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The Perception of Cultural Authenticity, Destination Attachment, and Support for Cultural Heritage Tourism Development by Local People: The Moderator Role of Cultural Sustainability

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Abstract: This study was prepared to examine the effects of cultural authenticity perception by local people on destination attachment and intention to support cultural heritage tourism. The study also investigated the moderator role of cultural sustainability perception. It was conducted in Manavgat, one of the most popular touristic destinations in Turkey. According to the study results, a positive effect was detected between the perception of cultural authenticity, destination attachment, and the intention to support cultural heritage tourism. In addition, the results indicate the existence of a moderator role of cultural sustainability perception in the relationship between destination loyalty and intention to support cultural heritage tourism. As a consequence of the findings obtained, a number of theoretical and practical suggestions have been presented to sector representatives, destination management organizations, and academics working in the literature.

Keywords: cultural authenticity; destination attachment; cultural sustainability; support for tourism development; local people; heritage tourism

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1. Introduction

In the literature, culture is defined as all of the values developed by societies through time, transferred to the next generations, and formed for human beings and the region they live in [1]. Humanity has spread culture through migration, trade, and art over the course of history and contributed to the formation of different cultures [2]. With the emergence of tourism, the speed of cultural expansion increases, and people make various trips to experience the cultures they are curious about [3]. Cultural tourism, which is among the recent tourism trends, has emerged as a field that allows interaction with adventure, culture, history, archeology, and local people. In this context, the conceptualization of cultural tourism has been performed in various studies in the literature [3–5].

The definition of cultural tourism was described by Richards [6] in his article "The Scope and Importance of Cultural Tourism". In the article, Richards defined cultural tourism as "travel performed partly or wholly with the purpose of increasing appreciation

for a cultural source". In 1996, Stebbins [7] defined cultural tourism as "special interest tourism involves seeking and engaging in activities related to aesthetics, intellectual, new and cultural encounters". The World Tourism Organization [8] provided a functional definition of cultural tourism: "The tourism-related pursuits of individuals when it comes to cultural attractions like heritage sites, artistic and cultural performances, as well as art and drama". In another definition, cultural tourism is defined as tourism oriented towards the cultural heritage of the destination or region visited.

Cultural heritage used in the concept of cultural tourism is the combination of lifestyles, including traditions, practices, places, objects, and artistic expressions developed by societies and transferred from one generation to the next [9]. Furthermore, cultural heritage is categorized in the literature into three types: constructed landscape (buildings and cityscapes), habitat (rural landscapes and beaches), and artifacts (books and documents) [10]. Cultural heritage tourism is an alternative type of tourism that offers the opportunity to learn about the history of societies and experience their historical processes. Re-creating tourism experiences that are perceived as authentic representations of historical people, places, and periods is of critical importance for cultural heritage tourism. In this respect, the concept of authenticity constitutes the central theme of cultural heritage tourism [11,12].

Authenticity can primarily be expressed in terms of being real or true and the authenticity of the perceived experience [13–15]. Therefore, in its simplest form, the literature suggests that heritage tourism, in order to be truly authentic, must take place in its authentic historical context or location, with original objects and works of art [16]. Providing a genuine cultural heritage experience has been regarded as a significant tool for the development of tourism destinations because it can draw in tourists and generate tourism revenue for local communities [17]. It is known that the destinations with maximum business objectives for the protection and development of authentic cultural heritage will facilitate the sustainability of culture and tradition during the development process [17]. The concept of "sustainability in tourism" has been accepted at many international standards as an approach that should bring some benefits to all forms of tourism [18]. As Butler [19] and Wall [20] state in the recent definitions of tourism sustainability, the sustainability of the tourism industry relies upon the sustainability of the environment, cultures, and societies.

Cultural heritage tourism destinations, in particular, are considered to be an area that requires serious attention in terms of sustainability and conservation since they are based on historical, cultural, and traditional values [21]. The formation of local, regional, and national identities could potentially have a significant impact on the conservation and sustainability of cultural heritage tourism, and, in addition, the sense of attachment of local people, especially those residing in areas close to heritage sites, undertakes a crucial mission in the development and transfer of the region to the future [22]. It was stated that increasing the attachment of local people could increase awareness regarding the protection and development of heritage [23].

In this sense, this study has examined whether the perception of cultural authenticity influences destination attachment or not. In addition, the influence of destination attachment on supporting tourism development is among the topics that have been widely studied in the literature [24–26]. In this study, unlike the previous studies, the moderator role of cultural sustainability perception in the effect of destination attachment on the intention of providing support for tourism development has been analyzed. Although there is a limited number of studies determining the effects of cultural identity on tourists [27], the effects of perceived cultural sustainability by local people on these variables remain unclear. As a consequence, this research aims to fill the relevant gap in the literature by examining the extent to which perceived cultural sustainability moderates the relationship between destination attachment and support for cultural heritage tourism development.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Theoretical Framework

The research hypotheses proposed in the study can be explained by the social exchange theory, which examines the connection between tourism development and local people. Social exchange theory proposes that residents of a region are more inclined to endorse the development of tourism if they think that the perceived benefits of tourism are greater than the costs, otherwise, they are unwilling to support tourism development [26,28]. The social exchange theory is one of the predominant theories employed to comprehend the local community's support concerning tourism development [24,29]. For example, Gursoy et al. [24] showed that the perceptions of local people about corporate social responsibility practices in hotels contribute to local people's support for tourism development through their contentment with the community. In this context, it can be argued that the local people's perception of cultural authenticity will support the development of cultural heritage tourism, provided that it is sustainable.

2.1.1. The Relationship between Cultural Authenticity and Attachment

The concept of authenticity has been examined by many people since MacCannell [16] examined it in their tourism studies. MacCannell [16] defined cultural authenticity as the expression of the characteristics belonging to the local culture to tourists with a view to creating an attractive experience for visitors. However, authenticity has been influenced by various perspectives. There are three perspectives of authenticity: objectivism (what is authentic and original), constructivism (socially and individually constructed), and existentialism (reflection without being authentic and real) [30]. The objectivist perspective of tourism authenticity is an objective representation of destinations that emphasizes the creation of authenticity of tourist experiences [31]. A sense of objective authenticity forms the ground for the creation of a tourism experience and is expected to evoke emotions in tourists [32]. Tourists who are under the influence of their emotions aroused by landscapes or activities will have a stronger commitment to cultural tourism. It is stated in studies that with the strengthening of commitment, belonging to the culture is also improved [23].

