



# TOURIST HARASSMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON TOURISM EXPERIENCE

## Abstract

 **Mehmet Yavuz ÇETINKAYA**, Ph.D.  
(Corresponding Author)  
Pamukkale University, Faculty of Tourism  
Department of Tourism Guidance  
E-mail: mehmetyavuzcetinkaya@hotmail.com

 **Zafer ÖTER**, Ph.D.  
Izmir Katip Çelebi University, Faculty of  
Tourism, Department of Tourism Guidance  
E-mail: oter@hotmail.com

*Purpose* – This study addressed the harassment of international tourists visiting Istanbul, debated both in print and visual media as a global problem for tourist destinations, and investigated its potential impact on the tourism experience.

*Methodology/Design/Approach* – This study utilized a questionnaire, which was first outlined by De Albuquerque & McElroy (2001) and later developed by Kozak (2007) in English. A total of 500 international tourists from 40 different nationalities residing in 45 different countries located in 11 different regions were surveyed in 8 main languages at Sabiha Gokcen International Airport.

*Findings* – The findings revealed that international tourists were subjected to six types of tourist harassment: persistence of vendors, begging, verbal abuse, sexual harassment, physical abuse, and peddling of drugs. Finally, the study revealed that harassment had a negative impact on the overall tourism experience, including variables like satisfaction level and future behavioral intentions.

*Originality of the research* – This study added to a still-maturing stream of research on tourist harassment by coming up with empirical evidence from one important tourist destination, Istanbul, Türkiye and providing several important theoretical and practical implications.

**Keywords** Tourist Harassment, Tourism Experience, Istanbul, Türkiye

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## INTRODUCTION

Tourism, which is the sum of the relations arising from the interaction among international tourists, host governments, host communities, and business suppliers might temporarily lead big groups of people [tourists] into relatively small-scale places, enhancing tourists' interactions with local people (Lisowska, 2017). Moreover, it enables the most frequent interactive relationships among people with different cultural backgrounds, which might cause tourists to face various challenges because of frequent traveling and entering the space of unknown cultures (Çetin & Bilgihan, 2016; Buhalis, 2000). Tourist harassment, a decades-old phenomenon, emerges as one of the most frequent unfavourable outcomes of interactive tourist-host relationships, disconfirming the hospitality principle of the tourism industry (Chepkwony & Kangogo, 2013). It is one of the serious problems negatively affecting tourism-related activities and resulting in adverse impacts on issues including holiday quality, tourist satisfaction, destination reputation, competitiveness, and future behavioural intentions (Nicely & Armadita, 2017; Nicely & Mohd Ghazali, 2014; McElroy et al., 2007; Kozak, 2017; De Albuquerque & McElroy, 2001). Moreover, harassment has a significant impact on the number of visitors to any tourist destination as well as its important role on how potential travellers make decisions as well (Ajagunna, 2006). Tourists might even have psycho-traumatic or mental problems because of harassment (Dibyendu, 2013). Despite the unquestionable importance of the subject as a broadening challenge, relatively little is known about tourist harassment making the literature scant in the tourism realm. Starting with the pioneering study of De Albuquerque and McElroy (2001) and further, Nicely et al., (2021, p.1), it is known that “from 2020, fewer than 50 scholarly articles exist on the topic in leading tourism journals spanning over eight decades”.

Tourist harassment is likely one of the most vexing issues threatening the sustainability, development, and wellbeing of the tourism industry in many countries worldwide. Türkiye, a leading tourist destination in the Mediterranean Region, is one of these countries, and tourists are subjected to harassment in its highly tourist-populated regions, particularly in Istanbul, one of the most famous and most visited tourism destinations in Türkiye and possessing a high potential for a great variety of tourism types (Çetinkaya, 2020). Türkiye lacks research on tourist harassment due to a lack of attention from tourism scholars. However, it is largely known in public and frequently appears in non-governmental organizations' reports (Üngüren et al., 2015). More widely, no attempt was made to examine tourist harassment subject by systematically carrying out studies from the academic perspective, shedding light on harassment issues in detail, particularly the potential impact of tourist harassment on tourism experience, except for a few studies performed in the last two decades such as Koçak & Enser (2017) on international tourists' thoughts on harassment problem (Ayazlar & Işık, 2016) on most perpetrated crimes and harassment-related happenings against international tourists, (Kırova, 2016) on how tourists perceive deceiving actions resulting from the touristic activities, (Üngüren et al., 2015) on how international tourists perceive commissioning as one tourist harassment type, (Kozak, 2007) on tourist harassment from a marketing perspective, and (Mimaroglu, 2004) on local people' tendency towards the sexual harassment. The present study differs from earlier research because it was carried out in Istanbul as well as its research topic and objectives whereas the majority of earlier studies were conducted in the country's Mediterranean and Aegean Regions. On the other hand, the majority of the existing academic studies on tourist harassment were carried out abroad and thus it may enhance

the value of the present and future research on tourist harassment in Türkiye. In addition, for a country like Türkiye, which benefits immensely from tourism patronage, academic research of this nature has crucial importance due to the possible loss of revenue in case of being blacklisted as an unsafe tourist destination for having high level of tourist harassment (Çetinkaya, 2020). As stated earlier, tourist harassment is highly important for tourist destinations. Scarce literature regarding this topic needs to be supported with new studies. As a part of the aforementioned theoretical information and taking this argument as a departure point, this study aimed to uncover previously unknown aspects of tourist harassment in Türkiye. More widely, it identified and explained the problem of tourist harassment in Türkiye using primary data analysis from a survey performed in Istanbul. The survey intended to unveil tourist harassment types and their frequency; to make a clear profile of harassers; to reveal spatial aspects of tourist harassment and where they occurred; and finally, to understand how harassment impacted international tourists' satisfaction level and future behavioral intentions. Consequently, the problem statement of this study can be summarized as follows; how did tourist harassment take place in Istanbul, and what impacts did it have on international tourists' tourism experience coupled with satisfaction level and future behavioral intentions? Istanbul is a developing city that attracts people from all over the globe. This study can help Istanbul's tourism development by creating awareness for new anti-harassment solutions. Furthermore, the findings obtained from this study can also serve many other tourist destinations with similar characteristics. The following chapters include a literature review, methodological aspects, data analysis, and conclusion.

