

A SOCIO-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE ON YOGA TOURISM



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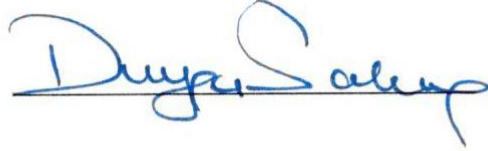
A Socio-Cultural Perspective on Yoga Tourism

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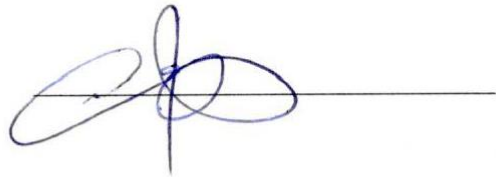
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ABSTRACT

A Socio-Cultural Perspective on Yoga Tourism

Yoga has become an increasingly widespread activity, also becoming popular as a form of tourism. Many Westerners travel to the roots of yoga, to destinations in India where yoga originated in ancient times. In addition, yoga trips to other places around the world are joined by yoga practitioners. This is also the case in Turkey where yoga has become a well-known activity. Several kinds of yoga trips are arranged to mountains, valleys and forests around Turkey, or to destinations abroad. Despite the growing popularity of yoga tourism, there is a dearth of studies on this topic. Little is known about what motivates tourists to travel to a particular destination to practice yoga, and about the impacts that this activity may cause in receiving destinations. Therefore the purpose of this investigation is to bring light on yoga tourism practices. The focus is on the point of view of the yoga tourists, as the research aims to understand the motivations and expectations of these individuals and their perceptions concerning socio-cultural aspects of yoga tourism. The findings show that there are three types of yoga trips: (1) yoga focused, (2) cultural tourism focused, and (3) wellness focused. These trips show different emphases and varied experiences, including the way in which the participants interact with others and in particular with the local community. The research also identifies some issues related to the concern of the yoga tourists for socio-cultural aspects such as authenticity, especially in root of yoga destinations.

ÖZET

Yoga Turizminin Sosyokültürel Perspektifi

Yoga, çok yaygın bir aktivite haline gelmekte, hem de bir turizm şekli olarak popülerleşmektedir. Birçok batılı, yoganın köklerine, yoganın antik zamanda doğduğu yerlere Hindistan'a seyahat etmektedir. Ayrıca, birçok yoga uygulayıcısı dünyanın her bir yanına yoga seyahatlerinde bulunmaktadır. Bu durum Türkiye'de de benzerlik göstermekte, yoga burada da çok bilinen bir aktivite haline gelmiş bulunmaktadır. Türkiye'nin dağlarına, vadilerine ve ormanlarına, hem de yurtdışı destinasyonlara çok sayıda yoga seyahatleri düzenlenmektedir. Yoganın büyüyen popülerliğine rağmen, bu konuda çalışma kıtlığı yaşanmaktadır. Belli varış noktalarına yoga yapmak için giden turistleri nelerin motive ettiği ve bu aktivitelerin bu noktalarda nelere sebep olduğu çok az bilinmektedir. Bu sebeple bu araştırmanın amacı yoga turizmi uygulamalarına ışık tutmaktır. Bu çalışma yoga turistlerinin motivasyonlarını, beklentilerini ve yoga turizminin sosyokültürel boyut algısını anlamayı hedeflemekte ve yoga turistlerinin görüşlerine odaklanmaktadır. Bulgular üç tip yoga seyahati olduğunu göstermektedir: (1) yoga odaklı, (2) kültürel turizm odaklı ve (3) sıhhat odaklı. Bu seyahatler, katılımcıların diğerleriyle ve özellikle yerel halkla etkileşimleri dâhil farklı vurgular ve çeşitli tecrübeler içermektedir. Bu çalışma aynı zamanda yoga turistlerinin özellikle yoganın doğduğu destinasyonlar için duyduğu otantiklik gibi bazı sosyokültürel kaygıları da ortaya koymaktadır.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research background

Yoga is an ancient activity which has reached our modern lives. Although it originated in India early 3500 BC, today the popularity of yoga is at its peak. Yoga is not a religion but it denotes individual growth and physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual balance (Iyengar, 1989). Yoga in Sanskrit means union; the union of the body, mind and spirit individually, and the union of the universe as a whole. Yoga is applied all around the world in different names and styles such as Hatha Yoga, Ashtanga Yoga, Bikram Yoga, Dharma Yoga, Yin Yoga, Acro Yoga, etc. It has created its own market around the globe. Moreover, yoga as a tourism type appeared in the last decades. People from the Western part of the world travel to the very East, to India, where the yoga journey began in ancient times (Maddox, 2014).

Yoga related activities have been spreading in America, Europe and other countries apart from India where it originated. It has become a favored sport, relaxation and spiritual activity shared by huge groups of people all around the world. Furthermore, yoga has even become a new marketing tool for tourism. Yoga practice as a part of wellness tourism or health tourism is introduced as a brand new product. Yoga holidays in natural places are increasingly emerging. Yoga education programs combined with holidays are arranged all around the world.

Yoga has also become a very popular and well-known activity in Turkey. Yoga holidays as a new way of tourism are also carried out in natural places such as mountains, valleys and islands of Turkey, and several festivals are arranged both nationally and internationally. Some teacher's training programs organize relaxation

holidays to the mountains and coastal regions of Turkey under the name of yoga retreats, as part of the education schemes. In addition, some programs also offer yoga holidays to India or Tibet. The number of yoga related recreation activities such as festivals, holidays, workshops and education programs increase each year, while the market for yoga is spreading in Turkey and all around the world.

As yoga spreads all around the world, tourism plays a critical role connecting people and communities with yoga, and transmitting it to the masses. Inevitably yoga changes during its journey from the East to the West. It adds new styles and new perspectives to its cultural and historical look. Yoga trips to the roots of authentic yoga root destinations or to the luxury facilities of the modern world create different experiences with varied levels of interaction between local communities and yoga tourists. This brings the question of what cultural values can be shared among yoga tourists, and do local communities benefit from these interactions socially and economically.

Despite this increasing interest in yoga as an activity and as a tourism type, the number of studies that have analyzed yoga tourism are very few worldwide, and none have evaluated this tourism type from a socio-cultural perspective. In addition, this topic has not been studied yet in Turkey, although the number of yoga trips is increasing day by day and this new way of tourism is becoming a hot trend. There is an emerging need for more literature that evaluates yoga tourism around the globe and in Turkey.

1.2 Aims and objectives

Yoga tourism is growing both worldwide and in Turkey. It is also generally considered as an attractive tourism type, which generally falls under the category of

more responsible and small-scale kind of tourism (Lehto, Brown and Morrison, 2006). However, no research has considered yoga tourism from a sustainability perspective, analyzing the impacts of this activity at the destinations. There is also no investigation or case study done about yoga tourism in Turkey. The profile and the motivations of the yoga travelers and the socio-cultural aspects of the Turkish yoga trips are not known by the decision makers in the tourism sector, even though this segment is growing and becoming well known.

While there are few studies concerning yoga tourism in other countries, these are insufficient and need to be extended. Since yoga tourism is an emerging type of tourism in Turkey, it is important to understand what motivates the participants to select these holidays, and to what extent the communities where this activity is being carried might benefit from it. Therefore this research looks at yoga tourism from the perspective of Turkish yoga tourists. The purpose of this study is to understand the motivations and expectations of yoga tourists and their perceptions concerning socio-cultural aspects of yoga tourism.

This research looks at yoga tourism within a sustainable tourism perspective, which includes not only the protection of scarce resources and the benefits that tourism will bring to the community, but also the visitors' perceptions in order to ensure adequate economic returns. This research also searches for socio-cultural issues in root destinations such as India and Thailand, where yoga was born and expected to be practiced in authentic ways. The interaction between the yoga tourists and the host communities where yoga trips are held both in Turkey and abroad is also investigated.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a broad academic literature about yoga, whereas there are only few studies on yoga tourism. Yoga as a kind of tourism is a niche area which has not been investigated much all around the world. The yoga literature can be divided into three main parts: (1) philosophical and foundational texts, (2) medical studies about yoga and (3) tourism studies that include yoga, such as yoga tourism and spiritual tourism, wellness tourism, health tourism and rural tourism (Maddox, 2014).

2.1 Philosophical and foundational texts

As a first group in the yoga literature, there are many philosophical and foundational texts about the history and philosophy of yoga. Vedas are the old philosophical texts, one of the oldest sacred texts in history, whose name means “knowledge”. The Vedas have been passed from generation to generation orally for a long time, and then around 1500 BC have been transcribed by several unknown authors (Dandekar, 2005). There are four main Vedas: the Rig Veda, the Yajur Veda, the Sama Veda and the Atharva Veda. The Vedas mostly include the traditions and rituals about Hindus and the Karma Kanda and Jnana Kanda parts; the latter covers the Upanisads, where yoga knowledge is written. Patanjali gathers together these Upanishads in the name of Yoga Sutras in which the yoga activity with kriya, bandha, asana and mudra is explained (Sovatsky, 2015). In addition, Patanjali creates the eight limbs of yoga (Ashtanga) before 2000 BC, which is also called Raja yoga, the yoga of the mind; this is the way that goes to individual enlightenment through controlling the mind and creating a unity between body, mind and spirit (Atkinson, 2010; Jois, 2002;

Singleton, 2010). Hatha Yoga Pratipika is another foundational yogic text, written by Swami Swatmarama in the 15th century, and which mostly includes bodily practice of asanas as part of Raja Yoga. Moreover, Bhagavat Gita, a part of Mahabharata Epic, is an important and historical Vedic text which is well known worldwide. Written around 400 and 200 BC, this text includes a dialog between the Lord Krishna and Arjuna in a battlefield. Although Bhagavat Gita is written as a story, it includes the main yoga philosophies, which are Raja Yoga, Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Jnana yoga. The text has 18 chapters with the first 6 chapters concerning Karma Yoga as related to the actions of a person; the middle part is about Bhakti Yoga and is concerned with the dedication of one; and the last block is about Jnana yoga and knowledge. There are many more philosophical texts written upon these foundational texts by several authors such as Swami Vivekananda, Pathabi Jois, Swami Sivananda, Sri Adi Shankaracharya, B. K. S. Iyengar, etc.

