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## A Study on Measuring Tourist Consumers' Intentions to Participate in Unusual Types of Tourism

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### ABSTRACT

Tourists who are bored with the traditional understanding of vacation have entered into new searches. As a result of these searches, new types of tourism have emerged over time. These tourism types are gathered together under the title of alternative tourism. Alternative tourism types are known as tourism types that are shaped according to the tourism understanding of individuals. For this reason, the main purpose of this study is to determine the intention of tourists participating in tourism mobility to participate in extraordinary tourism types. Within the scope of the study, ten types of tourism characterized as extraordinary are discussed. The 408 participants who constitute the sample of the study were asked questions about whether they knew these types of tourism before and their participation intentions. The data were analyzed by applying the survey technique, which is one of the quantitative research methods. In the questionnaire prepared for the participants, information was given about what these tourism types include and how they are realized. The data obtained were subjected to frequency analysis. It was determined whether the participants knew which type of tourism before and whether they would participate or not. The data obtained as a result of the research

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## **1. Introduction**

The technological developments accompanying the Industrial Revolution and the increase in economic prosperity, employment opportunities, and the diversity of transportation means have witnessed a significant increase in tourism mobility (Zengin et al., 2019). The tourism sector, which is considered one of the most profitable sectors worldwide, stands out as a mobility that creates a center of attraction for regions with various cultural, natural, and historical values when its use is correct, as well as its economic gains (Güngör, 2022). For this reason, the concept of alternative tourism emerged in the 1980s as a response to the problems caused by the excessive density and crowded environments caused by mass tourism in the carrying capacity (Wearing et al., 2009).

Alternative tourism encourages the efficient use of tourist resources, increases the tourism revenues of countries, and extends the tourism season. In this way, important steps are taken for the continuity of sustainable tourism understanding (Cesur et al., 2022). In line with individual demands, alternative tourism types are said to spread over a wide range. Although these demands are mostly to discover new places and get to know new cultures, it has been emphasized that it is an attractive element in destination visits within the scope of these tourism types (Uspanova, 2017). For this reason, it is possible to say that alternative tourism types can take place in a wide variety and range of areas by personal needs and demands.

Based on these definitions, it can be said that alternative tourism has an important role in understanding the interests and expectations of consumers, creating more suitable tourism opportunities for the target audience and thus further developing these types of tourism. In this context, this study examines some unusual tourism types that have emerged in line with the demands of tourists. It can be said that understanding the interest in these tourism types and determining the trends in these tourism types are important for the sustainability of the tourism sector.

## **2. Literature Review**

### ***2.1. Alternative tourism***

Alternative tourism is a type of tourism that emerged to minimize the negative effects of mass and city tourism and is also formed by combining innovative touristic products and services (Batman & Ulasan, 2013). The changes in the tourism sector in the world have led to the emergence of various types of tourism depending on the

demands of tourists in purchasing (Yavaş et al., 2017). It is said that diversified tourism types have emerged as an alternative in the sector for tourists who want to go beyond the usual sea, sand, and sun holiday concept (Albayrak, 2013). Alternative tourism is a type of tourism that is often associated with the concept of sustainability. The reason for this is said to be that it is sensitive to the needs of local people. While this type of tourism benefits local businesses, it is also said to lead to a cultural interaction between the host locals and visitors (Prince et al., 2017). The purpose of alternative tourism is stated as providing economic support to the development of the region by avoiding excessive consumption of natural and cultural resources without deteriorating the quality of the environment and by including local people in the activities realized in tourism mobility (Akpınar Külekçi & Bulut, 2010).

Within the scope of the tourism in question, it is said that by spreading the seasonal and periodic tourism mobility throughout the year, significant contributions will be made to local development and employment opportunities in the region where the mobility will take place (Tekin, 2017). Alternative tourism, which overlaps with the understanding of sustainable tourism, is expected to make a significant contribution to the targeted sustainability in the future of the sector by realizing tourism mobility without ignoring the resource needs of future generations. (Duran et al., 2018) In their study, Baytok et al. (2017) mentioned that among the important issues that paved the way for the emergence of alternative tourism, unplanned and unbalanced development and the benefits obtained from tourism are not shared equally among local people and other stakeholders. This can lead to injustice and social imbalance in the tourism sector. Triarchi et al. (2017) defined alternative tourism as a small-scale practice that requires less investment and largely encourages the participation of local people. It is mentioned that this type of tourism exhibits the special characteristics of its type by minimizing the negative impacts on local people and involving local people in the decisions to be taken.

