

The Relationship Between Travel Motivation and Revisit Intention: The Case of Safranbolu

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Keywords: Travel motivation Revisit Intention Destination marketing Safranbolu Received 3 July 2025 Revised 13 February 2026 Accepted 28 February 2026	Purpose – The aim of this study is to examine the travel motivations of individuals visiting the destination of Safranbolu, which is distinguished by its cultural heritage and historical texture, and their intention to revisit; specifically, to investigate the effect of travel motivations on revisit intention and to reveal the relationship between these two variables. Design/methodology/approach – The study was conducted using a quantitative research method, and a total of six hypotheses were established. To test the hypotheses, data were collected through an online survey shared between March 12 and April 13, 2025. Ethical approval for the survey was obtained from the Zonguldak Bülent Ecevit University Human Research Ethics Committee with decision number 576625. All 404 people who started the survey completed it. Measurement models were refined based on the model fit indices and evaluated accordingly. Results – According to the results obtained, relaxation motivation was found to be the strongest predictor of revisit intention, while the effects of experience and exploration dimensions were limited. The overall model fit was within acceptable limits, and the structure was theoretically supported. Discussion – Statistically significant but with a small effect size were identified between travel motivation and revisit intention. In particular, cultural experience and the search for an authentic environment were found to have a significant and positive effect on revisit intention.
Article Classification: Research Article	

1. Introduction

Destination loyalty within the tourism industry is closely linked to visitors' intentions to revisit. Travel motivations fundamentally influence individuals' choice of a destination. This study focuses on identifying which travel motivations are most effective in explaining visitors' intention to revisit cultural heritage destinations such as Safranbolu.

Tourism, as a multidimensional sector that contributes economically and fulfils individuals' social, cultural, and psychological needs, has increasingly gained strategic importance globally. With the impact of globalization, competition has intensified at both national and international levels, requiring tourism destinations to develop strategic plans to sustain their presence, success, and continuity in the sector.

In this context, travel motivation being a primary determinant for understanding tourist behaviour guides destination management and tourism planning. It plays a crucial role in shaping marketing strategies for destinations and enhancing visitors' likelihood of revisiting. Travel motivation, a fundamental concept that explains why and how tourists travel, directly influences destination choice, satisfaction with experiences, and revisit behaviors. It represents the driving and compelling force behind human behaviour, assisting in understanding tourist behavior by provoking, motivating, and guiding it (Baysal and Tekarslan, 1996: 101; Aydın and Sezerer, 2017: 119; Pektaş, 2017: 33). Travel motivation encompasses all the needs that might encourage an individual to participate in tourism activities and holds a significant place in tourists' decision-making and purchasing processes (Ünal, 2020: 68; Bayar, 2022: 8). Additionally, it can be defined as the reasons that drive individuals to seek specific travel or holiday experiences or their recognition that particular destinations can fulfill those needs (Harman, 2014: 110; Sarı Gök et al., 2021: 702). Therefore, the characteristics, attractions, and quality of services offered by businesses at a destination have the power to influence and enhance tourist motivation, making the destination more visible (Yazıt and Erkol Bayram, 2022: 104).

ETHICAL APPROVAL: The ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Ethics Committee of Zonguldak Bülent Ecevit University Human Research with the decision dated February 2, 2025, and numbered 576625.

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Moreover, studies analysing travel motivations enable better fulfilment of tourists' desires, needs, and expectations at both the destination and business levels, providing insights for prioritizing attraction elements within marketing strategies and strengthening tourists' revisit intentions (Albayrak, 2013: 144; Kozak, 2002: 222).

Revisit intention is a critical indicator for sustaining the long-term success of a destination. Particularly for unique cultural heritage destinations like Safranbolu, identifying the factors that influence the relationship between the initial visit experience and subsequent revisit intention is essential for sustainability. Accordingly, this research aims to determine the relationship between travel motivations and revisit intentions of tourists visiting Safranbolu a site listed on the UNESCO World Heritage List and renowned for its authentic architectural texture, historical structures, and cultural richness. The study's findings are expected to contribute to the development of appropriate and sustainable strategies for tourism in Safranbolu. Additionally, the originality of this research lies in its focus on the relationship between travel motivation and revisit intention specifically in the context of Safranbolu, an area previously unexplored in this regard.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Travel Motivation

