

The role of tour guide competency in the cultural tour experience: the case of Cappadocia

The role of tour
guide
competency

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Abstract

Purpose – This study investigates to what extent the values perceived by tourists throughout cultural tours impact their overall satisfaction levels and behavioral intentions related to the destination. This study further examines the moderating role of tour guide competency in the relationship patterns concerned.

Design/methodology/approach – Empirical data were collected via a survey from 420 foreign tourists who visited Cappadocia and participated in guided cultural tours. Partial least squares-structural equation modeling was used for data analysis.

Findings – Study results reveal that the effects of quality, emotional, monetary and social value perceptions of tourists gained through cultural tour experiences on their overall satisfaction levels and the effects of overall satisfaction on recommendation and revisit intention are positive and significant. Furthermore, the moderating role of tour guide competency is significant and positive in the relationships between quality value and satisfaction and between satisfaction and revisit intention.

Originality/value – This study offers a critical analysis of discoveries concerning the pivotal role of tour guide competency within the cultural tour experience.

Keywords Cultural tour, Perceived value, Tourist satisfaction, Tour guide competency, Cappadocia

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

The notion of perceived value has become a recent subject of interest among marketing managers and researchers (Caber, Albayrak, & Crawford, 2020; Um & Yoon, 2021; Yu, Lang, Zhao, Liu, & Hu, 2023). Tourism scholars have been particularly drawn to the connections between perceived value, satisfaction and behavioral intention. Such variables are of vital

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importance for the service industry when it comes to consumer behavior and customer loyalty (Dedeoğlu, Balıkcıoğlu, & Küçükergin, 2016; Haji, Surachman, Ratnawati, & MintartiRahayu, 2021; Jeong & Kim, 2020; Kul & Dedeoğlu, 2020; Um & Yoon, 2021; Yen, 2020; Yu *et al.*, 2023; Zeng and Yi Man Li, 2021). However, studies on value within the scope of tourism destinations (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Lee, Yoon, & Lee, 2007; Syakier & Hanafiah, 2022) are quite scarce, and to the best of our knowledge, ours is the first study to examine tourists' destination value perceptions within the scope of cultural tours and their effect on satisfaction levels and behavioral intentions. The relationship between the above variables has not been examined in the context of cultural tours.

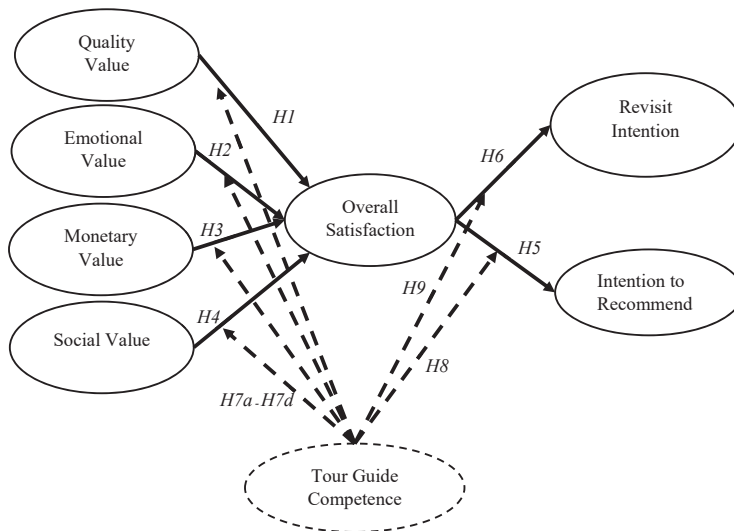
Cultural tourists consume culture-related services and experiences throughout the tours they purchase. In cultural tours, tourists perceive certain values in return for the service and experience they have consumed or will consume. Cultural tourists receive service from the tour guides accompanying them in the language they prefer while learning about the historical, artistic, environmental, natural, and cultural assets of the destinations and historical sites visited (Akgunduz & Eser, 2022; Douglas, Hoogendoorn, & Richards, 2023; Hwang & Lee, 2019; Latkova, Jordan, Vogt, Everette, & Aquino, 2020; Mousa, Abdelgaffar, Salem, Elbaz, & Chaouali, 2023; Weiler & Black, 2021). Tour guides shape the destination experiences of tourists, bringing value and meaning to the overall experience (Cheng, Kuo, Chang, & Chen, 2019; Huang, Hsu, & Chan, 2010; Nour Salah Al-Okaily Alzboun, & Abuhjeeleh, 2023) while impacting tourists' satisfaction levels and behavioral intentions (Chang, 2014; Cheng *et al.*, 2019; Fu, Li, XU, Liu, & Chen, 2023; Huang *et al.*, 2010; Zeng & Yi Man Li, 2021). For this reason, another aim of this study is to examine the moderating role of tour guide competence in the relationship between the perceived value, satisfaction levels, and behavioral intentions of tourists in the context of cultural tours. This is another important contribution of this study. The relationship between the above variables and the tour guide has been considered as a mediating or independent variable. Although its importance is frequently mentioned in the literature, it has not been empirically investigated. Therefore, this study further examines the moderating role of tour guide competency in the relationship patterns concerned.

The current study contributes to the relevant body of literature in two aspects. First, by investigating the multidimensional value of the cultural tour, it highlights how and in what subdimensions value is perceived within the scope of cultural tours. At this juncture, the antecedents of value are revealed in the context of a tour. Second, the incorporation of tour guide competence into the research model as a moderating variable makes it possible to investigate the role of tour guides, who bear the potential of shaping the tourist experience with their performances, within the framework of all the relationships included in the model (see Figure 1). Thus, this study presents important research findings related to tour organizers and guides regarding how value perceptions can shape behavioral intentions through the competence of tour guides.

2. Literature review

2.1 Cultural tourism and tour guides

Cultural tourism refers to tourism activities in which the main motivation of the visitor is to learn, discover, experience, and consume tangible and intangible cultural attractions or products in a tourism destination (Richards, 2018; Seyfi, Hall, & Rasoolimanesh, 2020). Cultural tourism allows tourists to acquire cultural knowledge from the cultural places they visit (Altunel ve Erkut, 2015). As such, it is a form of cultural consumption motivated by a desire to learn (Sukanthasirikul & Trongpanich, 2016). A tour guide is granted a professional certificate and appointed by a tour operator or travel agency, agreeing to accompany the activities of tourists or tour groups in accordance with a specific tour program (Ap & Wong,



Source(s): Figure by authors

Figure 1. Research model

2001; Huang *et al.*, 2010; Rini & Firdaus, 2022; Weiler & Black, 2021). Tour guides may narrate short stories on a tour bus or other transportation and give brief information about the scenery and panoramic spots on a given tour route, the local people encountered, the spots photographed, and the regions visited by the tourists throughout the tour (Latkova *et al.*, 2020). In this context, based on the existing body of literature, cultural tours involve traveling away from one's place of residence individually or with relatives, friends, or a group of people who are unfamiliar with one another but desire to experience and observe art, history, culinary culture, religion, festivals, customs, traditions, and regional lifestyles before eventually returning to their points of departure (Hausmann, 2007; Oliver, 2003).