In contrast, constructive authenticity states that overall experience is based on beliefs and culture and is therefore socially constructed [33]. Constructive authenticity implies that tourists can still find pleasure in genuine experiences, even though they are aware that the environment is artificial and not entirely natural [33]. Bryce et al. [34] focused on the quality of tourists' experiences and indicated that constructive authenticity can have an impact on tourists' feelings of loyalty, which, in turn, may affect their sense of belonging.

Existential authenticity is the alternative to objective authenticity. Existential authenticity is human-centered [35] and delineates the individual experience centered on self-worth. In other words, the existential authenticity concept is articulated as a unique existential state where individuals are honest with themselves. It is both an empathetic orientation and an experiential outcome [36]. It demands that tourists gain the ability to critically examine everyday occurrences and develop a new perspective, increasing their sensitivity to new experiences. Consequently, a sense of authenticity emerges, but beyond empathy, existential understanding depends on a desire or willingness for knowledge and learning, as tourists need to comprehend the empirical reality of what they are interacting with [35]. Earlier literature has suggested that tourists can experience existential authenticity when they participate in touristic activities; they feel more real, comfortable, and independent than they normally do, and their interactions with the environment seem more real and sincere [30]. Lin [37] indicated that travelers value existential authenticity more than object-related authenticity, which indicates that existential authenticity plays a more important role in tourism. While the perception of cultural authenticity is often evaluated from the tourists' perspective, it is believed that the cultural authenticity of the local people may also play a role in shaping destination identities.

As for the destination attachment concept, Altman and Low [38] stated that it is a cognitive or emotional connection that a tourist establishes as a result of their feelings,

knowledge, beliefs, and behaviors regarding the destination. In another definition, it was defined as the emotional attachment of an individual to a particular environment [39]. According to another definition, it refers to the emotional connection of tourists with a destination [40]. Halpenny [41] explained destination attachment as an emotional, cognitive, and functional connection to a destination. Kyle and Chick [42] stated in their research that the destinations that have cultural authenticity affect the attachment to that region.

At this juncture, the research hypotheses developed are as follows.

H1. *Cultural authenticity has a positive effect on destination attachment.*

H1a. *Objective authenticity has a positive effect on destination attachment.*

H1b. *Constructive authenticity has a positive effect on destination attachment.*

H1c. *Existential authenticity has a positive effect on destination attachment.*

2.1.2. The Connection between Destination Attachment and Cultural Heritage Tourism Development

The concept of attachment is defined in the literature as a personal, intimate connection to a place and the feeling of being at home [43] and has been widely studied in tourism literature [44–47]. It plays an important role in tourist destinations, in which places, environments, and interactions are shared with visitors. Andereck et al. [48] found a strong local awareness concerning the needs of residents for cultural heritage development. In another study, it was stated that the sense of attachment and belonging of residents living in touristic areas is a direct factor in the development of that region. Furthermore, they stated that this situation increased the value and desirability of the destination and was seen as an important determinant for the spread of culture [49]. In a different perspective, Chen and Chen [50] noted that the absence of communities residing near cultural heritage sites or the low number of people living in these sites may have a negative influence on the development of the site. The hypothesis developed based on these studies is presented as follows.

H2. *Destination attachment has a positive effect on the support for cultural heritage tourism development.*

2.1.3. The Role of Destination Attachment and Cultural Sustainability in Cultural Heritage Tourism Development

The management of tourism destinations based on sustainable principles has been indicated in the literature to enhance the long-term quality of life for local people, as well as increase their responsibilities and conservation awareness for the destination [51–53]. Cultural heritage tourism, compared to other tourism types, is particularly concerned with sustainability due to the presence of cultural assets, facilities, and artifacts within it. For cultural heritage tourism to develop and be passed on to future generations, it is necessary to plan and organize the area and region with sustainable policies. Cultural tourism links traditional tourism goods such as accommodation, dining, and recreation with cultural heritage goods such as visiting museums, cultural performances, gallery exhibitions, and more [1]. These assets are highly sensitive from a social and cultural perspective because they reflect the culture and historical heritage of the local people. The studies in the literature have indicated that the sense of attachment of the communities living in the region will affect their attitudes towards the area [44,48,49]. Tourism managers have argued that the efforts to promote tourist satisfaction for the sake of tourism development could harm both tangible and intangible traditional values and hinder their preservation for the future [23]. Rasoolimanesh et al. [54] stated that the development of identity and a sense of attachment in the communities with cultural heritage can foster stronger feelings of responsibility and ownership for the area, which, in turn, will support long-

term conservation that future generations will experience. Payne [55] noted that cultural heritage tourism contributes to the socio-economic well-being of the destination and that the desire of communities to sustain this well-being contributes to the sustainability of the area as well.

In this respect, the following hypothesis has been developed.

H3. *The perception of cultural sustainability has a moderator role in the effect of destination attachment on support for cultural heritage tourism development.*

The hypothetical research model developed in accordance with the research objective can be found in Figure 1.

