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Uzunogullari, Serkan, Karadimitriou, Christina and Pappas, Nikolaos (2024) The Palestinian Conflict and the Further IT Use from the Greek and Turkish Hotels. *Strategic Change*. ISSN 1086-1718

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RESEARCH ARTICLE OPEN ACCESS

The Palestinian Conflict and the Further IT Use From the Greek and Turkish Hotels

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Received: 23 April 2024 | **Revised:** 17 December 2024 | **Accepted:** 17 December 2024

Funding: The authors received no specific funding for this work.

Keywords: chaordic systems | Greece | hotel industry | IT use | Palestine | Turkey

ABSTRACT

The current conflict in Palestine substantially affects tourism and hotel operations in the Eastern Mediterranean. The study examines the Palestinian conflict's effect on the hotel industry's willingness to further use information technology (IT) as a means for handling the crisis. Two nationwide studies were conducted in the hotels of Greece and Turkey. Each study includes the perspectives of a sample of 400 hotel managers and evaluates the chaordic systems and dynamics related to the Palestinian conflict and the further use of IT in the hotels. By employing fsQCA and NCA, both studies generated the same three solutions: (i) IT orientation, (ii) the Palestine effect, and (iii) IT externalisation. The study contributes to theoretical and methodological perspectives whilst providing several managerial implications concerning the IT-related strategic change of hotels due to the Palestinian conflict.

1 | Introduction

The recent conflict in Gaza, Palestine, marked by its historical depth and geopolitical complexity, has profound implications on global tourism (e.g., generation of high uncertainty; widespread cancellations of reservations and travel; redirection of tourist flows), particularly affecting neighbouring regions (Farhan and Schaer 2023). The relationship between geopolitical conflicts and tourism has been extensively documented, illustrating its direct and indirect effects on tourist perceptions, destination choices, and overall industry performance (Akamavi, Ibrahim, and Swaray 2023; Isaac 2010a; Walters, Wallin, and Hartley 2019). The Israeli government's Ministry of Tourism (2023) reports that tourism arrivals to Israel from January 2023 to December 2023 were 34% lower than in 2019. Geopolitical conflicts often induce a spillover effect, influencing tourism and hospitality industries in nearby regions by impacting tourist flows, economies, and perceptions of safety (Perles-Ribes et al. 2018; Seabra, Reis, and Abrantes 2020).

Even though Greece and Turkey are geographically distant from the epicentre of the Palestinian conflict, it is expected that both countries will experience significant repercussions on their tourism and hotel industries due to changes in tourist flows and perceptions of safety and stability of the Eastern Mediterranean region (Greek Travel Pages 2023; Habtemariam 2023; Hürriyet Daily News 2023). In such cases, the use of information technology (IT) can provide pathways for companies and destinations to exit risk and crisis conditions (Bulchand-Gidumal 2022), since its deployment holistically affects the enterprising management and operations (Eaves et al. 2018). Therefore, it is imperative to evaluate the aspects that lead companies to adopt and further use IT (Gono, Harindranath, & Özcan, 2016; Mohammed et al. 2018), especially during periods of high uncertainty and instability. Despite the known impact of geopolitical events on the tourism and hospitality industries, a research gap exists regarding the complexity of the hotel sector's response mechanisms, particularly in the context of IT-related strategic change

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Summary

- The study examines the impact of the Palestinian conflict on the willingness of hotels in Greece and Turkey to further use IT.
- Two nationwide studies were conducted in the hotels of Greece and Turkey, each involving the perspectives of a sample of 400 hotel managers.
- It evaluates the chaordic dynamics and complexities by employing fsQCA and NCA.
- Three complex solutions can lead to the willingness of hotels in Greece and Turkey to further use IT.
- Several strategic IT-related recommendations are provided to hotel managers in response to geopolitical conflicts.

in hotels. Furthermore, the literature is predominantly silent concerning the complexity examination for further IT use from hotels during war clashes. In addressing this gap, the study employs fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) and necessary condition analysis (NCA) to examine the effect of the Palestinian conflict on the hotel industry in two major tourism destinations (Greece; Turkey) of this region.

Therefore, this study analyses the relationship between the Palestinian conflict and the willingness of hotels in Greece and Turkey to integrate IT further as a strategic response to the challenges posed by the conflict. The contribution of this study is theoretical as well as methodological. From a theoretical perspective, it provides a better understanding of IT and its potential further usage by the hotel industry for handling the impacts of a war conflict, providing evidence from two major tourism destinations (Greece and Turkey). Methodologically, the contribution concerns using fsQCA for complexity examination, offering a more holistic evaluation of hotels' IT use when dealing with the disastrous impacts of a military clash.

1.1 | Tourism Impacts of the Gaza Conflict

Geopolitical tensions have been a backdrop since the establishment of Israel on approximately 77% of the Palestinian land in 1948 (Isaac and Eid 2019). Following the division of the remaining part of Palestine into the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the West Bank has been under Israeli military occupation since 1967 (Isaac and Eid 2019). Therefore, the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians centres on competing claims to the same piece of territory (Belhassen 2023). Alluding to several factors, such as history, religion, and society, each nation tries to justify its claim over the disputed territory (Belhassen 2023). Consequently, Israel and Palestine not only share some of the world's most contested tourist sites, but also the region has suffered from political volatility throughout the years (Isaac 2010b; Morakabati 2013).