2.2 Perceived value and satisfaction

Zeithaml (1988) defines perceived value as the consumer's overall assessment of benefit/gain in using a product or service based on his/her perception of what is gained and sacrificed in return for the product or service concerned. According to Sweeney and Soutar (2001), perceived value refers to the evaluation made during the purchasing process, including the pre-purchase stage, throughout the consumption of the product and service, and after consumption. Although perceived value has become an important issue in the marketing literature, there is no consensus on the definition, its dimensions, or how to measure it (Hellier, Geursen, Carr, & Rickard, 2003; Holbrook, 1999; Mcdougall & Levesque, 2000; Sweeney & Soutar, 2001; Sanchez, Callarisa, Rodriguez, & Moliner, 2006; Zeithaml, 1988). The main reason for this is that the concept of perceived value is related to the individual evaluations of customers (Zeithaml, 1988). This is why the extant literature embodies two different approaches to defining and identifying the dimensions and measuring the notion of perceived value.

The first is the concept of functional or traditional value. This approach asserts that perceived value is composed of two parts. First, perceived value is measured through the comparison of the benefits obtained against those sacrificed for a product or service. The second approach considers perceived value as a multidimensional construct. This latter

approach takes into consideration new theoretical developments in the field of consumer behavior and the roles of emotions in purchasing and consumption habits (Sanchez *et al.*, 2006; Sanchez-Fernández & Iniesta-Bonillo, 2007). Sweeney and Soutar (2001) argue that the adoption of a multidimensional structure in measuring the values perceived by customers is more appropriate and yields more fruitful results. From the perspective of postmodern marketers, emotions are important factors in the context of consumer behavior. Because consumers travel for relaxation, entertainment, and pleasure, the emotional benefits they stand to acquire play a more significant role in their assessments of destination value perception (Kucukergin & Meydan Uygur, 2019; Rousta & Jamshidi, 2020).

One of the notable theories in this area is the consumption-value theory (Sánchez-Fernández & Iniesta-Bonillo, 2007). This theory suggests that five different values (i.e., functional value, conditional value, social value, emotional value, and epistemic value) influence consumer choice behavior. In other words, “multiple consumption values” are important for consumer choices. This theory can help us with predicting consumption behavior (Sheth, Newman, & Gross, 1991). Although previous studies share common ground concerning perceived value as a multidimensional rather than unidimensional structure, they put forward different dimensions for perceived value by using differing terms to name similar dimensions (Dedeoğlu, Van Niekerk, Weinland, & Celuch, 2019; El-Adly, 2019; Kim & Tang, 2020; Prebensen, Woo, Chen, & Uysal, 2013; Slack, Singh & Sharma, 2020). The five dimensions of value proposed by Sheth *et al.* (1991) consist of conditional, social, emotional, functional, and epistemic responses. According to Groth (1995), dimensions of value comprise cognitive perceived utility, psychological, internal, and external. Grönroos (1997) proclaimed that perceived value is about two different dimensions; cognitive and emotional. The dimensions of value proposed by de Ruyter, Wetzels, Lemmink and Mattson (1997) consist of emotional dimension or intrinsic value, functional dimension or extrinsic value, and logical dimension. According to Sweeney and Soutar (2001), perceived value is composed of the subdimensions of quality value, emotional value, monetary value, and social value. In this context, it is seen that researchers generally examine perceived value under the four dimensions of emotional value, social value, monetary value, and functional value (quality value).

Addressing perceived value from a multidimensional point of view is the preferred approach among tourism researchers (Caber *et al.*, 2020; Dedeoğlu *et al.*, 2019; El-Adly, 2019; Haji *et al.*, 2021; Kim & Tang, 2020; Prebensen *et al.*, 2013; Um & Yoon, 2021; Yen, 2020; Yu *et al.*, 2023). Therefore, the measurement of perceived value in this research was developed from work by Sweeney and Soutar (2001), perceived value was examined under the subdimensions of quality value, emotional value, monetary value, and social value. Quality value is perceived by consumers following their assessments regarding the goods or services they have purchased in light of the benefits and physical performance they have experienced (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). Emotional value arises from the emotions that consumers feel in return for the goods or services they have purchased (Petrick, 2002). Monetary value is the benefit obtained as a result of the comparison of goods or services against the money that consumers have paid or will pay (Dedeoğlu *et al.*, 2019). Lastly, social value is described as the benefit acquired by consumers through comparisons, such as whether goods or services are recognized in a particular social setting or not. In other words, social value represents the benefit derived from the product’s capability of improving the social self (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001).

The body of knowledge in question yields a comprehensive definition of value. Accordingly, Pandza Bajs (2015, p. 124) refers to perceived value as “an individual, cognitive-affective evaluation of the product or service that occurs in the purchasing process and is based on a comparison between the benefits and costs generated out of the offer and the offers of competitors in the market, and which varies with the changing circumstances of time,

place, and situation in which varies the assessment is made.” Thus, value in the context of cultural tours refers to the multidimensional impression that tourists acquire as a result of their cognitive and affective assessment of the cultural tourism product they have experienced.

Satisfaction is the consumer’s response to the assessment of the perceived difference between expectations and the result of consumption (Bayih & Singh, 2020; Dam & Dam, 2021) or the emotional response to comparing the results of a particular product purchased against a certain standard set before purchasing said product (Bigné, Andreu, & Gnoth, 2005; Chen & Phou, 2013; Del Bosque & Martín, 2008). Overall satisfaction has wide coverage in studies focusing on tourism experience. Specifically, the overall satisfaction levels of tourists have been examined within the framework of a guided tour (Hughes, 1991). Discovering how a broad range of expectations would impact the cumulative satisfaction of tourists visiting a destination may identify valuable ways to improve future tours and increase visitor satisfaction and intentions to revisit and recommend.

The functional and emotional benefits that a tourist obtains in return for the multidimensional efforts they have put in for their cultural tour experiences are expected to predict their satisfaction with those experiences (Gallarza & Saura, 2006; Pandza Bajs, 2015). If the value perceived throughout a tour increases, any satisfaction derived from it is expected to increase as well. The body of literature provides grounds supporting the view in question. According to Chen and Tsai (2007), tourists perceiving their travel experiences as valuable exhibit higher satisfaction. Similarly, Chen and Chen (2010) revealed a positive relationship between perceived value and satisfaction. In a study conducted by Lee *et al.* (2007) on tours organized to visit demilitarized zones in Korea, perceived value was shown to have significant effects on satisfaction. In their research focusing on students’ travel behavior, Gallarza and Saura (2006) revealed that perceived value predicts satisfaction.

