

Train Tourism in the Context of Experiential Tourism: The Example of the Touristic Eastern Express Travel**

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Abstract

Businesses focus on the concept of customer orientation in order to plan their activities correctly in the modern market. The concept of consumption experience has emerged in the modern marketing approach and the experiential tourism understanding has become widespread in the field of tourism. In this direction, the research focused on the concept of "train tourism", which is one of the alternative tourism types that the experiential tourism phenomenon is adopted as an approach. Moreover, the research aimed to develop a substantive theoretical model in order to determine the experiences of the individuals participating in the Eastern Express and Touristic Eastern Express travels. In the study using the grounded theory research design, the data obtained were analyzed using the constant comparative method, the three-step coding method and the coding manual. As a result of the analysis, a theoretical model named "Train Tourism Experience" and having a substantive nature was revealed. As a result of the research, eight components that generate the train tourism experience and named as "Emotional Experience, Gastronomic Experience, Hedonism, Innovative Experience, Authenticity, Popular Culture, Symbolism and Social Interaction" were revealed.

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INTRODUCTION

In the modern marketing world, businesses focus on the concept of customer orientation. In this direction, the information obtained about the consumption experience gains importance. The concept of consumption experience was first defined by Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) and found itself in the economic value index with the study by Pine and Gilmore (1998). With this attempt, it has been observed that consumers are now becoming interested in experiential activities at the point of communication and marketing. Moreover, the concept of experiential marketing, which is the basis of the concept of the experience economy, came to the fore (Schmitt, 1999b). As a result of the studies on the concept of experience, a new era has started and an understanding of tourism expressed in the form of experiential tourism has been introduced to the literature.

The experiential tourism approach, which defends that tourists do not only travel but also gain various experiences regarding the environment and cultures they encounter during travel, concentrates on alternative tourism types by keeping a distance with the understanding of mass tourism (Edgell et al., 2014; Babb, 2011). In the light of this information, this research focused on the concept of "train tourism", which is one of the alternative tourism types that experiential tourism is adopted as an approach. The train, which travels between Ankara and Kars cities in Turkey and called the "Eastern Express", has started to be used for touristic purposes, thus a new trend has started in terms of alternative tourism types. As a matter of fact, this trend has gained significant recognition. Considering the interest in train tourism in the world, it is important to highlight the potential of the Touristic Eastern Express in Turkey within the scope of train tourism. Moreover, mentioning the concept of train tourism in the 3rd Tourism Council Product Diversity and Sustainability Commission in Tourism Final Report (2017) and target of generating policies for the promotion of alternative tourism products in Turkey make this research important from a different point of view. In addition, when the literature is examined, it is seen that the studies on travel experience are sufficient in terms of explaining the concept, but the subject of touristic experience in train travels remains limited. It is thought that this study will contribute to the theoretical structure for the concept of travel experience in train tourism. In this direction, the research aims to develop a theoretical model to determine the experiences of individuals participating with touristic purposes in the Eastern Express and Touristic Eastern Express.

In the first part of the study, the concept of experience is emphasized and information about the development of the concept is given. Furthermore, the concept of experiential marketing, which is the basis of the concept of experience economy, was explained in the first part of the study. After this ranking, the experiential tourism approach was examined and the qualities of the approach were explained. On the other hand, a conceptual review was made for train tourism, of which there are very few studies in the literature. In the section that is exemplified by trains that operate as the tourism train in the world, the characteristics of the trains used for tourist purposes in Turkey were highlighted.

After the literature review in the research, data were collected with various techniques by using qualitative research methods in order to develop a substantive theoretical model on the subject of "Train Tourism Experience". In the study using the grounded theory research design, the data obtained were analyzed by using the constant comparative method, the three-step coding method and the coding manual. As a result of the analysis, a theoretical model with a substantive character was revealed.

Theoretical Background

Experiential Tourism

The concept of experience was first defined in the academic field by Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) as customer behavior that creates different emotional associations for the consumed products. Yuan and Wu (2008) express the experience as the sum of the results obtained by the consumer after consumption of a product. It is possible to define the experience as the sum of the events that give pleasure to the individual, which are permanent in the mind and affect the individuals emotionally rather than being a daily activity (Oh, Fiore & Jeoung, 2007). Schmitt (1999b) evaluates the special responses given by the customers to the stimulants prepared by an enterprise as an experience. It is possible to express the experience that is stated as special reactions by Schmitt (1999b) as a situation that varies from person to person. Besides, it is possible to indicate that the experience perceived by any two people is unlikely to be the same.

Pine and Gilmore (1998) first introduced the concept of the experience economy into the literature. In the study named "Welcome to the Experience Economy", the concept of the experience economy is expressed as a source of economic value in addition to the concepts of commodities, goods, and services in the economic value index. Pine and Gilmore (1998) examined experience in four main areas: education, entertainment, escape, and aesthetics. In the study, where experiences are evaluated as active or passive according to the participation of consumers, experience is classified as absorption and immersion with the participation of consumers. The relationship of these dimensions with each other, which are seen as four basic areas of experience, constitutes an important source of information in creating unforgettable experiential activities.

Consumers look for an emotional connection with the products they purchase and expect communication and marketing activities in this direction. In this context, the concept of experiential marketing, which is the basis of the concept of the experience economy, comes to the fore. Bernd Schmitt (1999b) first introduced the concept of experiential marketing to the literature. Schmitt (1999b) stated that experiential marketing focuses on understanding the experiences of consumers, not the characteristics of the goods and services produced or the benefits they provide to customers.

Nowadays, it is seen that individuals are moving away from mass tourism and they take into account the attractions such as cultural, artistic, and historical elements before deciding on their travels. This situation is generally explained by the concept of experiential tourism in the literature (Edgell et al., 2014). Besides, individuals desire to visit and experience natural beauties, historical buildings, and cultural activities called experiential tourism. At the same time, a new profile of tourists looking for adventure or exploring unknown places appears (Bevacqua & Farahi, 2015). People now prefer to look like a traveler rather than like an ordinary mass tourist, and they want to get to know the local culture and explore the touristic structures in the region during their holiday. Individuals do not want standard package tours provided by tour companies but prefer the holiday plan designed by themselves (Pattullo & Minelli, 2006).

Experiential tourism is expressed as sharing different lifestyles away from ordinary daily life (Babb, 2011). According to OECD (2002), experiential tourism is a type of tourism in which individuals interact with cultural characteristics and environmental factors in the region they visit. A touristic experience can be composed of concrete

products or services, as well as being affected by the level of unforgettable experiences offered (Cornelisse, 2014). This situation is explained with the concept of a memorable tourism experience in the literature.

A memorable tourism experience is defined as a tourism experience that is not forgotten after the tourism event occurs and is among the memories. These individual experiences are based entirely on a structure that arises as a result of the evaluation of the process by the individual (Kim, Ritchie & McCormick, 2012). Memorable tourism experience is expressed in the way that the good memories that occur in the destinations remain in the minds of the tourists and are seen as attractive memories. Therefore, there are important differences between the real experiences of tourists and the unforgettable experiences they have in their memories (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1998).

Train Tourism

Although rail transport is generally used for transportation purposes, it is also used by individuals for touristic purposes. Alternative tourism type, which is known as "railway tourism" in international literature, is used as "train tourism" (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2017) in Turkey. The concept of train tourism emerges within the scope of special interest with the nostalgia-themed trips of trains. Train tourism is generally shown as a preferred type of tourism that offers nostalgic experiences to tourists and based on special interest (Çontu, 2006). According to Kusters (1992), the preferences of individuals who participate in train travel for touristic purposes arise according to their special interests. In addition, these individuals see the train as a different entertainment venue and they enjoy being in touch with nature and observing natural landscapes.