The term motivation, which literally means "to move," is derived from the Latin word "movere." Motivation is defined as the internal driving force that directs purposeful behaviors toward a specific goal, enabling an individual to act in order to satisfy a biological need or psychological desire. Motivation, which represents the power that moves an individual to satisfy an aroused need (Ruthankoon and Ogunlana, 2003: 333; Toker, 2006: 43; Kurtzman and Zauhar, 2005: 23), when considered in the context of travel, refers to a set of needs that cause an individual to participate in tourism-related activities (Park and Yoon, 2009: 102). Travel motivation, defined by Pizam et al., (1979) as a series of needs and attitudes that guide an individual toward touristic activities (Akay and Yılmaz, 2019: 2166), consists of social and psychological factors underlying participation in tourism activities and includes specific needs. Travel motivation, which triggers the inclination to take a vacation during the tourist's decision-making process, can influence future behaviors and plays a decisive role in travel decisions and destination choice (Chen and Wu, 2009: 302; Bayih and Singh, 2020: 2; Ülkü et al., 2019: 312; Deniz and Serçek, 2024: 1656). In this context, understanding the factors that motivate tourists' travel behavior and destination preferences facilitates predicting travel decisions and forecasting future travel trends (Jang and Wu, 2006: 314). Therefore, to establish itself as a preferred destination, it is essential to comprehensively understand tourists' motivations and their subsequent behavioral intentions. Knowing tourists' preferences and behavioral intentions contributes to destinations' development and strategic planning through more accurate future-oriented plans (Leong et al., 2015: 81; Tatık, 2024: 61). Consequently, numerous studies focus on travel motivation to identify individuals' reasons for traveling. According to Rızaoğlu (2012), one of the earliest studies on the subject is Grinstein's (1955) work titled *Vacations: A Psychoanalytic Study*, in which travel motivation is explained as an individual's desire to escape from everyday life. Subsequent studies developed various theories and models within the framework of motivation to explain factors directing individuals' travel experiences and making these experiences satisfying (Çıki, 2024: 26). For example, Plog (1974) classified tourist types along the axes of allocentrism and psychocentrism; Dann (1977) explained motivation by two primary drives: "escape" and "self-fulfilment." Crompton (1979) introduced the push and pull factors model affecting travel decisions; Ross and Iso-Ahola (1991) addressed reasons for traveling as "escape" and "seeking." Pearce (1988) developed the travel career ladder model based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Finally, Klenosky (2002) examined motivations in the context of cause and effect relationships (Çetin and Perçin, 2021: 600; Harman, 2014: 111; Nisari and Yılmaz, 2018: 70). Among these models, the most widely accepted universal approach is the push and pull factors theory (Baloğlu and Uysal, 1996: 32; Wang et al., 2015: 855). In the push and pull factor theory, tourist motivations are examined in two categories—socio-psychological and cultural motivations—based on Crompton (1979) work. Elements such as escaping from routine, self-discovery, relaxation, prestige, nostalgia, strengthening kinship ties, and establishing social interaction are considered push factors, whereas elements like education and novelty are regarded as pull factors. Within this framework, push motivations are used to explain the desire to travel for vacation, while pull motivations are considered important in explaining destination choice as cited in (Swanson and Horridge, 2006: 672; Bayih and Singh, 2020: 2; Konyalılar, 2022: 3124; Çakıcı and Aksu, 2007: 184). According to the theory, tourists are pushed to make travel decisions based on personal characteristics while simultaneously

pulled by the features of a destination (Türkyay and Atasoy, 2021: 63). Push factors influence the travel decision, whereas pull factors are effective in determining the destination (Klenosky, 2002: 385). Additionally, push factors generally represent the individual's intrinsic motivations, while pull factors denote the unique attractions and facilities offered by the destination that influence destination choice (Albughuli, 2011: 21). Pull values, defined as concrete reasons for preferring one destination over another, include natural beauties, climate, flora and fauna, cultural and historical assets, religious structures and monuments, architectural and artistic features, accommodation and recreational facilities, and other entertainment services (Kılıç et al., 2011: 363; Eren et al., 2017: 482; Ersun and Arslan, 2009: 143). The attractions possessed by a destination are effective in gaining a competitive advantage compared to other destinations and in influencing holiday decisions toward the destination (Kocatürk, 2018: 2). In conclusion, motivation is not only a fundamental element guiding tourists to make travel decisions but also has a decisive effect on destination selection. Moreover, providing experiences aligned with tourists' motivations contributes to strengthening the intention to revisit.