Lee (2020) examined the relationship between the variables of experience, perceived value, and participation satisfaction within the framework of exhibitions. The research findings put forward that the relationship pattern among experience, perceived value, and satisfaction is positive both directly and indirectly. Furthermore, perceived value has a moderating role in the relationship between experience and customer satisfaction (Velošo & Gomez-Suarez, 2023). Yen (2020) found that perceived value in the context of a wine culture festival affects event satisfaction. Measuring perceived value unidimensionally but analyzing the value dimensions (i.e., quality of touristic services, destination appearance, emotional experience, reputation, monetary costs, and non-monetary costs) as exogenous variables that impact the unidimensional value concerned, Pandza Bajs (2015) concluded that perceived value has a positive effect on satisfaction in the context of Dubrovnik (Croatia). Likewise, Williams and Soutar (2009) investigated the relationships between value dimensions and satisfaction in the context of a specific type of tourism (i.e., adventure tourism). The analysis they performed concluded that value for money, novelty value, functional value, emotional value, and social value all have a significant effect on satisfaction. Lee *et al.* (2007) found that functional value perception, which includes both emotional value perceptions and quality and monetary value elements, positively affects tour satisfaction. Lee *et al.* (2007) similarly revealed that the perception of functional value consisting of quality and monetary elements and the perception of emotional value positively affect satisfaction. Accordingly, each different value element can be expected to be determinative in terms of satisfaction levels. Thus, the following hypotheses were developed:

- H1.* Quality value has a positive effect on overall satisfaction of cultural tourists.
- H2.* Emotional value has a positive effect on overall satisfaction of cultural tourists.
- H3.* Monetary value has a positive effect on overall satisfaction of cultural tourists.
- H4.* Social value has a positive effect on overall satisfaction of cultural tourists.

2.3 Satisfaction and behavioral intentions

Tourists make decisions for the future by taking into consideration their past experiences (Karakuş, 2023). Behavioral intentions, thus, are generally discussed within the scope of recommendation or revisit intention (Bayih & Singh, 2020; Hwang & Lee, 2019; Syakier & Hanafiah, 2022). Intention to recommend is examined within the framework of tourists recommending a particular destination by taking into account their previous experiences (Eid, El-Kassrawy, & Agag, 2019), and this process is deemed important for destinations in the context of free advertising (Lee, 2009). Revisit intention, on the other hand, refers to the personal assessment of a customer concerning the likelihood of re-purchasing the same product or service after using it (Peng, Yang, Fu, & Huan, 2023; Rajput & Gahfoor, 2020; Soliman, 2021). In other words, it expresses the intention to prefer the same product, brand, company, or destination in the future (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996). In the current study, the intention to recommend and revisit intention were measured as behavioral intention.

Tourists satisfied with their experiences are expected to engage in positive behavioral intentions and show a tendency to revisit the destination. On the one hand, taking into account the effect of motivation, cultural destinations may not be revisited, at least in the short term, even if they have a positive experience. On the other hand, satisfaction can be a determining factor for the intention to recommend. The literature puts forward a link between satisfaction and behavioral intentions. For example, Gallarza and Saura (2006) revealed that satisfaction does affect loyalty. Likewise, Williams and Soutar (2009) found that satisfaction affects intention. In a study conducted in the context of local festival visitors, the effect of overall satisfaction on behavioral intentions was found to be significant and positive (Sohn, Lee, & Yoon, 2016). In the context of cultural tourism, Altunel and Erkut (2015) demonstrated that satisfaction has a positive effect on recommendation. In a study conducted in the context of rural tourism, it was revealed that overall satisfaction has a positive effect on recommendation intention while having no significant effect on revisit intention (Phillips, Wolfe, Hodur, & Leistriz, 2013), as echoed by Altunel and Erkut (2015). Taking weather impacts into consideration, it was demonstrated that tourist satisfaction has a positive effect on revisit intention (Kim *et al.*, 2017). Thus, the following hypotheses were developed:

H5. Overall satisfaction of cultural tourists has a positive effect on intention to recommend.

H6. Overall satisfaction of cultural tourists has a positive effect on revisit intention.

2.4 Moderating role of tour guide competency

A tour guide (or tourist guide) who has a professional certificate is hired by a tour operator or a travel agency. This person accompanies the activities of tourists or tour groups during their visit by following a tour program (Huang *et al.*, 2010). According to the World Federation of Tourist Guides Association (WFTGA), a tour guide possesses an official certificate, guides the visitors in their chosen language, and provides explanations on the natural and cultural heritage sites of a region (WFTGA, 2003).

Intercultural differences often generate a cultural gap between visitor and destination. For this and several other reasons, tourists participate in guided tours. Individuals' desire to know and experience different cultures or avoid challenges that may arise from intercultural difficulties in the destinations they visit is a significant driver behind purchasing guidance services. As observed by many researchers, the performance of a tour guide has a remarkable impact on the tourist experience (Alazaizeh, Jamaliah, Mgonja, & Ababneh, 2019; Çetinkaya & Öter, 2016; Huang *et al.*, 2010; Jahwari, Sirakaya-Turk, & Altintas, 2016). For example, the tour guide provides information about museums and archaeological sites of interest or

different local customs and traditions. Tourists' perceptions of the destination differ according to the information communicated by the tour guide. Furthermore, foreign tourists are dependent on tour guides to maintain a balance in their interactions with the local culture and community (Tsaour & Teng, 2017). The levels of cultural knowledge and communication skills of tour guides play a notable role for tourists desiring to acquire knowledge in the cultural context (Pereira, 2015). In this vein, tour guides render the environment safe for tourists, keep them away from hardship, solve problems, serve as interpreters, arrange transportation means, and act as mediators between tourists and their unfamiliar surroundings (Zhang & Chow, 2004).

