



ANALYSIS OF THE FACTORS AFFECTING YACHTSMEN'S LONG-TERM BOAT BERTH LOCATION PREFERENCE PROCESS

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the factors influencing yacht owners' preferences for long-term berth locations, an area gaining importance as yachting grows in popularity. As yachting increasingly becomes a favored leisure activity, it is essential for yacht harbor operators to understand the preferences of yacht owners to attract and retain them. The research analyzes survey data from 173 yacht owners, focusing on both demographic and yacht-specific factors affecting their decision-making process. The findings highlight that flexible pricing, picturesque and easily accessible yacht harbors, and strong security measures, such as around-the-clock surveillance, play a crucial role in determining yacht owners' choices. Yacht harbors that offer a scenic environment are especially attractive, while enhanced security features provide peace of mind and increase the likelihood of being selected. Additionally, the range and quality of services offered at the yacht harbor, such as technical support and Wi-Fi access, are highly valued and contribute significantly to overall satisfaction. The study emphasizes the need for yacht harbor operators to tailor their offerings to meet the specific needs of various demographic segments and adjust pricing, security, and service quality accordingly. Recommendations include integrating smart yacht harbor systems and promoting sustainability practices, which are becoming increasingly relevant for today's yacht owners. Ultimately, this research underscores the importance of strategic planning, enabling yacht harbor operators to refine their services, foster customer loyalty, and maintain a competitive edge in the industry by addressing evolving customer demands.

Keywords: yacht harbor, boat berth location, yachtsmen, yachter, factors influencing the decision-making process

JEL Classifications: R41, H54

YATÇILARIN UZUN SÜRELİ TEKNE BAĞLAMA YERİ TERCİHİ SÜRECİNE ETKİ EDEN FAKTÖRLERİN ANALİZİ

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, yat sahiplerinin uzun süreli bağlama yeri tercihlerini etkileyen faktörleri incelemektedir. Yatçılığın giderek daha popüler bir hobi haline gelmesiyle, yat limanı işletmecilerinin bu müşteri kitlesini çekebilme ve elde tutabilmek için yat sahiplerinin tercihlerini anlamaları kritik hale gelmiştir. Araştırma, 173 yat sahibinden toplanan anket verilerini kullanarak, demografik ve yat özelliklerinin bu tercihleri nasıl şekillendirdiğini analiz etmektedir. Sonuçlar, esnek fiyatlandırma, doğal güzelliklere sahip ve kolay ulaşılabilir limanlar ile 24 saat güvenlik gibi güçlü güvenlik önlemlerinin yat sahiplerinin kararlarında önemli rol oynadığını göstermektedir. Özellikle doğal güzelliklerle çevrili yat limanları cazibe yaratırken, gelişmiş güvenlik sistemlerinin sağladığı güven hissi, tercih edilme olasılığını artırmaktadır. Ayrıca, limanların sunduğu teknik destek, Wi-Fi gibi hizmetlerin çeşitliliği ve kalitesi de yat sahiplerinin memnuniyetine önemli katkılar sağlamaktadır. Araştırma,



liman işletmecilerinin farklı demografik grupların beklentilerine uygun hizmetler sunarak fiyat, güvenlik ve hizmet kalitesinde gerekli iyileştirmeleri yapmaları gerektiğini vurgulamaktadır. Ayrıca, akıllı liman sistemlerinin entegrasyonu ve çevre dostu uygulamaların teşvik edilmesi gibi öneriler de giderek daha fazla önem kazanmaktadır. Bu çalışma, stratejik planlamanın liman işletmecileri için hizmetlerin iyileştirilmesi ve müşteri bağlılığının artırılması açısından kritik olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: yat limanı, tekne bağlama yeri, yatçılar, tercih sürecine etki eden faktörler

JEL Sınıflandırması: R41, H54

1. INTRODUCTION

Yachting has evolved from a niche activity into a widely popular pastime, drawing the attention of maritime enthusiasts and fueling growth in the maritime industry. As the number of yachtsmen increases, the selection of long-term boat berth locations has become a critical decision for many yacht owners. This process is not undertaken lightly, as it involves weighing multiple factors that collectively shape their final choice. The growing competition among yacht harbors, alongside the increasing number of yacht harbor operators, has highlighted the need for a deeper understanding of consumer behavior in this sector. The examination of factors influencing these preferences, particularly through demographic lenses, provides valuable insights for yacht harbor operators and other stakeholders in the maritime industry (İnak Özberk et al., 2023: 277-321).

The primary objective of this article is to explore the key factors that impact the decision-making process of yacht owners when choosing long-term berth locations. Key criteria such as location, pricing strategies, security measures, and harbor services are central to this investigation. Understanding how yachtsmen evaluate and prioritize these factors is essential for improving yacht harbor operations and aligning service offerings with customer expectations.

Among the various factors considered, location consistently emerges as one of the most influential. Yacht owners often prioritize accessibility, proximity to major sailing routes, and the surrounding environment when selecting a yacht harbor. The convenience and beauty of the yacht harbor's location directly impact its attractiveness to potential customers. Furthermore, pricing strategies are equally significant. Competitive and flexible pricing models, tailored to meet the financial expectations of different demographic groups, play a decisive role in the long-term berth selection process.

