

STAKEHOLDER INSIGHTS ON TOURISM SEASONALITY AND DESTINATION PERFORMANCE ALONG THE ALBANIAN ADRIATIC COAST

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Abstract: This study explores the quality of tourist destinations along the Albanian Adriatic coast, focusing on seasonality, visitor motivations, and barriers to year-round tourism. It examines key predictors of destination quality from stakeholder perspectives. Albania has a coastline stretching 477 kilometers, washed by both the Adriatic and Ion seas. They are integral parts of the Mediterranean basin. The study focuses on the Albanian Adriatic coastline, which represents not only a valuable natural resource, but also a key asset for sustainable tourism development. From a physical geography perspective, this area is part of Albania's Western Lowland. A quantitative approach was employed, using an online questionnaire completed by 186 stakeholders from tourism-related sectors. They offer a multifaceted perspective on tourism development. Addressing challenges such as seasonality and ensuring a comprehensive evaluation of destination quality. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, frequency analysis, Spearman's correlation, and multiple regression. Findings reveal that seaside tourism (23.6%) is the primary reason for visits, followed by cultural (16.8%) and gastronomic tourism (13.5%). However, strong seasonality persists, with 88.2% of visits occurring in summer. Regression analysis indicates that public transport is the strongest predictor of destination quality, followed by accommodation, and pre-arrival information, accessibility, and on-site tourist information. To extend the tourism season, investment in infrastructure, and accessibility is important. Strengthening public transport, improving tourist information, and enhancing environmental sustainability will boost destination quality and competitiveness. Furthermore, improving collaboration between local stakeholders and central institutions is important for strengthening destination quality. The study contributes to the literature on emerging tourism by offering recommendations for more effective policies and practices in managing coastal destinations in Albania.

Keywords: tourism seasonality, destination quality, accessibility, stakeholder perceptions, the Albanian Adriatic coast

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism is recognized as one of the key industries for development and a major source of income, jobs and wealth creation, particularly for less developed countries (Dupeyras & MacCallum, 2013; WEF, 2015). In Albania, according to the Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MTE, 2019: 3) is highlighted that "Data year after year prove the rise of tourism as one of the sectors that bring the most revenue to the state budget, entrepreneurial and family budget, with a direct contribution to the GDP of 8.5% and an indirect value added of 26.2%. This means that the added value of this sector is of importance economic and strategic for the country, since for every 1 Lek invested, 3 Lek of added value are created and for every 1 employee in this sector, 3 new jobs are opened." High-quality tourism destinations nowadays have become the expectations of tourism stakeholders. However, these quality tourism destinations do not have a definition and key performance indicator that can be used as a measurement indicator (Utama et al., 2021). Referring to Chen (2024), it is now widely accepted by researchers that the key to achieving sustainable destination development is the full participation of multiple stakeholders in the decision-making process and in the practice of destination management.

In contemporary tourism literature, stakeholders are typically framed as groups or individuals who are associated with tourism development initiatives and therefore can affect or are affected by the decisions and activities of those initiatives (Waligo et al., 2013: 343). To address the challenges of managing the eclectic needs and demands of multiple stakeholders, stakeholder theory has commonly been positioned as an important 'cross-sectional and integrated approach' during the development of tourism destinations (Ruhanen, 2009). Most notably, stakeholder theory advocates

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for the building of strong relationships between different actors that represent private and public interests and acknowledges the ‘interconnectedness of a variety of international, national, regional, and local individuals, groups and organizations (Nguyen et al., 2021). The future approaches must not only continue to critically engage the optimal ways in which participation should be facilitated but respond to new destination geographies that present unique social, cultural, and political challenges (Al-Mohammad & Butler, 2021).

