



## ETHICAL PRACTICES AND TOURISTS' BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS: THE CASE OF EUROPEAN POTENTIAL TOURISTS

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### ABSTRACT

Recently, ethical tourism has been a research interest but not yet a mature marketing tool for tourist destinations. A decade ago, scholars began studying the effectiveness of ethical concerns in tourism as perceived by private organizations. This study examines tourists' behavioural intentions based on four dimensions of ethical tourism (tourists' rights, socio-economic concerns, environmental concerns, and cultural concerns). The study sample comprises 567 respondents, considered potential tourists from five European countries (Germany, the UK, France, Spain, and Italy). The study results showed a strong positive effect of tourists' rights on destination choice and willingness to pay more. For the socio-economic, environmental, and cultural concerns, moderate effects on the destination choice and willingness to pay more were found, except for the effect of environmental concerns on the willingness to pay more. Theoretical and managerial implications were suggested based on the study findings.

### المخلص

في الآونة الأخيرة ، كانت السياحة الأخلاقية موضع اهتمام بحثي ولكنها ليست أداة تسويق ناضجة للوجهات السياحية. قبل عقد من الزمان ، بدأ العلماء في دراسة فعالية الاهتمامات الأخلاقية في السياحة كما تدرکها المنظمات الخاصة. تحاول هذه الدراسة فحص النوايا السلوكية للسياح بناءً على أربعة أبعاد للسياحة الأخلاقية (حقوق السياح ، الاهتمامات الاجتماعية والاقتصادية ، الاهتمامات البيئية والاهتمامات الثقافية). تتألف عينة الدراسة من ٥٦٧ مشاركاً ، يعتبرون سائحين محتملين من خمس دول أوروبية (ألمانيا والمملكة المتحدة وفرنسا وإسبانيا وإيطاليا). أظهرت نتائج الدراسة تأثيراً إيجابياً قوياً لحقوق السائحين على اختيار الوجهة والاستعداد لدفع المزيد. بالنسبة للمخاوف الاجتماعية والاقتصادية والبيئية والثقافية ، تم العثور على تأثير معتدل على اختيار الوجهة والاستعداد لدفع المزيد باستثناء تأثير المخاوف البيئية على الرغبة في دفع المزيد. تم اقتراح الآثار النظرية والإدارية بناءً على نتائج الدراسة.

**KEYWORDS**

Marketing; Destination; Ethical Tourism.

**الكلمات الدالة**

تسويق؛ وجهة؛ السياحة الأخلاقية.

**1. INTRODUCTION:**

With the stunning technological development, ethical considerations in business gained attention a decade ago by research. The significant role of ethical business practices as described by (Sharma, 2019): "We live in a time when the products of our private and governmental organizations have become so technologically powerful that they can have almost instantaneous national or global effects. The size of these organizations and the reach of these technologies mean that ethical failures can have worldwide consequences". That's why understanding organizational ethics and culture is so crucial now. Ethical considerations for tourism as a business have been a hot topic in recent years through many publications. Competition between tourism service providers commonly depends mainly on price, quality of services, and timing. In any case, these standards create parity between competitors while maintaining the opportunity for exclusivity in applying responsible tourism standards, which should be an essential component of their products (George, 2017). This interest has risen due to the increasing numbers of tourist arrivals and the variety of tourist activities. Today's tourism is described as a social practice related to people's lives, local communities, economies, and a diverse range of settings. Tourism practices are linked to several economic, social, cultural, and environmental impacts that represent sustainability. In their book "The Ethics of Tourism: Critical and Applied Perspectives", (Lovelock & Lovelock, 2013) emphasized the dimensions of sustainability as a comprehensive rule of ethical tourism. They addressed travel companies' owners who run tours to remote indigenous communities, saying that the principles of sustainable tourism are needed to optimize the outcomes of the tour, including the socio-cultural aspects, economic rewards, and positive environmental impacts. They also noted the difficulty of a tourist business owner considering how his tours affect future generations in destinations.

In conclusion, they summarized the ethical concerns of the tourism business to include core responsibilities towards indigenous people, customers, and businesses. Accordingly, a comprehensive ethical approach is necessary because the dimensions of sustainable tourism, in many cases, are humane behavior. With a comprehensive approach, tourists should have new thinking when practicing tourism activities. For this to be achievable, they ought to understand the culture of local residents at the destination before the visit begins, the ethical policy of the travel company or any of the tourism service providers, the wages and working conditions of the local employees, and ways of protecting the natural environment (Moufakkir & Leroux, 2014). However, consideration of non-sentient components of the destination is an essential part of the ethical approach. Articles and books on these topics attempt to strike a balance between how people travel, their profits, their pleasure, and their positive contributions to others (local people, other stakeholders, the destination, and the environment) (Inácio, 2018). Ethical tourism studies address topics such as responsible tourism, alternative tourism, mobility and accessibility, poverty alleviation, tourism and indigenous peoples, and environmental concerns. However, tourism and ethics are not just a research interest within tourism studies; in fact, the relationship between the ways people travel and the pleasure from tourism is critical and complicated (Fennell, 2019).