Based on these definitions, it can be said that alternative tourism is a type of tourism that encourages the protection of natural and cultural resources and the protection of these resources by local people. At the same time, alternative tourism plays an important role in minimizing the negative effects of mass tourism. For this reason, it can be said that it makes the tourism sector more inclusive and sustainable. It can be said that alternative tourism is a type of tourism that improves the traditional understanding of tourism, that is the influx of tourists on a large scale to popular tourist destinations called mass tourism. Alternative tourism, which emerged as a result of tourists' demand for change, can make significant contributions to

cultural interaction by being more in touch with the natural environment and local people and not ignoring the principles of sustainability.

## **2.2. Alternative tourism types**

Alternative tourism, which was developed to reduce the negative effects of mass tourism on the natural, socio-cultural, and economic environment over time, has recently gained importance with the widespread understanding of sustainable tourism. The understanding of sustainability, which aims to use natural resources in a quality manner in the long term, also forms the basis of alternative tourism. Increasing environmental awareness and changing expectations of tourists have accelerated the development and support of alternative tourism at the same rate. However, the fact that countries want to generate more tourism income by continuing tourism throughout the year and that people are in search of different pursuits with their social and economic development are among the factors that are effective in the development of different types of tourism. At this point, it is an undeniable fact that Turkey has rich alternative tourism resources. To utilize this potential, alternative tourism needs to be further developed and expanded. If alternative tourism is analyzed in groups, nature-based alternative tourism, culture-based alternative tourism, specialized alternative tourism, and education-based alternative tourism types can be analyzed (Ceylan et al., 2019).

Nature-based tourism can be defined as a broad concept that includes nature tourism, green tourism, rural tourism, soft tourism, responsible tourism, and ecotourism. Any type of tourism that has nature in common can be included in this group. Nature-based tourism can also be defined as a type of tourism that aims to protect the balance of ecological systems. With this approach, it aims to positively improve the relationship between nature, people, the environment, and tourism activities. Nature-based tourism aims to minimize the negative effects and destruction of tourism activities on the environment and to protect the sustainability of both tourism and the ecosystem without harming the environment. Tourism types such as plateau tourism, mountain tourism, farm tourism, agrotourism, cave tourism, and river tourism are also considered under this heading. Nature-based tourism, which includes many activities such as fishing, plant observation, rafting, bird watching, nature trips, and walks, has recently gained more importance with increasing activities in Turkey (Pirselimoğlu Batman, 2019).

Culture-based tourism is defined as a type of tourism that aims to explore, learn, and experience both the intangible and tangible cultural richness of a destination (Tören, 2023). Recent political, technological, and economic

developments have led to changes in the tourism sector as well as in many other sectors. Changing consumption perceptions, especially in developed countries, have led people to prefer vacations not only for entertainment, recreation, sports, or faith but also for personal fulfillment and cultural development. According to the data from the World Tourism Organization, culture-based tourism is said to be the type of tourism that has shown the most development in recent years, and it is among the predictions that it will become more prominent in the future (Baykan, 2007). Cultural tourism also includes tourism types such as cultural heritage tourism, ethnic tourism, gastronomy tourism, city tourism, and pilgrimage tourism (Tören, 2023).

Special interest-based tourism, or special interest tourism, can be defined as a type of tourism that is carried out to deepen people's interest in their field of interest and to learn or experience the details of that field. Special interest tourism can be related to anything, although it is a situation that varies from person to person rather than anything specific. At this point, people travel to see the production sites or stages of the things they are interested in, to experience things they have not experienced before, and to get pleasure from them. Tourism types such as cycling tourism, wine tourism, shopping tourism, festival tourism, and diving tourism can be shown among special interest tourism (Alkaya, 2019).

Education-based tourism is defined as travel to acquire new knowledge, acquire new skills, learn a language, or continue or improve one's current education (Turpcu, 2019). Contrary to popular belief, educational tourism, which includes not only students and teachers but also every individual in society who has a desire to learn, includes the aim of learning something and the desire to acquire new knowledge. Student exchange programs, foreign language courses, and professional development courses are also within the scope of education-based tourism (Hançer & Aydın, 2022). In this context, youth tourism can also be called one of the types of education-based tourism.

Within the scope of this study, 10 types of tourism are discussed. These tourism types are listed below.

End of the world tourism: This type of tourism, also known as last-chance tourism, is the travel of tourists to a destination before it disappears completely due to climate change and other factors (Kucukergin et al., 2020).

Booze tourism (booze cruise tourism): This is a type of tourism that revolves around the activity of drinking alcohol, including brewery tours and alcohol cruises (Laylo & Shakhrizoda, 2022).