Another important factor in destination management and performance is seasonality. Seasonality can be understood as a tourist destination being busier at certain times of the year than others (Butler, 1998). The usual aim of addressing the issue of seasonality is to balance the pressure and burden that tourism seasonality places on different stakeholders in a destination and to enhance the experience of tourists during peak seasons (Chen, 2024). Among the widespread discussions on causes of seasonality, Allcock (1995) contends that seasonality is a complex and variable phenomenon that cannot be explained by direct reference to any one set of factors, climatic or otherwise. Seasonality can affect both the demand and supply sides of tourism, potentially having significant consequences for destinations (Amelung et al., 2007; Koenig, 2004). The impact of seasonality would vary depending on the characteristics of destinations. From an economic standpoint, seasonality is generally agreed to impact the tourism business negatively (Allcock, 1995; Butler, 1998; Manning & Powers, 1984). It can cause numerous problems for all major stakeholders in tourism including operators, employees, local people, and tourists themselves (Commons, 1999), in a similar vein, Manning & Powers (1984) state that seasonality can cause inefficient resource use, loss of profit potential, and administrative scheduling difficulties.

In the European tourism scene, Albania is considered a developing destination, with significant and visible improvements in recent years. In 2023, Albania ranked 4th globally for the highest increase in the percentage of international tourist arrivals, marking a 56% increase compared to 2019 (UN Tourism, 2024). However, although the figures show an increase in the number of tourists and their spread in territory and time, tourism in Albania still presents a seasonal trend. Up to 95% of international visitors (Ministria e Turizmit dhe Mjedisit, 2024) to Albania have as their main motive beach tourism holidays and are from neighboring countries such as Kosovo, Montenegro, Greece and Italy, which constitute the main source markets, contributing to 63% of total arrivals in 2023. This dependence on a small number of main markets indicates the need for further efforts to diversify the market in the coming periods.

Many studies focus on perspectives from tourism businesses and local authorities, potentially overlooking the views of tourists themselves. For instance, Brokaj & Murati (2014) examines sustainable tourism development in Albania through stakeholders' involvement, primarily gathering data from residents, tourism businesses, and governance bodies. Incorporating tourist perceptions could offer a more balanced view of the tourism landscape. Studies often define seasonality in terms of peak and off-peak seasons, without delving into micro-seasonal shifts. For example, Spahiu & Kushta (2023) discuss challenges in winter tourism in Albania, focusing on infrastructure and environmental issues during the winter season. Exploring factors influencing tourism during shoulder seasons could provide deeper insight into seasonality patterns.

Many studies identify issues but may not provide actionable recommendations for policymakers. For example, the study by Qosja et al., (2022) highlights the need for cooperation and accountability among stakeholders but does not offer specific policy suggestions. Incorporating strategic recommendations could guide effective tourism management.

The hospitality industry in Albania is a growing service sector. The quality of tourism services in Albania (in the central area, from cities such as Tirana—the country's capital city and Durrës—the largest port city and the largest beach area in the country) live up to the expectations of tourists (Schiopoiu & Ozuni, 2021). But in terms of experience, the tourism sector in Albania is new, and its chaotic development reflects the evolving entrepreneurial mindset, the lack of vision of governments to design and implement strategies aimed at creating a sustainable sector, the problems of local administration, and the lack of cooperation among stakeholders (Mbrica et al., 2023). One of the biggest problems of the tourism sector in Albania, especially for the operators conducting such activity along the coast, is its seasonality and the few days the tourists stay (Mbrica et al., 2023). According to the online media "Fjala" which refers to EUROSTAT (2023) data, Albania ranks third after Croatia and Bulgaria for the high degree of seasonality with a weight of 46%. More than a third of tourist nights are spent in July and August. Based on this overview, the study sets out to achieve clear objectives related to its purpose. Its objectives from the perspective of stakeholders seek to present and analyze: 1) Key factors in the frequency of tourist destinations; 2) Seasonality of tourist destinations along the Adriatic coast and barriers to extending this seasonality throughout the year; 3) Determining the dependence of key factors on the quality of the tourist destination and the tourist product along the Albanian Adriatic coast.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research adopted a quantitative approach, utilizing an online questionnaire specifically designed and implemented for the aim of research to Adriatic coast touristic destinations from stakeholders' perception. Subsequently, data analysis was conducted, followed by the development of a multiple regression analysis model.

Population and sample

The study sample consists of the stakeholders that operate directly to indirectly to tourism sectors. They contributed to the research by sharing their perspectives on the reasons tourists visit their respective tourist destinations, the factors limiting year-round visitation, and their assessments of the quality of both the tourist destination and the tourist product. Their insights were grounded in their professional experience in the development of tourism within the destination.