Security measures also weigh heavily in the decision-making process. Yacht owners expect robust security features, including 24-hour surveillance, advanced camera systems, and fire safety protocols, to ensure the safety of their vessels. These measures enhance the perception of safety and often become deal-breakers when comparing different yacht harbor options. In addition, the quality and variety of yacht harbor services—ranging from technical support to amenities such as Wi-Fi—are key contributors to customer satisfaction. Yachtsmen place high value on service quality as it affects their overall comfort and convenience.

This research employs a survey methodology to assess the preferences of yacht owners regarding long-term berth locations. Data collected from 173 yacht owners provides insight into the significance of various factors in their decision-making processes. The results offer a clear ranking of the most critical elements that influence yacht owners' choices, shedding light on the dynamics of this market.

In conclusion, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that drive yachtsmen's preferences for long-term berth locations. By doing so, it offers strategic guidance for yacht harbor operators seeking to enhance service quality, attract and retain customers, and ultimately gain a competitive edge in the evolving maritime industry. The findings of this research are expected to serve as a valuable resource for both industry practitioners and academic researchers, contributing to more informed decision-making and strategic planning in the field of yacht harbor management.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The factors influencing yachtsmen's long-term boat berth location preferences have been extensively explored through academic studies and sectoral analyses. These studies emphasize that understanding the variables and preference criteria affecting these decisions can guide yacht harbor operators in making strategic decisions to enhance service quality and improve customer satisfaction. An in-depth analysis of yachtsmen's preference processes contributes to the development of more competitive and customer-centric approaches within the maritime industry.

Yachtsmen are often considered high-expectation clients, and their motivations for choosing a yacht harbor vary significantly. As such, effective destination marketing should consider both push and pull motivation factors, which encompass yachtsmen's desire for adventure, relaxation, and engaging in social activities. According to Paker and Vural (2016), understanding these motivations helps yacht harbor operators to cater to the distinctive



needs of yachtsmen and improve their overall experience. The rise in amateur sailors has also increased the demand for yacht harbor berth services. As Nemlioğlu and Arslan (2023) note, yacht harbors now employ digital communication and marketing strategies to showcase their service offerings to prospective customers. One of the primary concerns for yachtsmen is the safety of their vessels. However, beyond security, yacht harbors must also provide amenities that cater to yachtsmen's desire for comfort and connection with nature, thus transforming yacht harbors into essential living spaces (Tokol, 2020). Yachtsmen expect yacht harbors to have competent personnel who can meet their service needs, and this extends beyond technical support to include warm, courteous hospitality (Sarı et al., 2016). Furthermore, Türkiye's strategic geographic location and rich natural resources position it as an ideal region for marine tourism. However, uncontrolled tourism development may lead to environmental and social degradation. Hence, focusing on niche markets, particularly yacht tourism, which generates high per capita spending, offers a rational approach to sustainable tourism development (Bayer, 2018).

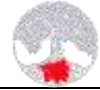
In terms of criteria influencing yacht harbor preferences, proximity to city centers, airports, and emergency facilities, as well as accessibility to local cultural and historical sites, play crucial roles in yachtsmen's decision-making processes (Paker & Vural, 2016). Environmental factors, such as favorable climate conditions, also significantly impact these choices (İnak Özberk et al., 2023). Additionally, the competitive advantages of Turkish yacht harbors within the Mediterranean region, as emphasized by Dikeç and Töz (2017), underscore the importance of strategic location and service offerings in attracting yachtsmen. Touristically oriented customers tend to prioritize the attractiveness of the yacht harbor's surroundings, including nearby destinations and cultural experiences. Yacht harbors catering to these clients must emphasize their proximity to cultural and historic sites, as well as their accessibility along travel routes (Paker, 2014). Conversely, socially oriented customers value entertainment and individual activity opportunities. These clients are often more drawn to vibrant yacht harbor environments that offer local cultural experiences and high service standards (Paker, 2014). As multifunctional spaces, yacht harbors serve as more than merely berth locations; they act as social hubs and attractions that provide dining, shopping, and cultural experiences to both mariners and the local community. The integration of these facilities enhances yacht harbors' value as tourism centers (Ugolini & Ivaldi, 2017). Easy access and proximity to travel routes or attractive destinations are essential considerations for yachtsmen, especially those with limited leisure time (Paker, 2014).

Pricing strategies also play a pivotal role in yachtsmen's yacht harbor selection. Affordable rates significantly influence the long-term choice of yacht harbors, and studies have shown that economic factors, particularly cost flexibility, carry considerable weight in this decision-making process (Gallo, 2023). Yacht harbors targeting high-income clients may focus on premium services rather than pricing, with features such as helicopter pads used as marketing strategies (Arat, 2006).

Security is another key factor shaping yachtsmen's preferences. Around-the-clock security, surveillance cameras, and emergency procedures enhance yachtsmen's trust in yacht harbors (Sarı et al., 2016). For those living on their vessels year-round, the yacht harbor's ability to provide safety against external threats like storms is of paramount importance (Arlı, 2012). The findings indicate that security has a statistically significant impact on behavioral intentions and overall satisfaction.