2.2 Medical studies about yoga

Medical Studies about yoga composes the second group in the literature that includes yoga therapy works and other physical and psychological studies. Yoga and back pain is a frequently studied area (Williams, Petronis and Smith, 2005; Galantino, Bzdewka and Eissler-Russo, 2004; Wren, Wright, Carson and Keefe, 2011). The health impacts of yoga and pranayama is another researched subject (Sengupta P., 2012). Kumar (2011), Alexander, Taylor, Innes, Kulbok and Selfe (2008), Aljasir, Bryson and Al-Shehri (2010), Nagarathna, Usharani, Rao, Chaku, Kulkarni and Nagendra (2012) and many other scholars investigate the effects of yoga in patients with diabetes. Moreover, the effects of yoga in depression and melancholia are also studied areas by Rohini, Pandey, Janakiramaiah, Gangadhar and Vedamurthachar

(2000) and Janakiramaiah, Gangadhar, Murthy, Harish, Subbakrishna and Vedamurthachar (2000). There are many more health topics related with yoga such as asthma (Manocha, Marks, Kenchington, Peters and Salome, 2002; Posadzki and Ernst, 2011), menstrual distress (Sridevi and Krishna Rao; 1996) and migraine (John, Sharma, Sharma and Kankane, 2007).

2.3 Yoga tourism

The third group in the yoga literature is that of yoga tourism. While yoga as a tourism activity appears as a distinct tourism type (Maddox, 2014; Liberman, 2004; Sharpley and Sundaram, 2005; Nichter, 2013; Aggarwal, Guglani and Goel, 2008; Lehto et al. 2006), often studies have also investigated yoga tourism as a part of larger categories that include wellness and health tourism. On the other hand, yoga tourism is seen as an alternative form of tourism, which is held especially in nature-based settings or beach resorts with warm climates in small scales (Lehto et al., 2006).

Connell (2006) states that yoga and meditation become part of wellness and that they have also a market under health tourism. Smith and Kelly (2006a) include yoga tourism under an umbrella of holistic tourism, which is also placed under wellness tourism. These authors remark on the growth of this market under the auspices of private tourism organizations around the world that market release yoga therapy, yoga programs and yoga activities. Smith and Kelly (2006b) also locate yoga as a dimension of wellness tourism, whereas, Smith and Puczko (2009) and Koncul (2012) put it in the spectrum of health tourism. Gerritsma (2009) investigates yoga activities in the Netherlands where yoga has become a continuous life style with workshops and yoga travel opportunities. Private wellness tour operators or

individual yoga teachers in the Netherlands also organize trips abroad to Spain, Greece, Indonesia, Portugal and Italy (Gerritsma, 2009). Some are called “Spiritual Travels”, whereas some may be referred to as “Relaxing and Recharging” activities (Gerritsma, 2009, p. 364). In contrast to the mainstream literature on yoga tourism, Akça (2006) gives yoga holidays as an example of rural tourism, using the case of the retreats in the Huzur Valley in Turkey.

In the scarce yoga tourism literature the main topics discussed include issues concerning the typology and characteristics of yoga tourists, motivations and reasons for individuals to participate in yoga tourism, problems and barriers in yoga tourism, authenticity in the context of yoga tourism and other socio-cultural issues related to the yoga tourism activity. The existing literature on these topics will be reviewed.

2.3.1 Typology and characteristics of yoga tourists

Typology and characteristics of yoga tourists is discussed in the few studies on yoga tourism. These typologies are important because different tourist groups experience the destination in varied ways. In order to understand the behaviors, characteristics and motivations of tourists, grouping similar individuals into clusters makes it easier to understand this activity. This categorization can be based on lifestyle, personality, income, purchasing habits, likes and dislikes of the travelers, etc. There are several examples of well-known and frequently cited tourists’ categorization in the literature.

Cohen (1972) is one of the first sociologists who categorizes tourists into four subgroups based on their tourist roles; that is the habits they keep during the trip as well as the familiarity and novelty that they look for in their vacations. In addition, this categorization also takes into account the degree to which tourists travel on their own or in organized groups; in other words their degree of institutionalization.

Cohen's categorization is composed of (1) the drifter, who tries to live just like the people he visits during the trip, has no time table or well defined travel goals; (2) the explorer, who arranges the trip alone but tries to keep some comfort zone; (3) the individual mass tourist, who shows a certain amount of control over the trip but mostly remains in his environmental bubble; and (4) the organized mass tourist, who is the least adventurer, remains in his usual, familiar environment during the well planned fixed trip.

Another well-known categorization of tourists is that of Plog (1974) who groups tourist into three categories based on their personalities and curiosity: (1) psychocentrics, who are dependent on their daily routine, conservative and avoid risk taking; (2) mid-centrics, who are somewhat risk takers and moderately eager to explore; and (3) allocentrics who are the risk takers, curious explorers and quick decision makers.

Both Cohen's and Plog's studies are the well-known early examples of tourists' categorization. In later years more categorizations have emerged and more specific tourism types have been studied. For example, in the wellness tourism literature, tourists' typologies that group tourists according to their socio-demographic profile and travel behavior have also appeared. Voigt, Brown and Howat (2011) categorize wellness tourists into three categories which are (1) beauty spa visitors, which includes younger participants who are full time employed and less likely to be a student; (2) lifestyle resort visitors, who have a higher household income; and (3) spiritual retreat visitors, who have a higher level of education and are part time employed or retired.

Another interesting example of categorizing tourists is that of Haq and Jackson (2006), which deals with spiritual tourists. Haq and Jackson (2006) group

spiritual tourists into five main categories based on the spirituality level of their trips. These five tourist groups are named from the more spiritual to the less spiritual ones as purposeful spiritual tourist, sightseeing spiritual tourist, casual spiritual tourist, incidental spiritual tourist and serendipitous spiritual tourist.

In the incipient yoga tourism literature, yoga tourists are also sometimes grouped into different categories. For example, Sharpley and Sundaram (2005) investigate Western tourists visiting the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and the associated town of Auroville in South East India and obtain two distinct tourist groups: (1) the permanent tourist group, composed of Auroville residents (who has become a minority); and (2) temporary visitors including three subgroups. These subcategories of temporary visitors are spiritual seekers, searching for spirituality and a spiritual experience; tourist trail followers, who are the majority and visit the areas without any spiritual purposes; and yoga and meditation practitioners, whose purpose is to experience yoga and meditation in the Ashram. In another categorization, Nichter (2013) classifies the foreign yoga tourists visiting India into four groups to draw attention to the heterogeneity and complexity of yoga tourists and to highlight their characteristics. According to Nichter's study (2013), yoga tourist categories are: (1) yoga lites, whose aim is to learn about yoga practice for pleasure, and who participate in workshops and isolate themselves from the material reality of India; (2) yoga travelers, which compose the second group of tourists and whose main purpose is not only yoga practice, but also self-transformation and search for authenticity; (3) yoga practitioners, whose major objective is learning about yoga in depth, visiting India in search for authenticity and keeping regular practice in the ashram; and (4) yoga professionals, whose main purpose is to obtain the required authorization to teach yoga in their own country.

In terms of yoga tourists' characteristics, Lehto et al. (2006), found that most of the tourists are composed of women, working as professionals, and who have higher education, and higher than average household incomes. These individuals also practice yoga on a regular basis in their daily lives. On the other hand, Rana (2015) found that in Rishikesh (India), 55% of the foreign yoga tourists are composed of males and 45% of females, while their ages change between 25 and 50. These tourists are also found to be educated and to work mainly as white collar individuals in services. In addition, in terms of wellness tourists' characteristics, Kim, Chiang and Tang (2016) found that 67% of the wellness tourists are female and 33% are male; in this study, the majority of the respondents are between 25 to 39 years old, and half of them have at least a Bachelor's degree.

2.3.2 Motivations of yoga tourists

Motivations of yoga tourist is also an area studied by several authors. Aggarwal et al., (2008,) writes the following concerning the general motivations of tourists visiting Ashrams in Rishikesh, India: "They believe that they are not looking for luxury but their arduous journey to meet the divine goal to make life simple and more fulfilling" (p. 461). Therefore in yoga tourism, luxury is not usually a motivation factor, while spiritual richness is. Some other motivations found in this study include: cultural and mental motivations, such as having peace of mind in religious places and being spiritually satisfied; believing in Indian religions and customs, and enjoying the rituals followed in the Indian tradition; enjoying Indian cuisines, sermons and interaction with monks; celebrating and participating in Indian festivals (Aggarwal et al., 2008).

Lehto et al. (2006) rank the top five motivations of the tourists in their study as: to renew myself, to relax, to be more flexible in body and mind, to let go of stress from a busy life, to help me gain a sense of balance (p. 30). Motivations found in the study of Lehto et al. (2006) are different from those appearing in the work of Aggarwal et al. (2008). They are more related with mental relaxation and wellness of a participant, whereas in Aggarwal et al.'s study (2006) spirituality and religion takes a more prominent place. In the article of Gerritsma (2009) the reasons why individuals practice yoga in the Netherlands similarly support the mental and physical motivation factors of a participant as being: for relaxation, to get more energy, for a better breathing, to meditate. Ambili (2016) found that there are four factors affecting yoga tourists visiting Kerala: "natural beauty", "tourism attractions", "traditional system of yoga" and "ayurveda and naturopathy", which is related to alternative medicine and healing (p. 62).

As yoga tourism is often included under the umbrella of wellness tourism, looking into the motivations of wellness tourists can also provide insights. As an example; Chen, Prebensen and Huan (2008) find the major motivations of wellness tourists in Taiwan as relaxation, pursuing multiple activities, recreation, and experiencing nature (p. 111). In the study of Chen et al. (2008) the social and environmental motivations are foreground factors. Five travel motivations that deal with psychological needs to enhance personal health are found. These motivations are listed as health consciousness, relaxation, attractiveness, curiosity and quality of life, which are indicators of mental and physical motivations (Chen et al., 2008, p. 113). Kim et al. (2016) found that self-development and relaxation and escape are the most important wellness tourism motivations.