## 1. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1.1. Tourist Harassment: A Global Problem for Tourist Destinations

The concept of tourist harassment has constantly been slippery, resulting in ambiguity in the literature (Otoo et al., 2019; Badu-Baiden et al., 2016). People have various ideas about what causes harassment, and defining harassment is practically impossible (Gilbert et al., 1998). Moreover, the harassment concept might differ across cultures. While some attitudes or behaviours are accepted as harassment in some cultures, surprisingly, they may be considered quite normal in others. Harassment accounts for disturbing, bothering, incapacitating by teasing, troubling, and might be defined as one of the major happenings that commonly occur today and irritate the exposed person (Mimaroglu, 2004).

According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021), psychological harassment is linked to several drivers, including gender discrimination, religion, age, ethnicity, nationality, background, disability, sexual orientation, and other differences, as well as to socio-economic causes. The Barbados government defined harassment as obscene language, gestures, and actions to taunt, abuse, and insult a person (De Albuquerque & McElroy, 2001). Furthermore, the Turkish Language Society defined harassment as annoying, disturbing, or bothering someone (TLS, 2018). From the standpoint of the tourism industry, harassment can be largely classified into two basic types. The first issue is that tourists, particularly international tourists, harass locals. Tourists might harass locals for sex, drugs, or other services. The second issue is the harassment of tourists by local people (McElroy, 2001). However, the term *harassment*, as part of the present study, accounts for the harassment of international tourists by local people. Tourist harassment means any negative behaviour that annoys tourists (Skipper, 2009; Dunn & Dunn, 2002). One more definition provided by De Albuquerque & McElroy (2001) presents two aspects of harassment: on the one hand, any annoying behaviour taken to the extreme from the perspective of the tourism victim; on the other hand, essentially refusing to have no for a response from the host perpetrator's perspective. Thus, it might be concluded that harassment could be defined as "*any annoying and uncomfortable behaviour against another person(s) that can occur in different social contexts.*"

There are essentially two spectrums when it comes to conceptualizing tourist harassment: active and passive spectrums. The active spectrum stands for the harassment of local people by international tourists to pursue sex and drugs aggressively. On the other hand, international tourists who are victimized by local people fall into the passive spectrum, which includes stalking, begging, verbal abuse, and aggressive selling methods (Badu-Baiden et al., 2016). Expanding the passive harassment spectrum, various academic investigations previously carried out on tourist harassment have unearthed that there are six distinct categories of tourist harassment. This study identifies for further exploration based on the common definitions of tourist harassment and typology. *Persistence of vendors*, as the first type, occurs when tourists feel harassed since they are persistently solicited to buy. *Peddling of drugs*, as the second type, occurs when there are crime-oriented dealings with drugs. *Sexual harassment*, as the third type, happens when tourists, regardless of their gender, are approached by some people who look for an unwanted sexual relationship, either voluntarily or in exchange for payment. *Verbal abuse*, as the fourth type, happens when people use obscene language or unsavoury gestures to threaten and annoy tourists. *Physical abuse*, as the fifth type, emerges when tourists are confronted violently, including insults and abusive manners, as well as bodily mistreatments (Wijesundara & Athula Gnanapala, 2019; Badu-Baiden et al., 2016; Nicely & Mohd Ghazali, 2014; Skipper, 2009; Kozak, 2007; De Albuquerque & McElroy, 2001). The sixth and last one, *begging*, is defined as persistently being solicited to give something, particularly money or food (Andriotis, 2016; Chepkwony & Kangogo, 2013; Wardhaugh, 2009). Regardless of the tourists' social status, they may be subjected to the harassment forms mentioned above (Kozak, 2007).

## 1.2. Tourist Harassment and Its Causes

After the study of De Albuquerque and McElroy (2001), tourist harassment as an issue gradually became the focus of some scholars in the tourism field. In the following years, it was investigated in several locations all over the world. Table 1 presents the tourist destinations where previous studies exploring tourist harassment were performed with their main findings.

**Table 1:** Tourist Destinations and Harassment Types

Country	Harassment Type	Authors
Jamaica	Physical Abuse, Verbal Abuse, ending, Peddling of Drugs, Soliciting of Sex, Begging	Nicely et al., 2015; Nicely & Mohd Ghazali, 2014; Skipper, 2009; Ajagunna, 2006
Barbados	Persistence of Vendors, Sexual Harassment, Peddling of Drugs, Physical Abuse, Verbal Abuse	De Albuquerque & McElroy, 2001
Ghana	Unruly Behaviour, Verbal Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Aggressive Action	Badu-Baiden et al., 2016
Jordan	Vendor's Persistence, Begging, Sexual Harassment, Verbal Abuse, Physical Abuse	Alrawadieh & Alrawadieh, 2020; Alrawadieh et al., 2019
Sri-Lanka	Pestering, Theft, Begging, Sexual Harassment, Financial Frauds, Beating, Drug Peddling, Verbal Harassment	Wijesundara & Athula Gnanapala, 2019; Jayasiri & Kalansooriya, 2015; Pathirana & Athula Gnanapala, 2015; Rathnayake & Wijesundara, 2015
Kenya	Interference with Privacy and Freedom of Movement, Begging, Pestering, Verbal Abuse, Drug Peddling, Sexual Harassment	Chepkwony, 2013; Chepkwony & Kangogo, 2013
China	Begging, Fraud, Physical Attack, Sexual Harassment, Illegal Search Detention, Extortion, Robbery, Larceny	Qiao et al., 2017
Portugal, Spain, Italy Greece, Cyprus	Sexual Harassment	Calafat et al., 2012
Türkiye	Persistence of Vendors, Sexual Harassment, Physical Abuse, Peddling of Drugs, Verbal Abuse	Koçak, 2017; Koçak & Enser, 2017; Kırova, 2016; Üngüren et al., 2015; Kozak, 2007; Mimaroglu, 2004;

Source: Çetinkaya, 2020

There are several causes of tourist harassment that can be classified under three main aspects; [i] tourists consume more than local people; [ii] local people perceive an unfair balance between international tourists and locals; [iii] discrimination in tourism locations (Wen & Li, 2015). Tourism professionals believe harassment might be caused by the interactive relationships between rich tourists vs. poor hosts, unequal national income distribution, and local people's practical means of supporting their lives in tourist destinations (De Albuquerque & McElroy, 2001), since international tourists are commonly accepted as a sign of capitalism by locals in tourist destinations worldwide. Tourists, according to local people, are wealthy individuals from more developed countries with more money to spend than local people. As a result, they can be a possible source of financial power (George, 2003; Dunn & Dunn, 2002). In addition to this, Ryan (1993) believes that tourists are unguarded in foreign lands and prone to harassment and crime since they are easily distinguishable and possibly carry valuable items, making them easy targets for snatchers such as passports, cameras, currency, etc. Furthermore, they are off guard, relaxed, and mostly do not stay long in tourist destinations (Skipper, 2009; Ajagunna, 2006).