Blancheton and Marchi (2013) evaluated tourist trains in different categories. This distinction is expressed as panoramic trains reaching natural areas, entertainment-oriented trains, living museum trains, and local trains that provide economic advantages to the regions. Railway routes are generally defined as multi-purpose routes created to be used for transportation and recreational activities. While railroad routes are sometimes used as a means of transportation connecting two points, at other times they can be a place that meets the entertainment search of local and foreign tourists (Reis & Jellum, 2012).

The diversity of individuals' curiosity and interests and significant growth in numbers transform trains into touristic product as well as being a travel vehicle (Doğan, Pekiner & Karaca, 2018). This situation has brought a different perspective to railways in many destinations around the world and has revealed the concept of train tourism in line with the special interests of tourists. It is possible to come across touristic train tours and routes in many destinations around the world.

When the touristic train travels are examined, the first thing that draws the attention is the "Orient Express", which made a Paris-Istanbul trip between 1883-1977. Orient Express, which emerged as a means of transportation, later became an important tourist symbol (Pera Palace Hotel, 2020). The Orient Express, which is the subject of many films and novels, was restored in 2019 and operates as a museum in the East Station in Paris. Furthermore, efforts are being made to re-join the famous train to touristic tours (Hürriyet Seyahat, 2020).



Photograph 1. Images of the Restored Orient Express

Source: "The famous Orient Express is back on the rails (Expeditions can start again)." (NTV, 2020).

The Arlberg tourist train, which is located in Austria and runs between Tyrol-Vorarlberg, has been operating since 1884. Numerous bridges, viaducts, and tunnels on the route offer a romantic tour. Another tourist train in Austria is the Semmering train route. The route of the tourist train included in the UNESCO World Heritage list covers the distance between Gloggnitz and Semmering (Martin, 2020).



Photograph 2. Arlberg and Semmering Tourist Trains

Source: "The 3 Most Beautiful Scenic Train Routes in Austria." (Martin, 2020).

The journey on the Trans-Siberian Express tourist train, which operates on the route known as the longest railway line in the world, takes about twelve days. The train, whose starting point is Moscow, moves to Vladivostok, which is in the far east of the country. The touristic train route, which has a total length of approximately 9289 km, also extends to Beijing via Mongolia (TransSibExpress, 2020).



Photograph 3. Trans-Siberian Touristic Train

Source: "A Brown Man in Russia: Lessons Learned on A Trans-Siberian Rail Journey." (Zadonsky, 2020).

It is possible to come across tourist trains that are famous for their railway routes in various regions of the world. Orient Express serving between London and Istanbul, Blue Train in South Africa with its famous restaurant, Skytrain in China, Copper Canyon in Mexico, Palace on Wheels operating in India and Indian-Pacific trains in Australia (Cook, Hsu, & Marqua, 2016) are important indicators of the interest in train tourism in the world. There are tourist trains in many regions around the world, some of them operate with themes for luxury train tourism and some for nature landscapes. These activities are considered as services designed to respond to the tourists' search for new and different experiences.

Trains operating in Turkey are often used to provide the need for transportation. Some of these trains are used for touristic purposes. One of them is the Van Lake Express. There is the opportunity to observe the nature views with the Van Lake Express, which travels between Ankara and Tatvan (TCDD Taşımacılık Incorporated Company, 2020a). There is another train called South Kurtalan Express that is not operated for tourist purposes in Turkey, but that people use in order to make the tourist activity. Due to the sights on the train route between Ankara and Kurtalan, it has attracted the attention of people and started to be used for touristic purposes. The route, which goes around Lake Hazar, offers tourists a different view (Demiralp, 2020).

Eastern Express is winning recognition as the first tourism train in Turkey and operating between Ankara and Kars. The Eastern Express is discovered as a result of people's search for new and different touristic activities and it offers tourists nostalgic and entertainment-themed experiences (TCDD Taşımacılık Incorporated Company, 2020b). Eastern Express travel is heavily preferred by “backpackers”. This situation makes it an important travel trend. Especially in the Eastern Express trip, where operates between Ankara and Kars, tourists have the desire to photograph natural beauties and share a lot on social media platforms with their unique themes (Aksakallı, Bayraktar & Koşan, 2017).

The train, which travels between Ankara and Kars cities in Turkey and called the "Eastern Express", has started to be used for touristic purposes, thus a new trend has started in terms of alternative tourism types. With this trend, the Eastern Express train travel has attracted great attention. Besides, this trend has gained significant recognition and attracted the attention of public institutions and organizations and entrepreneurs operating in various fields. Thus, the touristic train has been implemented called as "Touristic East Express" in collaboration with the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure and TCDD Taşımacılık Incorporated Company. This is the first train for tourist purposes in Turkey and consists of 120 people and all sleeping car. Travel time of the tourist train with six sleeping cars and a dining car is approximately 31 hours. The train, which runs between Ankara and Kars, stops 3 hours in Ilıc and 2 hours and 40 minutes in Erzincan and Erzurum.



Photograph 4. Touristic Eastern Express

Source: "Wondering About Touristic East Express?" (Seyyah Defteri, 2020).

Touristic Eastern Express travel is considered to be impressive for people who live in the western and southern regions of Turkey and rarely experience winter conditions. The preference for travel, especially in the winter, is generally thought as a result of the interest in winter landscapes. The place of Touristic Eastern Express passengers in the tourist typology is considered as a researcher tourist (Çakmak & Altaş, 2018). It is seen that individuals who do not want to lose their place in the context of popular culture and who are active on social media platforms have more demands for this experience (Doğan, Pekiner, & Karaca, 2018). Travelers decorate their rooms with the LED lights they bring with them during their travels and mostly share this design on their social media accounts (Eryılmaz & Yüçetürk, 2018).

Data And Methods

The main purpose of this study is to reveal the experiences of travelers participating in the Eastern Express and the Touristic Eastern Express on a theoretical basis and to develop a substantive theory in this direction. The "Grounded Theory" approach, which is one of the qualitative research designs, was taken as a basis in the study. The concept of grounded theory was first introduced by Glaser and Strauss in 1967 with the book named "Discovery of Grounded Theory". According to Glaser and Strauss (2006), grounded theory is defined as the discovery of theory by revealing the hidden information contained in the systematically collected data, which is generally used in social research. Charmaz (2005) stated that the grounded theory approach has a systematic and flexible structure and that it is a qualitative research methodology that helps to construct a theory by revealing the hidden information in the data set. Glaser and Strauss (1967) evaluated the concept of theory as substantive and formal theory. Formal theory is an approach produced against general problems, in an abstract nature and applicable to general areas. Substantive theory, on the other hand, is a lower level theoretical approach rather than a general approach (Creswell, 2016). The grounded theory approach in qualitative research aims to produce a substantive theory with constant comparative analysis. The three-stage coding method is used in constant comparison analysis. The three-stage coding method is applied in the form of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The open coding phase is accepted as a testing process and it is seen as the step of creating temporary coding by analyzing the raw data in depth. Axial coding is defined as the stage where data is re-evaluated and main categories are determined. Selective coding is seen as the process in which categories are integrated, the main themes are created and the theoretical model is designed (Strauss, 2003). In the coding process of grounded theory studies, a coding manual developed by Saldana (2009) is

used in addition to the three-step coding method. The coding manual brought to the literature by Saldana (2009) is shown in Figure 1.