Similarly, Mak, Wong and Chang (2009) found Hong Kong spa visitors motivations as a part of wellness tourism as relaxation and relief, escape, self-reward and indulgence, and health and beauty (p. 195). In addition, Voigt et al. (2011) identify benefits sought by wellness tourists under six dimensions that include transcendence, physical health and appearance, escape and relaxation, important others and novelty, re-establish self-esteem” and “indulgence.

Religious tourism or spiritual tourism is also related with yoga tourism since several people visit ashrams and roots of yoga destinations for spirituality. Wang, Chen and Huang (2016) found religious tourists’ motivations as religious belief, cultural enjoyment, and mental relaxation (p. 86). Relaxation is a frequently mentioned tourist motivation in several studies in wellness and religious/spiritual tourism (Wang et al., 2016; Chen et al., 2008; Mak et al., 2009), as well as in yoga tourism (Aggarwal et al., 2008; Lehto et al., 2006; Gerritsma, 2009).

Sharpley and Sundaram (2005) on the other hand, concentrate on the feelings of tourists visiting the ashram and visitors explain their feelings as: “it helps to build up a healthy life”, “the practice of yoga is impressing and it can help a person to have a relaxed and healthy life”, “helps to relax the mind” (p. 169). These feelings of the participants show their physical and mental motivations. A visitor describes himself as in “search of the inner self” and another tourist explains that he “learned to look at life differently, that material things do not matter too much” (Sharpley and Sundaram, 2005, p. 170). These examples also support mental motivations of the individuals as an important reason to participate in yoga holidays.

Motivations which lead a person to learn more about yoga and to travel for yoga purposes can also be related with the need for self-esteem of the person (Ponder and Holladay, 2013). Although yoga practice starts in the classrooms, the desire to

learn more can lead practitioners to travel in order to engage with other communities to experience other yoga practices, styles, teachers and settings.

2.3.3 Problems and barriers in yoga tourism

Satisfying the expectations is also important to better understand yoga tourism and yoga tourists. The motivations and the expectations should be in line with what is experienced. The literature (Smith and Puczko, 2009; Rew, 2007; Yoga Magazines, 2007) criticizes some of the current practices of yoga tourism, including issues in yoga destinations, such as quality of staff, the difference between the promised and the experienced, and the content of the programs. For example, Smith and Puczko (2009), criticize the qualification of staff by raising the issue that some of the training programs are too short (one month or a few weeks) to become a yoga teacher or a spa therapist. Rew (2007) criticizes that some yoga holidays do not reflect what they promise, and that there is a gap between what is promoted in the brochures and the real life experience. The main problem derives from the fact that people who set up retreats are not qualified in business and management (Rew, 2007). This trend may continue, as there are many more retreats opened each year whose managers or trainers are not properly qualified in yoga. Moreover, it has been estimated that there are more than a hundred types of yoga, and although the variety of yoga types included in holiday programs can be an influencing factor for the advanced practitioners, it can be confusing for the beginners (Yoga Magazines, 2007).

2.3.4 Authenticity of yoga tourism destinations

Authenticity is also an important issue related to tourism and it is discussed in the literature by several authors. Authenticity in tourism is first studied within a

sociological perspective by MacCannell (1973) who questions the authenticity of tourist settings. Actually, authenticity is a complicated term that can refer to many meanings. It is a polysemic issue, according to Cohen (2007), and it can be used in different contexts; it represents origins, genuineness, sincerity, creativity and flow of life. Authenticity is shaped in the post modernity period and it criticizes the staged/performed activities in which pseudo-events replace the real ones and fake experiences seem more genuine than the real ones within time (Wang, 2000). Van den Abbeele (1980) criticizes the disclosure of authenticity by stating that “once a sight is marked as authentic, it is by the very fact of its being marked no longer quite authentic” (p.7).

In yoga tourism literature, authenticity is a studied area, especially in the cases where Western tourists travel to India, to the roots of yoga. India is seen as the capital of yoga and spirituality, and ashrams are the places in which tourists practice yoga and meditation (Aggarwal, 2008). However, the study of Van den Abbeele (1980), stated that the authenticity of these places is questionable because of the destination being labeled as authentic.

Maddox (2014) analyzes authenticity especially within the context of Ashtanga yoga tourism, in which Western people travel to India, Mysore, to practice it. Although India is believed to be a very spiritual and authentic place to visit, Mysore becomes the Beverly hills of India where local people are separated from their authentic culture and approach Western lifestyle (Maddox, 2014). Young Indians in Mysore are described as following a Western fashion, wearing tight jeans and trendy sport shoes, and carrying phones (Maddox, 2014). Therefore India as a culture becomes more Western oriented (Maddox, 2014). Tourists going to India

with the motivation of experiencing authenticity may not find what they expected; their experience and their expectations may not match each other.

Authenticity of the retreats can also be damaged because of tourists' behaviors and tourists' demands. Liberman (2004) criticizes tourists going to India for yoga education programs. While an ordinary day for a yoga student in India begins with the student's practice of asana very early in the morning at 5-6 am, some schools change their schedule to fit those students who do not want to start the day before 8 am (Liberman, 2004). Some also adapt their menus to more Western oriented foods. In addition, Western tourists are criticized by Liberman (2004) as not embracing the yoga philosophy, shopping much more, consuming alcoholic drinks, behaving to others in an arrogant way and preferring to go to the pool of luxury hotels or parties instead of afternoon satsangh (philosophy discussion). Moreover, these students do not attend classes that reflect the local culture and yoga philosophy such as Indian cooking, Ayurvedic massage, Sanskrit, etc., and they hesitate to interact with local people and Indian culture (Liberman, 2004).

2.3.5 Other socio-cultural aspects of yoga tourism

Socio-cultural impacts of tourism are mainly people driven impacts. They cause changes in value systems, individual behavior, traditions, local languages, family structure and relationships, moral rules, safety levels and collective life styles in local communities; these are caused directly or indirectly by tourists and tourist-host interrelationship (Wall and Mathieson, 2007). These changes can be positive, such as an enrichment in the social and cultural life of the host community, or negative such as the loss of cultural identity (Rátz, 2000). Large numbers of tourists can cause a

decrease in the quality of the local life and lead to damage in the social and cultural uniqueness of the destination (Throsby, 2009).

Socio-cultural impacts appear slowly and therefore they may be hard to detect since the changes may be adopted within a considerable period of time; they may also be irreversible (Lansing and Vries, 2007). For example, the demonstration effect refers to the local behavior in which existing practices are modified and local residents are pushed to migrate. It also includes topics such as neocolonialism, sex tourism and prostitution, crime, erosion in language and changes in healthcare as some of these negative socio-cultural impacts (Wall and Mathieson, 2007).

From the sustainable tourism perspective, the socio-cultural dimension is related to fairness; that is a destination in which local people are treated as equals rather than servants, all stakeholders receive a fair treatment, employees have equal opportunities, and local residents sustain their dignity and pride (Rátz, 2000; Swarbrooke, 1999). In addition, socio-cultural sustainability is about cultural integrity, preservation and renewal of the traditions and the culture such as religious forms, arts, etc. Tourism can also lead to damage in the cultural assets of the community, such as traditional dances, ethnic arts and rituals. These cultural assets can become goods for tourist consumption and tourism may lead to commodification of these assets with staged authenticity, by causing cultural degeneration and destruction of the meaning of the authentic experience (Wall and Mathieson, 2007). Thus, socio-cultural sustainability in tourism destinations is generally described as including the preservation of the cultural integrity of the place, together with the development of structures that strengthen the community and support the local people (Özdemir et al., 2015). In this sense, the participation of the community in the

decision-making process, together with transparency in the governance system, are deemed essential to attain a sustainable tourism destination (Gezici, 2006).

Recognizing the importance of empowering the local population, alternative ways of developing destinations have appeared, such as the community-based approach, in which the host community is placed at the heart of sustainable development (Murphy, 1985). Haywood (1988) defines community based tourism as a process of involving all stakeholders in decision making such as local government officials, local citizens, architects, developers, business people, and planners.

The main purpose in the community based approach is to integrate society into the decision making process via decentralization of the power and participation, creating a dialog between stakeholders and achieving consensus in decision making so as to enhance the quality of life of the community (Pforr, 2004; Ladkin and Bertramini, 2002; Fayos-Solá and Alvarez, 2014). In addition, the community based approach aims to redistribute cost and benefits fairly in a society and increase carrying capacity of the host community by reducing negative impacts of tourism while increasing its positive effects (Blackstock, 2005).

According to Wall and Mathieson (2007), a sustainable destination requires bottom up development in which local residents are integrated into the decision making in order to sustain the development and wellbeing of the affected parties. In this case, local participation gains importance. Arnstein (1969) highlights that citizen participation should be supported via redistribution of power and she explains the necessary steps called ladder of citizen participation. These steps and their categorization can be seen from Figure 1.

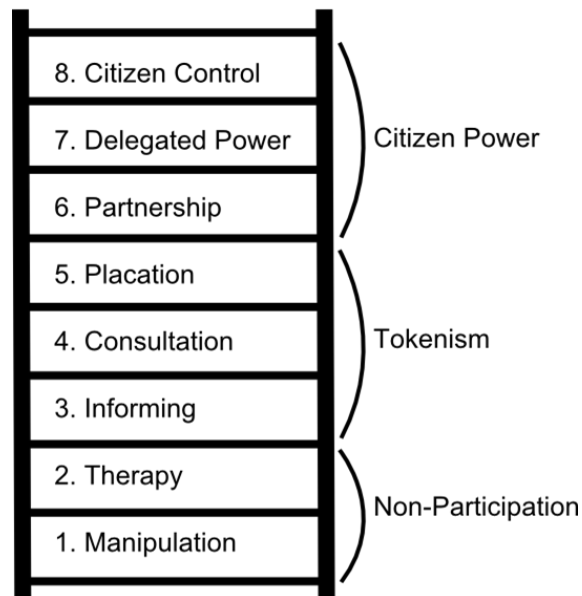


Fig. 1 Eight rungs on a ladder of citizen participation (Arnstein,1969)

The bottom two steps are composed of (1) Manipulation and (2) Therapy which are the levels of non-participation. In these first two steps, people do not participate in the decision making process; instead they are cured or educated by the power holders. The following three steps, (3) Informing, (4) Consultation and (5) Placation, are part of what is considered as tokenism. In this kind of participation people gain a voice; they can hear about the decisions and also they are heard by power holders. However, in this category, people still lack the power to influence others, especially the power holders, who still make the decisions. The highest three steps, the citizen power block, include (6) Partnership, which enables citizens to join and negotiate with power holders, (7) Delegated Power and (8) Citizen Control, in which citizens become the majority decision maker and have full managerial power in decisions.