The *Irritation Index or Irridex*, created by Doxey (1975) might explain some local people's inappropriate behaviours and attitudes toward international tourists and tourism development. It depends on an understanding of how local people's behaviours and attitudes may vary at various stages of a tourist destination's life cycle. More broadly, local people might blame international tourists for any negativity in the host destination since they are essentially the natural outcomes of tourism development in terms of its various environmental, economic, and social effects on the tourist destination. Local traders may start to ignore international tourists and treat them properly. Those who spend less money, in particular, might be subject to humiliating and insulting behaviours. Aside from that, there might be misunderstandings arising from cultural and educational differences and the foreign language barrier. It is possible that even if tourists perceive some locals' behaviours and attitudes as harassment, they are not being targeted on purpose (Çetinkaya, 2020).

Even though tourist harassment is a global problem for tourist destinations worldwide, only a few tourist destinations have managed to deal with this issue. This situation has arisen due to a variety of factors. First, tourist harassment is either not statistically documented or is not prioritized in governmental policies because it is not deemed a crime. Second, tourist harassment is complex to measure because the perception of the experience mostly belongs to a subjective basis in terms of

objectivity (Ajagunna, 2006; De Albuquerque & McElroy, 2001). This can be clearly understood in phrases like “*what is good merchandising to the vendor is badgering behaviour to the visitor*” by De Albuquerque and McElroy (2001, p. 478).

Furthermore, international tourists view the holiday as an opportunity to relax and rest without being bothered by other people, whereas local people, including street vendors/sellers, consider harassment a great skill and believe that they do have the right to sell on public streets at any time (Wen & Li, 2015). Conversely, locals see nothing wrong with inviting tourists, especially international ones, into their stores to encourage them to contribute to their business and assist tourists. On the other hand, international tourists, particularly those from western countries, feel harassed since they think that the tourists [customers] should make the first move in their own cultures (McElroy et al., 2007). Thirdly, dealing with complaints from tourists is difficult since they are on vacation for a short period and believe that the happening is not worth reporting or do not know what needs to be done when they experience harassment due to anomie (Badu-Baiden et al., 2016; De Albuquerque & McElroy, 2001). Because the type, scope, and location of the harassment are unknown with no specific information, tourism officials might struggle to establish effective control mechanisms that could pursue the problem. Likewise, owing to anomie, international tourists might not know what needs to be done and how to behave when they undergo harassment while on vacation (McElroy et al., 2007; Ajagunna, 2006).

### 1.3. Impact of Tourist Harassment on Tourism Experience

For decades, the phenomenon of tourist harassment has been an important and crucial problem, which impacts the sustainability and competitiveness of tourism-related activities negatively in several popular tourist destinations worldwide (Kozak, 2007). As a major challenge, tourist harassment, a neglected area of academic study, particularly in Türkiye has garnered some attention in the tourism realm over the past two decades. In this vein, many researchers performed some academic research shedding light on the relationships between tourist harassment experience/encounter and some important variables, including tourist satisfaction, tourist expenditure, destination image, and lastly, behavioural future intentions, including re-visit and recommendation intention. For example, H.S. Dunn & L.L. Dunn (2002) found out that tourist harassment, as well as crime and violence, negatively impacted the future of the tourism industry in Jamaica. Ajagunna (2006) investigated how violent harassment experience affected the hospitality and tourism industry in Jamaica and thus uncovered that harassment affected the tourism and hospitality industry in Jamaica, causing bad publicity, giving a reputation and notoriety as being an unsafe location and its perception as a tourist destination with a wide range of risks and dangers. Another study conducted in Jamaica by Skipper (2009) revealed that harassment encounter had a detrimental impact on the overall quality of the tourism experience in Jamaica. Further, Kozak (2007) unveiled that harassment experience had a negative impact on the overall holiday quality of tourists and behavioural future intentions, including their satisfaction level, repeat visit, as well as recommendation intention to Türkiye.

According to Jayasiri & Kalansooriya (2015), there was a relationship between tourist harassment encounter and tourist satisfaction, which negatively impacted the well-being of Sri Lanka’s tourism industry. Moreover, Pathirana & Athula Gnanapala (2015) discovered that tourists visiting Sri Lanka’s cultural sites experienced a wide range of tourist harassment, as well as natural environment variation and poor site management, which caused dissatisfaction among tourists and harmed the future wellbeing of the tourism industry in Sri Lanka. On the other hand, Wen & Li (2015) found out that harassment may influence re-visit rates and destination image deeply in a negative way, which needed to be addressed as it was significant with regards to destination marketing. Khairat (2016) uncovered that harassment had a substantial impact on tourists’ experiences in Egypt, potentially leading to negative views, particularly, towards the destination choice, which could lead tourists to re-evaluate their holiday plans and decisions. Another study carried out by Nyaruwata & Douglas (2017) in Zimbabwe unveiled that harassment, particularly by the local traffic police, notorious for corruption issues, greatly influenced tourists’ decision not to spend their next vacation in the country. Furthermore, Alrawadieh et al., (2019) found out that the role of tourist harassment on tourist expenditure was considerable in Jordan. Nicely (2020) and Otoo et al., (2019) discovered that harassment towards tourists had a significant damage on tourists’ behavioural future intentions such as re-visit and recommendation intention, as well as destination image (Wijesundara & Athula Gnanapala, 2019). These summarized studies agree that a large majority of the international tourists, wherever they travel are subjected to harassment, with its various types differing in accordance with the tourist destination in one way or another in tourist destinations all around the world.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

Following a literature review, the authors decided to conduct quantitative research on this subject using a questionnaire. The questionnaire was first outlined by De Albuquerque & McElroy (2001) and later developed by Kozak (2007) in English. Then, it was translated into several other languages, such as German, Russian, French, Persian, Arabic, Italian, and Spanish. The questionnaire, administered in eight languages, was totally unchanged. Furthermore, the survey was exactly anonymous; no names were obtained from the respondents, and the questionnaire was expected to take approximately 10 minutes to complete. The questionnaire had an introduction and 23 close-ended questions; it was separated into three parts, each of which addressed separate issues. The introduction part described the study’s objective (s). The first part consisted of an initial question, that was pertinent to any harassment encounter, and it was followed by a series of further close-ended questions to unearth types of harassment, types of harassers, locations where harassment happened, and types of harassment dimensions. For variables, that required a rating, a scale ranging from 1 [very often] to 5 [never] was used. For the questions that had no meaning to respondents, the option of do

not know/no opinion was utilized (Dhar & Simonson, 2003). A 5-point Likert scale was utilized in Part II to uncover respondents' level of satisfaction regarding their holiday in Istanbul and behavioural future intentions. For variables that required a rating, scale ranging from 1 [very satisfied] to 5 [very dissatisfied] and from 1 [very likely] to 5 [very unlikely] were applied. Part III aimed to determine the socio-demographic characteristics as well as holiday-related characteristics.

