

The Local's Reactions to Tourists Escaping to Nature After COVID-19: An Assessment on Bungalow Accommodation

COVID-19 Sonrası Doğaya Kaçan Turistlere Yerel Halkın Tepkileri: Bungalov Konaklaması Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme

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ABSTRACT

This study is aimed to determine the reactions of the public towards Bungalows, which have reached significant numbers in the district as a type of accommodation preferred by tourists to escape to nature after the pandemic, and the tourists staying here, and the tourists staying here and to understand the perceived impacts of the bungalow-type accommodation model on the environment, economy, and investment through these reactions in this study. Quantitative research methods were used in the study. A questionnaire was preferred as a data collection tool. Convenience sampling technique was preferred for sampling and during the data collection process, 443 surveys were collected in Sapanca. The study findings reveal that local people support the escaping to nature behavior of tourists, which increased after the pandemic, in terms of their economic contributions, but criticize them for their environmental impacts. The environmental concerns of the locals who do not want more bungalow investments in their regions are greater than their economic gains. While the study measures the reactions of the local people regarding the increasing bungalow-type accommodation, it fills a gap in the literature by supporting the views that there may be reactions at routine times to the developments caused by COVID-19 in tourism.

Keywords: Tourism, Tourists Escaping to Nature, Local's Reactions, COVID-19, Bungalow

Öz

Bu çalışma, COVID-19 pandemisinden sonra doğaya kaçmak isteyen turistlerin tercih ettiği bir konaklama türü olan bungalovların belli bir bölgede artmasıyla birlikte, yerel halkın bu konaklama türüne ve burada kalan turistlere karşı tepkilerini belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışmada nicel araştırma yöntemleri kullanılmıştır. Veri toplama aracı olarak anket tercih edilmiştir. Örneklem için kolayda örneklem tekniği tercih edilmiştir ve veri toplama sürecinde Sapanca'da yerel halktan 443 anket toplanmıştır. Çalışma bulguları, yerel halkın pandemiden sonra artan doğaya kaçış davranışını desteklediğini, bunun ekonomik katkıları açısından olumlu bulunduğunu ancak çevresel etkileri nedeniyle eleştirdiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Yerel halkın bölgelerinde daha fazla bungalow yatırımı istememelerinin arkasındaki çevresel kaygıları, ekonomik kazançlarından daha ağır basmaktadır. Çalışma, yerel halkın artan bungalow tipi konaklamalara karşı tepkilerini ölçerken, COVID-19'un turizm üzerindeki etkileri nedeniyle meydana gelen gelişmelere karşı rutin zamanlarda da tepkilerin olabileceği görüşlerini destekleyerek literatürdeki bir boşluğu doldurmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Turizm, Doğaya Kaçan Turistler, Yerel Tepkiler, COVID-19, Bungalow

INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry, which started to grow rapidly in the 20th century, grew further with the influence of technological developments and reached its peak in the 21st century. As a result of this situation, new tourism movements have emerged that use different supply sources in tourism. In particular, physical activity (entertainment and recreation), nature, culture and technology stand out as supply sources that facilitate new tourism activities (Swarbrooke et al., 2003). It should be noted that in recent years, the supply sources that allow tourism activities to be carried out have diversified greatly and new types of tourism have emerged that can meet almost individual demands (Migas et al., 2008). All these supply-related developments bring about a period in which demand peaks. This increase and the fact that people act with their travel instinct ensure that tourism activities are shaped according to tourism types that include suitable choices for tourists (Arunmozhi & Panneerselvam, 2013; Aminudin & Jamal, 2020).