Tour guides can provide positive contributions to a destination (Arabacıoğlu, 2023), particularly in the context of cultural tourism, as tourists participating in such activities generally have high levels of education and a desire to learn and experience novel things. The fact that tour guides convey information about the destination renders the experience more meaningful, adding value to the destination in the eyes of tourists (Cheng *et al.*, 2019). Zhang and Chow (2004) claim that tour guides are the most important factor for the success of tourism destinations. Chang (2014) states that tour guides have a positive and significant effect on the satisfaction levels of tourists and that competent tour guides increase tourist satisfaction. Kuo, Chang, Cheng, and Lin (2016) found that tour guides impact tourists' satisfaction levels and this satisfaction affects their loyalty to the destination. The quality of service provided by tour guides during tour programs not only affects the tourists' experiences but also increases their tendency to revisit (Huang, Weiler, & Assaker, 2015). Heung (2008) found a significant and positive relationship between tour guide service quality and agency reputation, as well as between tourists' proposition tendencies. Huang *et al.* (2010) investigated the performances of tour guides and the satisfaction levels of tourists in package tours in Shanghai and found that tour guide performance has a direct positive and significant effect on tourist satisfaction. Cheng *et al.* (2019) state that tour guide service affects concepts such as cultural identity, destination image, and perceived value, and these concepts are strong triggers for behavioral tendencies.

As noted above, the effect of tour guide performance on tourists' satisfaction levels, behavioral tendencies, and experiences has been researched in previous studies (Cheng *et al.*, 2019; Çetinkaya & Öter, 2016; Frochot & Batat, 2013; Huang *et al.*, 2015; Hwang & Lee, 2019; Syakier & Hanafiah, 2022). However, different dimensions have been put forward to measure the performance of the tour guide. According to Lin, Ting, Hsu, and Wu (2014), tour guides' performance can be measured based on their communication skills – how they communicate with local and international tourists. Zhang and Chow (2004) used the importance-performance model to measure the performance of tour guides. Heung (2008) used the importance-performance model previously used by Zhang and Chow (2004) in his study, in which he examined the effects of tour guides' service quality on the agency's reputation and customers' word-of-mouth communication and expressed these expressions in four sub-dimensions (presentation and communication ability, professional attitude and ability, professional knowledge, personal integrity). Chang (2014) used the scale suggested by Heung (2008) in his study to examine the effect of tour guide performance on the satisfaction levels and shopping behaviors of tourists and as a result of factor analysis, this scale consisted of three sub-dimensions (presentation and communication ability, professional attitude and ability, personal appearance/manners and integrity/knowledge). Huang *et al.* (2010) used scale items they gathered from the extant literature in their study and found that tour guide performance consists of four sub-dimensions (professional competence, interpersonal skills and organization, empathy, and problem-solving). On the other hand, Lin, Lin, and Chen (2017) borrowed scale items previously used to measure different dimensions related to tour guides and found that tour guide professional competence consists of three sub-dimensions. They are professional knowledge, professional skills and professional attitude. Hwang and

Lee (2019) used both the items and dimensions developed by Lin *et al.* (2017) and the items of professional competence, which is a sub-dimension in the tour guide performance scale of Huang *et al.* (2010), to measure the competence of a tour guide. Within the scope of this research, the competence of the tour guide was measured with the scale developed by Huang *et al.* (2010).

The current study investigates the moderating role of tour guides, who accompany tourists in a wide range of aspects and convey information about historical, artistic, environmental, natural, and cultural assets in the destinations in a language the tourists prefer, as well as in the relationships between the values perceived by tourists throughout a cultural tour, their overall satisfaction levels, and their behavioral intentions. The fact that tour guides are integral to the assessments of tourists about the experiences they had is the fundamental reason behind this research aim (Chang, 2014; Cheng *et al.*, 2019; Huang *et al.*, 2010; Zhang & Chow, 2004). In this context, the research model and the hypotheses developed are presented below.

- H7a.* Tour guide competency moderates the relationship between quality value and overall satisfaction of cultural tourists.
- H7b.* Tour guide competency moderates the relationship between emotional value and overall satisfaction of cultural tourists.
- H7c.* Tour guide competency moderates the relationship between monetary value and overall satisfaction of cultural tourists.
- H7d.* Tour guide competency moderates the relationship between social value and overall satisfaction of cultural tourists.
- H8.* Tour guide competency moderates the relationship between overall satisfaction of cultural tourists and their intention to recommend.
- H9.* Tour guide competency moderates the relationship between overall satisfaction of cultural tourists and their revisit intention.

3. Methodology

In order to test the research hypotheses developed in this study, a quantitative research method was taken into account. In this context, a questionnaire was developed and used to collect empirical data. Structural equation modeling was applied to understand the complex relations in the model created by considering the purpose of the research.

3.1 The questionnaire structure

In the first part of the survey, value perceptions of tourists participating in cultural tours were measured via 19 items (Petrick, 2002; Sanchez *et al.*, 2006; Sweeney & Soutar, 2001); tour guide competency via 13 items (Chang, 2014; Huang *et al.*, 2010), satisfaction via three items (Bigné, Sánchez, & Sánchez, 2001; Bigovic & Prašnikar, 2015; Su, Hsu, & Marshall, 2014), intention to recommend via three items (Su *et al.*, 2014; Zeithaml *et al.*, 1996), and revisit intention via three items (Kim & Moon, 2009; Ryu & Han, 2011). Items were measured with the help of a seven-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree to 7 = Strongly agree). The second part of the survey involved questions to identify the demographic characteristics of the participants. As the questionnaires were to be distributed to foreign tourists participating in cultural tours in Nevşehir, Cappadocia, they were prepared solely in English. A pilot study was conducted to eliminate possible errors, and the survey was applied with the help of tour guides to 60 tourists participating in cultural tours in Cappadocia. As a result of the pilot test, it was

observed that the survey items were understandable and clear. For this reason, the survey form was used verbatim. The role of tour
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competency

3.2 Data collection and sample

The research was conducted in Cappadocia, which is one of the most significant cultural destinations in Turkey. It is known for its distinctive geographical structure, historical wealth, and cultural diversity. The region is famous for its fairy chimneys, which are carved in tuff stones. These natural wonders have served as a place where people lived and underground cities have been built since ancient times. The fact that Cappadocia has been home to various civilizations throughout history indicates a rich cultural heritage. Churches, monasteries, and underground cities in the region are adorned with unique frescoes and decorations dating back to the early Christian era. Cappadocia offers visitors a unique experience by incorporating cultural elements such as handicrafts, traditional dress, and local cuisine. When all of these elements come together, Cappadocia stands out as a unique destination for cultural tourism. Moreover, the Cappadocia region was the first in Turkey to be included in UNESCO's cultural heritage list in 1985 (UNESCO, 2021). In this sense, the Cappadocia region, with its cultural and historical structures as well as its natural beauty, is a preferred destination for cultural tourists.