The following non-probability sampling methods were utilized in this study: convenience sampling, which ensures that every unit, person, or case has an equal chance of being included in the sample; it facilitates data collection quickly; it is inexpensive to create samples; and it makes research easier (Yıldırım & Simşek, 2016; Kozak, 2014; Yazıcıoğlu & Erdoğan, 2014). Purposive sampling, on the other hand, accounts for the purpose of identifying and selecting the units and cases that meet pre-determined criterion and be as distinct from one another as possible; it picks up a wide range of variation on dimensions to obtain the significance of various circumstances to maximize the diversity relevant to the research question (Baltacı, 2018; Patton, 2002). The study's population consisted of the total number of international tourists visiting Istanbul, Türkiye in the year of 2017; the number of international tourist arrivals to Istanbul was 10.840.595. The minimum sample was determined to be 384 respondents in accordance with the formulas of Yamane (2001) and Sekaran (2000) However, the authors surveyed 523 international tourists to increase the sample representativeness at Istanbul Sabiha Gokcen International Airport, which serves as one of the main international aviation gateways for international tourists and represents the key entry and exit points to Istanbul, Türkiye.

Based on the presumption of being a possible respondent passing the airport passport and security control, the authors approached any international tourist, introduced themselves, and provided relevant information to the possible respondent about the research and questionnaire form [e.g., purpose, phases, and possible feedback] through giving necessary instructions and finally asked if s/he would like to take part in the survey study or not [informed consent]. Regardless of whether any harassment-related incident was experienced or not, the respondents who were willing and meeting the pre-determined sampling criteria to screen, such as being an international tourist and staying for a few days in commercial accommodation located in Istanbul, Türkiye were given a copy of the questionnaire form and a clipboard for convenience, along with a pen, through a face-to-face interview between the authors and respondents. The authors did their best to find respondents who would participate on a volunteer basis without any insistence and acted formally, as this was critical to the quality of the answers provided to questions (Kozak, 2014). The authors also sought maximum diversity regarding respondents' socio-demographic and holiday-related characteristics. The data collection process took place between August 10 and 20, 2017, with a total of 10 visits to the airport, each of which lasted no longer than 6 hours. The data collection process began nearly at 9:00 and ended at 17:30 every day. The duration was limited to avoid interfering with airport and customs control operations. A total of 23 questionnaire forms were excluded from the data analysis process because they were incorrectly and incompletely filled out due to missing information for important variables. The rest of the questionnaire forms were analysed using SPSS.20.

As stated previously, this study which, depends on the presumption that tourist harassment is one of the main causes of tourist dissatisfaction addressed the harassment of international tourists visiting Istanbul, debated both in print and visual media as a global problem for tourist destinations, and investigated its potential impact on the tourism experience. Thus, given the primary objective and supporting sub goals listed below, the study sought to answer a number of specific questions and hypotheses listed in Table 6.

A. Do international tourists have any complaint about harassment during their holiday in Istanbul, Türkiye?

If yes;

- a) What type of harassment are international tourists exposed to in Istanbul, Türkiye?
- b) By whom are international tourists exposed to harassment in Istanbul, Türkiye?
- c) How often are international tourists exposed to harassment in Istanbul, Türkiye?
- d) Where are international tourists exposed to harassment in Istanbul, Türkiye?
- e) How did harassment influence international tourists' overall tourism experience in Istanbul, Türkiye?

### 3. FINDINGS

#### 3.1. Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

According to Table 2, the sample was roughly split equally between male (45.0%) and female (55.0%) respondents. Nearly half of the respondents were single (47.6%), while 45.0% were married. With a slight preponderance, 51.2% were aged between 15 and 34. 37.4 % of respondents had a bachelor's degree, followed by 23.8% with a master's and/or Ph.D. degree. 18.2% of the respondents were students, followed by professionals (16.6%). 23.6% of the respondents had an annual income under € 9.999 followed by 20.6% with an annual income between € 10.000 and 19.999. Regarding the holiday-related characteristics (*not tabulated*), 28.6% of the respondents visited Istanbul once, followed by 24.4%, who had their first time in Istanbul. The majority of the respondents (29.6%) chose bed and breakfast hotels, while the longest stay was less than a week in Istanbul (37.8%). The main travel motivations were vacation (42.4%) and cultural attractions (21.6%). In addition, most respondents (24.5%) used the internet to collect information about Istanbul, followed by 21.2% of the respondents, who took advice from family and friends. Finally, 32.9% of the respondents travelled to Istanbul with family and relatives. The nationality profile (*not tabulated*) revealed that 27.2% of the respondents were Arab tourists, coming to visit Istanbul from varied Arabic countries. The

Arab tourists were followed by Persian (7.8%) and British (7.4%) tourists. About the country profile (*not tabulated*), the main group was coming from Italy (7.8%), followed by Germany (7.4%), and France (7.4%).

**Table 2:** Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

Respondents' Demographic Characteristics		N	%
Gender	Male	225	45.0
	Female	275	55.0
Marital Status	Single	238	47.6
	Married	225	45.0
	Other	37	7.4
Age Group	15-24	122	24.4
	25-34	134	26.8
	35-44	101	20.2
	45-54	81	16.2
	55-64	45	9.0
	65 and over	17	3.4
Educational Qualification	Primary School	13	2.6
	Secondary School	79	15.8
	Vocational Education	102	20.4
	Bachelor Degree	187	37.4
	Master and/or PhD.	119	23.8
Current Position	Director	44	8.8
	Senior Manager	46	9.2
	Middle Manager	47	9.4
	Junior Manager	15	3.0
	Professional	83	16.6
	Clerical	30	6.0
	Skilled	48	9.6
	Semi-Skilled	30	6.0
	Unskilled	10	2.0
	Retired	34	6.8
	Student	91	18.2
	Unemployed	22	4.4
Annual Income	under 9,999 €	118	23.6
	10,000-19,999 €	103	20.6
	20,000-29,999 €	101	20.2
	30,000-39,999 €	75	15.0
	40,000-49,999 €	44	8.8
	50, 000-over €	59	11.8
Total		500	100.0

The characteristics of the respondents related to their future behavioural intentions were profiled as well. According to Table 3, most respondents were satisfied with their vacation (78%). In addition, 79 % of the respondents said they would revisit Istanbul, while 80 % said they would visit another destination in Türkiye. Moreover, they intended to recommend Istanbul to relatives and friends (80%) and expressed no regrets about visiting Istanbul (69%).

