

An Evaluation of Albanian Adriatic Sea Cost Destinations to Better Understand Tourist Motivations and their Profiles

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Abstract: - Albania offers spectacular natural beauty and a profound cultural inheritance, making it a booming destination for domestic and international tourists. This article examines and contrasts the tourism segments of three main coastal destinations in Albania: Vlora, Shkodër and Durrës. It aims to identify differences in tourist typology based on travel motivation, travel behaviour, and key factors influencing the choice of destination. The research employs the methods of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and cluster analysis on a sample of 653 visitors who participated in a structured online survey conducted in Albanian (targeting visitors from Albanian-speaking countries) and came from Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro, and the Republic of North Macedonia. Factor analysis suggests that there are mutual expectations of the quality of service and common motivational themes (leisure and cultural exploration) across the three countries. (It is evidenced that) Durrës has a cultural-social orientation, Vlorë emphasises nature, and Shkodër has a more complex and multidimensional motivational framework. Such findings suggest that tourism strategies should be tailored to accommodate the unique character of each place while maintaining consistent service quality. For all destinations, cluster analysis separates two major tourist segments: (1) high engagement as well as premium tourists who seek a wide range of experiences, and (2) low engagement and goal-oriented tourists with narrow preferences. The services offered by the coast remain the primary driver, despite the diverse characteristics of the destination. Dual-tier service models and targeted marketing strategies for experience- and efficiency-oriented tourists are brought out by the findings. The study reveals a structural contrast dichotomy between high and low levels of participation as a distinctive feature of Albanian coastal tourism.

Key-Words: - Tourist segmentation, premium tourists, goal-oriented tourists, Factor Analysis (EFA), quality of service and motivational themes

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1 Introduction

Albania, with its stunning natural beauty and fascinating cultural history, is progressively emerging as a new Mediterranean tourism destination. This tendency has become progressively apparent over the last two years, with numerous regions attaining heightened significance as prominent tourism attractions. These destinations attract both domestic and foreign tourists in search of diverse experiences, encompassing rural, nature, eco- and cultural tourism. This type of tourism growth is crucial, as through responsible practices preserve natural and cultural resources, create employment opportunities, and enhance the overall well-being of destination communities.

The significance of the nation's tourist sector is becoming evident in the economic context, as evidence gathered from economic models indicates substantial growth that implies pronounced effects on economic development. The World Tourism Organization's study in 2024, discovered that accommodation and food service activities elevated their GDP contribution from approximately 2.9% in 2019 to about 4.2% by 2023, highlighting the expanding significance of tourism in the economy. INSTAT data for the fourth quarter of 2024 indicate a 10.3% rise in net revenues and an 8.3% growth in employment within the accommodation and food service sector. The rising influx of tourists to Albania's main destinations reflects the country's burgeoning worldwide appeal and the demand for diverse tourism experiences that highlight its various traits.

In the highly competitive environment of the Mediterranean tourism sector, comprehending the motivations driving tourist behaviour and the sub-segments within the tourist demographic is essential for establishing effective destination management and marketing techniques. This requirement has prompted a shift in scholarly focus towards investigating tourist motivation as a precondition for comprehending travel behavior and processes of selecting destinations. The established theoretical framework for these investigations is grounded in the push-pull theory, initially introduced in [1], which contends that tourists are driven by inner psychological prerequisites (push factors) and extrinsic destination characteristics (pull factors). This established framework has been extensively utilized in tourism research to analyze the intricate processes influencing visitors' location selections and the nature of experiences they pursue.

To implement this theoretical framework, modern travel and tourism research utilizes advanced combinatorial techniques, especially

factor analysis, to derive hidden motivational dimensions from intricate survey data, integrating various variables into consistent and interpretable variables. The component scores are utilized as input for cluster analysis, enabling researchers to differentiate various tourist typologies based on their comprehensive motivational and demographic profiles. This rigorous methodology provides substantial insights for tourism designers., facilitating the personalization of products and marketing methods aligned with the distinct goals and motivations of each recognized typology.