Although the developments in tourism and especially the demand for tourism are increasing day by day, it should also be said that the demand for the industry has a very sensitive and fragile structure. In this context, it is known that tourism demand has a very flexible structure in a very short time (Song et al., 2010; Untong et al., 2014). Various natural

or human-caused reasons can instantly affect national or international mobility in tourism. Natural disasters, political attitudes, war, terrorism and epidemics are just a few of these reasons. In such cases, changes in tourists' travel plans may negatively affect local economies in the tourism market (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2021). For this reason, countries need to have short, medium and long term plans in order for tourism to be less affected by such negativities. As a matter of fact, the negativities that arise can disappear after a certain period of time. The most important issue here is to put into practice plans that can overcome the periods of negativities in line with strategic goals.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which emerged in China in late 2019 and had a serious impact in 2020, is one of the most recent crises that is in line with the evaluations expressed here. With the pandemic, there have been serious disruptions in tourism (Brough et al., 2021). National or international travel restrictions imposed during the pandemic period due to the virus transmitted through contact and respiration in humans have prevented people from engaging in touristic activities (Neuburger & Egger, 2021; Şengel et al., 2023). In their study, Bahar and İlal (2020) stated that the pandemic caused employment and income losses in the tourism industry due to the unsuitable nature of the tourist product for stocking, and stated that it extended the return period of investments in tourism.

During the COVID-19 period, when tourism was severely damaged, employment decreased significantly due to travel restrictions, and businesses and countries faced serious financial problems. In particular, the shrinking demand has caused the supply capacity of the industry to be far from expectations and lack economic stability for a certain period of time (Erkan & Şengel, 2021). However, as stated before, crisis-related demand contractions in tourism are overcome after a certain period of time. As a matter of fact, UNWTO (2024) supports this information and stated that 1286 million international tourists (overnight visitors) participated in travel movements worldwide in 2023, and this number indicates a 34% proportional increase compared to 2022. Statistics for 2023 on tourist numbers indicate that international tourism has recovered to 88% of pre-pandemic levels in 2023, supported by strong pent-up demand. Total export revenues from tourism (including passenger transportation) has been reached US\$ 1.6 trillion in 2023, equivalent to almost 95% of the US\$ 1.7 trillion recorded in 2019. In addition, preliminary estimates indicate that, with the impact of both domestic and international travel, direct gross domestic product in tourism has been reach 3.3 trillion US dollars in 2023, corresponding to approximately 3% of global GDP, almost equal to the results in 2019.

Although there are many reasons for the optimistic developments observed after the pandemic in tourism, the most critical elements here are the changing demand (tourist) trends after the pandemic and the restructuring of the supply accordingly (Ap et al., 2020; Brouder et al., 2021; Şengel, 2021). Developments after COVID-19 have led to the development of new products in line with changing demand trends or the increase in the importance of some existing products (Beylakov et al., 2020). In his study, Durgun (2021) emphasizes that there will be changes in the behavior of tourists after the pandemic and that different products will begin to gain importance in tourism activities in the supply-demand relationship in the tourism sector. It has been stated that touristic activities will increase, especially in quieter environments rather than crowded environments. While some tourists returned to their old habits in the post-pandemic period, some tourists began to search for new products suitable for social and physical distance. The quests arising from social and physical distance have accelerated tourists' escape to nature, and tourists have participated in tourism activities by taking advantage of individualized accommodation opportunities in natural areas (Zhu & Deng, 2020; Şengel et al., 2020; Mugaunia et al., 2021; Stone et al., 2021; Vaishar & Stastna, 2022). On the one hand, accommodation types such as camping and caravans, where tourists stay with their own means, are becoming more common, on the other hand, bungalow-type accommodation is becoming more common for tourists who do not have such opportunities (King et al., 2021). This study examines Sapanca, a district destination, within the theoretical framework expressed here. It is aimed to determine the reactions of the public towards Bungalows, which have reached significant numbers in the district as a type of accommodation preferred by tourists to escape to nature after the pandemic, and the tourists staying here and the tourists staying here and to understand the perceived impacts of the bungalow-type accommodation model on the environment, economy, and investment through these reactions in this study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Nowadays, people focus on alternative tourism activities rather than mass tourism. The basis of tourists' preference for destinations where alternative tourism activities are concentrated lies in their motivations such as their desire to obtain information about natural, cultural and traditional life, their desire to interact with the local people and witness their lives (Ötügen, 2010). Among these alternative types, nature-based Tourism is culturally and ecologically sensitive. Nature-based tourism is based on the use of natural resources and economic elements of tourism as a model in the development of natural areas (Luzar et al., 1998). This situation also reveals a known basic mistake about nature-based tourism activities. Philosophically, nature-based tourism represents an approach that does not endanger sustainability by using nature, but on the contrary, mediates the emergence of a protective attitude towards nature. Based on this, it can be said that nature tourism is a passion for people's desire to meet the calm and impressive beauties of natural environments and an understanding of protecting these resources.

