

## A QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION INTO THE MAIN PROBLEMS OF YACHT AND MARINA OPERATORS IN TURKEY

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## Abstract

Yacht and marina tourism is of great importance for countries with sea coastlines in terms of economic, social and environmental factors. However, there continue to be some problems awaiting solution. Türkiye is one of the rare countries surrounded by sea on three sides. It has a coastline longer than its terrestrial border. However, the benefits obtained from sea tourism are not at the desired level. There are some problems here, as in other countries. The important thing is to identify the problems and which institution or organization will solve them. The aim of this investigation is to determine the current problems faced by yacht and marina operators in Turkey. In the study, the exploratory interview technique was used. To formulate the interview questions, internal, environmental, integrated, and social variables were determined by scanning the literature on the problems of yacht and marina enterprises. Face-to-face interviews were held with 33 senior marina managers certified by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in Turkey. According to the results of the research, the main problems faced by yacht and marina businesses are grouped under five headings: problems related to layout and environmental issues, decisions taken by the state or local governments, personnel, environmental factors and rival businesses, and yacht/boat owners and boat captains. In addition, it was determined that while yacht and marina businesses operating in the Aegean and Marmara regions have similar problems, businesses in the Mediterranean region have different problems. This study is limited to Türkiye yacht and marina tourism. However, research shows that similar problems exist in other Mediterranean countries.

**Keywords:** Marine tourism; Marinas; Yacht management; Yacht and marina management problems.

## UMA INVESTIGAÇÃO QUALITATIVA DOS PRINCIPAIS PROBLEMAS DOS OPERADORES DE IATE E MARINA NA TURQUIA

## Resumo

O turismo de iates e marinas é de grande importância para os países com costas marítimas em termos de factores económicos, sociais e ambientais. No entanto, continuam a existir alguns problemas que aguardam solução. Türkiye é um dos raros países rodeados de mar em três lados. Possui um litoral mais longo que sua fronteira terrestre. No entanto, os benefícios obtidos com o turismo marítimo não estão ao nível desejado. Existem alguns problemas aqui, como em outros países. O importante é identificar os problemas e qual instituição ou organização irá resolvê-los. O objetivo desta investigação é determinar os problemas atuais enfrentados pelos operadores de iates e marinas na Turquia. No estudo, foi utilizada a técnica de entrevista exploratória. Para formular as perguntas da entrevista, as variáveis internas, ambientais, integradas e sociais foram determinadas por meio da leitura da literatura sobre os problemas dos empreendimentos de iates e marinas. Foram realizadas entrevistas presenciais com 33 gerentes seniores de marinas certificadas pelo Ministério da Cultura e Turismo da Turquia. De acordo com os resultados da pesquisa, os principais problemas enfrentados pelos negócios de iates e marinas são agrupados em cinco categorias: problemas relacionados ao layout e questões ambientais, decisões tomadas pelos governos estaduais ou locais, pessoal, fatores ambientais e negócios rivais e /proprietários de barcos e capitães de barcos. Além disso, foi determinado que, enquanto as empresas de iates e marinas que operam nas regiões do mar Egeu e de Marmara têm problemas semelhantes, as empresas da região do Mediterrâneo têm problemas diferentes. Este estudo limita-se ao turismo de iates e marinas de Türkiye. No entanto, a investigação mostra que existem problemas semelhantes noutros países mediterrânicos.

**Palavras-chave:** Turismo marinho; Marinas; Gestão de iates; Problemas de gestão de iates e marinas.

## UNA INVESTIGACIÓN CUALITATIVA DE LOS PRINCIPALES PROBLEMAS DE LOS OPERADORES DE YATES Y MARINAS EN TURQUÍA

## Resumen

El turismo en yates y puertos deportivos es de gran importancia para los países con costas marítimas en términos de factores económicos, sociales y medioambientales. Sin embargo, sigue habiendo algunos problemas pendientes de solución. Türkiye es uno de los pocos países rodeados de mar por tres lados. Tiene un litoral más largo que su frontera terrestre. Sin embargo, los beneficios que se obtienen del turismo marítimo no están al nivel deseado. Hay algunos problemas aquí, como en otros países. Lo importante es identificar los problemas y qué institución u organización los resolverá. El objetivo de esta investigación es determinar los problemas actuales que enfrentan los operadores de yates y marinas en Turquia. En el estudio se utilizó la técnica de la entrevista exploratoria. Para formular las preguntas de la entrevista, se determinaron variables internas, ambientales, integradas y sociales mediante la exploración de la literatura sobre los problemas de las empresas de yates y marinas. Se realizaron entrevistas cara a cara con 33 gerentes senior de puertos deportivos certificados por el Ministerio de Cultura y Turismo de Turquia. Según los resultados de la investigación, los principales problemas que enfrentan los negocios de yates y marinas se agrupan en cinco encabezados: problemas relacionados con el diseño y cuestiones ambientales, decisiones tomadas por los gobiernos estatales o locales, personal, factores ambientales y negocios rivales, y yates. /proprietarios de embarcaciones y capitanes de embarcaciones. Además, se determinó que mientras que las empresas de yates y marinas que operan en las regiones del Egeu y Marmara tienen problemas similares, las empresas en la región del Mediterráneo tienen problemas diferentes. Este estudio se limita al turismo de yates y puertos deportivos de Türkiye. Sin embargo, las investigaciones muestran que existen problemas similares en otros países mediterráneos.

**Palabras clave:** Turismo marítimo; Marinas; Gestión de yates; Problemas de gestión de yates y marinas.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Any activities carried out with marine vessels on the sea and directly related to professional activities for tourism purposes fall under the umbrella category of "Sea Tourism" (Topçuoğlu, 2006: 5-6). From the point of view of the tourism industry, sea tourism is a multifaceted activity with a strong maritime component. Due to the strong effects of marinas, concepts such

as marine tourism and yacht tourism have been developed around economic factors (Lukovic, 2012: 89). At its most fundamental level, sea tourism is a food- and transportation-based phenomenon (Pardali and Giantsi, 2018: 66).