The relationship between conflict and tourism is complex, with terrorism, conflicts, and war generally recognized as major deterrents to travel and tourism (Akamavi, Ibrahim, and Swaray 2023; Isaac 2010a; Walters, Wallin, and Hartley 2019). Consumers' perceptions of risk, both direct and indirect, are

impacted by crises and uncertainty when it comes to purchasing hospitality and tourist products (Yordam Dağistan et al. 2023). Farmaki, Pappas, and Karadimitriou (2024) argues that countries and societies can suffer economically, socially, and psychologically due to wars and conflicts. Consequently, numerous tourism studies examining the effects of political instability have found negative outcomes. (Akadiri et al. 2020; Akamavi, Ibrahim, and Swaray 2023; Demiralay and Kilincarslan 2019). This includes events such as military coups, political violence, wars, and religious and ethnic conflicts. For example, Theocharous et al. (2020) analysed the monthly arrival data in Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, and Israel between 1987 and 2012 and found that political instability significantly reduced tourist arrivals and increased volatility in all four countries. According to Akamavi, Ibrahim, and Swaray (2023), tourists prioritize a destination's public safety, security, peace, and terrorism aspects while planning their trips. Indeed, destination attractiveness is considered to be directly connected to safety when instability is caused by hostilities, like in Israel and Palestine (Isaac 2010a). The consensus in the literature is that unrest leads to market volatility, sharp drops in hotel occupancy rates, fewer guests, and shorter stays. This results in a disruption in demand and affects pricing, revenue management, and financial performance (Israeli and Reichel 2003; Chiriko 2021; Qiu et al. 2021).

Countries directly impacted by political instability, such as wars and terrorism, often see a decline in tourist flows (Perles-Ribes et al. 2018). In addition, neighbouring countries often feel positive or adverse consequences, depending on whether the spillover or the substitution effect is more prominent (Perles-Ribes et al. 2018). The spillover effect refers to an economic activity's positive or negative externalities on any unrelated element (Seabra, Reis, and Abrantes 2020). In tourism, the concept of spillover effects encompasses the unintended consequences that the tourism sector in one area can have on the visitation patterns of neighbouring regions, highlighting the spatial relationships in understanding these dynamics (Seabra, Reis, and Abrantes 2020). As an outcome of these occurrences, countries or regions find themselves delineated into categories of winners and losers (Perles-Ribes et al. 2018). Although the dynamism of geopolitical issues makes spillover or substitute effects hard to predict, certain points can be ascertained between closely neighbouring countries, as Seabra, Reis, and Abrantes (2020) have demonstrated with the example of Portugal. They assert that terrorist attacks in Spain severely impact tourists travelling to Portugal from Asia, Oceania, America, and other European countries. Similar results were also reported in the study by Akadiri et al. (2020), which found that geopolitical risks over the last three decades have negatively affected Turkey's real GDP and tourism industry. Buda (2016) further supports this view, emphasising that tourism in Jordan coexists with ongoing, often violent conflicts within the country or spilling over from neighbouring regions such as Palestine, Israel, Iraq and Syria.

One of the most recent eruptions of unrest in the Middle East was the Arab Spring, in which the spillover and substitute effect was visible. During the Arab Spring, several countries in the area, such as Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Morocco, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen, experienced both violent and peaceful demonstrations (Buda 2016). These events, and how they were covered in the media, greatly

affected tourism in the region (Buda 2016; Morakabati 2013). As a result, a significant number of tourists looked for alternative destinations (Morakabati 2013). Although the volume of tourists in nations like Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Jordan and Lebanon experienced a decline, other Mediterranean countries, notably Greece, Turkey and especially Spain, witnessed positive tourism results (Perles-Ribes et al. 2018). Such findings clarify the importance of understanding regional geopolitical and tourism dynamics and the potential risks incurred by negative perceptions.

Therefore, it is evident that tourism can be influenced by geopolitical events, adapting to the shifts in the broader landscape. Moreover, geopolitical risks continue to pose threats to the normal operations and conduct of tourism-related businesses (Akadiri et al. 2020; Demiralay and Kilincarslan 2019). Subsequently, crisis conditions are known to encourage hotels to adopt various crisis management practices, including cost-cutting measures such as staff layoffs, reduced working hours, postponed maintenance, and limited services, as well as marketing, communication, and media management to target new customers, offer discounts, and distribute information (Taylor and Enz 2002; Ritchie and Jiang, 2019; Wut, Xu, and Wong 2021). It is in light of these processes that the utilisation of information and communication technology is considered to augment crisis management practices. Indeed, a recent study sampling 28 conflict-affected countries, including Israel, Lebanon and Syria, found that aspects of ICT play a significant role in managing tourism crises effectively by enhancing security, providing real-time communication, and building tourist confidence (Choudhary et al. 2020).

1.1.1 | IT In Hospitality

Assessing strategic approaches within the hospitality sector, particularly in leveraging IT to navigate the crisis, is necessary. This is particularly important since the literature indicates that IT can be used as a business strategic enhancer (Galloway, Sanders, and Bensemann 2016) and as a powerful driver for optimising organisational structures (Healy and Iles 2003). Most companies nowadays rely on IT as their primary or secondary tool to run and manage their operations (Wut, Xu, and Wong 2021). Online social networks are growing in importance as a resource for tourists seeking information and purchasing tourism products and services (Navío-Marco, Ruiz-Gómez, and Sevilla-Sevilla 2018). Ryschka et al. (2016) analysed social media as a crisis management tool and highlighted its impact on a company's reputation, emphasising its growing importance as a communication tool with global reach. They also assert that crisis managers must be prepared to employ social media to provide accurate information and prompt responses. Similarly, Horng et al. (2022) analysed how hotels leverage the capabilities of the impacts related to big data analytics and social media strategies to create competitive advantage and performance. They found that social media can optimise the extent to which marketing programmes are effective, and different strategies related to social media have varied impacts on the competitiveness and performance of corporations.