Yacht harbor services can be divided into human and boat-related categories. While human-related services involve hospitality and interaction, boat-related services include maintenance and storage options (Arlı, 2012). In modern yacht harbors, yachtsmen not only seek berthing facilities but also additional services that meet their lifestyle needs, such as dining, social events, and repair services (Bal, 2019). The quality and variety of yacht harbor services greatly influence yachtsmen's decision-making processes. Skaržauskienė et al. (2022) note that basic services, such as boat storage, fuel supplies, water, and electricity connections, are essential for yachtsmen, but complementary services like social activities and event planning can enhance their overall experience. As the yachting sector grows, the importance of customer-focused services and infrastructure improvements, such as modern docking facilities, cannot be overstated (Dikeç & Töz, 2017). Finally, service quality is critical to yachtsmen's satisfaction, and the physical condition of yacht harbor facilities, including management offices, restrooms, and retail spaces, are key indicators of quality (Sarı et al., 2016). As customer satisfaction is directly linked to service quality, improving yacht harbor offerings based on yachtsmen's expectations can enhance competitiveness within the maritime tourism sector. Increasing the number of yacht harbors and modernizing existing ones are essential for meeting the growing demand in Türkiye (Dikeç, 2015).

In summary, the literature highlights the multifaceted factors influencing yachtsmen's long-term yacht harbor preferences, emphasizing the need for yacht harbors to offer not only safe and accessible berth facilities but also high-quality, customer-centric services. By addressing these factors, yacht harbors can better meet the evolving needs of yachtsmen and strengthen their position in the competitive maritime tourism market.



3. RESEARCH MATERIALS & METHODOLOGY

3.1. Purpose and Importance

The process of selecting a long-term boat berth is influenced by multiple factors that reflect the preferences and behaviors of yachtsmen. This study aims to analyze these factors and their significance, offering insights into the decision-making process. By understanding the determinants of yachtsmen's choices, yacht harbor operators and maritime industry stakeholders can enhance their strategic planning and service delivery. The growing demand for yacht harbors, fueled by the development of nautical tourism, highlights the need for effective infrastructure and quality services. Competitiveness among yacht harbors has increased with the rising number of berthing locations, necessitating a focus on customer satisfaction and high service standards. Additionally, the decision-making models—rational, satisfactory, and behavioral—shed light on the varied approaches yachtsmen adopt based on logical analysis, minimum acceptable standards, or emotional influences. This framework underpins the study's investigation into the factors shaping yachtsmen's preferences for long-term berthing locations.

3.2. Population and Sample

The research population includes yachtsmen who have permanent berthing arrangements at yacht harbors. A total of 173 participants, selected voluntarily, formed the sample for this study. These respondents were chosen to represent a diverse demographic and experiential profile of the broader yachtsmen community. Efforts were made to ensure that the sample accurately reflected the population, with data confidentiality and ethical considerations strictly upheld throughout the study.

3.3. Hypotheses of Research

The primary hypothesis of this study is that yachtsmen's preferences for long-term berthing locations are significantly affected by demographic and experiential factors. To explore these relationships, twelve sub-hypotheses were developed, examining variables such as gender (H1), age (H2), educational background (H3), profession (H4), and boat characteristics (H8). These hypotheses were designed to identify how specific factors influence yachtsmen's berth preferences, providing actionable insights for harbor operators.

Table 1: Hypotheses of Research

	Hypotheses
H₁	Yachtsmen's attitudes toward permanent berthing locations differ significantly by gender.
H₂	Yachtsmen's attitudes toward permanent berthing locations differ significantly by age.
H₃	Yachtsmen's attitudes toward permanent berthing locations differ significantly by educational background.
H₄	Yachtsmen's attitudes toward permanent berthing locations differ significantly by profession.
H₅	Yachtsmen's attitudes toward permanent berthing locations differ significantly by home city.
H₆	Yachtsmen's attitudes toward permanent berthing locations differ significantly by the duration of boat ownership/yachting experience.
H₇	Yachtsmen's attitudes toward permanent berthing locations differ significantly by boat usage frequency.
H₈	Yachtsmen's attitudes toward permanent berthing locations differ significantly by boat type.
H₉	Yachtsmen's attitudes toward permanent berthing locations differ significantly by boat length.
H₁₀	Yachtsmen's attitudes toward permanent berthing locations differ significantly by the purpose of boat usage.

3.4. Assumptions and Constraints

It is assumed that the participants provided honest and accurate responses in the survey. The data collection process adhered to ethical research practices, ensuring participant anonymity and data security. One limitation of the study is its reliance on self-reported data, which may introduce biases. Additionally, the findings are specific to the sample and may not be fully generalizable to all yachtsmen. Despite these constraints, the study's rigorous methodology ensures the reliability of its results.



3.5. Data Collection Tool

A comprehensive survey served as the primary data collection instrument, structured in two main sections. The first section captured demographic and boat-related information, including variables such as gender, age, education level, profession, home city, boat ownership duration, usage frequency, boat type, and boat length. The second section evaluated participants' attitudes toward factors influencing berthing preferences, such as location, pricing, security, and service quality. A five-point Likert scale was used, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The survey underwent a pilot test with a small group of yachtsmen to refine clarity and appropriateness. Statistical analysis methods, including descriptive statistics, t-tests, ANOVA, and reliability testing via Cronbach's Alpha, confirmed the instrument's validity and internal consistency. A power analysis determined the required minimum sample size to ensure robust findings, and the final sample size of 173 exceeded this threshold, enhancing the study's credibility. The selection of analysis methods is contingent upon the normality of the data distribution. To evaluate this, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk normality tests were applied to the scale dimensions. Since the data were found to conform to a normal distribution, parametric methods were employed for group difference analyses.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the research regarding the factors influencing yachtsmen's preferences for long-term boat berth locations. The results are analyzed in terms of demographic characteristics, boat-related features, attitudes towards yacht harbor selection criteria, and statistical data related to normality tests and other descriptive statistics.