Today's consumers seek ethical considerations to make their purchasing decisions (Weeden, 2002). Hence, this study examines the effect of ethical practices and

concerns on potential tourists' behavioral intentions (destination choice and willingness to spend more) at the destination they plan to visit. Among the many studies on ethical tourism, a few have been conducted on the role of ethical practices in marketing tourist destinations. In addition to the scarcity of studies on this topic, most were limited to travel companies. This would create a gap as many ethical practices, such as environmental protection regulations, go beyond the control of travel companies. Thus, the current study examines the effect of ethical practices by all actors on destination choice and intention to spend more using a developed comprehensive model based on previous empirical studies. In addition to the dimensions of sustainable tourism, tourists' rights are included as a major influential factor in potential tourists' behavior.

## 2. Literature review

### *Concepts of ethical tourism*

Ethical tourism has evolved as a travel concept to the destination where priority is given to ethical issues, including human rights, social injustice, animal welfare, and environmental protection. Ethicalism should address host destinations and tourists to avoid any behavior or activities that may negatively affect ethical concerns (Weeden, 2002). On the other hand, ethical tourism is a term that emerged from some tourism patterns and approaches such as eco-tourism, green tourism, just tourism, soft tourism, pro-poor tourism, and volunteerism. From their names and activities, these patterns will likely present a product that addresses the negative impacts of mass tourism. More recently, these patterns are termed "alternative tourism " and presented in terms of ethical approaches to tourism development. Caruana et al. (2014) links ethical practices in tourism with tourist activities that benefit local residents and reduce the negative impacts of tourism on the natural environment and the sociocultural values of the host destination.

Scholars have a clear consensus that well-planned sustainable tourism is the core of all ethical concerns. In this regard, Kaya (1997), as cited in Erdem et al. (2016), presented an integral model of sustainable tourism ethical concerns. He explained the need to balance five important factors (economic health, well-being of locals, protection of resources, healthy culture, and satisfaction of guests) that all tourism stakeholders need for managerial purposes.

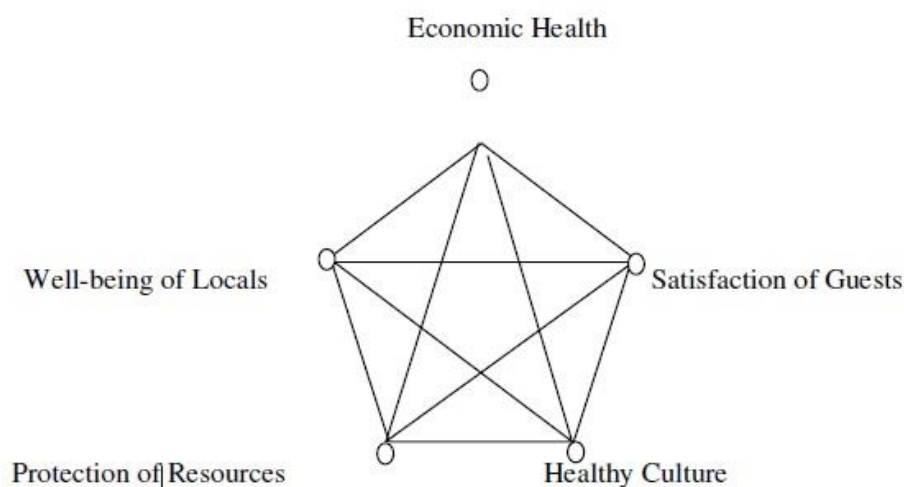


Figure 1: Magic Pentagon of Sustainable Tourism Development (Source: Kaya, 1997)

On the other hand, responsible tourism was carried out in the literature as the base for ethical tourism (Mihalic, 2016; Goodwin & Francis, 2003; d'Amore, 1993).

For this study, the concept encompassing both supply and demand is selected, considering the sustainable development principles to comprehensively determine the ethical practices.

### ***Ethical tourism and tourists' behavioral intentions***

Ethical tourism practices go beyond the main dimensions of sustainability (economic, socio-cultural, and environmental). They are concerned with tourists' responsible behavior and the stakeholders' role in planning based on their moral responsibilities (Weeden, 2002). When empirically examining ethical concerns in host destinations, sustainable development principles and tourism impacts are crucial. The current study examines tourists' behavioral intention (destination choice and willingness to spend more) based on their perception of ethical concerns. In addition to the tourists' rights, the current study divides the ethical practices into factors that form the dimensions of sustainable tourism. These factors are suggested to affect European potential tourists' behavior towards a proposed destination. In addition to destination choice and willingness to pay more, tourists' behavioral intentions could include destination image (Assaker et al., 2011), satisfaction (Mat-Som & Bader-Badarneh, 2011), loyalty towards a destination, including word of mouth and repeat visitation (Žabkar et al., 2010; Beerli & Martín, 2004). These behaviors are appropriate for current or past tourists, while the present study's selection of destination choice and willingness to pay more is because it deals with potential tourists. However, explicit studies that undertake the role of ethical practices as perceived by tourists in the attitudes of tourists are modest in number. For example, Goodwin & Francis (2003) examined tourists' choice and willingness to pay more based on their perception of service quality and socio-economic and environmental concerns, placing the study in the context of marketing campaigns. On the other hand, most studies were less comprehensive in terms of ethical aspects and did not target the consumers as the sample of their studies.