The integration of IT in hotels has been previously documented, with researchers like Pappas (2018) and Horng et al. (2022)

exploring the effectiveness of hotel websites and social media utilisation. According to Pappas (2018), a hotel company's resilience to crises can be strengthened through the innovative application of marketing and IT. Moreover, Şanlıöz-Özgen, Türksoy, and Atabay (2024) recognise hotel websites and mobile sites as essential platforms for crisis communication, providing information on safety measures and flexible booking policies to address customer concerns and enhance direct bookings. A further constitutive role of technology is highlighted by Sharma et al. (2022), who suggest that technology can assist organisations during a crisis by addressing challenges such as improving forecasting, enhancing sales and turnover, expanding market access and boosting profitability.

The connection between technology and innovation is not new in the literature (Malik 2001; Satta et al. 2015; Vacher, Arfa, and Ammari 2020), whilst numerous studies confirm that innovation is paramount for managing the impacts of crisis (Broshi-Chen and Mansfeld 2021; Naidoo 2010). Naidoo (2010) emphasises the importance of innovation activities and how they increase the likelihood of surviving a crisis. Meanwhile, Broshi-Chen and Mansfeld (2021) assert that the tourism crisis is a complex problem necessitating effective management and mitigation through creativity and innovation, promoting flexibility and open-mindedness. They also suggest that resilience could be an area of further research due to its correlation with innovation and creativity in crisis management. Building on this discussion, the research by Melián-Alzola, Fernández-Monroy, and Hidalgo-Peñate (2020) examines the concept of hotel resilience in a highly uncertain setting and highlights the impact of organisational resilience on performance, confirming the significance of resilience in enhancing outcomes.

In response to the challenges posed by geopolitical conflicts, the effective adaptation of the aforementioned strategies hinges critically on an organisation's willingness to embrace and further integrate IT. The studies by Ozturk et al. (2017) and Park et al. (2017) examined the intention to use IT in various contexts. The literature equips us with numerous tools for addressing and mitigating the challenges of the crisis. However, as Broshi-Chen and Mansfeld (2021) point out, current approaches often rely on linear, ex-post-crisis strategies that may not fully align with tourism crises' intricate, unpredictable and complex nature. Therefore, effectively managing tourism crises also requires a deep understanding of their unique and complex nature (Broshi-Chen and Mansfeld 2021).

1.2 | Chaos and Complexity

Although the theory of chaos was first used primarily in physical, mathematical and biological sciences, it has recently emerged as a significant meta-theoretical framework in social sciences studies (Seeger 2002). In particular, it places a focus on unanticipated, non-linear connections as well as complex system components (Altınay and Kozak 2021; Mahmoudabadi 2015; Seeger 2002). The chaos theory assumes that the situation is unpredictable, complex and highly dynamic (Wut, Xu, and Wong 2021).

According to Meekes, Buda, and De Roo (2020), the fundamental principle of complexity centres on the understanding that

open systems react to external influences by self-organising their constituent parts, thus evolving towards a better alignment with their environment.

Enterprises and destinations are considered complex, ever-changing systems with many interrelated characteristics and activities that often interact in non-linear ways (Choe and Kim 2021; Küçükergin et al. 2021). Businesses operate in a complex environment, and their management is characterised by high levels of complexity, especially during periods of uncertainty (Pappas 2018). Known for constant change and uncertainty, the tourism crisis poses significant operational and strategic challenges to the industry's supply and demand sides, making it a multifaceted and complex issue (Broshi-Chen and Mansfeld 2021). For example, while the symmetric approach found Zika-related perceptions to have no impact on destination choice, the asymmetric method revealed significant effects on both high and low visit intentions, highlighting the limitations of traditional symmetric analyses in capturing tourist behaviour (Choe and Kim 2021). Similarly, Buda (2016) emphasises the complexity of tourism within sociopolitical turmoil, arguing that danger and conflict are not always deterrents for tourism. As a result, military conflicts not only affect business operations but also heavily impact the perceptions of consumers and their purchasing decision-making (Farmaki, Pappas, and Karadimitriou 2024). Despite the presence of conflict and danger, consumers desire authentic and unique experiences, which drives them towards these areas. Buda (2016) argues that recent occurrences of conflict can ironically influence tourists' risk perceptions, implying that, contrary to expectations, danger and conflict can actually draw in tourists instead of turning them away. Likewise, Demiralay and Kilincarslan (2019) assert that analysing the sensitivity of the tourism and leisure industry to geopolitical events by using linear models might be misleading. Thus, in the business sphere, several studies highlight the importance of examining the complexity of enterprising decision-making (Mariani et al. 2024; Pappas 2018).

While non-linearity and complexity are not new in leisure and tourism research (Meeke, Buda, and De Roo 2020), researchers have recently embraced non-linear methodologies after realising that reductionist (linear) methods fail to adequately capture the complexity of behavioural patterns (Farmaki and Pappas 2022; Kumar et al. 2023; Rasoolimanesh et al. 2021). Building on this paradigm shift, Kumar et al. (2023) emphasise the versatility and applicability of the fsQCA technique in interpreting complex phenomena across various themes. These themes are enhancing business competitiveness, understanding tourist behaviour and satisfaction, promoting entrepreneurship, managing the tourism business ecosystem, advancing sustainable tourism practices and improving service quality.

1.3 | Study Tenets

The study focuses on the service sector and uses the term "tenet" in an attempt to highlight the investigation and identification of specific complex conditions (Pappas 2023). When the research investigates the conditions in reference, the examinations are not based on statistical hypotheses and their associated consistency metrics as would be the approach in

a parametric investigation, but instead, the focus is on the complex outcome scores and their generated adequacy (Wu, Yeh, and Woodside 2014). Following the study of Ordanini, Parasuraman, and Rubera (2014), in accordance with the configurational theory, the same factors can produce different outcomes. Therefore, this study examines the effect of the Palestinian military conflict and the intention of hotels in Greece and Turkey to handle the related crisis by further using IT. As a result, following Pappas (2023) and Woodside (2013), the study sets six tenets:

- T1: Each antecedent should be included in at least one generated solution.
- T2: At least two antecedents should be included in each generated solution, actually creating a complex configuration (recipe principle).
- T3: At least two solutions that have the ability to lead to the same outcome should be generated (equifinality principle).
- T4: None of the examined antecedents should be included in all the generated solutions (contrarian case analysis).
- T5: Although all the generated solutions can lead to the same outcome, none of them should generate a high outcome score.
- T6: None of the generated solutions should include all the examined cases.