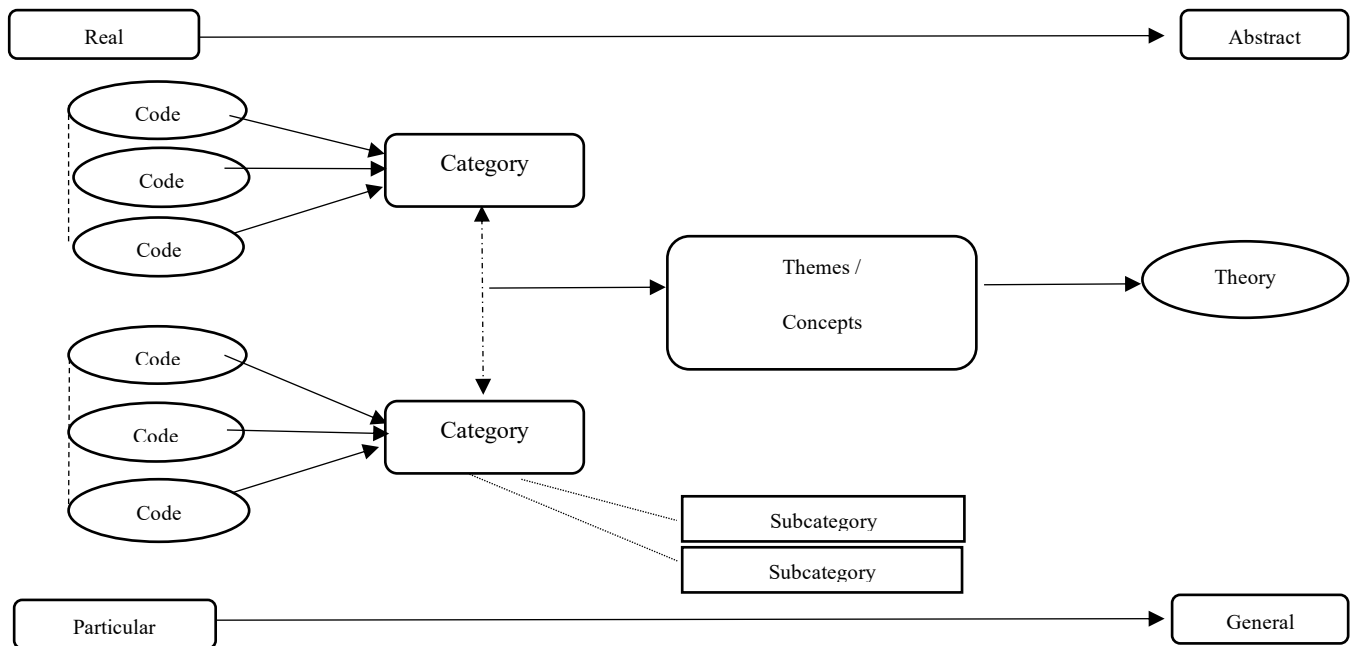


Figure 1. Coding Manual

Source: The Coding Manual For Qualitative Researchers, (Saldana, 2009).

The data obtained in the study were analyzed with reference to the three-step coding method developed by Corbin and Strauss (1990) and the coding manual developed by Saldana (2009). The data collected in the research were subjected to content analysis and coding was done. Content analysis is evaluated in three groups as meta-analysis, meta-synthesis (thematic content analysis) and descriptive content analysis (Çalık & Sözbilir, 2014). Meta-synthesis analysis is an approach that interprets qualitative findings by comparing them. Besides, the obtained qualitative findings are synthesized and new inferences are revealed by the thematic analysis method (Thomas & Harden, 2008). Meta-synthesis analysis is generally used in studies focusing on perception and experience concepts (Polat & Ay, 2016). The qualitative data obtained in the study were evaluated through meta-synthesis content analysis, which generally focuses on perception and experience. The open coding process was carried out after the implementation phase of each of the techniques that were preferred in the data collection process of the research. Obtained open codes were transformed into categories by the axial coding method after the qualitative data collection techniques were terminated. The data obtained in the qualitative phase of the research were subjected to a coding process with the help of NVIVO 12 package software.

The population of the research consisted of individuals participating in the Eastern Express and Touristic Eastern Express travel. In this context, the theoretical sampling approach, which is frequently used in the grounded theory approach, which was determined as the design of the research, was adopted. In the theoretical sampling technique, the coding process was carried out after each application (interview, observation, document review, etc.) for the sample group. When the contents obtained after the applied data collection techniques complied with the predetermined codes and a new code could be created, theoretical saturation was reached (İlgar & İlgar, 2014).

The qualitative research method includes a number of different data collection techniques. One or more of these techniques can be used in grounded theory studies. In this study, it was aimed to reveal the grounded information by

using different qualitative data collection techniques. The qualitative data collection process stages used in the study are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Qualitative Data Collection Stages

Stage	Data Collection Technique	Research Question
Stage 1	Qualitative Interview with Tourists (Open Coding)	What are the experiences of individuals traveling for touristic purposes on the Eastern Express?
Stage 2	Examination of Videos on Social Media (Open Coding)	How do the social media videos that are published by travel bloggers about Eastern Express travel reflect the Eastern Express travel experience?
Stage 3	Examining Participant Comments on Social Media Platforms (Open Coding)	What subjects do people traveling for touristic purposes comment on social media about their experiences on the Eastern Express?
Stage 4	Examination of Photos Shared on Social Media (Open Coding)	How do the photos shared by touristic travelers on the Eastern Express reflect their travel experiences?
Stage 5	Creating the Theoretical Model (Axial Coding-Selective Coding)	How can the experience of traveling on the Eastern Express be explained in a theoretical model?

In order to collect the data used in this study, ethics committee approval was obtained with the decision of Atatürk University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee dated 01.08.2019 and numbered 47. In the first stage of the research, qualitative interviews were conducted with tourists. At this stage of the research, the answer to the question of "What are the experiences of the individuals traveling for touristic purposes on the Eastern Express?" was sought. In the second stage of the research, the videos on social media were examined. At this stage of the research, the answer to the question of "How do the social media videos that are published by travel bloggers about the Eastern Express travel reflect the Eastern Express travel experience?" was sought. In the third stage of the research, the comments of the participants on social media platforms were examined. At this stage of the research, the answer to the question of "What subjects do people traveling for touristic purposes on the Eastern Express comment on social media about their experience?" was sought. In the fourth stage of the research, the photos shared on social media were examined. At this stage of the research, the answer to the question of "How do the photos shared by the individuals traveling for touristic purposes on the Eastern Express reflect their travel experiences?" was sought. Finally, the process of forming the theoretical model was started with the analysis of the data obtained in the research. At this stage of the research, the answer to the question of "How can the experience of traveling on the Eastern Express be explained in a theoretical model?" was sought.

Limitations of the Research

Among the limitations of the research are the fact that the research was carried out with qualitative techniques and therefore does not have the quality of generalization. In addition, although the data was diversified in the research, the results of the research were revealed by the interpretation of the data obtained. In this respect, the number and duration of qualitative interviews, the number of analyzed comments, photographs and videos are among the limitations of the research. Another limitation is that the theoretical model put forward as a result of the research is abstract and substantive.

Data Analysis

Qualitative Interview with Tourists

The semi-structured interview form, which was used as a qualitative interview tool with tourists in the study was prepared by benefiting from the work done by Tung and Ritchie (2011), which used the grounded theory pattern to

reveal the components of a memorable tourism experience. After the interview form was adapted for the train tourism experience, three field experts were consulted. Accordingly, in the meeting with the individuals who have experienced the Eastern Express travel, they were asked to describe the experiences that have taken place in their minds from the decision-making stage for the trip, in order of importance. Moreover, details were asked about the reasons that made memorable experiences in their minds. Finally, a different question was asked in order to understand the emotional connotations of these reasons in tourists. Besides, some demographic information of the interviewees (age, gender, marital status, with whom they participated in the trip and the status of participating in the trip individually or through the tour program) were included in the semi-structured interview form.

