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A Research on Visitor Opinions Regarding Customer Satisfaction in Thermal Hotels: The Example of Kızılcahamam

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Abstract

Since tourism is a service-based sector, the quality and adequacy of the services offered in tourism enterprises vary on customer basis and hence it is difficult to measure. The demand for health tourism is increasing day by day. Three main types of health tourism are as follows; medical tourism, senior (elderly) and accessible (disabled) tourism; and spa, wellness tourism. The aim of this study is to analyze the current state regarding the level of customer satisfaction of the thermal hotels located in Kızılcahamam district. In this study, which was carried out using the qualitative research technique, the interview tool was preferred as the data collection tool. Our study was on voluntary basis, twenty-five people staying on certain dates in thermal hotels located in Kızılcahamam district were asked for answering fourteen questions regarding their opinions on what level thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam in meeting customer expectations.

Keywords: Health tourism, Medical tourism, Thermal tourism, Customer Satisfaction

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of human existence, individuals have had to work in order to sustain their lives. The difficulties of today's work conditions, job stress, and the challenges faced have led to physical and psychological exhaustion. People affected by these adversities seek ways to distance themselves from the work environment and regain their health. Such search for regaining health has attracted the attention of the tourism sector over time, has contributed to the rise of health tourism, which is a sub-type of tourism.

Health tourism can be defined as any travels that contain any activities aimed at preserving, improving, or finding a solution for individuals' health conditions (Şengül & Bulut, 2019). Within the scope of health tourism, there are various types classified according to the categorization made by the Turkish Ministry of Health. According to this classification, health tourism in Turkey is divided into three categories: Medical tourism, elderly (senior) and accessible (disabled) tourism; and thermal health tourism (Şengül & Bulut, 2019).

The first type mentioned in this classification is medical tourism, where tourists engage in medical treatment or surgical interventions as their primary purpose, while also participating in tourism

activities such as relaxation and entertainment (Şengül & Bulut, 2019). The second type is elderly tourism, which encompasses temporary or permanent stays that combine elderly care and tourism, where elderly individuals who require care move from their residence to another location to preserve, improve, rehabilitate, and develop their health (Şengül & Bulut, 2019). According to this classification, the third and final type is thermal tourism and medical spa & wellness tourism. The demand for thermal and spa-wellness tourism is increasing, which aims to enhance the physical and mental well-being of individuals through complementary and alternative therapies such as massage, acupuncture, hydrotherapy, reflexology, as well as activities like manicure, pedicure, exercise, and diet. (Siner & Torun, 2020). Since health tourism, like other types of tourism, is dependent on the services provided, the quality and adequacy of the services offered by health tourism businesses can vary, leading to variations in customer satisfaction levels.

Customer satisfaction, which forms another dimension of our research, is a function based on the benefits expected by the customer from a product or service (benefit package), the burdens relieved by the customer, the performance expectations from the product or service, and its conformity with socio-cultural values. In general, customer satisfaction is defined as the customer's judgment regarding the expected and realized service performance (Şahin & Şen, 2017).

Based on the information obtained from the literature, it has been observed that many studies have been conducted regarding the dimension of customer satisfaction in thermal tourism. However, there have been very few studies conducted specifically for Kızılcahamam district, and these studies are out of date. Hence, our study becomes significant as it assesses both the general situation of thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam and evaluates the thermal services they offer, aiming to update previous research on customer satisfaction in thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam.

The aim of this study is to determine the level of customer satisfaction among thermal hotels operating in the Kızılcahamam district. The main interest of the research is to identify the competencies and deficiencies of the services offered by thermal hotels in the Kızılcahamam district. Herewith, the interdependency between the goods and services provided by thermal hotels in the Kızılcahamam district and the level of customer satisfaction would be evaluated, and an interpretation will be made based on the determined results. This study focuses on customer satisfaction in thermal hotels and aims to contribute to the existing literature on the subject.

For this purpose, individuals who stayed in thermal hotels in the Kızılcahamam district on May 20th and 21st of 2023 will constitute the population of our research. Since it is not possible to reach the entire population, it would be assumed that the results collected from interviews conducted with the selected individuals adequately represent the entire population. Another assumption of our research is that the responses are sincere and accurate.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The World Health Organization defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. In this definition, physical and mental well-being are the known aspects of health" (Aytuğar and Çılğınoğlu, 2021:1091). Based on this definition, it can be said that individuals are happier, more productive, and more entrepreneurial when they are healthy (Çiftçi, 2018). However, in the 21st century, the conditions people are exposed to in order to satisfy their basic needs and desires can lead to the deterioration of their health and even its loss if preventive measures are not taken.

Due to the proliferation of health tourism enterprises in time and the service diversity, customers have sought to benefit from facilities and opportunities that are not available in their own regions in order to receive better healthcare. Therefore, individuals who travel for this sake soon caught the attention of the tourism sector and gave rise to health tourism, which is a niche market within the tourism industry. Health tourism can be defined as travels including all kinds of activities aimed at preserving, improving, or finding a cure for individuals' health conditions (Şengül and Bulut, 2019).

When examining health tourism worldwide, some countries stand out in the field of medical tourism, which are India, Thailand, Singapore, the United States, Malaysia, Germany, Mexico, South Africa, Brazil, and Costa Rica. The reasons for the prominence of health tourism in these countries include high standards of healthcare services, ease of accessibility to the destination, and the availability of necessary technology, infrastructure, and expertise for healthcare (Çiftçi, 2018). In addition to these above mentioned characteristics, factors such as the affordability, accessibility, suitability to needs, and quality of care provided by destinations have unquestionable influence on the potential of health tourism.

When looking at the motivations that lead people to health tourism, we can see some leading factors, such as (Şengül & Bulut, 2019):

- Inadequacy of healthcare providers in the countries or regions where individuals reside,
- Costliness of healthcare services provided in the countries or regions where individuals reside,
- Insufficiency of technical equipment and personnel in healthcare services in the countries or regions where individuals reside,
- Concern that the health service received would be heard or known in the country or region they live in,
- Opinions and recommendations from individuals who have previously experienced healthcare services in that region.

Health tourism, which has reached a volume of 100 billion dollars worldwide recently, has attracted the attention of all countries with its economic potential. As the world population increases, the average life expectancy is rising, the proportion of the elderly population in the society is going up, and under these conditions the amount spent on healthcare services in total is boosting. People seeking a higher quality and healthier life have sought quality and affordable healthcare services and turned towards countries that would provide them. In addition to basic medical treatments or rehabilitation services, many other treatments such as aesthetic-cosmetic procedures, dental treatments, and other applications that might not covered by health insurance are also considered within the scope of health tourism and are widely used (Şengül and Bulut, 2019: 59-60). Furthermore, in addition to traveling from one country to another for spa treatments that are reported as medically necessary, other factors such as taking advantage of spas in cosy environments for the purpose of relaxation, rejuvenation, and wellbeing are also considered within the scope of health tourism (Çiçek & Avderen, 2013: 26).

Medical tourism is among the fastest-growing sectors in the world, and many countries are currently making legal and practical plans to reduce traveling costs to customers and following a competitive pricing policy to generate higher incomes out of this business. Increasing popularity of preferring to visit distant countries for medical reasons has now become an international trade phenomenon and has a significant economic potential for the global economy. It has been observed

that medical tourism has emerged as a profitable sector, especially for developing countries (Şengül & Bulut, 2019: 60).

There are many reasons for the increasing importance of medical health tourism. The high cost of therapeutic healthcare services in developed countries, the deterioration of healthcare systems, and the increase in population lead to longer waiting times for treatment are some of the primary reasons (Çiçek & Avderen, 2013: 26).

Health tourism generally has two main objectives. The first is to provide treatment for individuals who are overwhelmed by city life, experiencing stress and various health problems, and reintegrate them into society in a healthy way. The second objective is to revive domestic and international tourism, which contributes to the economy and national income in return.

Considering health tourism in Türkiye, it is obvious that Türkiye has great importance as of global health tourism in terms of qualified healthcare institutions, advanced medical infrastructure, and specialists. In this context, in order to increase economic returns of the growing health tourism, it is deemed necessary to determine the current potential of the country and take the proper actions in this direction. In this regard, Türkiye stands out as a country where foreign patients may choose as a destination due to its advantageous geographical location, affordability of healthcare services compared to other countries, and hosting various activities and tourism types within the scope of tourism. It is believed that if these advantages are evaluated, developed, and promoted properly, Türkiye's importance and value in the field of health tourism would increase (Çılgınoğlu & Aytuğar, 2021: 1092).

Health tourism includes various types of tourism regarding resting, treatment, climate therapy, water therapy, natural tourism, and so on. It also includes thermal tourism, where individuals seek healthful aspects of nature, visit hot springs, mineral water sources, baths, spas, and complementary medical services (such as prosthesis) at affordable rates. Some categories contained under this type of tourism in "Türkiye's Tourism Legislation" are as follows (Güvenç, 2007: 24):

- Balneotherapy (thermalium wellness): The treatment involving natural and healing water sources, particularly in thermal spas.
- Climatotherapy: The treatment practised in mountain resorts, utilizing open-air environments. It may be applied together with balneotherapy.
- Uvalism: The introducing of fruits and vegetables grown in certain regions for therapeutic purposes.
- Cave tourism: Traveling to caves for health reasons.

The definitions above shows that health tourism can be categorized into different forms. In Türkiye, according to the classification of the Ministry of Health, the General Directorate of Health Services, and the Health Tourism Department, health tourism is grouped under three main topics (Şengül and Bulut, 2019: 57): Medical tourism, Senior and Accessible tourism, Thermal health tourism and Spa & Wellness

Medical tourism, one of the types of health tourism, is a concept that is progressively growing and developing within the tourism industry. It refers to individuals traveling to other countries with the aim of receiving medical treatment and often combining this travel with vacation purposes. In medical tourism, the "tourist" seeks medical treatment or surgical intervention while engaging in touristic activities such as relaxation and entertainment, as well (Şengül & Bulut, 2019: 58).