2 | Methods

2.1 | Participants

The studies were conducted in two countries during January and February 2024.

The data were collected via a nationwide email distribution of structured self-assessed questionnaires addressed to hotel managers in Greece and Turkey. Those two countries were selected as they are two of the largest tourist destinations worldwide (Turkey is the fourth largest destination, and Greece is the ninth) and the largest destinations in the region (Eastern Mediterranean) (UNWTO 2023). In Greece, the email addresses of the hotels were derived from the Greek Travel Pages (<https://www.gtp.gr>), while those of the Turkish hotels were sourced from the Hotel Association of Türkiye (<https://www.turob.com/>), Türkiye Hoteliers Federation (<https://www.turofed.org.tr/>), and Türkiye Tourism Hotel Managers Association (<https://turoid.org>) websites. As expected, the response rate was low (email distribution of questionnaires); thus, more than 4000 emails were sent for each of the studies. The partially completed questionnaires were deleted from the database (list-wise deletion) for study bias reduction. As Raghunathan (2020) suggests, list-wise deletion is the most appropriate method for handling missing data.

2.2 | Sampling

Since the perspectives of hotel managers were unknown, the study employed the conservative approach of 50/50, assuming that half of the managers would express positive perceptions and the rest

negative ones. As suggested by Sekaran and Bougie (2020), Z (cumulative probability) was set at 1.96, and a maximum S (Std. Deviation) at 5%. Following Akis, Peristianis, and Warner (1996), below is the provision of the sample calculation:

$$N = \frac{Z^2(\text{hypothesis})}{S^2} \Rightarrow N = \frac{1.96^2(0.5)(0.5)}{0.05^2} \Rightarrow N = 384.16.$$

In accordance with Kumar et al. (2020), the sample size determines the margin of error in the research. In both studies, the sample was rounded to a total of 400 useful (fully completed) questionnaires.

2.3 | Measures

Both studies utilised a structured questionnaire consisting of 33 statements adopted from previous studies (Hotel website: Pappas 2018; Social media: Horng et al. 2022; Innovation: Naidoo 2010; IT competence: Pappas et al. 2021; Hotel resilience: Melián-Alzola, Fernández-Monroy, and Hidalgo-Peñate 2020; Willingness to further use IT: Ozturk et al. 2017 and Park et al. 2017) and measured by using a five-point Likert-scale. The questionnaire also included two categorical questions examining the hotels' operational mode (Annual; Seasonal) and their star rating (1*–5*). According to the Greek legislation (Presidential order: 43/07.03.2002 [e-nomothesia.gr 2023]), the maximum hotel rate that can be provided is five stars (5*). Similarly, the hotel industry in Turkey adheres to a comparable regulation, where the highest attainable rating is also five stars (Presidential order: 1134/31/5/2019, [mevzuat.gov.tr 2019]).

The chaordic perspectives of the hotel managers were examined by using fsQCA since this is perceived as the best method for complexity evaluation (Olya and Al-Ansi 2018) and provides qualitative inductive analysis, although it is based on quantitative data (Longest and Vaisey 2008). The study also evaluated the negated

sets (simple condition's inclusion/exclusion) and designated the exclusion of an antecedent by using '~' as a symbol. The sufficiency of a generated pathway should comply with coverage between 0.27 and 0.75 and a minimum consistency of 0.74 (Skarmeas, Leonidou, and Saridakis 2014). As presented in Table 1, both studies are asymmetric since all the correlation outputs are lower than 0.6 (Skarmeas, Leonidou, and Saridakis 2014). Hence, further analysis had to be non-parametric (Woodside 2013). Moreover, the existence of necessary conditions was evaluated through the employment of NCA (Necessary Condition Analysis) since it is more precise than fsQCA (Bol and Luppi 2013) and also has the ability to provide their degree (Dul 2016).

2.4 | Algorithms

For calibration, the studies used 36 and 39 (Greece; Turkey) individual cases, respectively. In both cases, the causal conditions' membership estimation was between 0 and 1, with the cross-over set at 0.5 (Ragin 2008). As designated by Xie and Wang (2020), the membership thresholds were (i) non-membership at 5%, (ii) cross-over point at 50%, and (iii) full-membership at 95%, defining the threshold values at two, three and four (Pappas and Woodside 2021). The willingness of hotels to further use IT 'f_wit' due to the Palestinian conflict is examined through the fuzzy-sets of operational mode 'f_o', hotel category rating 'f_r', hotel website 'f_hw', social media 'f_sm', innovation 'f_i', IT competence 'f_itc' and hotel resilience 'f_hr'.

3 | Results

The dissemination of the categorical variables concerning the sample of the Greek and Turkish hotels is illustrated in Table 2. The descriptive findings of each study (Greece and Turkey) and the full statements for each simple condition are provided in Table 3.

TABLE 1 | Correlation matrix.

Greece		1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Hotel website	1					
2	Social media	0.025	1				
3	Innovation	0.096	0.063	1			
4	IT competence	0.034	0.001	0.047	1		
5	Hotel resilience	0.047	0.080	0.006	0.016	1	
6	Willingness for IT	0.013	0.037	0.017	0.026	0.022	1
Turkey		1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Hotel website	1					
2	Social media	0.534	1				
3	Innovation	0.095	0.091	1			
4	IT competence	0.026	0.117	0.510	1		
5	Hotel resilience	0.052	0.124	0.543	0.542	1	
6	Willingness for IT	0.042	0.071	0.529	0.544	0.505	1

TABLE 2 | Categorical questions.