Reliability of the Survey

The reliability of the survey was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, Split-Half reliability, Parallel, and Strict Parallel tests. The results indicated strong internal consistency, with all criteria exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70. This suggests that the survey was a reliable instrument for capturing yachtsmen's preferences. A power analysis was conducted using G*POWER 3.1 software to ensure the sample size was sufficient for detecting group differences. Based on the analysis, a minimum sample size of 102 was required to achieve adequate statistical power ($1-\beta = 0.80$) at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. With a sample size of 173, the study surpassed this threshold, ensuring the validity of the findings.

Table 2: Results of Reliability Analysis of The Survey

Criteria	Reliability Results of the Survey
Cronbach_Alpha	0,829
Split	0,925-0,832
Parelel	0,830
Strict	0,829

4.2. Demographic Findings and Boat Characteristics

The study begins by identifying the demographic profile of the participants, as well as the characteristics of their boats. A total of 81.5% of the respondents were male, and 18.5% were female. The age distribution showed that 36.4% were between 36 and 45 years old, while smaller groups fell within other age ranges: 22.0% were aged 26-35, 17.3% were both 46-55 and 56-65 years old, and 5.8% were 66 years or older. In terms of educational attainment, the majority (58.4%) had completed a university degree, followed by 23.1% with a master's degree and 6.4% with a doctorate. Occupationally, 44.5% of participants were self-employed, 34.1% worked in the private sector, 6.4% were public sector employees, and 15% were retired. The geographic distribution was notably concentrated in the Istanbul region, with 41.6% residing on the Anatolian side and 23.7% on the European side, followed by Muğla (13.9%) and İzmir (11.0%). Regarding boat ownership, the majority (88.4%) owned a sailboat, while smaller percentages had motor yachts (7.5%), catamarans (2.3%), or gulet type boats (1.7%). The length of the boats varied, with 64.2% owning vessels between 11-15 meters, followed by 26.0% with boats measuring 5-10 meters, and fewer participants owning larger boats (5.8% for 16-20 meters and 4.0% for boats over 21 meters). Most participants (59.0%) reported using their boats primarily for leisure and cruising, while others engaged in sailing competitions (23.7%), ran sailing schools (11.6%), or operated boats for commercial use such as daily charters (4.6%). In terms of duration of yacht harbor use, 19.1% of participants had been using their current berth location for more than ten years, and 35.3% had stayed for 1-3 years. Yacht harbor changes were infrequent, with 57.2% reporting that they had not changed yacht harbors in the last five years.



4.3. Attitudinal Data on Yacht Harbor Preferences

The study then explored yachtsmen's attitudes towards yacht harbor selection factors, measured using a series of Likert scale questions. According to Table 3, the highest-rated item was the importance of transparent pricing for yacht harbor services, with an average rating of 4.69 out of 5, indicating that clear and upfront pricing is a key factor in decision-making. Conversely, the proximity of the yacht harbor to tourist areas received the lowest average rating of 2.94, showing ambivalence about the role of nearby tourist attractions in yacht harbor selection. Overall, the participants' responses on the attitude scale regarding permanent berthing preferences yielded a general mean score of '4.20,' reflecting a consensus toward 'Agree.'

Table 3: Percentage Distribution of the Attitude Scale of Yachtsmen Towards Their Permanent Berthing Point Preferences.

	Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Avg.	±	Sa
1	The ease of access to the yacht harbor (via road, air, or sea) plays a decisive role in my selection of a harbor.	0,6	1,7	5,8	19,1	72,8	4,62	±	0,73
2	The climate conditions of the yacht harbor's location are an important factor in my preference.	2,9	8,7	17,9	30,1	40,5	3,97	±	1,09
3	The harbor's location in a calm and peaceful environment is one of my reasons for choosing it.	1,7	3,5	16,2	32,9	45,7	4,17	±	0,94
4	The proximity of the yacht harbor to tourist destinations is a significant factor in my preference.	16,2	23,1	26,0	19,7	15,0	2,94	±	1,30
5	Yacht harbors surrounded by natural beauty are more appealing options for me.	1,2	6,9	17,3	26,6	48,0	4,13	±	1,01
6	Affordable pricing at the yacht harbor plays a decisive role in my selection.	0,6	0,6	7,5	16,8	74,6	4,64	±	0,70
7	I prefer yacht harbors with a high price-quality balance.	4,0	4,6	12,1	18,5	60,7	4,27	±	1,10
8	Promotions and discounts offered by the harbor influence my choice.	2,9	8,1	13,3	32,4	43,4	4,05	±	1,07
9	The transparent and clear presentation of service prices at the yacht harbor is important to me.	0,6	0,0	2,3	23,7	73,4	4,69	±	0,57
10	Membership or long-term rental benefits offered by the harbor affect my decisions.	0,0	1,2	6,9	28,9	63,0	4,54	±	0,68
11	The adequacy of security measures at the yacht harbor significantly impacts my preference.	1,2	2,3	7,5	25,4	63,6	4,48	±	0,83
12	Fire safety measures are one of the factors shaping my choice of a yacht harbor.	2,3	5,8	18,5	24,9	48,6	4,12	±	1,05
13	It is important to me that harbor staff are trained for emergencies when choosing a yacht harbor.	4,6	4,0	19,7	25,4	46,2	4,05	±	1,11
14	Strong security measures in the harbor's surroundings provide me with reassurance.	1,2	2,3	12,7	26,6	57,2	4,36	±	0,88
15	The 24/7 surveillance of the harbor by security cameras is a feature I consider important for safety.	1,2	1,2	10,4	23,1	64,2	4,48	±	0,82
16	The quality of technical support and maintenance services at the yacht harbor plays a critical role in my selection.	2,9	9,2	22,5	28,9	36,4	3,87	±	1,10
17	The cleanliness and organization of the harbor directly affect my preferences.	0,0	1,7	9,8	37,0	51,4	4,38	±	0,73
18	The professionalism of harbor staff in customer service is important to me.	0,6	1,7	12,7	36,4	48,6	4,31	±	0,80
19	Additional services offered by the harbor (e.g., Wi-Fi, water, electricity) influence my preference.	0,6	4,6	17,9	27,7	49,1	4,20	±	0,93