**Table 3:** Respondents' Behavioural Future Intentions

Respondents' Behavioural Future Intentions		N	%	Mean
To what extent are you satisfied with your holiday in Istanbul?	Very Satisfied	180	36.0	2.01
	Satisfied	209	41.8	
	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	59	11.8	
	Dissatisfied	32	6.4	
	Very Dissatisfied	20	4.0	
How likely are you to come back to Istanbul in future?	Very Likely	205	41.0	1.96
	Likely	189	37.8	
	Uncertain	50	10.0	
	Unlikely	33	6.6	
	Very Unlikely	23	4.6	
How likely are you to visit another destination in Türkiye in future?	Very Likely	215	43.0	1.93
	Likely	183	36.6	
	Uncertain	47	9.4	
	Unlikely	30	6.0	
	Very Unlikely	25	5.0	
How likely are you to recommend your holiday to your relatives and friends?	Very Likely	224	44.8	1.91
	Likely	174	34.8	
	Uncertain	46	9.2	
	Unlikely	33	6.6	
	Very Unlikely	23	4.6	
How likely do you feel regret for visiting Istanbul?	Very Likely	39	7.8	3.83
	Likely	54	10.8	
	Uncertain	65	13.0	
	Unlikely	138	27.6	
	Very Unlikely	204	40.8	
Total		500	100.0	

### 3.2. The Nature of Tourist Harassment in Istanbul

According to the study findings, out of 500 international tourists, 57.8 % reported experiencing some form of harassment in one way or another, with a slight preponderance, followed by 42.2 %, accounting for those who reported no harassment. According to Table 4, the nature of harassment experienced by respondents, the type of harassment, and its prevalence were shaped more widely as follows: the most prevalent type of harassment was the persistence of vendors, followed by begging, verbal abuse, sexual harassment, physical abuse, and lastly, the least prevalent type of harassment was the peddling of drugs.

**Table 4:** Respondents' Type of Harassment

Harassment Type	Frequency	N	%	Mean
Persistence of Vendors	Very Often	91	18.2	2.31
	Often	92	18.4	
	Neither Often Nor Occasionally	49	9.8	
	Occasionally	40	8.0	
	Never	15	3.0	
	No Opinion	2	0.4	
Peddling of Drugs	Very Often	1	0.2	4.97
	Often	7	1.4	
	Neither Often Nor Occasionally	13	2.6	
	Occasionally	247	49.4	
	Never	21	4.2	
	No Opinion	1	0.2	
Sexual Harassment	Very Often	8	1.6	4.38
	Often	29	5.8	
	Neither Often Nor Occasionally	22	4.4	
	Occasionally	34	6.8	
	Never	179	35.8	
	No Opinion	17	3.4	
Verbal Abuse	Very Often	7	1.4	4.03
	Often	5	1.0	
	Neither Often Nor Occasionally	13	2.6	
	Occasionally	20	4.0	
	Never	228	45.6	
	No Opinion	16	3.2	
Physical Abuse	Very Often	7	1.4	4.75
	Often	5	1.0	
	Neither Often Nor Occasionally	13	2.6	
	Occasionally	20	4.0	
	Never	22,8	45.6	
	No Opinion	16	3.2	
Begging	Very Often	78	15.6	2.57
	Often	82	16.4	
	Neither Often Nor Occasionally	42	8.4	
	Occasionally	63	12.6	
	Never	21	4.2	
	No Opinion	3	0.6	
Total		289	57.8	



Table 5 shows the study findings regarding the types of harassment experienced by the respondents, the harassers, and the prevalence of harassment in Istanbul. The most common harasser group was found to be vendors/hustlers, followed by beggars, taxi drivers, tour guides, and other hustlers involving airport staff, police officers, scammers, con artists, street children, waiters, and hairdressers. The rest of the harasser parties, including hotel staff, boat/yacht staff, beach staff, and drug peddlers, were found to be the least common sources of harassment.

**Table 5:** Respondents' Type of Harasser

Harasser Type		N	%	Mean	Harasser Type		N	%	Mean
Vendors Hustlers	Very Often	80	16.0	2.38	Taxi Drivers	Very Often	35	7.0	3.30
	Often	95	19.0			Often	76	15.2	
	Neither Often Nor Occasionally	53	10.6			Neither Often Nor Occasionally	50	10.0	
	Occasionally	47	9.4			Occasionally	34	6.8	
	Never	12	2.4			Never	82	16.4	
	No Opinion	2	0.4			No Opinion	12	2.4	
Beggars	Very Often	58	11.6	2.76	Tour Guides	Very Often	2	0.4	4.36
	Often	88	17.6			Often	16	3.2	
	Neither Often Nor Occasionally	49	9.8			Neither Often Nor Occasionally	40	8.0	
	Occasionally	59	11.8			Occasionally	63	12.6	
	Never	29	5.8			Never	155	31.0	
	No Opinion	6	1.2			No Opinion	13	2.6	
Drug Peddlers	Very Often	2	0.4	4.80	Hotel Staff	Very Often	1	0.2	4.66
	Often	3	0.6			Often	6	1.2	
	Neither Often Nor Occasionally	15	3.0			Neither Often Nor Occasionally	14	2.8	
	Occasionally	22	4.4			Occasionally	60	12.0	
	Never	236	47.2			Never	197	39.4	
	No Opinion	11	2.2			No Opinion	11	2.2	
Beach Staff	Very Often	2	0.4	4.75	Boat Staff	Very Often	3	0.6	4.70
	Often	10	2.0			Often	4	0.8	
	Neither Often Nor Occasionally	17	3.4			Neither Often Nor Occasionally	12	2.4	
	Occasionally	20	4.0			Occasionally	58	11.6	
	Never	221	44.2			Never	194	38.8	
	No Opinion	19	3.8			No Opinion	18	3.6	
Other	Very Often	15	3.0	4.63					
	Often	9	1.8						
	Neither Often Nor Occasionally	11	2.2						
	Occasionally	16	3.2						
	Never	221	44.2						
	No Opinion	17	3.4						
Total		289	57.8						

When it comes to location (*not tabulated*), harassment occurred in a variety of locations in Istanbul, ranging from streets to markets and bazaars and from tourist attractions to hotels, along with other places, including restaurants, cafes, bars, shopping centers, and means of transportation including taxis, tramways, and buses. The study findings were as follows: streets, markets/bazaars, and most frequently visited tourist attractions and archaeological sites happened to be the locations with a high level of harassment, respectively. On the other hand, hotels, shopping centers, restaurants/cafes/bars had the lowest level of harassment. Finally, the respondents stated that they were harassed neither frequently nor infrequently in certain places, such as transportation, taxis/buses/tramways, tours/trips to different areas, and other places in Istanbul.

