiday experiences (Hacıoğlu & Saylan, 2014).

It is known that not only in our country but also all over the world, an innumerable number of men and women are employed in the tourism sector. It

is also a fact that the tourism sector, which appeals to such a large audience, also contributes to the increase in intercultural interaction and the revival of international trade. As mentioned above, these encouraging multidimensional tourism developments also bring a series of security threats. The most serious threats to the tourism and travel sector include regional and global terrorist acts, high crime rates, natural disasters, and epidemics. These regional and global threats often have the potential to affect well-known tourist destinations as well as various industries directly or indirectly related to the travel and tourism sector (Ünlüönen, 2000).

The tourism sector, which provides employment opportunities for millions of people not only in Turkey but also around the world and facilitates international trade and cultural exchange, has significant economic benefits (UNWTO, 2021). For example, the World Travel & Tourism Council (2022) declared that the tourism sector contributed 10.4% to global GDP in 2019 and provided employment for approximately 319 million people. This rate is very important for the global economy.

Despite these advantages, the tourism industry faces several security threats that can adversely affect its stability and growth. The impact of such risks is multifaceted, affecting not only the immediate tourist destinations but also related sectors such as hospitality, transportation, and local economies. According to Gössling and Hall (2017) key security risks include:

1. **Terrorism:** Fear of terrorism is another negative factor, as potential tourists are deterred from visiting places. It has been shown that this situation can lead to long-term declines in visitor numbers. It is a fact that acts of terrorism can have devastating effects on tourism. The devastating acts of terrorism in Paris can be given as an example. It has been determined that these acts of terrorism caused a significant decrease in tourist visits and created a negative ripple effect on the relevant sectors (Neumayer, 2004).
2. **Natural Disasters:** Some natural events such as hurricanes, tsunamis and earthquakes can disrupt tourism infrastructure. They can even displace communities. The tourism sector, along with other sectors in the affected areas, can be severely affected. The 2011 Japanese tsunami served as an example of how natural disasters can have a major negative economic impact (Wu & Hayashi, 2014).
3. **Crime:** Crime is another important factor affecting tourism. High crime rates in tourist resorts can undermine the sense of security and deter current and future tourists, as tourism and visitor behavior can suffer as a direct result. This has affected long-term and short-term tourist trends (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999).

4. Epidemics and Pandemics: Health outbreaks are another major factor affecting travel worldwide. This is the most recent example of the COVID-19 outbreak that has emerged worldwide recently. Everyone has seen how and how quickly global tourism will be disrupted by this global pandemic. The tourism industry is now extremely susceptible to health-related risks as a result of this pandemic. Travel worldwide has decreased at an unprecedented rate as a result of the pandemic (World Health Organization, 2020).

These security threats not only jeopardize the safety of tourists but also impact the broader economic ecosystem that supports the tourism sector. Effective management and strategic planning are essential to mitigate these risks and ensure the sector's resilience.

## **1.2. Problem Statement**

Tourism is a critical economic driver that significantly impacts employment and GDP in many countries. The success and sustainability of the tourism sector depends on the perceived and actual security of destinations. Terrorism, political instability and increased crime can jeopardize tourist safety, and there have been declines in tourist numbers and revenues in affected areas (Hsu & Sharma 2023). Despite the critical impact of security on tourism, there is often little emphasis on integrating comprehensive security measures into tourism planning and management. Security vulnerabilities not only put tourists at risk, they also jeopardize the long-term sustainability of tourism. Consequently, understanding the important role that security plays in tourism and developing strategies to mitigate these risks is essential to promoting a growing and safe tourism industry (Hall, Timothy, & Duval, 2003).

Tourism used to be considered a luxury and a privilege reserved for the wealthy, but these days it's practically a need. Travel is becoming more popular, and nations are coming up with new ways to capture a bigger chunk of the expanding travel market. Tourism as a vehicle for social mobility is of interest to the fields of economics, sociology, and psychology. Because tourism makes it easier for different social and cultural institutions to interact, it also has an impact on societal changes and the evolution of behavioral patterns (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2017).

Among the social and psychological factors that positively affect tourism are the need for relaxation, entertainment, sports and cultural influences. However, it seems that the motivation to travel alone is not enough; economic and social factors also play a role. Tourists may prioritize the need for security when choosing a holiday. Along with other basic requirements, the security

factor is a basic need for people to live in peace and feel safe in a tourist destination (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2017).

### **1.3. Research Objective**

Security has many direct and indirect effects on the tourism sector. In this context, the main objective of this research is to understand, evaluate, and explain the impacts of the security element on the tourism sector in light of existing research on the topic. Furthermore, this research study will examine the importance of security in tourism and how it affects different aspects of traveler behavior such as destination choice, holiday experience and intention to return, how security perceptions affect traveler behavior, the negative impacts of security concerns on travel industries and destinations, and the tactics needed to successfully prevent and address security issues.