20	The availability of social areas and relaxation facilities at the yacht harbor is valuable to me.	2,9	9,2	26,0	26,6	35,3	3,82	±	1,10
	General response average of the attitude scale towards yachtsmen's permanent berthing point preferences	4,20							

Key findings related to specific yacht harbor attributes are as follows:

Accessibility: 72.8% of participants strongly agreed that ease of access via road, sea, or air is a critical factor in yacht harbor selection, with an average rating of 4.62. Climate Conditions: 40.5% of respondents rated local climate as a very important factor, with a mean score of 3.97, reflecting moderate significance. Tranquility: The desire for a peaceful environment was highly valued, with 45.7% strongly agreeing and an average rating of 4.17. Natural Beauty: Yacht harbors surrounded by natural beauty were considered more attractive, with 48.0% strongly agreeing and an average score of 4.13. Pricing: Yacht harbor pricing was a crucial factor, with 74.6% of respondents strongly agreeing that affordable rates influenced their choice, leading to a high mean score of 4.64. Promotions: Discounts and promotions were rated important by 43.4% of respondents, resulting in a mean score of 4.05. Other noteworthy factors included security measures, cleanliness, the professionalism of staff, and the availability of technical services and amenities like Wi-Fi and electricity. Safety was a particularly strong influence, as 63.6% of respondents rated sufficient safety measures as critical, and 64.2% valued 24/7 security camera surveillance.

4.4. Normality Tests and Descriptive Statistical Data

To assess the appropriateness of further parametric analyses, normality tests were conducted across various dimensions. The results of the normality tests are pivotal in determining the appropriate analytical methods to be employed. Accordingly, Table 4 provides descriptive statistics along with the normality test outcomes for all dimensions. As shown in Table 4, the null hypothesis (H0), which asserts that the data follows a normal distribution, is accepted since the results of both normality tests indicate $p > 0.05$. Consequently, parametric methods will be utilized for group difference analyses.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistical Information and Normality Test Results for Dimensions.

Dimensions	Average	St. Deviation	Asymmetry	Kurtosis	Kolmogorov-Smirnov		Shapiro-Wilk	
					ist	p	ist	p
General Score of the Attitude Scale of Yachtsmen Towards Permanent Berthing Preferences	4,205	0,518	-0,622	0,329	9,084	0,564	8,966	0,243

4.5. Demographic and Behavioral Differences

Gender Differences: The results of the t-test for gender differences indicated no statistically significant variation in the overall scale scores. Specifically, the mean score for females ($n=32$; $M=4.29$, $SD=0.48$) was slightly higher than that of males ($n=141$; $M=4.19$, $SD=0.53$), with a t-statistic of 1.040 and a p-value of 0.300 ($p>0.05$). This suggests that both genders utilized similar perspectives when responding to the scale. Age Differences: Analysis of variance (ANOVA) results revealed significant differences based on age ($F=5.942$, $p<0.01$). As shown in Table 5, the age group of 26-35 years ($n=38$; $M=4.38$, $SD=0.49$) exhibited a significantly higher attitude towards the preferences for long-term boat berth locations compared to the other age groups. Post-hoc Tukey tests confirmed that the 26-35 age group had significantly higher mean scores than the 18-25 ($n=2$; $M=4.20$, $SD=0.00$), 36-45 ($n=63$; $M=4.17$, $SD=0.58$), 46-55 ($n=30$; $M=4.13$, $SD=0.56$), and 66 and above age groups ($n=10$; $M=4.05$, $SD=0.27$).

Table 5: ANOVA Test Results for Age Differences

	Group	n	\bar{X}	Sd.	F-ist	p	Post-hoc (Tukey Test)
General Score of the Attitude Scale of Yachtsmen Towards	(1) 18-25	2	4,20	0,00	5,942	0,000*	2>1, 2>3, 2>4, 2>6
	(2) 26-35	38	4,38	0,49			
	(3) 36-45	63	4,17	0,58			



Permanent Berthing Preferences	(4) 46-55	30	4,13	0,56			
	(5) 56-65	30	4,30	0,44			
	(6) Ages 66 and over	10	4,05	0,27			

*Significant difference for $p < 0.05$

Educational Background: ANOVA results also indicated a significant difference in scale scores based on educational attainment ($F=6.140$, $p < 0.01$). As shown in Table 5, participants with a doctoral degree ($n=11$; $M=4.36$, $SD=0.37$) demonstrated a notably higher attitude towards long-term berth preferences compared to those with elementary ($n=2$; $M=4.15$, $SD=0.21$), secondary ($n=19$; $M=4.21$, $SD=0.52$), and undergraduate degrees ($n=101$; $M=4.19$, $SD=0.56$). Post-hoc analysis confirmed that doctoral graduates and master's degree holders ($n=40$; $M=4.34$, $SD=0.43$) significantly outperformed the lower education groups.