Senior tourism involves temporary or permanent stays that bring together elderly care and tourism. It aims to preserve, improve, rehabilitate, and develop the health of elderly individuals who are in need of care and travel from their residence to another location (Şengül & Bulut, 2019: 58-59).

Accessible tourism is a type of tourism that includes all preventive, therapeutic, and rehabilitative health services provided to disabled individuals. The goal of accessible tourism is to treat or rehabilitate individuals with disabilities and reintegrate them into society (Şengül & Bulut, 2019: 58-59).

Thermal tourism is a concept that has been utilized by people for a long time in human history, and it has various definitions. Thermal tourism refers to a type of tourism that combines treatment practices such as thermal mineral baths, drinking water, inhalation, mud baths, along with supportive treatments such as climate therapy, physical therapy, rehabilitation, exercise, psychotherapy, and diet. It also includes the recreational use of thermal waters. Thermal tourism is not limited to use of healing waters alone. With the development of thermal tourism, several other concepts have emerged, such as: (Şengül & Bulut, 2019: 59)

- Climatotherapy: A treatment type that utilizes fresh air in mountains or seaside resorts.
- Uvalism: A treatment type using fruits and vegetables.
- Balneotherapy: A treatment using mineral thermal waters.
- Thalassotherapy: A treatment utilizing seawater and sunlight.
- Hydrotherapy: A treatment using fresh water.
- Speleotherapy: A treatment utilizing caves.
- Peloidotherapy: Mud therapy.
- Heliotherapy: Sunlight therapy.

As the Ministry of Tourism sets out, it would be more convenient not considering the "spa & wellness" as a separate type of tourism under the name of "beauty and fitness tourism," instead including it within the scope of thermal tourism and integrate into the services and activities of thermal tourism facilities. This approach would promote the increase of investments that leverage the potential of thermal waters. Besides, it would expand the concept of thermal tourism beyond the traditional notion of spas, encompassing the concepts of "spa & wellness" and incorporating the characteristics of resort-type hotels (Güvenç, 2007: 25).

Thermal tourism is also defined as "tourism that takes place in regions where therapeutic underground waters with certain temperature and beneficial minerals come naturally to surface, as well as healing mud and vapors emerge to the surface, within unique climatic conditions of the region. It involves a combination of various methods such as thermal mineral baths, drinking cures, inhalation therapies, mud baths, as well as climate therapy, physical therapy, rehabilitation, exercise, psychotherapy, and diet. It includes the recreational use of thermal waters and also aims to take advantage of other attractions of the destination" (Tuna, 2019: 119).

Contemporary thermal tourism establishments should own the following service units (Kozak, 1992: 34):

Treatment Center: Treatment centers are the sections of thermal facilities where patients' conditions are diagnosed, and typically include laboratory units for diagnosis. Some tests may be conducted here to decide whether thermal water is beneficial for the patients' existing conditions or

to identify potential therapeutic effects. Subsequently, necessary treatments are administered under the supervision of physicians and specialists in the balneotherapy units. The mentioned services and units may vary depending on the size of the establishment. The services offered at the treatment center are as follows (Kozak, 1992: 34):

a) Balneotherapy Applications: General swimming pool (bath and dynamic pool), treatment pool (equipped), special treatment baths (with pools, tubs), general bath pools, showers (massage showers, regular showers, jet showers, horizontal showers, horizontal pressure showers), massages (general massage, partial massage, underwater massage), mud baths (general mud bath, partial mud bath, shower after mud bath), steam baths, gas baths.

b) Physical Therapy Applications: Physical therapy applications can be varied according to the physical size of the thermal facility. The most common ones are electro-physical therapy and radiation therapy.

Accommodation Facility: The accommodation facility is the section of a thermal tourism establishment where lodging is provided. This facility would be a conventional hotel, a combination of various types of accommodations, or a resort-like complex. In other words, the accommodation section of a thermal tourism establishment would be a hotel, a combination of both hotel rooms and aparts, or a facility resembling a holiday village (Kozak, 1992: 35).

Recreation Facilities: Recreation facilities are the areas where guests can spend leisure time after undergoing treatments. These areas and units can be expanded in size and number based on the scale and available space of the thermal tourism establishment. The services provided in these areas, which can be listed as walking areas, groves or forests, tea gardens, sports facilities, game rooms, libraries, cinema and TV lounges, cycling routes, horse riding areas, etc., and can be varied even further. These facilities are designed to occupy guests' free time and generate revenue for the establishment (Kozak, 1992: 35).

While various countries are considering and planning to improve thermal tourism, the European continent has an advantageous position in this field. The European continent itself has an average of 1.500 thermal facilities and the number increases. While people in the past applied to health institutions solely to find cures to their illnesses, it is observed that patients and individuals nowadays participate in thermal tourism mostly for relaxation, maintaining their health, healing, and rejuvenation purposes.

Türkiye ranks among the top seven countries in the world in terms of geothermal resource richness and potential, and is ranked first in Europe. The thermal waters in our country have superior qualities compared to the thermal waters in Europe, both in terms of flow rate, temperature, and various physical and chemical properties (www.kultur.gov.tr). Health tourism investments are generally considered to be labor-intensive. It provides substantial employment advantages for healthcare personnel and other qualified personnel (Avcıkurt & Çeken, 1998:34), (Çiçek & Avderen, 2013: 27). Unfortunately, Türkiye cannot make good use of this resource due to unprofessional establishments. Even, some well-known thermal springs do not have websites, it would be difficult to reach price information, the employees are not customer-oriented, and most of them do not speak any of foreign languages. The main and important negative factors in this sector are unqualified personnel and insufficient management. (Çiçek & Avderen, 2013: 27-28).

Customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction is not an inherent part of a product or service but rather a perception that customers personally attribute to the product or service. Therefore, different customers may have varying levels of satisfaction when exposed to the same experience or service. A customer's perception of a product or service is influenced by their own experiences, socio-economic and cultural environment, values, education, beliefs, psychology, and information obtained through various communication channels. Customers' perceptions of products or services directly and indirectly affect their purchasing behavior and customer satisfaction. From this perspective, customer satisfaction can be seen as a multifaceted and complex concept comprises customers' lifestyles, past experiences, future expectations, and individual and societal values (Burucuoğlu, 2011: 14-15).

As the given definition indicates, customer satisfaction is determined by two factors. The first factor that determines customer satisfaction is customer expectations. Expectations, which can be described as the scientific, managerial, and behavioral characteristics that customers seek or want to see in businesses they receive services from, vary based on customers' age, gender, education levels, socio-cultural characteristics, and past experiences with service providers (Büber & Başer, 2012: 267). The second factor that determines customer satisfaction is customers' perceptions of the services they receive. Perceptions are measured based on individuals' opinions or evaluations regarding the services received and the service process. The perception factor also varies based on customers' characteristics and past experiences with the service providers (Büber & Başer, 2012: 267).

Thermal Tourism in Kızılcahamam

Kızılcahamam, a district of Ankara, the capitol city of Türkiye, has an increasing importance in thermal tourism throughout history with its thermal baths that have been in use since the ancient Roman era, and rapid development in the tourism sector continues in the region. The region has two significant centers, one in the district center and the other in Seyhamamı. Currently, thermal tourism is the primary source of economic income for the district, with thermal waters serving hundreds of customers every day and reaching significant numbers during the summer.

The study conducted in 2006 (Çontu, 2006) revealed the following findings: During the summer, the accommodation capacity in the region is significantly inadequate. The thermal baths, operating from 6:00 a.m. to midnight, serve an average of 300-400 people during winter and around 3,000-4,000 people during summer per day. This amounts to an average of 20,000 people per month and approximately 250,000 people annually (Çontu, 2006: 59).

Following Mehmet Çontu's research in 2006, the district has experienced development and changes in terms of thermal tourism. The table below shows the number of rooms and beds in active thermal hotel establishments in Kızılcahamam in 2023. The data was obtained from popular reservation websites such as tatilbudur.com, trivago.com, etstur.com, and tripadvisor.com, indicating the presence of 16 active thermal facilities in the district. The data in the table was collected from the hotels' websites and reservation platforms. The missing data (shown as "not available", n.a.) in the table indicates either the absence of information on the hotels' websites or limitations of our research.

Table-1: Thermal Facilities in Kızılcahamam District

Name	Number of Rooms	Number of Beds
Eliz Hotel Convention Center	588	n.a.
Çam Termal Resort	256	n.a.
Başak Termal Otel	110	274
Patalya Termal Resort	159	312
Kızılcahamam Hotel	n.a.	n.a.
Akasya Vadisi	124	n.a.
Kaplıca Termal Otel	33	102
Swiss İnternational Kızılcahamam	580	n.a.
Kızılca Vadi Termal	268	1700
Hotel Şifa Hayat Suyu	52	n.a.
Güven Termal Kızılcahamam	n.a.	n.a.
Soğuksu Hotel	40	110
Üç Su Termal Otel	10	24
Deva Termal Otel	17	n.a.
Ay-Fi Farm	13	28
Ay-Fidam Dağ Oteli	10	24

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Model

In this study, qualitative research methodology was preferred, taking into consideration both the subject of the research and the individuals participated to the research.

In this study, the action research model, which is one of the qualitative research methods, was used. Action research is a research approach carried out by the practitioner himself or with an auxiliary researcher, which includes collecting and analyzing data to reveal the problems related to the implementation process or to understand and solve an already emerging problem (Beyhan, 2013: 67).

2.2. Population and Sample

The population of the study consists of customers who prefer to stay in a total of sixteen thermal tourism facilities operating in Kızılcahamam. It would be difficult to reach all of these people, who have the potential to answer the questions of our research and who we define as the universe of the research, due to the limited time and high cost. Therefore, it was decided to select a sample from the research population would be more appropriate. In this context, the voluntary sampling method was used. In cases where the voluntary sampling technique is used, individuals voluntarily participate in the research as subjects or respondents (Turunç, 2021). Accordingly, 25 (twenty five)

individuals who volunteered to participate in the study and preferred thermal tourism facilities operating in the Kızılcahamam district were selected as the sample group.