The effect of service quality on tourists' satisfaction, the fulfillment of which is part of a tourists' rights, is widely undertaken from a marketing perspective. However, a few studies on ethical practices have been conducted to examine the role of service quality, as a tourist's right, in marketing a destination. For this topic, other issues should be considered to better interpret tourists' behavioral intentions. These may include the trip value versus money spent (Mat-Som & Badarneh, 2011), mutual respect (Dangi, 2018), integration with local aspects (Priatmoko et al., 2021), liberty of tourists' mobility and ethical formalities at airports and borders (Singh, 2013).

On the other hand, tourism services providers are challenged by the complexity of tourism product. This could be explained by the length of their supply chain such as accommodation suppliers (X. Zhang et al., 2009). The challenge here is to persuade them to prioritize ethical tourism practices. The dissatisfaction of tourists with a holiday occurs when they are cheated in some marketing aspects such as prices, communication, and distribution. For example, dissatisfaction arises when a tourist is promised a hotel room overlooking the ocean, and when the room is located half a kilometer from the beach (Weeden, 2005).

Based on a general review of the literature, most studies on tourism marketing aim to identify the extent to which tourists are satisfied with the quality of service, attractiveness, and prices. Other studies examine factors influencing destination loyalty, such as novelty

seeking and diversity of activities. In all cases, such topics address the demand side and consider the pleasure of tourists. Undertaking tourists' rights as a significant factor besides the sustainable tourism principles is based on the argument that a relaxing experience and reasonable prices are at the top of tourist's priorities ( Goodwin & Francis, 2003; Josephides, 2002). Goodwin & Francis (2003) claimed that rebellious consumers are unwilling to pay for ethically tradable products. They estimate the amount they would pay according to the priority they give to the ethical aspects over the common standards. Based on these arguments, the following two hypotheses were formulated:

***H1: Tourists' rights, needs, and desires significantly affect destination choice.***

***H2: Tourists' rights, needs, and desires have a significant effect on tourists' willingness to pay more.***

Most studies on tourism impacts have been conducted regarding community residents' perceptions and attitudes towards tourism development. However, little attention has been paid to tourists' behavior (e.g., destination choice, expenditure, satisfaction, and loyalty) towards ethical practices at the destination. Many examine the socio-economic benefits such as the ownership of small and medium enterprises, job opportunities with good wages, poverty alleviation, public services' improvement, and involvement in decision making (Gursoy et al., 2002; Mccool & Martin, 1994). In many destinations, especially in developing countries, local staff occupy low-level jobs in tourism enterprises while foreigners occupy high-level positions. Ethically, all stakeholders in public and private sectors must cooperate to empower local staff through training programs to reach senior managerial and technical positions (Altinay et al., 2016). Establishing small and medium-scale enterprises is another ethical practice as a form of local people's empowerment (Suansri, 2003). Giddy & Hoogendoorn (2018) referred to the concept of "ethical dilemmas". This encompasses exclusion, representation, fairness, distributive justice, and other socio-economic concerns. Freire-Medeiros (2009) discussed the commodification issues of poverty. For a tourism business to remain viable, maintaining these conditions is needed. Regarding the socio-economic role in the tourists' behavioral intention, Rahimah et al. (2018) examined the role of social responsibility practiced by the destination in enhancing tourists' emotions. Among the factors of the study, socio-economic ones were considered. They found that all corporate social responsibility practices directly influenced tourists' satisfaction. Ayob et al. (2009) developed a theoretical model of factors influencing tourists' satisfaction, including business ethics. They found that business ethics were more influential on tourists' satisfaction than environmental and marketing practices. As part of the Su & Huang (2019) study, local community support by tourism service providers had a significant positive effect on the tourists' satisfaction and repeat visitation intention. Based on this review, the following two hypotheses were formulated:

***H3: Residents' socio-economic concerns have a significant effect on destination choice.***

***H4: Residents' ethical socio-economic concerns significantly affect tourists' willingness to pay more.***

The natural environment is now a crucial motivation at tourist destinations in terms of attractiveness. However, there is an increasing awareness, especially in developed countries, towards the current environmental degradation that is caused by climate change and other progressive problems. In this regard, destination stakeholders are required to create preserved natural parks, target responsible tourists, adopt water and energy saving

methods, control the number of tourists coming within groups, and regularly assess the environmental impacts of tourism (Cohen, 1978; Payne & Dimanche, 1996).