2.2. Revisit Intention

In the tourism sector, revisit intention is defined as the tourist's judgment regarding the likelihood of revisiting a destination and is considered important for destinations, businesses, and all stakeholders in the sector (Türk, 2020: 58). This concept, which expresses the willingness to revisit a destination in the future (Bayrakçı and Akdağ, 2016: 99), includes the expected or planned future behaviours of tourists (Lam and Hsu, 2006: 591). Tourists' desire to see a previously visited destination again and their tendency to recommend it to others (Kalkan, 2022: 65) are explained through the revisit intention concept. The importance of this concept was emphasized by Gitelson and Crompton (1984), stating that "efforts to develop and maintain repeat visits are vital for destinations." In this context, meeting tourists' needs and expectations at the travel destination (Türk and Özdemir, 2021: 357), previous visit frequency, acquired experiences and satisfaction level, service quality, and tourist motivations (Alegre and Cladera, 2009: 679; Um et al., 2006: 1142; Boit, 2013: 19) are among the primary factors affecting revisit intention. Among these factors, travel history appears to be a significant determinant in future destination preferences. When comparing first-time visits with repeat visits to the same destination, it has been found that tourists who revisit have a higher intention to revisit in the future compared to first-time visitors. Indeed, repeat visitors constitute more than half of the total tourist arrivals in many destinations. Particularly, the satisfaction of the tourist's previous destination experience is considered a fundamental factor encouraging the intention to revisit the same destination (Oppermann, 1998: 132; Wang, 2004: 101; Kozak and Rimmington, 2000: 264). A tourist who is highly satisfied with a destination tends to evaluate it positively and shows willingness to recommend it to others; as a result, a sense of loyalty toward the destination develops. Furthermore, a previously experienced destination involves much less uncertainty in vacation planning compared to an unvisited one. This situation reduces potential tourists' perceived uncertainty through positive evaluations made by previous tourists, which can be more effective than commercial advertising in destination selection; it generates income and profit for the destination while supporting positive promotion and reducing marketing costs (Soleimani and Einolahzadeh, 2018: 14; Witt and Witt, 1995: 455; Meng and Han, 2018: 349; Khuong and Ha, 2014: 491). In this context, revisit intention is evaluated as an indicator that tourists are satisfied with their experiences at the destination, tend to exhibit similar future behaviours, and are likely to recommend the destination to their environment, thus holding strategic importance for the tourism sector (Karahana and Birdir, 2023: 44). In conclusion, destination managers' understanding of tourist motivations and offering suitable experiences are critical necessities for increasing tourist loyalty and strengthening revisit intention.

Safranbolu, which was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1994, has a rich historical and cultural heritage with its traditional Ottoman architecture and 1008 registered artifacts. Its houses with unique architecture reflecting Ottoman culture, climate, and lifestyle; mosques, fountains, bridges, inns, baths, tombs, rock tombs, and the Yemenici Bazaar are among numerous cultural assets that make Safranbolu a prominent destination for cultural tourism (Hadrovic, 2024: 785; Özdemir, 2013: 126; Ayaz et al., 2021: 4). Particularly, the preservation of the city's historical texture makes it a strong attraction for domestic and foreign tourists interested in cultural and historical values, distinguishing it as a museum city (Kocakaya and Dönmez, 2022: 127).

2.3. Destination Marketing

The increase in global competition and the diversification of tourist expectations have rendered it insufficient for destinations to possess only natural and cultural features; these elements must be effectively promoted and managed. In this regard, destination marketing plays a crucial role in promoting a specific region, creating brand value, and developing sustainable strategies for attracting tourists. Destination marketing, as a management approach that supports making accurate strategic decisions through comprehensive analyses and evaluations based on tourism supply and demand, ensures the effective positioning of existing touristic products in appropriate target markets and maximizes the economic returns of the destination (Kurtoğlu and Temiz, 2018: 91). Destination marketing is a proactive, strategic, and visitor-oriented approach that balances the interests of visitors, service providers, and local communities, aiming for sustainable development and supporting the economic and cultural progress of the region (Sharma, 2013: 20). It is also a type of marketing aimed at increasing the number of visitors by promoting the destination (Gedik, 2021: 124). This type of marketing includes all promotional activities created to present the identity of the destination, constructed in accordance with its natural and cultural characteristics, to visitors effectively and attractively by highlighting the ideal and remarkable features of the destination to be promoted (Atsız and Kızıllırmak, 2017: 28; Ekşi, et al., 2022: 138; Keleş, 2021: 49).