Ten volunteers were selected for the interview on the basis of the theoretical sampling technique, and these individuals were required to complete the Eastern Express journey completely. The interviews lasted an average of 12-13 minutes. The interviews were recorded with two audio recorders with the permission of the participants. After each interview, transcription was made for the audio recordings, the participants were given code names (K1, K2, K3...) according to the interview order and subjected to open coding. With the open coding process for the data of the last participant who was interviewed, it was concluded that the data reached saturation and no new or different open code could be reached, and the interview phase of the research was terminated.

The data obtained as a result of the interviews were subjected to content analysis and an open coding process was made for the interview notes. With the open coding process, a total of 42 open codes were obtained. The open codes resulting from the analysis were then reported for using in the axial coding stage. Some of the open codes from the interview data are given in Table 2 to give an example.

Table 2. Open Coding Examples for Qualitative Interviews

Participant	Encoded Content	Open Code
K1	<i>"...We thought we might get bored on the train ..." "...We thought that the sound of the train would affect our sleep negatively ..."</i>	Expectation
K2	<i>"...We were away from the phone for a while, so it was good that I was disconnected from technology for a few hours. ..."</i>	Digital Addiction Awareness
K3	<i>"...During the trip I felt like I was in a fairy tale world. ..." "...The sound of the train while stopping was sometimes reminiscent of horror movie train scenes. ..."</i>	Extraordinary Experience - Imagination
K4	<i>"As a matter of fact, the Eastern Express did not result in very positive experiences for me. First of all, there was a problem of cleaning and the temperature of the rooms was unnecessarily high..."</i>	Negative Experience
K5	<i>"The most important reason that made this experience memorable for me; we did our train dance, indispensable for the Eastern Express, knocking the door of our neighbors who we did not know in the side compartment and doing small shopping warmed our hearts firstly, then everyone unfamiliar got together and those wonderful dances were made and fun..."</i>	Participation in Events - Variety of Activities
K6	<i>"The unforgettable aspect of the Eastern Express was that it was different."</i>	Innovative Experience - The Quest for Innovation
K7	<i>"...The last two things that are unforgettable for me are the train employees treating passengers like a complete guest. ..."</i>	Hospitality
K8	<i>"Traveling became more meaningful to me when I shared this excitement with my dear friends..."</i>	Meaningfulness in the Experience
K9	<i>"...Trains are like a living history for me ..."</i>	History-Story
K10	<i>"This experience made me feel excitement, passion, adventure and fun..."</i>	Hedonism

During the interview, because the words of K1 "... We thought we might get bored on the train..." and "... We thought that the sound of the train would affect our sleep negatively ..." evoke some expectations before the experience, an open coding was made in the form of "expectation". Since K2 participant personally viewed his/her commitment to technology negatively with the phrase "... We were away from the phone for a while, so it was good that I was disconnected from technology for a few hours...", it was coded as "digital addiction awareness". With the sentence "... During the trip I felt like I was in a fairy tale world ...", K3 participant commented that his/her experience was not ordinary, and we coded this as "extraordinary experience". Furthermore, the sentence of the K3 participant "... The sound of the train while stopping was sometimes reminiscent of horror movie train scenes ..." was coded as "imagination".

The K4 participant encountered many negative situations during the trip and said, "As a matter of fact, the Eastern Express did not result in very positive experiences for me. First of all, there was a problem of cleaning and the temperature of the rooms was unnecessarily high ". Thus, we coded this situation as "negative experience". K5 participant participated in various entertainment-oriented activities and ranked it the top among the unforgettable experiences of this situation. K5 participant said, "The most important reason that made this experience memorable for me; we did our train dance, indispensable for the Eastern Express, knocking the door of our neighbors who we did not know in the side compartment and doing small shopping warmed our hearts firstly, then everyone unfamiliar got together and those wonderful dances were made and fun". This sentence was coded as "participation in events-variety of activities".

Considering the Eastern Express travel as a new and different experience, the K6 participant made the sentence "The unforgettable aspect of the Eastern Express was that it was different" and revealed the code "innovative experiences - the quest for innovation". K7 participant talked about the train staff in the meeting and commented that "... The last two things that are unforgettable for me are the train employees treating passengers like a complete guest...". This situation is coded as "hospitality". The K8 participant made an effort to make sense of his/her experience and revealed the code "meaningfulness in the experience" with the sentence "Traveling became more meaningful to me when I shared this excitement with my dear friends".

K9 participant evaluated the train historically and commented "... Trains are like a living history for me ...". This interpretation is coded in the form of "history-story". K10 participant stated what his/her experience meant emotionally and made the assessment that "This experience made me feel excitement, passion, adventure and fun". Considering these emotional situations, the comment in question was evaluated as a "hedonism" code.

Examination of Videos on Social Media

Within the scope of the research, the videos about the "Eastern Express" on the YouTube website, which is widely used as a video sharing platform, were examined. Five videos were analyzed by using the theoretical sampling method and taking into account the content and scope of the videos with the highest number of views. The videos were subjected to content analysis through NVIVO 12 package software and NCapture extension. Open coding process for videos was made with content analysis. The features of the videos selected for analysis are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Features of Videos about Eastern Express Selected For Analysis

Video Code	Name of the Video	Video Duration	Number of Views	Number of Likes	Number of Comments
V1	"KARS IN 25 HOURS WITH THE EASTERN EXPRESS! EASTERN EXPRESS"	9 minutes 45 sec.	1.636.257	17.681	1.189
V2	"Eastern Express - Important Information & Ordering Cag Kebab to the Train"	6 minutes 04 sec.	914.061	6.222	310
V3	"Journey to Kars with the Eastern Express"	8 minutes 36 sec.	868.920	7.121	655
V4	"Eastern Express: A 25-hour journey between Ankara and Kars"	18 minutes 07 sec.	735.720	14.265	1.390
V5	"Journey to Kars with the Eastern Express Kars"	17 minutes 38 sec.	627.319	6.910	485

The videos decided to be analyzed were subjected to content analysis. As a result of the content analysis, an open coding process for the videos was carried out. With the open coding process, a total of 58 open codes were obtained. The open codes that emerged as a result of the analysis were reported later to be used in the axial coding stage.

The statement of "Cag Kebab was excellent. I will come here to eat cag kebab again" in V1 video was coded as "gastronomic experience" because it carries the elements of eating and drinking. In addition, because of the description stated in the V1 video "Have nice conversations with the compartment officers, you can learn good information from them and add color to your journey" evokes getting information while traveling, it is coded as "learning experience" and "seeking new knowledge". In addition, the cultural conversations of the team that shot the V1 video with the peddler encountered at the Erzurum stop were coded as "local culture".

In V2 video, the statement of "We are going to Erzurum, there is a place that makes a great cag kebab (in the image, there is information that they had this gastronomic experience in the previous year) we ordered from there" coded as "past experience" because it reflects an experience that was lived in the past. The sentence "glass door... if you want to create a private space inside, this is completely your privacy when you close this curtain" in the speech that took place during the introduction of the compartment in the V2 video, revealed the "privacy" code. The sentence in the V2 video, "The doors can be locked from the inside, but they cannot be locked from the outside. If you want to go to the dining car, you can ask the compartment attendant to lock it" is coded as "security".

The technical details given during the presentation of the compartment in the V3 video have revealed an open code in the form of "provided technical possibilities". Besides, it is seen that the weather conditions are in the form of heavy snow and snowstorm as of the moment the trip was experienced. Meanwhile, while the travelers were passing between the carriages, they saw that the snow that had fallen from outside filled inside and used the expression "I don't believe ..." with laughter. This phrase is coded as "surprising experience".