2.3. Data Collection Tool

The most commonly used data collection techniques in qualitative research are interviews, observations, and document analysis (Turunç, 2021: 36). In this study, the interview data collection tool used in qualitative studies was preferred, and the questions used in the interviews were adapted from the survey and interview questions of previous studies on this subject (Dereli and Temizkan, 2019; Akkuş and Korkmaz, 2022; Kement, Çavuşoğlu, Bükey & Başar, 2019; Çiçek, 2015; Ayata, 2023; Sandıkçı, 2008; Akkılıç & Çetintaş, 2015; Seçilmiş, 2012; Belber & Turan, 2015; Eleren & Kılıç, 2007). The participants were asked to answer the following questions:

- Did you visit thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district for providing thermal health services or just for accommodation purposes?
- Do you find the pricing of thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district reasonable?
- Are you satisfied with the service provided by the staff of thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district?
- Do you think that thermal facilities in Kızılcahamam district are responsive to guests' wishes and complaints?
- Do you find the entertainment and sports facilities offered by thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district sufficient?
- Do you think that thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district fulfill their commitments in a timely and complete manner?
- Do you think that thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district contribute to individuals' socialization?
- Do you think that the health services offered in thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district are effective?
- Are you satisfied with the general cleanliness and hygiene conditions of thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district?
- Do you find the security measures of thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district sufficient?
- What do you think about the decoration, design, and visual appeal of thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district?
- Are you satisfied with the food and beverage services of thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district?
- Do you think that you may receive the thermal health services you expect in thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district?
- Would you recommend the services offered by thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district to others?

2.4. Data Analysis

The data analysis process used in qualitative research is generally concerned with bringing together perceptual pieces to form a whole (Turunç, 2021: 36). In this study, the collected data was analyzed using the descriptive analysis technique under the qualitative research category. The collected data was classified by evaluating similarities. After the classification, interpretations were made, leading to the findings in the conclusion and discussions.

3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

Table 2. Participants' Demographic Characteristics

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS	Frequence	Percentage
Gender		
- Male	9	36%
- Female	16	64%
- Total	25	100%
Age Distribution		
- 18-25	6	24%
- 26-35	6	24%
- 36-45	3	12%
- 46-55	5	20%
- 56-65	0	0%
- 66-75	2	8%
- 76+	3	12%
- Total	25	100%
Education Level		
- Primary School	0	0%
- High School	4	16%
- Associate's Degree	0	0%
- Bachelor's Degree	17	68%
- Master's Degree	4	16%
- Doctorate	0	0%
- Total	25	100%
Income status		
- 6.000 TL and below	3	12%
- 6.001-9.000 TL	6	24%
- 9.001-12.000 TL	9	36%
- 12.001-15.000 TL	1	4%
- 15.001 TL and above	6	24%
- Total	25	100%
Marital Status		
- Married	14	56%
- Single	11	44%
- Total	25	100%
Occupation		
- Public Sector Employee	2	8%
- Private Sector Employee	12	48%
- Self-Employed	1	4%
- Retired	0	0%
- Student	4	16%
- Homemaker	1	4%

- Unemployed	5	20%
- Total	25	100%
Place of Visit		
- Domestic	24	96%
- Abroad	1	4%
- Total	25	10

According to Table 2, the distribution of participants in terms of gender, age, education level, marital status, occupation, and their places of origin is as follows: The participants in the research consisted of 64% female participants and 36% male participants. Looking at the age distribution, 24% of participants were in the 18-25 age range, 24% were in the 26-35 age range, 12% were in the 36-45 age range, 20% were in the 46-55 age range, 0% were in the 56-65 age range, 8% were in the 66-75 age range, and 12% were 76 years old and above. In terms of education level, 0% of participants had completed primary school, 16% had a high school degree, 0% had an associate's degree, 68% had a bachelor's degree, 16% had a master's degree, and 0% had a doctorate degree. When examining the income status of participants, 12% had an income of 6000 TL and below, 24% had an income between 6.001-9.000 TL, 36% had an income between 9.001-12.000 TL, 4% had an income between 12.001-15.000 TL, and 24% had an income of 15.001 TL and above. Regarding marital status, 56% of participants were married and 44% were single. Looking at the occupation of participants, 8% were public sector employees, 48% were private sector employees, 4% were self-employed, 0% were retired, 16% were students, 4% were homemakers, and 20% were unemployed. Finally, in terms of the places of origin, 96% of participants were from within the country, and 4% were from abroad.

3.1. Findings on Customer Expectation Leveling

Table 3. Distribution of Responses to the Question "Did you visit the thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district for the purpose of receiving thermal health services or solely for accommodation?"

Purpose of Guests' Visits to Thermal Hotels	Frequency	Percentage
For accommodation purposes	9	%36
For receiving thermal health services	16	%64
Total	25	%100

According to Table 3, 36% of the participants stated that they visited the hotels in Kızılcahamam district for accommodation purposes. On the other hand, 64% of the participants mentioned that they visited the hotels in Kızılcahamam district for receiving thermal health services.

Table 4. Distribution of Responses to the Question "Do you find the service pricing in the thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district suitable?"

Opinions on Service Pricing in Thermal Hotels	Frequency	Percentage
I find it suitable	8	%32
I do not find it suitable	17	%68
Total	25	%100

According to Table 4, 32% of the participants stated that they find the service pricing in the hotels in Kızılcahamam district suitable. On the other hand, 68% of the participants mentioned that they do not find the service pricing in the hotels in Kızılcahamam district suitable.

Table 5. Distribution of Responses to the Question "Are you satisfied with the service provided by the staff in the thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district?"

Opinions on the Service Provided by the Staff in Thermal Hotels	Frequency	Percentage
I am satisfied	20	%80
I am not satisfied	5	%20
Total	25	%100

According to Table 5, 80% of the participants stated that they are satisfied with the service provided by the staff in the thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district. On the other hand, 20% of the participants mentioned that they are not satisfied with the service provided by the staff in the thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district.

Table 6. Distribution of Responses to the Question "Do you think that the thermal facilities in Kızılcahamam district are responsive to guests' requests and complaints?"

Opinions on the Responsiveness of Thermal Facilities to Guests' Requests and Complaints	Frequency	Percentage
I think they are responsive	5	%20
I don't think they are responsive	17	%68
Undecided	3	%12
Total	25	%100

According to Table 6, 20% of the participants stated that they believe the thermal facilities in Kızılcahamam district are responsive to guests' requests and complaints. 68% of the participants expressed that they do not think the thermal facilities are responsive, while 12% of the participants were undecided about the responsiveness of the thermal facilities to guests' requests and complaints.

Table 7. Distribution of Responses to the Question "Do you find the entertainment and sports facilities provided by the thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district sufficient?"

Opinions Regarding Entertainment and Sports Facilities Provided by Thermal Hotels	Frequency	Percentage
I find them sufficient	14	%66
I find them insufficient	11	%44
Total	25	%100

According to Table 7, 66% of the participants indicated that they find the entertainment and sports facilities provided by the thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district sufficient. On the other hand, 44% of the participants stated that they find the entertainment and sports facilities provided by the thermal hotels insufficient.

Table 8. Distribution of Responses to the Question "Do you think that the thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district fulfill their commitments in a timely and complete manner?"

Opinions Regarding Fulfillment of Commitments by Thermal Hotels in Kızılcahamam	Frequency	Percentage
I think so	22	%88
I don't think so	3	%12
Total	25	%100

According to Table 8, 88% of the participants indicated that they believe the thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district fulfill their commitments in a timely and complete manner. On the other hand, 12% of the participants stated that they do not think the thermal hotels fulfill their commitments in a timely and complete manner.

Table 9. Distribution of Responses to the Question "Do you think that the thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district contribute to individuals' socialization?"

Opinions Regarding the Contribution of Thermal Hotels to Individuals' Socialization	Frequency	Percentage
I think there are social environments	10	%40
I don't think there are social environments	15	%60
Total	25	%100

According to Table 9, 40% of the participants indicated that they consider the thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district provide social environments that contribute to individuals' socialization. On the other hand, 60% of the participants stated that they do not think the thermal hotels provide social environments that contribute to individuals' socialization.

Table 10. Distribution of Responses to the Question "Do you think that the health services provided in thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district are effective?"

Opinions Regarding the Effectiveness of Health Services Provided in Hotels	Frequency	Percentage
I think they are effective	23	%92
I don't think they are effective	1	%4
I'm undecided	1	%4
Total	25	%100

According to Table 10, 92% of the participants indicated that they think the health services provided in thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district are effective. 4% of the participants stated that they do not think the health services are effective, while another 4% were undecided about the effectiveness of the health services provided in thermal hotels.

Table 11. Distribution of Responses to the Question "Are you satisfied with the general cleanliness and hygiene condition of thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district?"

Opinions Regarding the General Cleanliness and Hygiene Condition of Hotels	Frequency	Percentage
I am satisfied	21	%84
I am not satisfied	4	%16
Total	25	%100

According to Table 11, 84% of the participants indicated that they are satisfied with the general cleanliness and hygiene condition of the thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district. On the other hand, 16% of the participants stated that they are not satisfied with the general cleanliness and hygiene condition of the thermal hotels.

Table 12. Distribution of Responses to the Question "Do you find the security measures of thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district sufficient?"

Opinions Regarding the Adequacy of Security Measures in Hotels	Frequency	Percentage
I find them sufficient	10	%40
I do not find them sufficient	15	%60
Total	25	%100

According to Table. 12, 40% of the participants indicated that they find the security measures of thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district sufficient. On the other hand, 60% of the participants stated that they do not find the security measures of the thermal hotels sufficient.

Table 13. Distribution of Responses to the Question "What do you think about the decoration, design, and visual appeal of thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district?"

Opinions Regarding the Decoration, Design, and Visual Appeal of Thermal Hotels	Frequency	Percentage
Positive	16	%64
Negative	9	%36
Total	25	%100

According to Table 13, 64% of the participants expressed a positive opinion about the decoration, design, and visual appeal of thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district. On the other hand, 36% of the participants expressed a negative opinion about the decoration, design, and visual appeal of the thermal hotels.