There are also some barriers to this participatory approach criticized in the literature, such as lack of shared vision among participants (Sautter and Leisen,

1999) and assuming the local community as a homogeneous block which can make decisions based on consensus (Blackstock, 2005). A shared vision among stakeholders, clear leadership as well as long-term strategies are inevitable for a successful collaboration (Ladkin and Bertramini, 2002). In addition, the literature has also identified knowledge and access to information as instrumental sources of power for the local community, and as essential in implementing sustainable development (Byrd, Cárdenas and Greenwood, 2008; Moscardo, 2011).

Yoga tourism has also been shown to have socio-cultural impacts, especially when it is carried out in destinations which are nested within local communities. The literature comments on cases in which tourism may cause degeneration of local people and their values. In the article of Maddox (2014), it is seen that part of the local community is separated from their authentic culture and adopts a Western look due to yoga tourism practices in their destination. In the paper of Liberman (2004) similar problems caused by yoga tourism are investigated and this author remarks on the destruction in the authentic experience in many yoga schools. In contrast, yoga tourism can also help local communities discover yoga and spread it as a cultural value (Ponder and Holladay, 2013).

The benefits that yoga tourism may bring to the communities are explained by Ponder and Holladay (2013) who study the transformative power of yoga tourism. They believe that there is a relationship between yoga and the top level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which is self-esteem. The desire to learn more about yoga and to travel to interact with others enhances the awareness, experience and knowledge of the practitioners (yoga tourists) and creates a network among the home country of the practitioners and the destinations; this in turn leads to a continuous enhancement in the community's capital. A conceptual model of the transformative power of yoga

tourism and its enhancement of the community's capital as portrayed by Ponder and Holladay (2013) is shown in Figure 2.

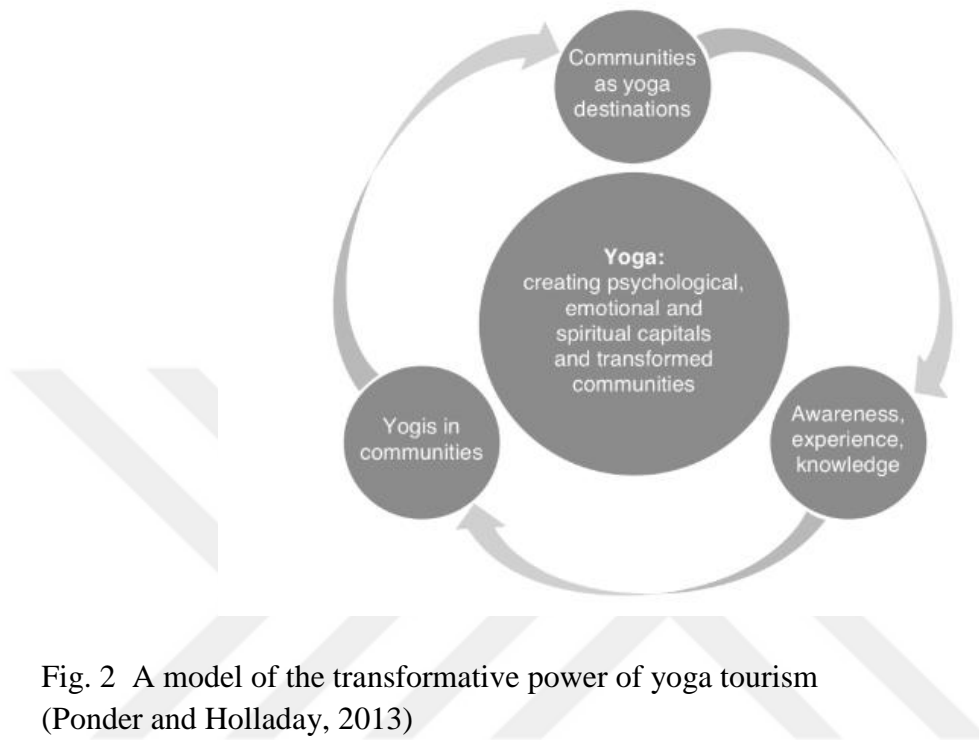


Fig. 2 A model of the transformative power of yoga tourism (Ponder and Holladay, 2013)

According to the work of Ponder and Holladay (2013) summarized in Figure 2, yoga is at the center of the tourism experience, representing a trigger, which creates psychological, emotional and spiritual capital, thus transforming not only the tourist but also the community. Yoga is performed by yogis (yoga practitioners) in communities and these yogis travel to other communities referred to as yoga destinations. Yogis enhance their awareness, experience and knowledge about yoga, and share them in their home communities. Sharing the knowledge with other practitioners inspires others to travel, and motivate them to search more about yoga and learn about different cultures. The loop continues in this way and many practitioners travel to experience more, and then share more, which in turn leads

others to travel more as well. The transformational power of yoga is actually a factor of educational motivation, in which the desire to learn more creates a loop and then triggers others to maintain this loop (Ponder and Holladay, 2013).

A summary of the yoga tourism literature is listed in Table 1. The main topics included are those that are examined in the related headings in the literature review. The main points of these studies and sources are also summarized.



Table 1. Summary of the Scarce Literature on Yoga Tourism

Topic	Main Points	Sources
Yoga as a tourism activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part of wellness or health tourism • Below an umbrella of holistic tourism, which is also placed under wellness tourism. • An example of rural tourism • A tourism type on its own 	Connell (2006); Smith and Kelly (2006 a); Smith and Kelly (2006 b); Smith and Puczko (2009); Koncul (2012); Akça (2006)
Typology and characteristics of yoga tourists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two distinct groups: the permanent tourist group and temporary visitors. The temporary visitor group: spiritual seekers, tourist trail followers, and yoga practitioners. • Yoga tourists visiting India are categorized into four groups: yoga lite, yoga traveler, Yoga practitioner and yoga professional. • Mostly women, working as professionals, with higher education and higher than average household incomes, practice yoga on a regular basis. 	Sharpley and Sundaram (2005); Nichter (2013); Lehto et al. (2006); Rana (2015)
Motivations for yoga tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical motivations: self-renewal, flexibility in body and mind, letting go of stress from a busy life, gaining a sense of balance. • Mental and physical motivations: relaxation, getting more energy, better respiration, meditation. • Educational motivation: learning more about yoga. • Cultural and professional motivations: traveling for engagement with other communities, experience other yoga practices, styles, teachers and settings. • Social and environmental motivations: pursuing multiple activities, recreation, and experiencing nature. 	Chen et al. (2008); Lehto et al. (2006); Gerritsma (2009); Ponder and Holladay (2013); Ambili (2016)
Problems and barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Length of programs. • Gap between the promised and the experienced. • Qualification of retreat owners. • Qualification due to variety of yoga types. 	Smith and Puczko (2009); Rew (2007); Yoga Magazines (2007)
Authenticity and other socio-cultural aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local people in India are separated from their authentic culture and embrace Western lifestyle. • Western tourists are criticized for not acting in a yogic way. • Tourists hesitate to communicate with local people. • Ashrams in India transform their schedules and menus to appeal more to Westerners. • Transformational power of yoga. 	Maddox(2014); Liberman (2004); Ponder and Holladay (2013)

CHAPTER 3

YOGA TOURISM IN TURKEY

3.1 Yoga activities in Turkey

In Turkey there is no literature on yoga tourism even though yoga has become a frequently preferred activity and it is also provided as a course in some universities, private schools, colleges and even in kindergartens. Therefore, the information for this part was obtained through a review of websites, social media news of yoga studios and well known yoga teachers, and materials often used to promote yoga holidays.

There are many yoga studios, yoga teachers and yoga students in Turkey. Some teacher's training programs arrange relaxation holidays (yoga retreat) as a part of the education scheme to Kaz Mountains and coastal regions of Turkey. Some programs also offer yoga holidays to India, Thailand or Tibet. There are some yoga festivals in Turkey that have been held for a few years and their number increases continuously. The yoga festival in Kabak Valley, called Dream Yoga Festival, is one of them, and it is held in a protected area in Fethiye. The festival brings teachers and students from different countries, yoga schools and disciplines. Basically accommodation is composed of camp places, bungalows and tents. The festival offers organic foods from surrounding villages and it takes about five days in the summer time. The Yoga Rainbow Festival is another example; it is an international festival organized through the collaboration of Turkey, India and Russia, and held in Çıralı, Kemer. Yoga teachers and practitioners around the world visit Turkey for this activity. Yoga Sufi Camp is another activity held in Konya, which includes both yoga and Sufism in its content, and is organized as a weekend program. The Mind

and Body Festival held in Istanbul includes yoga in its program. It is an international gathering of people for wellbeing, health and culture. In addition, some teacher's training programs are held in the Kaz Mountains, Hızır Camp, etc. These generally take a week and are designed as both a yoga holiday and an education program. Yoga holidays in Narköy (Kocaeli) and small Yoga retreats in the Prince Islands (Istanbul) and Uludağ (Bursa) are also arranged a few times a year.

3.2 Yoga holidays, yoga retreats and yoga education programs

Yoga trip is used as a general name for yoga traveling activities in Turkey. Recent yoga trips can be divided into three main categories which are yoga holidays, yoga retreats and yoga education programs. All these three sub categories may be included under the umbrella of yoga trips, but there are some differences among them. Yoga holiday, as a sub group, has a relaxed program, including yoga sessions only once or twice per day, giving free time for participants to enjoy the sea and the sun, and providing alternative activities such as sightseeing tours, wine tasting, etc. They are open to everyone, each level of practitioners and non-practitioners who want to learn yoga, join the activities and go on a holiday. Yoga retreats are the second group, and are usually organized at the end of the yoga education programs to become a yoga teacher. It is a way for a new teacher to be alone, to meditate and practice. Yoga retreats may give free time to participants but their schedule is full of dedication and suitable for advanced practitioners. Lastly, yoga education programs are the teachers' training programs or yoga programs which usually provide certificates for the participants. Generally, this type of programs are open to all levels of yoga practitioners or to those who want to join and learn some yoga, although some of programs are only open to current yoga teachers.