For destination marketing, developing a destination as a positively perceived entity or brand is of great importance. Therefore, knowing the factors that visitors consider when making travel decisions directly affects the marketing success of the destination (Özdemir, 2007: 68). In this context, the primary objectives of destination marketing are identifying the target market(s) where the natural, cultural, historical, and recreational resources and the offered touristic products and services of a destination can be evaluated most efficiently, and carrying out planning, product development, and promotional activities that can influence the purchasing and travel preferences of potential tourists in these markets (Özer, 2012: 164). Beyond these fundamental goals, there are also strategic objectives within destination marketing aimed at ensuring long-term success and sustainable development. These strategic goals include increasing the long-term welfare of the local population, maximizing visitor satisfaction, raising the profitability of local businesses to create an economic multiplier effect, and optimizing the potential impacts of tourism by establishing a sustainable balance between economic benefits and socio-cultural and environmental costs (Buhalis, 2000: 99). With successful destination marketing aligned with all these goals, both attracting new visitors to the destination and increasing the satisfaction of existing visitors, thereby encouraging their return, can be achieved. Visitors' tendency to revisit a destination is directly related not only to the quality of the experiences offered by the destination but also to how these experiences are presented, promoted, and managed. Therefore, an effective destination marketing strategy ensures high satisfaction during visitors' initial trips and increases the intention to revisit, thus contributing to the destination's sustainability and competitive strength in the long term. Through this, destinations can position themselves more effectively in a competitive tourism environment and support sustainable tourism development.

As a heritage city with increasing national and international recognition, examining the factors affecting visitors' travel motivations and revisit intentions is important for Safranbolu in terms of enhancing visitor satisfaction, ensuring tourist loyalty, and maintaining the destination's competitive advantage. Based on this, the following hypotheses can be proposed:

Visitor experience plays a decisive role in determining a destination's perceived value and revisit intentions. In the tourism context, this experience is formed by a combination of elements such as the destination's physical characteristics, service quality, social interactions, and emotional responses. Positive experiences, particularly in authentic and unique destinations such as cultural heritage sites, foster satisfaction, loyalty, and a desire to revisit. In this context, hypothesis 1 was developed, predicting that experiences in Safranbolu could positively influence individuals' intentions to revisit the destination.

H1: There is a statistically significant and positive relationship between tourists' experience motivation and their intention to revisit Safranbolu.

The effect of the experience variable on revisit intention was statistically examined. Since $p < .05$ and $\beta > 0$, H1 is supported. Although the effect size is relatively small, this does not undermine the hypothesis, as H1 only

predicts a positive and significant relationship. The limited practical impact of the effect will be discussed in the implications section.

H2: There is a statistically significant and positive relationship between relaxation and the intention to revisit Safranbolu.

One of the fundamental motivations influencing tourists' destination choices is the desire to "explore." They report engaging in tourist activities to satisfy this need for exploration. Particularly in destinations with a rich cultural heritage, visitors have the opportunity to learn and experience new things, both historically and culturally. Safranbolu's architecture, traditional lifestyle, streetscape, and museums possess the richness to support this motivation for exploration. Therefore, satisfying this motivation for exploration may increase visitors' desire to return to the destination. In this context, hypothesis 3 was developed.

H3: There is a statistically significant and positive relationship between the intention to revisit Safranbolu and exploration.

The effect of exploration on revisit intention was statistically examined. Since $p < .05$ and $\beta > 0$, H3 is supported. Although the effect size is relatively small, this does not undermine the hypothesis, as H3 only predicts a positive and significant relationship. The limited practical impact of the effect will be discussed in the implications section.

H4: There is a statistically significant and positive relationship between Safranbolu experience and relaxation.

Visitors' needs for exploration and relaxation are not independent, but often complementary processes. A relaxing environment allows individuals to become more open and curious about their surroundings, while the process of exploration can also increase their psychological satisfaction and relaxation. In this context, it can be argued that in a destination like Safranbolu, which boasts both natural and cultural riches, there is a positive relationship between individuals' sense of relaxation and their exploration behaviour. Time spent in a comfortable environment can increase visitors' exploration levels by allowing them to explore their surroundings more deeply. Hypothesis 5 was developed in this context.