It is seen that the V4 video is mostly prepared in a documentary style. In the interview with a person traveling on the train, the speaker used the expression "I was constantly seeing the Eastern Express on social media, I was following the name of the Eastern Express or something from blogs, I wanted to experience this...". This expression was coded as "the effect of social media on the decision". In the conversation with another traveler, the phrase "I wouldn't have known this place if I hadn't seen it on the internet... I am sharing it here on Instagram, I am advertising this place" was used. This situation was coded as "sharing experiences on social media".

In the V5 video, it is understood that the travelers were transported by buses to get on the train from Kırıkkale due to the renovation in Ankara Station. When they came to the train station by bus services to get on the train, the statement “It is very nice, like in the movies. You know, they bring us in such a way that they are secretly smuggled, or so ...” was used. This situation was coded as "narration" and "imagination". After the introduction of the compartment in the V5 video, it was understood that the travelers were satisfied with their compartments with a smile and the words "This is our suite room ...". Thus, coding was made in the form of "absorption" and "satisfaction" by commenting that they have adopted travel.

Examining Participant Comments on Social Media Platforms

Within the scope of the research, evaluative comments made on the social media on the “Eastern Express” and personal blog posts by travel bloggers were examined. The participant comments included in the study were limited to the comments by the travelers about their experiences. Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, TripAdvisor, Ekşi Sözlük, and Google Search Engine platforms were searched using “Eastern Express” and similar tags, and the comments and blog posts reflecting travel experiences were selected by theoretical sampling method. The selected comments and blog posts were compiled using NVIVO 12 package software. A total of 1043 traveler comments and six blog posts, which are considered to reflect the Eastern Express travel experience and qualify as travel-related reviews, were analyzed. In addition, the blogger named Mag Porter (2018) interviewed 10 travelers who had the Eastern Express experience and this interview was evaluated in a blog post. In this context, the interview conducted by Mag Porter with 10 travelers was included in the research and subjected to an open coding process. As a result of the open coding process, a total of 112 open codes were obtained. The open codes that emerged as a result of the analysis were reported later to be used in the axial coding stage. Some of the open codes that emerged as a result of the content analysis of the comments and blog posts on the social media platforms are given below for exemplary purposes.

“I witnessed the magnificent views along the way; it was a truly excellent experience for me, which includes young people traveling like me on the way, and people from all over Anatolia on the way back. Therefore, in my article, which will be a bit long, I wanted to give information about the Eastern Express and to draw a road map for those who will go. ”

A sample participant comment on the content analysis and open coding process for the comments on the social media platform can be seen above. The phrase "along the way" stated in the participant's comment was coded as "the route" because it evokes the Eastern Express train route. A new open code named "scene" was created with the phrase "perfect scenes" in the comment. The interpretation of "including traveling young people like me on the way and people coming from all over Anatolia on the way back" was explained with the codes of "being with the society" and "communitation.” The “truly excellent experience” assessment stated in the comment was coded as “over-admiration”. The comment of the participation for other travelers “I wanted to give information about the Eastern Express and also to draw a road map for those who will go” revealed open codes as "recommending" and "making suggestions".

“I took my ticket from the sleeper section of the Eastern Express and I went on a 17-hour journey towards Erzurum. I board the train at around 1 am from Kayseri. I opened the bed and I slept. First, the train is very clean. The sheets packaged one by one and they were even cleaner, the temperature of the train was very good and also you can adjust it, it is nice to sleep on the train; it shakes like a cradle and there is a sweet voice. I would say that I slept

without waking up, when I got up, I met friends in the compartment; two university students were going to travel. Although I took books and films with me, I did not even need them. With conversation, the time flew by. Especially in the direction of departure, the train consists of young friends and travelers. This journey has become quite popular especially in the winter. Fortunately, everywhere was under snow, but the weather was clear, the 17-hour journey went like 1.5 hours with very beautiful views. "

Another example of content analysis and open coding for comments on the social media platform is given above. As stated in the comment of the participant, "I went on a 17-hour journey" and the phrases "the 17-hour journey" are coded as "travel time". With the "train is very clean" evaluation stated in the comment, "cleaning" code has emerged. Participant's interpretation of "sheets packed one by one" was coded as "service" because it evokes the service given on the train. The explanation stated that in the interpretation "the temperature of the train was very good and also you can adjust it," revealed the "comfort" code. As seen in the statement, the comment of "it is nice to sleep on the train; it shakes like a cradle and there is a sweet voice. I would say that I slept without waking up" was evaluated as the "rest" code. As stated in the comment, the phrases of "I met friends in the compartment; two university students were going to travel" and "conversation" were coded as "social interaction". The evaluations "time flew by" and "The 17-hour journey went like 1.5 hours" were coded as "escape experience" or "fascinated by". Moreover, "The train consists of young friends and travelers." sentence was evaluated as "interaction with the co-socio-cultural group". The phrases in the interpretation "in winter", "everywhere was under snow but the weather was clear" and "with very beautiful views" were coded as "winter landscapes". The participant's assessment of "quite popular" is coded as "popular culture" and "trend".

Examination of Photos Shared on Social Media

Within the scope of the research, photo-sharing websites on social media were examined. Photo posts, which were made with #doğuekspresi tag on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram platforms and had open access, were examined. The photographs selected with the theoretical sampling technique were compiled using the NVIVO 12 package software and the NCapture extension. With the coding of each photo discovered, it was concluded that a new or different code could no longer be reached, and 380 photographs were coded, reflecting the experiences of the Eastern Express journey. After the content analysis and open coding process, 72 open codes were obtained. The open codes that emerged as a result of the analysis were reported later to be used in the axial coding stage. Some of the content analysis and open coding processes for the photos on the social media platforms are given below with the permission of the photo owners to illustrate.



Photograph 5. Examples of Photos Shared on Social Media

The decorations seen in the first photograph emerged as a result of the desire of the travelers to change their physical environment and this situation was coded as "atmosphere" and "authenticity". The book reading activity seen in the second photograph was coded as an "experience providing personal benefit" and the code of "nostalgia" emerged because the book read reflects the past periods.

Results

Creating the Theoretical Model

At this stage of the research, the answer to the question of "How can the experience of traveling on the Eastern Express be explained in a theoretical model?" was sought. In the research, the data obtained from various platforms were sent to two people, who were experts in the field and worked on qualitative research methods, and the coding process was requested. The codes obtained from the experts were compared with the codes developed by the researcher. Accordingly, similar codes were revealed and the result of three different coding processes was found to be mostly similar, and the data on the different codes were re-examined and considered. The codes that revealed from the data obtained after this process were summarized by eliminating the similar ones, the codes were combined, and a total of 138 open codes were gained from the data obtained in the study.

Within the scope of the research, the open codes that followed the qualitative data collection process and were revealed and compiled after each application were examined. Axial coding was carried out based on the three-step coding method developed by Corbin and Strauss (1990) for open codes and the coding manual provided to the literature by Saldana (2009). In this way, a large number of open codes were summarized and categorized. The common and repetitive thoughts and codes in the open codes obtained in the research were combined under categories with the axial coding method.