In this wider environment, Albania's three main coastal cities— Vlorë, Shkodër and Durrës — exhibit distinct traits and attractions that enhance Albania's varied tourism portfolio. The Adriatic coastal city of Durrës, impeccably integrates history and modernity with its scenic sandy beaches, establishing it as the principal seaport of the country. Vlore, situated at the unique bond of the Adriatic and Ionian Seas, is notable for its remarkable natural beauty and its significant contribution to the nation's quest for freedom. Shkodër, a cultural and historical asset, functions as an access point to the Albanian Riviera and the Albanian Alps, harmonizing cultural engagement with nature discovery.

Despite the growing strategic significance of these places for the Albanian tourism sector, there is a paucity of evidence-based studies to elucidate the motivational factors influencing visitor behaviour and the patterns related to the segmentation of a particular tourist demography. Targeted marketing and destination management techniques which increase tourist satisfaction and the destination's competitiveness are hindered by this information gap. Evaluating various destinations within a unified study framework provides considerable methodological and practical benefits, enabling the identification of behavioral similarities among visitors across different regions, while accounting for local differences and formulating customized strategies for each destination. Comparative research also improves our theoretical understanding of tourist motivation by systematically studying how destination variables affect key motivational factors and results in behavior.

This study examines the established knowledge gap through a comprehensive comparative analysis of tourist motivations and segmentation systems in Durrës, Vlorë, and Shkodër, offering both theoretical and practical insights for tourism development strategies in Albania. Albania's aspiration to emerge as a competitive destination in

the Mediterranean requires an in-depth understanding of tourist motivations and behaviors. This knowledge is essential for encouraging sustainable tourism development and implementing effective marketing strategies in an increasingly flooded regional market.

This study paper raise two research questions:

1. What are the internal and external reasons for tourists to select a destination?
2. How the tourist's segmentations differ in Durrës, Vlorë and Shkodra in terms of demographics and motivation attributes?

This paper's distinction between high and low interaction along the Albanian coast is not an easy count. This approach addresses structural variability, which has been shown to be generalizable by analyzing different locations.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Motivation Factors for Tourism and Consumer Behaviour

Sociologists, anthropologists, and psychologists are interested in tourist motivation [1], [2], [3]. Travel motivations are a significant determinant of tourist behavior. Tourists demonstrate diverse motivations for interregional travel. Motivation significantly affects an individual's travel decisions, influenced by intrinsic factors and the attractive features of destinations. [4].

2.2 Structure of Push and Pull Factors

Push and pull factors are crucial to understanding visitor motivation. Push factors influence or generate a motive, according to the study [5]. The reasons for escaping and seeking, which simultaneously affect individuals' leisure are the the main motivational factors influencing leisure or tourism behavior [6], [7].

Push and pull factors function within different time frames; nonetheless, they are interconnected rather than independent [8]. There are two interrelated steps in the decision-making process: first, consumers are motivated to act by internal needs; second, they are directed toward specific possibilities by external resources. The process may take place either in a conscious manner or on a subconscious level [8]. The concrete aspects of the destination, such as tourist attractions and elements linked with tourism, have the greatest influence on the primary motivator of interest. Moreover, motivation acts as a crucial element, enabling a person's inner desire to exceed their

everyday activities, leisure, personal growth, status, and social connections with loved ones [8].

2.3 Research on the Motivations of Tourists

A number of studies have been conducted in a variety of circumstances to investigate these motivating variables. Several aspects impacting visitors' choices to visit the South Korean national park were investigated in [8]. In a comparable way, [9] created a model that examines the motivations and perceptions of Portuguese tourists, clarifying the connection between these two elements. The desire to escape from a monotonous surroundings is the key motivator for local tourists. "Meeting spiritual needs" is an essential motivator for international travelers visiting Jordan, according to [10]. However, a number of studies have shown that the domestic market is not well segmented, that there aren't many unique demands, and that there isn't a wide variety of products and services available [11], [12].