### 3.3. The Relation Between Harassment Status and Respondents' Socio-Demographic and Holiday-Related Characteristics

The authors undertook a series of parametric and non-parametric tests as some parts of the primary quantitative data showed no normality values to comment on significant differences with 5 % significance that would help to test whether there was a significant difference between harassment types and respondents' socio-demographic and holiday-related characteristics. Following the data analysis, it was clear that the respondents' socio-demographic and holiday-related characteristics did not only converge, but also partially converged and diverged from one another. The study findings confirmed that six different types of harassment, such as persistence of vendors, begging, peddling of drugs, sexual harassment, verbal abuse, and physical abuse, did not differ significantly in accordance with respondents' socio-demographic characteristics (*gender, marital status, age group, annual income*) and holiday-related characteristics (*number of visits to Istanbul, accommodation preference, length of stay in Istanbul*). Table 6 shows the current status of all study hypotheses developed by the authors prior to the study's implementation. The majority of the hypotheses were rejected because statistical analyses could not confirm the presence of significant differences, resulting in no empirical evidence between the harassment encounter majority of the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics and holiday-related characteristics.

**Table 6:** Research Hypotheses

H <sup>1</sup> : There is a significant difference between international tourists' gender and harassment.	<i>Rejected*</i>
H <sup>2</sup> : There is a significant difference between international tourists' nationality and harassment.	<i>Accepted**</i>
H <sup>3</sup> : There is a significant difference between international tourists' marital status and harassment.	<i>Rejected</i>
H <sup>4</sup> : There is a significant difference between international tourists' age group and harassment.	<i>Rejected</i>
H <sup>5</sup> : There is a significant difference between international tourists' annual income and harassment.	<i>Rejected</i>
H <sup>6</sup> : There is a significant difference between international tourists' number of visit and harassment.	<i>Rejected</i>
H <sup>7</sup> : There is a significant difference between international tourists' accommodation preference and harassment.	<i>Rejected</i>
H <sup>8</sup> : There is a significant difference between international tourists' length of stay and harassment problem.	<i>Rejected</i>
H <sup>9</sup> : Harassment does influence international tourists' satisfaction level from their holiday in Istanbul.	<i>Accepted</i>
H <sup>10</sup> : Harassment does influence international tourists' re-visit intention to Istanbul in the future.	<i>Accepted</i>
H <sup>11</sup> : Harassment does influence international tourists' intention to visit another destination in Türkiye.	<i>Accepted</i>
H <sup>12</sup> : Harassment does influence international tourists' intention to recommend Istanbul to relatives and friends.	<i>Accepted</i>
H <sup>13</sup> : Harassment does influence international tourists' sense of regret feeling for visiting Istanbul.	<i>Accepted</i>

\* There is a significant difference between international tourists' gender and sexual harassment.

\*\* There is a significant difference between international tourists' nationality and persistence of vendors, begging, peddling of drugs, and sexual harassment.

On the other hand, the study findings verified that the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents differed with regard to some variables. For example, while harassment types, including persistence of vendors, peddling of drugs, verbal and physical abuse, and begging, showed no significant differences based on respondents' gender, it was another matter for other respondents, who reported sexual harassment [U289=6188.500,  $p < 0.05$ ]. Sexual harassment varied according to the respondents' gender. In other words, the gender of the respondents showed a partially significant difference, and female respondents were subjected to more sexual harassment than their male counterparts while on vacation in Istanbul.

**Table 7:** Man-Whitney U Test [Respondents' Gender and Harassment Types]

Harassment Type	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	z	p
Peddling of Drugs	Male	122	140.78	17175.50	9672.500	-.977	.328
	Female	167	148.08	24729.50			
Sexual Harassment	Male	122	177.77	21688.50	6188.500	-6.245	.000
	Female	167	121.06	20216.50			
Verbal Abuse	Male	122	155.57	18980.00	8897.000	-1.888	.059
	Female	167	137.28	22925.00			
Physical Abuse	Male	122	145.52	17753.00	10124.000	-.128	.899
	Female	167	144.62	24152.00			

\*The mean difference is significant at the 0, 05 level.

### 3.4. The Impact of Harassment on Tourism Experience

The authors ran a regression analysis to find out the potential impact of harassment on respondents' tourism experience, to investigate the relationship between harassment experience and respondents' satisfaction level and their future behavioural intentions. The data analysis showed that the harassment significantly impacted the respondents' satisfaction level and future behavioural intentions. According to Table 8; the study findings were as follows: satisfaction level [R=.219,R<sup>2</sup>=.048, p<0.05], re-visit intention [R=.171,R<sup>2</sup>=.029, p<0.05], intention to visit another destination in Türkiye [R=.192,R<sup>2</sup>=.037, p< 0.05], intention to recommend Istanbul to relatives and friends [R=.171,R<sup>2</sup>=.029, p<0.05] and regret visiting Istanbul [R=.182, R<sup>2</sup>=.033, p < 0.05].

**Table 8:** Regression Analysis

Variable	B	SE	β	t	p
Constant	2.700	.161	-.219	16.801	.000
Satisfaction Level	-.472	.105		-4.494	.000
Constant	2.491	.163	-.171	15.276	.000
Re-visit Intention to Istanbul	-.370	.107		-3.471	.001
Constant	2.514	.164	-.192	15.299	.000
Intention to visit Another Destination in Türkiye	-.420	.107		-3.914	.000
Constant	2.456	.168	-.171	14.645	.000
Intention to Recommend Istanbul to Relatives and Friends	-.380	.110		-3.470	.001
Constant	3.169	.193	-.182	16.413	.000
Sense of Regret for visiting Istanbul	.468	.126		3.713	.000

\*The mean difference is significant at the 0,05 level.