Table 6: ANOVA Test Results for Educational Background

	Group	n	\bar{X}	Sd.	F-ist	p	Post-hoc (Tukey Test)
General Score of the Attitude Scale of Yachtsmen Towards Permanent Berthing Preferences	(1) Elementary	2	4,15	0,21	6,140	0,000*	5>1, 5>2, 5>3, 4>1, 4>2, 4>3
	(2) Secondary	19	4,21	0,52			
	(3) Undergraduate	101	4,19	0,56			
	(4) Graduate	40	4,34	0,43			
	(5) Doctoral	11	4,36	0,37			

*Significant difference for $p < 0.05$

Professional Background: No significant differences were observed in the overall scale scores based on professional background ($F=0.630$, $p=0.596$). This indicates that the attitudes toward long-term berth preferences did not vary significantly among public sector employees ($n=11$; $M=4.29$, $SD=0.41$), private sector employees ($n=59$; $M=4.26$, $SD=0.47$), freelancers ($n=77$; $M=4.18$, $SD=0.58$), and retirees ($n=26$; $M=4.12$, $SD=0.49$). City of Residence: ANOVA results demonstrated no significant differences in scale scores based on the participants' cities of residence ($F=0.550$, $p=0.866$). This suggests that attitudes towards long-term berth preferences were consistent across various cities, including major urban areas. Boat Ownership/Duration of Yachting: Significant differences were observed regarding the duration of boat ownership ($F=7.317$, $p < 0.01$). As shown in Table 7, the group with 11 years and over of ownership ($n=81$; $M=4.32$, $SD=0.53$) exhibited significantly higher attitudes towards long-term berth preferences compared to those who had owned a boat for less than a year ($n=5$; $M=4.21$, $SD=0.74$), 1-5 years ($n=50$; $M=4.23$, $SD=0.50$), and 6-10 years ($n=37$; $M=4.13$, $SD=0.50$). Post-hoc tests confirmed these findings.

Table 7: ANOVA Test Results for Boat Ownership/Duration of Yachting

	Group	n	\bar{X}	Sd.	F-ist	p	Post-hoc (Tukey Test)
General Score of the Attitude Scale of Yachtsmen Towards Permanent Berthing Preferences	(1) less than 1 year	5	4,21	0,74	7,317	0,000*	4>1, 4>2, 4>3
	(2) 1-5 years	50	4,23	0,50			
	(3) 6-10 years	37	4,13	0,50			
	(4) 11 years and over	81	4,32	0,53			

*Significant difference for $p < 0.05$

Duration of Boat Use: ANOVA results revealed significant differences based on the frequency of boat use ($F=6.599$, $p < 0.05$). As shown in Table 8, the group using their boats several times a week ($n=71$; $M=4.35$, $SD=0.55$) showed significantly higher attitudes towards long-term berth preferences compared to those using their boats very rarely ($n=1$; $M=4.20$, $SD=NA$) and a few times a year ($n=14$; $M=4.23$, $SD=0.55$).



Table 8: ANOVA Test Results for Duration of Boat Use

	Group	n	\bar{X}	Sd.	F-ist	p	Post-hoc (Tukey Test)
General Score of the Attitude Scale of Yachtsmen Towards Permanent Berthing Preferences	(1) Very rare	1	4,20	-	6,599	0,013*	5>1, 5>3, 5>2,
	(2) A few times a year	14	4,23	0,55			
	(3) Monthly	39	4,26	0,44			
	(4) Once a week	48	4,23	0,53			
	(5) A few times a week	71	4,35	0,55			

*Significant difference for $p < 0.05$

Boat Type: There were no significant differences in scale scores based on boat type ($F=1.290$, $p=0.280$), indicating that participants' attitudes toward long-term berth preferences did not vary significantly among different types of boats. Boat Length: ANOVA results revealed significant differences based on boat length ($F=3.634$, $p < 0.05$). As shown in Table 9, participants with boats longer than 21 meters ($n=7$; $M=4.53$, $SD=0.44$) showed significantly higher attitudes towards long-term berth preferences compared to those with boats between 5-10 meters ($n=45$; $M=4.12$, $SD=0.55$) and 11-15 meters ($n=111$; $M=4.19$, $SD=0.51$).

Table 9: ANOVA Test Results for Boat Length

	Group	n	\bar{X}	Sd.	F-ist	p	Post-hoc (Tukey Test)
General Score of the Attitude Scale of Yachtsmen Towards Permanent Berthing Preferences	(1) 5-10 meters	45	4,12	0,55	3,634	0,032*	4>1, 4>2, 4>3
	(2) 11-15 meters	111	4,19	0,51			
	(3) 16-20 meters	10	4,52	0,35			
	(4) 21 meters and over	7	4,53	0,44			

*Significant difference for $p < 0.05$

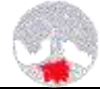
Purpose of Boat Use: Significant differences were found in attitudes based on the purpose of boat use ($F=7.979$, $p < 0.01$). As shown in Table 10, the group using their boats for commercial purposes ($n=8$; $M=4.36$, $SD=0.27$) had significantly higher attitudes toward long-term berth preferences compared to those using boats for leisure ($n=102$; $M=4.21$, $SD=0.47$) and sailing schools ($n=20$; $M=4.07$, $SD=0.63$).