Archaeological findings in Egypt show us that people used boats 11,000 years ago and that some even sailed. Some sources report that Egyptian rulers first used boats for pleasure on the Nile River in 4000 BC. The Dutch used these



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fast-sailing boats to seize smugglers and pirates, and they named these boats “Jaght,” which means “Hunter” (İldırılı, 2017: 35). In the following years, the important statesmen of Amsterdam named the sailboats they sent to guide the large export ships “Jaghtschippen”—that is, “hunter boat” (Falconer, 1780).

Today, they have lost this ancient meaning and are known as motor or sailing boats that are used only for pleasure and private purposes. Still, yachting remains a reflection of people’s desire for speed and prestige. It is possible to describe yachting as a type of tourism with proven economic importance (Silveira et al., 2018: 182). Yachting and marina management continue to develop around the world, and the two prominent regions are the Caribbean Islands and the Mediterranean.

It is known that around 600,000 yachts visit the marinas in the Mediterranean during the summer and the marinas in the Caribbean during the winter (Aydın, 2011: 54). Related capacity and service areas are increasing day by day due to the support of the yacht and marina enterprises by the state, the encouragement of investments, and the provision of loans (Sarı, 2011: 55).

A recent count puts the total number of marinas in the European Union alone at 62,689. It has been calculated that these enterprises have an annual turnover of half a billion Euros. On the other hand, according to a study conducted in England, it is estimated that the EU has a turnover of more than 3.2 billion Euros, and its accuracy is confirmed by the ICOMIA (International Council of Marine Industry Associations).

When some estimates and official data are evaluated, one can estimate a turnover of approximately 4 billion Euros. When these marinas and destination areas are evaluated geographically, the ratio of marina operations located on the Mediterranean coasts is approximately 70%. When yacht ownership in EU countries is evaluated, Spain, France, and Italy are the leading member states (Interreg Pharos4MPAs, 2017; Emodnet, 2019).

Marinas, sports, entertainment, recreation, and other activities included in sea tourism have played an important role in the globalization of recreational activities. As a result of the increase in the economic welfare of the people, the pressures of urban life, the increase in social interest in and longing for nature and the sea, the rapid development of technology, and the proliferation of boats with various characteristics, marina management has developed considerably (İldırılı, 2017: 38).

The pandemic has further contributed to a rise in sea tourism. All these developments have accelerated the growth and development of the marina sector. Marinas are generally known as large recreational ports. Marinas have shipbuilding and repair units, as in other major ports, and serve as bilge and waste oil collection stations for yachts (Diakomihalis, 2007: 444).

Parallel to the regional competition within marine tourism, the increasing competition within marina management has made it more difficult to please clients. This situation causes the standards of conflict between organizations to rise while increasing overall quality (Altunoğlu and Erbilgin, 2018: 277). Töz et al. (2016) and Paker and Özgezmez (2014) examined the interests and expectations of customers in marinas, finding that geographical location took precedence, followed by service

quality, rest, eating and drinking, shopping, nightlife and entertainment, prestige, social events, and other activities.

Although yacht and marina tourism continues to develop around the world, it also has important problems. Although some countries have their own problems, there is no doubt that they have common problems. In this research, we tried to reveal the problems experienced in this field in Turkey. Accordingly, solution suggestions have been put forward. The limited number of qualitative and quantitative studies in this field reveals the importance of this research. In the research, all marina managers, that is, the entire research population, were included.

In the relevant literature, studies on the problems of yacht and marina enterprises generally focus on issues in the field. These include environmental problems and sustainability (Pittman et al., 2017; Ritchie et al., 2017; El Gohary & Hassan, 2010; Dolgen et al., 2003; Mensa et al., 2011; Ross, 2003; Gürel & Kuleyın, 2017; Kumcu & Taslak, 2016; Tahmaz & Atik, 2016; Sevinç & Güzel, 2017; Tuğdemir & Soğukpınar, et al. 2016; Erdoğan, 2017; Akaltan & Işık, 2019), problems related to development and infrastructure (Bell, 2012; Benny, 2000; Tobiasson & Kollmeyer, 1991; Dreizis & Potashova, 2018; Chen et al., 2016; Toh et al., 2017; Ergin, 2010; Koç & Çetin, 2018; Sevinç & Güzel, 2016), issues related to customer satisfaction (Martina & Yepes, 2019; Bell, 2012; Silveira et al., 2018; Cheong, 2002; Pardali and Giantsi, 2018; Bilski, 2015; Elias et al., 2020; Vlastic et al., 2019; Santos & Perna, 2018; Doğan, 2019; Crouch, Del Chiappa and Perdue, 2019), marine tourism problems (Dikeç and Töz, 2017; Kuleyın, 2011; Görgün, 2011; Karaosmanoğlu & Kazancıoğlu, 2016; Erbilgin, 2018; Crouch, Del Chiappa & Perdue, 2019; Sarı, 2011; İldırılı, 2017), and financial problems (Onay & Keçeciler 2014; Joy and Beautiful, 2016).

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Nautical tourism is a tourism niche that combines the whole of marine recreation activities in destination shores and ports by offering facilities and services for dry land tourists, cruisers and yachtsmen. In other words, all the on shore and off shore involving activities comprising floating, submarine and land infrastructure. The importance of such a niche is that it is not only limited to the marine factors and equipment, but also involves the cultural conditions, land facilities and environment in the hosting marinas and lands (Boukherouk, 2020).

Tourism and nautical tourism, in particular, are activities that have been experiencing high growth rates during the past several years. In today’s world and society, where the global economy’s ground is shaken by the economic crisis, as well as the crisis of investment and investment ideas, nautical tourism is presented as an intriguing economic opportunity (Lučić & Dubrovnik, 2017).

Marine tourism” and “nautical tourism” terms share conceptual similarities, and although there are features related to all of the terms, “nautical tourism” is considered a broader term that includes lakes, rivers, and other aquatic environments where tourists can enjoy boating activities. The popularity of water and coastal tourism is steadily increasing. Marinas, a vital part of water tourism activity, are complex

organizations including heterogeneous business structures with numerous suppliers of various tourist services (Skaržauskiene et al., 2022).