Table 14. Distribution of Responses to the Question "Are you satisfied with the food and beverage services of thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district?"

Opinions Regarding the Food and Beverage Services of Thermal Hotels	Frequency	Percentage
I am satisfied	22	%88
I am not satisfied	2	%8

Average quality	1	%4
Total	25	%100

According to Table 14, 88% of the participants indicated that they are satisfied with the food and beverage services of thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district. 8% of the participants stated that they are not satisfied with the food and beverage services, while 4% of the participants mentioned that the food and beverage services of the thermal hotels are of average quality.

Table 15. Distribution of Responses to the Question "Do you think you receive the thermal health services you expected at the thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district?"

Opinions Regarding Receiving Expected Thermal Health Services	Frequency	Percentage
I think I receive them	24	%96
I don't think I receive them	0	%0
I haven't received any health services	1	%4
Total	25	%100

According to Table 15, 96% of the participants stated that they think they receive the thermal health services they expected at the thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district. None of the participants indicated that they do not think they receive the expected thermal health services. However, 4% of the participants mentioned that they have not received any health services at the thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam district.

Table 16. Distribution of participants' responses to the question "Would you recommend the services offered by thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam to others?"

Responses Regarding Recommending the Services of Thermal Hotels to Others	Frequency	Percentage
I would recommend	23	%92
I would not recommend	2	%8
Total	25	%100

According to Table 16, 92% of the participants stated that they would recommend the services offered by thermal hotels in Kızılcahamam to others. On the other hand, 8% of the participants indicated that they would not recommend the services of thermal hotels to others.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Customer satisfaction is a multidimensional concept that varies according to various factors. What makes this concept special is its differentiation based on customers' lifestyles, past experiences, future expectations, and individual and societal values. From this perspective, ensuring customer satisfaction under all circumstances becomes challenging.

With the adoption of the relationship marketing approach by businesses, the concept of the customer has gained importance, and businesses have started aiming for long-term profitable relationships with their customers. This study aimed to measure the level of customer satisfaction of thermal hotels operating in the Kızılcahamam district. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with twenty-five individuals who stayed at these thermal hotels. In line with the findings obtained from these interviews, recommendations were made on the subject.

When the demographic characteristics of the participants in the study, as shown in Table-1, are examined, it can be seen that the majority of the participants are married women working in the private sector, between the ages of 18-35 and with a bachelor's degree. Additionally, the majority of these participants are domestic visitors.The results obtained from the questions measuring the level of customer satisfaction are provided below.

It is observed that the majority of participants visited the thermal hotels for the purpose of receiving health services. This indicates that participants prefer these thermal hotels not only for accommodation purposes but also for health purposes. Furthermore, it is concluded that the participants are satisfied with the services provided by the hotel staff, the entertainment and sports facilities, the timely and complete fulfillment of commitments, the effectiveness of the thermal health services, the general cleanliness and hygiene conditions, the decoration, design, and visual appeal of the hotels, the food and beverage services provided, and the health services provided, and they would recommend the services to others.

Furthermore, based on the findings obtained, it is concluded that the guests visiting thermal hotels in the Kızılcahamam district find the hotels' response to guest requests and complaints, socialization opportunities, and security measures inadequate, and they do not find the pricing of the services suitable. The reasons for these dissatisfactions can be attributed to the high costs of the thermal tourism services offered by the hotels, economic factors, high inflation, the depreciation of the Turkish Lira against foreign currencies due to the changing global economic conditions during the period from 2020 to 2022, the high costs of desired activities or facilities in Türkiye, and the hotels' management perceiving the reasons for guests' visits to thermal hotels as the need for relaxation and solitude, which leads to insufficient emphasis on social activities. These four dimensions need to be considered by the hotel managements, and necessary measures should be taken to address them. The following methods can be used to address these issues:

- Instead of using customer feedback forms, which are still commonly used in service businesses, businesses can utilize Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software, which is developing with technology. With this approach, customer feedback and complaints can be analyzed objectively and quickly delivered to the management in the form of reports. In addition to traditional forms, customers can express their feedback and complaints through online reviews and evaluation platforms. This way, both employees and hotel management can be informed about the wishes and complaints of customers.

• To increase the sociability of thermal hotels, hotel managements can collaborate with the Ministry of Tourism to host events and festivals. Additionally, hotels can open new areas for different sports activities that can attract the interest of customers.

• Recommendations for increasing security measures in thermal hotels include increasing the number of security personnel in proportion to the size of the hotels, installing emergecy buttons to call security personnel on each floor and in public areas, increasing the number of surveillance cameras in the hotel, and working with professional security companies specialized in the security sector.

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The Role and Importance of Shortening Product Life Cycle with A Planned Obsolescence Strategy in Green Marketing

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Abstract

The study was designed to investigate the relationship between green marketing, which has recently come to the fore, and the negative effects of shortening product life as a result of the product obsolescence strategy used in marketing. The exploratory research design was adopted in the study. While obtaining the data, primary and secondary sources considered to be useful and relevant for the study were used. Planned obsolescence can lead to heightened resource consumption, waste generation, and negative ecological impacts. It can contradict the principles of sustainable production and consumption, which emphasize durability, longevity, repairability, and responsible end-of-life management. In order to make the negative aspects of product obsolescence more evident, the importance of the subject was emphasized by giving place to case studies from different sectors and products at the end of the study. As a result of the literature review and observations made for the study, it was deduced that the objective and subjective information of today's consumers is higher than before therefore they attach more importance to green marketing issues and they react more to strategies such as product obsolescence. All literature studies and observations were evaluated at the end of the study and suggestions were made for both consumers and producers.

Keywords: Planned Obsolescence, Green Marketing, Product Life Cycle, Marketing Strategy, Consumer Perception

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, due to consumers becoming more conscious, increasing sustainable consumption, consumer environmentalism and ecological problems in society, companies have had to focus on providing environmentally friendly products and services to meet environmental needs (Ishaq and Di Maria, 2019). With the increase in consumption awareness in individuals and institutions, companies has faced increasing public sensitivity, stricter regulations and increasing stakeholder pressure to protect the natural environment while producing. Therefore, "green" issues have become increasingly important to corporate decision makers (Nguyen-Viet, 2022). But in today's competitive market, businesses can use many different methods to make as much profit as

possible. One of these methods is planned obsolescence, in other words, making the products more demanded by shortening their useful life. Planned obsolescence can basically be expressed as designing the products not for too long in order to increase profit maximization and survive in the competitive market by reducing the lifetime of the products they produce (Hartl, et al. 2023). While planned obsolescence may benefit businesses in terms of short-term profits and market competitiveness, it raises ethical concerns and can have negative implications for consumers and the environment. Some critics argue that it fosters a throwaway culture, promotes excessive consumption, and contributes to the generation of electronic waste (Maggiolino, 2019). As a result of shortening the life of the products, consumers feel the need to change products frequently, and therefore businesses need to put products on the market much more frequently to meet the demand. Businesses can determine the service life of their products; It can be reduced by regulations made in product quality, by rapid technological renewals or by creating a new and old product perception in the minds of the consumer (Trienekens and Zuurbier, 2008).

It is seen that planned obsolescence applications are reacted by consumers in countries such as Brazil and the USA, which is considered as the starting point of the strategy, and companies that shorten the product lifecycle by implementing the strategy are sued by consumers (Pope, 2017). Such reactions, which increase with the effect of developing communication networks, can be considered as a sign of global awareness in consumers. In addition, green marketing, which has recently developed and is becoming more and more widespread among consumers (Nekmahmud and Fekete-Farkas, 2020), is seen in more consumers who is very careful and sensetive about; green products, green labels, interest in green products, sensitive to environmental and social issues, questioning the events ethically, knowing and seeking their rights, conscientious and more has revealed the existence of a conscious consumer group that approaches consumption rationally by displaying rational consumption behaviors (Szabo and Webster, 2021). In recent years, there has been a growing consumer demand for sustainable and durable products (Vătămănescu, et al. 2021). Consumers are increasingly conscious of the environmental impact of their purchasing decisions and are seeking products that align with their values (Kumar and Dubeyi 2023). This shift in consumer behavior, along with stricter regulations and stakeholder pressure, has pushed many businesses to adopt more environmentally friendly practices and develop sustainable product offerings (Khan, et al. 2023).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1. Green Marketing

Green marketing can be expressed as the adaptation of products designed and developed to all marketing processes in order to eliminate or minimize the destruction on ecological balance and the environment (Yaşar, 2019). Green marketing is a platform that brings together the concepts of sustainability, ecological and environmentalist marketing (Dangelico and Vocalelli, 2017). There is a need for green marketing to address issues that affect all humanity, the natural atmosphere and eventually sustainability (Djaadi, 2016).

In today's world, the concept of green marketing shows its effect more and more (Vilkaite-Vaitone, et al. 2022). The awareness of not only consumers but also companies towards the environment is increasing day by day. When looked at, many companies such as Toyota, BMW,

Apple, Nike, Sony, IBM, Siemens, Starbucks, Coca Cola, Vodafone follow an environmentally friendly policy and carry out their advertising and marketing activities within the framework of environmental awareness. Thus, it is seen that environmental products find their place in almost every product category (Günay, 2019). When the importance of green marketing is examined from two different perspectives, there is society on one side and businesses on the other (Bakar, 2015). As a result of the gradual decrease of natural resources, which are seen as inputs of production activities, consumers who increase their awareness of environmental problems have preferred to use environmental products (Sterner, 2003). The consumer shift toward environmental products is driven by the desire to conserve resources, minimize environmental impact, prioritize health and well-being, and support socially responsible businesses. This trend has pushed companies to adapt their practices and offerings, leading to a broader availability of environmentally friendly products in the market (Nekmahmud and Fekete-Farkas, 2020). However, some companies that want to produce and sell more products and make a profit by keeping the life cycles of the products as low as possible contradict this situation (Bajwa, et al. 2019).