In terms of the environmental ethics in tourism, the literature has undertaken many practices such as the environmental protection techniques at natural destinations (Haraldsson & Ólafsdóttir, 2018), water and energy saving methods (Parpairi, 2017), physical carrying capacity (Navarro Jurado et al., 2013), and other tourists' responsible behaviors. However, little is known about the effect of pro-environmental tourism on the tourists' behavioral intentions, such as destination choice (Nowacki et al., 2021). Dunlap et al. (2000) analyzed human beliefs about the disruption of the ecological balance with the resulting problems of human growth in the context of the new environmental paradigm. Nowacki et al. (2021) used the theory of planned behavior to study the relationship between tourists' behavior towards environmental concerns and eco-friendly tourism and the social norms regarding responsible behavior towards the environment. The study found a significant effect of environmental beliefs on the respondents' attitude to ecotourism. Mancha & Yoder (2015) developed an environmental framework based on planned behavior theory to predict green behavioral intention. They found that self-defining significantly influences the intention to protect the natural environment. In this regard, Milfont (2012) referred to the importance of value orientations such as post-materialism. Park et al. (2018) modified a theoretical model to examine tourists' decision-making toward pro-environmental tourism. The study showed a significant influence of personal environmental values and beliefs on the respondents' moral obligations and pro-environmental intents. Unlike the socio-economic and cultural principles of sustainable tourism, many studies found that tourists are willing to pay more for the environmental conservation practices of the destination managers (Bookbinder et al., 2016; Wang & Jia, 2012; Lindberg et al., 1996). Based on this review, the following two hypotheses were formulated:

***H5: Ethical, and environmental concerns have a significant effect on destination choice.***

***H6: Ethical and environmental concerns significantly affect tourists' willingness to pay more.***

Similarly, cultural impacts have gained great attention from scholars. Some significant issues in this regard are protecting residents' cultural values (Dai et al., 2021), promoting the cultural heritage (Ismagilova et al., 2015), avoiding commodification (Shepherd, 2002), and enhancing peace and dialogue (Kappler & Lemay-Hébert, 2019). Little attention has been paid to tourists' attitudes towards the cultural practices at the destination. Zhang et al. (2021) claimed that tourism commercialization's role in promoting tourists' authentic experience is not yet empirically proven. They found that all types of authenticity, including postmodern tourism, affect tourists' behavioral intentions towards the destination. In the same context, Zhang et al. (2008) claimed that tourism commercialization negatively impacts tourists' sustainable development and future behavior. Dai et al. (2021) reviewed the notion of authenticity and its' role in heritage conservation by assessing the cultural values that affected the tourists' satisfaction. The study argued that cultural conservation is related to heritage consumption by promoting heritage values. Thus, more empirical examination of the role of the destination's cultural and ethical practices in tourists' behavioral intentions is needed. Based on that, the following two hypotheses were formulated:

**H7: Ethical, cultural concerns have a significant effect on destination choice.**

**H8: Ethical cultural concerns significantly affect tourists' willingness to pay more.**

### 3. Methodology

#### Method

The study aims to validate a theoretical framework and test eight hypotheses about the effect of ethical concerns practiced by a destination on potential tourists' behavioral intentions. To clarify the causal relationships between the independent variables and dependent variables, the study model was designed:

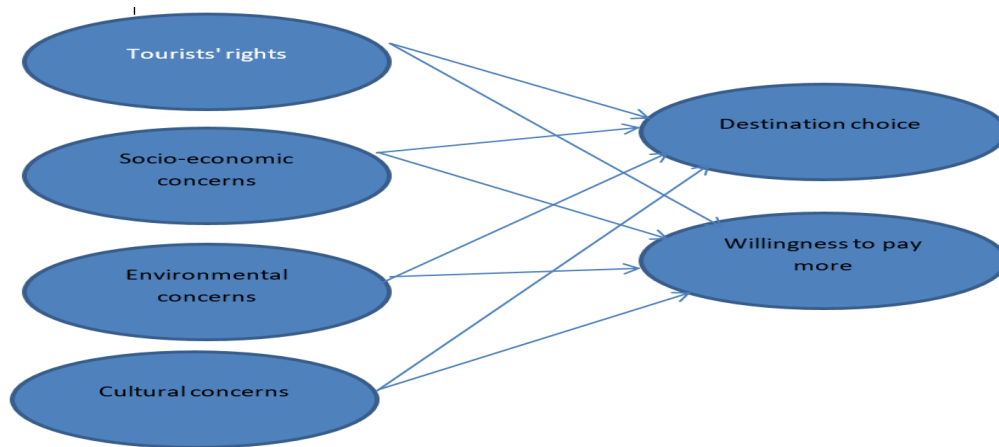


Figure 2: Study Model

The ethical concerns were driven by previous empirical studies that undertake tourists' intents and the four main principles of sustainable tourism. A quantitative method using a self-administered questionnaire was used to achieve the study's aim. The quantitative method is commonly used in tourism research and has increased over time. It explains phenomena through numerical data (Aliaga, M. and Gunderson, 2002). In tourism research, it is widely used in behavioral studies that undertake both tourists and local residents to analyze predictions of observed behavior. For local residents, quantitative methods are preferred to examine their behavioral intentions, including perception and attitude towards tourism impacts at host destinations. As for tourists, quantitative methods are more appropriate for examining their behavioral intentions, including perception of the destination, destination choice, loyalty, and expenditure (Dwyer et al., 2012). The current study deals with factors affecting destination choice and willingness to pay, and due to the large sample size, the quantitative method was used.