The concept of maritime tourism includes all tourism activities related to the sea and the coasts and is one of the fastest-growing segments of maritime activity, which has been rapidly developing worldwide. This is a specific form of tourism that includes holidays, recreation, and leisure. Marine tourism involves sailing, using recreational vessels, boats, and cruise ships for leisure or business. In addition to using pleasure boats and cruises, it covers a wide range of activities such as water skiing, windsurfing, underwater fishing, scuba diving, swimming and tours of marine parks (Skaržauskiene et al., 2022).

Local and foreign tourists the fact that sea lovers who buy yachts instead of houses desire to spend time in areas such as the sea, rivers and lakes. They prefer to spend their lives in marinas, bays and seas as a lifestyle have enabled marine tourism to be more demanded among other tourism types and expand its framework. In this context, the increase in interest in amateur maritime, daily and weekly commercial yacht tours and cruise ship holidays, which are included in coastal and sea-based facilities and activities, made marine tourism the main element of mass tourism movements (Arlı, 2020).

Directly linked to marine tourism and preferred by the tourists with high incomes, yacht tourism has been mentioned most often and increasingly seen as important; also, it is included in the literature as a type of tourism with a high economic return a comprehensive and flexible form of tourism where travellers spend time freely on their yachts along the route they decide, they moor their yachts and visit the historical and natural beauties of the destination and its surroundings, they can visit the city centre, go shopping and also benefit from the services of other tourism businesses (Sevinç & Güzel, 2017).

When discussing about yachting one cannot consider only the tourist or recreational aspect, where the sea is the focus of the tourist experience and its main motivation but also other activities such as shipbuilding connected to it, the management of marinas, the brokerage industry and other related activities. The reality of yachting is very composite and is therefore simplistic to talk of a single sector. In considering the phenomenon of yachting it is more appropriate to refer to broader conceptual categories such as macro-sector, the value system and the sectorial system that enable us to understand all the necessary and complementary activities for the construction, maintenance and use of yachting units (Ivaldi, 2014).

Marina industry is one of the services offered to the stakeholders surrounding the marina itself, for example yacht industry, boat industry and others facilities like fueling operations, cleaning and maintenance facilities. This marina industry are part in marine tourist activities and provides important resources for the local economy. From this, marina sector always make a changes and improvements in their services especially facilities enhancement to attract the yacht owner to berth and use their facilities.

Marina as a destinations accessible by land and by water, including berth places for visitors, accommodation, dining facilities, swimming pool and other entertainment and leisure facilities that provide a marina atmosphere (Ioannidis,

2019). Yacht Tourism is an engaging activity and part of marine tourism. Bedroom, toilet, kitchen, living room, and multi-purpose room are available inside a yacht. The yacht can serve seafaring and is suitable for the nature-loving tourists, enjoys travelling, and can stay overnight like lodging.

The yacht is a recreational and sports tourism equipment of the high-end group due to travelling by sea expenses, such as oil expense, additional expense, maintenance expense, cost of insurance, parking fee, and yacht cleaning expense. In the tourists' opinion, Yacht Tourism has been worthwhile since it is an adventure; the tourists can experience the excitement and be close to the marine nature and use their yachting ability (Chonweerawong, 2020).

The marina is defined as: "a part of the water space and coastline specially constructed and arranged for the provision of link services, tourist accommodation in vessels and other services in accordance with this Regulation" (Lučić & Dubrovnik, 2017). Marina is a fundamental and best known type of nautical tourism harbour. As opposite to other nautical harbours which offer only boat mooring and storage services, in particularly appointed marina areas, they also offer a whole series of other facilities and services which enhance tourists' enjoyment, extend the tourist season, increase nautical and tourist expenditure and enrich the entire nautical and tourist offer (Šamanović, J., 2002).

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The concept of maritime tourism includes all tourism activities related to the sea and the coasts and is one of the fastest-growing segments of maritime activity, which has been rapidly developing worldwide. This is a specific form of tourism that includes holidays, recreation, and leisure. Marine tourism involves sailing, using recreational vessels, boats, and cruise ships for leisure or business. In addition to using pleasure boats and cruises, it covers a wide range of activities such as water skiing, windsurfing, underwater fishing, scuba diving, swimming and tours of marine parks (Skaržauskiene et al., 2022).

Marinas can provide different tourism services, but their leading service will always be boat storage. Some visitors do not require other services, but forming other services is impossible without this essential facility. In addition to boat storage, marinas can offer boat lifting or lowering services, minor repairs, off-season storage, deck cleaning, etc. All of these are complementary products to the primary service, though the consumer expects these services to come by default with ship storage.

Boat storage is unimaginable without other support services; showers and toilets for yachters, freshwater pumps, electricity, as well as refueling and repair services may be required. Other essential services include accommodation and event planning, which are specific and complex in the marina segment. The design of the basic marina service of boat storage depends on the available infrastructure. Each

marina must have space for boats of different sizes. If it is a more extensive marina, pools are allocated deep (Skaržauskiene et al. (2022).

Yacht tourism today is a type of tourism that is developing most dynamically. In many countries it's a prospering business that includes hundreds of thousands of yachts, charter companies, shipyards, an extensive network of yacht harbors in various regions of the World ocean (Tetyana, 2015). Not every vessel in a marina is a yacht, but yachts are the symbionts of the marina industry. Although there is no formal definition for what makes a vessel a yacht, most descriptions emphasise that a yacht is for pleasure and recreation (Lazarus & Leonidas, 2021).

In this regard, the directions of perspective development of yachting facilities are following: placing of yachting complexes in the structure of the city and beyond its bounds, considering the formation of a network; introduction of modern technologies in the construction of complexes, particularly in organization of storage, maintenance and repair of swimming facilities; formation of architectural and planning structure of yacht complexes to modern standards of service vessels and their users; - System development of the regulatory framework for the design and construction of modern yachting complexes (Tetyana, 2015).

An undeniably huge number of tourists interested in yachting in the recent years has enabled yacht tourism, which is in a rapid development process in coastal countries, to be an important part of tourism industry, which has become one of the world's largest industries (Sevinç & Güzel, 2017).