The amount of products and services consumed in recent years has increased tremendously around the world, causing rapid depletion of natural resources and serious damage to the environment (Balderjahn, et al. 2013). Global warming, increasing environmental pollution and decreasing plants are some of the effects of environmental damage (Goggins and Rau, 2016). Concern for the environment has produced developments that emphasize the need to promote sustainability and minimize negative impacts on the environment. When thinking about green marketing, one of the biggest misconceptions is to focus solely on promoting green product characteristics or designing products that cause less ecological damage. Even though these movements are tactically involved in green marketing, businesses should always consider with a holistic approach how they can achieve these common goals and meet consumer needs in the long run (Ayyıldız and Genç, 2008). On the other hand, it is necessary to minimize the potential damages caused by the implemented strategies (Kuppelwieser, et al. 2019). Planned obsolescence is one of these strategies.

2.2. Planned Obsolescence

Planned Obsolescence is a strategy that has increased in recent years and is also a threat to sustainability (Nilsson and Lobo Perez, 2022). Planned obsolescence is a profound strategy in which products with low durability are designed, which are used by companies selling durable products and are characterized by gradually decreasing consumer value over time (Agrawal, et al. 2015). In 1954, industrial designer Brooks Stevens referred to the concept of planned obsolescence as "instilling in the buyer the desire to have something a little earlier than necessary, a little newer, a little better" (Adamson and Gordon, 2003). As a central marketing strategy, the purpose of planned obsolescence is to encourage consumers to buy as much as possible (Guiltinan, 2009). To elaborate, planned obsolescence should encourage consumers to purchase the newest products by making them incompatible or partially compatible with the older version, and thus depreciate the previous versions (Miao, 2011). By designing products with a short product life cycle, companies plan to achieve higher revenues and profits in markets that are saturated and highly competitive (Gershoff et al. 2012). Consumers, who try to keep up with the

movement of the products in a sense, cannot remain unresponsive to this process and perform planned obsolescence when they renew their existing products (Tüfekçi, et al. 2014: 592). The emergence and adoption of planned obsolescence dates back to the early 1900s, when the Dupont brand reduced the durability of early versions of nylons to cause them to change (Slade, 2006). Also, Xerox and Kodak have reduced the durability of products such as copiers and micrographic equipment by designing their core components to become obsolete faster (Borenstein et al. 1995).

It is not right to view planned obsolescence only from the consumer perspective (Echegaray, 2016). Planned obsolescence includes the determination of company policies in a way that will ensure that the products lose their function before the expected time from the front of the enterprises, as well as the consumers buying the new a little earlier (Maycroft, 2009). These policies include making designs in line with plans about how durable a product should be during the production phase and determining the quality of the material in line with these plans. In addition, although the products continue to work for the expected period, this time, through advertisements, users can be directed to their usage desires and thus obsolescence can be ensured. In addition, the fact that the spare parts of the products are not included in the market or the repair cost of the product is almost the same as buying a new one is considered within the scope of planned obsolescence (Aladeojebi, 2013: 1504).

Guiltinan (2009) "Creative Destruction and Destructive Creations: Environmental Ethics and Planned Obsolescence" and N. Maycroft (2009), "Consumption Planned Obsolescence and Waste" can be given as examples of his studies that deal with the subject with its environmental aspects. In addition, the documentary "The Light Bulb Conspiracy" shot by C. Dannoritzer (2010) and T. Cooper's book "Longer Lasting Products: Alternatives to the Throwaway Society" published in 2010 deal with the issue with its environmental dimension.

The main reason for the existence of planned obsolescence strategies is to establish a balance in the system as a tool that provides high consumption rate in response to increased production as a result of technological developments. In line with this basic purpose, the causes of planned obsolescence are examined under three headings: anthropological, sociological and economic (Pope, 2017). These three topics can be summarized as follows: from the point of view of humanity and its relationship with the environment, culturally placing human in the center of nature, giving a happy meaning to consumption activities with socially created false needs, and an economic system in which growth is adopted (Taffel, 2023). From this point of view, it can be stated that the behaviors of the firms in a growth economy and the consumer behaviors in the consumption culture are the two important motivations of planned obsolescence (Kanlıtepe and Özgül, 2021: 965).

Nowadays, businesses are influencing consumption behaviors with the desire to own the product by arousing the desire to consume in consumers with various methods. Due to the media and the internet, advertisements can reach large audiences (Özdemir and Yaman, 2015). As a result of the planned obsolescence strategy, consumers are materialized by using advertising as a marketing tool and are directed to buy even though they do not need it. Consumers are sold a lifestyle based on consumerism (Çelik, 2018).

The most obvious and up-to-date example of this is the advertisements made on social media on TV and on the internet by taking advantage of Covid-19. As a result of the pandemic and the need for social distancing measures, individuals have had to rely more on remote and online transactions, conducting most of their activities from home (Zhu, et al. 2021). In this period, transactions in many fields from education to commerce began to be carried out online. Therefore, the need for screens from computers to TVs has increased (Kulular-İbrahim, 2021). In this period, as a result of the planned obsolescence strategy, advertisements forcing consumers to buy new products by influencing them have increased in a way that prevents them from self-questioning whether they need it or not. For many products, such as this example, which shows that marketing techniques have social effects in the form of both economic and social damage, various promotions are frequently on the agenda in order to increase the sales of new model products by evaluating the corona as an opportunity for many products (Torlak and Tiltay, 2017).

2.3. Product Lifecycle and Planned Obsolescence Types

The role and importance of shortening the product life cycle with a planned obsolescence strategy in green marketing is a contentious topic. The product lifecycle is a term that refers to the actions that take place from the time a new product enters the market until it leaves the market (Yüce, et al. 2019: 176). Each product has a certain life span. When a product idea is commercialized, the product enters the market and competes for sales and profits. Products have a lifetime just like humans. The life cycle in humans is defined as the life cycle and is referred to as the product / market life cycle as it depends on a specific market when applied to products. The product lifecycle may be short for some products and long for some products (Draskovic, et al. 2018). The life cycle of each product has distinctive features. The length of the product life cycle stages may vary depending on the sector, product or service it is dependent on (Kotler and Armstrong, 2018).

Using the concept of product lifecycle to develop marketing strategy can also be difficult because marketing strategies can be both a cause and an effect for the product lifecycle. The current product lifecycle position suggests the best marketing strategies to marketing managers, and the results can affect product performance in later stages, which in turn affects the market and the market cycle (Kotler and Armstrong, 2018). In fact, today's market for technological products requires the product or service to be renewed at most every two years. It has been stated that a business that does not immediately respond to the needs of consumers will become marginal in a rapidly growing market by replacing its competitorsr (Więcek-Janka, et al. 2017). Products that are manufactured with a limited lifetime encourage the purchase of spare parts and thus generate stable sales and gains for producers (Slade, 2006). According to the researches made in recent years, the service life of the products has decreased significantly due to technological advancements, consumer demand for novelty, and economic considerations (Casals, et al. 2019). It is seen that the lifespan of the products is still decreasing despite positive feedback. Consumers want the new product more quickly, and use the old products for a shorter period of time. This leads to a decrease in the need for quality products that can be used in the long term and encourages consumers to have new products more quickly (MacArthur, 2016).

Continuous improvement in corporate strategies often involves introducing new components or features to existing products. This approach allows companies to enhance their products, address

customer needs, and stay competitive in the market (Saarikko, et al. 2020). Companies frequently update their technology to mitigate the risk of competition from the used goods market (Guiltinan 2009). However, there is a potential risk for producers who incentivize the release of new products. This risk arises when the value of older units diminishes as soon as the producer introduces the new product. Even if the improvements in the new product are not substantial, consumers may still perceive their current product as "out of fashion" due to the constant upgrading cycle (Rivera and Lallmahomed, 2016).

Consumers' purchasing behavior is influenced by the perceived lifetime of a product. A study suggests that consumers tend to believe that cheaper products have a shorter lifespan compared to more expensive ones (Cox, et. al. 2013). This perception leads customers to assign lower value to such products. Therefore, the perceived reliability of a product plays a significant role in shaping consumer behavior (Mansoor, et. al. 2022).

The obsolescence policy designed and implemented by manufacturers to shorten the life of the product and to encourage the purchasing of substitutes by consumers can be realized in several different ways. These are; technological obsolescence, psychological obsolescence and quality obsolescence (Guiltinan, 2009; Packard, 1960).

2.3.1. Technological Obsolescence

When a higher technology product is put on the market, it occurs as the previous product is considered to be obsolete. According to Packard (1960), it is the most appreciated and most useful form of planned obsolescence. Technological obsolescence, which is the most valid and widely used type today, increases the performance of a product with technological developments and increases the benefit to be obtained from that product. The first type of obsolescence was made as technological obsolescence (Solczak, 2013: 8).

Television screens that offer a better image quality, use less fuel running cars, longer-lasting phone batteries have always been appreciated by consumers. These product features align with consumer desires for enhanced performance, cost savings, and convenience (Bodart and Truyens, 2020). However, in smartphones that are launched every year, a real innovation is very rare. In addition, constantly renewed smart phones create the feeling that the product they have is getting old. Consumers think that they are following the technology by replacing their old phones with a higher model. Thus, while companies ensure the continuity of their production and sales thanks to their renewed models, consumers also feel psychologically satisfied (Aydın, 2018: 13-14).

2.3.2. Psychological Obsolescence

Psychological obsolescence is defined as the consumers' willingness to renew the products that they buy voluntarily, functionally working and have no problems (Kadıoğlu, 2014: 68). In psychological obsolescence, the product, which is still in good condition in terms of performance and quality, becomes less desirable due to the introduction of another product into the market, and becomes less desirable due to design or other changes (Maitre-Ekern and Dalhammar, 2016). There is an abstract obsolescence in psychological obsolescence, which is also called glamor obsolescence or style obsolescence. The consumer, for a subjective reason, is no longer satisfied with the product, although there is no disruption in the operation of the product (Packard, 1960).