In the research, the first category that emerged as a result of summarizing the common and repetitive thoughts obtained during the data collection process was named as "Emotional Experience". The emotional experience module, which was evaluated within the scope of strategic experience modules by Schmitt (1999a), was described as revealing experiences that can create some emotional impact related to the product or image. In the data obtained in the study, some personal and psychological factors were encountered in the experiences of travelers. The narratives examined in the data and the romantic objects observed in the images are explained with the concept of romance. It was observed that travelers were emotionally affected by past experiences and previous memories. The desire to discover in travelers, and their motivation in this regard, were evaluated as emotional experiences. It was found that individuals tried to make sense of their experiences and narrated some experiences by using their imaginations. Travelers who expect a desire for comfort or relaxation while traveling may sometimes encounter negative emotional experiences. In the documents examined, it is seen that the travelers are fascinated psychologically in some activities with some emotional stimulants and they are caught in emotional situations such as excitement. Codes of "personal elements, psychological elements, romance, personal motivation, past experiences, previous memories, personal association, desire to discover, imagination, storytelling, meaningfulness in the experience, desire for relaxation, negative emotional experiences, emotional stimulants, excitement, emotional experiences, spiritual, impulse, psychological fascination" were revealed from obtained data and were evaluated as "Emotional Experience". The "Emotional Experience" category was created by bringing these codes together and supported with the study by Schmitt (1999a).

Another category that emerged as a result of axial coding can be expressed as "Gastronomic Experience". In line with the data obtained in the study, it was observed that the travelers were interested in some gastronomy products during the Eastern Express trip. Travelers often share their experiences with the food service offered on the train and comment on the food variety. In addition, tourists intensely share their food and beverage photos on social media. In these shares, it was determined that travelers were trying to produce creative gastronomic products such as making fried egg with garlic sausages, making eggs scrambled with tomatoes and green pepper or cooking Turkish coffee in the carriage. It was observed that the physical environment in the compartment and gastronomic products were associated with the shared photographs. Moreover, scientific studies on gastronomic experience in the literature (Quan & Wang, 2004; Sims, 2009; Ceylan, Ceylan, & Yaman, 2018; Çakmak & Altaş, 2018) were examined. The category of "Gastronomic Experience" in the study was created as a result of combining the open codes that emerged as "product experience, food service, food and beverage visuals, associating the physical environment with the gastronomic product, the effort to produce creative gastronomic products, food diversity, local foods" and taking into account the studies in the literature.

Another category created as a result of axial coding was named "Hedonism". When the data obtained in the study were examined, it was determined that the travelers had thoughts about enjoyable/pleasurable activities. Kim, Hallab and Kim (2012) and Kim, Ritchie and McCormick (2012) stated that hedonic factors have an important place among the factors affecting the tourist experience in their studies on memorable tourism experiences. Moreover, Dunman and Mattila (2005), Bohanek et al. (2005), Tung and Ritchie (2011) and Kim (2014) stated in their studies on experiential tourism that the perceived value of the tourist experience is largely determined by hedonic factors. It is also argued that hedonic factors are an important component of a memorable tourism experience. According to the data obtained in the study, it was determined that individuals who experienced Eastern Express travel had extraordinary experiences and were happy with many activities. Moreover, expressions of satisfaction by travelers were frequently encountered and it was observed that they had an escape experience especially in participating in fun activities. The category of hedonism was obtained as a result of the combination of open codes that emerged in the form of "fun, escape, happiness, luxury, the pursuit of satisfaction, comfort, spiritual rest, pleasant memories, participation in activities, self-renewal, peak experiences, post-activity satisfaction, extraordinary experience, satisfaction, extreme appreciation". Moreover, with the literature review, the Hedonism category was supported by Bohanek et al. (2005), Dunman and Mattila (2005), Tung and Ritchie (2011), Kim, Hallab and Kim (2012), Kim, Ritchie, and McCormick (2012) and Kim (2014).

Another category that emerged as a result of axial coding was named "Innovative Experience". When the data obtained in the study were examined, it was observed that there were efforts to differentiate the experience of travelers with some innovative moves. Soylu et al. (2019) emphasized the issue of experience innovation in touristic experiences. Tourists' search for new knowledge, their efforts to create new events, their desire to have different experiences and their interest in surprising experiences are explained by the concept of experience innovation. In the data obtained from the study, it was observed that the travelers were interested in surprising and coincidental experiences. It is thought that travelers who try to create an activity by improvisation tended to produce some creative experiential activities. The Innovative Experience category was created by combining open codes that appeared in the form of "creative designs in compartment decoration, search for innovation, search for new knowledge, variety of activities, random experiences, amazing experiences, improvised activities, creating new activities, creative

gastronomic product creation, effort to make a difference in experience, surprise". Furthermore, the concept of Innovative Experience was found to be compatible with the study conducted by Soylu et al. (2019) that is about experience innovation and supported by the literature.

Another category that emerged as a result of axial coding was named "Authenticity". When the data obtained in the research are examined, it is thought that the travelers were in search of authenticity. Focusing on the concept of authenticity in tourist experiences, Wang (1999) stated that authenticity is an alternative resource in the field of tourism. Moreover, the study emphasized that authenticity can explain a wide variety of tourism experiences. Bhati et al. (2014), who made a study to evaluate historical trains as cultural heritage value, stated that authenticity is one of the key factors identified for the evaluation of these trains as cultural heritage attractions. Anzoise and Malatesta (2010) stated that tourists are looking for a number of experiential products on original activities and authenticity. Focusing on the experiences of individuals traveling for recreational purposes, Chandralal and Valenzuela (2015) stated that travelers had authentic local experiences. In line with the data obtained in the research, it is thought that the individuals participating in the Eastern Express were interested in object-oriented authenticity, some nostalgic experiences, and the atmosphere in the physical environment, aesthetics, thematic formations, artistic activities and many touristic attractions. It was observed that travelers, who enjoyed being in harmony with nature, tended to narrate events and tended to historical motifs. The category of authenticity was obtained by combining the open codes of "aesthetics, lifestyle, atmosphere, nostalgia, storytelling, natural charms, cultural attractiveness, artistic activities, harmony with nature, thematic formation, authenticity related to the object, the story of space, narratives, history-story, the texture of furniture, the attractiveness of stations". Moreover, the category of authenticity was supported by studies highlighting authenticity by Wang (1999), Anzoise and Malatesta (2010), Bhati et al. (2014) and Chandralal and Valenzuela (2015).

Another category that emerged as a result of axial coding was expressed as "Popular Culture". When the data obtained in the study are examined, it is thought that travelers were heavily influenced by popular culture. Doğan et al. (2018) indicated that individuals who do not want to lose their place in the context of popular culture and who are active on social media platforms have more demands for the Eastern Express travel experience. Popular culture is defined as a culture that gains awareness in the society through various tools such as social media, is liked by the majority of the society and is liked by many individuals (Güngör & Uysal, 2019). When the data obtained in the study are examined, it is thought that the decision-making processes of travelers were affected especially by the popularity on social media. In this context, it was observed that the travelers have participated in the Eastern Express trip as a result of the desire to gain prestige in the context of popular culture, the desire to be socially accepted and the experience turning into a trend. The fact that travelers share their experiences intensely on social media platforms can be shown as evidence that they are influenced by popular culture. The Popular Culture category was created by summarizing the open codes "comparison, image, thematization, expectations, feeling of social acceptance, gaining prestige, external factors, snobbism, word of mouth communication, the impact of social media on decision, social media sharing, social perception, trend, intellectual". Moreover, the studies conducted by Doğan et al. (2018) and Güngör and Uysal (2019) are thought to support this category.

Another category that emerged as a result of axial coding was named as "Symbolism". When the data obtained in the study were examined, it was observed that the travelers were in an effort to describe their travel experiences with

certain symbols. Symbolism is defined as the process of creating meaning by making use of certain symbols (Fiske, 1996). Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) approached the concept of consumption from an experiential point of view and stated that the consumption event has a symbolic meaning. Furthermore, Addis and Holbrook (2001) emphasized the dominance of symbolism in consumption activity. In line with the data obtained in the research, it is thought that travelers had the desire to make sense of their travel experiences with certain symbols. Taking pictures with the Eastern Express written signboard, taking photographs of the train from the outside while on the move, social media posts for interior and exterior design, decoration activity using various motifs and interest in landscapes have taken place in the majority of the data obtained. These special symbols for the Eastern Express travel are thought to symbolize the travel experiences of the travelers. The symbolism category emerged as a result of combining the open codes of "brand experience, signs, motif, decoration, exterior photograph of the train, winter landscape, decoration, exterior design, interior design, snow view, landscape" with axial coding method. The concept of "Symbolism", which was created in this context and defined by Fiske (1996) as the process of creating meaning by making use of some symbols and signs, was supported with studies by Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) and Addis and Holbrook (2001).