### **1.4. Importance of the Research**

The tourism sector has a wide scope within world economies, attracting attention with the increase and development in international and national tourist movements. However, as tourism revenues are affected by threats such as health issues, accidents, and terrorism, the concept of security is becoming an increasingly decisive factor in tourism activities (Baker, 2014; Tarlow & Santana, 2002). For this reason, studies on security issues in the tourism sector are among the important topics highlighted in the industry and literature (Hall, Timothy, & Duval, 2003; Ünlüönen, 2000).

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Tourism and Tourist**

When examining the literature on the concepts of "tourist" and "tourism," it becomes clear that there are numerous different definitions for these terms and no common definition exists. The Turkish Language Association defines the concept of tourism as travel undertaken for purposes such as sightseeing, relaxation, and entertainment (Turkish Language Association [TDK], 2014). In another dictionary, tourism is described as the activity of traveling to a place for pleasure; the business of providing hotels, entertainment, and restaurants for travelers; the practice of traveling for enjoyment; tourist guiding and management; and the promotion and encouragement of travel and accommodation for tourists (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2014). The World Tourism Organization (WTO), which offers a more comprehensive definition, describes tourism as a concept that includes the activities of people traveling outside their usual environment for reasons such as work, leisure, and other purposes, provided they do not spend more than one year at the destination (WTO, 1995).

The changing definitions of tourists and tourism are still being investigated in recent studies. Smith (2020) asserts that a growing number of people consider tourism to be a complex system that involves the interaction of numerous economic, social, and environmental elements that affect people's travel patterns and interactions with destinations. Williams and Lew (2021) state that there is a growing importance of sustainability in the tourism industry. In addition, they emphasize that the tourism sector is not only promoting economic development but also serves as a dynamic activity that addresses social and environmental challenges. In their analysis of the significance of safety and security in this sector, Tarlow and Santana (2002) discuss how these variables impact tourist experiences and the attractiveness of the destinations they wish to visit. Moreover, they examine various risks associated with tourism, including two critical factors: safety and health concerns, and analyze how and to what extent these factors influence tourist behaviors.

Regarding the definition of a "tourist," the Turkish Language Association defines a tourist as a person who travels for purposes such as entertainment, rest, sightseeing, and recognition, a traveler, voyager, or tourist (TDK, 2014). A tourist can be either domestic or foreign, depending on whether they travel within or outside their home country. Furthermore, Weaver and Lawton (2020) argue that the definition of tourist should include the growing trend of "experiential tourism" where tourists seek authentic, immersive experiences that go beyond traditional travel. McIntosh et al. (1995) defines a tourist as an individual who travels for a variety of purposes and purposes, from business to pleasure, and whose behavior is shaped by experiences and services at the destination and destination.

These contemporary definitions highlight the ongoing evolution and complexity of the terms "tourism" and "tourist," reflecting the broader changes and challenges within the global tourism industry.

## **2.2. Security**

Security reflects the multifaceted nature of tourism. In recent years, it has received increasing attention in tourism literature. It is fair to say that the term security, traditionally associated with physical security, has recently come to encompass emotional, social, and psychological aspects. According to recent studies, security in the travel industry encompasses more than just the absence of danger. Moreover, social stability, digital privacy, and health security are considered elements of security today (Drammeh, 2024). The study showed that visitors' perceptions of security are affected by data security, health concerns related to the pandemic, and physical security. Similarly, perceived security significantly affects travel preferences and preferred destinations

Fuchs and Pizam, (2011). These findings imply that destinations that provide risk management, social stability, and security can attract more and more tourists. The Turkish Language Association defines security as the preservation of the legal order that permits people to live comfortably. This new strategy is in line with that definition (TDK, 2014). In order to give tourists a satisfying and comforting experience, tourism management should take these larger aspects of security into account. It highlights how crucial mental and physical security are to communication and planning in the travel industry.

### **2.3. Safety in Tourism and Its Importance to Tourism**

It is the reality that tourist safety includes actions meant to detect and lessen potential risks and hazards during travel, bringing these incidences down to manageable levels. It entails thorough risk management techniques that cover possible hazards related to travel, including accidents, natural catastrophes, and medical problems. However, maintaining the integrity and prestige of the tourism business as well as safeguarding visitors depend on assuring safety in the sector (David & Edgell, 2020).

The main purpose of tourism security is to protect tourists from deliberate dangers and threats, primarily terrorism, crime, and sabotage. In order to protect tourists from these deliberate threats (which may include illegal activities or targeted attacks), it is essential to take effective, deterrent security measures. In addition to protecting people, security in tourism generally aims to create a safe atmosphere that increases visitor satisfaction levels (Mansfeld, & Pizam, 2006).