	Greece		Turkey	
	N	%	N	%
Operational mode				
Annual	152	38	343	85.8
Seasonal	248	62	57	14.2
Hotel category rating				
1*	71	17.8	8	2
2*	89	22.3	8	2
3*	125	31.3	43	10.8
4*	73	18.2	105	26.2
5*	42	10.5	236	59.0
Total	400	100	400	100

The study employed CFA (Confirmatory Factor Analysis) because all the examined statements were derived from the literature. In all cases, the loadings were much higher than 0.4 (Table 4), which is the minimum level that can be accepted (Norman and Streiner 2008). Cronbach's Alpha showcased that both studies have internal consistency (acceptable values > 0.7—Nunnally 1978), while AVE (Average Variance Explained) was higher than 0.5 (Kim 2014), and CR (Composite Reliability) was higher than AVE (Huang et al. 2013).

3.1 | Complex Configurations

The research in Greece generated four sufficient pathways, and the research in Turkey produced three sufficient complex configurations (Table 5). The first sufficient pathway for Greece is the second solution for Turkey. This configuration includes the star rating categorical variable and produces high outcome scores for the antecedents of hotel website, social media and IT competence. The second solution for Greece is the first pathway for Turkey. This solution includes both categoricals and produces high scores of outcomes for the simple conditions of innovation and hotel resilience. The third pathway for Greece does not appear in the Turkish sufficient complex configurations. This solution includes the hotels' operational mode and has high outcome scores for innovation and IT competence. The fourth solution for Greece is the third pathway in the research conducted in Turkey. This configuration includes the categorical operational mode and showcases high outcome scores for social media and innovation.

3.2 | Size Effects

To examine the necessity of the simple conditions under evaluation, the study employed NCA. As indicated by Dul (2020), the existence of size effects (d) along with a sufficient p -value (<0.5) designates a simple condition as necessary (Table 6). The NCA plots are presented in Figure 1. In the research conducted in Greece, all the examined antecedents generate size effects, but two of them (Innovation; IT Competence) do not have a sufficient

p -value. Hence, those two simple conditions cannot be considered as necessary. Conversely, in the research conducted in Turkish hotels, the antecedent of IT competence does not generate size effects nor a sufficient p -value, and subsequently, it cannot be considered necessary. Combined with fsQCA findings, the third solution generated from the research in Greek hotels cannot be accepted since none of its simple conditions (Innovation; IT Competence) is considered necessary. On the other hand, all the solutions generated by the research in Turkey are valid since at least one of the simple conditions in each pathway is necessary.

4 | Discussion

4.1 | Tenet Confirmation

As suggested by Pappas et al. (2021), regardless of the necessity analysis, the confirmation of tenets should be examined in accordance with the findings of the complexity analysis (fsQCA). In both studies (Greece; Turkey), each examined simple condition is included in at least one generated solution (T1 confirmation), while none of them are included in all the generated sufficient pathways (T4 confirmation). Moreover, each sufficient complex configuration includes two or three examined antecedents (T2 confirmation). Additionally, the research in Greece generated four solutions leading to the same outcome (Willingness for further IT use), while the research in Turkish hotels produced three sufficient pathways (T3 confirmation). The unique coverage for Greek hotels varies from 0.07 to 0.1 and for Turkey from 0.084 to 0.096 (T5 confirmation). Finally, the raw coverage in the research conducted in Greece varies from 0.36 to 0.4, and in the research examining the Turkish hotels from 0.359 to 0.37 (T6 confirmation). As a result, the study confirms all six tenets.

4.2 | Sufficient Pathways

Following the NCA findings, all three accepted pathways in the research conducted in Greek hotels are the same as the three generated solutions concerning the research in the Turkish hotel industry. More specifically, the first solution (which includes the simple conditions of the hotel website, social media, and IT competence) concerns the IT orientation of the hotel industry. With special reference to the Gaza conflict, the combination of these three simple conditions is able to lead to an acceptable solution and highlights the importance of the company's IT orientation in order to further use IT as a means to handle a crisis condition. As evidenced by the literature, crisis conditions change the way tourism and hospitality enterprises conduct their business (Akadiri et al. 2020; Demiralay and Kilincarslan 2019), whilst the use of IT with special reference to websites and social media can provide the firms with a competitive advantage (Hornig et al. 2022; Pappas 2018). However, this solution encapsulates the IT orientation of hotels to increase the strategic dynamics of the enterprises for handling the Palestinian conflict. Therefore, the contribution of this configuration concerns the provision of a pathway related to the IT orientation of the hotel firms in both Greece and Turkey.

The second sufficient pathway (which includes the antecedents of innovation and hotel resilience) focuses on the effect that the

TABLE 3 | Descriptive statistics.