Two basic factors affecting psychological obsolescence and brand value in the eyes of consumers are; is advertising and fashion (Keeble, 2013). Advertising, as a form of persuasive communication is an effort to influence the target audience positively and to turn towards purchasing behavior by giving information about the product with the messages it sends to the target audiences for the purpose of communication it has while also affecting the attitudes and perceptions. While introducing a new product, the old product is devalued and the consumer is directed to the new one (Elden, 2003).

2.3.3. Quality obsolescence

Quality obsolescence, refers to the intentional use of poor quality materials or manufacturing processes during the production phase, resulting in products losing their functionality or becoming obsolete in a relatively short period of time. This practice is often associated with planned obsolescence, a strategy aimed at stimulating repeat purchases and increasing profitability (Azamfirei, et al. 2023). Quality obsolescence can be explained as causing the product to lose its functions in a short time by using poor quality materials during the production phase. The priorities that support this in consumer behavior are that the product is suitable for visual tastes and fashion trends. Features such as the quality and longevity of the product, which will likely change in a short time, are considered unnecessary (Kadıoğlu, 2014: 65).

Guiltinan (2009) states that quality obsolescence, which he refers to as concrete obsolescence, is seen in three ways. The first is that the product life is designed to be limited. Portable radios, whose lifetime is reduced to 1000 hours, are designed as a light bulb and a product life of three years are shown as examples of this type.

The second is that the product is designed to allow limited repair. Repair of the broken product is either not possible or unreasonably high cost. This motivates the user to buy new products.

Guiltinan (2009) shows the deterioration of the aesthetic design of the product in time to reduce the satisfaction of the product as the third and last form of quality obsolescence. Damage to the appearance of the products during daily use in a short time can cause users to dispose of the product and replace it with a new one (Cooper, 2005).

2.4. Planned Obsolescence Principles

Planned obsolescence operates on the premise that the design process intentionally favors the creation of more fragile goods. Engineers are motivated to design products with a limited lifespan. As a result, both products and their components become outdated over time (Rivera and Lallmahomed, 2016). Unless there is an extended producer responsibility program in place, these items are typically disposed of rather than being reused. However, it's worth noting that in certain markets, such as the automobile industry, remanufacturing plays a significant role, allowing for the reuse of components and extending the lifespan of certain products (Kojima, et al. 2009).

As a result of the various crises that have devastated the global economy, manufacturers have found that the problems of the global economy are caused by the oversaturation of the market with goods that have a very long life. Manufacturers have realized that high quality goods cause situations such as economic crisis and unemployment. They also analyzed that consumers are reluctant to spend too much money on quality equipment, but low-quality, efficient product designs make the purchaser emotionally happy (Niklewicz-Pijaczynska, et al. 2021). With this thought, manufacturers have started to use the planned obsolescence method and this method

contains some basic principles. In summary we can say that planned obsolescence depends on certain basic principles and those principles are (Damianov, 2019; Damianov and Vlahova, 2019; Maitre-Ekern, E., and Dalhammar, 2016):

• The duration of use of the product (warranty period, expiration date, useful life, etc.) is deliberately planned according to a certain limit.

• Planned limitation of the features of the product for later improvements (an example of products locking (freezing) in a non-functional way over time.)

• Always developing better alternatives and offering products with poor qualities to encourage the consumer to these alternatives (e.g. screen sizes, pixel counts, video stream rate, capacity, data stream rate, etc.)

• Requiring consumers and producers to update the product and buy a new one after a while, with the imposition of mandatory legal sanctions.

• Expanding the design of product design, creating a design influenced by trendy marketing and seasonality factors.

• Suspension of the supply of industrial products that are exploited by endless production resources (particularly the feature of computer equipment).

• Integration of product components with life cycle constraints, but includes more than 50% of the product value.

• Complex irreparable items are useless. Failure of a single component of the device causes complete change.

• Incompatible newly introduced software with old devices or the production of new accessories that are incompatible with old products.

• Shortening the shelf life and life cycle of the product.

• Use of low grade and low quality materials. It means more supplies, more energy, and more water for every new device or product purchased. And this leads to more pollution and greenhouse gas pollution for the planet.

Especially, the last item indicates a very important point for the green marketing issue, which the study also emphasizes.

2.5. Examples of Planned Obsolescence

The light bulb indeed serves as one of the earliest documented examples of planned obsolescence. In 1895, bulbs manufactured in Ohio, USA, featured a filament invented by Adolphe Chaillet that lasted approximately 1500 hours (Carles, et al. 2020). However, by 1924, advancements in filament technology had extended the bulb's lifespan to around 2500 hours. Rather than embracing the opportunity to produce more durable bulbs, manufacturers made a strategic decision to limit the lifetime of light bulbs to 1000 hours by modifying the filament. Patents that enabled bulbs to surpass the 1000-hour threshold were rejected. As a result, sales of light bulbs significantly increased as consumers were compelled to replace them more frequently (Rivera and Lallmahomed, 2016).

The business model of planned obsolescence aims to circumvent the "durable goods problem" by mitigating the adverse impact of market saturation, which can lead to reduced sales rates for the producer (Sankaranarayanan, 2007). The limited lifespan of products fosters a culture of replacement purchases, thereby generating consistent sales and earnings (Slade, 2006).

Apple is among the companies that incorporate planned obsolescence into their business model. Their devices, like the iPod, iPhone, or iPad, are intentionally designed to make it difficult for users to replace the batteries themselves. Consequently, when the batteries lose capacity, users are left with two choices: either purchase a new device or have Apple perform the battery replacement (Kessler and Brendel, 2016: 33). Apple employs various strategies to manage obsolescence, including the deliberate incompatibility between new and old products (Malinauskaite and Erdem, 2021). An example of this is evident in the second generation of Apple's in-ear headphones, which introduce new features such as remote control and a microphone (Apple, 2020). However, these features are only fully functional with newer models of the iPhone, iPad, or iPod. For instance, the headphones are completely incompatible with the first generation of the iPod shuffle and only provide audio playback for the second and third generations. From the fourth generation onwards, all features work properly. As a result, customers who own older versions of the iPod shuffle and desire to enjoy the benefits of the new headset and its functions face technological obsolescence and seemingly have no option but to purchase a newer model (Kessler and Brendel, 2016: 34).

Furthermore, recent research suggests that customers perceive their iPhones to become slower when new iPhone models are released (Mullainathan, 2014). Analysis using Google's data tool Trends reveals an increase in searches for 'iPhone slow' following new iPhone release dates. Several reasons could explain this phenomenon (Makov and Fitzpatrick, 2021; Wen and Zhu, 2019; Chumnumpan and Shi, 2019): Firstly, Apple may intentionally slow down older iPhone versions through updates to their iOS operating system, a form of qualitative obsolescence. Secondly, older iPhone models may lack the computational power required to handle newer versions of the operating system, leading to technological obsolescence. Lastly, customers may be seeking a justification to replace their older devices, indicating psychological obsolescence.

Printers and ink cartridges serve as prominent examples of planned obsolescence in consumer products (Amandam, 2020). Numerous lawsuits have targeted Epson inkjet printers, which were accused of prematurely suspending printer functionality before cartridges were fully used. Following the legal proceedings, Epson was found to be in the wrong and subsequently compelled to compensate consumers who purchased their products between 1999 and 2006 with $45 coupons (Delaney, et al. 2009).

2.6. The relationship of planned obsolescence with green marketing

The relationship between planned obsolescence and green marketing can be complex. On one hand, planned obsolescence, with its emphasis on creating short-lived products and encouraging frequent replacements, can be seen as contrary to the principles of green marketing. Green marketing aims to promote environmentally friendly practices, such as sustainability, resource conservation, and reduced waste (Sarkar, 2012). Planned obsolescence often leads to increased consumption and waste, as products are discarded and replaced more frequently than necessary. This can have negative environmental impacts, including the depletion of resources, increased energy consumption in manufacturing, and the generation of more electronic waste (Satyro, et al. 2018).

However, some companies may attempt to integrate green marketing practices into their approach to planned obsolescence. For instance, they may emphasize energy efficiency, recyclability, or the use of eco-friendly materials in their products. They may also offer recycling or take-back programs to encourage responsible disposal (Maitre-Ekern and Dalhammar, 2016). Critics argue that these green marketing initiatives are often insufficient and merely serve as greenwashing, providing an illusion of environmental responsibility while still promoting a culture of consumption and waste (Scanlan, 2017).

3. METHODOLOGY

This study aimed to examine the relationship between green marketing and the negative effects of product obsolescence strategies used in marketing. Green marketing has recently emerged as an important concept promoting environmentally friendly products and practices. However, concerns have been raised about adverse consequences from shortened product lifecycles associated with planned obsolescence and other product obsolescence strategies.

A systematic review methodology was adopted to achieve the objectives of this study. Relevant academic databases and literature resources were searched to identify studies examining the link between green marketing and adverse effects from product obsolescence strategies. The literature review includes articles published in English and Turkish until 2023. Studies selected for the literature review will be evaluated against predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Data extraction involves analyzing key information from selected studies, such as research design, methodology, variables studied, and findings on the relationship between green marketing and the negative effects of product obsolescence strategies.

With the synthesized findings, it is aimed to provide a comprehensive overview of the available information on this subject. The study highlights the complex interplay between green marketing and product obsolescence by identifying common themes, trends, and research gaps in the literature.

4. RESULTS

As a result, the link between green marketing and the negative effects of product obsolescence strategies such as planned obsolescence is a complex and controversial issue. Trying to reveal the link between green marketing and the negative effects of product obsolescence strategies, this study aimed to add to current knowledge and provide insights for policy makers, marketers and consumers. In line with the data compiled as a result of the research the following inferences were made;

- While addressing the problems related to product obsolescence in the context of green marketing, it has also been determined that responsible practices in line with sustainability goals should be encouraged.
- While green marketing aims to promote environmentally friendly products and practices, concerns arise when these efforts clash with the strategy of shortening product life cycles to increase consumption and profitability.
- Balancing several factors is essential to address potential conflicts and ensure responsible practices that benefit the environment. Innovations in product design, materials, and manufacturing processes can contribute to extending product lifecycles and reducing waste. By incorporating sustainable practices into their green marketing strategies, companies can enhance their environmental credentials and meet the growing consumer demand for eco-friendly products.
- In addition, consumer awareness and education play a vital role in influencing purchasing decisions. Educating consumers about the effects of product obsolescence strategies can empower them to make informed choices and support sustainable alternatives. Transparency in product labeling and certification systems can also help consumers identify truly eco-friendly products.
- Also, collaboration between stakeholders is crucial to driving change. Governments can implement regulations that discourage planned obsolescence and encourage sustainable product design. Industry associations and organizations can encourage companies to adopt responsible approaches by establishing guidelines and standards for green marketing practices.