Table 10: ANOVA Test Results for Purpose of Boat Use

	Group	n	\bar{X}	Sd.	F-ist	p	Post-hoc (Tukey Test)
General Score of the Attitude Scale of Yachtsmen Towards Permanent Berthing Preferences	(1) Holiday and travel	102	4,21	0,47	7,979	0,000*	5>1, 5>2, 5>3, 4>1, 4>2, 4>3
	(2) Living space	2	3,78	1,03			
	(3) Sailing school	20	4,07	0,63			
	(4) Individual sail racing	41	4,26	0,59			
	(5) Commercial business (daily rental, etc.)	8	4,36	0,27			

*Significant difference for $p < 0.05$

Duration of Current Berth Location: The analysis revealed significant differences based on the duration of the current berth location ($F=6.202$, $p < 0.01$). As shown in Table 10, participants who had been at their current location for more than 10 years ($n=33$; $M=4.34$, $SD=0.53$) exhibited significantly higher attitudes compared to those at their current location for less than a year ($n=18$; $M=4.29$, $SD=0.55$) and 1-3 years ($n=61$; $M=4.12$, $SD=0.54$).



5. DISCUSSION

The findings from this study provide significant insights into the preferences of yachtsmen regarding long-term boat berth locations. The overall attitude scale indicates that participants largely agree with a mean score of 4.20, suggesting a consensus on the importance of various factors influencing their decisions. This general agreement is evident in several key areas, particularly concerning pricing, service quality, security measures, and additional amenities provided by yacht harbors. One of the most pronounced findings is the critical role of yacht harbor pricing in shaping yachtsmen's preferences. Participants expressed a strong agreement (mean score of 4.64) with the statement that "affordable yacht harbor prices play a decisive role in my selection." This highlights the necessity for yacht harbor operators to adopt competitive pricing strategies and transparent pricing policies. As indicated by Paker (2014), effective pricing strategies can enhance customer loyalty, particularly when combined with service quality. Therefore, yacht harbors need to balance their pricing with the quality of services offered, ensuring that their prices reflect the value perceived by the customer. Additionally, the preference for yacht harbors that maintain a high price-quality balance (mean score of 4.27) suggests that yachtsmen are discerning consumers who seek quality services at reasonable prices. This finding aligns with consumer behavior literature, which emphasizes the importance of perceived value in decision-making (Arat, 2006). Yacht harbors should, therefore, strive to provide high-quality services while keeping costs manageable for their clientele. Another crucial element identified in the study is the significance of security measures in influencing yacht harbor choice. A considerable number of participants expressed strong agreement (mean score of 4.48) that adequate security precautions substantially impact their preferences. This underscores the need for yacht harbors to implement robust security protocols, such as 24-hour surveillance, controlled access points, and emergency preparation training for staff. Ensuring a safe environment not only protects yachtsmen's investments but also enhances their overall experience, leading to greater customer satisfaction and retention. The data also reveal that additional amenities and services, such as the availability of Wi-Fi, electricity, and technical maintenance support, significantly affect preferences. The importance placed on service variety (mean score of 4.20) reinforces the idea that yacht harbors must diversify their offerings to meet the comprehensive needs of their customers. High service quality is directly linked to customer satisfaction and loyalty (İlban & Bal, 2020). Thus, yacht harbors that provide excellent customer service, alongside a range of technical and recreational facilities, are more likely to attract and retain yachtsmen.

Demographic insights from the study indicate that the majority of respondents are male (81.5%), yet no significant attitude differences between genders were observed. This suggests that both men and women share similar values and concerns regarding yacht harbor preferences, pointing towards a potential market segmentation strategy that targets the unique needs of both genders without alienating either group. Moreover, the age distribution reveals that participants aged 26-35 exhibit stronger preferences compared to other age groups. This younger demographic may possess greater flexibility and adaptability, leading to more pronounced preferences influenced by current market offerings. Yacht harbors aiming to attract this group might consider emphasizing modern amenities and experiences that resonate with younger yachtsmen's values and lifestyle. The educational background of respondents also plays a role, with participants holding doctoral degrees expressing higher preferences for certain yacht harbor features. This trend may suggest that individuals with advanced education possess a more refined understanding of quality and value, impacting their decision-making process. Hence, yacht harbors should consider enhancing their marketing strategies to appeal to this demographic through educational outreach and targeted communications.