		Greece		Turkey	
		Means	SD	Means	SD
Hotel website					
HW1	In our hotel website, we used systematic links for gathering further information	3.31	0.709	3.21	1.284
HW2	In our hotel website we used multiple value-added features (key facts, maps, distances, news, GPS, etc)	3.22	0.677	3.38	1.317
HW3	In our hotel website, we used interactive value-added features (interactive maps, electronic postcards, Web cam, guest books, etc)	3.07	0.817	3.03	1.327
HW4	In our hotel website, we used online customer service and support (FAQs, chat, site map, avatar, site search engine, etc)	3.40	0.711	3.16	1.357
HW5	In our hotel website, we guaranteed online bookings by using a booking engine	3.13	0.813	3.54	1.299
HW6	In our hotel website, we used secure online payment (e.g., PayPal)	3.45	0.730	3.61	1.318
Social media					
SM1	Our hotel helps customers to anticipate developments in the markets using social media	4.02	0.583	3.66	1.155
SM2	Our hotel continuously tries to discover additional needs of our customers of which they are unaware using social media	4.17	0.628	3.76	1.037
SM3	Our hotel innovates using social media even at the risk of accelerating our products obsolescence	3.78	0.745	3.60	1.099
SM4	Our hotel searches for opportunities to use social media in areas where customers have difficulty expressing their needs	3.90	0.637	3.65	1.058
SM5	Our hotel interacts with customers to obtain useful information for innovation using social media	3.84	0.713	3.72	1.008
SM6	The intensity with which our hotel interacts with customers using social media is high	4.15	0.634	3.59	1.027
SM7	Our firm frequently uses social media to organise meetings with customers	3.70	0.940	3.03	1.241
Innovation					
I1	For handling the Gaza conflict, we created new services and products	2.91	0.746	2.15	1.086
I2	For handling the Gaza conflict, we progressed to innovative pricing strategies	3.17	0.847	2.32	1.141
I3	For handling the Gaza conflict, we adopted innovative and new marketing strategies	3.24	0.941	2.36	1.153
I4	For handling the Gaza conflict, we improved the placement of our products and services	3.36	0.980	2.40	1.198
I5	For handling the Gaza conflict, we improved the pricing of our products and services	3.39	0.954	2.43	1.244
IT competence					
ITC1	The hotel's IT infrastructure is able to assess the pressures from Gaza conflict	3.36	0.742	2.88	1.335
ITC2	The employees of the hotel should contain a high level of IT-related knowledge due to Gaza conflict	3.56	0.684	2.31	1.237
ITC3	We believe that further IT development due to Gaza conflict is complex to implement	3.69	0.838	2.31	1.149

(Continues)

TABLE 3 | (Continued)

		Greece		Turkey	
		Means	SD	Means	SD
ITC4	Integrating further IT into our work practice due to Gaza conflict is difficult	3.71	0.780	2.42	1.173
Hotel resilience					
HR1	Due to Gaza conflict the hotel adapts to changes in the environment by offering new products or services	4.07	0.753	2.50	1.265
HR2	Due to Gaza conflict the hotel adapts to changes in the environment by incorporating new technologies	3.80	0.878	2.39	1.188
HR3	Due to Gaza conflict the hotel adapts to changes in the environment by negotiating with tour operators	3.73	0.967	2.69	1.238
HR4	Due to Gaza conflict the hotel adapts to changes in the environment by recovering the hotel occupancy rate	4.21	0.720	2.60	1.268
HR5	Due to Gaza conflict the hotel adapts to changes in the environment by improving its competitive position	4.07	0.691	2.73	1.319
HR6	Due to Gaza conflict the hotel adapts strategically and operationally to new environmental conditions	4.21	0.761	2.72	1.305
Willingness to further use IT					
WIT1	Given the chance I intend to further use IT for handling the impact of Gaza conflict	3.55	0.706	2.47	1.186
WIT2	I am willing to use IT/ICT in the near future for handling the impact of Gaza conflict	3.79	0.714	2.54	1.145
WIT3	I plan to use IT/ICT for handling the impact of Gaza conflict	3.93	0.764	2.54	1.154
WIT4	I will recommend the use of IT/ICT to others for handling the impact of Gaza conflict	3.63	0.682	2.53	1.191
WIT5	I predict that I should use IT/ICT for handling the impact of Gaza conflict	3.65	0.685	2.53	1.218

conflict in Palestine has on both Greek and Turkish hotels. The combination of those two antecedents showcases the relationship between resilience and innovation and is linked to the effect of the conflict on the hotels of the two examined countries. The aspect of innovation as a means for managing the effects of a crisis (Broshi-Chen and Mansfeld 2021) in order to offer the highest possible hotel resilience (Melián-Alzola, Fernández-Monroy, and Hidalgo-Peñate 2020) is confirmed through this complex configuration. Moreover, this pathway also provides evidence that the Greek and Turkish hotels focus on adapting to the new reality and redirecting their operations in accordance with the tourism impacts of the Palestinian conflict.

The third sufficient complex configuration (includes the simple conditions of social media and innovation) concerns the externalisation of IT from the hotels. Social media can be used as a means of attracting a wider audience, and it can also communicate innovative business approaches. As a result, the configuration in reference confirms that the externalisation of a company can be achieved through the use of IT and can be connected with the communication of its innovative practices. This solution connects the necessity of innovation with the use of social media. As suggested by Horng et al. (2022), such strategic focus can increase the competitive advantage and the performance of the

enterprises. However, this pathway also highlights that hotels' externalisation of IT includes high levels of complexity, and it needs to be approached under the generated chaordic dynamics.

5 | Conclusions and Implications

The study focused on the Palestinian conflict and the intention of hotels to use IT further as a means to handle the specific crisis. By using fsQCA, the study has examined the complexity and the derived chaordic systems of hotel managers' decision-making. The findings of the two studies conducted in Greece and Turkey have revealed three sufficient complex configurations (the same three solutions in both countries) that are able to lead their hotels to be willing to use IT further in order to handle the effects of the Palestinian conflict. The first pathway concerns the IT orientation of the hotel company, the second one focuses on the actual effects of the military conflict in Palestine, and the third complex solution deals with the IT externalisation of the hotel enterprise. Moreover, the research findings provided several managerial implications concerning the strategic changes in the hotel business environments in Greece and Turkey, with particular reference to the study's research focus (Palestinian conflict and IT use).

TABLE 4 | Factor analysis.