Yoga trips are organized in different ways in Turkey. Firstly, yoga institutions can arrange their yoga retreat programs at the end of their education program. Some yoga institutions even make yoga retreats as a must for graduation in order to become a yoga teacher. Some of the institutions/centers do not organize retreats, but some arrange holidays in Turkey instead or trips abroad to India and Nepal as optional. The second way in which yoga travel activities are planned in Turkey include individual yoga teachers organizing yoga retreats, or concentrated yoga education programs combined with yoga retreats or yoga holidays. As long as yoga tourism continues to be well-known and popular, organizer parties and organizations keep appearing. This also illustrates the third way in which yoga trips are organized. For example, Dream Yoga Events is a private organizer company who arranges the Yoga Fest in Turkey. Lastly, individual estate owners such as vineyard owners or organic farm owners prepare yoga holidays in their places as a new marketing tactic.

The schedule of the yoga trips in all destinations are very similar to each other with respect to timing of the day. In general, yoga programs start early in the morning with meditation and about two and half hours yoga practice sessions. Then breakfast is held and free time starts. In some programs, especially in retreats, participants are free to do anything such as swimming, reading, writing, sleeping, meditating, etc. In busy programs, which combine yoga with some other activity such as trekking or sightseeing, mid of the day is used for those kinds of activities. In some intense teacher training programs, this part of the day is also used for verbal lectures.

In the afternoon, before dinner, second yoga practice sessions are generally held. These take about 2 hours. This session may include a lecture on topics such as

details of yoga poses and yoga anatomy, or another type of yoga style such as yin yoga. Dinner is served about 7 or 8 pm. After dinner, participants come together in the class for meditation or beside the camp fire to talk about yoga philosophy. Night is ended early around 10 pm so as to start early on the next day.

In order to increase the understanding of current yoga tourism in Turkey, a preliminary gathering of data is carried out. Facebook events of the holidays are followed and websites of the events, camping areas and teachers are investigated through their online presence, including those yoga holidays that are carried out between May and September 2016. Current yoga holidays organized in Turkey are described in some detail in the following part and then summarized in Table 2.

A popular yoga holiday is the Dream Yoga Fest (19-23 May 2016) in Kabak Valley, which was organized for the third time in 2016. The theme for 2016 was “Breeze of Serenity”. Pricing for accommodation can change according to the preferences (tent or bungalow with different views such as valley view, mountain view, sea view, etc). The pricing table for this festival is showed in Table 2. This festival attracts very qualified national and international teachers. The program is mostly composed of different type of yoga and meditation sessions. There are also massage sessions. No information is shared about food. There is no certification for attendance.

Table 2. Summary of the Yoga Tourism Programs in Turkey (between May and September 2016)

Name of the Program	Yoga Trip Type	Place	Date	Price	Accommodation food included or paid separately	Information on instructors shared	Certificate provided
Dream Yoga Fest	Yoga Holiday	Kabak valley – Fethiye	19-23 May 2016	from 385 to 530 Euro	Included	Yes	No
Lycian Yoga Fest	Yoga Holiday	Lycian way – Kaş	17-21 May 2016	from 850 to 1250 TL	Included	Yes	No
Hello to the summer in Hızır Camp	Yoga Holiday	Kaz Mountains	20 -21 may 2016	from 470 to 710 TL	included	Yes	No
Cappadocia Holiday	Yoga Holiday	Cappadocia	27-30 May 2016	from 945 to 1245 TL	Included	No	No
Yin Yoga Education Program with Devrim Akkaya in Kaz Mountains	Yoga Education Program / Yoga Retreat	Kaz Mountains	25 – 30 June 2016	1.550 TL	Paid separately	Yes	Yes
Psychology of Chakras Education with Devrim Akkaya in Kaz Mountains	Yoga Education Program / Yoga Retreat	Kaz Mountains	10 – 17 July 2016	2.250 TL	Paid separately	Yes	Yes
Yin Yoga and 3 Chakras Camp with Devrim Akkaya and Mey Elbi in Kaz Mountains	Yoga Holiday	Kaz Mountains	3 – 7 August 2016	600 TL	Paid separately	Yes	No
Yoga Holiday with Şaylan Yılmaz and Sinem Er	Yoga Holiday	Fethiye	21 – 24 July 2016	500 TL	Paid separately	No	No
Yoga Camp and Holiday in Bozcaada	Yoga Holiday	Bozcaada	16 – 19 June 2016	from 1150TL to 1700 TL	Included	Yes	No
Silence Retreat in Saklıkent with Hamsa and Gayatri	Yoga Retreat	Saklıkent	6-10 July 2016	from 650 to 750 TL	Included	No	No
Yoga Camp in Tents in Kaz Mountains	Yoga Holiday	Kaz Mountains	19 – 22 May 2016	from 550 to 690 TL	Included	No	No
End of summer camp with Naz Sarman and Mey Elbi	Yoga Holiday	Fethite – Bonjuk Bay	19 – 22 September 2016	from 1100 to 2100 TL	Included	Yes	No
Yoga Holiday in India	Yoga Retreat	Vivekananda Yoga University in Bangalore	In August for 2 weeks	700 USD for program	Included	No	No

Lycian Yoga Fest (17-21 May 2016) is a new yoga holiday type, mostly carried out in Kaş. This festival promises yoga classes and trekking in the Lycian way. The pricing of the festival changes between 850-1250 TL for 4 nights depending on the number of people staying in a room and the accommodation type (tent or bungalow). Vegetarian menu composed of breakfast and dinner, and sandwiches for lunch is included in this price. In the festival, there are ten Turkish yoga teachers qualified in different styles.

Hello to the summer in Hızır Camp (19 -21 May 2016) is a typical yoga holiday held in the Kaz Mountains in the Hızır Camp. There are two trainers who are organizing this holiday and giving the classes in the camp. One of them is a qualified yoga teacher and the other one is a body therapist. Pricing changes from 470 to 710 TL according to the number of people staying in the room and the accommodation type (tent, treehouse or bungalow). All meals are included in this price.

Cappadocia Holiday (27-30 May 2016) is an unusual example of yoga holiday. It is held in Cappadocia, Le Maisons de Cappadoce Hotel, combined with culture tourism. This holiday is organized by MK yoga center. Yoga is promised in the evenings and meditation session is available in the morning. This program also includes various activities during the day such as historical site seeing, wine tasting, trekking and Turkish bath. Pricing changes between 945 – 1245 TL depending on the room type. All meals are included, while activities are not included in this price, except for yoga and meditation. No information is shared about the yoga teacher and her qualifications.

Yin Yoga Education Program with Devrim Akkaya in Kaz Mountains (25 – 30 June 2016) is designed as an education program combined with yoga retreat. This

program is suitable for yoga practitioners and yoga teachers. Yoga alliance certificate (50 hours) is provided for the current yoga teachers who participate in this retreat. Devrim Akkaya, yoga instructor for this program, is a known and very qualified teacher. The price of the education program is 1550 TL. Accommodation is paid separately according to the preferences. A vegetarian menu is also provided.

Psychology of Chakras Education with Devrim Akkaya in Kaz Mountains (10 – 17 July 2016) is designed as a yoga retreat. It is open to anybody who wants to join. Devrim Akkaya is the yoga instructor for this program too. The price for the education program is 2250 TL. Hızır Camp provides accommodation and food service, which are also paid as a plus by participants. Yoga Alliance verified Advayta Yoga certificate is provided to all participants.

Yin Yoga and 3 Chakras Camp with Devrim Akkaya and Mey Elbi in Kaz Mountains (3 – 7 August 2016) is a yoga program combined with holiday which appeals to all levels of yoga practitioners. Yoga classes are held in the morning with Devrim Akkaya (Yin Yoga) and in the afternoon with Mey Elbi (Vinyasa Yoga). The concept of this program is to concentrate on the first 3 chakras of the body through yoga sessions. Devrim Akkaya and Mey Elbi, yoga instructors for this program, are well known and very qualified teachers. The price of the education program is 600 TL. Accommodation is separately paid to the Hızır Camp. Vegetarian menu is also provided with the accommodation.

The concept of Yoga Holiday with Şaylan Yılmaz and Sinem Er (21 – 24 July 2016) program is to celebrate femininity; it is a kind of yoga and healing retreat for women. It is held in a hotel located in Fethiye and promises yoga and meditation sessions concentrated on women energy. Pricing for the yoga program is 500 TL. Accommodation price is also paid separately to the hotel. Vegetarian menu is

provided by the hotel. No information is shared about the yoga teachers and their qualifications in the Facebook event page.

Yoga Camp and Holiday in Bozcaada (16 – 19 June 2016) is an example of an interesting type of a yoga holiday which is organized in a vine house by the owner of the estate. The program offers different yoga style sessions each day, and an optional castle and street tour in the island. Yoga classes are provided by a qualified teacher. Price includes yoga program, island tour, accommodation, food and wine. Pricing vary from 1150 to 2000 TL.

Silence Retreat in Saklıkent with Hamsa and Gayatri (6-10 July 2016) is technically open to everyone but is actually suitable for upper level practitioners. It is a busy program with yoga and philosophy sessions. The concept of this program is silence, which means searching for inner self in the silence with the help of the meditation sessions; silent walks are expected from the participants. Hamsa and Gayatri are the qualified teachers who organize the retreat and yoga sessions, but no information is shared about them in the Facebook event page. The program is held in a house 4 km close to Saklıkent. Food is prepared in the kitchen of the place with the participants. Price for retreat, accommodation and food is 750 TL in 2 person rooms and 650 TL in 8 person living room.

Yoga Camp in Tents in the Kaz Mountains (19 – 22 May 2016) is open to everyone. It is held in Akaleos Camping in the Kaz Mountains. It contains different kinds of ateliers such as yoga, partner yoga, meditation, massage, trekking, botanic garden visit, etc. Price for accommodation is 550 TL for a tent and 690 TL for a room, atelier and vegetarian menu are included in the price. No information is shared about the teachers and their qualifications.