H5: There is a statistically significant and positive relationship between relaxation during Safranbolu visit and exploration.

Visitor experience is a holistic concept encompassing all interactions with a destination. The quality of this experience can also influence individuals' exploration behaviours. Enriched and authentic experiences increase individuals' desire to explore new places. Safranbolu's historic houses, streets, cultural events, and local life offer visitors numerous unique elements to explore. These unique experiences likely stimulate curiosity and strengthen the motivation to explore. In this context, hypothesis 6 was developed.

H6: There is a statistically significant and positive relationship between Safranbolu experience and exploration.

3. Methodology

This study was conducted using quantitative research methods. A survey form, designed to meet the research objectives, was distributed to participants online via forms.office.com between March 12 and April 13, 2025. Prior to the survey, approval was obtained from the Zonguldak Bülent Ecevit University Human Research Ethics Committee under decision number 576625.

The study sample consisted of 404 people who visited Safranbolu and voluntarily completed the survey. The survey was distributed to potential participants via social media platforms and relevant digital tourism groups, and all 404 people who opened and answered the survey have completed it.

The questionnaire form used to collect data within the scope of the research consists of three parts:

The first section includes questions about demographic and visitor behaviour, such as participants age, gender, education, marital status, income level, and the number of times they visited Safranbolu. This section was designed to describe sample characteristics and support analyses with control variables.

To measure travel motivations, we used statements widely used in the literature and whose validity and reliability have been proven in various studies. The scale consists of three subscales:

Relaxation: Measures participants' motivation to get away from the city, rest, and relieve stress.

Experience: It includes experience-oriented elements such as seeing new places, participating in cultural events, and getting to know authentic lifestyles.

Exploration: It includes cognitive and psychological elements such as discovering the unknown, having adventure, and seeking personal development.

Items for each dimension were rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). During the scale adaptation process, item-total correlations and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were conducted, and the results supported the construct validity of the scale. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients were found to be above .80 for each sub-dimension.

Revisit Intention Scale: Revisit intention was measured to determine participants' future intentions to return to Safranbolu. Three items adapted from previous similar studies, translated into Turkish, and validated were used. A sample item was: "I intend to revisit Safranbolu in the future." A 5-point Likert-type scale was used, and the reliability coefficient of the scale was calculated as .87. The necessary validity and reliability analyses have been conducted. The overall fit indices of the model were found to be within acceptable ranges, indicating that the model provides a good fit to the data. The relationships between the constructs were found to be statistically significant ($p < .05$).

Information regarding the study population and sample, variable scales, and data collection tools and techniques is provided below under separate headings. The collected data were subjected to confirmatory factor analysis, correlation and descriptive statistics. Hypothesis testing was conducted to determine the mediating effects of variables. The findings were compared with other studies and evaluated. SPSS 24.0 software was used for data analysis and measurement.

In the structural model analysis, the effect of the relaxation motivation on revisit intention ($\beta=0.5371$; $p<0.001$) was found to be at the highest level. Conversely, although the effects of the experience (0.1670 ; $p=0.0229$) and exploration (0.2262 ; $p=0.0066$) dimensions were statistically significant, their effect sizes were low. Correlations among motivation dimensions ($r > 0.52$) were found to be high and significant, supporting the multidimensional structure of motivation.