The study employed a non-probability sampling approach, comprising 186 stakeholders. Their professional backgrounds span across various domains, including civil society, tourism enterprises, other businesses, central public institutions, local public institutions, non-profit organizations, educational institutions (universities, training and vocational education centers, high schools), public agencies, media, and donors (Table 1).

Table 1. Professional sector of stakeholders (Source: authors' editing)

Professional sector	Southern Albanian Adriatic coast	Central Albanian Adriatic coast	Northern Albanian Adriatic coast	Albania Adriatic coast
Civil society	14.2% (N=9)	16.7% (N=9)	18.8% (N=13)	19.4% (N=31)
Tourism enterprises	26.9% (N=17)	35.2% (N=19)	34.8% (N=24)	32.3% (N=60)
Other businesses	6.3% (N=4)	12.9% (N=7)	8.7% (N=6)	9.1% (N=17)
Central public institution	9.5% (N=6)	3.7% (N=2)	2.98% (N=2)	4.8% (N=10)
Local public institution	22.2% (N=14)	3.7% (N=2)	14.5% (N=10)	13.9% (N=26)
Non-profit organization	0	9.3% (N=5)	2.98% (N=2)	3.8% (N=7)
Educational institution	11.1% (N=7)	16.7% (N=9)	15.9% (N=11)	14.5% (N=27)
Public agency	1.6% (N=1)	0	0	0.5% (N=1)
Media,	7.9% (N=5)	0	0	2.68% (N=5)
Donors	0	1.9% (N=1)	1.5% (N=1)	1.1% (N=2)
Total	100% (N=63)	100% (N=54)	100% (N=69)	100% (N=186)

Instrument

The online questionnaire, administrated via Google Forms, was designed to collect information on stakeholders' perspectives based on the aim of the study. It was validated in a previous study and adapted to this current research (Qualitest; European Communities, 2003). The development of the questionnaire items and later analysis was further supported by prior studies (Komppula, 2016; MTE, 2019; Dwyer, 2022; Morrison et al., 2025; Agaraj (Shehu) & Pulaj (Brakaj), 2024). The first item specifies the tourist destination, while the second identifies the representation of the stakeholder group involved in tourism development within a given destination. The third and fifth items are multiple-choice ones, aiming to determine the reasons tourists visit the destination and to identify factors limiting year-round visitation. The fourth item focuses on identifying the most frequent period of tourist visits to the destination.

Additionally, 14 other items are structured on a Likert scale, ranging from 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good), with a sixth option specified as "not applicable." The reliability of the instrument was measured using Cronbach's Alpha with a score of 0.853, analyzed with IBM SPSS program (version 20). Out of these items, the assessment of quality of the tourist destination is carried out through nine of them with the reliability of Cronbach's Alpha, scoring 0.854, meanwhile five items assess the quality of the tourist product at the destination, with a reliability of Cronbach's Alpha, equal to 0.775, presenting that these items with values higher than 0.43 on the discrimination indexes. Questions can be considered excellent discriminators if they have a score > 0.40. (El-Uri & Malas, 2013: 4).

The assessing of the tourist destination quality was done by 9 evaluated items. They are presented as: Q1- How do you assess the potential for the tourism industry to grow and develop in this destination? Q2 - How do you assess the support provided to local tourism businesses (training, consulting, financing programs, etc.)? Q3 - How do you assess the promotional and marketing activities of tourism services in this destination? Q4 - How do you assess the hospitality shown to tourists in this destination? Q5 - How do you assess tourist safety in this destination from a law and police perspective? Q6 - How do you assess tourist safety in this destination from the perspective of healthcare service availability? Q7 - How do you assess the air quality in this tourist destination? Q8 - How do you assess the cleanliness of the environment in this tourist destination? Q9 - How do you assess the noise level at this tourist destination? To assess the tourist product quality in destination 5 items are taken into consideration. They are: Q10 - How do you assess the quality of the information tourists receive before arriving at the destination? Q -11 How do you assess the accessibility of tourists with disabilities to tourist services at this destination? Q12 - How do you assess the development of public transportation at this destination? Q-13 How do you assess the accommodation at the destination? Q14 - How do you assess the completeness of the information tourists receive at the destination about the activities and tourist services offered there?