	Greece				Turkey			
	Load.	A	AVE	CR	Load.	A	AVE	CR
Hotel website		0.933	0.755	0.949		0.917	0.650	0.918
HW1	0.953				0.754			
HW2	0.869				0.844			
HW3	0.809				0.809			
HW4	0.894				0.854			
HW5	0.841				0.797			
HW6	0.842				0.776			
Social media		0.886	0.616	0.918		0.893	0.575	0.903
SM1	0.929				0.634			
SM2	0.717				0.806			
SM3	0.735				0.761			
SM4	0.824				0.814			
SM5	0.760				0.874			
SM6	0.778				0.758			
SM7	0.731				0.627			
Innovation		0.889	0.689	0.916		0.958	0.724	0.929
I1	0.793				0.853			
I2	0.650				0.857			
I3	0.933				0.879			
I4	0.896				0.831			
I5	0.850				0.833			
IT competence		0.868	0.663	0.921		0.858	0.512	0.807
ITC1	0.817				0.778			
ITC2	0.706				0.687			
ITC3	0.917				0.679			
ITC4	0.909				0.715			
Hotel resilience		0.885	0.663	0.921		0.962	0.697	0.932
HR1	0.941				0.766			
HR2	0.758				0.724			
HT3	0.680				0.885			
HR4	0.760				0.852			
HR5	0.894				0.897			
HR6	0.824				0.870			
Willingness for IT		0.877	0.678	0.913		0.959	0.559	0.863
WIT1	0.915				0.788			
WIT2	0.811				0.777			
WIT3	0.698				0.755			

(Continues)

TABLE 4 | (Continued)

	Greece				Turkey			
	Load.	A	AVE	CR	Load.	A	AVE	CR
WIT4	0.869				0.707			
WIT5	0.809				0.707			

TABLE 5 | Complex solutions.

Complex configuration	Raw coverage	Unique coverage	Consistency		
Model: $f_{wit} = f(f_o, f_r, f_{hw}, f_{sm}, f_i, f_{itc}, f_{hr})$					
Greece					
1.	~f_o, f_r, f_{hw}, f_{sm}, ~f_i, f_{itc}, ~f_{hr}	0.36592	0.08480		
2.	f_o, f_r, ~f_{hw}, ~f_{sm}, f_i, ~f_{itc}, f_{hr}	0.38701	0.10382		
3.	f_o, ~f_r, ~f_{hw}, ~f_{sm}, f_i, f_{itc}, ~f_{hr}	0.40287	0.09275		
4.	f_o, ~f_r, ~f_{hw}, f_{sm}, f_i, ~f_{itc}, ~f_{hr}	0.36838	0.07583		
Solution coverage: 0.37926		Solution consistency: 0.79293			
Turkey					
1.	f_o, f_r, ~f_{hw}, ~f_{sm}, f_i, ~f_{itc}, f_{hr}	0.37048	0.09583		
2.	~f_o, f_r, f_{hw}, f_{sm}, ~f_i, f_{itc}, ~f_{hr}	0.35867	0.08435		
3.	f_o, ~f_r, ~f_{hw}, f_{sm}, f_i, ~f_{itc}, ~f_{hr}	0.36946	0.08750		
Solution coverage: 0.36944		Solution consistency: 0.80486			
Operational mode: f_o		Hotel category rating: f_r		Hotel website: f_{hw}	
Social media: f_{sm}		Innovation: f_i		IT competence: f_{itc}	
Hotel resilience: f_{hr}		Willingness for further IT use: f_{wit}			

TABLE 6 | Size effects.

	Greece			Turkey		
	ce_fdh	cr_fdh	p	ce_fdh	cr_fdh	p
HW-WIT	0.147	0.106	0.006	0.119	,089	0.003
SM-WIT	0.086	0.057	0.009	0.143	0.071	0.033
I-WIT	0.077	0.054	0.152	0.125	0.062	0.000
ITC-WIT	0.041	0.021	0.667	0.000	0.000	1
HR-WIT	0.111	0.079	0.010	0.042	0.021	0.022

5.1 | Theoretical Implications

Primarily, this study makes an important contribution to the theoretical understanding of IT's role in crisis management within the hotel industry by providing evidence from two major

tourism destinations. However, the study found that, in periods of crisis, hotels' willingness to further use IT is complex and fraught with interdependencies, including IT orientation, innovation, and external pressures. By adopting a chaotic approach and the use of fsQCA and NCA, the study also makes a