#### Questionnaire design and data collection

The questionnaire items were mostly adopted from previous studies that deal with sustainable tourism dimensions in ethical contexts. The items were divided into seven parts: 1. Respondents' personal profile 2. Tourists' rights 3. Socio-economic ethical practices 4. Cultural ethical practices 5. Environmental ethical practices 6. Destination choice 7. Willingness to pay more. The questionnaire consists of (36) items, and the Likert scale was used to deal with all responses for the independent and dependent variables (Strongly agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), Strongly Disagree (1)). The responses' values relied on the following classification:

- Less than the 2.33 Low.
- From 2.34 to 3.66 Medium.

- More than the 3.67 High.

Table 1: Questionnaire sections and references.

Questionnaire Sections	References
Tourists' Rights	(Weeden, 2005)
Socio-economic Practices	(Su & Huang, 2019; Thu Tran et al., 2018; Weeden, 2002)
Environmental Practices	(Park et al., 2018; Mancha & Yoder, 2015; Milfont, 2012)
Cultural Practices	(Dai et al., 2021; Goodwin & Francis, 2003; Weeden, 2002)
Destination Choice	(Lovelock, 2008; Goodwin & Francis, 2003)
Willingness to Pay More	(Goodwin & Francis, 2003)

The questionnaire was written in five languages from the study areas and was designed through Google Drive forms and sent by email and social media tools, where Facebook pages was the most helpful tool, and about 56% of the questionnaires were collected. Before the data collection, the questionnaire was reviewed by four professionals in the field of tourism marketing and sustainable development and two professionals in academic writing. The data collection was conducted from September 2021 to March 2022. No missing data were reported since the responses were filled out electronically.

A pilot study was made with 23 questionnaires filled in by a random sample of respondents from the same countries. Accordingly, some items were reformulated based on respondents' written notes, including some uncommon terms in each of the five languages.

### ***Sampling***

The study targeted potential tourists from Germany, the UK, France, Spain, and Italy. The selection of these European countries was from a current and future marketing perspective through the promotion of ethical tourism practices, due to the remarkably increasing number of tourist arrivals from Europe, especially from the five countries mentioned above, which greatly exceeds the other regions of the world.



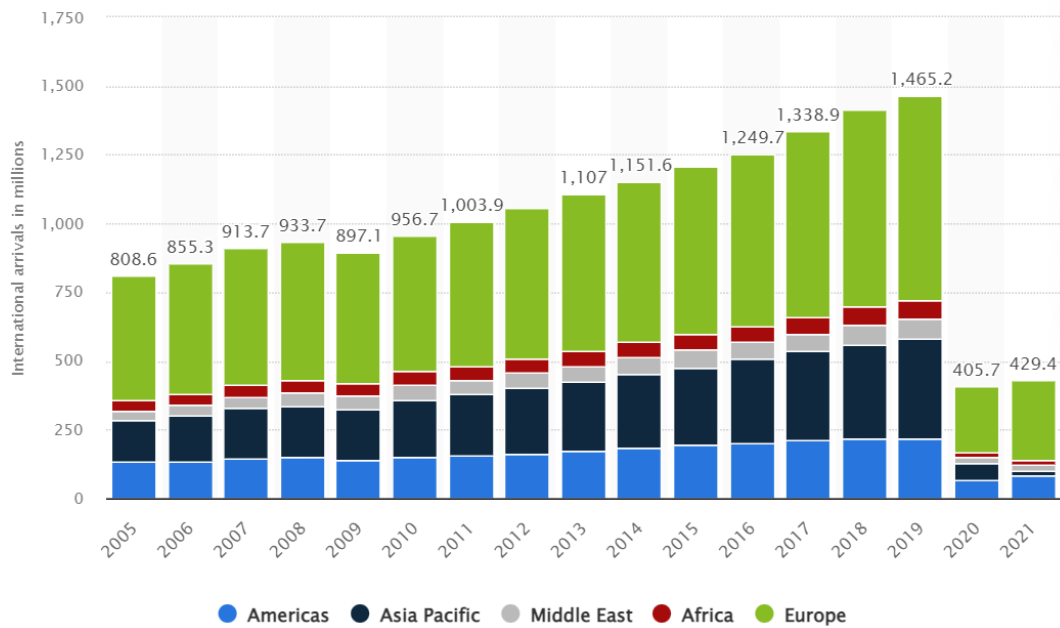


Figure 3: Number of international tourist arrivals worldwide from 2005 to 2021, by region

Source: (Statistica, 2021)

The sample consisted of 567 respondents randomly selected as potential tourists to unknown destinations since the focus of the current study is the destination's ethical practices regardless of its name. The sample size was calculated using the (Yamane, 1967) formula.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

n= the wanted respondents

N= all population

E= reliability 0.05

The population is all the inhabitants of the five countries of the sample, which counts about 322000000 inhabitants. Accordingly, the minimum number of the sample should be 400 respondents.