The number of tourists visiting Nevşehir in 2019 was 1,718,114 (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2021). Cappadocia encompasses two regions: Central Cappadocia and Greater Cappadocia. Central Cappadocia, located in the province of Nevşehir, is the most renowned and sought-after region of Cappadocia for tourists. Important tourist centers such as Ürgüp, Göreme, Avanos, and Uçhisar are located here; fairy chimneys, underground cities, valleys, churches, and unique geographical formations are the focal points of this region. Larger Cappadocia refers to a broader region that encompasses Central Cappadocia, as well as the provinces of Aksaray and Kayseri (Kazanıcı & Şuludere, 2020) (see Figure 2). Although this region is historically recognized as Cappadocia, the most profound and famous tourist attractions are usually located in Central Cappadocia. Central Cappadocia was chosen as the area for the current study for this reason.



Source(s): Figure by Kazancı ve Şuludere (2020)

Figure 2.
Map of Cappadocia

G*POWER 3 was used to determine the sample size for this study (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007). Accordingly, the minimum sample size was calculated to be 68 (Power = 0.80, $f^2 = 0.15$, $\alpha = 0.05$). This figure was multiplied by three to obtain a more consistent model (Ringle, da Silva, & Bido, 2014). Although the total number of forms needed was 203 at the minimum, 460 survey forms were distributed. Non-random sampling and judgmental (intentional) sampling methods were used in the selection of the research sample. In order to apply the questionnaire created within the scope of the research and to collect the data, one of the authors, who is a tour guide, contacted other tour guides face-to-face and informed them about the research. The forms were delivered to professional tour guides who consented to distribute the survey in May-September 2019 and were later collected for analysis. The survey was administered to foreign tourists representing 55 nationalities participating in cultural tours in Nevşehir at the end of a tour with the assistance of the tour guides. A total of 446 forms were returned. Of those, 26 were excluded from the data set as they were filled in incompletely or incorrectly. For this reason, 420 questionnaires were used in testing the hypotheses developed within the framework of the research. The return rate for the survey is 91.3%.

3.3 Data analysis

Before initiating the data analysis process, the eligibility of the data obtained from the subjects was controlled. In this respect, first, missing data were identified and eliminated. Second, Mahalanobis distance was controlled to identify and eliminate the outliers. As a result of the examination of Mahalanobis distance, one subject was removed from the data set. Third, the skewness and kurtosis values were controlled to reveal whether the data set in the study had normal distribution or not. As the analysis put forth that four survey items related to tour guide competence violated the normal distribution, they were removed from the data set (Kline, 2011). Then, the model developed within the scope of the research was analyzed via partial least squares-structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). Given its growing use in tourism research, PLS-SEM was preferred for the current research as well (Usakli & Küçükergin, 2018). The model has a complex structure as it is constituted of a great number of variables and items. Therefore, it is the most appropriate choice to use in the presence of continuous moderation and in measuring the relevant interaction effects (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2017). This analysis improves the accuracy of the interaction effects (Sarstedt, Hair, Nitzl, Ringle, & Howard, 2020). Moreover, bias-corrected confidence intervals are provided, and bootstrapping methods can be used in PLS-SEM (Hair *et al.*, 2017).

4. The empirical results

4.1 Demographic characteristics of the sample

The majority of the respondents (55.6%) were women. In terms of age, 48% were 26–33, followed by 34–41 (21%). Regarding the marital status of the respondents, 55.8% were single. In terms of educational background, the majority had master's degrees (53.2%), bachelor's degrees (28.2%), and associate degrees (11.2%). While America and England ranked as the top two countries of origin, most of the respondents were from countries where the official languages spoken are English (39.6%) or Spanish (14.6%). An examination of arrival numbers revealed that 91.6% of the respondents were visiting Nevşehir for the first time. When the overnight stay or accommodation length of tourists visiting the Nevşehir region was examined, 43.9% of them stayed for two days and 51.3% stayed for three days or longer. However, when the duration of the cultural tours was examined, the majority of them (85.7%) participated in single-day cultural tours, although they stayed in Nevşehir for two or more days (see Table 1).

Information	Group	f	%	The role of tour guide competency
Gender	Male	186	44.4	
	Female	233	55.6	
	Total	419	100	
Country	USA	65	15.5	
	England	40	9.5	
	Australia	20	4.8	
	Russia	4	1.0	
	China	17	4.1	
	India	38	9.1	
	Spain	29	6.9	
	Other	206	49.1	
	Total	419	100	
Tour duration	One day	359	85.7	
	Two days	47	11.2	
	Three days	9	2.1	
	Four days and more	4	1.0	
	Total	419	100	
Visit	First	384	91.6	
	Second	27	6.4	
	Third and more	8	1.9	
	Total	419	100	
Education	Primary school	2	0.5	
	High school	29	6.9	
	Associate degree	47	11.2	
	Bachelor's degree	118	28.2	
	Post-graduate	223	53.2	
	Total	419	100	
Age	17 and less	3	0.7	
	18–25	43	10.3	
	26–33	201	48.0	
	34–41	88	21.0	
	42–49	25	6.0	
	50–57	35	8.4	
	58 and more	24	5.7	
	Total	419	100	
Length of stay	One day	20	4.8	
	Two days	184	43.9	
	Three days and more	215	51.3	
	Total	419	100	
Marital status	Married	185	44.2	
	Single	234	55.8	
	Total	419	100	

Source(s): Table by authors

Table 1.
Demographic characteristics of the sample

4.2 Outer model

PLS-SEM consists of two separate constructs: the outer model and the inner model (Hair *et al.*, 2017). Because the outer loading value of “My cultural tour experience in Cappadocia is well made” was found below 0.40 via the outer model analysis, the item was removed from the analysis, and the measurement model was reanalyzed. The results of the final analysis are presented in Table 2. Construct reliability (CR) values exceed 0.70, as proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981), which means that construct reliability is achieved. Convergent validity is also achieved, as the value of average variance extracted (AVE) and outer loadings exceed the recommended value of 0.50 (Hair *et al.*, 2017). Furthermore, Table 3 presents data regarding