2.4 From a business perspective, the impact of Social Media

Economically, rational consumer choice is founded on the expectation of advantages from meeting a need. Services, not products, are the focus in tourism, therefore testing is unnecessary. Thus, social media tourism promotion advertising strategies influence consumer destination choices. Since many ads go unseen, the judgment is based only on the commercials' expectations, which are likely effective. [13].

Tourism is heavily influenced by social media. Companies need a solid social media strategy since user-generated material typically trumps official information., [13].

2.5 Market Segmentation as a Strategic Tool

Research indicates that market segmentation functions as a strategy that allows destinations to enhance marketing programs aimed at distinctly identifiable consumer segments. Market segmentation functions as a strategic marketing tool, enabling marketers to discern potential consumer preferences and spending behaviors., [14], [15], [16], [17].

Demographic data, behavioral patterns, opinions, and product responses can be used to segment customers and improve strategic efficacy in a competitive market, according to [18]. This approach worked well in [14], which used motivation to categorize visitors to three Kenyan

National Parks into escapers, learners, and spiritualizers.

Recent studies show an increasingly important role for computational modelling, simulations, and experimental validation, especially to enhance segmentation and demand-analysis results. Those studies concern push–pull motivation analyses of the Albanian domestic tourism, [19], an econometric assessment of tourism–growth dynamics in Albania, [20], and Grey-model forecasting of tourist arrivals, [21]. Complementary studies with systems orientations present simulation modelling as a powerful method for scenario testing and appraisal, as seen in [22]. This clearly supports the incorporation of a comparative synthesis (Table 4), a comparison of factors' structure (Table 5), and a computational modelling framework enabling simulation robustness checks against segmentation.

3 Methodology

This study employs a positivist quantitative method to analyse travel motivations and behaviour patterns that influence destination selection in three coastal tourism sites in the Adriatic region: Durrës, Vlorë, and Shkodër. In this approach, primary data are collected through structured questionnaires. In contrast, existing literature provides secondary data, which enables a deeper understanding of tourist behaviour without imposing the researchers' subjectivity and minimising their interpretative bias. The instrument was developed in an orderly manner based on a careful literature review. It was operationalised in the Google Form format to facilitate online access for a population widely dispersed geographically. The questionnaire has been translated into Albanian to enable its application to the target groups in Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro, and North Macedonia in a language-sensitive and culture-specific manner.

The instrument is three and includes the demographic Part that relates to gender, age, education level, and monthly salary; the behavioural pattern assessment and the motivation assessment are employed with 25 items measuring push-pull factors per the established tourism research frameworks, [8], [9], [12], [13], [23], [24]. An adapted 25-item instrument to measure the push-pull factors from prior work, [25], was applied to Albanian domestic tourists. This study extended the same framework to include a number of coastal destinations and a wider cross-border sample for comparative segmentation. Five-point Likert scales have been used for all types of constructs, indicating the extent to which participants agree or disagree with the statement, ranging from "strongly disagree"

to "agree strongly." Thus, the metric properties for all the constructs are uniform. In this study, a simple random sampling approach is used to guarantee that each case in the target population has an equal probability of being selected, in this way sample representation is enhanced and selection bias is reduced. The sample comprised 653 respondents, with 240 from Shkodër, 210 from Durrës and 203 from Vlorë, which was acceptable for complex multivariate studies. A cross-border sampling methodology, that uses the same instrument in three places, improves robustness and methodological clarity increasing generalizability beyond individual case evaluations.