Nature tourism is not only relaxation and entertainment, but also reveals respect for nature and environmental awareness. Although nature tourism is defined as the pleasure of being in natural areas and observing nature, it also represents protecting nature with effort and understanding and not harming the environment. It contributes to the country in socio-economic and environmental terms (Valentine 1992). In this respect, it represents a mechanism that protects sustainability, not violates it.

Nature-based tourism, which is among the alternative tourism types, means visiting areas where the natural environment and sustainable ecotourism systems are provided and benefiting from cultural and natural elements. With the increase in nature-based tourism activities, new business models and employment types are emerging in destinations rich in such resources. Nature-oriented tourism types are also known by many different names such as eco-tourism, rural tourism, plateau tourism, farm tourism and green tourism. This type of tourism is defined as a type of tourism that likes to be in touch with nature, supports nature-oriented studies, and includes travels to areas with unspoiled cultural attraction (Luzar et al., 1998). Stakeholder cooperation has an important role in achieving success in nature-based tourism.

Since the period when restrictions began due to COVID-19, the tourism sector has almost come to a halt and has become one of the most damaged sectors. Özdemir (2020) determined in his study that after the epidemic, tourists will tend to engage in nature-related tourism types. It has been emphasized that there will be an increase in demand in alternative tourism types such as ecotourism, plateau tourism and rural tourism, and it has also been stated that interest in small-scale accommodation businesses will increase in accommodation preferences. As a matter of fact, in the years when the effects of the pandemic continued, it was observed that tourists took escape in nature and preferred small-scale businesses in nature, supporting this view (King et al., 2021; Sánchez-Sánchez, & Sánchez-Sánchez, 2022). It can be said that factors such as hygiene and social distance have a determining role in these changing attitudes and behaviors of tourists (Kılıç et al., 2020). In the 2-3 years since the effects of the pandemic began to be seen, the preferability of daily tours, entertainment-themed products and large-scale accommodation establishments where sharing is intense has decreased. People have turned towards nature and turned to accommodation options that enable rural tourism activities

It is seen that after COVID-19, people abandon themselves to nature in order to get away from crowded environments or to avoid the anxiety and stress that crowds may cause. Thus, nature-related tourism activities, which increased their impact after the pandemic, became one of the leading behaviors of people to participate in tourism types where they can feel safe in terms of health. The study conducted by Çavuşoğlu and Kolbakır (2023) shows that the main factors that push individuals to participate in nature-based tourism in the post-pandemic period are factors such as relaxation, meeting with nature, getting away from crowded environments, seeking innovation and reducing possible risk factors.

With the pandemic, it is seen that in addition to the types of tourism in which people are in touch with nature, accommodation structures with an isolated life in nature and minimal social relations have also come to the fore. As

people's participation in nature tourism increases, new employment opportunities have been created and economic impacts have emerged in this field. Accommodation models and recreational activities in natural environments have also provided diversity. One of the most important of these accommodation facilities is bungalows. However, the history of bungalow accommodation operations is older. With the pandemic, there has been a significant increase in their numbers and a serious cluster has emerged in some regions that were relatively more isolated and in touch with nature, both to protect themselves from the pandemic and to be closer to nature. As a matter of fact, Ötügen (2010) states in his study that bungalow type accommodation dates back to ancient times. He states that these are elements of attraction in the region and contribute to the development of the destination. These facilities also play a role in the interaction between local people and tourists and provide both economic and social benefits to the local people. It helps tourists to relax by spending time in nature and to follow the flora and fauna closely.