The last category emerging as a result of axial coding can be expressed as "Social Interaction". When the data obtained in the study were examined, it was observed that the travelers interacted socially at many points during their travels. The concept of social interaction, which is one of the motivational elements of the experience put forward by Aho (2001), is cited as one of the basic needs of people. When defining experiential tourism, OECD (2002) emphasized that individuals interact with cultural features and environmental factors in the region they visit. Babb (2011) emphasized social interaction in experiential tourism, which she explains as sharing different ways of life away from routine daily life. Mitchell and Orwig (2002) argued that the social interaction that occurs during the experimental activity is one of the factors to be taken into account in the production of experiential tourist products. Bideci (2018) stated social interaction as one of the external factors affecting the tourist experience. Walls et al. (2011) listed social interaction among the factors that affect tourist experiences. Focusing on the experiences of individuals traveling for recreational purposes, Chandralal and Valenzuela (2015) indicated that social interaction is a component of the travel experience. In the light of the data obtained from the study, it can be said that travelers enjoyed participating in common entertainment during their travels, had a tendency to be in touch with society, took some social and relational initiatives, and were interested in cultural factors. The Social Interaction category emerged as a result of the combination of open codes of "relational experience, social experience, cultural interaction, being with the community, social relations, participation in activities, local culture, communitation, hospitality, common entertainment, interaction with the co-socio-cultural group." Furthermore, literature on the concept of Social Interaction was reviewed and it was observed that the tourist experience has been emphasized in the studies conducted by Aho (2001), Mitchell and Orwig (2002), OECD (2002), Babb (2011), Walls et al. (2011), Chandralal and Valenzuela (2015), and Bideci (2018).

In line with the data obtained within the scope of the research, the axial coding process was completed. As a result of the coding process carried out by two different experts and researchers, selective coding was made for the categories determined by taking into account the opinions of the experts, and eight categories were combined with the selective coding technique. The resulting categories were compared with similar studies in the literature. With the analysis results of the data obtained in the research, expert opinions and the support of the literature, it was

determined that the "Train Tourism Experience" consists of eight components. The theoretical model of "Train Tourism Experience" developed substantially within the scope of the research is given in Figure 2.

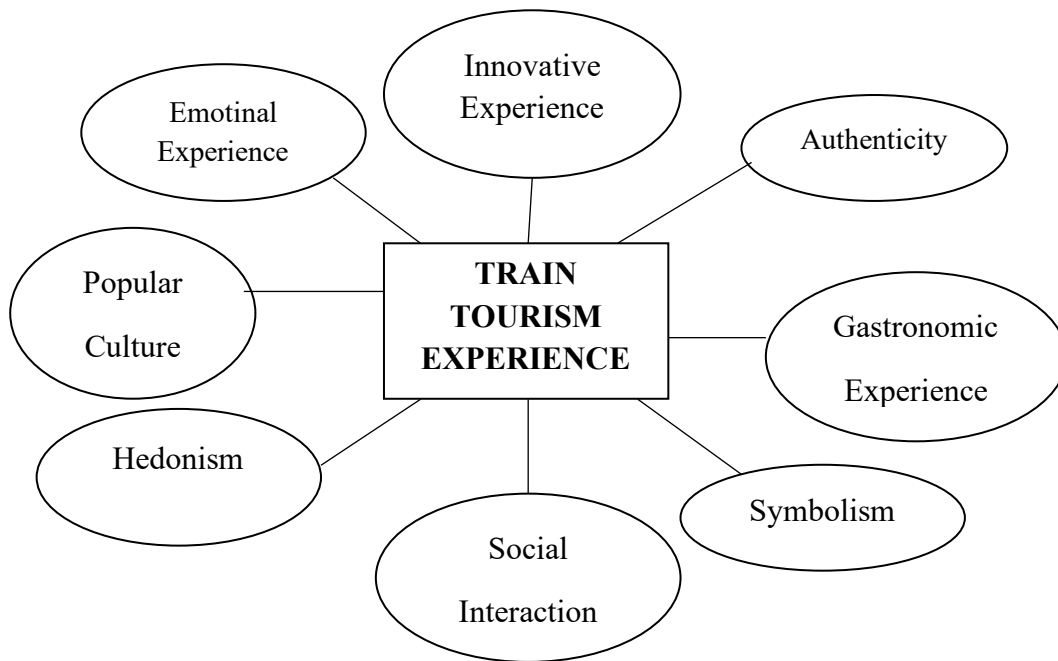


Figure 2. Theoretical Model of Train Tourism Experience

The theory of "Train Tourism Experience" developed in line with the data obtained as a result of the research has a substantive character. The theory of "Train Tourism Experience" developed in the research shows a substantive theory feature as a low-level theoretical approach rather than a general approach based on the interpretations of researchers and experts. In this direction, it can be stated that the theory that emerged in the research does not have a structure that can be generalized and has no abstract quality. The generalization of this theory can only be possible with proof studies with quantitative methods. In this context, it is thought that the theory of "Train Tourism Experience" consists of eight components: "Emotional Experience, Gastronomic Experience, Hedonism, Innovative Experience, Authenticity, Popular Culture, Symbolism, and Social Interaction".

Discussion

When the studies in the field of experiential tourism are examined, it has been determined that the studies on the travel experience for train tourism are limited. In this direction, the research is thought to have a unique value. In this context, the research was designed for the concept of train tourism, based on the experiential tourism understanding. The main purpose of this study, which focused on the experience of train tourism, was to develop a substantive theory for this experience.

In line with the data obtained in the research, the components that make up the train tourism experience were compared with the literature. The category of "Emotional Experience" that emerged in the study is similar to the "Emotional Experience" module, which is among the "Strategic Experiential Modules" determined by Schmitt (1999a) and was described as revealing experiences that can create some emotional impact related to the product or image. In line with the data obtained in the study, it was observed that the travelers were interested in some

gastronomy products during the Eastern Express trip. Besides, scientific studies on gastronomy experience (Quan & Wang, 2004; Sims, 2009; Ceylan, Ceylan, & Yaman, 2018; Çakmak & Altaş, 2018) were examined and it was decided that the concept of "Gastronomic Experience" is a component of the train tourism experience. The concept of "Hedonism", which is thought to be another component of the train tourism experience, is among the components of experiential tourism and show similarity with the studies conducted by Bohanek et al. (2005), Dunman and Mattila (2005), Tung and Ritchie (2011), Kim, Hallab and Kim (2012), Kim, Ritchie, and McCormick (2012) and Kim (2014).

When the data obtained in the study were examined, it was observed that there were efforts to differentiate the experience of travelers with some innovative moves. The "Innovative Experience" component created in this direction is similar to the study conducted by Soylu et al. (2019) on experience innovation. When the data obtained in the research are examined, it is thought that the travelers are in search of authenticity. The "Authenticity" component created in this context show similarity to the studies conducted by Wang (1999), Anzoise and Malatesta (2010), Bhati et al. (2014), Chandralal and Valenzuela (2015) with an emphasis on authenticity.