Marina and port are types of facilities that can be established successfully if it is located, designed and operated properly, but has the potential to cause environmental harm. Thus proper management is a prerequisite in order protect the environment from deterioration. However the management of marina and port are a complex issue, with many factors contributing to the problem.

With proper management it is possible to have optimal solution, minimal impact and this can be achieved by fulfilling the seven tenets. This includes; environmentally sustainable, technologically feasible, economically viable, socially desirable, legally permissible, politically approvable and administratively achievable (Loo et al., 2009).

Services provided by the touristic ports (marinas) to ships and passengers are (Pardali et al., 2018): port services as mooring and anchorage, well traffic sign, berths protected from the weather, boat launching ramps, warehouses, parking areas, easy access to the hinterland, dry storage areas for repairs and winter storage, safety and security systems, commercial port services, as water supply, bunkering, marine equipment and food supply, restaurants, bars, electricity, modern communication systems, waste reception facilities, banking services, hygiene facilities and cleaning complexes (WC and shower, laundries, dry cleaning), commercial shops, health care center, pharmacy, public services: customs, coast guard, repair services: including repair and maintenance units of the boats, technical support of electronic instruments, marine equipment & supplies, tourist-cultural and other services such as information, tourist attractions, entertainment venues, sports facilities, museums, cultural events (Eliasa et al., 2020).

Regarding the requirements need to be met in building

tourism harbor which is marina oriented from several different aspects. First of all it need to gain a thorough understanding on factors that will affect facility development, including, not limited on the kind of the tourists or area which nowadays are interesting to be visited or can be an attraction through development of, facility and service, political situation and regulations as well as permits, availability of public services, geophysics and environment.

Type of vessels to be served by the harbor in accomodating how the ships operate, understanding on small ship's (yacht) voyage character such as: long itinerary (10 – 25 days), focusing on culture and nature, daily visits and outing that does not require a major port (Mandi, 2017). Marine resources are either overexploited or at a critically endangered level; consequently, the services they provide, including the attractiveness for tourists are also endangered. Added to the overexploitation (human effects), the research regarding climate change (human and nonhuman causes) have shown that the number of pressures on the marine ecosystems is swelling to levels that might assume irreversible changes (Amazonas et al., 2021).

Existing literature has been systematically researched to gather information and facts about the potential negative environmental impacts of nautical navigation and tourism on the marine environment. Wastewater poses a danger to public health if discharged into waters used for recreational activities such as swimming, diving and nautical tourism (Burić & Kovačić, 2021).

The construction of wastewater reception stations from yachts, boats and other vessels in marinas and ports would largely solve one of the biggest problems facing today's society (Burić & Kovačić, 2021). Many studies implemented the concept of a systematic review approach to explore the literature that has been conducted in human resources in the maritime industry, especially in shipping, where it has been proven that human error was the cause of 80% of accidents (Ivošević & Milošević, 2022).

Many studies implemented the concept of a systematic review approach to explore the literature that has been conducted in human resources in the maritime industry, especially in shipping, where it has been proven that human error was the cause of 80% of accidents. Some of these errors are crew management errors, as preoccupation with minor technical problems, failure to delegate tasks and responsibilities, failure to set priorities, inadequate monitoring, failure to utilize available data, inability to communicate intent and plans, etc. (Šekularac-Ivošević, 2016).

Marinas and boating activities should minimize changes to the natural landscape, have operations compatible with the existing environment, reduce most negative impacts and enhance positive beneficial values when possible and practical (Ross, 2003). Mismanagement of liquid and solid wastes within a marina may lead to increased coastal contamination by sewage, elevated nutrient levels and in cases exposed to reduced water circulation, the resultant risks of eutrophication become significant.

During the construction phase of a marina, extensive coastline alteration and marine works may lead to loss of ecologically important habitats, including rockpools and littoral seagrass meadows (Xjenza, 1997). In addition, port structures themselves require areas for maintenance and

repair, security personnel, reception areas and restaurants and other facilities to attract and welcome yachtsmen and their vessels. But this type of port has a strongly negative environmental impact because of its very large infrastructure and due to the size of the ships and systems of anchoring that cause a significant loss in marine biodiversity. However the marina development need to sustain according to sustain the environment as well (Ahmad et al., 2020).

Yachting tourism refers to the use of water vessels or boats for leisure purposes, including cruising fishing, racing, or the practice of other nautical activities. Depending on the type of vessels, it could be classified into sailing and boat powering and, depending on the property, as chartered or private yachting (Eliasa et al., 2020). Yachting in Turkey has started to developed at the end of nineteen seventies. Primarily yachting tourism, which consist of south and southwest shores of Turkey and known as "Blue Voyage", has began with the boats of the sponge haunTERS which are deprived from comfort and luxury.

Than these tours are being carried out by the boats which are called Bodrum Type Golets. The yachting has been initiated and progressed since the beginning of nineteen eighties by the government policy of subsidizing the yachting and yacht tourism (Incaz Guner & Guler Brebbia, 2000). According to Turkish Chamber of Shipping (2015) followings are advantages of Turkish yacht or boat building industry: e and skilled labor force, world class production quality, acceptable costs, qualified and sufficient sub-industry, modern and technologic foundations, easy access to worldwide markets and favorable climate (Aydin & Aydin, 2019).

Turkish yacht and marine tourism has some problems, weaknesses and threats. Overcoming these problems can enable the country to reach the point it deserves in this field. The weaknesses and threats of Turkish yacht and marina tourism can be summarized as follows (Sariisik et al., 2011):

Weaknesses ca be listed as legislation should be rearranged so that sail-powered yachts will pay less tax than engine powered yachts, technical standards should be developed for the processing of bilge water and solid waste disposal, fairs should be funded and the development of yacht clubs should be encouraged, asingle authority should be responsible for all entry procedures for foreign flagged yachts, steps should be implemented to organise the training of workers for the yacht tourism sector, complicated investment procedures, inactive capacity in marinas, lack of international pressure group activities, average prices are lower than the neighbouring countries, and there is stiff price competition among the many competitors in the Turkish market, and input costs of yacht are high.