In this study is utilized a multi-step methodology, which start with Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation, which was applied to all destinations, to identify the main elements of motivation and the service quality perception. For all destinations, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin values results over 0.8, and a significant Bartlett's sphericity test ($p < 0.001$), suggest data and factor analytic process suitability. Hierarchical cluster analysis was performed to determine the optimal number of clusters, followed by K-means clustering to classify cases into different motivation segments. To situate these motivational segments within overlapping socio-demographic compositions, cross-tabulation comparisons with Pearson's Chi-Square tests were conducted to examine differences in cluster membership and the major socio-demographic characteristics, including gender, age, education, income, marital status, accommodation type, and occasion for the trip. This method provides an in-depth analysis of destination-specific tourist behaviour and preference structures within demographic contexts.

Although not addressed in the present analysis, this framework outlines several methodological scenarios for extending the generality of findings by validating the high-low engagement dichotomy. Different scenarios could either test the robustness of segmentation results with resampling techniques, study the response of cluster stability under different specifications, or simulate shocks to demand using various forecasting models such as Grey GM^r (1,1) or ARIMA, after such inclusion becomes standard practice in whatever future analysis.

This research builds upon the previous study on the formulation of motivations for domestic tourists in Albania, [25], which used the push-pull framework for a general sample of domestic visitors, and studies of tourism supply in the Vlorë region, [26]. Unlike these studies, we will conduct a comparative segmentation across three destinations

(Durrës, Vlorë, and Shkodër) in this paper, contributing a multi-site demand-side perspective.

4 Results and Discussion

4.1 Push and Pull Motivation Factors Driving Tourist Decisions in Durrës, Vlorë, and Shkodër

The outcomes of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Table 1) validate the appropriateness of the dataset for conducting Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) in all three locations—Durrës, Vlorë, and Shkodër. The values of KMO for push and pull factors varied from 0.839 to 0.914, indicating an excellent sample were significantly above the acceptable threshold of adequacy. The values of KMO for Durrës are 0.839 for push factors and 0.900 for pull factors, while the KMO values for Vlorë and Shkodër are even higher, respectively 0.86 and 0.90. Furthermore, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is highly significant ($p < 0.001$) across all destinations, indicating that the correlation matrices are not identity matrices and that adequate correlations exist among the variables. These findings collectively corroborate the application of factor analysis in discerning the fundamental motivational factors of tourists at each location.

Table 1. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Results

Destination	KMO Value Push Factors	KMO Value Pull Factors	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Push & Pull factors)
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Durres	0.839	0.900	$p < 0.001$
Vlore	0.861	0.914	$p < 0.001$
Shkoder	0.862	0.907	$p < 0.001$

Source: Created by the authors

The results of the factor analysis (Table 2, Appendix) indicate the presence of distinct motivational structures across the three coastal destinations. While common themes of relaxation, cultural and social exploration, wellness, and social interaction recurred, the configuration at each site is specific: Durrës emphasises relaxation along with cultural exploration; Vlorë mixes culture with wellness and nature; while Shkodër combines wellness and cultural exploration with heavier

motives for social connection. The results show both common motivational dimensions and destination-specialised patterns that influence visitor choice.

The destination reliability and service quality have therefore emerged as a single, dominant factor to which all of the motivations can be placed: safety, hygiene, value for money, and information systems. This shows (Table 3) that tourists in Durrës, Vlorë, and Shkodër seem to agree that reliable services and the quality of the destination are very much at the core of their travel experience.

Table 3. Exploratory Factor Analysis of Pull Motivation Factors Among Tourists in Durrës, Vlorë, and Shkodër

Destination	Factor Structure		Factor Loading
Durrës	60.1% of the total variance explained	Destination Reliability and Service Quality	Safety and security (0.865, 0.852)
			Hygiene and cleanliness (0.853)
			Value for money (0.818, 0.807)
			Tourist information systems (0.772)
Vlorë	62.1% of the total variance explained	Destination Reliability and Service Quality	Tourist protection (0.879)
			Safety (0.852)
			Tourist information systems (0.840)
			Value for money (0.827)
Shkodër	60.1% of the total variance explained	Perceived Destination Reliability	Hygiene standards (0.780)
			Safety (0.885)
			Tourist protection (0.879)
			Value for money (0.829)
			Hygiene standards (0.823)
			Tourist information systems (0.813)