- Addressing the complexities surrounding the intersection of green marketing and product obsolescence requires a multidimensional approach. By considering innovation, consumer demand, environmental concerns and sustainability together, it is possible to find a balance that encourages responsible practices and contributes to a more sustainable future.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Today, the negative environmental impacts of planned obsolescence, such as increased consumption, resource depletion and waste generation, appear to far outweigh any potential benefits. A truly green marketing approach needs to prioritize longevity, durability, repairability and recycling initiatives to minimize environmental damage.

The relationship between planned obsolescence and green marketing is mostly negative in the eyes of consumers, but this may vary depending on the specific practices and goals of the companies. While planned obsolescence and green marketing may seem contradictory, some companies may try to harmonize both concepts, but the effectiveness and sincerity of such efforts will remain a matter of debate.

In conclusion, the role and importance of shortening the product lifecycle through planned obsolescence in green marketing is a complex and controversial issue. Balancing innovation, consumer demand, environmental concerns and sustainability is crucial to addressing potential conflicts and ensuring responsible practices that truly benefit the environment. Assuming that the concepts mentioned in the study are quite up-to-date in terms of both the producer and the consumer; surveys, observations, experiments, etc. can be used in future studies and more detailed, deep and important information can be obtained by doing analyze with these methods.

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JOMAES

Comparison Of Travel Motivations In Yoga Tourism And Mass Tourism

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Abstract

In this study, it is aimed to compare different travel motivations of tourists who prefer yoga and mass tourism. In this sense, phenomenological method was used to determine the differences between niche markets and mass markets. The sample of the research consists of individuals who have experienced yoga tourism and mass tourism. The research questions were asked face-to-face to the coastal tourists in the Alanya region and the participants in the yoga center operating in the Alanya region. According to the findings obtained from the interviews, motivation and expectation differences were observed between the tourists who prefer the niche market and the tourists who prefer the mass market. Hence, the study would be important in understanding and meeting the motivations of niche markets compared to mass markets.

Keywords: Yoga Tourism, Mass Tourism, Travel Motivation

1.INTRODUCTION

There are significant differences in travel motivations between tourists who prefer yoga tourism and those who prefer mass tourism. Yoga tourists travel for the purposes of self-improvement, mental and physical health, deepening the practice of yoga, and finding more inner peace. Mass tourists, on the other hand, often travel for reasons such as relaxation, entertainment, exploring new places and experiencing different cultures. Yoga tourists prefer activities such as yoga studios, meditation centers, healthy eating facilities, as well as natural and calm environments where they travel. Mass tourists, on the other hand, prefer tourist attractions, shopping malls, restaurants, bars and nightclubs. While mass tourists generally prefer crowded touristic areas to travel, yoga tourists prefer quiet and isolated areas (Kandemir, G., Özer Y., and Akova O., 2020). While yoga tourists make healthy lifestyle choices, mass tourists prefer to spend more on food and drink. In conclusion, there are significant differences in travel motivations between yoga tourists and mass tourists.

In this study, it is aimed to compare the different travel motivations of tourists who prefer yoga tourism and mass tourism, and to comprehend and reveal the differences between niche and mass markets through the interview method.

History of Yoga: Yoga is a practice that originated in ancient India and gained worldwide popularity for its physical, mental and spiritual benefits. Yoga is essentially a holistic system of practices that aim to bring harmony and balance to the mind, body and spirit. The word "yoga" comes from the Sanskrit word "yuj", meaning to subjugate or unite (Broad, 2012). The earliest written records of yoga are found in the Vedas, ancient holy Hindu scriptures that describe yoga

as a spiritual practice aimed at helping individuals reach a state of union with the divine. Over time, different schools of yoga have emerged, each with its own unique practices. Today, yoga is practiced by millions of people around the world.

The physical practice of yoga includes a series of poses or postures known as 'asanas' designed to increase strength, flexibility and balance. Meditation, which involves focusing the mind and developing awareness, is another important component of the practice. Yoga also includes guidelines known as 'yamas' and 'niyamas' that provide a framework for living an ethical, meaningful and purposeful life (Kandemir, G., Özer Y., & Akova O., 2020). Beyond its physical and mental benefits, yoga also has a rich spiritual tradition that emphasizes the interconnectedness of everything. One of the most well-known benefits of yoga is its ability to reduce stress and anxiety. Yoga has been shown to lower levels of the stress hormone, cortisol and help regulate mood and reduce anxiety. It has also been revealed that yoga improves sleep quality, increases feelings of relaxation and calmness, and increases the individual's overall sense of well-being (Efe, F. & Keyvan, A., 2021).

One of the many types of modern tourism that emerged as a result of the multitude of needs and demands of tourists is yoga tourism (Jammu, 2016). Yoga tourism has been seen as a niche in health tourism in most studies in the literature. However, it is seen in studies that consider yoga tourism as a niche on its own (Liberman, 2004; Sharpley & Sundaram, 2005; Nichter, 2013; Maddox, 2014). Yoga tourism means traveling for yoga, meditation, and other mental and physical wellness practices. Yoga tourism is often associated with activities such as yoga vacations, yoga camps, and yoga festivals. Yoga tourism is designed to help people get rid of their stressful and busy lives, relax their minds and stretch their bodies. Such trips can take place in private facilities such as yoga centers and spa facilities. These travel options may include:

Yoga holidays: Yoga vacations are travels that last a few days to a few weeks and usually include yoga instruction, meditation, healthy eating, and relaxation activities.

Yoga camps: Yoga camps are designed for those who want to practice intense yoga and can often last for weeks.

Yoga festivals: Yoga festivals are events that usually last several days, focusing on the practice of yoga and other mental and physical health practices.

Yoga centers: Yoga centers are special facilities designed for yoga training, meditation and wellness practices. Yoga centers are often used for yoga vacations or yoga camps.

Cultural tours: Cultural tours are tours designed for those who want to learn about the origins and philosophy of yoga practice. With these tours yoga centers, temples, and other yoga-related places may be visited.

The travel options offered within the scope of yoga tourism are quite wide and offer suitable options for those who want to practice yoga at all levels.

Examples of yoga tourism in the context of spiritual tourism may be seen in the literature. Kandemir and others mentioned that yoga tourism plays a substantial role in the movement of seeking spirituality. While researches on spiritual tourism brought together the discussions on the distinction between "tourist" and "traveler" in the past, it also gave birth to concepts such as "religious tourist" and "spiritual tourist" (Kandemir, G., Özer Y. and Akova O., 2020).

In order to understand the *travel motivations of yoga tourists*, it is necessary to understand the motivations of spiritual tourists (Kandemir, G., Özer Y. and Akova O., 2020: 156-157). Motivations of spiritual tourists; aiming at personal development and spiritual purification, freedom and personal spaces, personal and spiritual behavior with a sense of belief at the forefront, obtaining

natural experiences, seeking existential authenticity and interacting with the local people (Kandemir, G., Özer Y. and Akova O., 2020:156-157). Spiritual tourism is extremely effective in reducing stress and anxiety, rebalancing the mind and body, taking time for oneself, having new experiences and improving oneself.

Various definitions are made for *mass tourism* in the tourism literature. The main four elements of mass tourism are mentioned (Çubuk, 1981: 46 and Bahar, O. 2003: 151). These are as follows;

• Large number of participation,

• Having journey collectively,

• Having a collective accommodation arrangement,

• Social integration of the vacationer with a vacation group.

According to this: "Mass tourism is a type of tourism that is organized in advance, all-inclusive (travel, accommodation and other services), with a certain price, in groups, organized by travel agents to certain places" (Dinçer, 1993: 12 and Bahar, O. 2003: 151).

According to the center-periphery relationship, mass tourism is organized from the developed center country to the developing countries called 'periphery', the touristic product is based on natural resources, mostly charter airlines are used in international transportation, holiday villages and coastal hotels are chosen as accommodation type, and touristic products are all standardized package holidays (Yarcan, 1996: 22-23). Therefore, the two most important features of mass tourism are the large number of participants and the presentation of the holiday as a standard package. The rapid rise of mass tourism, which began in the 1970s, has led to intense discussion of its effects on the environment. Because, this type of tourism, which consists of large mass movements; the negative effects on water resources, soil and vegetation, wildlife, atmosphere and the entire ecosystem are now seen as an economic cost (Briguglio and others. 1996: 72).

There are many different types of mass tourism. The prominent ones are as follows:

Beach Tourism: It is the type of tourism where vacationers travel to sunbathe, swim and relax on the beach.

City Tourism: A type of tourism where many people travel to cities to explore historical and cultural sites, visit museums, and try local cuisine.

Nature Tourism: It is the type of tourism where vacationers travel to see natural beauties, walk in natural parks, camp and observe natural life.

Cultural Tourism: A type of tourism where people travel to explore historical and cultural sites, visit local festivals, and meet locals.

Amusement Tourism: It is the type of tourism in which vacationers travel to visit theme parks, water parks and other types of entertainment centers.

Shopping Tourism: The type of tourism where people travel to shop at local stores, buy local handicrafts, and visit local bazaars.

Health Tourism: It is the type of tourism where people travel to remedy health problems, try alternative medicine applications or relax in spa centers.

Faith tourism: It is a type of tourism in which individuals travel depending on their religion, sect or beliefs. This type of tourism is usually carried out to visit sacred places, temples, monasteries, churches, mosques and other religious structures.