Threats are strengthening TL against other main currencies, high level of special consumption tax on alcohol, increasing competition in yacht tourism in Mediterranean region, increasing tax fees against new yachts, bureaucratic obstacles, no Ministry permit is made up of very old or old fashioned boats, last conflicts emerged in the countries located around of Mediterranean, increasing fuel prices, pollution at the coastal areas and degradation of marine eco-systems and the competition sustained by price discounts for all tourism products under the pressure of foreign tour operators.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this investigation is to identify the main problems of yacht and marina businesses in Turkey. Our hope is that identifying the problems of yacht and marina management in Turkey, which has the longest coastline, and offering solutions will enable relevant enterprises to become more competitive.

Sea tourism does not only consist of accommodation services connected to the trio of sea, sand, and sun but also includes many different areas. In this respect, many countries with coastlines are making important strides to earn high incomes, attract qualified and wealthy tourists, create new employment areas, and be among serious competitors in this field. However, many problems still require solutions. The results of this research could make important contributions to this sector, as well as to relevant public institutions and academicians interested in this subject.

Given the lack of a study like this in the extant literature, we used a combination of qualitative and exploratory methods. Qualitative research examines problems through inquiry and interpretation in an attempt to understand the form of a problem in its natural context (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Klenke, 2016). Hancock (1998) describes qualitative research as a method that investigates social phenomena or events in their natural conditions and aims to generate ideas, emotions, and experiences.

Data collection without statistical data can be broadly interpreted, characterizing and revealing people's interactions and behaviors after the experience (Fossey et al., 2002). In this context, a semi-structured interview form was prepared to obtain the research data. To obtain sufficient information, the most emphasized problems in the related literature were taken as a basis.

In preparing the questions and statements used in the semi-structured interview form, studies related to this field were used (Erdoğan, 2017; Erbilgin 2018; Karaosmaoğlu & Kazancıoğlu; 2016; Akaltan, 2016; Doğan, 2019; Crouch et al., 2019; Dikeç & Töz; 2017; Sarı , 2011; Kuleyin, 2011; Altınkaya & Atik, 2016; İlhan, 2008; İldırmlı, 2017).

Said form consists of group-related questions related to five main questions (layout and environmental issues, decisions taken by state or local governments, personnel, environmental factors, rival businesses, and yacht/boat owners and boat captains). All the questions in the five groups were directed to the managers and were designed according to the answers they received. The answers were coded within those groups.

The scope of the research consists of all yacht marina companies serving in Turkey. As of 2020, there are a total of 47 yacht marina operations in Turkey, 6 of which are municipality certified. The other 41 yacht marina enterprises are certified by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture in Turkey (in other words, yacht marinas operating purely for tourism purposes were included in the sample, and six yachts and marina operations were not included in the research since they were certified by the relevant municipality).

In total, all businesses were reached, and the managers of four of them could not be contacted. In the case of 4 marina businesses, the managers could not be interviewed for various reasons. As a result, interviews were

held with the senior managers of 33 marinas. Of the companies interviewed, 45% serve in Mugla, 15% in Antalya, 12% in Izmir, and 12% in Istanbul. Other businesses are located in Mersin, Aydin and Balikesir.

Before the interviews, emails containing information about the study and interview questions were sent to the business managers as of 4 September 2020. Although there were delays in some appointments, a high rate of participation was achieved. In addition to the notes taken for the effective use of time, during the interviews held in some enterprises, a recording device was used in line with the permission of the business managers.

The interviews were then converted into data. The collected data were shared with the business manager to confirm veracity. The interviews lasted between 48 and 138 minutes. The process, which started on 4 September 2020, was concluded on 27 March 2021. This study is limited to the problems of Turkey's yacht and marina tourism. Other countries may have different problems due to their location. On the other hand, it was not possible to reach all marina managers.

#### 4 RESULTS

The data obtained from the interviews were analyzed using MAXQDA 2020. The results showed that 76% of the business managers interviewed are male, and 61% are between the ages of 30-40. In terms of education, 66% have a bachelor's or master's degree. In terms of experience, 55% of the interviewed managers have worked between 10 and 20 years in this sector.

In addition, it was determined that 39% of these managers worked in the same marina for 4 to 9 years. The demographic characteristics of the managers who participated in the interview are given in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Demographic Characteristics of the Participants.

Sex	N	%	Age	N	%
Male	25	75.76	30-40	20	60.61
Female	8	24.24	41-50	8	24.24
			51 and older	5	15.15
Level of Education		Position			
Technical high school	2	6.06	Operations manager	17	51.52
Tourism/Business Administration	14	42.42	PR manager	6	18.18
Other bachelor's degree	5	15.15	Technical manager	5	15.15
Public relations and advertising	2	6.06	General manager	5	15.15
Mechanical engineering	1	3.03			
Graduate	8	24.24			
Experience (Years)		Experience with Company (Years)			
1-10	8	24.24	1-3	6	18.18
11-20	18	54.55	4-9	13	39.39
21 and more	7	21.21	10-15 and more	11	33.33
			No comments	2	6.06

Source: own elaboration.

The characteristics of the marinas are presented in Table 2. It is seen that 55% of yacht marina enterprises have 250 mooring points or more. It is noteworthy that 61% of the businesses are located 1 km or less from the city center. Transportation to the enterprises is mainly provided by taxi (64%) and ring service (60%).

In 70% of the enterprises, maintenance and repair services are provided in the technical service and land park areas of the yachts. The second most frequent service provided by the enterprises among the slipway services is bottom washing (52%). The yachts mostly stay on the dock for 3 to 6 months (39%).