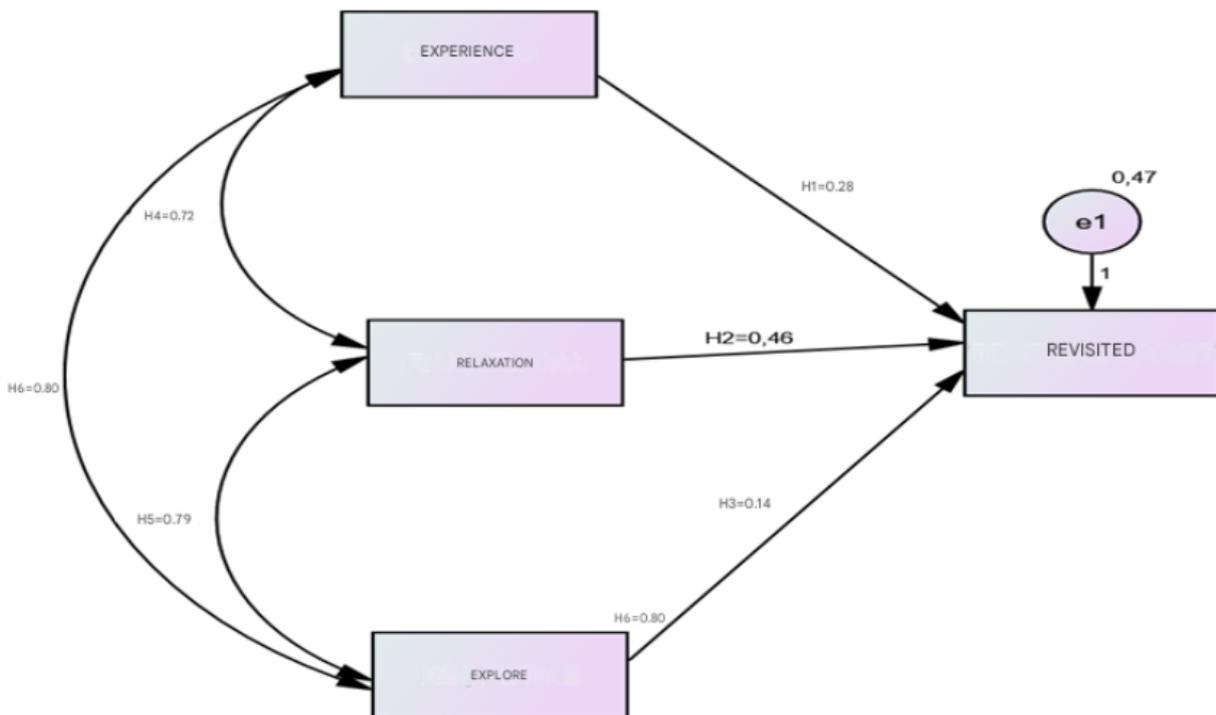


Figure 1: The Symbolic Model of the Study

3.1. The Universe and Sample of the Study

The population of the study is Safranbolu. The sample consists of 404 people. The scale created in order to obtain data in the study was delivered to the participants via the website <https://forms.office.com>, on a voluntary basis and with a consent form, via an online link, and it was thought that the participants gave sincere answers. The survey was applied between 12.03.2025 and 13.04.2025 by sharing the survey link over the internet. All participants completed the survey, which was delivered to 404 people. The variables of the survey were measured using Likert-type scales, with 1=Strongly disagree-5=Strongly agree. Of the people in the sample (404 people), women were 57.67% (n=233), men were 42.33% (n=171); 13.61% (N =55) are in the 18-24 age range, 56.44% (n=228) are in the 25-44 age range, 15.84% (n=64) are in the 45-54 age range, 10.64% (n=43) are in the 55-64 age range, 3.47% (n=14) are in the 65+ age range. Primary school 4.21% (n= 17), High school 13.61% (n=55), Vocational school 16.58% (n= 67), College/Faculty 56.44% (n= 228), Master's/Doctorate 9.16% (n= 37).

4. Findings

4.1. Model Fit Indices

Table 1. Model Fit Indices

Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF	RMR	GFI	AGFI	PGFI
Default Model	121	621,3206	230	,0000	2,7014	,0661	,8954	,8404	,5868
Saturated Model	351	,0000	0	-	-	,0000	1,0000	-	-
Independent Model	26	12252,6526	325	,0000	37,7005	1,0574	,0939	,0214	,0869

When the fit indices of the structural equation model established within the scope of the research are examined, it is seen that the model generally exhibits a good fit with the data. Although the chi-square value ($\chi^2=621.32$, $sd=230$, $p<0.001$) is significant, alternative fit indices were evaluated considering that this value is sensitive to sample size.

The CMIN/DF value obtained is 2.7014, which is within the acceptable limit of <3 and shows that the model has a good fit. In addition, values such as CFI=0.9672, TLI=0.9536, IFI=0.9675 and NFI=0.9493 are also above the threshold value of >0.90 , which shows that the model has a very strong fit.

The RMSEA value of 0.0650 (<0.08) and the SRMR value of 0.0661 (<0.08) indicate that the error level of the model is within acceptable limits. The GFI=0.8954 and AGFI=0.8404 values are also on the borderline, but they support that the model fit is generally sufficient. When all the fit indices obtained are evaluated, it can be said that the model fits the data well.