One of the district destinations where bungalow accommodation is concentrated due to the pandemic is Sapanca. It can even be said that this concentration has an international character rather than a national level. It is estimated that officially thousands and unofficially tens of thousands of bungalow facilities serve in the district, which has a small surface area. There are many problems, especially in unregistered facilities, in service quality and security (risks such as fire, etc.) (Yıldırgan & Batman, 2022). There are a number of studies carried out jointly by NGOs and local governments in the district to correct the current unregistered structure. It is thought that this situation will fulfill an important function for a sustainable environment and social reconciliation.

The increase in bungalow facilities in Sapanca paves the way for a certain tourist density in the district in almost every period of the year, especially in the summer months and public holidays. Naturally, there is a process in which Sapanca is affected by this situation. In parallel, (Yıldırgan and Taşcıoğlu, 2023) observed in their studies that there is an excessive growth in Sapanca's bungalow supply, which may pose a risk for the natural environment of the district. However, he emphasized that bungalow operators have a certain awareness about sustainable tourism and the environment and that they apply various methods on issues such as waste management, energy saving and recycling. However, it should be said that these positive works were largely carried out by officially registered bungalows.

Methodology and Data Collection Tool

In Sapanca district (Sakarya/Turkey), which is one of the important symbols of tourists' escape to nature after COVID-19, the bungalow type accommodation model increases tourists' interest in the natural environment and stands out as a preferable type of accommodation. However, despite all well-intentioned and optimistic developments, local people may have positive or negative reactions to the increasing bungalow type accommodation in the district. In the period after the pandemic, the reactions of the local people to this development, which has increased in Sapanca and directed tourism in the destination, has an important place within the scope of tourism activities. The reactions of local people towards shaping the natural environment create an interaction between tourists and tourism businesses. While the study measures the reactions of the local people in Sapanca regarding the increasing bungalow-type accommodation, it fills a gap in the literature by supporting the views that there may be reactions at routine times to the developments caused by COVID-19 in tourism. Quantitative research methods were used in the study. A questionnaire was preferred as a data collection tool.

Characteristics of the Questionnaire Used

The questionnaire used for the study consists of three parts. While the first part consists of questions that provide descriptive information about the participants, the second part consists of questions that reveal whether the participants are interested in tourism or are affected by tourism developments in the district. The third section contains statements measuring the reactions to the increase in bungalow facilities in the district. The statements in the third part of the questionnaire were prepared according to the 5-point Likert technique. The reactions of the local people were received in the form of answers graded in the range of (1) Strongly Disagree - (5) Strongly Agree. The scale used

in the research was taken from the study used by Zengin (2017) and his colleagues, and expressions related to general tourism were adapted to be suitable for bungalow type accommodation.

Population, Sample and Data Collection Process

Questionnaire data was collected over a three-month period between October 25, 2023 and January 25, 2024. The research population, which data will be collected, is the local people of Sapanca. Convenience sampling technique was preferred for sampling and it was not aimed to reach a number of participants of 384 or more, which is the required sample size for the infinite population. During the data collection process, 443 questionnaires were collected. Since the questionnaires were collected face to face and in a controlled manner, all of the questionnaires were used in the analysis process, as there were no missing or incorrect questionnaires. First, the skewness and kurtosis values were examined for the normality condition of the data, and since these values were in the range of -2/+2, analyzes were carried out through parametric tests (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

Analyses Used in the Study

Since the questionnaire used in the study was used for similar research problems in previous periods, it was assumed that the scale met the validity condition. For data reliability, the Cronbach Alpha value was checked and this value was found to be 0.838 for 16 statements in the scale. Since this value is greater than 0.700, it can be expressed as a result that complies with the data reliability condition in social sciences (Coşkun, et al., 2019). Finally, frequency analysis, explanatory factor analysis and independent simple t-test analyzes were used to obtain the study findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings regarding the demographic characteristics of the participants in the study show that the majority of male participants (63.2%). It is understood from Table 1 that the participants have a balanced distribution in terms of age, but there are more young participants than other age categories. In terms of education, higher education constitutes the majority (54.0%). Regarding the average monthly income, it can be said that the participants are concentrated below 40 thousand TL (80.8%). There is a balanced distribution between those who live for a short time and those who live for a long time in Sapanca. In professions, it is seen that the other category (housewife, retiree and student) is predominant (39.5%). Since a significant part of the data was collected face to face from center of Sapanca district, it is thought that the current results were formed in this way.