Two considerations were taken into account for the sample selection for more accurate responses: First, the minimum age to be 20 years. Second, the respondent must have at least one international travel experience as a tourist during the last five years.

### Statistical Treatments

To analyze the study data and test the hypotheses, statistical analysis methods were used through the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS software version 22). For the statistical treatments, the following procedures were used:

- Frequencies and percentages of demographic factors.

- Means and standard deviation for the independent variables (tourists' rights, socio-economic practices, environmental practices, and cultural practices) and the dependent variables (destination choice and willingness to pay more).
- Correlations and linear regression to test study hypotheses, correlation, and linear regression test to calculate the effect of the four independent variables on the two dependent variables.

#### 4. Findings

##### *Respondents' profile*

As shown in Table 2, 57.8% of the respondents were male, and 42.2% were female. For age, the highest percentage was scored for the age group of 44-51 years old (34.7%), while the lowest percentage was scored for the age group of 36-41 years old (4.1%). Respondents from Germany scored the highest percentage among the five nationalities (29.1%), and Italian respondents scored the lowest percentage (13.4%). For education, bachelor's holders scored the highest percentage (41.3%), while Ph.D. holders scored the lowest (4.1%). In terms of marital status, married respondents had the highest percentage (66%), and divorced respondents had the lowest percentage (9.7%). For the occupation, self-employees scored the highest percentage (21.1%), and students were the lowest (5.4%). Finally, the greater percentage of yearly income was scored for those of 40000-60000 Euro (21.3%).

Table 2: Frequency and percentage for demographic information (n=567)

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Male	328	57.8
	Female	239	42.2
<b>Age group</b>	20-27 years old	47	8.3
	28-35 years old	23	4.1
	36-43 years old	33	5.8
	44-51 years old	197	34.7
	52-59 years old	165	29.1
	60 years old and more	102	18.0
<b>Nationality</b>	Germany	158	27.9
	UK	113	19.9
	France	117	20.6
	Spain	103	18.1
	Italy	76	13.4
<b>Highest level of education</b>	secondary	7	17.5
	diploma	18	45.0
	bachelor	7	17.5
	master	7	17.5
	PHD		

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Current occupation</b>	Professional	76	13.4
	Government employee	96	16.9
	private employee	66	11.6
	Self-employed /Business owner	116	20.5
	Retired	74	13.1
	Homemaker	48	8.5
	Student	54	9.5
	Others specify	37	6.5
<b>Average of yearly income in Euro</b>	Less than 20,000	67	11.8
	20,001-40,000	74	13.1
	40,001-60,000	198	34.9
	60,001-80,000	186	32.8
	80,001-100,000	31	5.5
	Above 100,000	11	1.9
<b>Marital Status</b>	Single	111	19.6
	Married	223	39.3
	Widowed	115	20.3
	Others	118	20.8
<b>Number of international trips during the last five years</b>	0 trip	242	42.7
	1-3 trips	468	82.6
	4-6 trips	58	10.2
	6 and above	41	7.2

**Tourists' rights**

Table 3: Means and standard deviation for Tourists' rights/needs/desires

No	Items How important is it for a destination to:	Mean	Standard Deviation	Agreement Degree
1	Offer appropriate products and activities	4.75	0.43	High
2	Offer fair quality versus money spent	4.77	0.42	High
3	Promote mutual respect (host and guest)	4.78	0.41	High
4	Integrate the tourists with local aspects	4.55	0.50	High
5	Provide liberty of tourist movement	4.76	0.43	High
6	Conduct ethical formalities at the airports, borders, sites	4.39	0.49	High

<b>Total Means</b>	4.67	0.19	
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Table 3 shows that the highest mean reached (4.78) out of (5) for the item "Promote mutual respect (host and guest)," and the lowest mean was (4.55) for the item "Integrate the tourists with local aspects". The total means for this part scored (4.67). This means that respondents see their rights as the most important ethical concern. Responses to this part clearly show the mutual respect between hosts and guests.

### *Socio-economic concerns*

Table 4: Means and standard deviation for Socio-economic concerns

No	Items How important is it for a destination to:	Mean	Standard Deviation	Agreement Degree
1	Encourage residents' ownership of facilities and amenities (e.g. accommodation, transportation, restaurants...)	3.15	1.26	Medium
2	Give employment priority to residents	4.02	1.47	High
3	Do fair treatment and wages for employees	4.33	1.11	High
4	Promote the local handicrafts and other local products	3.22	1.44	Medium
5	Encourage pro-poor tourism	3.30	1.37	Medium
6	Improve infrastructure and public services to be used by both tourists and residents	3.73	1.31	High
7	Involve residents in policies' decision making	3.13	1.64	Medium
<b>Total Means</b>		3.55	0.60	Medium

Table 4 shows that the highest mean reached (4.33) out of (5) for the item "Do fair treatment and wages for employees," and the lowest mean was (3.13) for the "Involve residents in policies' decision making". The total mean for this part scored (3.55). This means that the respondents showed a moderate opinion of the importance of socio-economic concerns.