Apitourism (bee tourism): Apitourism is defined as a type of tourism that offers tourists the opportunity to experience beekeeping, taste bee products, and explore ecological bonds (Wos et al., 2013).

Jihad tourism: It includes travel to destinations to contact and cooperate with jihadist groups.

Ghost tourism: This type of tourism includes hotels seeking guests with the claim of being haunted, companies offering ghost hunts, and ghost walks (Thompson, 2010).

Mycological tourism (mushroom discovery tourism): It is defined as a recreational tourism activity that serves as a bridge between nature and culture where biocultural heritage is discovered by observing, collecting, and tasting wild mushrooms (Jimenez Ruiz et al., 2017).

Counter-tourism (focus tourism): It is a type of tourism that involves a tourist turning his/her back to the touristic product when visiting a famous tourist destination and taking photos of both the landscape and the touristic artifact from that direction (Laylo & Shakhrizoda, 2022).

Slum tourism: This type of tourism is defined as the travel of wealthy people outside their safe areas to experience the lifestyle of lower-income communities (Yıldız, 2019).

WWOOFing tourism (organic farm tourism): This type of tourism is defined as tourism mobility that takes place to experience organic and rural life, to get to know a different culture other than one's own culture, and ultimately to gain an extraordinary life experience (McIntosh et al., 2006).

Sagitta tourism (arrow tourism) is defined as a type of tourism that involves throwing an arrow on a map hung on the wall and traveling to the place where the arrow comes from on the map or choosing the region to be visited or the beginning of the trip by throwing an arrow on the map in the destination.

### **3. Methodology**

The method followed during the research, the findings obtained, and the effective presentation of the results are of great importance. This research, conducted to examine the awareness of unconventional types of tourism under the title of alternative tourism and to measure participation in these tourism types, focuses on the population of tourist consumers who participate in tourism activities at least once a year. This study, conducted using a convenience sampling method, was carried out between March and May 2024 through a survey technique applied to 408 individuals. This study addresses 10 unusual types of tourism, including booze

tourism (alcohol tour tourism), apitourism (bee tourism), jihad tourism, ghost tourism, mycological tourism (mushroom discovery tourism), counter-tourism (focus tourism), suburban tourism, WWOOFing tourism (organic farm tourism), and sagitta tourism (archery tourism). In the survey, definitions of 10 unusual types of tourism were provided, and participants were asked for their responses regarding their intention to participate in these types of tourism. The data obtained from the survey forms are in SPSS. It was analyzed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents the frequency and percentage distributions of the individual characteristics of the 408 individuals who make up the sample group of the study.

**Table 1.** Findings on the demographic characteristics of tourist consumers

Variables	Groups	n	%
<b>Gender</b>	Woman	205	50,2
	Man	203	49,8
<b>Age</b>	18-30 years	213	52,2
	31-40 years	121	29,7
	41 years and older	74	18,1
<b>Education Level</b>	Primary-Middle School	12	2,9
	High School	54	13,2
	Associate Degree / Bachelor's Degree	292	71,6
	Postgraduate	50	12,3
<b>Income Level</b>	0 - 17.002 TL	115	28,2
	17.003- 30.000 TL	111	27,2
	30.001- 45.000 TL	89	21,8
	45.001 TL and above	93	22,8
<b>Frequency of Travel</b>	Once a year	162	39,7
	2-3 times a year	199	48,8
	4-5 times a year	26	6,4
	6 times a year or more	21	5,1
<b>Preferred Person / Means of Travel</b>	Alone	63	15,4
	Together with family	233	57,1
	With a friend	106	26,0
	Through tour	6	1,5
<b>Total</b>		408	100,0

Source: Authors' elaboration

When examining Table 1, it can be seen that women make up 50.2% and men make up 49.8% of the sample group consisting of 408 individuals in the study. When looking at the average ages of the tourist consumers participating in the research, it was found that the vast majority, at a rate of 52.2%, are in the age range of 18-30, and again, a significant portion, at a rate of 28%, have an income of 0-17,002 TL. When examining the educational levels of the participants, it is revealed that 71.6% are graduates of Associate's/Bachelor's degrees, and regarding the frequency of travel among the participants, it is shown that a significant majority, at 48.8%, travels 2-3 times a year. In the research, when participants were asked who they preferred to travel with, the most common response was with Family, at a rate of 57.1%. Table 2 shows the percentage distributions of the responses of 408 participants, who constitute the sample group of the study, regarding unusual tourism types.