Table 2. Fit Index Values

Fit Index	Value	Acceptable Range
Ki-square (χ^2)	621,3206	-
Degrees of Freedom (df)	230	-
p-value	0,000	$< 0,05$
χ^2/df	2,7014	< 3
TLI	0,9536	$> 0,90$
CFI	0,9672	$> 0,90$
NFI	0,9493	$> 0,90$
IFI	0,9675	$> 0,90$
RMSEA	0,0650	$\leq 0,08$
SRMR	0,0661	$\leq 0,08$

GFI	0,8954	> 0.90 (borderline)
AGFI	0,8404	> 0,85 (borderline)

When the relationships between the variables in the structural model were examined, the effects of the travel motivation variables of experience, relaxation and exploration on the intention to revisit were analyzed. The hypothesis test results according to the path coefficients and t values are as follows:

The effect of the relaxation variable on the intention to revisit was positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.5371$; $t = 8.54$; $p < 0.001$). Therefore, Hypothesis H2 was supported.

There is a significant but weak relationship between the experience variable and the intention to revisit ($\beta=0.1670$; $t=2.27$; $p=0.0229$). The findings show that the relationship is positive and significant ($p < .05$). Therefore, H1 is supported.

The effect of the motivation to explore on the intention to revisit was found to be significant ($\beta = 0.2262$; $t = 2.71$; $p = 0.0066$). However, since this effect was limited, Hypothesis H3 was not supported.

The bidirectional relationships between the motivation variables are quite strong. The correlations between experience and relaxation ($\beta=0.5282$), relaxation and exploration ($\beta=0.5789$) and experience and exploration ($\beta=0.5763$) were found to be high and significant ($p<0.001$).

4.2. Comparison of Model Fit Indices

Table 3. Comparison of Model Fit Indices

Model	NFI (Delta1)	RFI (rho1)	IFI (Delta2)	TLI (rho2)	CFI
Default Model	,9493	,9283	,9675	,9536	,9672
Saturated Model	1,0000	–	1,0000	–	1,0000
Independent Model	,0000	,0000	,0000	,0000	,0000

The model fit indices obtained for structural equation modelling are presented in Table X. The fit values obtained by the default model indicate that the model provides a high level of fit with the data. The NFI (Normed Fit Index) value was calculated as .9493; the RFI (Relative Fit Index) value as .9283; the IFI (Incremental Fit Index) value as .9675; the TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index) value as .9536 and the CFI (Comparative Fit Index) value as .9672. These values are above the threshold values of 0.90 (good fit) and 0.95 (perfect fit) widely accepted in the literature. Especially the IFI and CFI values being above .95 reveal that the model is strongly validated and the proposed structural relationships provide a high level of fit with the data. The saturated model received a value of 1.0000 in all fit indices and this model is in full fit with the data; However, since there are no degrees of freedom, it cannot be interpreted directly. The independent model has a value of ,0000 in all indices, and it is seen that this model, which assumes that there is no relationship between the variables, does not show a significant fit with the data. This supports that the assumed model exhibits a much better model fit compared to the independent model. The analysis findings show that the proposed structural model provides a high level of fit with the data and provides a suitable structure for testing the research hypotheses.

Table 4. Model Fit Indices After Modification

Fit Index	Value	Acceptable Limit	Comment
χ^2 (Ki-square)	621,3206	-	It should be evaluated together with the degree of freedom.
Df	230	-	Degree of freedom of the model.
p-value	0	> 0,05	It may be significant in a large sample, it should not be evaluated alone.
χ^2/df	2,7014	<3	Acceptable level of fit.
TLI	,9536	> 0,90	Perfect level of fit.
CFI	,9672	> 0,90	Perfect level of fit.
NFI	,9493	> 0,90	Very good level of fit.
IFI	,9675	> 0,90	Perfect fit.
RMSEA	,0650	\leq 0,08	Acceptable fit.
RMSEA PCLOSE	,0001	> 0,05	Borderline value; should be interpreted with caution.
SRMR	,0661	\leq 0,08	Acceptable.
PRATIO	,7077	> 0,50	Strong model in terms of parsimony.
PNFI	,6718	> 0,50	Acceptable.
PCFI	,6845	> 0,50	Acceptable.
AIC	863,3206	It is preferable to be low	Evaluated comparatively.
ECVI	2,1422	It is preferable to be low	Suitable in terms of model validity.