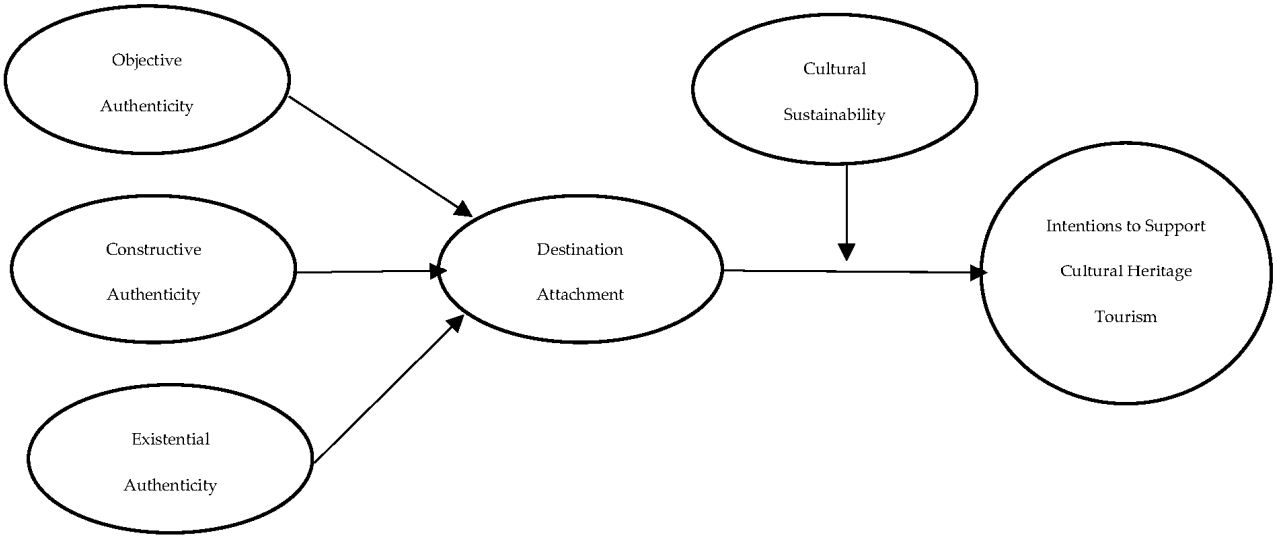


Figure 1. Hypothetical research model.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Instrument

The purpose of the current research is to measure the effect of cultural authenticity perception by local people on destination attachment and the effect of destination attachment on the intention to support cultural heritage tourism development. In addition, the moderator role of cultural sustainability perception in the effect of destination attachment on the intention to support cultural heritage tourism development has been examined. To test the hypothetical research model created based on the study's objectives, one of the quantitative methods, the survey technique, has been preferred. The main reason for choosing the survey technique is its ability to reach a broad audience and sample the population. In the research, all variables of the model to be tested were created through a comprehensive literature review. Each variable contains more than two items and has been rated using a 5-point Likert scale.

Fifteen items related to cultural authenticity, which was measured in three distinct dimensions as Objective Authenticity (6), Constructive Authenticity (6), and Existential Authenticity (3), were adapted from the study of Nguyen and Cheung [56]. The items to measure destination attachment were determined with the help of previously used scales. For the mentioned variable, the study of Hallak, Assaker, and Lee [57], which consisted of 4 items, was preferred. In order to evaluate the intention to support cultural heritage tourism development, a 6-item scale created by Megeirhi et al. [58] was used. And, finally, cultural sustainability was measured with a 5-item scale created by Negrusha et al. [59]. All the scales preferred in the research questionnaire are originally in English. A pilot study was carried out with 38 residents to detect possible problems in the scales. Due to the pilot

study, it was ascertained that there were no language or style problems concerning the comprehensibility of the scales. Moreover, it was found that all the Cronbach's alpha values of the scales were above 0.70.

3.2. Research Area, Sampling and Data Collection

The study was carried out in the Manavgat district of Antalya, which is one of the most popular destinations in Türkiye. There are three main reasons why Manavgat was chosen as the target region. The first one is the number of facilities and visitors. It is observed that the number of domestic and foreign tourists who visited the accommodation establishments in Antalya in 2022 reached 23,087,209, and, in Manavgat, this number amounted to 6,592,226 [60]. Manavgat is the town of Antalya with the highest bed capacity with 183,706 beds in 529 accommodation facilities. In this respect, it is evident that nearly 30% of the total Antalya bed capacity is within the borders of Manavgat [61]. The calculations made as a consequence of these statistics point to the high number of tourists visiting Manavgat. The second reason is that Manavgat is home to many cultural, natural, and historical attractions. In addition to its 64 km length of sandy beaches, the Manavgat River, which is one of the most steadily flowing rivers in Türkiye and divides the city in two, the Manavgat Waterfall on this river, the Alara Creek marking the city's border with Alanya, the Köprülü Canyon National Park, and the Titreyengöl-Sorgun Ecotourism region are some of the natural beauties of Manavgat. Apart from these, Selge, Seleukia, and Side Ancient Cities, which can be considered as important historical and cultural heritage of the city, attract many tourist groups. Finally, Manavgat is the largest district of Antalya with a population of over 240 thousand and a surface area of 2283 km^2. As a matter of fact, there is a population growth rate of 6% every year related to tourism [62]. In Figure 2, a map showing the natural and cultural heritage sites of Manavgat has been presented.



Figure 2. Natural and Cultural Heritage Sites/Manavgat.

In order to ensure the representation of the target population in the research, it was determined that a minimum sample size of 384 was required with a 95% confidence level [63]. The data were collected through face-to-face interviews using the convenience sampling method by a team of surveyors who were familiar with the Manavgat region

and consisted of three individuals. June and July 2023, when the tourism season is at its peak, were chosen as the data collection period. It was ensured that the sampled group for data collection consisted of adults aged 18 and above residing in Manavgat. On the dates specified, the three most crowded locations in Manavgat city center were determined (Sarılar, Side, and Yayla locations), and the questionnaires were collected by three researchers in total, one researcher in each location. Due to the heightened risk of common method bias in social science research, a cover page was designed for each questionnaire form, including details such as "All information gathered during the research will be kept confidential", "There are no correct or incorrect responses in this questionnaire", and "Participation is voluntary". This was performed to increase the response rate [64]. Consequently, a total of 433 surveys were collected on the specified dates. Once the incomplete and incorrectly completed questionnaires were eliminated, the research analyses were conducted using 419 survey forms.