### *Environmental concerns*

Table 5: Means and standard deviation for "Environmental concerns."

No	Items How important for a destination to:	Mean	Standard Deviation	Agreement Degree
1	Safeguard the natural environment by all stakeholders	3.92	1.64	High
2	Target responsible tourists	3.11	1.49	Medium
3	Adopt water and energy-saving methods	2.69	1.58	Medium
4	Control the number of tourists coming within groups	3.73	1.31	High
5	Assess regularly the environmental impacts of tourism	3.08	1.65	Medium
<b>Total Means</b>		3.31	0.93	Medium

Table 5 shows that the highest mean reached (3.92) out of (5) for the item "Safeguard the natural environment by all stakeholders," and the lowest mean was (2.96) for the item "Adopt water and energy saving methods". The total mean for this part scored (3.31). This means that the respondents showed a moderate opinion of the importance of environmental concerns.

**Cultural concerns**

Table 6: Means and standard deviation for "Cultural concerns (destination)"

No	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Agreement Degree
1	Protect residents' cultural values	3.35	1.70	Medium
2	Promote the cultural heritage	3.11	1.49	Medium
3	Avoid cultural and religious commodification	3.57	1.04	Medium
4	Following a local agenda for cultural events	3.47	1.41	Medium
5	Promote a culture of peace and dialogue	3.08	1.65	Medium
Total Means		3.32	0.83	Medium

Table 6 shows that the highest mean reached (3.57) out of (5) for the item "Avoid cultural and religious commodification," and the lowest mean was (3.08) for the item "Promote a culture of peace and dialogue". The total mean for this part scored (3.32). This means that the respondents showed a moderate opinion of the importance of cultural concerns.

**Destination choice**

For the destination choice, the respondents were asked: "When the destination practices ethical concerns well, how do you rank your agreement about the following statements: you will seriously consider visiting that destination."

The mean for this question was (2.75). This means that the respondents showed a moderate opinion of the role of all ethical concerns in selecting a destination.

**Willingness to pay more.**

For the willingness to pay more when the respondents were asked: "In case you visit that destination (where the ethical concerns are practiced well), you are willing to pay more."

Table 7: Means and standard deviation for "willingness to pay more"

No	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Agreement Degree
1	Donations for environmental protection	3.38	1.08	Medium
2	Donations for cultural heritage maintenance	3.12	1.19	Medium
3	More to support low-income families	3.43	1.26	Medium
4	More for local products and activities	3.29	1.56	Medium
Total Means		3.29	0.77	Medium

Table 7 shows that the highest mean reached (3.43) out of (5) for the item "More to support poor families" and the lowest mean was (3.12) for the item "Donations for cultural heritage maintenance". The total mean for this part scored mean (3.29). This means that the respondents showed a moderate opinion to the role of all ethical concerns to pay more at the destination.

### ***Hypotheses testing***

For the hypotheses testing, correlation and linear regression tests were applied.

**Hypothesis 1:** *Tourists' rights, needs and desires have a significant effect on destination choice.* For this hypothesis, correlation coefficient (R) was (.632a), and (R<sup>2</sup>) was (.399). t value scored (19.377) with (.000b) significance. This shows a strong positive effect of tourists' rights, needs and desires on destination choice.

**Hypotheses 2:** *Tourists' rights, needs, and desires have a significant effect on tourists' willingness to pay more.* For this hypothesis, correlation coefficient (R) was (.174a), and (R<sup>2</sup>) was (.030). t value scored (3.117) with (.000b) significance. This shows a positive effect of tourists' rights, needs and desires willingness to pay more.

**Hypothesis 3:** *Residents' socio-economic concerns significantly affect destination choice.* For this hypothesis, correlation coefficient (R) was (.604a), and (R<sup>2</sup>) was (.365). t value scored (18.017) with (.000b) significance. This shows a moderate positive effect of socio-economic concerns on destination choice.

**Hypotheses 4:** *Residents' socio-economic concerns significantly affect tourists' willingness to pay more.* For this hypothesis, correlation coefficient (R) was (.483a), and (R<sup>2</sup>) was (.234). t value scored (13.122) with (.000b) significance. This shows a moderate positive effect of socio-economic concerns on willingness to pay more.

**Hypothesis 5:** *Ethical environmental concerns have a significant effect on destination choice.* For this hypothesis, correlation coefficient (R) was (.394a), and (R<sup>2</sup>) was (.155). t value scored (10.176) with (.000b) significance. This shows a moderate positive effect of ethical environmental concerns on destination choice.

**Hypothesis 6:** *Ethical environmental concerns significantly affect tourists' willingness to pay more.* For this hypothesis, correlation coefficient (R) was (.050a), and (R<sup>2</sup>) was (.002). t value scored (1.188) with (.235b) significance. This shows that there is no effect of ethical environmental concerns on willingness to pay more.