Procedures and data analysis

The questionnaire was created using Google Forms and distributed online to various stakeholders. They were informed about the researchers' commitment to confidentiality and anonymity. Frequency analysis was used for multiple-choice questions related to the reasons tourists visit tourist destinations and why this destination is not visited throughout the year. Frequency analysis is the process of determining the number of times reasons appear in stakeholders' responses. Other data analysis was conducted with a 95% confidence level using the IBM SPSS program. After performing descriptive statistics for 14 items related to the quality of the tourist destination (9 items) and the quality of the tourist product of the destination (5 items), various measures of central tendency and distribution characteristics were observed. A Spearman correlation was used to determine the relationships and strength among the 14 variables. Afterwards, a multiple regression analysis model was developed between the averaged variables of tourist destination quality and the variables of tourist product quality to calculate the effect size.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study engaged 186 stakeholders from diverse professional backgrounds to assess the quality of both tourist destinations and their associated products. These stakeholders include representatives from civil society, tourism enterprises, other businesses, central and local public institutions, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, public agencies, media, and donors (Table 1). Their involvement is important as they provide a multifaceted perspective on tourism development, ensuring a comprehensive evaluation of destination quality. Several authors have suggested that mayor stakeholders of the supply side, such as national tourism boards, and local tourism operators are essential elements for the

sustainable development and competitiveness of tourist destinations (Dredge, 2006; Ritchie & Crouch, 2003). Tourism enterprises (32.3%) and local institutions (13.9%), which constitute a significant portion of respondents, play a key role in shaping tourism experiences, while educational institutions (14.5%) contribute through research and workforce training. The participation of central public institution (4.8%), public agencies (0.5%), media (2.68%), and donors (1.1%) further strengthens the assessment by incorporating regulatory, promotional, and financial dimensions into the evaluation process.

The analysis of stakeholders' responses regarding the reasons for visiting tourist destinations along the Albanian Adriatic coast highlights notable regional variations in tourism appeal. The table presents stakeholders' responses regarding the reasons for visiting tourist destinations along the Albanian Adriatic coast, categorized into three main regions: the Southern, Central, and Northern Albanian Adriatic coasts (Table 2). The Southern Albanian Adriatic coast had the highest number of total responses (232), followed by the Northern region (193) and the Central region (146). Each region shows distinct tourism patterns, with seaside tourism being the most common reason of all three. In the southern Albanian Adriatic coast, seaside tourism dominates with 24.1%, followed by cultural tourism (15.1%) and ecotourism (13.8%), emphasizing the region's natural and historical assets. The central Albanian Adriatic coast shows a more balanced distribution, with seaside tourism (22.6%), gastronomic tourism (12.5%), and cultural tourism (21.9%) leading, reflecting this destination's role as a beach destination and a historical site. In the northern Adriatic region, seaside tourism (23.8%), gastronomic tourism (15.5%), and ecotourism (16%) stand out, indicating a mix of natural beauty, culinary experiences, and outdoor activities.

Looking at the Albanian Adriatic coast, (the last column of the Table 2) confirms that seaside tourism remains the dominant reason for visits (23.6%), underscoring the importance of coastal attractions. Cultural tourism (16.8%) and gastronomic tourism (13.5%) follow, highlighting Albania's historical and culinary appeal. Ecotourism (12.6%) also holds a significant presence, pointing to an interest in nature-based activities. Other reasons such as health tourism (6.5%), professional visits (6.1%), and recreational/sport tourism (4.5%) have a more limited but still relevant impact, showing potential for further development. Categories like transit (3.7%), shopping (1.7%), and religious tourism (1.9%) have minor representation, suggesting specialized tourism segments and that the coast is not a major destination for these activities. These insights emphasize the dominance of leisure tourism, with emerging niches in cultural, ecological, and culinary experiences.