3.3. Data Analysis

The quantitative data obtained from the research were initially transferred to the SPSS program for analysis. Firstly, Mahalanobis distance was examined to identify outliers. Accordingly, 7 questionnaires were excluded from the analysis since they contained outliers (Mahalanobis' D (28) > 0.001). Subsequently, in order to address the issue of multicollinearity, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and tolerance values were calculated. Upon reviewing the obtained results, it was observed that the VIF value was below 5, and the tolerance value was above 0.10. Therefore, it was concluded that there were no multicollinearity problems since these values fell within the accepted range [65]. Furthermore, when preparing the data set for structural equation modeling, a check for normality distribution was performed. The values for kurtosis and skewness were found to be within the range of −1.5 to +1.5. Consequently, it was determined that the data followed a normal distribution [66].

SPSS AMOS program was used to test the hypothetical research model created based on the research purpose. In this context, a two-step approach recommended in the literature was preferred [67]. According to this approach, initially, confirmatory factor analysis was applied to the data, and factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha, and construct reliability coefficients, along with discriminant validities, were calculated. Following factor analysis, due to low factor loadings, two items from the objective authenticity dimension of the cultural authenticity scale and three items from the intention to support cultural heritage tourism development scale were not included in the analysis. Subsequently, after confirmatory factor analysis, path analysis was conducted for hypothesis testing. To measure the moderator effect mentioned in the hypotheses, Process Macro (Model 1) [68] was utilized.

4. Findings

4.1. Demographic Profile

The demographic characteristics of the participants have been presented in Table 1. When the table is analyzed, it can be seen that 52.4% of the participants are male. Nearly half of the respondents (46.8%) are in the 35–44 age range, and 62.4% of them are single. When their educational status is considered, it is observed that 36.9% of the participants have an associate degree, and 49.3% have a bachelor's degree. Regarding the length of their stay in Manavgat, 40.5% have been living there for 1–5 years, and 34% have been living there for 6–10 years. This situation can be explained by the leap that Manavgat has made in tourism in recent years. When the ten-year data were analyzed, it was seen that the number of tourists visiting Manavgat increased from 2.5 million tourists [69] to 6.5 million tourists [70]. The studies in the literature indicate that tourism investments in and around Antalya have created various employment opportunities in many fields, especially tourism, and, as a consequence, there has been an intense migration to Antalya and its surroundings [71]. In the light of the data obtained, it can be stated that there has been an increased interest in living in Manavgat destination over the last five years. Finally, when the income status of the residents has been evaluated, it is understood

that 27.9% of them have an income between TL 30,001 and TL 40,000 (approximately USD 1110–USD 1480).

Table 1. Description of the Participants (n = 412).

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	216	52.4
Female	196	47.6
Age		
18–24	45	10.9
25–34	108	26.2
35–44	193	46.8
45–54	55	13.3
55 or more	11	2.7
Marial Status		
Married	155	37.6
Single	257	62.4
Education Status		
Primary education	11	2.7
Secondary education	28	6.8
Associate degree	152	36.9
Undergraduate	203	49.3
Postgraduate	18	4.4
Length of stay in the destination		
Less than 1 year	23	5.6
1–5 years	167	40.5
6–10 years	140	34.0
11–15 years	50	12.1
16 years and more	32	7.8
Income		
11.500 TL and less	77	18.7
11.501–20.000 TL	93	22.6
20.001–30.000 TL	79	19.2
30.001–40.000 TL	115	27.9
40.001 TL and more	48	11.7

4.2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Concerning the Structural Model

In line with the research objectives, it is recommended to apply confirmatory factor analysis before testing the hypotheses [67]. Accordingly, confirmatory factor analysis was first applied in order to test whether the collected data supported the model. Hair et al. [72] stated that the factor loadings for all statements in a construct should be a minimum of 0.50, but, ideally, it should be at least 0.70. In this research, the criterion of "having a factor loading of at least 0.70" was adopted for a better model fit and construct validity. As a consequence of the evaluation, five statements in total were removed from the scale: two statements in the objective authenticity dimension ("cultural assets are authentic"; "cultural values have been verified by historians") and three statements in the intentions to support cultural heritage tourism dimension ("I support tourism and desire it to become a significant aspect of my community", "destination management organizations should take necessary steps to support tourism", and "I would like to participate voluntarily in promotional activities related to cultural heritage tourism") had factor loadings below 0.70. The remaining 25 statements had factor loadings ranging from 0.810 to 0.978, and the calculated t-values were significant at the level of $p \leq 0.001$. Additionally, it was found that the fit indices of the data were at an acceptable level (χ^2/df = 2.900, NFI = 0.962, RFI = 0.956, IFI = 0.975, TLI = 0.971, RMSEA = 0.068, RMR = 0.034, and CFI = 0.975). In

light of the results obtained, it was decided that the data collected within the framework of the six-factor structure supported the structural model.

In the context of reliability, Cronbach's alpha and construct reliability values were considered. For the accepted reliability level, Cronbach's alpha (CA) and construct reliability (CR) coefficients in each construct should be at least 0.70. The closer the coefficient is to 1, the higher the reliability [73]. As a result of the analysis, it was determined that Cronbach's alpha coefficient was a minimum of 0.931, and the construct reliability coefficient was a minimum of 0.943. Based on these results, it can be stated that the scale meets the reliability criteria for all constructs.

As a part of assessing convergent validity, average variance extracted (AVE) values were analyzed. AVE values are suggested to be a minimum of 0.50 for each construct [72]. As a consequence of the analysis, it was determined that the minimum AVE values were 0.771. The findings of the study indicate that all values have satisfactory results within the context of confirmatory factor analysis. The results can be found in Table 2.

Table 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results regarding the Structural Model.