End of summer camp with Naz Sarman and Mey Elbi (19 – 22 September 2016) is a yoga holiday program open to everyone which is held in Fethiye, Bonjuk Bay. Yoga and meditation sessions are provided in the morning and in the afternoon by these qualified teachers. The price changes between 1100 to 2100 TL depending on the number of people staying and the accommodation type (tent or bungalow, with or without toilet). Accommodation and vegetarian menu are included in this price.

Each year Istanbul Yoga Merkezi arranges yoga trips to India, Vivekananda Yoga University in Bangalore. This program takes 2 weeks and occurs in late August. This is a kind of yoga retreat; this university program is full of yoga activities and starts at 5:30 in the early morning and lasting till in 22:00. The program includes some other activities such as visiting temples and book stores. Accommodation and food are supplied by the University. Price for this holiday is 700 USD.

In conclusion, there are various yoga travel activities in Turkey. Some of them are very relaxed and are more like regular holidays in which some yoga classes are included (referred to as a yoga holiday). Some of them aim to give yoga education beside holidays (referred to as yoga education program). The last type requires a stronger dedication (referred to as yoga retreat), and appeals to advanced practitioners. In most of the yoga holidays and yoga retreats, accommodation and food are included in the pricing. However in the yoga education program these are paid separately. Only some of the yoga education programs give certificates to participants. The late spring, summer and early autumn times are the frequently preferred seasons for yoga trips.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND CONCEPTUAL MODEL

4.1 Research questions

- What are the motivations and expectations of Turkish yoga tourists?
- Is there any community interaction between Turkish yoga tourists and local residents in the destinations where yoga tourism occurs?
- What are the perceptions of yoga tourists concerning socio-cultural aspects of yoga tourism?

4.2 Conceptual model

The conceptual model has been designed from the literature to guide the research based on the yoga tourism literature (Nichter, 2013; Chen et al., 2008; Lehto et al., 2006; Gerritsma, 2009; Ponder and Holladay, 2013; Smith and Puczko, 2009; Rew, 2007; Maddox, 2014; Liberman, 2004). The wellness and spiritual tourism literature are also taken into consideration because yoga as an activity is often included under the umbrella of wellness or spiritual tourism. The model is also based on the preliminary data collected on the current situation of yoga tourism in Turkey.

In the model shown in Figure 3, the typology may affect the destination preference, motivations and expectations of yoga tourists. Motivations may also influence the tourists' destination preference and expectations.

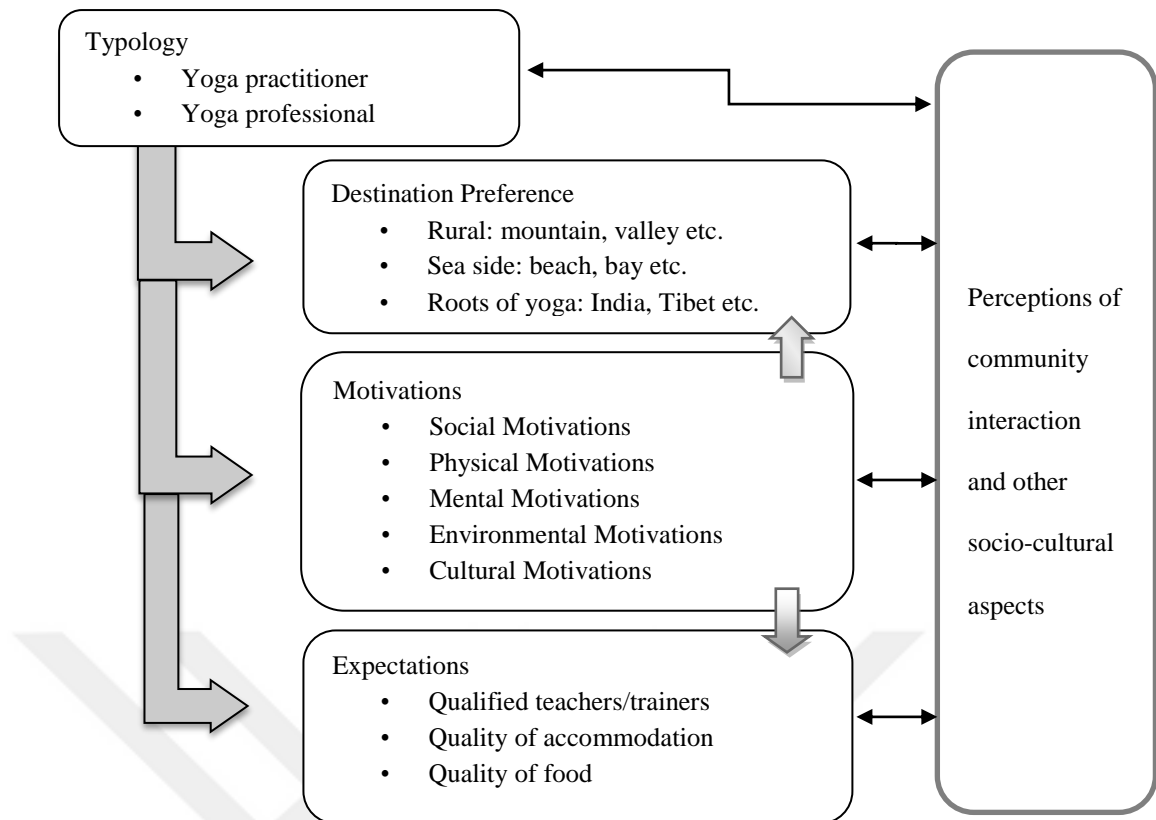


Fig. 3 Conceptual model of yoga tourism

In the model, typology refers to the yoga tourist types. Yoga practitioner is the tourist who has the major purpose of learning about yoga in depth, practices in daily life and may become a yoga professional later. Yoga professional has a main purpose of receiving the required authorization, for example a certificate, to teach yoga or to enhance his/her yoga practice by working with very qualified teachers; he/she may also organize the holiday and give classes in the program as a professional in this category. Although in the yoga literature there are more categories than these two, the results of the preliminary research done by the author in the yoga field shows that Turkish yoga tourists mainly include two distinct categories, which are yoga practitioners and yoga professionals. The tourists can prefer rural destinations such as mountain and farm, sea side destinations such as beach and bay, and roots of yoga destinations such as India and Tibet.

Motivations can be divided into six sub categories as social, physical, mental, environmental/destination, cultural, and educational/professional. Table 3 provides greater detail about these types of motivations that are discussed in the literature (Smith and Puczko, 2009; Rew, 2007; Maddox, 2014; Liberman, 2004) and are included in the conceptual model.

Table 3. Motivations for Yoga Tourist

<p>Social Motivations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social activities • recreation • being together with similar people 	<p>Physical Motivations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • escaping from a busy job • letting go of stress from a busy life • physical therapy • health related
<p>Mental Motivations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relaxation • mental therapy • searching for the inner-self • feeling at home away from home • gaining a sense of balance • increase in quality of life 	<p>Environmental / Destination Motivations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exploring nature • finding a peaceful atmosphere
<p>Cultural Motivations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exploring different cultures • enjoying local food • interactions with local residents 	<p>Educational / Professional Motivations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • experiencing other yoga practices, styles, teachers and settings • learning yoga • obtaining a certificate

CHAPTER 5

METHODOLOGY

The study aims to investigate the motivations and expectations of different yoga tourists and their destination preferences for yoga tourism. There is very limited literature about yoga tourism worldwide. Therefore this study aims to obtain a deeper knowledge about this topic. Because the research area is mostly unexplored and much more understanding is needed, qualitative research techniques are used for this study. Semi structured in-depth interviews are carried out with Turkish yoga tourists taking care to include respondents from each typology (yoga practitioner and yoga professional) in the sample. A combination of judgmental and snowball sampling is used to select those respondents that previously participated in yoga tourism and are more likely to provide information on the topic.

First a preliminary listing of potential interviewees was prepared. Because the author is a yoga professional, the possible candidates are selected using judgmental sampling taking care to access those individuals that are likely to provide the information sought. At this first stage, seven interviews were conducted in Turkish, and the interviewees were asked to refer other potential respondents that matched the research requirements. Therefore eight more interviewees were reached through this snowball sampling method and were also interviewed in Turkish. The interview guideline may be seen in Appendix A.

The list showed in Table 4 provides a detailed listing of interviewees. The participant's name is kept confidential, and a code is used for each interviewee instead. Table 4 also includes information on the typology of yoga tourist to which each interviewee belongs. The gender of the participants, their age, the number of

years that they have been practicing yoga, and their destination preferences are also included as information. Interviews were continued until saturation was reached. Glaser (1967) defines theoretical saturation as: “no additional data are being found” (p. 65).

Table 4. Detailed List of Interviewees

Participant	Age	Gender	Years of Practice	Typology	Destination Preference
P1	34	Female	18	Yoga Professional	Roots of yoga
P2	28	Female	4	Yoga Professional	Seaside
P3	38	Female	15	Yoga Professional	Roots of yoga, seaside, rural
P4	30	Female	3	Yoga Professional	Seaside
P5	55+	Female	2	Yoga Practitioner	Rural
P6	42	Female	23	Yoga Professional	Rural
P7	50	Female	8	Yoga Practitioner	Seaside, rural
P8	38	Female	6	Yoga Practitioner	Rural
P9	26	Male	4	Yoga Practitioner	Roots of yoga
P10	26	Female	3	Yoga Professional	Roots of yoga
P11	38	Male	2	Yoga Practitioner	Roots of yoga, seaside, rural
P12	32	Female	4	Yoga Professional	Roots of yoga, seaside, rural
P13	52	Female	1	Yoga Practitioner	Rural
P14	32	Female	3	Yoga Practitioner	Roots of yoga, seaside, rural
P15	32	Male	6	Yoga Practitioner	Seaside, rural

In total 15 participants were interviewed: 12 of them were women and 3 of them were men. The number of women interviewees is higher than men because yoga in Turkey is a women-dominated area, as in many other places around the

globe. This disproportional number is similar to the study of Maddox (2014) in which there were 13 participants interviewed and 10 of them were women.