Independent Samples t-Test was used to understand respondents' harassment status, satisfaction level, and future behavioural intentions; whether the respondents, harassed during their vacation in Istanbul, differed significantly from the other respondents who did not report any harassment. According to Table 9, there was a significant difference between harassed and non-harassed respondents' satisfaction level [ $t_{289} = 4.883, p < 0.05$ ] and behavioural future intentions, which included intention to re-visit Istanbul [ $t_{289} = 3.936, p < 0.05$ ], intention to visit another destination in Türkiye [ $t_{289} = 4.644, p < 0.05$ ], intention to recommend Istanbul to relatives and friends [ $t_{289} = 3.854, p < 0.05$ ] and lastly, regret visiting Istanbul [ $t_{289} = -4.116, p < 0.05$ ].

**Table 9:** Independent Samples t-Test [Respondents' Harassment Status and Behavioural Future Intentions]

Behavioural Future Intentions	Harassment Status	N	X	SD	t	p
To what extent are you satisfied with your holiday in Istanbul?	Yes	289	2.19	1.167	4.883	.000
	No	211	1.76	.795		
How likely are you to come back to Istanbul in the future?	Yes	289	2.11	1.204	3.936	.000
	No	211	1.75	.872		
How likely are you to visit another destination in Türkiye in the future?	Yes	289	2.12	1.196	4.644	.000
	No	211	1.68	.899		
How likely are you to recommend your holiday in Istanbul to your relatives and friends?	Yes	289	2.07	1.230	3.854	.000
	No	211	1.71	.856		
How likely do you feel regret for visiting Istanbul?	Yes	289	3.63	1.330	-4.116	.000
	No	211	4.09	1.167		

\*The mean difference is significant at the 0,05 level.

## CONCLUSION

The study revealed that; 57.8 % of the international tourists to Istanbul experienced six major types of harassment in Istanbul. Persistence of vendors was the most often encountered form, followed by begging, verbal abuse, sexual harassment, physical abuse, and drug peddling, respectively. Considering the harassment types that might show changes by country, region, tourist destination, and culture, these findings broadly support previous studies on tourist harassment (Koçak & Enser, 2017; Üngüren et al., 2015; Wen & Li, 2015; Nicely & Ghazali, 2014; Chepkwony & Kangogo, 2013; Skipper, 2009; Kozak, 2007). *The persistence of vendors* could be attributed to various factors, including local peoples' financial motivations, stereotyped thoughts and feelings,

and international tourists' vulnerability. The over eagerness to make more money and keep their business alive may result in fierce competition among local businesses and their employees in the tourism industry. These results are supported by previous studies (Üngüren et al., 2015; Nicely & Ghazali, 2014; Skipper, 2009; Kozak, 2007). Furthermore, many shops, restaurants, and stores offering similar products and services coupled with inadequate local planning and poor organization regarding tourist services and human relationships may result in harsh competition, which might happen to be one of the triggering factors for persistence of vendors for international tourists in Istanbul. Another important reason could be the stereotyped thoughts and feelings of the locals, especially those working in the tourism industry, who claim that there is nothing wrong with their insistent selling tactics because they think that international tourists would want to be encouraged to make purchases.

For some local people, international tourists, especially those coming from oil-rich Gulf countries, might be perceived as easy targets for financial profit because they are temporal visitors and are possibly to go back to their countries in a few days. This mainly supports the results of the previous research on tourist harassment, confirming local people's stereotyped and prejudiced thoughts as one of the reasons for vendors' persistence (Chepkwony & Kangogo, 2013; Skipper, 2009; McElroy et al., 2007; Kozak, 2007). To sell their products, some local Turkish vendors believe that they must be aggressive, and they think of this as one of the characteristics of successful and good salesmanship. It is normal for them to hunt possible international tourists as customers to urge on them in public areas because they simply believe that they are just doing their jobs, not doing anything wrong. One more explanation for the high level of persistence of vendors in Istanbul could be made with the vulnerability of international tourists. For some local people, this situation may be an advantage, which they can use to get more money and sell more because tourists are recognizable by their appearance. Moreover, they usually speak a different language, have maps in hand or look for directions, take pictures and look around, look relaxed and off-guard, and appear less confident in their surroundings, that may urge on local vendors for their intentions. This result is mostly emphasized in prior studies on tourist harassment (Ajagunna, 2006; Cavlek, 2002; Levantis & Gani, 2000).

*Begging*, the second most frequently seen harassment type, may be best illustrated by the high prevalence of poverty-related problems. Moreover, the high level of begging in Istanbul is related to the presence of refugees coming from neighbouring Middle East countries. Furthermore, some local people and refugees may consider begging as a lucrative activity. This broadly confirms the findings of previous studies that unveiled poverty-based problems as triggering factors for begging (Qiao et al., 2017; Andriotis, 2016; Lozanski, 2013). In other words, the income disparity between international tourists and local people seemed to result in harassment in Istanbul, that roughly shares well with the results of the prior studies (George, 2003; Dunn & Dunn, 2002).

The third mostly perpetrated harassment type, *verbal abuse*, may have commercial roots like the persistence of vendors. Some street vendors, peddlers, and sellers may verbally abuse international tourists with unpleasant talks, comments, and even saucy jokes because tourists decide not to purchase any products or services from them or obviously reject to communicate. Moreover, the local sellers may yell at tourists to attract them into their shops, stores or restaurants, a traditional way of doing business in the Middle East, which the tourists may interpret as verbal abuse due to cultural differences. This supports the results of prior studies on tourist harassment in general (Nicely & Ghazali, 2014; Dunn & Dunn, 2002). *Sexual harassment* was the fourth most experienced harassment type. The basis of the sexual harassment may be attributed to some local peoples' stereotyped and prejudiced perceptions on international female tourists. Some local people, particularly men, might perceive international female tourists traveling alone as women seeking sexuality and random relationships while on holiday. Aside from this, they might think that international female tourists have more sexual liberation than their Turkish counterparts, and thus they may expect a different approach from female tourists. In fact, sexual harassment is not just a tourism-related problem in Türkiye and around the world. Local people also confront this problem since there is a growing concern about gender issues and women's rights in Türkiye, as in other parts of the world. Sexual harassment should also be analysed in terms of time and location. Contrarily, there may be cases of sexual harassment perpetrated by tourists and aimed at local people, which are outside the scope of this study. The first four types of harassment that respondents had to endure in Istanbul became increasingly intense. A minority of the respondents stated that they were exposed to *physical abuse* and *peddling of drugs* while on vacation in Istanbul, which is consistent with prior studies on tourist harassment in other destinations (Koçak & Enser, 2017; Chepkwony & Kangogo, 2013; Skipper, 2009). Türkiye does have strict laws against crime-oriented matters and incidents, which can limit the peddling of drugs and physical abuse.