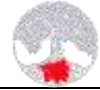
The analysis of ownership duration indicates that participants who have owned boats for over 11 years exhibit more defined preferences, reflecting the notion that experience correlates with expectations and standards. These findings suggest that seasoned yachtsmen possess a more nuanced understanding of what constitutes a desirable yacht harbor experience, which can guide operators in tailoring their services to meet these expectations effectively. Interestingly, the study found that those who frequently use their boats reported higher preference scores. This implies that regular engagement in yachting activities heightens awareness and knowledge of service offerings, influencing decision-making positively. Similarly, respondents who have changed their berth location less frequently expressed more stable preferences, indicating a tendency to favor long-term relationships with yacht harbors that provide satisfactory experiences. Finally, the research reinforces the notion that effective segmentation is vital for yacht harbors. By understanding the distinct needs and preferences of their clientele, operators can tailor their services and marketing strategies to cater to diverse customer segments. A thorough analysis of customer expectations, through tools such as surveys and statistics, is essential for continuous improvement and adaptation in the competitive landscape of yacht harbor services (Skaržauskienė et al., 2022). In conclusion, the findings of this study highlight the multifaceted nature of yachtsmen's preferences when selecting long-term berth locations. Price, service quality, security, and additional amenities are pivotal factors influencing decision-making. By aligning their offerings with the preferences and expectations of their clientele, yacht harbor operators can enhance customer satisfaction, foster loyalty, and ultimately thrive in a competitive market.



6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study shed light on the primary dynamics influencing the preferences of yachtsmen regarding long-term boat berth locations. These dynamics include pricing strategies, geographical location, security measures, and the quality of yacht harbor services, all of which offer significant insights for yacht harbor operators and other stakeholders in the yachting industry. The research indicates that appropriate pricing strategies directly influence yachtsmen's preferences. Economically attractive prices and flexible payment terms emerge as critical factors in selecting a boat berth location. Additionally, yachtsmen emphasize the vital role of geographical location in their decision-making process. Accessibility, alignment with travel routes, and natural surroundings are significant components that influence these preferences. Notably, yacht harbors situated near areas of natural beauty and strategic locations are favored more by yachtsmen. Yachtsmen also place a high premium on security measures, with 24-hour surveillance, camera systems, and fire safety protocols deemed essential in their choice of berth locations. Yacht harbors perceived having a high level of security to become more appealing to potential customers. Finally, service quality and diversity are paramount in determining berth preferences. Factors such as technical support, maintenance services, recreational facilities, and customer service quality enhance yachtsmen's satisfaction and loyalty to yacht harbors. Based on the analysis, several recommendations are made for yacht harbor operators to enhance their offerings and attract yachtsmen: Customer Segmentation: When segmenting their clientele, yacht harbor operators should focus on the group aged 26-35, doctorate holders, individuals with 11 years or more of boat ownership, frequent users, owners of vessels over 21 meters, commercial operators, and those who have used their current berth for over ten years.

Pricing Strategies: Yacht harbors should develop economically attractive pricing strategies. By offering flexible payment options and various discounts, operators can positively influence yachtsmen's preferences. Sustainable pricing policies that encourage repeat use of services and recommendations to others should be established (Bal, 2019). Location and Geographical Factors: Yacht harbor operators must highlight the geographical advantages of their locations and provide ease of accessibility for yachtsmen. Strategic positioning, environmental sustainability, and the protection of natural surroundings will enhance a yacht harbor's appeal. Comprehensive long-term planning based on market forecasts should inform you about the selection of yacht harbor sites. Factors such as transportation, environmental conditions, and operational considerations should be meticulously planned to ensure safety and aesthetic appeal (Bal, 2019). Security Measures: Yacht harbor operators must maintain high security standards to reinforce yachtsmen's perceptions of safety. Comprehensive security protocols, including 24-hour surveillance and advanced fire safety measures, will build trust among potential clients. Service Quality Enhancements: During the planning phase, yacht harbor operators should consider transportation, aesthetics, and service quality. Hiring qualified staff and fostering a culture of continuous improvement can boost employee morale and enhance service delivery. Analyzing pricing strategies relative to competitor offerings is essential for maintaining competitiveness (Bal, 2019). Additionally, the effective organization of operational facilities, much like the strategic arrangement of equipment to reduce workload and fatigue, can significantly enhance service quality and employee efficiency (Tavacioğlu et al., 2021). Customer Loyalty Programs: Yacht harbors should develop customer loyalty programs that offer discounts and privileges, thus enhancing yachtsmen's commitment. Additionally, leveraging customer relationship management systems to analyze and understand customer preferences can lead to improved service delivery (Karaosmanoğlu & Kazançoğlu, 2016). Collaborative efforts between academic institutions and industry players can lead to holistic partnerships aimed at improving the quality of yacht harbor services. Training programs and on-the-job procedures for yacht harbor staff should be established to ensure high-quality service delivery (Bal, 2019). Government policies regarding yacht tourism play a crucial role in industry's development. The government should streamline the processes required for yacht harbor investments and facilitate the entry and exit procedures for foreign yachtsmen. Simplifying these bureaucratic hurdles can make yacht tourism more appealing and accessible (Arat, 2006). While this research has made significant strides in understanding the factors influencing yachtsmen's preferences for boat berth locations, it also presents avenues for future research. Future studies should explore the impact of technological advancements, the role of social media and digital marketing, and the importance of ecological sustainability in yachting preferences. Investigating how new technologies integrate into yacht harbor services and affect yachtsmen's choices will provide valuable insights. Moreover, examining the positioning of yacht harbors on digital platforms and their marketing strategies will enhance understanding of customer engagement. In conclusion, the study's findings and recommendations provide a foundation for yacht harbor operators and stakeholders in the maritime sector to better align their services with the evolving preferences of yachtsmen, ultimately fostering growth and sustainability in the yacht tourism industry.



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