Source: Created by the authors

4.2 Results of Tourist Segmentation in Durrës, Vlorë, and Shkodër

Cluster analysis performed for Durrës indicates the existence of two separate tourist segments. The first segment (Figure 1), comprising 59% of the sample,

is labelled as "High-Engagement Coastal Tourists." They show above-average scores on all motivational dimensions, indicating strong interest in diverse and quality-oriented experiences beyond basic coastal attractions. The second segment is characterised by equal gender and age balance, higher education, and a strong interest in coastal tourism. The second segment (41%) represents "Basic Coastal Tourists." They show below-average engagement in motivational dimensions and exhibit behaviour characterised by simple, price-sensitive choices relating to basic coastal activities. They are similar to Cluster 1 demographically, but with lower expectations, therefore customized products may engage them.

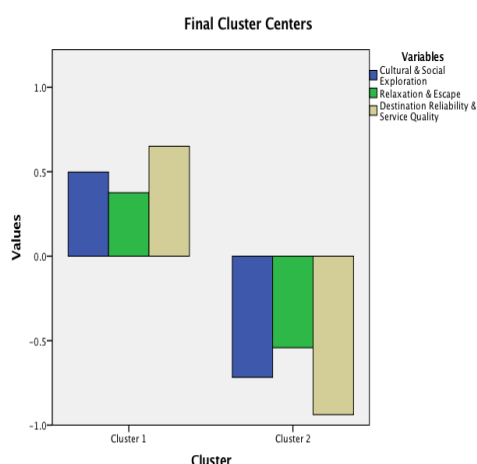


Fig. 1: Durrës Segmentation
Source: Created by the authors

The cluster analysis applied to Vlorë indicates two distinct tourist segments (Figure 2). The first segment, identified as "Engaged Premium Tourists" represents 63% of incidents. They scored above average across all motivational aspects, including strong engagement, diverse interests and high expectations, in various destination experiences. This group is represented by young people, with single status, and with higher income. They also have a strong orientation to the coast from a demographic perspective. Concerning the second segment, identified as "Selective Basic Tourists" represents 37% of incidents. They have lower motivating engagement and simpler efficiency-seeking expectations. They tend to be older, more often married with children, and more selective and price-conscious in their attendance at any given tourism activity. The contrasts in demographic characteristics between the clusters are significant and reflect their separate market profiles."

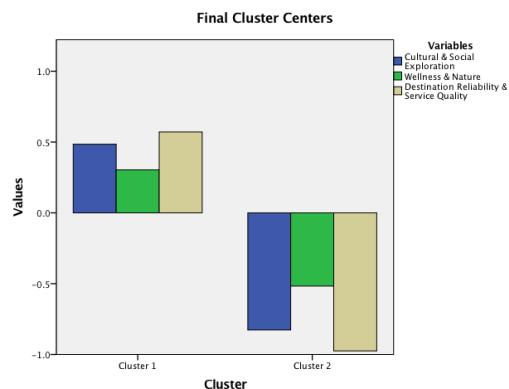


Fig. 2: Vlorë Segmentation
Source: Created by the authors

Cluster analysis performed for Shkodër indicates the existence of two separate tourist segments (Figure 3). Together with 52% of the qualification, the first segment is named 'Multidimensional Tourists'. These are the individuals whose motivation and interaction measure high across all dimensions: cultural, natural, and experiential interests. They have set more refined expectations and tend to enjoy longer stays, indulging in many activities at a time. The second segment accounts for 48% of our sample. Dubbed 'Streamlined Tourists', they sustain below-average engagement across all dimensions. Their approach is still evident in the rational, efficiency-oriented manner of tourism: somehow related to business, transit, or repeat visits, they functionally seek maximum experiences.