The ages of the interviewees change between 26 and 58. According to our typology 7 of the interviewees are yoga professionals and 8 of them are yoga students. In terms of destination preference, 7 of the respondents participated in yoga trips in Turkey, 4 of them joined yoga trips abroad (India, Thailand) and the remaining 4 joined trips both in Turkey and abroad. Details of the participants can be seen in Table 4.

As a typology, the yoga professional category represents the participants who do yoga in a professional way; for example, works as a yoga teacher and gives classes regularly, for whom yoga is a job, the way of earning money. Yoga practitioner is the category that includes yoga students who practice yoga regularly, want to learn yoga in depth and do not generate money from this activity. Both typologies in this study include those people who join a trip as a participant, not as an organizer of the trip or as a teacher in that trip. In Turkey, there can be some other categories mentioned in the literature such as yoga lites within Turkish yoga practitioners. However, this study focuses on only two main groups: yoga practitioners and yoga professionals. In terms of destination preference, seaside represents destinations that are located at the seaside such as beach and bay. Rural destinations include destinations in the mountains and in forest areas such as farms and highlands. Roots of yoga type destinations represent the destinations where yoga originated and is expected to be practiced in an authentic way such as India and Thailand.

The information obtained from the interviews is analyzed using two methods: ethnographic summary and content analysis. Ethnographic summary is used to

support the conclusions with direct quotations from the interviews, whereas content analysis evaluates the numeric description of data (Morgan, 1988). The analysis of the data is carried out to obtain insights into the motivations, destination preferences, expectations of Turkish yoga tourists for their yoga trips, as well as their interaction with the local community during their trips, and their perception concerning authenticity and other socio-cultural related issues.



CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this qualitative study, interviews are made in order to obtain a deeper knowledge about yoga trips in Turkey and abroad, motivations and expectations of Turkish yoga tourists to attend these trips as well as their perceptions concerning community interactions and other socio-cultural aspects during the visit. Both ethnographic summary and content analysis are used to analyze the data obtained from the interviews.

6.1 Content analysis findings and discussion

Content analysis is used to obtain the themes mentioned during the interviews as well as their frequencies. In this analysis, answers of the interviewees were coded into a list of themes and a total of 106 themes were obtained. The list of all themes and their frequencies are shown in Table B1 in Appendix B.

According to the frequencies of the theme analysis, going to the sea / swimming and busy program are the most repeated themes and can be therefore considered most important for Turkish yoga tourists. Thus, for Turkish tourists, yoga and going to the sea are often thought as two mutually complementing activities. Yoga trips are also frequently defined as enjoyable. Knowing the teacher and going with friends are commented as very influential factors. Wonderful/beautiful nature of the destination and touristic attractors such as visiting temples are also mentioned frequently. Comfort, good teachers, well known teachers, delicious food, all day practicing yoga, being close to nature and learning more / in depth are other important aspects of yoga trips.

The themes may be grouped under the following headings: (1) activities / tourism, which is related with touristic activities at the destination and activities done during the yoga trip; (2) social aspects of the program/trip, which refers to the items related to social issues of the yoga trip and interaction with the group; (3) yoga program and educational aspects, which includes the features of the yoga program and aspects related with yoga education; (4) decision making factors, which is related with items affecting decision making process of yoga trip selection; (5) mental aspects/benefits, which is composed of items related with mental motivations and mental benefits; (6) interaction with locals, which includes items about interactions and interaction level between yoga tourist and the local community; (7) aspects of the place / environment, which is composed of features concerning the surrounding environment and the area where tourists stay during their yoga trips; (8) tourism impacts, which includes items related with impacts of tourism in the destination; (9) food related aspects, which refers to the items about food and eating during the yoga trip; (10) aim of participation in program/trip, which is related with the purpose of the participants in order to join the trip; (11) cultural roots of yoga, includes items related with the root destinations where yoga originated.

Two judges who were not familiar with the research were asked to group the themes under these eleven categories. Reliability was measured according to the methods investigated by Zimmer and Golden (1988) and Perreault and Leigh (1989) for this process. Firstly, the method used by Zimmer and Golden (1988) was applied. Judges assigned each theme to one of the most suitable categories. Out of 106 items 76 matched. A z-score was calculated as a next stage in order to obtain the

probability of obtaining 76 matches out of 106 themes. The z-score is measured according to the following formula:

$$z = \frac{k - E}{\sqrt{np(1 - p)}}$$

In this formula n represents the total number of items, which is 106; k represents the number of matching themes out of n, which is 76; E represents the total number of items / number of categories, which equals 106/11; and p represents 1 / number of categories, which is 1/11.

$$z = \frac{76 - \left(\frac{106}{11}\right)}{\sqrt{\left(\frac{106}{11}\right)\left(1 - \frac{1}{11}\right)}} = 22.42$$

The z-score and matching details are listed in Table 5. Because the z-score is found to be 22.42 and is greater than a z-score of 2.33, which is corresponding to an alpha of 0.01, the result is accepted as significant. Therefore, it means there is a significant agreement between the judges.

The reliability concerning the level of agreement between the judges is measured according to the calculations of Perreault and Leigh (1989). The formula of Perreault and Leigh (1989) is:

$$R = \sqrt{\left[\left(\frac{F}{N}\right) - \left(\frac{1}{k}\right)\right] \left[\frac{k}{k-1}\right]}$$

In this formula, F represents the number of agreed themes, which is 76; N represents the total number themes, which is 106; and k is the number of categories, in this case it is 11.

$$R = \sqrt{\left[\left(\frac{76}{106}\right) - \left(\frac{1}{11}\right)\right] \left[\frac{11}{11-1}\right]}$$

$$R = 0.8298$$

The reliability for this content analysis was found to be 82.98% according to this formula. This percentage is greater than the minimum value suggested by Perreault and Leigh (1989), which is 80%. In more exploratory types of researches more than 70% can also be acceptable (Perreault and Leigh, 1989).

Table 5. Matching Themes and Z-score

Total number of themes	106
Number of matches	76
Percentage matching	71.6%
Z score	22.42

In Table B2 in Appendix B, categories (with their frequencies put in parentheses) are shown. Each category is composed of themes related with that particular category and each category has its own frequency. Categories with the higher frequencies mean that they are most mentioned during the interviews and therefore are thought to have more importance than those with lower frequencies. According to this frequency analysis, categories of decision making factors, aspects of the place/environment and activities/tourism are the most important top three categories. Yoga program and educational aspects, and mental aspects/benefits are the following most important categories.

As seen by the categorization in Table B2, many of the themes appearing in the interviews reflect a concern of the participants for the quality of the yoga programs, the environment where these are carried out and the activities that it is combined with. Some motivational aspects are also frequently mentioned, especially in terms of mental motivations and educational/learning motivations. In addition, interaction with locals is a frequently mentioned topic, during the interviews, whereas other socio-cultural aspects of yoga tourism appear less frequently during

the interviews. The conclusions obtained via the content analysis are expanded in the following part through the use of ethnographic summary techniques.

6.2 Ethnographic summary findings and discussion

In this research, ethnographic summary is used to provide conclusions about motivations and expectations of Turkish yoga tourists, their interactions with local community and their perceptions of socio cultural aspects of the trips. These conclusions are supported by using quotations from the interviews.

There are some important common findings about how Turkish yoga tourists learned about the yoga trips and why they decided to participate. Most participants are influenced by their teachers and friends to attend yoga trips. Knowing the teacher, following well known teachers in camps and going with friends or someone known are common decision factors. P1 explains her decision process to attend yoga camp in India as: "Actually I wanted to attend this holiday because my friends were going too." On the other hand, P8 explains her decision process as:

I was looking for exactly this kind of holiday in which I could concentrate on my yoga practice with a teacher through long yoga classes and spend my holiday close to nature at the same time. In this searching process, I learned that my yoga teacher was organizing this kind of yoga retreat. It was a good coincidence; the teacher was an important factor so I preferred his retreat.

Similarly P7 says: "Teachers were an influential factor in my decision making process because I knew the teachers who were organizing the holiday and I loved them." Going to the sea or swimming is frequently stated as a motivation. Lots of participants want to go to the sea during their yoga trip. P6 says: "My expectation was to go to the sea. It was a part of my imagination related with this trip." P5 says: "I wanted to have a swimming activity during our trip."

6.2.1 Types of yoga trips

There are different kinds of yoga trip concepts which are held in different locations all over Turkey. Some of them are located very near to the villages, close to the local community and some are isolated in a private area, such as the Kabak Valley, where there is no local community. The evaluation of the interviews shows that there are significant differences among yoga trips and they can be divided into three distinct categories as (1) yoga focused, (2) cultural tourism focused and (3) wellness focused yoga trips. Each group shows a different emphasis and varied experiences, including the way in which the participant interact with others and in particular with the local community.

In the yoga focused yoga trips the main motivation of the participants is to practice yoga in a concentrated way in order to focus on yoga activities and self-improvement. Participants in this group prefer to be isolated in natural places. Although some yoga camps are placed in villages, near to the local community, many of the participants have not seen any local people during their holidays and have no local interactions. P3 explains that she didn't see any local during her retreat: "I didn't see any local people, zero. Everyone in the camp including workers were from our group; they were yoga teachers."

Participants of yoga focused trips spend their free time mostly in the same area searching/listening to their inner self, meditating, reading, writing, or swimming in the sea, the river or in the pool. They do not want to be disturbed during their retreat. They do not prefer to participate in irrelevant activities which may be combined with the yoga holiday, such as sightseeing tours. Another prominent motivation of this group is their willingness to be close to nature in their retreat. P3 explains this situation as:

I want to be immersed in yoga all day long, which means doing yoga in the morning and evening, meditating at night or watching a yoga related documentary. My aim is to be doing yoga all the time within nature, not having a telephone and being in no rush. I want to be in the same place, in a retreat within the nature, and practicing heavily.

Participants in this group mostly avoid interaction with others except their group. P2 explains this case as: "It is good not to interact with the community because you are there for some other reasons", "I didn't have a dialog with anyone but it would be disturbing to feel the existence of some other people."

In contrast, yoga trips with cultural tourism focus include cultural activities offered beside yoga practice once or twice a day. Yoga practicing is combined with sightseeing, trekking or other touristic activities available in the destination, such as visiting a castle, eating a traditional meal, etc. P14, who participated in a yoga and trekking holiday in Artvin (Turkey), explains her motivation to attend this holiday as: "I wanted to travel to the Black sea region. It was one of the destinations that I wanted to see. Therefore I saw Artvin; it was beautiful."