Dimensions	Items	Outer loadings	t	CR	AVE	Cronbach's alpha
	<i>My cultural tour experience in Cappadocia</i>					
Quality value	has an acceptable standard of quality	0.879	52.834	0.889	0.728	0.814
	is outstanding quality	0.882	54.822			
Emotional Value	is very reliable	0.795	26.077	0.939	0.755	0.919
	makes me feel good	0.839	39.924			
	gives me pleasure	0.878	51.923			
	gives me a sense of joy	0.902	64.450			
Monetary value	makes me feel delighted	0.891	68.704	0.954	0.807	0.940
	gives me happiness	0.834	29.738			
	is reasonably priced	0.909	76.052			
	is economical	0.878	54.242			
	is fairly priced	0.926	74.027			
Social Value	is a good product for the price	0.935	108.922	0.874	0.542	0.837
	is worth the money	0.839	35.724			
	has good reputation	0.754	21.401			
	are taken by many people that I know improved the way I am perceived by others	0.633	13.947			
	People who take that type of Cultural tour experience in Cappadocia obtain social approval	0.816	24.191			
Satisfaction	would give me social approval	0.795	18.991	0.916	0.785	0.862
	The visit to Cappadocia exceeded my expectations	0.802	20.811			
	I am pleased with my decision to visit Cappadocia	0.850	45.131			
	My holiday in Cappadocia satisfied me	0.905	54.772			
Recommendation	I would tell positive things about Cappadocia to other people	0.902	55.359	0.962	0.893	0.940
	I would encourage my friends and relatives to come Cappadocia	0.932	75.707			
	I would recommend Cappadocia to those who are planning a holiday	0.961	100.677			
Revisit intention	I would like to revisit Cappadocia in the near future	0.941	67.891	0.940	0.840	0.904
	I would visit Cappadocia more frequently	0.910	92.719			
	Cappadocia would be my first choice over other destinations	0.943	123.670			
Tour Guide Competence	Cappadocia would be my first choice over other destinations	0.895	79.364	0.942	0.643	0.930
	This tour guide has the knowledge of the destination's culture	0.816	30.777			
	This tour guide has the knowledge of tourist attractions	0.844	35.229			
	This tour guide has the knowledge of local people's lifestyle	0.785	31.856			
	This tour guide has the knowledge of the destination's history	0.850	36.718			
	This tour guide is good at interpersonal communication	0.789	23.933			
	This tour guide is able to cooperate with other service staff (e.g., driver)	0.809	29.862			
	This tour guide had good communication and presentation skill	0.800	28.669			
The tour guide speaks clear language	0.788	29.347				
The tour's guide pronunciation is clear	0.727	24.074				

Table 2.

Outer model results

Source(s): Table by authors

	EV	MV	QV	REC	RVI	SV	SAT	TRC
EV								
MV	0.494							
QV	0.816	0.563						
REC	0.480	0.419	0.432					
RVI	0.411	0.327	0.319	0.395				
SV	0.497	0.322	0.410	0.258	0.438			
SAT	0.594	0.522	0.549	0.723	0.559	0.369		
TRC	0.587	0.349	0.634	0.471	0.254	0.297	0.542	

Note(s): QV: quality value; EV: emotional value; MV: monetary value; SV: social value; Sat: satisfaction; REC: recommendation; RVI: revisit intention; TRC: tour guide competence

Source(s): Table by authors

Table 3.
Result of discriminant validity

the discriminant validity. The heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratios of correlations were controlled, and no value exceeded 0.90, signaling that discriminant validity is achieved (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015).

4.3 Inner model

Within the scope of analyzing the results of the inner model, first, the presence of multicollinearity was controlled (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011, 2017). As presented in Table 4, all values are below 5, which proves that the inner model has no multicollinearity problem. The results for the inner model are presented in Table 3. The bootstrap resampling method was utilized to determine the *t* values for the path coefficients in the inner model, and the subsample threshold was set at 5000 (Hair et al., 2017). The analysis results revealed that the quality value tourists have obtained from their cultural tour experiences has an insignificant effect on their overall satisfaction levels ($\beta = 0.085, t = 1.225, p > 0.05$). Thus, **H1** is not supported. As the effect of emotional value obtained from cultural tour experience on overall satisfaction level was examined, it was observed that the effect is positive and significant ($\beta = 0.301, t = 4.082, p < 0.05$). Thus, **H2** is supported. In this respect, it can be concluded that an increase in emotional value perceptions of tourists participating in cultural tours will stimulate an increase in their overall satisfaction levels. In addition, it was observed that monetary value obtained from cultural tour experience has a significant effect on tourists' overall satisfaction levels ($\beta = 0.257, t = 4.269, p < 0.05$). This finding shows that **H3** is supported. It is observed that social value obtained from cultural tour experience has a significant effect on tourists' overall satisfaction levels ($\beta = 0.102, t = 2.151, p < 0.05$). In other words, as social value perceptions of tourists rise in a positive direction, their satisfaction levels will rise as well. In this respect, **H4** is supported.

Hypothesis	Relationships	β	p-values	VIF	R^2	f^2	Q^2	Support
H1	QV→SAT	0.085	0.221	2.141	0.352	0.005	0.272	No
H2	EV→SAT	0.301	0.000	2.263		0.062		Yes
H3	MV→SAT	0.257	0.000	1.402		0.073		Yes
H4	SV→SAT	0.102	0.032	1.364		0.012		Yes
H5	SAT→REC	0.652	0.000	1.000	0.423	0.738	0.374	Yes
H6	SAT→RVI	0.494	0.000	1.000	0.242	0.323	0.202	Yes

Note(s): QV: quality value; EV: emotional value; MV: monetary value; SV: social value; Sat: satisfaction; REC: recommendation; RVI: revisit intention

Source(s): Table by authors

Table 4.
Result of inner model

Overall satisfaction levels of tourists have a significant and positive effect on destination revisit intention ($\beta = 0.652, t = 15.223, p < 0.05$). Accordingly, it can be concluded that tourists satisfied with their previous experiences participating in cultural tours are more likely to revisit the destination. Thus, **H5** is supported. Lastly, it was revealed that the effect of tourists' overall satisfaction with the destination on their intention to recommend is positive and significant ($\beta = 0.494, t = 13.399, p < 0.05$). Thus, **H6** is supported. The R^2 value shows that while 35.2% of satisfaction is shaped by dimensions of perceived value, 42.3% of recommendation and 24.2% of revisit intention are explained by their antecedents. As shown in Table 3, emotional value ($f^2 = 0.062$), monetary value ($f^2 = 0.073$) and social value ($f^2 = 0.012$) had low effects on satisfaction. Satisfaction had a large effect on recommendation ($f^2 = 0.423$) and revisit intention ($f^2 = 0.242$). As the Q^2 value is larger than zero for satisfaction ($Q^2 = 0.272$), recommendation ($Q^2 = 0.374$), and revisit intention ($Q^2 = 0.202$), its explanatory latent construct exhibits predictive relevance (Henseler *et al.*, 2015).

4.4 The moderating role of tour guide competency

This study examined the moderating role of tour guide competency among the variables. At this juncture, the stages proposed by Hair *et al.* (2017) were taken into account. Because tour guide competency was measured as a continuous variable in the current study, its interactive effect on the specified relationships was analyzed. To reveal the significance of the moderating effect of tour guide competence, the two-stage approach proposed by Hair *et al.* (2017) was adopted. The moderating role of tour guide competence is briefly presented in Table 5.