**Table 2.** Qualifications of Marinas.

Capacity of Marinas	N	%
500 and more	9	27.27
101- 250	9	27.27
301- 500	8	24.24
251- 300	5	15.15
100 and below	3	9.09
Certificates		
Certificated by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism	30	90.91
Gold Anchor	19	57.58
Blue Flag	18	54.55
ISO 9001:2008	5	15.15
Municipality Certificated	5	15.15
ISO 14001	2	6.06
OHSAS 18001	1	3.03
Distance to City Center		
1 km or less	20	60.61
2 km-5 km	5	15.15
6 km and more	9	27.27
Transportation Facilities		
Taxi service	21	63.64
Ring service	20	60.61
Golf cart	10	30.3
Rental car	8	24.24
Bike	6	18.18
Shipyard Services		
Land parking and maintenance and repair for yachts with technical service	23	69.70
Bottom wash	17	51.52
High-capacity boat carrier	16	48.48
Wintering services	13	39.39
High-capacity overhead crane	11	33.33
Yacht supply store	6	18.18
Length of Stay in Marinas (months)		
1 and less	11	33.33
3-5	13	39.39
6-8	5	15.15
Social Facilities		
Food and beverage services	27	81.82
Shopping Stores	22	66.67
Resting Places	16	48.48
Yacht Club	13	39.39
Outdoor Parking	13	39.39
Tennis court	10	30.3
Hotel	10	30.3
Laundry	8	24.24
Fuel Station	3	9.09
Hospital	3	9.09

Source: own elaboration.

Food and beverage services are provided in 82% of the marinas, shopping malls in 67%, and hotels and tennis courts in 30%. A total of 84% state that the common areas are sufficient. Regarding the question of security, 65% have 24/7 security personnel, and 73% employ eight or more security personnel. In addition, 87% of the enterprises stated that they video surveil their premises 24 hours a day. Managers revealed a general lack of external support for the promotional activities of the enterprises. Mostly social media communication channels (67%) are used, and 58% promote themselves by participating in fairs and events.

A total of 85% have fire warning systems, and 55% have vault and fastening systems for inclement weather. Only 33% of the marinas have occupational physicians, and 61% receive support from nearby health institutions. Among the participants, 52% stated that they would not be able to benefit from the next services by blacklisting yachtsmen who do not comply with the operating rules or disturb other guests. Regarding the deficiencies of the marinas, participants pointed out missing buildings and closed areas (66%), the fact that they are unprotected because the yachts are open to the sea (13%), the risks of docking yachts, and insufficient breakwater visibility (13%), while 8% of the participants stated that they do not have any deficiencies in their businesses.

According to the participants, marinas apply different pricing policies, including group marinas, when it comes to pricing. The MAXQDA 2020 program analysis revealed that 64% of them offer the advantage of long-stay customers and that discounts are given to these customers. In 36% of the marinas, the ministry tariff is applied. The occupancy rate of the marinas does not fall below 50% throughout the year, and

90% of the enterprises have 90% or more occupancy throughout the summer. The rate of enterprises that spend the winter with 90% or more is 60%. It is understood from the answers given to the question of the average occupancy rate of their enterprises that 93% of the enterprises use 75% or more of their capacity.

A total of 79% stated that they are involved in the blue card application. Businesses that were not included in the application declared that they followed more environmentally friendly methods. The rate of enterprises stating that they have in-house recycling points and solid waste reception areas is 76%. In line with the information given by the management authorities, yachtsmen generally stay in marinas between one and six months (76%). The rate of yachts staying in the marinas from six months to one year is 21%.

The following table lists the problems found, in order of importance, according to the main categories analyzed: 1) The settlement plan and environmental problems experienced by the participants during and after the establishment of the yacht and marina business; 2) the answers given by the participants regarding the problems that arise due to the decisions taken by the state or local governments within the scope of laws and regulations in Turkey; 3) the personnel-related problems in marina enterprises, which were determined as a result of the transfers of the participants; 4) the problems caused by yachts, boat owners, boat captains, and employees in marina enterprises, and the problems caused by environmental factors and competing businesses.

**Table 3.** Establishment and environmental, the scope of laws and regulations, personnel-related and problems, problems caused by yachts, boat owners, boat captains, and employees and problems caused by environmental factors and competing businesses of Marinas.

Category	Problems	N
Establishment and environmental problems of Marinas.	Experiencing problems in technical services and finding spare parts due to the weak infrastructure of the yacht industry in Turkey	18
	The use and occupation of the parking lot and other facilities within the business by guests from outside or the people of the city rather than yachtsmen	16
	Marinas built in quiet areas remain in the city over time	11
	Failure to plan in accordance with the capacity and experiencing problems in customer reservation and acceptance	9
	The main breakwaters are not strong enough or not built at all	6
	Insufficient land parking areas and slipways; inability of lift capacities to meet the demand	5
	Insufficient technical infrastructure; inability of vaults or bollards to meet needs	5
	Social facilities and areas remain below capacity while planning and cannot meet the needs of yachtsmen	3
	Yachts experiencing the problem of not being able to berth at marinas in enterprises built without calculating the geographical conditions and evaluating the prevailing winds of the port operation	3
	Lack of fully sheltered and secure areas for yachts	2
The problems within the scope of laws and regulations of Marinas.	The breakwaters are not in the desired features, and the waves overrun the yachts and damage them	1
	High rental, usage fee, and post-privatization costs demanded by the state from marina areas and its reflection on prices	27
	Although the main field of activity of the marina management is culture and tourism, it is under the Ministry of Transport and operated by the legislation of this ministry	27
	Experiencing many problems with the legislation, decreasing guest satisfaction due to the lack of updates, and thus experiencing economic losses due to the decrease in the number of visitors	26
	Although marinas are included in the tourism sector, some special statuses given to accommodation businesses are not given to marinas by the government	19
	For yachtsmen who have taken residence, a one-year residence can be given. However, if they stay in their own country or other countries for more than 120 days within one year, their residence is automatically reduced. Legal action is taken against yacht and boat owners and employees who have exceeded this period and are exposed to deportation practices	16
	Most of the foreign yachtsmen leave the country or cancel their reservations as a result of illegal immigration and the migration movements experienced with the Syrian crisis	13
	In accordance with the regulation on the implementation of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection No. 29656 in Turkey, yacht and boat owners can stay for 90 days when they enter the country. At the end of 90 days, they have to return to their country, and after a certain period of time, they have to obtain a new visa to enter Turkey	12
Problems in foreign policy after the attempted coup on 15 July 2016	11	