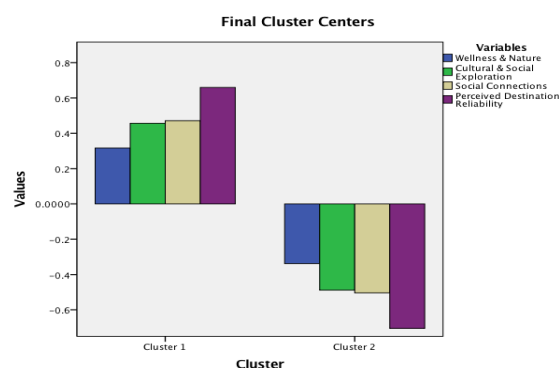


Fig. 3: Shkodër Segmentation
Source: Created by the authors

4.3 Comparative Patterns of Tourist Segmentation

Table 4 and Table 5 compare the substantial differences in tourist segments and the push-pull motivational structures of the three destinations, which form a short synthesis, as detailed above in the cluster results.

Table 4. Comparative Overview of Tourist Segmentation Across Destinations

Nr	Destination	Segment 1 (High Engagement)	Segment 2 (Low Engagement)	Representative Traits
1	Durrës	High-Engagement Coastal Tourists	Basic Coastal Tourists	Differ mainly in motivation breadth, but demographics are homogeneous
2	Vlorë	Engaged Premium Tourists	Selective Basic Tourists	Differ in age, income, and marital status (significant demographic segmentation)
3	Shkodër	Multidimensional Tourists	Streamlined Tourists	Differ in motivational complexity; gender plays a marginal role

Source: Created by the authors

Table 5. Comparative Analysis of Push–Pull Factor Frameworks Across Destinations

Nr.	Destination	Push Factors (variance explained)	Pull Factors	Distinctive Feature
1	Durrës	Cultural & Social Exploration; Relaxation & Escape (≈59.7%)	Destination Reliability & Service Quality	Homogeneous visitor base
2	Vlorë	Cultural & Social Exploration; Wellness & Nature (≈57.7%)	Destination Reliability & Service Quality	Demographically diverse segmentation
3	Shkodër	Wellness & Nature; Cultural & Social Exploration; Social Connections (≈68.9%)	Perceived Destination Reliability	Most complex motivational structure

Source: Created by the authors

Beyond merely presenting clusters descriptively, results show pronounced structural regularity across destinations. A recurrent framework of dual clusters emerges that constantly divides tourists into groups of high engagement and low engagement. This tenet is not a chance finding but denotes a deeper structural law of segmentation. On the other hand, symmetry is apparent in the mirror distributions of one site across clusters: engaged groups (High-Engagement Coastal Tourists, Engaged Premium Tourists, Multidimensional Tourists) shared quality-oriented and diversified motivations, while streamlined groups (Basic Coastal Tourists, Selective Basic Tourists, Streamlined Tourists) gravitated towards more limited utilitarian motivations. This parallel allows the raw enumeration to be condensed into families of tourist profiles, thus minimising redundancy and accentuating the fundamental order underlying the seemingly heterogeneous data. Therefore, cluster analysis, which separates groups, also demonstrates that Albanian coastal tourism is structured around a small number of repeat forms of motivation.

4.4 Discussion of the Analysis Findings

The synthesis above shows that for Durrës, Vlorë, and Shkodër, the segmentation results tend to coalesce around a dual-clustering structure. The local demographic differences notwithstanding, the data confirm that the principal distinction is not destination-related but structural: tourists repeatedly fall into two broad categories, defined in terms of their engagement and breadth of motivation.

Higher engagement profiles fit the first family: High-Engagement Coastal Tourists in Durrës, Engaged Premium Tourists in Vlorë, and Multidimensional Tourists in Shkodër. They are quality-seeking, broad-motivated tourists pursuing diverse cultural, natural, and social experiences. They are often well-educated, Part of a broad demographic representation, and are willing to invest in a long or varied stay.