**Hypothesis 7:** *Ethical cultural concerns have a significant effect on destination choice.* For this hypothesis, correlation coefficient (R) was (.162a), and (R<sup>2</sup>) was (.026). t value scored (3.913) with (.000b) significance. This shows a positive effect of ethical cultural concerns on destination choice.

**Hypotheses 8:** *Ethical cultural concerns have a significant effect on tourists' willingness to pay more.* For this hypothesis, correlation coefficient (R) was (.519a), and (R<sup>2</sup>) was (.269). t value scored (14.436) with (.000b) significance. This shows a moderate effect of ethical cultural concerns on willingness to pay more.

## **5. Discussion and conclusion**

This study attempts to comprehensively examine tourists' behavioral intentions (destination choice and willingness to pay more) based on ethical practices implemented by the destination. In addition to tourists' rights, socio-economic, environmental, and cultural concerns were examined. The study findings show a moderate agreement on the

significance of socio-economic, environmental, and cultural ethical concerns. On the other hand, Respondents believe that tourists' rights must be prioritized by the destination. Diski (2003) as cited in Marina (Novelli, 2005), argued that tourists buy holidays primarily for pleasure and they care about the problems of the real world after a relaxing experience is done. This means that all stakeholders should pay more attention to raising awareness in the minds of tourists of the importance of responsible tourism. Tourism marketers should positively perceive ethical practices in tourism before promotional activities are conducted. Perceiving ethical concerns to achieve organizational effectiveness is crucial. However, recognizing an ethical problem is a prerequisite for such effectiveness (Yaman & Gurel, 2006). Moreover, it isn't easy to assess whether tourism organizations follow the highest ethical practice standards (Weeden, 2005).

The study shows a moderate positive effect of the socio-economic and cultural ethical concerns on destination choice. Although the effect of tourists' rights was much more substantial, this finding is somewhat favorable since destination choice, in most studies, is mainly affected by service quality, variety of activities, expected expenses, travel time, and social life (Konu et al., 2011; Hudson & Shephard, 1998; Klenosky et al., 1993). However, today's tourists are looking for a unique socio-cultural experience that the above elements are part of. Tourists' experience assessment is not merely based on service quality; memorable activities, including local lifestyle, are also a base of the assessment (Joseph & Gilmore, 1999). Concerning this argument, Zheng et al. (2020) claimed that postmodern tourists are more interested in the value of traveling process, linking the travel experience with their daily life.

Unlike the current study, environmental concerns were found to influence tourists' behavioral intentions. (Mohaidin et al., 2010) found that attitude towards environmental features positively influenced tourists' intention to select a sustainable destination. This positive effect could be due to the respondents' educational level. One of the recommendations that might be suggested in this regard is that targeting specific markets for sustainable tourism patterns would be a required marketing method. In this sense, Pulido-Fernández & López-Sánchez (2016) stated: "Tourist segment with high level of "sustainable intelligence" (called "pro-sustainable tourist") is willing to pay more to visit a more sustainable destination", and that "there is little willingness to pay if the destination's commitment to sustainability increases the price of the tourism product". This would explain the unwillingness of the current study's respondents to pay more, although the destination practices ethical environmental concerns.

Generally, the study found a moderate positive effect of socio-economic, and cultural concerns and a negative effect of environmental concerns on tourists' willingness to pay more. Although this finding is not very negative, it needs more attention when compared to the strong positive effect of tourists' rights on expenditure. Since this is normal in human behavior, administrative implications can be suggested by creating benefits for tourists when they act positively with the four dimensions of ethical concerns. Integrating tourists into local aspects in natural areas is a good example. Such an approach would address the fact that respondents' views on spending more do not necessarily mean how they would behave when booking a holiday (Goodwin and Francis, 2003).

Based on the current study and many previous ones, tourism planners must recognize that adopting considerable policy changes has become necessary. Durán-Román et al. (2021) claimed that the attitude of the stakeholders should be oriented to the destination identity through the establishment of repositioning strategies that leads to innovative, authentic

product and unique, memorable experience. Such efforts are compatible with ethical tourism and would generate socio-economic benefits in a responsible destination. More comprehensively, ethical aspects in tourism are an opportunity for marketers to have a unique competitive advantage and to break out of the traditional price-based competitiveness (Goodwin & Francia, 2003). However, the standardization of concepts and the adoption of ethical codes agreed upon among the destination stakeholders is an essential managerial implication to push service providers to adopt ethical tourism as a work culture. Weeden (2005) referred to the complexity of ethical tourism that leads to the reluctance of tour operators to promote their ethical policies where ethical practices could be inconsistent with the tourists' expressed intention.

Finally, this study concludes that examining the effect of ethical practices on tourists' behavioral intentions is worthy from a marketing perspective. Tourism marketers should adopt effective international ethical tourism initiatives and declarations (e.g., UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism). This may overcome difficulties in accurately implementing ethical practices by public and private stakeholders. Theoretically, tourism marketing through ethical tourism has been studied on suppliers, especially tour operators. Further studies are, therefore, recommended on the demand side. The study also recommends studies on the forms and methods of cooperation between all suppliers in the government and tourism sector concerning ethical tourism.

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