	Decreased interest and demand due to the global crisis	8
	Follow-up of each and every new legislation related to marinas and fulfillment of their requirements incurs new costs	8
	The inadequacy of the yacht marina operators or the non-governmental organizations that have the authority to represent, and their opinions and recommendations	6
	The absence of seven safe businesses in boat penalties, allowing boats to receive support from areas other than marinas	4
Personnel-related problems of Marinas	The personnel do not know a foreign language, their level is low, or they are not willing to learn a language	23
	Personnel entering off-limits areas inside the yachts and the privates of the yachtmen, making use of them in various ways and damaging the corporate image	18
	Difficulty in finding trained personnel in the sector	16
	The staff show tolerance toward yacht owners they meet or become close to and are unfair to other guests	12
	The operating personnel demanding extra fees from the yachtmen without the knowledge of the management and not documenting this by receiving a cash fee	7
	Employees pretending to have received a service that yacht owners did not receive and making unfair profits	6
	Reflecting the personnel's own problems with the customer	6
	Establishing unnecessary intimacy with guests by moving away from the business culture	5
	Acting as if the yachts in the facility belong to them, and hosting guests or friends on the yacht	3
	Personnel causing damage by pretending to know the rules of the business on matters that foreign yacht owners are not aware of	3
	The high level of wage expectations of qualified personnel	2
The problems caused by yachts, boat owners, boat captains, and employees.	Foreign yacht owners do not take care of their captains and employees and do not come to their boats for a long time after leaving their boat	13
	Damage to the property of the guests or misuse	11
	Making noise and causing uneasiness in the business by hosting many guests	9
	Making unauthorized passage from his own boat to the neighboring boats in the mooring area and disturbing other guests	8
	Damage to his own boat or the equipment of the enterprise during berthing	8
	Using the yacht as a pleasure boat without obtaining the necessary permits	7
	Leaving the enterprise without paying a fee and moving to another enterprise	6
	Trying to deliberately put the company in a difficult situation by exacerbating small problems	5
	Paying fewer wages by making an agreement with the employees, not the business	4
	Disturbing other yacht owners by not complying with the operating rules, leaving the business in a difficult situation	3
	Some boat owners go abroad and do not take care of the problems related to their boats, do not hear from their boats for a long time, or leave their boats in operation, never to be bought again	3
	Requesting to approach the enterprise without having passport and customs procedures done	3
	Trying to pay for tax- and duty-free shopping with technological devices with high financial value in the country	2
The problems caused by problems caused by environmental factors and competing businesses	Epidemic diseases and their consequences	18
	Occupation of parking areas by the residents of the area; use of marinas in the city center without permission from the management of all parking lots	14
	Competitors providing services at less than their costs to attract customers	13
	Fishermen's shelters nearby provide mooring services like yacht businesses, thus exceeding their brief	6
	The waves created by the large ships and ferries passing nearby cause distress	6
	The risk of fire for those who light a barbecue at the picnic	4
	Marine accidents occurring in or around the enterprise	4
	Environmental and marine pollution and discharge of wastewater by some municipalities to the sea and, by extension, to marina areas	3
	Storms and tornadoes at sea leaving the business in a difficult situation	3
	Nearby activities pose a risk, including the flying of wish balloons, the falling of the lit candles into the marina, and the risk of fire	2
	Problems experienced due to sailing clubs, diving schools, and swimming activities in the vicinity	2

Source: own elaboration.

## 5 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

Efforts were made to reach 41 marinas with tourism operation certificates operating in Turkey, which constitute the main body of this research, but only 33 enterprises could be interviewed. Due to the fact that the interviews were conducted during a busy period, the enterprises had to be visited more than once. In some instances, although an appointment was made, interviews were conducted in the field due to the workload of the business managers.

Another limitation is the difficulties experienced in accessing the official data of yacht and marina enterprises in Turkey. Although the data of yacht and marina management, which is the subject of marine tourism operation, includes the same year in many official institutions in Turkey, different and contradictory data have emerged.

## 6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Turkey, which has an important geographical position in the world, draws attention with its superiority in many areas in terms of attractiveness and the face of being surrounded by seas on three sides. However, research has shown that although it contains such important recreational areas, these are not fully utilized. Yacht and marina management is one of these areas. When looking at other countries, even those not on the seaside are engaged in activities related to marinas, but Turkey, which has a seaside length of 8333 kilometers, has not been able to develop in this area.

One of the problems is that yacht and marina businesses are easily affected by the crises the country has experienced and cannot increase their market share sufficiently due to the fragile structure of the economy.



Businesses are trying to cope with the problems in the face of crisis. In addition, there are significant differences in the level of influence of marinas locally and regionally.

Instead of showing growth and development, the marina and its businesses stay away from various methods to keep their current situation stable. In general, by following other rival companies closely, they are open to all kinds of developments in the direction of solutions. Thus, they act quickly in solving problems for competitive purposes and, consequently, adopt a flexible management structure. All of these measures help accelerate growth. In this context, customer satisfaction is of great importance in providing an advantage over competing marinas. As mentioned in previous studies and in the literature review, one of the main problems of marinas in Turkey is the lack of a joint study with public and local governments, associations, chambers of commerce, universities, and other organizations at the international, national, industrial, and regional levels. However, the 33 marinas included in the study were willing to take part in such activities, thus proving the importance of this study in the field of yacht and marina management.

The marina managers stated that the promotion and advertisements of yacht companies in Turkey still have great room for improvement. Broadcasting organizations claim that the right promotions and advertisements can increase the income of enterprises to a great extent. The results of the studies conducted by Dikeç & Töz (2017), Doğan (2019), Altinkaya and Atik (2016), Erdoğan (2017), Kuleyin (2011), and Karaosmanoğlu & Kazancıoğlu (2016) show similarities in terms of the problems experienced with public and local governments. However, it is understood from the interviews that legal obligations leave businesses in a difficult situation and that they do not lead to constructive solutions. Vlastic, Poldrugovac, & Jankovic (2018) state that the difficulties and problems are related to issues of infrastructure, institutional framework, and bureaucracy.