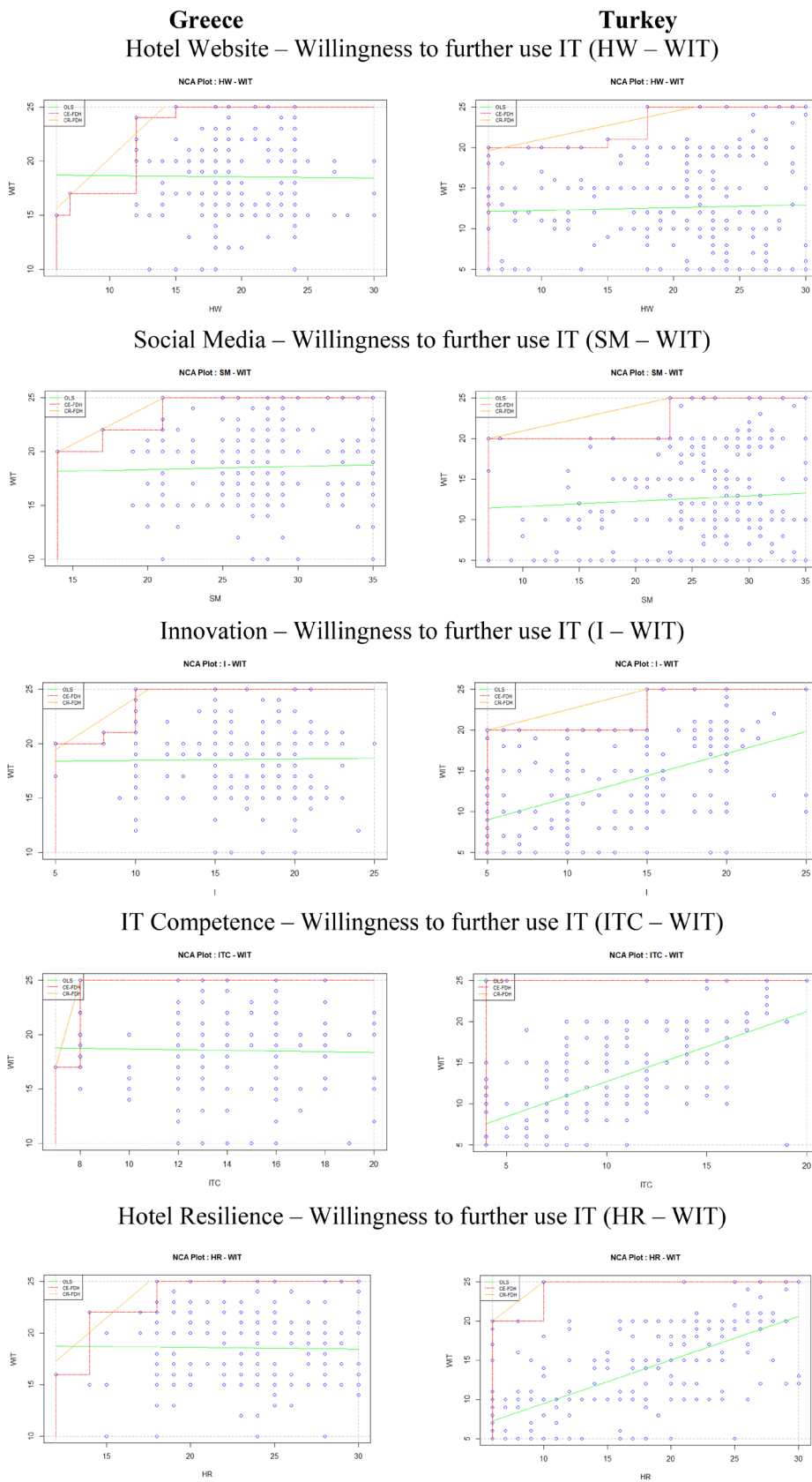


FIGURE 1 | NCA plots.

valuable methodological contribution, supporting the adoption of non-linear analytical techniques to effectively capture the complexity of tourism crises and the resulting decision-making.

Therefore, the study reaffirms the importance of IT in crisis management (Choudhary et al. 2020; Şanlıöz-Özgen, Türksoy, and Atabay 2024), highlights the link between resilience and

innovation (Broshi-Chen and Mansfeld 2021; Melián-Alzola, Fernández-Monroy, and Hidalgo-Peñate 2020) but more importantly reinforces the need for a complex, multifaceted approach to understanding strategic decision-making (Pappas 2018; Mariani et al. 2024).

5.2 | Practical/Managerial Implications

Examining the chaordic systems concerning the willingness of hotels to further use IT to handle the impacts of the Palestinian conflict provides several managerial implications. First, hotel managers must recognise the strategic importance of IT in crisis situations. Second, the hotels must strategically integrate IT use into the core of their operations in order to mitigate the effects of the Palestinian conflict. As the findings indicate, in an era that is consistently characterised by crises and turbulence, IT offers the means for handling the derived uncertainty and leading companies to relevant strategic decisions concerning their operations. In response to concerns and issues created by a crisis, IT should be used to streamline operations, facilitate internal/external communication and enhance customer experiences. In addition, hotels can manage supply chain disruptions, effectively communicate safety updates and precautions to guests, review and adjust pricing plans in real time, and enhance marketing and sales strategies with the support of well-integrated IT. These IT-based initiatives can strengthen organisations' competitive advantage and improve their performance during periods of crisis.

Moreover, innovative approaches are likely to strengthen organisational resilience. By externalising their operations and activities through IT, they can enhance organisational resilience and speed up recovery from crises, such as the Palestinian conflict. From a strategic perspective, such approaches are able to safeguard the survival of the company and its future development.

Finally, in crisis conditions, a linear approach seems not to be enough to understand the complexity of the crisis-derived aspects. As the study revealed, the development and implementation of IT strategies in hotels during periods of crisis must consider a complex relationship of various factors, including operational mode, category rating, website effectiveness, social media presence, innovation, IT competence and resilience. The study's provision of three solutions (IT orientation, Palestine effect, IT externalisation) offers hotels alternatives in order to formulate any changes concerning their willingness to use IT further. Consequently, hotel managers need to use more sophisticated means of situation analysis, and any change has to be based on the strategic aspects, competencies and characteristics of each company. When such complex relationships are recognised, strategies to address and adapt to them must be identified.

5.3 | Limitations and Future Research

The present study also has some limitations. First, it focused on the examination of the complex perspectives of the hotel managers. Therefore, future research could examine the chaordic perceptions of other stakeholders, such as destination authorities and tourists in the examined destinations. Such an approach

can provide a holistic understanding of the conflict's impact. Second, the studies concentrated on hotel managers in two major Eastern Mediterranean destinations (Greece and Turkey). As a result, any generalisation of the findings should be approached with caution, as other Eastern Mediterranean destinations (e.g., Cyprus, Egypt, Israel) may have different viewpoints. Thus, future research could investigate other Eastern Mediterranean regions, which could broaden the insights. Third, the two studies were conducted during the peak of the military conflict in Palestine, and the solutions generated should be accepted as specific to that period. Future research could also examine whether this decision-making is temporary or reflects a broader strategic change in hotel management and their willingness to further use IT in their operations after the conflict.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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