Table 1. Demographic information of the participants

Demographic Variable	n	%
Gender?	--	--
Female	163	36,8
Male	280	63,2
Age?	--	--
30 years and below	189	42,6
31-45 years	127	28,7
46 years and above	127	28,7
Education?	--	--
Primary education	116	26,1
secondary education	88	19,9
High education	239	54,0
Monthly Income (Turkish Lira?)		
20.000 Turkish Liras and below	231	52,1
20.001-40.000 Turkish Liras	127	28,7
40.001 Turkish Liras and above	85	19,2
Residence Period in Sapanca?		
5 years and below	192	43,3
6-10 years	62	14,0
11 years and above	189	42,7
Job?		
Public Employee	64	14,4
Private Sector Employee	100	22,6
Small business	104	23,5
Other	175	39,5

Descriptive information about the participants' interest in tourism is given in Table 2. Most of the participants (54%) state that they are related to tourism. It was observed that the majority of the participants considered bungalow type accommodation important for the development of regional tourism. There is a balanced distribution in terms of personal contribution to possible developments in regional tourism. Approximately 70% of the participants think that the development of bungalow type accommodation in the Sapanca region will not harm the region. However, the majority of the participants (83.1%) think that the environmental damage that this situation will cause will have a negative impact on regional tourism.

Table 2. Demographic information of the participants

Demographic Variable	n	%
Gender?	--	--
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male	280	63,2
Age?	--	--
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The expressions with the highest and lowest frequencies in the scale measuring public reactions in the research are given in Table 3. In order to prevent the findings from creating too much information confusion, three expressions with the highest and lowest frequency have been included in the table. The expressions with the highest frequency are " In my region, the bungalow type accommodation model is developing without a plan." (3.81), " I think that the developments in the bungalow type accommodation model have made a significant contribution to the regional economy." (3.78) and " The development of the bungalow type accommodation model in my region diversifies the local economy." (3,74). The locals have been thanked that bungalow-type accommodation, which is one of the most symbolic results of escaping to nature after the pandemic in Sapanca, provides economic contributions to the district. However, they think that the construction of this type of accommodation has developed very unplanned.

Table 3. Reactions of local's

Highest Frequencies (high to low)			Lowest Frequencies (low to high)		
Expressions	Mean	Std. Dev.	Expressions	Mean	Std. Dev.
In my region, the bungalow type accommodation model is developing without a plan.	3,81	1,25	I think more bungalow type accommodation models are needed to further develop tourism in the region.	2,58	1,43
I think that the developments in the bungalow type accommodation model have made a significant contribution to the regional economy.	3,78	1,22	I think that there are no necessary measures to protect the natural environment in the development of the bungalow type accommodation model.	2,70	2,33
The development of the bungalow type accommodation model in my region diversifies the local economy.	3,74	1,19	The bungalow type accommodation model does not give investors enough say in tourism.	2,97	,98

The expressions with the lowest frequency are “I think more bungalow type accommodation models are needed to further develop tourism in the region.” (2,58) “I think that there are no necessary measures to protect the natural environment in the development of the bungalow type accommodation model.” (2,70) and “The bungalow type accommodation model does not give investors enough say in tourism.” (2,97). Despite all the economic gains, the people do not want bungalow type accommodation to become more common in the district.