Table 2. Stakeholders' responses regarding the reasons for visiting tourist destinations along the Albanian Adriatic coast (Source: authors' editing)

Reasons	Southern Albanian Adriatic coast 63 stakeholders	Central Albanian Adriatic coast 54 stakeholders	Northern Albanian Adriatic coast 69 stakeholders	Albania Adriatic coast 186 stakeholders
	Total (ne %)	Total (ne %)	Total (ne %)	Total (ne %)
Seaside tourism	56 (24.1)	33 (22.6)	46 (23.8)	135 (23.6)
Ecotourism	32 (13.8)	9 (6.2)	31 (16.0)	72 (12.6)
Cultural tourism	35 (15.1)	32 (21.9)	29 (15.0)	96 (16.8)
Health tourism	16 (6.9)	14 (9.4)	7 (3.6)	37 (6.5)
Relative/friendship visiting	15 (6.4)	11 (7.5)	14 (7.3)	40 (7.0)
Gastronomic tourism	29 (12.5)	18 (12.3)	30 (15.5)	77 (13.5)
Professional visiting	16 (6.9)	12 (8.2)	7 (3.6)	35 (6.1)
Recreative/sport visiting	11 (4.7)	5 (3.4)	10 (5.2)	26 (4.5)
Transit	10 (4.3)	-	11 (5.7)	21 (3.7)
Shopping	7 (3.0)	-	3 (1.6)	10 (1.7)
Religious tourism	4 (1.7)	2 (1.4)	5 (2.6)	11 (1.9)
Other business	1 (0.4)	-	-	1 (0.2)
Total	232 (100%)	146 (100%)	193 (100%)	571 (100%)

The Figure 1 shows the seasonality of visits to the Albanian Adriatic coast tourist destination, based on stakeholder responses. The data reveal that summer overwhelmingly dominates as the peak season, accounting for 88.2% of visits, aligning with previous findings that highlight seaside tourism as the primary attraction (23.6%). This type of tourism in Albania has a pronounced seasonal character, and for as a result, most accommodation structures in the coastal area face difficulties seasonal operation (MTE, 2019: 6). Spring (8.1%) and autumn (3.2%) see significantly fewer visitors, likely due to interest in cultural, gastronomic, and ecotourism activities. For example, Cordova-Buiza, et al., (2024) mentioned in their study that "Local gastronomy plays a direct role as a tourist attraction, being a relevant objective when visiting a tourist destination". Winter (0.5%) has minimal tourism, reinforcing the region's strong seasonal dependence on summer beach tourism. These results highlight the need for diversification strategies to promote year-round tourism.

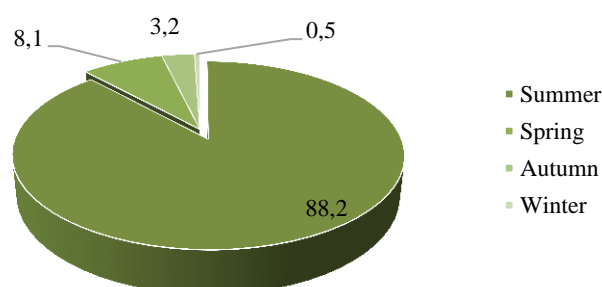


Figure 1. The seasonality of visits to Albanian Adriatic coast tourist destination (in %, stakeholders' responses) (Source: authors' editing)

To better understand why seasonality is highly concentrated during the summer and why year-round tourism is lacking, stakeholders were asked about the reasons the destination is not visited throughout the year. This question was presented to them as a multiple-choice question, allowing them to select multiple barriers based on their perspectives. Results are shown in Table 3. The Table 3, evidence that the northern Albanian Adriatic coast faces multiple barriers to year-round tourism, with the lack of entertainment options (21.6%), insufficient social media promotion (11.1%), and limited local tours (10%) being the most significant reasons. Meanwhile, poor road infrastructure (7.9%) and a shortage of cultural events (9.5%) hinder off-season tourism. Other challenges, such as harsh climate conditions (5.3%) and urban distance (4.7%), further discourage visitors beyond the summer months. These limitations highlight the need for investment in entertainment, digital marketing, and infrastructure improvements to extend the tourism season. The central Albanian Adriatic coast presents similar concerns but with some distinct trends. While lack of entertainment (21.6%) remains a primary issue, the region also struggles with limited cultural events (14.7%) and deficient local tours (12%). Road infrastructure damage (7.2%) and inaccessibility to rural areas (7.2%) are also notable deterrents. The absence of sports activities (4.8%) and low urban connectivity (2.4%) suggest that infrastructural and recreational development could significantly improve tourism retention.