The model fit indices obtained after the modification processes show that the structural equation model provides sufficient fit with the data. The chi-square/degree of freedom (χ^2/df) ratio is 2.701 and is within the limit of < 3 recommended in the literature, which shows that the model has an acceptable fit.

In addition, positive fit indices such as TLI (0.9536), CFI (0.9672), NFI (0.9493), and IFI (0.9675) all exceed 0.90, indicating that the model demonstrates a strong fit. The fit indices based on error terms, RMSEA (0.0650) and SRMR (0.0661), are also within the acceptable limits reported in the literature, further supporting the model.

PRATIO, PNFI and PCFI values, which take into account the simplicity of the model, are >0.50, which shows that the model is suitable not only in terms of fit but also in terms of parsimony (simplicity).

As a result, the model fit indices obtained after the modifications meet the recommended limit values, indicating that the model is statistically significant and structurally valid.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study contributes to tourism marketing and destination management by exploring how travel motivations influence tourists' intentions to revisit Safranbolu. Indicate that travel motivations significantly affect revisit intention, with relaxation being the most influential factor. Experience and exploration motivations also positively affect revisit intention, but their impact is comparatively smaller.

Among the motivations, relaxation emerged as the strongest predictor, suggesting that visitors perceive Safranbolu as a destination for rest and psychological renewal. This implies that destination managers should

focus on services and activities that promote relaxation, while also offering opportunities for experience and exploration to enhance destination loyalty.

The findings suggest that tourists' revisit decisions are driven by multiple motivational factors, as evidenced by the high correlations among travel motivations. For example, visitors seeking relaxation also enjoy discovering new places or engaging in different experiences. This reinforces the idea that travel motivations are not isolated, but interact with each other.

The model's fit indices (RMSEA, CFI, TLI, and SRMR) confirm that the structural model provides a good fit with the data and aligns with the theoretical framework. This supports the notion that multidimensional travel motivations are key in explaining destination preferences and revisit intentions.

This study provides significant insights into rural cultural tourism by demonstrating how the need for relaxation influences destination loyalty. For practitioners, developing services that meet tourists' relaxation needs in cultural heritage destinations like Safranbolu may increase repeat visit rates. At the same time, offering experience and discovery-based activities, such as guided thematic tours or authentic local experiences, can enhance the competitiveness of the destination.

To enhance repeat visitation rates in Safranbolu, it is recommended to develop more relaxation areas that foster a strong connection with nature. Quiet parks or spa facilities could provide an environment that encourages relaxation, which plays a crucial role in motivating tourists to return. Additionally, diversifying activities that offer experiences and opportunities for discovery is key to building destination loyalty. Incorporating guided cultural tours, local handicraft workshops, and gastronomy experiences would appeal to tourists' curiosity and desire for unique, memorable experiences.

Preserving and effectively presenting the cultural values of Safranbolu is essential, particularly given its historical significance. Emphasizing authentic cultural experiences, while investing in infrastructure, will help maintain the destination's appeal. Alongside this, implementing sustainable tourism strategies can enhance the long-term attractiveness of Safranbolu, attracting visitors while ensuring environmental responsibility. Policies that align with tourists' motivations for relaxation, discovery, and cultural enrichment will further promote a positive and sustainable tourism experience.

While the study offers valuable insights into the relationship between travel motivations and revisit intentions in Safranbolu, the findings' generalizability is limited. To expand on this research, future studies should explore how different destinations with varying cultural and geographical characteristics impact travel motivations and revisit intentions. Furthermore, examining the influence of demographic factors—such as age, income, and education—could provide a deeper understanding of the diverse motivations behind travel and the likelihood of revisiting a destination.

This study contributes to the understanding of the relationship between travel motivations and destination loyalty, emphasizing the crucial role that relaxation motivation plays in fostering loyalty to a destination. By highlighting the importance of considering travel motivations in a more holistic manner, the findings suggest that various motivations are interconnected and collectively influence tourists' decisions to revisit a destination. In conclusion, the study advances knowledge on how different motivations, particularly relaxation and exploration, shape revisit intentions in rural cultural tourism settings. It provides valuable insights for tourism managers aiming to enhance the appeal and competitiveness of cultural heritage destinations, such as Safranbolu, by recognizing the significance of both relaxation and discovery in strengthening destination loyalty.

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