

Comparison Of Travel Motivations In Yoga Tourism And Mass Tourism

Firdevs Feyza İNCE

Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University, Tourism Faculty, Ankara. firdevs.ince@hbv.edu.tr
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1428-5484>

Çağla KESKİN

Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University, Institute of Graduate Programs, Master Degree Student,
Ankara. keskin.cagla@hbv.edu.tr
<https://orcid.org/0009-0005-1509-0832>

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 (Lieberman, 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 primary 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.

REFERENCES

- Kandemir Altunel, G., Özer, Y. and Akova, O. (2020). Yoga as a Spiritual Awakening Instrument in Tourism, *Journal of Turkish Tourism Research*, 4(1): 152-163.
- Broad, W. (2012). *The Science of Yoga: The Risks and The Rewards: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks*
- Efe F. & Keyvan, A. (2021). Kaygı, depresyon ve travma sonrası stres bozukluğunda yoganın etkililiği: Bir gözden geçirme. *IntJourExerPsyc*, 3(1):1-11.
- Maddox, C. B. (2014). Studying at The Source: Ashtanga Yoga Tourism and The Search for Authenticity in Mysore, India. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 13(4), 330-343.
- Jammu, JPS (2016). Hindistan'da Yoga Turizmi. *Int. J. Bilgilendirin. Taşınmak*. 8, 1–6.
- Sharpley, R. and Sundaram, P. (2005). Tourism: A Sacred Journey the Case of Ashram Tourism, India. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 7:161–171.
- Lieberman, K. (2004). Yoga Tourism in India. *Yoga Life*, 7(35), 23-32.
- Nichter, M. (2013). The Social Life of Yoga: Exploring Transcultural Flows in India. In *Yoga Traveling, Germany: Springer*. 201-224.
- Çubuk, M.(1981). Şehircilik ve Bilim Dalında Bir İnceleme. (Basılmamış Doktora Tezi), İstanbul Mimar Sinan Üniversitesi Mimarlık Fakültesi.
- Dinçer, M.Z. (1993). *Turizm Ekonomisi ve Türkiye Ekonomisinde Turizm*, İstanbul:Filiz Kitabevi
- Bahar, O. (2003). Kitle Turizminin Çevre Üzerindeki Olası Etkileri : Bodrum Örneği, *Anatolia: Turizm Araştırmaları Dergisi*, Cilt 1 4, Sayı 2
- Yarcan. Ş. (1996). *Türkiye’de Turizm ve Uluslararasılaşma*. İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayını
- Briguglio, L., Aecher, B., Jafari, J. ve Wall. G. (1996). *Sustainable Tourism in Islands & Small States: Issues and Policies*.
- Cai, G., Xu, L., Gao, W., (2021). The green B&B promotion strategies for tourist loyalty: surveying the restart of Chinese national holiday travel after COVID-19. *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 94 (2021).
- Gursoy, D., & Chen, M. H. (2000). Competitive analysis of cross-cultural tourist behavior: A strategic framework. *Journal of Travel Research*, 38(3), 239-245.
- Lee, S. H., & Jang, S. S. (2019). Effects of tourism on subjective well-being: Does tourism type make a difference? *Journal of Travel Research*, 58(6), 985-998.

- Fodness, D., & Murray, B. (1999). A typology of tourist pleasure trips: Development of a tourism trip motivation scale. *Journal of Travel Research*, 38(1), 30-34.
- Yıldırım, A. & Şimşek, H. (2016). *Sosyal bilimlerde nitel araştırma yöntemleri*. Ankara: Seçkin Yayıncılık.
- Kasim, A., Dzakiria, H., Park, C., Nor, N. A. M., Mokhtar, M. F., & Rashid Radha, J. R. R. R. (2013). Predictors Of Travel Motivations: The Case Of Domestic Tourists To Island Destinations In Northwest of Malaysia. *Anatolia*, 24(2), 188-205
- Özel, Ç. H., & Kozak, N. (2012). Motive based segmentation of the cultural tourism market: A study of Turkish domestic tourists. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 13(3), 165-186.
- Sert, N.A.(2019). *Iğdır Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi Sayı:20*
- Paris, Cody; Teye, Victor. (2010) "Understanding Backpacker Motivations: A Travel Career Approach", *Journal Of Hospitality Marketing & Management*. 19, 1-16

APPENDIX: INTERVIEW FORM

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?

APPENDIX: 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)

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)