The second family is composed of low-engagement profiles: Basic Coastal Tourists, Selective Basic Tourists, and Streamlined Tourists. These are pragmatic and narrowly motivated visitors; their preferences are guided by convenience, cost sensitivity, or some specifically functional purpose, such as short coastal visits, repeat travel, or business-related stay. These tourists, by their very behaviour, suggest efficiency-oriented choices rather than engagement-driven exploration.

Putting everything together, these data suggest that high-and-low engagement differentiation is a structural characteristic of coastal tourism in Albania and not just incidental due to local variations. Though the demographic correlates (age, marital status, income, and gender) vary from one destination to another, the broader two-family framework remains invariant.

While some factor structures, such as "Relaxation & Escape" and "Cultural & Social Exploration", were also suggested by [25], the present study differs from the above in demonstrating that these motivational dimensions recur systematically across destinations, creating a structural high-low engagement dichotomy. The comparative generalisation stands as a new contribution above and beyond prior single-context analyses.

This insight raises the analysis above the level of descriptive segmentation: it shows that Albanian coastal destinations share a structural pattern that is generalisable and hence pertinent for tourism policy, destination branding, and service differentiation.

Research found out that Vlorë has varied demographic trends across marital status, age, and income, resulting in various tourist profiles. Shkodër has moderate segmentation, with gender playing a minimal role, while Durrës has a more uniform visitor base. Vlorë, unlike other places, mixed hotels and holiday homes, while Durrës and Shkodër favored holiday homes. However, coastal tourism remained the main aim throughout all places.

Durrës, Vlorë, and Shkodër cluster analysis reveals common and unique tourist segmentation trends for each destination. All three destinations exhibit The dual-cluster structure of the three destinations distinguishes high-engagement tourists, who seek diverse and quality experiences, from low-engagement tourists, who travel for practical purposes. The cluster composition and characteristics vary greatly by destination. In conclusion, all destinations have high and low engagement clusters, but their motivators and demographic characteristics vary. The insights enable it to customise its service delivery, infrastructure strategy and marketing to its tourist segmentation environment.

While enumeration ensures completeness, the main finding show that varied clusters lead to a few repeated structures. The high-low engagement dichotomy shows that segmentations focuses on structural regularities and not in random variances. Recognising these forms moves the study from description to interpretation by linking empirical data to tourism behaviour theory.

5 Conclusions

A robust structure ($KMO > 0.8$) is identified in the factor analysis conducted in Vlorë, Shkodër and Durrës. The main priorities highlighting including hygiene, value for money, safety and accurate tourist information. Common motivations consist on relaxation and cultural exploration, however each destination points out various aspects: Durrës prioritizes cultural and social interaction, whereas Shkodër highlights social interaction; Vlorë focus on wellness linked to nature and heritage.

Cluster analysis identifies different segmentation trends: Durrës offers a more unified profile, Vlorë show demographic distinctions related to lifecycle and Shkodër shows diverse experiences. These findings suggest that each destination has a personality of its own, which would offer a basis for differentiated development and marketing of tourism. A prevalent theme among various destinations is the formation of two distinct tourist clusters: high-engagement tourists, characterised by their quality-seeking nature and multifaceted expectations, and low-engagement tourists, who exhibit more straightforward and functional motivations and behaviours. Two dominant families of tourist profiles are always arriving at the destination segments of interest in the Albanian coastal regions. The first family consists of high-engagement tourists and is characterised by widely ranging multidimensional motivations and a search for qualitative experiences. Narrower, utilitarian motivations and pragmatic travel behaviours characterise the other family of low-engagement tourists. Differences amongst destinations will manifest at least for the most Part on the demographic correlates and relative salience of their motivational dimensions, yet the high-low engagement dichotomy remains invariant.

Future research needs to formalise the observed symmetries and recurrence patterns of engagement into explicit theoretical models. This conversion of finding segmentation from an empirical type into a body of knowledge that can explain and predict the clustering effects in tourists from and to different contexts.