Security and safety measures must be linked to ensure the sustainability of the tourism sector. Governments, tourism operators and local communities need to cooperate to ensure that tourists feel safe. This includes developing surveillance systems, implementing emergency response plans and raising awareness of potential risks (Hsu & Sharma 2023). Integrating safety and security measures is essential for the viability of the tourism sector. Ensuring the safety of visitors is the responsibility of governments, travel agencies, and local communities. As a result, governments, travel agencies, and communities need to cooperate. Tourists can enjoy an approach that balances security and safety. Therefore, a positive impression is formed about it and this encourages the manager to visit more often. The highest level of security and safety is very important for success and customer satisfaction in the tourism and travel sector (Hsu & Sharma 2023; Mansfeld, & Pizam, 2006).

### **2.4. Safety and Tourism: Its Importance**

It is well known that there is substantial relationship between security and tourism. In recent years, the importance of this relationship has also increased

due to a series of high-profile events such as terrorist attacks, regional conflicts, natural disasters and pandemics, and etc. Such these events have revealed the critical role that security plays in shaping tourism dynamics and influencing behavior of travel (Gössling, et al., 2017).

Security in the tourism industry is becoming increasingly complex. Some of the main reasons for this are the emergence of variables such as rapid population growth, economic growth, and globalization. These increasing complexities have gone beyond direct threats such as terrorism and crime and have begun to include broader issues such as health crises, national and international crime, sustainable development, and resource scarcity. Consequently, the way these elements interact shows how crucial and significant security management is to the travel and tourism sector (Gössling et al., 2017).

In a competitive tourism industry, security perception is known to significantly affect various aspects of travel. For example, visitors' security perceptions can affect where they want to go, how long they will stay, and the likelihood of returning to the same place. In particular, recent studies have shown that these issues have been extensively researched and examined. It has been found out how security education affects visitors' perceptions and behaviors and the importance of proactive security measures has been revealed (Scott et al., 2017). The impact of terrorism and political instability on destination image has been analyzed and how such events change tourist perceptions and affect travel trends has been revealed (Naradda et al., 2022).

Fuchs and Pizam (2011) conducted a survey to investigate tourists' perceptions of security in popular destinations and found important findings on how security practices and incidents affect tourists' decisions (Jamal and Budke, 2020). focused on the effects of health crises such as pandemics on tourism trends and showed that global health emergencies can direct tourist preferences to safer destinations.

Both crimes that victimize tourists and organized crimes targeting tourism-related businesses are factors that can significantly damage the prestige of a destination. Similar actions can have a negative impact on tourism and deter future tourists. Perceived and effective security issues will cause tourists to choose destinations that are perceived as safer. Therefore, taking stronger security measures for the sustainability of tourism, as well as providing effective crisis management, is a necessity for the future of tourism (Kozak, M.; C. Crofts, J. and Law, R. 2007).



### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Research Strategy**

This research aims to examine the importance of security in tourism and to determine the role of security issues in tourists' destination selection, holiday experience and revisit intention in light of previous studies. This research aims to reveal how security perception is reflected in tourism behaviors, how security issues harm the tourism sector and destinations, and what should be done to manage security issues. The data collection process of this study was carried out by conducting a literature review on the relationship between security and tourism.

The literature review technique was used as a qualitative research method to examine the relationship between security and tourism. With this technique, previous studies on the subject were examined, and the effects of security on tourism, destination choices, and revisit intentions were discussed. The literature review provides a comprehensive framework in terms of revealing the reflections of security perception on tourism behaviors, the negative effects of security problems on the tourism sector and destinations, and what needs to be done to prevent and manage these problems.

#### **4. Research Analysis**

Based on the literature, this research shows that security is a significant factor in tourism. For instance, Ünlüönen and Seçilmiş (2009), in a survey-based study, revealed that Istanbul has an image that does not inspire confidence from certain aspects for tourists. Karaman and Polat (2020), in their study, concluded that there is a significant relationship between the security perceptions of domestic tourists visiting the Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia Regions and their intention to revisit. It was found that if visitors place high importance on the safety of the regions they choose, they are more likely to visit again. Among the reasons for this, they noted that the historical and cultural richness of these regions in recent times could be attracting tourists.

In summary, the study provided offers a comprehensive overview of the concepts of tourism, tourist, safety, and security, and their interrelatedness. Here's a structured analysis and how the references integrate into the text.

#### **5. Conclusion and Recommendations**

The detailed literature reviewed on security and tourism, which has become a global issue, emphasizes that the relationship between security and safety in the tourism industry is extremely critical while addressing the multifaceted nature of the tourism sector. The security factor in tourism can affect not only tourism preferences but also economic and sometimes political



trust. In fact, this situation experienced regarding security has evolved into a more complex understanding of the process at global and individual levels (Hall, Timothy, & Duval, 2004).