Table 4. Explanatory factor analysis and dimensions

<i>ECONOMIC GAIN</i>	Expl. Var.	Cr. Alpha	Mean	Std. Dev.	Factor Load.
	28,948	0,880	3,535	0.935	
The development of the bungalow type accommodation model in my region diversifies the local economy.					0.825
I think that the developments in the bungalow type accommodation model have made a significant contribution to the regional economy.					0.816
The bungalow type accommodation model creates new markets for our region.					0.789
The people of the region should benefit materially and morally from the development of the bungalow type accommodation model.					0.756
I like the bungalow type accommodation model as it is a new source of income for the local people in our area.					0.750
In my opinion, bungalow type accommodation establishments in our region should employ a significant portion of their employees from the workforce in our region.					0.727
I think that one of the most important factors for tourism continuity in my region is the bungalow type accommodation model.					0.625
<i>ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT</i>	Expl. Var.	Cr. Alpha	Mean	Std. Dev.	Factor Load
	17,127	0,717	3,379	0,823	
In my opinion, the development of the bungalow type accommodation model is not sensitive enough to the natural environment and natural values.					0.765
The developing bungalow type accommodation model in the region is harming the natural environment.					0.752
Policies related to the development of the bungalow type accommodation model have a role in the degradation of the natural environment.					0.655
In my region, the bungalow type accommodation model is developing without a plan.					0.601
The lack of zoning plans is the biggest factor preventing the development of the bungalow type accommodation model.					0.585
<i>INVESTMENT</i>	Expl. Var.	Cr. Alpha	Mean	Std. Dev.	Factor Load
	9,012	0,692	2,985	0,791	
It does not be given Bungalow investors enough say on tourism-related issues.					0.688
I think more bungalow type accommodation models are needed to further develop tourism in the region.					0.642
Bungalow type accommodation model investors should participate in decision-making processes regarding tourism in the region.					0.502

Principal Components Analysis with Varimax Rotation: Total Variance Explained: 55.088%; Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Sample Size: .851%; Bartlett Test of Sphericity (0.00): p<0.05; df. 105; Chi-Square: 2259.010 Evaluation Range ([1] Strongly Disagree – [5] Strongly Agree for All Dimensions)

Before variance tests were performed on the collected data, Explanatory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed to narrow down the expressions in the scale and make evaluations on the dimensions. Firstly, Varimax Rotated Components values were examined in order to test the suitability of the structure and scale for factor analysis. As a result of the analysis (Table 4), the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) sample size was determined as 0.851 (approximately 85%), while the Bartlett Test of Sphericity was determined as (p=0.000<0.05). Considering the reference values of social sciences on the subject (KMO≥0.700), these values show that the scale used in the study is suitable for factor analysis in the context of the data obtained. As a result of EFA on the scale measuring the reactions of local's, the total explained variance for the 3 dimensions obtained was determined to be 55%. For social sciences, variance values over 50% indicate that the result is at expected levels.

As a result of the EFA, the public's reactions to the bungalow type accommodation model created a 3-dimensional structure called economic gain, environmental impact and investment. The variances explained according to the dimensions formed are 28.948%, 17.127% and 9.012%, respectively. These values are at acceptable levels for multidimensional structures. Since compliance with statistical rules is an important criterion, 1 expression (I think that the necessary measures were not taken to protect the natural environment in the development of the bungalow type accommodation model) was disabled while performing EFA. The factor loadings of the expressions that make up the dimensions take values ranging from 0.825 to 0.502. Table 4 also includes values such as c. alpha, mean and standard deviation for the dimensions resulting from the factor analysis. All results show that the scale is suitable for factor analysis.

Table 5. Local's reactions according to interest in tourism

Dimensions	Variables	n	\bar{X}	t	p
Economic Gain	Yes	204	3,524	-0,234	0,815
	No	239	3,545		
Environmental Impact	Yes	204	3,282	-2,309	0,021*
	No	239	3,462		
Investment	Yes	204	3,083	2,433	0,015*
	No	239	2,902		

* Significant at p<0.05 level.

The reactions of local people towards the bungalow type accommodation model, which increased according to their involvement in tourism, were measured (Table 5). The fact that Sapanca people are interested in tourism affects their reactions to the bungalow type accommodation model. The bungalows received varying reactions to the local's according to involvement in tourism on the dimensions of environmental impact ($p=0.021<0.05$) and investment ($p=0.015<0.05$). There was no such difference for the economic return ($p=0.815>0.05$) dimension. According to means, participants who are not related to tourism or are not tourism professionals ($\bar{x}=3.4628$) think that bungalows have more environmental impacts. In addition, it further supports the bungalow investments of participants who are interested in tourism or tourism professionals ($\bar{x}=3.0833$). This result is possible. Because almost all of the people who define themselves as related to tourism among the data collected have bungalow facilities themselves or a relative of theirs.