First, tour guide competency was incorporated as a moderating variable in the relationship between quality value and overall satisfaction, and a significant effect was observed ($\beta = 0.170, t = 2.118, p < 0.05$). In light of this finding, it was revealed that tour guide competence has a significant moderating effect on the relationship between quality value and overall satisfaction in the context of cultural tours. Thus, **H7a** is supported. In this respect, we can assert that the effect of tourists' quality value perceptions on their overall satisfaction levels will determine their perceptions of tour guide competence. When the moderating effect of tour guide competence in the relationship between emotional value and overall satisfaction was examined, it was understood that it does not generate a significant effect ($\beta = -0.189, t = 1.921, p > 0.05$). Thus, **H7b** is not supported. As the moderating effect of tour guide competence in the relationship between monetary value and overall satisfaction was examined, neither did it show a significant effect in this relationship ($\beta = -0.092, t = 1.280, p > 0.05$). Therefore, **H7c** is not supported. In addition, the moderating effect of tour guide competence between social value and overall satisfaction was observed to be insignificant ($\beta = 0.135, t = 1.929, p > 0.05$). Thus, **H7d** is not supported.

Hypothesis	Relationships	β	p	R^2	f^2	Q^2	Support
H7a	QV*TRC→SAT	0.170	0.034	0.414	0.021	0.318	Yes
H7b	WV*TRC→SAT	-0.189	0.055		0.031		No
H7c	MV*TRC→SAT	-0.092	0.201		0.009		No
H7d	SV*TRC→SAT	0.135	0.054		0.019		No
H8	SAT*TRC→REC	0.006	0.901	0.441	0.000	0.385	No
H9	SAT*TRC→RVI	0.091	0.038	0.251	0.017	0.209	Yes

Table 5.
Result of interaction effects

Note(s): QV: quality value; EV: emotional value; MV: monetary value; SV: social value; Sat: satisfaction; REC: recommendation; RVI: revisit intention; TRC: tour guide competence

Source(s): Table by authors

Tour guide competence was incorporated as a moderating variable in the relationship between overall satisfaction and intention to recommend, and as a result, it was concluded that tour guide competence has an insignificant effect on the relationship between tourists' overall satisfaction and intention to recommend ($\beta = 0.006$, $t = 0.124$, $p > 0.05$). For this reason, **H8** is not supported. Thus, tour guide competence has no moderating role in the relationship between overall satisfaction and intention to recommend. Lastly, examination of the moderating effect of tour guide competence in the relationship between tourists' overall satisfaction and revisit intention revealed a significant effect ($\beta = 0.091$, $t = 2.081$, $p < 0.05$). Accordingly, it was revealed that tour guide competence has a significant moderating effect on the relationship between tourists' overall satisfaction in the context of cultural tours and their intention to revisit, meaning that **H9** is supported. As a result, it can be asserted that the effect of tourists' overall satisfaction on their intentions to revisit will be more determinant as their perceptions of tour guide competence increase.

5. Conclusion and implications

5.1 Conclusion

This study investigated to what extent the values perceived by tourists throughout cultural tours impact their overall satisfaction levels and behavioral intentions related to a cultural destination. The research findings suggest that perceived value has an important place in tourists' evaluations in the context of cultural tour experience. This finding reinforces the importance of value in consumer decisions in a different context, as suggested by the consumption-value theory (Sheth *et al.*, 1991). In a situation where the direct effect of quality value on overall satisfaction is insignificant, tour guide competence is a determinant of the effect of tour quality evaluation. Quality value is a factor that can be evaluated through the tour guide, rather than being seen as an ineffective variable on overall satisfaction. Several specific theoretical and practical implications are provided below.

5.2 Theoretical implications

This study offers several theoretical implications. First, it was observed that the quality value tourists acquire from their cultural tour experiences does not impact their overall satisfaction levels. Thus, the effect of quality value on the overall satisfaction of tourists was insignificant. This finding is not consistent with several previous studies conducted in the tourism context (Chen & Chen, 2010; Lee *et al.*, 2007; Lin & Wang, 2012). It is quite possible that tourists' value perceptions related to cultural tour experiences had yet to be considered as a direct determinant of overall satisfaction levels when such studies were conducted. In essence, the fact that tour guide competence was found to have a positive moderating role in tourists' overall satisfaction and quality value perceptions supports this finding. Previous research studies suggest that tour guides shape the destination experiences of tourists and that information communicated by them helps tourists attach meaning to the destination, thus bringing added value to the destination (Cheng *et al.*, 2019).

Second, emotional, monetary, and social value perceptions of tourists acquired from the cultural tour experiences have a significant and positive effect on their overall satisfaction levels. This finding is supported by other studies in the body of tourism literature (Chen & Chen, 2010; Lee *et al.*, 2007; Petrick, 2002). In the context of emotional value, the pleasure and joy that tourists acquire from their cultural tour experiences may increase their satisfaction. In the context of monetary value, tourists perceiving that the money they spent for participating in cultural tours is reasonable and affordable and that the experience is worth the money spent may have higher levels of satisfaction. Lastly, the fact of tourists perceiving that their cultural tour experiences will bring them social value through greater recognition in their social circles may exhibit higher satisfaction levels.

Third, tourists' overall satisfaction with their vacation in the destination has a significant and positive effect on their revisit and recommendation intentions. Thus, tourists who visited Nevşehir by participating in cultural tours and were satisfied with their experiences in the destination may revisit Nevşehir or recommend the cultural tour they had in Nevşehir to their acquaintances. This finding is supported by the literature (Altunel & Erkut, 2015; Bigovic & Prašnikar, 2015; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Lee *et al.*, 2007).

Fourth, the moderating role of tour guide competence in the relationships between the perceived value, overall satisfaction, and behavioral intentions of cultural tourists was examined. In this respect, tour guide competence was shown to have a significant and positive moderating effect on the relationship between the quality value perceptions of cultural tourists in Nevşehir and their satisfaction levels. Thus, the effect of tourists' quality perceptions on their overall satisfaction levels will become determinant as their perceptions of tour guide competence increase. If tourists have positive perceptions that the tour guide has competence in tour management or conveying information about all tangible and intangible cultural values included in the tour program, this state of affairs will facilitate quality value perceptions to become more determinant of satisfaction. For this reason, tour guides' self-development and possession of wide-ranging knowledge, comprehensive information about the historical structures, and familiarity with customs, traditions, and lifestyle of the destination, along with solid communication with visitors and a good command of language, will not only help tourists have a positive tour guide perception but also increase the quality value of the tour program in general.