According to the respondents, the harassers ranged from vendors/hustlers to beggars, taxi drivers to tour guides, and other harassing groups, such as drug peddlers, boat/yacht staff, beach staff, and hotel staff. Since harasser types might vary depending on culture, tourist destination, region, and country, these findings are consistent with previous studies (Skipper, 2009; Kozak, 2007; De Albuquerque & McElroy, 2001). The large number of harasser groups, which include hawkers, harassers, scammers, con artists, etc., could be explained by a lack of deterrent and sufficient rules, regulations, and precautions or a lack of inspection in Istanbul's key locations and hot tourist spots. The locations in which harassment occurred, as stated by the respondents, involved a variety of settings, including streets, markets/bazaars, tourist attractions, hotels, restaurants, cafes, bars, shopping centres, and means of transportation, including taxis, tramways, and buses. The results revealed the locations in which respondents were subjected to harassment, respectively, as follows: streets, particularly crowded ones, including Istiklal Avenue Beyoğlu Street, and Taksim Square; markets/bazaars, especially traditional ones such as Grand Bazaar and Spice [Egyptian] Bazaar in Istanbul; and the most commonly visited tourist attractions and archaeological sites, such as Topkapı Palace, Hagia Sophia Mosque, and Sultan Ahmet Mosque, located in Istanbul's historical peninsula. Since harassment location might vary depending on culture, tourist destination, region, and country, these generally support the results of the past studies (Koçak & Enser, 2017; Chepkwony & Kangogo, 2013; Ajagunna, 2006).

The harassment might stem from differences in the respondents' socio-demographic backgrounds, or partly from their holiday-related characteristics. Therefore, the study findings confirmed that harassment in its six forms did not reveal any significant differences based on the respondents' socio-demographic and holiday-related characteristics. In other words, the variables above did not have any role in the respondents' encounter with harassment problems during their vacation in Istanbul, contrary to the findings of previous studies, including marital status (Chepkwony & Kangogo, 2013), age group (Chepkwony & Kangogo, 2013; Mopeli, 2009; De Albuquerque & McElroy, 2001) accommodation preferences (Koçak & Enser, 2017; Skipper, 2009; Ajagunna, 2006; Alleyne & Boxill, 2003), and the number of visits (Badu-Baiden et al., 2016; Chepkony & Kangogo, 2013; Boakye, 2012; Mopeli, 2009; Mimaroğlu, 2004; De Albuquerque & McElroy, 2001). Female tourists were subjected to sexual harassment more than their male counterparts, which is consistent with the previous studies (Chepkwony & Kangogo, 2013; Kozak, 2007; De Albuquerque & McElroy, 2001).

The harassment had a significant impact on the respondents' tourism experiences. In other words, harassment plays a significant role in determining satisfaction levels and future behavioural intentions. Moreover, the data analysis revealed considerable differences between respondents who reported the absence and presence of harassment. The respondents who experienced harassment were less satisfied with their vacation, less likely to revisit Istanbul, less likely to visit another destination in Türkiye, less likely to recommend Istanbul to their relatives and friends when they return to their country, and lastly, they felt regret for visiting Istanbul. These results broadly confirm the findings of past studies, indicating that the harassment problem caused lower satisfaction levels and reduced the tendency of future behavioural intentions (Wijesundara & Athula Gnanapala, 2019; Alrawadieh et al., 2019; Badu-Baiden et al., 2016; Nicely & Ghazali, 2014; Chepkwony, 2013; Skipper, 2009; Kozak, 2007). Therefore, it might be concluded that the absence of harassment contributes to the promotion of a positive tourism experience and, as a result, has a positive impact on satisfaction with the holiday and future behavioural intentions. Therefore, dealing with tourist harassment issues is important to avoid growing complaints.

This study investigated the subject of tourist harassment and its potential impact on the tourism experience in Istanbul. The study's results mostly confirmed the findings of prior studies on tourist harassment, excluding a few changes. Unlike the previous research performed in various parts of the world, this study did not find major differences between harassment encounters and respondents' socio-demographic and holiday-related characteristics except for the gender variable, especially for sexual harassment. From a theoretical point of view, the current study provided significant insights into the subject of the tourist harassment and its relationship with the tourism experience, including some important variables such as satisfaction level, and future behavioural intentions. This study showed that there are spatial aspects to the tourist harassment problem. Some tourism employees' professional ethics should be questioned. Female or solo tourists must be better informed about safety and harassment issues in major cities. Based on scientific measurement of given harassment types, an index similar to the Economist Intelligence Unit Safe Cities Index could be developed for cities (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2021). This study contributed to the restricted literature on tourist harassment by giving empirical evidence from one of the world's most important tourist destinations, Istanbul and thus filled a gap as prior to the present study no other study examined tourist harassment and its possible impact on tourism experience in Istanbul. Regarding tourism operations, global metropolitan cities like Istanbul share similarities and particularities.

From a practical point of view, sharing examples of tourists' harassment, the specific locations within the destination where the harassment is experienced, the nature of the harassment, who is perpetrating the harassment (e.g., drug dealers, tourism agents, etc.), and the resulting economic impact would likely inspire residents and service providers to be strong advocates for change by creating community partnerships." The findings of this study might lead to more strategies focused on minimizing negative interactions between local people and tourists in Istanbul and also lead to further studies exploring other aimed approaches. Policy makers and tourism authorities in Istanbul can benefit from having a through understanding of the prevalence and consequences of tourist harassment to implement targeted interventions. Authorities can create a more welcoming and secure environment for tourists by enhancing safety precautions, raising awareness among local people and tourists, and promoting community participation initiatives. Finally, tackling tourist harassment can help Istanbul maintain its reputation as a top tourist destination and contribute to the long-term growth of its tourism industry. For example, some specific areas should be better supervised to eliminate tourist harassment. Also, some certain tourism employees should be better controlled, and their work permits might be annulated as a result of tourist harassment issues. All the stakeholders acting as host parties ought to emphasize the awareness of tourist harassment and its adverse impacts on the sustainability, economy, development, and success of the tourist destinations in the long term. They should also realize the potential loss due to harassment of tourists, particularly international tourists, in case this problem is not effectively handled or minimized. Furthermore, the findings might be used by local and central governments to concentrate on tourist harassment mitigation efforts on potential harasser groups, to design effective strategies, to develop training and education programs, to strengthen law enforcement, to collaborate on community engagement initiatives, to organize public awareness campaigns, and to adopt technology-based solutions by a wide range of stakeholders, such as tourism officials, policymakers, tour operators, travel agencies, destination managers, and other relevant authorities.

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