Table 3. The reasons the Albanian Adriatic coast is not visited throughout the year. (Source: authors' editing)

Reasons	Southern Albanian Adriatic coast 63 stakeholders	Central Albanian Adriatic coast 54 stakeholders	Northern Albanian Adriatic coast 69 stakeholders	Albania Adriatic coast 186 stakeholders
	Total (ne %)	Total (ne %)	Total (ne %)	Total (ne %)
Entertainment lacks	34 (18.3)	27 (21.6)	41 (21.6)	102 (20.3)
Social media lack	13 (6.9)	9 (7.2)	21 (11.1)	43 (8.6)
Local tours lack	25 (13.4)	15 (12.0)	19 (10)	59 (11.8)
Cultural events lack	22 (11.8)	16 (14.7)	18 (9.5)	56 (11.2)
Road infrastructure damage	25 (13.4)	9 (7.2)	15 (7.9)	49 (9.8)
Agency of rural information lacks	15 (8.1)	12 (9.6)	13 (6.8)	40 (7.9)
Sports activity lack	17 (9.1)	6 (4.8)	13 (6.8)	36 (7.2)
Local guides lack	13 (6.9)	8 (6.4)	11 (5.8)	32 (6.4)
Rural area inaccessibility	9 (4.8)	9 (7.2)	10 (5.3)	28 (5.6)
Harsh climate	2 (1.1)	5 (4.0)	10 (5.3)	17 (3.4)
Urban distance	4 (2.2)	3 (2.4)	9 (4.7)	16 (3.2)
Online booking absence	4 (2.2)	5 (4.0)	5 (2.6)	14 (2.8)
Difficult terrain	3 (1.6)	1 (0.8)	5 (2.6)	9 (1.8)
Total	186 (100%)	125 (100%)	190 (100%)	501 (100%)

The southern Albanian Adriatic coast, while sharing similar limitations, has some challenges, particularly a lack of local tours (13.4%), cultural events (11.8%), and agency of rural information (8.1%). Sports activity deficiencies (9.1%) limited social media presence (6.9%) and difficult terrain (1.6%) further contribute to restricted year-round tourism potential.

For the entire Albanian Adriatic coastline, the most important issues are the lack of entertainment (20.3%), insufficient local tours (11.8%), and limited cultural events (11.2%). While harsh climate (3.4%) and difficult terrain (1.8%) are natural constraints, others—such social media lack (8.6%) and absence of online booking options (2.8%)—can be addressed through targeted policies. Even the MET (2019: 13) evidence that "In order for this industry to become one of the pillars of the Albanian economy, it is necessary to mitigate the seasonal effects of coastal tourism through the development of other forms of tourism, increasing the number of visitors, nights of stay and consequently income from tourism".

Strengthening tourism services, improving accessibility, and diversifying entertainment and cultural offerings could significantly enhance the region's year-round tourism appeal. To gain a deeper understanding of the factors influencing the quality of tourism development of the Adriatic coast in Albania, stakeholders were surveyed about them. The relationships between these factors were assessed using Spearman's correlation analysis (Table 4).