Table 6. Local's reactions according to the idea of bungalows to improve district tourism

Dimensions	Variables	n	\bar{X}	t	p
Economic Gain	Yes	415	3,5652	2,580	0,010*
	No	28	3,0969		
Environmental Impact	Yes	415	3,3812	0,149	0,881
	No	28	3,3571		
Investment	Yes	415	2,9912	0,439	0,664
	No	28	2,9048		

* Significant at $p<0.05$ level.

The results of the differentiation of local people's reactions to the development of bungalow facilities according to the idea of bungalows to develop district tourism are given in Table 6. Of the three dimensions in the study, there are only differing results on the economic return dimension ($p=0.010<0.05$). According to means, those who think that Bungalows Improve District Tourism state that these developments have significant contributions to the district in terms of economic return ($\bar{x}=3.5652$). Sapanca local people think that bungalows make valuable contributions to the district, especially due to the economic returns they provide.

Table 7. Local's reactions according to the personal benefits provided to the district people

Dimensions	Variables	n	\bar{X}	t	p
Economic Gain	Yes	218	3,7064	3,841	0,000*
	No	225	3,3702		
Environmental Impact	Yes	218	3,2697	-2,787	0,006*
	No	225	3,4862		
Investment	Yes	218	3,1376	4,032	0,000*
	No	225	2,8385		

* Significant at $p<0.05$ level.

The reactions to the development of bungalow facilities in Sapanca, based on the benefits it provides to individual participants, reveal interesting results (Table 7). Findings differ according to the individual benefits provided by this new process to the participants for all dimensions of economic return ($p=0.000<0.05$), environmental impact ($p=0.006<0.05$), and investment ($p=0.000<0.05$). According to means, those who individually benefit from bungalow evolution state that bungalows provide economic return to the district ($\bar{x}=3.7064$), while they also express a positive opinion about bungalow investments ($\bar{x}=3.1376$), despite the current density in the region. Those who do not benefit individually react more ($\bar{x}=3.4862$) due to the environmental effects caused by bungalows in the district.

Table 8. Local's reactions according to their thoughts that the new accommodation type

Dimensions	Variables	n	\bar{X}	t	p
Economic Gain	Yes	136	3,2931	-3,684	0,000*
	No	307	3,6431		
Environmental Impact	Yes	136	3,5471	2,870	0,004*
	No	307	3,3055		
Investment	Yes	136	2,8211	-2,940	0,003*
	No	307	3,3055		

The last evaluations in the findings are related to the differences in the reactions of local people to the increase in bungalow type accommodation in Sapanca district according to their opinion that bungalows will harm the district (Table 8). Each of the dimensions of economic return ($p=0.000<0.05$), environmental impact ($p=0.004<0.05$) and investment ($p=0.003<0.05$) differed according to the participants' opinion that the bungalows would harm the district. According to the means, participants who think that bungalows do not harm the district have a more positive opinion ($\bar{x}=3.6431$) regarding the economic returns provided by bungalows. Similarly, they made evaluations supporting bungalow investments ($\bar{x}=3.0586$). Those who think that bungalows harm the district gave higher levels of reactions regarding the environmental impacts they cause.

The study revealed the reactions of local people to bungalow-type accommodation, which exists within tourism activities (Cohen, 1982) but has become very widespread as a result of tourists escaping to nature after COVID-19 (Anggapradja et al., 2020), from a district perspective. The reactions of local people concentrated on criteria such as economic return, environmental impacts and investment. Wong (1998) stated in his study that negative environmental consequences may occur during the construction of nature-based accommodation facilities that are not properly managed. While discussing the issue, Chang (2010) stated that the relevant bungalow facilities would provide significant economic gains to the region where they are developed. Badavi and Molchanov (2020) reveal that the development of bungalow investments as small accommodation businesses continues and that they should be supported, especially in the context of rural development. He thinks that this study conducted specifically in Sapanca is similar to the literature studies mentioned here, and that the developments in the bungalow type accommodation model of the district people make a significant contribution to the regional economy and contribute significantly to rural development by diversifying the local economy.