Factors/Items	Standard Loading	t-Value	R^2	CR	AVE	CA
Perceived Authenticity						
Objective Authenticity				0.965	0.888	0.962
Cultural assets represent the history of Manavgat.	0.902	36.38 *	0.81			
Cultural values have been preserved from the actual period.	0.936	43.32 *	0.87			
Cultural values have a documented history.	0.964	51.51 *	0.92			
Cultural assets are in an old and ancient structure.	0.967		0.73			
Constructive Authenticity				0.982	0.922	0.976
Old structures reflect traces from the local culture's life.	0.958	41.83 *	0.91			
Old structures are still used for their original purpose.	0.967	43.91 *	0.93			
Old structures represent the identity of the local culture.	0.955	41.31 *	0.91			
Old structures explain local lifestyles.	0.978	46.55 *	0.95			
Old structures are consistent with the current state of the local culture.	0.969	44.18 *	0.93			
Old buildings provide an opportunity to experience the local culture.	0.936		0.87			
Existential Authenticity				0.966	0.905	0.959
Cultural structures provide a calm and peaceful atmosphere.	0.958		0.79			
Cultural assets offer an enjoyable experience.	0.966	42.14 *	0.93			
Cultural values help me relax in my life.	0.930	41.55 *	0.86			
Destination Attachment				0.980	0.930	0.973
Many things in this destination remind me of my past.	0.959	49.38 *	0.91			
I cannot imagine living in a different city because I would have to give up too much of myself.	0.960	49.68 *	0.92			
I have had so many experiences here that I have become very attached to this city.	0.976	56.34 *	0.85			
I know this destination so well that I can easily recognize any photograph of it.	0.963		0.84			
Intentions to support cultural heritage tourism				0.952	0.879	0.969
It is important to develop plans to preserve historical sites and manage the growth of tourism.	0.953		0.90			
I support the promotion of various historical tourist attractions in the destination.	0.882	33.29 *	0.76			
Tourists should be provided with cultural information to enhance their experiences.	0.976	51.30 *	0.85			
Cultural Sustainability				0.943	0.771	0.931
The promotion of local culture and identity should be encouraged.	0.845		0.71			
The cultural life of the city should be fostered.	0.810	20.58 *	0.65			
The educational and cultural development of the community should be ensured.	0.966	28.24 *	0.93			
The foreign language skills of the region's residents should be improved, and the cultural heritage should be promoted by the local community.	0.882	23.83 *	0.77			
The emergence/development of a sense of pride in "being from Manavgat" should be encouraged.	0.882	23.84 *	0.77			

* $p < 0.001$.

Table 3 explores the discriminant validity of the model. Based on the results of the table, it was found that the root square of AVE (Average Variance Extracted) for all constructs was found to be higher than all values in the relevant row. In the direction of these results, it was determined that the construct provided discriminant validity [74].

Table 3. Discriminant Validity Results.

Factor	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. OA	0.942 [a]					
2. CA	0.922	0.960 [a]				
3. EA	0.847	0.820	0.951 [a]			
4. DA	0.840	0.859	0.877	0.964 [a]		
5. ISCHT	0.900	0.827	0.777	0.898	0.938 [a]	
6. CS	0.223	0.201	0.199	0.187	0.210	0.878 [a]

OA: Objective Authenticity, CA: Constructive Authenticity, EA: Existential Authenticity, DA: Destination Attachment, ISCHT: Intentions to Support Cultural Heritage Tourism, and CS: Cultural Sustainability. [a] Square root of the AVE.

4.3. Hypothesis Testing

After the confirmatory factor analysis, path analysis was conducted. It was determined that the fit indices obtained in the path analysis were within acceptable limits (χ^2/df = 2.689, NFI = 0.966, RFI = 0.960, IFI = 0.975, TLI = 0.970, RMSEA = 0.079, RMR = 0.033, and CFI = 0.975). According to these results, objective authenticity perception positively influences destination attachment (β = 0.25, t = 6.949, and $p < 0.001$). Similarly, constructive authenticity has a strong and positive effect on destination attachment (β = 0.81, t = 13.920, and $p < 0.001$). On the other hand, existential authenticity does not have any statistically significant effect on destination attachment. Therefore, whereas H1a and H1b hypotheses have been accepted, H1c has been rejected. Consequently, destination attachment has a strong and positive effect on the intention to support the development of cultural heritage tourism (β = 0.90, t = 27.751, and $p < 0.001$). Concerning this outcome, H2 has been validated.

The results of the regression model developed to examine the moderator effect determined within the scope of the research hypothesis can be found in Table 4. Upon evaluating the findings in the table, it has been revealed that the moderator role of cultural sustainability perception is significant in the effect of destination attachment on the intention to support cultural heritage tourism (β = 0.04, 95% CI [0.002, 0.085], and $p < 0.05$). Upon further analysis of the specifics regarding the moderator variable, the effect of destination attachment on the intention to support cultural heritage tourism is lower for residents with a low perception of cultural sustainability (β = 0.73 and 95% CI [0.686, 0.791]) and higher for those with a high perception (β = 0.81 and 95% CI [0.762, 0.864]). In the light of the result obtained, H3 has been supported. In Figure 3, the coefficients of the structural model have been presented.

Table 4. Moderated Effect Results.

					Intentions to Support Cultural Heritage Tourism	
					β	**Confidence Interval**
H3						Min. Max.
Destination Attachment (X)					0.69 *	0.613 0.781
Cultural Sustainability (W)					0.18 *	0.311 0.491
X.W (Interaction)					0.04 **	0.002 0.085
R^2					0.71	
Cultural Sustainability	*β*	S.E.	t	LLCI	ULCI	
Low:	0.73 *	0.03	27.91	0.686	0.791	
Middle:	0.75 *	0.02	34.73	0.712	0.798	
High:	0.81 *	0.03	31.24	0.762	0.864	

* $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.05$.