While these are primery examples of mass tourism, there are many more. These types of tourism differ according to the purpose of travel, interests and lifestyles of tourists and constitute an important market for the tourism industry. Tourists' travel motivations constitute an important marketing strategy for the tourism industry. The tourism industry may increase customer satisfaction and gain competitive advantage by providing services that meet the expectations of tourists.

Among the *motivations of mass tourism*, desire to escape from daily lives and get away from stress have important place. "The motivation to escape is that tourists want to get away from their daily lives and get rid of their stress" (Gao, Cai, & Xu, 2021).

Besides, among the *travel motivations of tourists*, the desire to have a cultural experience comes to the fore, as well. Activities such as getting to know local cultures, visiting historical places, tasting local food and meeting locals attract tourists. Tourists travel to experience different cultures, taste local food and visit historical places. It is also a source of motivation for tourists to want to have fun and do different activities.

As a result, tourists' travel motivations constitute an important marketing strategy for the tourism industry. Motivations such as escape, cultural experience, entertainment, adventure, shopping and health and well-being are among the primary travel motivations of mass tourists.

Travel motivation is a concept that expresses a person's reasons and desires to travel. These motivations may stem from many different factors, for example traveling for different reasons such as cultural exploration, vacation, adventurous activities or relaxation. Travel motivation is the key factor that determines the way people travel and the activities they do during their travels. Many studies have shown that motivation to travel plays an important role in people's lives. For example; in a study, it is stated that traveling improves people's quality of life and reduces stress (Lee and Jang, 2019). Travel motivation can stem from many different factors. For example; people may travel for reasons such as desire to experience cultural experiences, desire to explore different places, desire to have eating and drinking experiences, desire to participate in nature and outdoor activities, or just to relax and relieve stress (Gursoy & Chen, 2000). These motivations can vary depending on factors such as a person's lifestyle, socio-economic status, personal interests, cultural identity and life experiences. There are also different types of travel motivation. For example; adventure tourism is a genre in which a person travels because of his desire to participate in nature and outdoor activities. Such travel often involves high-risk activities and may be a challenge to oneself. Also, holiday tourism is a genre in which a person travels simply because he or she wants to relax and get away from stress. Such travels usually offer relaxing and luxurious accommodation options and can provide relaxation (Fodness & Murray, 1999).

As a result, travel motivation is a key factor that determines why people travel. These motivations can improve people's quality of life and make them feel happier and more fulfilled.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1.Research Method

In this study, phenomenology research design, one of the qualitative research methods, was used. The phenomenology research design focuses on the facts that are aware of but yet are wanted to be examined in depth and that do not have detailed information (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013: 78). Phenomenological research results in reaching the core of the participants' experiences by describing the experiences of the participants on a particular topic.

Interview questions were taken from Kasim and others, (2013) and Özel and Kozak (2012) with 5 dimensions (culture, relaxation, socializing, personal development, escape) and a travel

motivation scale consisting of 18 items (Sert, 2019:540) and Paris and Teye's (2010) motivation scale was used as a source. Assistance was obtained from these scales in order to ensure that the interview questions and the research were not groundless.

Since phenomenology is based on personal experiences, individuals who have or are experiencing these experiences constitute the sample of the research. Individuals who have experienced yoga tourism and mass tourism constitute the sample of this research.

2.2.Research Questions

The research questions were prepared to measure the motivation of the participants from different perspectives with issues such as culture and history, relaxation, socialization, personal development, escape, experience and budget.

1. How would you describe your travel motivation?

A) Culture and History Dimension:

2. What do you think about communicating with local people while traveling?

3. Is it important for you to gain experience from different cultures and traditions through travel? What do you think about this?

B) Relief Size:

4. Would you prefer to be in a calm atmosphere during your travel?

5. Is one of the main goals of your travels to have fun?

6. What is the priority of mental and physical rejuvenation/rest during your travel?

C) Socialization Dimension:

7. Do you aim to make new friendships during your travel?

D) Personal Development:

8. Are travels important to discover, challenge and gain new talents?

E) Escape Dimension:

9. Does your travel make you feel free, independent and open-minded? What do you think about the connection of these feelings with travel?

10. Is getting away from the stress of city life one of your travel goals?

F) Seeking Experience:

11. Do you care about having experiences that you can tell your family and friends during your travel?

12. Does travel add an experience to you and show that it is beneficial?

G) Budget:

13. Do you take care that your travels are on a low budget?

14. Do you avoid allocating a budget for your experience?

2.3.Data Collection Tool and Process

A semi-structured interview form was used as a data collection tool in the research. In the semi-structured interview form, there is a predetermined set of questions or topics. It was given importance for the participants to experience the relevant type of tourism. Research questions were asked to the yoga tourism participants at the yoga center where they participated in the event. The questions were asked to mass tourists during their experience in the region where they participated in tourism. The questions were asked to the participants face to face during the experience. The research was directed to 30 participants in total, including 15 yoga tourism participants and 15 mass tourism participants.

3.RESULTS

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the yoga participants

Age group	18-25 (3 participants)
	25-35 (7 participants)
	36-50 (5 participants)
	50+ (0 participants)
Education Group	Primary school graduate (0 participants)
	High school graduate (4 participants)
	University graduate (8 participants)
	Graduate-PhD (3 participants)
Marital status	Married (3 participants)
	Single (12 participants)

Table 2: Demographic characteristics of the mass participants

Age group	18-25 (4 participants)
	25-35 (5 participants)
	36-50 (4 participants)
	50+ (2 participants)
Education Group	Primary school graduate (3 participants)
	High school graduate (5 participants)
	University graduate (6 participants)
	Master-PhD graduate (1 participant)
Marital status	Married (9 participants)
	Single (6 participants)

The age, education and marital status of the participants participating in the research are given in Table 1 and Table 2. Accordingly, 20% of the yoga tourists participating in the research are in the 18-25 age range, 46,7% are in the 25-35 age range, and 33,3 are in the 36-50 age range. 27% of the participants are high school graduates, 53% are university graduates, and 20% are postgraduate-doctoral graduates. 20% of the participants are married and 80% are single.

In mass tourists, 27% are 18-25 years old, 33% are 25-35 years old, 27% are 36-50 years old, and 13% are 50 years old and over. 20% of the participants are primary school, 33% high school, 40% university and 7% graduate-doctorate. 60% of the participants are married and 40% are single.

In the first question, yoga participants used mostly the words; "exploring, gaining experience, resting and rejuvenating" to answer the travel motivation question; mass tourism participants used mostly the words; "resting, having fun, interest and getting away from routine".

In the Culture and History section, it was seen that the participants of both types of tourists gave positive responses to communication with the local people and had a positive attitude towards experiencing different cultures.

In the relaxation part of the questions, the mass tourists stated that the main goal was to have fun as well as rest. Yoga tourists, on the other hand, stated that they prefer quiet and intertwined environments compared to crowded environments, specifying calmness, renewal and rest as their main goal.

When the answers of the participants were examined in terms of socialization, while yoga tourists looked positively to making new friends, the positive responses of mass tourists were less.

In terms of personal development and experience, yoga tourists stated that they were willing to share their experiences, seeing it as a benefit to explore, take challenges and gain new skills. Mass tourists, on the other hand, said that they had a positive outlook on new experiences, but they also stated that it was not their first purpose of travel.

In terms of escape dimension, it has been seen that both types of tourists desired to escape from daily life such as getting away from city life and leaving behind the stress of business life. Both also expressed their feelings of freedom and individuality.

Both types of tourists mostly stated that they do not particularly choose the low budget travels. However, while yoga tourists do not refrain from allocating a special budget for their experience, it was observed that the positive responses of mass tourists on this subject were more limited.

4.CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Niche tourism and mass tourism represent different approaches in the tourism sector. Niche tourism focuses around a particular interest, hobby or activity, while mass tourism targets a wider range of people. While individual preferences and interests are at the forefront in niche tourism types, mass tourism offers more standardized experiences. While mass tourism offers more economically accessible and widespread holiday options, yoga tourism offers more original options. Both are tourism areas that have an important place in the tourism sector but offer different experiences by targeting different population and demands.

According to the findings obtained within the scope of our research, it has been observed that the tourists who choose both types of tourism differ from each other in terms of preferences. While tourists who prefer yoga tourism focus on the quality of their experiences, tourists who prefer mass tourism give more importance to entertainment and relaxation. While mass tourists care more about fine dining and recreational activities, yoga tourists are more focused on the quality of their experience. While individual entertainment, rest and escape are at the level of holiday

purpose in mass tourists, yoga tourists are observed as spiritual rest, entertainment, watching and experiencing local culture, socializing and escape vacation purposes.

Niche tourism needs special attention due to its structure. The promotion of niche tourism types should be supported and improved, besides it should be ensured not only the tourists who are interested in such types of tourism but also uninformed tourists are aware of sorts of niche tourism. Changes in consumer preferences in time should not be ignored and consumers' new expectations (such as healthy life and responsible consumption habits) should be tried to be met. For the reason that new consumer expectations have the potential to be a niche tourism type on their own, they should be seriously considered by tourism entrepreneurs, as well. Lastly, it should be aimed to attract the attention of potential tourists who are not aware of this type of tourism by promoting it with the right marketing and substantial content.

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APPENDIX: INTERVIEW FORM

1. How would you describe your travel motivation?

A) Culture and History Dimension:

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9. Does your travel make you feel free, independent and open-minded? What do you think about the connection of these feelings with travel?

10. Is getting away from the stress of city life one of your travel goals?

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11. Do you care about having experiences that you can tell your family and friends during your travel?

12. Does travel add an experience to you and show that it is beneficial?

G) Budget:

13. Do you take care that your travels are on a low budget?

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Marital status	Married (3 participants) Single (12 participants)

APPENDIX: Table 2: Demographic characteristics of the mass participants

Age group	18-25 (4 participants) 25-35 (5 participants) 36-50 (4 participants) 50+ (2 participants)
Education Group	Primary school graduate (3 participants) High school graduate (5 participants) University graduate (6 participants) Master-PhD graduate (1 participant)
Marital status	Married (9 participants) Single (6 participants)