Definitions of tourism and tourists vary from source to source. In addition, the tourism sector reflects the complexity and constantly evolving structure of the field. It has been observed that modern approaches emphasize that tourism encompasses a wide range from entertainment, rest, and exploring new places to business activities and increasingly includes both experiential and sustainable travel. Security today affects not only tourism but also the health sector, social and other environmental areas. In particular, it has become a necessity to achieve the desired levels of security in terms of sustainability and ensuring social welfare (Hall, Timothy, & Duval, 2004).

For all countries with tourism potential, it has great economic importance. For this, the number of tourists coming is also of great importance. However, threats and dangers continue to exist on a global scale and are experienced with greater frequency. The image of a region or country is not only its cultural and natural heritage or its economic environment. In addition to these, it is its social and political climate, public order, and both tourist and product security. For this reason, the concept of security in tourism has expanded beyond the traditional physical security understanding to include psychological, emotional and social dimensions. This broader understanding is important in that tourists' perceptions of security now include health risks, digital privacy and social stability. Effective security management is essential to reduce risks such as health emergencies and natural disasters; security measures are taken against deliberate threats such as crime and terrorism (Popescu, 2011).

Security and tourism have a crucial relationship influencing travelers' overall travel habits and location preferences. While picking a destination, travelers typically do not overlook security and safety. Prominent incidents like pandemics and terrorism have raised awareness of security concerns and illustrated the necessity of all-encompassing and proactive security measures. Terrorist incidents in different parts of the world have revealed how important security is for tourism. Perceived terrorism attracts fewer tourists. No matter how attractive a country is, tourists cannot be expected to show interest in places where there is no security and safety. The number of tourists who take this risk is quite low.

## **Recommendations**

1. *Integration of Safety and Security Measures:* Tourism stakeholders need to put forward a comprehensive approach that brings together safety and

security. The main reason for this requirement includes strong security measures against both crime and terrorism, as well as the implementation of strong risk management strategies for accidents, natural disasters and the health sector (Mansfeld, & Pizam, 2006; David & Edgell, 2020).

2. *Increasing Perceived Security:* Destination management organizations should focus on improving the perceived security of their locations in order to achieve all kinds of desired efficiency in the tourism sector, and whatever steps need to be taken in this regard should be taken. This includes not only health and safety procedures and preparations for risk management, but also clear communication about crisis response plans. Travelers' decisions can be greatly influenced if they are aware of these measures (Fuchs, & Pizam, (2011).

3. *Encouraging Experiential Travel and Sustainability:* Developments continue in the national and international tourism sector. In parallel with the development, the sector needs sustainability. Sustainability triggers competitiveness and increases success. Therefore, places to visit should encourage environmentally friendly and socially responsible practices because travel trends are moving towards sustainability and experiential travel. In the socio-economic, socio-cultural and geopolitical context, in addition to securing the long-term security existence of the tourism sector, an emphasis on authentic experiences and sustainable practices can significantly increase visitor happiness. Finally, tourists generally prefer safe destinations over dangerous travel destinations (Williams & Lew, 2021).

4. *Encouraging Cooperation among Investors:* Different scientific studies on this sensitive and critical issue have shown that creating a safe, secure and attractive environment is another strategy to achieve national or international competitiveness in the tourism sector. Therefore, both travel agencies and local communities and governments need to cooperate and ensure this among themselves. It is the fact that tourism needs to be well managed. Because tourists want a safe and attractive environment, which requires cooperation of investors. On the other hands, the investors should cooperate to ensure this and to develop and implement safety and security measures. By focusing on these critic matters, the investors should make travel purposes more attractive and more competitive for the visitors. However, in order to remain competitive in the tourism industry, destinations must also be able to attract and satisfy tourists better than their competitors (Hsu & Sharma 2023).

5. *Adapting to Emerging Risks:* Tourism investors must be cautious and adapt to emerging risks such as health crises and technological threats. It is necessary to ensure that security protocols and safety measures are updated regularly against emerging, potential and developing threats (Drammeh, 2024; Jamal & Budke, 2020).

If the suggestions listed above and similar ones are taken into consideration, it may be possible to increase both the safety and satisfaction of tourists in the tourism sector. It may even be possible to achieve the formation of a more durable and sustainable tourism sector.

The tourism sector is a vital source of income for many countries, both in terms of income generation and personnel employment. However, the perception of security that can be experienced in destinations has the potential to significantly affect this. Therefore, ensuring security in the tourism sector is a critical requirement for every country's economy. In the event of possible disruptions or problems related to tourist security, the potential to damage the reputation of a tourism destination is quite high. This issue is an event that needs to be addressed extensively with the right strategies as a national security issue. In this context, every investment that includes the security of tourists and tourism can be considered as a strategic investment in the economic future of a country.

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