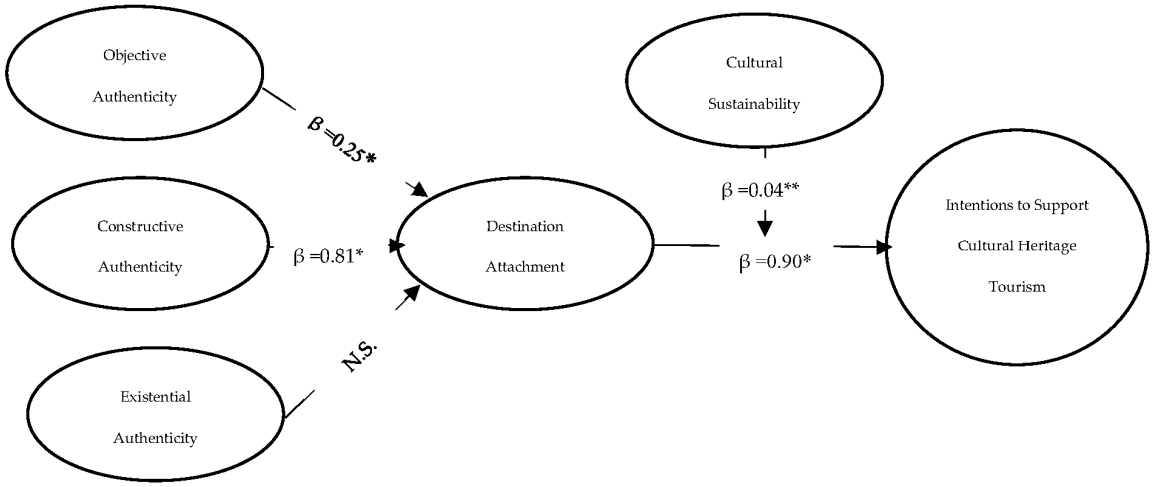


Figure 3. Structural Model Coefficients. * $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.05$; N.S. No significant.

Figure 4 displays the results on the details of the moderator effect.

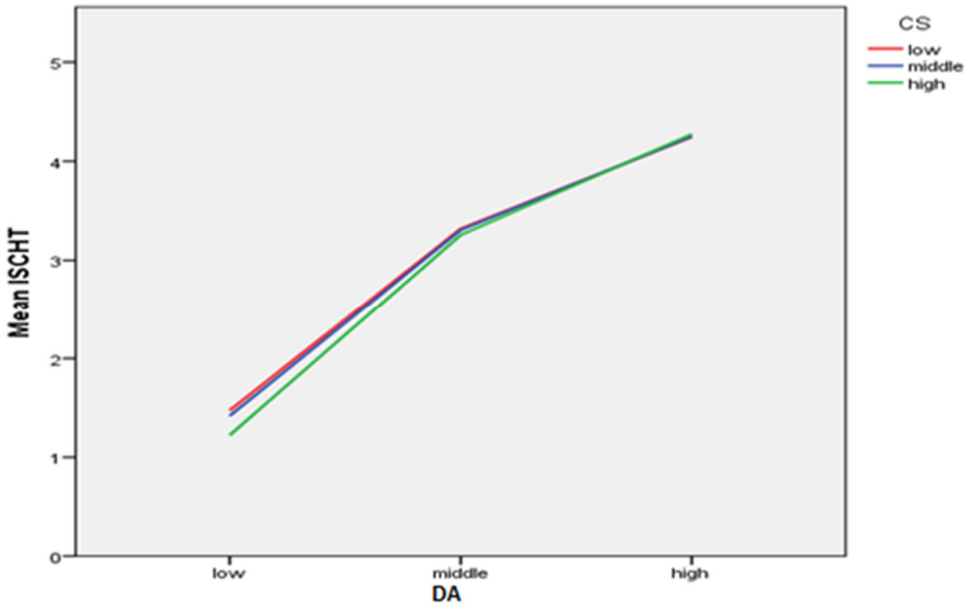


Figure 4. CS moderator to DA-ISCHT (CS: Cultural Sustainability; DA: Destination Attachment; and ISCHT: Intentions to Support Cultural Heritage Tourism).

The acceptance and rejection statuses of the research hypotheses have been presented in Table 5.

Table 5. The Acceptance/Rejection Status of Hypothesis Testing.

Hypothesis No	Hypothesis			Acceptance/Rejection
H1a	Objective Authenticity	→	Destination Attachment	Accepted
H1b	Constructive Authenticity	→	Destination Attachment	Accepted
H1c	Existential Authenticity	→	Destination Attachment	Rejected
H2	Destination Attachment	→	Support for Cultural Heritage Tourism Development	Accepted
H3	Destination Attachment	→	Support for Cultural Heritage Tourism Development * Cultural Sustainability	Accepted

*: The interaction term between two variables.

5. Discussion

Despite the existence of studies that analyze cultural authenticity from the perspective of tourists [31,32], there are very few studies in the literature that examine the cultural authenticity perception from the perspective of local people. Nevertheless, the perception of cultural authenticity by local people will have several ramifications regarding tourism.

A number of studies [30,75,76] emphasize the importance of cultural tourism destinations having the capacity to offer objective, constructive, and existential authenticity. In Kutty's study [77], cultural authenticity is discussed as a factor that can support economic and social equality, strengthen the sustainability of a region or city, and provide a competitive advantage. As suggested by Megeirhi et al. [58], a result-oriented communication plan prepared by trusted local policymakers, cultural site managers, and marketing experts can be effective in garnering the support of the locals, who are an important stakeholder in sustainable cultural heritage tourism management. In the long run, it is thought that such a plan could contribute to the preservation and enhancement of cultural worldviews and authenticity. In the study conducted by Poort et al. [78], the importance of looking at sustainable cultural tourism development from an authenticity perspective is discussed. The studies in the literature indicate that the awareness of local people for conservation will increase with the recognition of cultural values [53]. Moreover, the findings of this study indicate that the destination attachment of local people will enhance with the increase in objective and constructive authenticity. As these two dimensions are associated with the objects themselves [79], it can be argued that the tangible elements of historical buildings increase the destination attachment of local people.

Surprisingly, there is not a significant effect of existential authenticity of local people on destination attachment. This may be due to the fact that existential authenticity is a potential situation that could be mobilized through individual activities. Existential authenticity is an activity-dependent type of authenticity [79]. In this respect, why the relationship with destination attachment has not yielded a significant result can be attributed to the fact that local people do not spend much time in cultural heritage sites. Indeed, existential authenticity connotes the authenticity perception that is activated by touristic events [80]. The results obtained revealed the preferences of local people for different authenticity perceptions and provided valuable practical implications for tourism developers, heritage managers, and other stakeholders from a demand perspective.