Despite these optimistic results regarding economic gains, the bungalow type accommodation model has developed very quickly and unplanned in the region. It has been revealed that the necessary precautions were not taken to protect the natural environment during the construction of some of these structures. Lawrence-Zúñiga (2010) states that bungalows are structures that need to be protected, but their construction process should also be within the plan. This situation creates a significant disadvantage in the context of sustainable tourism goals. In this context, it can be said that it is unnecessary to build more bungalows after investments reach a certain level.

The level of awareness about tourism and the status of benefiting from tourism emerged as the dynamics that determine the reactions to the development of bungalows in Sapanca. Individuals who benefit from tourism or are tourism professionals have developed positive reactions to the economic returns that bungalows provide and to support new investments. Locals who think that bungalows provide personal benefit or do not harm the district showed similar results to tourism professionals. Apart from these, the public has developed reactions in the context of the environmental impacts caused by the developments. As a matter of fact, the literature states that local's react especially when environmental and social sustainability is endangered (Reed et al., 2006; Tanguay et al., 2010; Kim & Lee, 2022; Gautam, 2023). In this context, it can be said that the results of the study are in parallel with the literature.

CONCLUSIONS

This research highlights how the shifting consumption habits of tourists post-pandemic, particularly their inclination towards nature-based escapes, have elicited responses from local populations. Similar observations are echoed in Kamata's (2022) work. Consequently, destination decision-makers may consider adopting strategies to manage stakeholders' newfound penchant for nature retreats effectively. As noted by Wilkinson et al. (2023), fostering stakeholder solidarity and implementing controlled monitoring are crucial for shaping the future of tourism. Such initiatives not only aid in rural development but also warrant acknowledgment and action.

Tourists' escape to nature after the pandemic brings significant economic gains for small and natural destinations. It is seen that many economic parameters, especially income and employment, stand out as important gains in these destinations. Studies in the literature support these factors, which are considered as practical implications of this study (McNeely, 2021; Lu et al., 2021). The results of this study also revealed how important it is to gain individual income from tourism and the situation caused by the increasing number of bungalows. King et al. (2021) states that the gains of the economy are an important element to be discussed in this context. In this context, a framework can be established to ensure that the majority of the population maximizes their economic gains, which its obtain by tourism.

The most important negative consequence of tourists' intense preference for nature after the pandemic is that nature and many natural elements have been negatively affected. Especially when a tourist facility built in nature is built without environmental protection awareness, it can bring about serious problems regarding the sustainability of natural resources in the region. Considering the fact that the negative reactions of the local people are generally concentrated on this issue, destinations should carry out such developments in a controlled manner and taking into account certain planning. Zengin et al. (2023)'s study makes an important determination in solving this problem. In their study, where they state that there is a serious connection between overtourism and COVID-19, they recommend the use of demarketing as a strategy to combat overtourism and ensure sustainability. Neglecting such issues and unplanned situations may cause the bad consequences of overdeveloped tourism activities to be more noticeable. For small destinations, a process may emerge in which the social, environmental and economic sustainability of tourism resources will be endangered. All destination stakeholders need to develop positive attitudes and behaviors regarding this issue.

Limitations and future studies

Research data were collected face to face in the center/bazaar of the district destination. This situation created a limitation in reaching people living in villages in the more rural areas of the sample. In addition, during the quantitative data collection process, it was observed that people showed an attitude towards expressing their feelings and thoughts outside of the questionnaire. Future research can re-examine the subject with quantitative studies conducted with a sample spread throughout the district and with a certain systematicity, or with qualitative studies that will obtain in-depth data on the subject. Additionally, the study can be repeated in destinations in different countries with similar characteristics.

Credit author statement

All authors have contributed equally. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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