The proposition posits testable hypotheses for simulation and forecasting: (a) engagement family membership must remain stable under resampling; (b) demand shocks simulated through Grey-model or ARIMA scenarios should differentially impact the two families; (c) destination-specific pull factors should influence transitions between families in counterfactual simulations.

This universal proposition elevates the study beyond a case-specific segmentation whereby the

results are explained as a structural regularity in Albanian coastal tourism. This provides a theoretical basis for future research design and offers managers of destinations a clear conceptual framework for guiding differentiated strategies.

Today, tour operators and destination managers must create customized strategies, products, pricing and marketing campaigns for each cluster. This approach guarantees that infrastructure planning addresses the diverse requirements effectively. Albanian seaside destinations reveal a strong double-cluster effect. To understand seasonal variance, regional generalisability, and engagement patterns, longitudinal, comparative and qualitative research should investigate this issue.

Future research must test the high-low engagement framework's hypothesized structure in other Mediterranean or worldwide destinations for generalize and refine its theoretical and practical implications.

The study presents three significant contributions to the field. (1) This study builds upon prior research that concentrated on destination or supply-side analysis by offering a comparative examination of demand across three destinations. (2) It links presents a general proposition that identifies consistently observed segmentation patterns. (3) For replication and theoretical development, it links empirical findings to computational modeling and simulation frameworks for replication and theoretical building. These achievements make the study unique and beneficial for Albanian tourist policy and academic research. as distinctive and useful for academic research.

Thus, this research builds on previous national or area studies, [25], [26] through cross-destination comparative frameworks on linking motivational factors to structural segmentation patterns.

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Contribution of Individual Authors to the Creation of a Scientific Article (Ghostwriting Policy)

- Ani Mbrica was responsible for conceptualisation, methodology, and formal analysis.
- Mirjam Dibra drafted the results and conclusion.
- Ermira Qosja planned and executed the activities of the research.
- Nevila Çinaj was in charge collection of data.
- Enida Pulaj (Brakaj) reviewed and edited the manuscript.

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APPENDIX

Table 2. Exploratory Factor Analysis of Push Motivation Factors Among Tourists in Durrës, Vlorë, and Shkodër

Destination	Factor Structure		Factor Loading
Durrës	59.7% of the total variance explained	Factor 1 - Cultural & Social Exploration (32.0% variance explained)	Meeting new people (0.836)
			Visiting historical/cultural sites (0.826)
			Exploring archaeological sites (0.814)
			Experiencing something new (0.738)
		Factor 2 - Relaxation & Escape (27.7% variance explained)	Escaping daily routine (0.877)
			Physical and spiritual relaxation (0.860)
			Relieving work stress (0.794)
			Quality time with companions (0.629)
Vlorë	57.7 % of the total variance explained	Factor 1 - Cultural & Social Exploration (30.9% variance explained)	Exploring archaeological sites (0.821)
			Meeting new people (0.802)
			Visiting historical/cultural sites (0.723)
			Visiting friends' recommended places (0.664)
		Factor 2 - Wellness & Nature (26.8% variance explained)	Escaping daily routine (0.861)
			Relieving work stress (0.824)
			Physical and spiritual relaxation (0.798)
			Enjoying natural scenery (0.684)
Shkodër	68.9% of the total variance explained	Factor 1 - Wellness & Nature (27.6% variance explained)	Escaping daily routine (0.869)
			Physical and spiritual relaxation (0.849)
			Relieving work stress (0.784)
			Enjoying natural scenery (0.670)
		Factor 2 - Cultural & Social Exploration (24.6% variance explained)	Exploring archaeological sites (0.914)
			Visiting historical/cultural sites (0.902)
			Experiencing something new (0.715)
			Meeting new people (0.600)
		Factor 3 - Social Connections (16.7% variance explained)	Health-related reasons (0.790)
			Maintaining connections with relatives/friends (0.697)
			Visiting friends' recommended places (0.559)

Source: Created by the authors