Destination attachment is considered as an important antecedent in its effect on the intention to support tourism development [26]. When the results of this study have been analyzed, it is observed that cultural sustainability perception has a moderator role in this relationship. When compared with the findings of this study, it can be stated that cultural authenticity perception is an important antecedent in the formation of destination attachment.

When examining the theoretical contributions of this study, it is important to note that it proposes a model that addresses the relationships between cultural authenticity, destination attachment, the development of cultural heritage tourism, and cultural sustainability within a single framework. The empirical validation of these relationships is a significant aspect of this model. This study identifies the antecedents that play a crucial role in the formation of destination attachment among the local people and in supporting the cultural heritage tourism development. Furthermore, it examines the effects of these antecedents on other variables and highlights the moderator role of cultural sustainability perception in these effects. Cultural sustainability is essential for preserving cultural heritage and diversity. It is also crucial for those who rely on them for their livelihoods and contributes to the health and well-being of the planet. This can also help in the preservation of biological diversity and ecosystems.

6. Implications

The findings of this study provide contributions to not only practical but also theoretical research by aiming to enhance existing knowledge about how residents perceive cultural authenticity, an area that has been inadequately studied. It also provides a valuable

opportunity to consider the role of residents in the management and planning of cultural tourism destinations. On one hand, it sheds light on the key constraints and challenges, and, on the other hand, it offers implications for future research. Furthermore, the study provides practical and theoretical data that can be valuable for public and private organizations interested in improving destination attachment and the development of cultural heritage tourism. It offers data that can guide future improvements in these areas.

Based on the results above, this study concludes that cultural authenticity should be actively used for the development of destination attachment and cultural heritage tourism and that cultural sustainability plays a moderating role in this regard.

Based on the findings and discussions, some suggestions are presented for the development of destination attachment and cultural heritage tourism in the case of Manavgat. Similar destinations are expected to benefit from these data and implications.

6.1. Theoretical Implications

First, the appropriateness of the analysis results of the research scale used as a measurement tool for the structural model indicates that the scale can also be used in future studies. The major implications of this study for future academic research lie in understanding how cultural authenticity as perceived by local people has a direct influence on destination attachment and intention to support cultural heritage tourism development. The theoretical implications of the subject can be outlined as follows. Firstly, whereas many studies explore authenticity, attachment, and cultural heritage tourism from the perspective of tourists, this study focuses on the perception of these concepts by local people. Thus, this broadens the perspective of research and offers new insights for a comprehensive and detailed understanding of the subject from both perspectives. The local people living in a tourism destination are an integral part of that destination, and understanding their perceptions of tourism activities in the area [81] is crucial for the development of cultural heritage tourism and ensuring its sustainability [82]. In this context, the present study has sought the opinions of the local people. Secondly, in the literature, most studies have primarily focused on the effects of authenticity and destination attachment on loyalty and commitment. However, very few have investigated the relationship between authenticity and sustainable cultural tourism [78]. Therefore, this study is expected to make a significant contribution to the literature.

6.2. Practical Implications

The findings firstly suggest that to gain long-term competitive advantage and ensure the sustainability of cultural heritage tourism, it is necessary and of great importance to continue to preserve the cultural authenticity that will yield beneficial outcomes. In the study, it has been found that the effect of destination attachment on the intention to support cultural heritage tourism is lower in residents with a low perception of cultural sustainability, whereas it is higher in individuals with a high perception of cultural sustainability. There seems to be a direct relationship between the two situations. As the local people's perception of cultural sustainability increases, it is thought that the influence of destination attachment on supporting cultural heritage will also increase. To achieve this, it is important for the local community to:

- Preserve traditional knowledge and wisdom.
- Encourage and use traditional expressions in the spoken language.
- Protect and promote traditional artistic elements specific to the region, which play a significant role in expressing cultural identities.
- Additionally, it is essential for the locals to be willing to preserve traditions. One way to achieve this is by facilitating intergenerational learning and passing on traditional knowledge and skills. This can be performed through methods such as creating photographic records or digital archives.

It is essential to secure the support of the state and other institutions concerning cultural sustainability. Laws and regulations aimed at preserving cultural heritage can be

made more functional, and policies that encourage the utilization of traditional knowledge and practices should be formulated. In the development of cultural heritage tourism, travel businesses should also prioritize the emphasis on cultural authenticity. This approach significantly influences the formation of destination attachment.

Constructive authenticity is an element that directly affects loyalty [83]. Thus, governments and operators should use authenticity in the construction of attractions in tourist destinations to ensure that tourists and locals understand that the environment in Manavgat and similar tourist destinations are real as an inherent feature. This practice will positively affect the creation of a sense of attachment to the destination. Regarding structural authenticity, which considers authenticity construction as a social process, tourism authorities should include references to places, symbols, and nature that can be visited by the local people in promotional campaigns. Moreover, there should be an emphasis on practices that increase interactions between locals and tourists. This will not only enhance intercultural interactions but also contribute positively to the development of cultural heritage tourism. Furthermore, in order to strengthen the existential authenticity perception of local people, it may be suggested to organize various activities and make announcements that will attract residents to cultural heritage sites. Thus, local people will discover the privileges of being a part of cultural heritage while living in it.

Ensuring cultural sustainability can be challenging when people are not aware of its relevance to their lives. Therefore, it is recommended to raise awareness among the local population about the aspects of cultural sustainability that relate to their livelihoods. In this regard, educating the locals about the importance of cultural sustainability and why it matters, as well as supporting and financing organizations and companies that promote cultural sustainability, can contribute to positive outcomes. Awareness of cultural sustainability should also be raised through the media and other channels.

Academicians studying about cultural tourism should also focus on cultural authenticity and destination attachment perceptions, investigate the current situation of other destinations, and give importance to cultural sustainability perceptions regarding the destination.