**Table 2.** Findings on tourists' responses regarding unusual tourism types

Tourism Types	Awareness			Interest		Participation Intention		
	I know	I've just heard	I don't know	Yes, I'm interested	No, I'm not interested	Yes, I participate	Undecided	No, I don't participate
End of the world tourism	%14,7	%15,4	%69,9	%85,3	%14,7	%64,0	%23,3	%12,7
Booze tourism	%20,8	%13,7	%65,4	%51,0	%49,0	%40,9	%13,7	%45,3
Apitourism	%13,7	%14,2	%72,1	%41,4	%58,6	%26,5	%22,3	%51,2
Jihad tourism	%12,7	%11,8	%75,5	%17,9	%82,1	%11,3	%12,0	%76,7
Ghost tourism	%17,9	%14,0	%68,1	%58,1	%41,9	%38,5	%23,0	%38,5
Mycological tourism	%20,3	%13,0	%66,7	%60,5	%39,5	%47,1	%16,9	%36,0
Counter-tourism	%17,4	%12,3	%70,3	%65,7	%34,3	%54,4	%21,6	%24,0
Slum tourism	%19,6	%7,6	%72,8	%49,5	%50,5	%36,0	%19,6	%44,4
WWOOFing tourism	%20,8	%15,4	%63,7	%72,8	%27,2	%62,0	%15,4	%22,5
Sagitta tourism	%20,1	%10,8	%69,1	%70,8	%29,2	%59,8	%16,2	%24,0

Source: Authors' elaboration

In Table 2, when the participants were asked about their level of knowledge about tourism types, it is seen that the most known tourism types are booze tourism (20.8%) and WWOOFing tourism (20.8%), while the types of tourism that are not



heard of at all are Jihad tourism (75.5%) and slum tourism (72.8%). When the participants were asked which type of tourism is interesting or not, it was observed that the most interesting responses were end of world tourism (85.3%) and WWOOFing tourism (72.8%). The types of tourism that received the highest number of responses of “I am not interested” were Jihad tourism (85.1%) and apitourism (58.6%). When the intention to participate in unusual types of tourism was measured, it was found that the tourism types that received the highest percentage of “I would participate” responses were end of the world tourism with 64.0% and WWOOFing tourism with 62.0%, while the tourism types that received the highest percentage of “No, I would not participate” responses were Jihad tourism with 76.7% and slum tourism with 44.4%.

## 5. Conclusion

Alternative tourism, unlike traditional tourism, offers diversity according to the wishes and needs of individuals. At the same time, it is considered an understanding of tourism that supports the protection of environmental and cultural values while tourism mobility takes place. Each type of tourism serves different tastes and purposes. In this context, ten extraordinary tourism types, which are among the alternative tourism types, have been discussed. Participants' intentions to participate in these ten types of tourism were investigated. A little more than half (50.2%) of the participants in the study were women, while the majority of them were between the ages of 18 and 30. The higher proportion of young people in the age range of the participants may be a result of the fact that they are more inclined to new and alternative types of tourism, especially those that are considered to be unusual.

It was observed that the majority of the participants (71.6%) were associate degree and bachelor's degree graduates, and when the income ranges were examined, it was observed that the majority of the participants (28.2%) were 0-17,002 TL. In these results, it has been determined that tourists within the scope of youth tourism prefer or can prefer extraordinary tourism types more. Considering that this group prefers more innovation and diversity, it is possible to say that diversification in alternative tourism types will make significant contributions to the tourism destination. In terms of consumer behavior, it is possible to say that consumers are interested in new and different elements. For this reason, consumers' interest in the different makes them feel as innovative and exploring individuals. Touristic consumers can find a sense of value and belonging when they participate in a new type of tourism. Gaining a new and different experience also contributes to their

personal development. At the same time, this participation also leads people to gain different perspectives with the new experience.

For the development of these unusual tourism types, there are some suggestions for the participants that we consider within the scope of youth tourism. Promotion to this target group through social media, where they spend a lot of time, can make significant contributions to the development of these tourism types. Providing unique and interesting content to the target audience through social media and digital marketing strategies will encourage potential tourists to participate in tourism activities. At the same time, content that introduces tourists to unique and new activities in the destination can be created. This will make the destination a center of attraction. Collaborations with local businesses in these destinations will popularize tourism diversity, leading to both the development of the destination and the new tourism diversity. Touristic consumers' interest in what is different and new is an important innovation in terms of product development and market strategies. Collaboration and understanding of consumers' expectations by stakeholders will support participation in an innovative and unique type of tourism. Therefore, the adoption of trendy tourism diversity is important in terms of all the positive contributions mentioned above.

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