In addition, although Erbilgin (2018) and Crouch et al. (2019) reported that management personnel have a high impact on the loyalty and recommendation decisions of yachtsmen in their studies, they alone will not be sufficient in solving deficiencies in customer satisfaction. Although most of the enterprises interviewed try to take the necessary precautions against the problems related to personnel, sometimes such issues can be overlooked. Businesses that do not pay attention to these issues risk losing customers in the future.

In their studies, Karaosmanoğlu & Kazancıoğlu (2016), Erbilgin (2018), and Crouch et al. (2019) have revealed that marina customers keep their demand and expectation levels at high levels. Chen et al. (2016) reported that yacht owners' activities in marinas and the number of berths is not sufficient and that yacht associations are not more active in the markets. The present study confirms this. Customer density can be created by meeting the expectations and demands of marina guests and by emphasizing the attractiveness of the marinas.

Yachting tendencies can change over time. According to Ross (2003), some yachtsmen may want reasonable prices, others may want silence and calmness, and still others may want to be in a social environment. Some yachtsmen, on the other hand, expect to take advantage of opportunities for technical support. The participants of this study stated that

some yachtsmen may have very specific requests such as: "Please connect me in front of the nightclub." Such complexities of demands and service, which change from customer to customer, can complicate the work of marina businesses.

As a result of the evaluation of the findings obtained from this study, it is understood that the enterprises and managers have little control over crises and that they expect the senior management to make executive decisions. Paker & Özgezmez (2014), Sarı (2011), Doğan (2019), and Dikeç & Töz (2017) discussed possible future situations. However, none discuss pandemic problems. However, Wang, Zheng & Chen (2018) suggest establishing a separate quarantine department in such cases.

The pandemic in 2020 and its effects on yacht marina management should be considered as a separate study. Epidemics and disasters may have high-level negative effects on the marina sector and beyond (Arlı, 2020). In addition, Froelich (2020) reports in his study that during the COVID-19 epidemic, the double-digit increase in booking requests for private yacht holidays and yacht charters was considered a safer alternative for holiday seekers.

Given the rules and bureaucracy applied based on the regulations and communiqués prepared by the public and their implementation, documentation processes are seen as a burden and an unnecessary procedure for businesses and yachtsmen. Robins (2011) talked about the negative aspects of relations with local authorities, while Chen, Balomenou, Nijkamp, Poulaki, and Lagos (2016) stated in their studies that laws and regulations affect coastal activities and the number of piers.

Since marinas in Turkey are constructed in accordance with coastal law regulations, the outdated limitations of said regulations lead to various problems. Erdoğan (2017), Kuleyin (2011), and Karaosmanoğlu & Kazancıoğlu (2016) noted similar issues in their studies. It is crucial that structural, administrative, and managerial problems across the board are eliminated and that their needs are reviewed. Vlastic et al. (2019) mentioned the lack of planning and control functions of the marina and the inefficiency and inadequacy of current implementations.

Public administration is seen as an obstacle to yacht and marina businesses in terms of development and attractiveness, and the lack of sufficient NGOs in yacht and marina management is a detriment. Since Turkey's laws and regulations are prepared without consulting the institutions they affect, the fact that only the public sees yacht and marina businesses as a source of high income leaves such businesses in a difficult situation.

Moreover, they value the ideas of their employees in terms of seeking solutions. Hence the importance of taking customers' opinions into account while determining potential solutions through research, interviews, surveys, and other feedback methods conducted within the enterprise. Enterprises should be open to developments in terms of increasing their internal activities and customer satisfaction by taking the opinions of employees and guests seriously. Accordingly, business managers have stated that positive contributions are effective in solving the problems, increasing the revenues of the marina businesses while reducing their costs.

The yacht mooring prices of marinas have been increasing around the world. There are many economic and legal practices in support of yachts and marinas in other states in the Mediterranean basin, which are considered competitors. Moreover, since the Greek economic crisis, the marina industry along the Aegean Sea has been revived. Such competition has led to an increase in yacht mooring taxes in other countries.

On the contrary, in Turkey, the state's marina land areas and high rental rates cause operators to increase their costs over their competitors. As a result, besides not being able to attract new customers, this tendency may lead to the loss of existing customers. According to the senior marina managers interviewed for this study, since 50% of the turnover of the enterprise is returned to the state as rental income, the operators cannot invest with the remaining profit margin and cannot strengthen their technological and technical infrastructures in the context of the attractiveness of the enterprise.

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#### CRedit author statement

Term	Definition	Author 1	A.2
Conceptualization	Ideas; formulation or evolution of overarching research goals and aims	x	x
Methodology	Development or design of methodology; creation of models	x	x
Software	Programming, software development; designing computer programs; implementation of the computer code and supporting algorithms; testing of existing code components	x	x
Validation	Verification, whether as a part of the activity or separate, of the overall replication/ reproducibility of results/experiments and other research outputs	x	x
Formal analysis	Application of statistical, mathematical, computational, or other formal techniques to analyze or synthesize study data	x	x
Investigation	Conducting a research and investigation process, specifically performing the experiments, or data/evidence collection	x	x
Resources	Provision of study materials, reagents, materials, patients, laboratory samples, animals, instrumentation, computing resources, or other analysis tools	x	x
Data Curation	Management activities to annotate (produce metadata), scrub data and maintain research data (including software code, where it is necessary for interpreting the data itself) for initial use and later reuse	x	x
Writing - Original Draft	Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work, specifically writing the initial draft (including substantive translation)	x	x
Writing - Review & Editing	Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work by those from the original research group, specifically critical review, commentary or revision – including pre- or post-publication stages	x	x
Visualization	Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work, specifically visualization/ data presentation	x	x
Supervision	Oversight and leadership responsibility for the research activity planning and execution, including mentorship external to the core team	x	x
Project administration	Management and coordination responsibility for the research activity planning and execution	x	x
Funding acquisition	Acquisition of the financial support for the project leading to this publication	x	x

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