Table 4. Spearman's rho correlation matrix (Source: authors' editing)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14
Q1	1.000	.286**	.331**	.432**	.403**	.356**	.242**	.288**	.199**	.184*	.323**	.255**	.183*	.225**
Q2		1.000	.552**	.390**	.285**	.304**	.232**	.390**	.276**	.438**	.197**	.393**	.263**	.210**
Q3			1.000	.422**	.371**	.311**	.185*	.347**	.258**	.460**	.150*	.377**	.148*	.134
Q4				1.000	.593**	.449**	.473**	.558**	.416**	.311**	.441**	.356**	.319**	.404**
Q5					1.000	.535**	.414**	.473**	.379**	.271**	.360**	.312**	.264**	.298**
Q6						1.000	.344**	.492**	.407**	.399**	.407**	.301**	.188*	.372**
Q7							1.000	.644**	.614**	.166*	.295**	.366**	.497**	.461**
Q8								1.000	.686**	.344**	.367**	.471**	.387**	.468**
Q9									1.000	.163*	.325**	.340**	.336**	.427**
Q10										1.000	.336**	.472**	.301**	.315**
Q11											1.000	.459**	.334**	.575**
Q12												1.000	.330**	.505**
Q13													1.000	.482**
Q14														1.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 4 presents the evaluation provided by stakeholders regarding relationship between variables measuring key factors influencing the tourist destination quality and the tourism product quality in the Albanian Adriatic coast touristic destination. This assessment serves to identify significant trends and interdependencies. The Spearman's rho correlation coefficient is represented in the values of the table, and they are statistically significant at the 0.01 level and 0.05 level. Their positive values indicate a direct correlation between variables, which means that an increase in one variable is associated positively with an increase in another one. To interpret the correlation values, we refer to the size of the correlation coefficient and its general interpretation as following: .8 to 1.0 very strong relationship, .6 to .8 strong relationship, .4 to .6 moderate relationship, .2 to .4 weak relationship, .0 to .2 weak or no relationship (Salkind, 2000: 96).

The study shows *strong correlations* ($\rho \geq 0.6$) between some variables of tourist destination quality. Stakeholders consistently associate better air quality (Q7) with a cleaner environment (Q8), ($0.644, p = 0.000$). This suggests that destinations implementing strong environmental policies and sustainable waste management practices are perceived more favorably. A strong correlation between environmental cleanliness (Q8) and noise levels (Q9), ($0.686, p = 0.000$) indicates that stakeholders perceive these factors as important in maintaining an attractive tourist environment. Reduced noise pollution often signals a well-managed, high-quality destination. Stakeholders recognize that a welcoming atmosphere (Q4) is closely linked to a clean and well-maintained environment (Q8), reinforcing the idea that service quality and environmental upkeep are interdependent in shaping a positive tourist experience ($0.558, p = 0.000$).

Some noteworthy *moderate correlations* ($0.4 \leq \rho < 0.6$) emerge as important trends in stakeholder perceptions. Stakeholders link high hospitality standards (Q4) with better air quality (Q7), suggesting that destinations focusing on guest satisfaction often implement environmental policies to enhance visitor comfort ($0.473, p = 0.000$).

A cleaner environment (Q8) is perceived as directly contributing to health and safety (Q6). This supports the idea that effective waste disposal and sanitation influence both environmental and public health outcomes ($0.492, p = 0.000$).

Stakeholders acknowledge that destinations providing greater accessibility for disabled tourists (Q11) also tend to offer comprehensive tourist information (Q14), suggesting a commitment to inclusivity in tourism planning ($0.575, p = 0.000$).

Limited stakeholders' influence was observed in some variable relationships, where *weak correlations* ($0.2 \leq \rho < 0.4$) were identified. Stakeholders do not strongly relate business support initiatives (Q2) with tourist legal safety (Q5), ($0.285, p = 0.000$). This implies that business support initiatives are not sufficient to ensure tourism's safety, highlighting the importance of regulations and law enforcement in protecting tourists. Governmental intervention is considered important to tourism safeties. Çinaj et al., (2022) in their study, highlighted that "Through law enforcement institutions, measures were taken which increased / strengthened the trust of the actors in the tourism industry to ensure security.

The involvement of the state in concrete actions to promote domestic tourism demand, to help the tourism economy, strengthened the perception that Albania is a safe destination for tourism". The quality of pre-arrival information (Q10) has only a weak correlation with perceived accommodation standards (Q13), suggesting that stakeholders believe on-site experiences weigh more heavily in tourist satisfaction ($0.301, p = 0.000$).

The study shows *very weak correlations* ($\rho < 0.2$) in the minimal perception relationships of stakeholders. Stakeholders do not perceive noise levels (Q9) as a major barrier to tourism development potential (Q1), indicating that infrastructure investment, marketing strategies, and regulatory policies play a more significant role ($0.199, p = 0.007$).

Legal safety (Q5) concerns appear to be independent of the quality of tourist information before arrival (Q10), suggesting that stakeholders view legal security as a destination-specific factor rather than something that can be influenced by external communication. ($0.184, p = 0.000$).