Whenever a new touristic product or service is to be developed, the local people ought to be involved in the process and how they perceive their own culture from the perspective of authenticity needs to be understood. This is also a method of protecting sustainable development in social and cultural terms for touristic destinations [78].

6.3. Limitations and Future Research

The limitations of this study are primarily related to its measurements. In particular, variables such as cultural authenticity and destination attachment are rather abstract concepts. The measurements used in the study may not represent these concepts in the best possible way. As the data were obtained through a self-report method, the validity of the responses is closely related to the honesty and self-awareness of the participants. Therefore, there may be some possible measurement errors. This situation may impose a limitation on the objectivity of the data. Additionally, this study employed a quantitative method, which can be considered as another limitation. Future research could be designed with qualitative or mixed methods to further develop the knowledge in this field. Furthermore, the study is limited to assessing the effect of cultural authenticity on destination attachment and cultural heritage tourism development in addition to examining the moderating role of cultural sustainability in this interaction. Nevertheless, there are other factors that can contribute to destination attachment and cultural heritage tourism development. Future research could consider these additional elements. In future studies, exploring various factors beyond cultural authenticity can yield new results. Additionally, the research model can be expanded to include other moderator variables along with cultural sustainability. In addition, it should be noted that the research sample in this study is specific to Manavgat, and the results may be influenced by the unique characteristics of this locality. The sample of the study has been limited to the Manavgat region due to the fact that it is home to a rich

cultural heritage resource, has not lost its authentic part and cultural values, and has been able to preserve them until today. In addition, the fact that it is a destination with a high level of tourism development in general, as well as providing time, cost, and accessibility advantages, also contributed to this limitation. This situation limits the generalization of the findings of the study. Conducting comprehensive research across different countries and regions, allowing for comparisons, is necessary to generalize the findings. Another limitation of the study is the sample size. It would be beneficial to evaluate the results over a numerically larger sample in future studies.

7. Conclusions

The principal conclusions of this study could be summarized as follows: firstly, this study reveals that cultural authenticity can positively support destination attachment and cultural heritage tourism development, and it demonstrates the significance of the moderator role of cultural sustainability perception in this support. The findings show that "objective authenticity" and "constructive authenticity" perceptions, which constitute cultural authenticity, positively affect destination attachment. In other words, it can be concluded that the participants with a higher perception of objective and structural authenticity have a higher level of destination attachment. Su and Wall [23] stated that with the increase in the attachment of local people to a destination, awareness regarding the protection and development of cultural heritage will also increase. In this sense, with the development of authenticity perception in local people, it may be possible to develop awareness towards the formation of attitudes and behaviors for the protection of cultural heritage. As stated in Rickly Boyd's [84] study, objective authenticity primarily focuses on the authenticity of objects, artifacts, structures, and other similar things. Likewise, the local people who participated in the study live in close proximity to many real historical and cultural artifacts in Manavgat district. Therefore, it is possible to evaluate Manavgat as a destination that encompasses historical and cultural features as unique through an objective approach. Accordingly, it can be stated that the objective authenticity perceptions of the participants are higher. Nevertheless, the influence of existential authenticity on destination attachment is not statistically significant. In line with this, Bryce et al. [34] emphasized in their study that constructive authenticity could influence attachment, and Kolar and Zabkar [32], in their examination of the authenticity concept in connection with cultural tourism, stated that the strengthening of the objective reality sense would enhance commitment and, consequently, the development of cultural attachment. In the study carried out by Domínguez-Quintero et al. [85], it is suggested that the objective dimension of authenticity positively influences the existential dimension, and, in the context of cultural tourism, a high perception of objective authenticity is also considered to have a positive effect on existential authenticity perception. Approaching the situation from this perspective, based on the data obtained as a result of the study that there is no significant relationship between existential authenticity and destination attachment, it can be assumed that objective authenticity, which has a positive relationship with destination attachment, can also positively affect the existential authenticity perception of local people participating in the study. Existential authenticity, on the other hand, requires individuals to understand the reality of what they interact with, necessitating a desire for knowledge and learning. The lack of any impact of existential authenticity on the perception of destination attachment among the local community participants in the study may be attributed to a lack of interest in or demand for knowledge and learning related to existential authenticity. In addition, MacCannel [16] stated that people can become estranged from their environment over time and have the misconception that authenticity is outside their own region. For this reason, based on the possibility that the local people participating in the study may be partially alienated from the authenticity of the region they live in, it may have been concluded that their existential authenticity perceptions do not have an effect on their attachment to the destination. Regarding existential authenticity, Dağ et al. [86] consider authenticity as being in contact with one's own self, knowing oneself and one's own identity, and then living in

harmony with their own self. In this respect, it can be stated that the lack of a significant effect between existential authenticity perception and destination attachment may be due to the fact that the local people participating in the study do not evaluate the historical and cultural objects in the region with objective reality due to the nature of existential authenticity but perceive them in a relative way by focusing on their own experience.

Another result obtained indicates that destination attachment supports cultural heritage tourism development. The effect of destination attachment on supporting tourism development has been examined in various studies [24–26]. As Lak et al. [22] also pointed out, the sense of attachment of local people, especially those residing in the areas near cultural heritage sites, plays a significant role in the region's development. Furthermore, the study by Su and Wall [23] suggests that an increase in local people's attachment can enhance awareness of the preservation and development of cultural heritage. Finally, it was concluded that the perceived cultural authenticity by the local community has an effect on destination attachment, and this effect is moderated by cultural sustainability, with the perception of cultural sustainability being lower among participants, leading to a lower impact of destination attachment on the intention to support cultural heritage tourism development. This result suggests that raising the perception of cultural sustainability can influence destination attachment, potentially leading to the formation of an intention to support the development of cultural heritage tourism. In general, cultural authenticity has an influence on the development of cultural heritage tourism. This aligns with the studies emphasizing that authenticity constitutes a key theme in cultural heritage tourism [11,12]. Moreover, testing these relationships with the current study provides a better understanding of how the variables used interact with the perception of local people regarding a cultural heritage tourism destination.

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