While the emotional and monetary value perceptions of tourists in the context of the cultural tour they experienced were found to have a significant and positive effect on satisfaction, tour guides' competence was found to have no moderating role in the relationships among these variables. Taking into consideration the fact that the moderating role of tour guide competence in the relationship between the emotional and monetary value perceptions of tourists participating in cultural tours and their overall satisfaction levels was insignificant, it can be asserted that the tourists may have enjoyed, in emotional terms, viewing and experiencing the historical, natural, and geographical elements in the destination rather than focusing on the competence of the tour guide and may have taken into account, in monetary terms, the content of the tour program, the museums, and archaeological sites included in the program.

That the moderating role of tour guide competence was found to be insignificant in the relationship between social value perception and overall satisfaction levels is also significant. Individuals in the social circles of the tourists in question were not familiar with the tour guide's competence and the quality and importance of their guidance. For this reason, the moderating role of the tour guide's competence relationships with social value perceptions and satisfaction of the tourists experiencing a cultural tour could not be observed. In light of the research findings, the existence of the moderating role of tour guide competence depends on the fact that the competence of the tour guide is known, experienced, or appreciated by the social circles of the tourists, or the guiding competence of the tour guide from whom the tourists received service in the cultural tour is recognized and popular in the social circle concerned. The moderating effect of tour guide competence was found to be significant in the relationship between satisfaction and revisit intention, whereas it was found insignificant in the relationship between satisfaction and recommendation intention. It can be expected that the effect of overall satisfaction on tourists' intention to revisit would become more determinant as tourists' perceptions of tour guide competence increase.

5.3 Practical implications

Some practical implications are provided based on the findings of this paper. Increasing the quality value perceptions of tourists has revealed that the museums and archaeological sites in

Cappadocia, which are included within the scope of cultural tours, should be reviewed by travel agencies. It also shows that travel agency employees working in the cultural tour sector should diversify tour programs specific to the Cappadocia region or enrich the tour program content in terms of quality value. Although the quality value perceptions of tourists participating in cultural tours do not have a positive and significant effect on their overall satisfaction levels, the positive moderating role of tour guide competence in the relationship between these variables reveals the importance of the tour guide in cultural tours. Although the quality perceptions of tourists regarding a cultural tour do not have a significant impact, the expression and competence of the tour guide and their quality perceptions were found to have a more significant effect on overall satisfaction levels. Therefore, the quality of services provided by tour guides should be increased so that tourists participating in cultural tours will have high and positive quality value perceptions. In this context, travel agencies have a great responsibility. For example, before the high season starts, the tour guides who will guide cultural tours throughout the season should be selected in advance and trained by experts in the field in line with the vision and mission of the travel agency. Such efforts can focus on the revised tour programs, history, geography, and culture of the destinations. Tour guides should also be trained in communication skills and presentation skills. In addition, they should be paid well by the travel agencies. In particular, tour guides' minimum payment per tour or day should be determined by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism or by the relevant authorities annually.

The monetary, emotional, and social value perceptions of the tourists visiting the Cappadocia region by participating in cultural tours have a positive and significant effect on their overall satisfaction levels. The Cappadocia region has become a very famous and popular destination, especially in recent years, through social media promotion. Therefore, tourists who travel to this region by participating in cultural tours can easily visit the points they have seen through social media. At this point, travel agencies have a great responsibility. In particular, they should be sure to include museums and archaeological sites in their marketing and itineraries, which are of great importance in terms of social value perceptions and are frequently shared via social media. Social media has become the most widely used promotional tool for people, companies, and destinations today. In this context, travel agencies should focus on their promotions on applications such as Instagram and Facebook to promote their cultural tours.

Taking into consideration the rapidly growing competition in the tourism industry, this finding is of great importance for destinations because the satisfaction of every tourist who visits a destination by participating in cultural tours may not necessarily drive them to revisit the same destination. However, upon returning to their permanent places of residence, they share positive remarks about their travels and cultural tours with close circles and acquaintances, which may arouse curiosity or clear listeners' doubts and misbeliefs about cultural tours in the destination. Every tourist satisfied with their past experiences will promote the destination in some way even if they do not revisit the location. Agencies organizing cultural tours must advertise through various media utilized for destination marketing, and recommendations from past visitors might be effective for the decisions of prospective tourists. Third, to strengthen the impact of satisfaction on revisit propensity through the guide's skills, tour guide training programs should ensure that candidates are better equipped through a more concerted focus on foreign languages, effective communication techniques, and information on destinations. In addition, it may be useful to conduct periodic research on the perceptions of tourists to determine the competence of existing tour guides. Since tour guides greatly affect the quality value, they should focus on the critical moments, where tourist experiences take place. For example, the tour guide can organize a small event or ceremony at a point of symbolic importance for the destination. They can enrich the experience with several stimuli that touch different senses (Soliman, 2021). In this way, the experience can be perceived as exceptional.

6. Limitations and future research

Although the current study offers important theoretical and practical implications, it also has several limitations. The research findings revealed that the moderating role of tour guide competence was insignificant in the relationship between the emotional, monetary, and social value perceptions of tourists participating in cultural tours and their overall satisfaction levels. Nevertheless, this effect can be investigated in the context of different types of tourism. Cultural tours, tourists, and tour guides, which are the subjects of the current research, are present in every region of Turkey (and most of the world) and cover a wide area of practice. Moreover, the direct effect of tour guide competence on value, satisfaction, and behavioral intention could be examined in future studies. In this study, Nevşehir, a province characterized by intense tourism activities, impacts both the scope and limitation of the research. This is due to the difficulty of reaching a large number of tour guides and tourists while bearing in mind the cost of the research. Future research may test the present model on different destinations with wide acceptance and recognition in the context of cultural tours.

It may be suggested for future research to cover a broader period and test the model developed in the current study on a sample encompassing both domestic and foreign tourists. Furthermore, a new model to be developed by comparing repeat and first-time tourists may facilitate a deeper understanding of the behavior of tourists in the context of cultural tours. The current study merely discussed the competence of tour guides. Although the analysis of the mediation effect of overall satisfaction was not the main focus of our research, future studies may test a model that incorporates a moderated mediation effect using the same variables or with different variables. Moreover, fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) can be used to collect more detailed results (e.g., Dedeoglu, Boğan, Kucukergin, & Birinci, 2023). Future studies can also utilize a mixed-method research strategy (Khoo-Lattimore, Mura, & Yung, 2019).

The body of literature includes studies in which different tasks or roles of tour guides were discussed and dimensions were determined accordingly. For instance, Zhang and Chow (2004) compiled items from studies in the literature to measure the performance quality of tour guides and performed the measurements using items related to the competency, appearance, language skills, and mediating role of tour guides rather than using subdimensions or role categorization. The fact that these elements were not examined in the current study may be considered another limitation.

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