To better understand the assessment of the tourist destination's performance along the Albanian Adriatic coast a multiple regression model was conducted between mean variable of tourist destination quality variables and tourist product quality variables. The main purpose of multiple linear regression is to predict changes in the dependent variable because of variations that occur in several independent variables (Hamied & Malik, 2017). Questions Q10, Q11, Q12, Q13, Q14 are considered components of tourist product based on Qualitest, 2003.

They are independent variables and are predictors in multiple regression model. Pre-arrival information quality (Q10) is an important factor of the tourist product, as accurate and complete information about the destination helps tourists plan their trip and have better experience. Meanwhile, accessibility for tourists with disabilities (Q11) provides opportunities for inclusion, making the destination more accessible to everyone. Completeness of tourist information (Q12) ensures that tourists have all the necessary information to enjoy easily the destination. Tourist information on-site (Q14) has a direct impact on the tourist experience. The timely information on-site can greatly improve the tourist experience. This regression model about tourist destination quality and tourist product quality in destination, explains 40.7% of the total explained variance (adjusted R square), and it is significant [$F(5, 180) = 26.36; p < .001$]. This result suggests a good model fit.

Table 5. Multiple regression model of Tourist destination quality (Source: authors' editing)

	Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p-value
1	(Constant)	1.389	.217		6.402	.000
	Q10	.117	.046	.167	2.554	.011
	Q11	.127	.057	.158	2.214	.028
	Q12	.163	.049	.240	3.311	.001
	Q13	.110	.042	.173	2.626	.009
	Q14	.094	.046	.150	2.023	.045

B: Unstandardized Coefficients; Beta: Standardized Coefficients; t: T-statistic

Table 5 represents the mean values of unstandardized and standardized coefficients, t, and p-value for all variables. All the variables are statistically significant ($p < .05$), so they are predictors of the touristic destination quality.

The model estimates that the evaluation of public transport in the destination (Q12, Beta .240) constitutes the most significant predictor of the quality of the tourist destination. This is followed by the evaluation of accommodation in the destination (Q13, Beta .173), the quality of information received by tourists before arriving at the destination (Q10, Beta .176), the assessment of accessibility for tourists with disabilities to tourism services in the destination (Q11, Beta .158), and finally, though statistically significant, the evaluation of the overall information received by tourists at the destination regarding available activities and tourism services (Q14, Beta .150).

CONCLUSION

Stakeholder perspectives highlight that in the Albanian Adriatic coast, destination quality is significantly influenced by environmental sustainability and hospitality, while tourism product quality is shaped by accessibility and service infrastructure. These findings emphasize the importance of collaborating and integrating environmental, regulatory, and service-based improvements to create a more competitive and attractive tourism destination.

Šambronská et al. (2025) in their study highlighted that “Cooperation in tourism refers to the joint efforts of various stakeholders, including governments, local communities, businesses and tourists themselves, to promote and develop tourism in a responsible and sustainable manner. Examples include organizations that bring together local stakeholders to promote and manage tourism in a particular destination. They work together to develop marketing campaigns, improve the infrastructure and improve the overall tourist experience.

Stakeholders appreciate the driving force that factors such as air quality, cleanliness and noise levels have in increasing the quality of a destination. For them, hospitality, access to information and the more complete it is, again increase visitor satisfaction. Even more important is the increased attention to taking concrete actions for visitors with disabilities. They do not see the connection between the development of concrete tourism business plans and the impact they have on tourist safety. For this reason, it is suggested that management plans for tourist destinations be developed separately. In their assessment, what visitors experience at a destination is more important than what they are informed about before arriving at the destination. Such an assessment, from a tourism perspective, is relevant to the strategic perspective of tourism development in Albanian coastal tourist destination, adding to the premises for a sustainable and year-round development of tourism. Although the study brings valuable findings from the perspective of stakeholders, it focuses only on the Albanian Adriatic coast, leaving out of the analysis the Ionian coast and the potentials that the latter offers, although there are similarities, especially regarding seasonality.

This suggests the need for undertaking similar studies with a wider geographical reach. Also, follow-up studies may also include visitor perspectives, in line with the initial research objectives. However, current findings can serve valuably for decision-making processes, helping to provide practical and concrete solutions.

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