When the data obtained in the study are examined, it is thought that travelers are heavily influenced by popular culture. The studies conducted by Doğan et al. (2018) and Güngör and Uysal (2019) supported the "Popular Culture" component created in this direction. When the data obtained in the study were examined, it was observed that the travelers were in an effort to describe their travel experiences with certain symbols. The "Symbolism" component, which was created in this context and defined as the process of creating meaning by using certain symbols by Fiske (1996), was supported by the studies conducted by Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) and Addis and Holbrook (2001). When the data obtained in the study were examined, it was observed that the travelers interacted socially at many points during their travels. The "Social Interaction" component, which was created in this context and is among the motivational elements of the experience put forward by Aho (2001), has been highlighted in studies conducted by the Mitchell and Orwig (2002), OECD (2002), Babb (2011), Walls et al. (2011), Chandralal and Valenzuela (2015) and Bideci (2018).

Future Research

In the research, a substantive theoretical model was designed by combining the categories with the selective coding process after the axial coding process for open codes. The substantive theoretical model that emerged in this context was named "Train Tourism Experience". The model developed under the name of Train Tourism Experience consists of eight components named "Emotional Experience, Gastronomic Experience, Hedonism, Innovative Experience, Authenticity, Popular Culture, Symbolism and Social Interaction". It can be stated that the theoretical model obtained as a result of the research does not have a structure that can be generalized and does not have an abstract character, since it has a substantive quality. In line with the research results, some suggestions for future research are presented.

- In order for this substantive theoretical model developed within the scope of the research to have a generalization feature, it can be said that proof studies should be done with quantitative methods. In this context, the most important suggestion that can be made as a result of the research is that this model developed with a scale development study should be tested.

- It is thought that TCDD Taşımacılık Incorporated Company, which is the only authorized institution in terms of the management and organization of railway activities in Turkey, offers enriched experiences for the consumers it addresses, and it is thought that the organization can benefit from the advantages of experiential marketing. Moreover, it is thought that it would be correct for travel agencies serving with the concept of train tourism to act in the same direction. In this context, it is thought that the organization and commercial enterprises should examine the tourist experiences and take action to complete the existing deficiencies.
- In the research, it was determined that innovative experiences attracted a lot of attention. In this context, it is thought that there is a need for studies on new activities that can create a difference in the perceptions of tourists. Furthermore, it is thought that sustainable differentiation can be created by generating and presenting unique experiences that can be remembered by tourists.
- In line with the data obtained from the research, it was observed that social media was very effective in the travel decision-making process. In the light of this information, it is thought that academic and commercial web-based studies should be emphasized.
- It is thought that the research gives partial support in filling the gap in the literature with the "Train Tourism" section. In this context, it is thought that academic studies are needed to expand the literature on Train Tourism.
- Relating the theoretical model of "Train Tourism Experience" developed as a result of the research with the developed theories about the experience in the literature is considered important in terms of contribution to the literature. In this context, it is thought that academic studies are needed for the theory of train tourism experience, which emphasize the obtained experiences, argue that these experiences are an important factor in the formation of individuals' selves, and evaluate this within the scope of expanded self-theory. The expanded self-theory was introduced into the literature by Belk (1988). This theory is defined as the perceptions, evaluations, and beliefs of individuals, who take shape since birth, develop with social relations, differ from individual to individual, accumulate memories obtained from experiences and are heavily influenced by the gained experiences.

Declaration

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Appendix: Open Codes

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| 1. Entertainment | 53. External Factors |
| 2. Education | 54. Imagination |
| 3. Escape | 55. Storytelling |
| 4. Aesthetics | 56. Spiritual Recreation |
| 5. Product Experience | 57. Delightful Memories |
| 6. Service Experience | 58. The Quest for Innovation |
| 7. Brand Experience | 59. Seeking New Information |
| 8. Hedonism | 60. Meaningfulness in the Experience |
| 9. Symbolic Factors / Symbolism | 61. Participation in Events |
| 10. Creative Designs in Compartment Decoration | 62. Local Culture |
| 11. Happiness | 63. The Desire for Freshness / Relaxation |
| 12. Comparison | 64. Negative Emotional Experiences |
| 13. Sensory | 65. Emotional Stimulants |
| 14. Emotional | 66. Sense of Excitement |
| 15. Relational | 67. Snobbism |
| 16. Behavioral | 68. Self-Renewal |
| 17. Cognitive | 69. Harmony with Nature |
| 18. Intellectual | 70. Communitation |
| 19. Lifestyle | 71. Motif |
| 20. Atmosphere | 72. Thematic Formation |
| 21. Relationship | 73. Authenticity |
| 22. Image | 74. Object-Related Authenticity |
| 23. Social Experience | 75. Peak Experiences |
| 24. Security | 76. Post-Activity Satisfaction |
| 25. Nostalgia | 77. Extraordinary Experience |
| 26. Thematisation | 78. Word of Mouth Communication |
| 27. Narration | 79. Satisfaction |
| 28. Social Interaction | 80. Social Experiences |
| 29. Cultural Interaction | 81. The Story of Space |
| 30. Personal Elements | 82. Narratives |
| 31. Psychological Elements | 83. Diversity of Activities |
| 32. Romance | 84. Hospitality |
| 33. Personal Motivation | 85. The Effect of Social Media on the Decision |
| 34. Past Experiences | 86. Social Media Sharing |
| 35. Previous Memories | 87. Experiences with Personal Benefit |
| 36. Expectations | 88. Random Experiences |
| 37. Sense of Social Acceptance | 89. Surprising Experiences |
| 38. Earning Prestige | 90. History-Story |
| 39. Luxury | 91. Decoration |
| 40. Being with the Community | 92. Route |
| 41. Learning | 93. Exterior Photograph of the Train |
| 42. Seeking Satisfaction | 94. Common Entertainment |
| 43. Informative Experience | 95. Food Service |
| 44. Transformational Experience | 96. Food and Beverage Images |
| 45. Comfort | 97. Entertainment Areas |
| 46. Natural Attractions | 98. Special Interest |
| 47. Cultural Attractions | 99. Associating Physical Environment with |
| 48. Personal Association | Gastronomic Product |
| 49. Signs | 100. Train Facilities |
| 50. Social Relations | 101. Rest |
| 51. Artistic Activities | 102. Winter Landscape |
| 52. Desire to Discover | 103. Popular Culture |

104. Decoration
105. Social Perception
106. Travel Time
107. Technical Opportunities Offered
108. Privacy
109. Gastronomic Experience
110. Service Provided
111. Innovative Experience
112. Improvisation Activities
113. Trend
114. Intellectual
115. Spiritual
116. Impulse
117. Adoption
118. Creating a New Activity
119. Service Concept
120. Sincerity
121. Exterior Design
122. Interior Design
123. Cleaning
124. Creative Effort to Produce Gastronomic Products
125. Physical Tissue
126. Food Diversity
127. Local Foods
128. Snow Landscape
129. Over-Liking
130. Advising
131. Making Suggestions
132. Interaction with Co-Socio-Cultural Group
133. Psychological Fascination
134. Landscape
135. Digital Addiction Awareness
136. The Effort to Make a Difference in Experience
137. Surprise
138. Attractiveness of Stations



**T.C.
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Konu: Etik Kurul Kararı

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	<p>Aşağıda bilgileri verilen proje ile ilgili çalışmanın, etik ilkeler açısından değerlendirilmesi isteği ile ilgili husus görüşüldü.</p> <p>Yapılan görüşmelerden sonra; söz konusu projeyle alakalı yapılacak çalışma için, araştırmanın gerekçe, amaç, yaklaşım ve yöntemleri dikkate alınarak konuyla ilgili çalışmanın gerçekleştirilmesinde etik ve bilimsel yönden sakınca bulunmadığına, Etik Kurulu oy birliği ile karar vermiştir.</p>	
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