Yoga tourists in this group are eager to communicate with others and they want to discover the local culture and traditions of that location. P13 explains her experience during camp as:

When we were in the Artvin Yoga Retreat, our hosts cooked and served us, and they guided for us ... At noon we went to some neighbors to eat pie. Another day we went to the cafe of a neighbor to eat pancakes. It was a great experience. Local aunts and uncles joined us. We chatted with them. They were great people. There were some hand crafts in the cafe and we bought from them.

P11 evaluates the interactions between tourists and local community in Mehmet Alan Village in the Kas Mountains. He mentions that local communities around the yoga camping areas get familiar with yoga and yoga tourists. He says: "Local people hear good things about yoga and they do not have prejudice towards

yoga tourists." He thinks that it is a great advantage for the villages because the tourists and those camps contribute to their local economy.

India's version of cultural tourism focused yoga trips can show that there is a contrast concerning community interaction. Some participants in those trips avoid getting in touch with the local community. In the case of P14, they visited five cities in India, and especially travelled to touristic places such as Taj Mahal, river Ganges and several temples. Besides this busy program they practiced yoga at least once a day. This yoga trip was organized by her teacher, who is from Greece. In her case, even the guide was their yoga teacher and they had very limited local interactions. They preferred to practice yoga in the hotels where they stayed in rather than in the ashrams which are available in India to practice yoga. P14 tells about their trip and says:

During our holiday in India, we ate in beautiful places and never bought something to eat from the streets. We had some snacks in our pockets during the day. We ate in our hotel in the mornings and in the evenings. Our tour guide took us to good restaurants so we always ate good food in beautiful places. I never had stomach ache. We stayed in 4 and 5 star hotels. Some of the best hotels that I stayed at were there, such as Hilton, Richmond, and Holiday Inn. Their foods were delicious.

In the wellness focused yoga trips, on the other hand, the motivations are to spend the holiday eating better food, relaxing and detoxing. In this type of trip, yoga is combined with wellness and is practiced once or twice a day as in the other types. P2 explains her experience as: "I wanted to have a natural diet and therefore I paid attention to what I ate and drank there. You also pay attention to your sleep in order to wake up early." P3 supports this by stating that: "it is very important for a facility to have organic, vegan good meals." P8 similarly says that: "I was sure that I was going to eat good and natural foods."

People participating in this type of trips seek more comfort and hygiene in the place and prefer gluten free meals, fancy raw foods and detox cocktails. P14 tells about her yoga camp in Gökceada and she says that their holiday was not solely yoga; yoga composed half of it. They also enjoyed the sea and the sun, had a mud bath, and spent time with friends. P15 tells about one of the yoga trips in which he participated:

Karakaya is such a clean and gorgeous place. Foods were so delicious and safe. We were nourished in a very healthy way. Our teacher was very careful about the foods during her retreat and her retreat was gluten free. We ate buckwheat and quinoa.

He also compares this holiday with that of Hızır camping and Pastoral Valley by saying: "This place has more distinguished ambiance than other camping areas. They serve you and there is no informal interaction."

One participant can join different types of yoga trips. There are cases in which participants joined more than one type of yoga trips. For example P14 attended each type of yoga trips. She attended a yoga focused yoga trip because she wanted to learn yoga deeply. She attended a cultural tourism focused yoga trip because she wanted to see the Black sea region and have a yoga holiday; there was a good opportunity for her to travel and do yoga at the same time. Lastly, she preferred a wellness focused yoga trip because she loved doing yoga and wanted to take care of her body during the holiday too.

6.2.2 Motivations

The study also reveals that the reasons for attending a yoga trip can change from one type of yoga trip to another. In addition, it is observed that participants can have various motivations. There are some frequently mentioned motives for joining yoga

trips. Learning more and in depth is one of the main motivations mentioned during the interviews. P1 explains: "I wanted to see how yoga was done in India and I wanted to learn more and in depth." Similarly P9 says: "First I started to do yoga as a type of a sport but then I wanted to learn more and decided to attend a yoga trip to India."

In line with the motive of learning, improving the self and continued yoga practice are other referred motivation items. P2 says: "You go there in order to improve yourself" and P3 explains her reason for joining related to the wish to practice yoga all day long. On the other hand, P3 explains that she was also motivated by the opportunity to practice with well-known teachers for self-improvement.

Listening to inner self and inner voice is also one of the mentioned motivations. P6 joined a yoga trip in order to hear her inner voice more and to turn to her inner self. She says: "Sometimes we just do not stop and listen to our inner voice; my intention to join this trip was to hear my inner voice more."

Meditation, mental rest and relaxation are also frequently mentioned motives for participating in yoga trips. P8 explains her wish to relax her brain and to move away from her daily thoughts. P2 describes her intention to get rid of addictions; addiction to people, to places, to certain type of emotions and to somethings. She says: "My intention was to get rid of these addictions and to be liberalized."

6.2.3 Expectations

Expectations of participants can be very different from one person to another just like motivations and one participant may have more than one expectation. P8 participated in one yoga camp and her expectation before the camp was that it would be more like

a holiday. She expected to spend more relaxed time having fun but her actual experience was different. She explains her expectations as:

I was expecting more fun; more laughing, swimming and drinking. I thought it was going to be like doing yoga on holiday. I found myself in a stricter discipline than I expected. It was actually a time allocated for self-improvement. It was like preparing for something. Despite my expectations, this was better for me because it was a holiday in which my brain was relaxed. Although there was no laughing and drinking, it was a holiday in which you didn't think about daily stresses. The program was busy in a different way.

Hygiene and comfort are very frequently mentioned expectations among participants. P14 explains:

We stayed in Bungalows. Transportation to that location was hard, it was on the highland. It could be challenging for someone, could be less comfortable but I enjoyed it. It is enjoyable for me if there is certain level of hygiene and comfort.

Many of the participants are happy to be in nature and some of them thought yoga and nature to be linked. They wanted to be close to nature during their yoga trips. However, being close to nature can mean less comfort or hygiene and this may be problematic for some participants. P5 says: "The place was very natural but I think it could be better with respect to hygiene. I am obsessed with hygiene. The kitchen and the toilets could be better and the bed smelled old."

Some participants are looking for comfort during their yoga practice. P3 says: "I always search for the facility of the retreat before I arrive and ask for the sunshade tube and other places where we practice yoga. Facility is important."

Some of the participants are without expectations. They interpret expectation as a negative thing which may lead you to feel unhappy in return when you expect something. P7 explains her case as: "I just looked up the camp place on the net but I didn't want to search so much about it. I was scared to feel unhappy if I expected something and I could not find it there." Similarly P6 had no expectation towards the

place before she went there. She expresses her feelings as: "I didn't think about the people, the place, and the practice. I didn't have expectations. Therefore I didn't feel disappointed or I didn't have a case to say that it could be better that way."

Although yoga teachers and students are mostly from abroad in India and Thailand, these yoga programs are found to be busier and stricter compared to yoga trips in Turkey. Some participants joined yoga trips both in Turkey and abroad (India and Thailand). They compare their experiences in those locations. There are difference between their expectations and actual experiences. P12 says: "Yoga camp in India was full of education, stricter and more intense. India for me is different and more beautiful. All the yoga holidays that I joined in Turkey do not equal to one in India."

Another participant (P11) wonders about yoga camps in Turkey after joining one of them in Thailand and he says: "There is a big difference between them. In Turkey, camps are more like holidays. They are more relaxed. The concept includes swimming, travelling, eating and drinking." He also thinks that he learned in Thailand different things than in Turkey. He criticizes yoga in Turkey, which he believes is done as a sport and not supported with its philosophy. When he was in a Thailand yoga trip, the teachers took attendance in philosophy classes, although no attendance was controlled during the yoga practice sessions. He says: "I think that the aim of yoga camps in Turkey is to make people love and get familiar with yoga. In contrast the aim of the camps in Thailand is for participants to improve and make yoga part of their lifestyle."

Moreover P11 also evaluates the focus and size of the yoga camp and says: "Most of the yoga camps in Turkey are held as social activities, and are not purely yoga focused. When the size of the camps becomes greater than 12-13 people then it

turns into a holiday." He adds that Turkish people love to enjoy themselves.

Therefore, yoga trips in Turkey are done in a Turkish style which includes some yoga and some *halay* (fun).

In contrast, P14 thinks that yoga trips in Turkey are more like retreats in which you can turn to your inner self and focus on yoga and the teacher. P14 expresses her thoughts as: "When you are abroad for a yoga trip, you are in an unknown world and your tourist part lights on. You want to discover."

6.2.4 Perceptions of authenticity and socio-cultural issues

Many people prefer to attend yoga trips in India because this country is at the roots of this ancient activity. Participants are surprised that they cannot come across a yoga practicing community, contrary to what is believed. P3 explains this case as:

We can say that obviously most of the community in India is not doing yoga. Actually they do not do yoga as we do; yoga is in their head. They do not practice asana (yoga poses). They go to temples, do their rituals. They are connected to their beliefs and Hindu culture.

P12 supports this issue by saying:

They are not doing yoga. We think they were born as yogis. However they are people who were born into this philosophy. Yoga is very nested within their religion. Yoga is not placed in their lives as asana in a physical way. The yoga center which we went to in India has free yoga sessions open for the local community. I saw some Hindus coming to classes but they were irrelevant. They wonder why it became popular in the West and they come to see what it actually means in a Westerner manner.

P10 joined a yoga trip in Rishikesh (India), in order to become a yoga teacher. Her experience is one of the rare cases in which the ashram owner is a Hindu family and there are local interaction examples such as being friends with local shopping owners, etc. She explains about this interaction by saying: "The owner of the retreat was also our Hatha yoga teacher. It was a kind of family business. His

wife and their child were living there. His father was managing the camping area. Their baby was walking all around.” She also highlights that: “They are connected with the Indian culture, of course, but they can speak English and this differentiates them from the community. They are not average usual Hindu people. They have money; they are the richer ones.”

P12 also has interesting comments similar to P10, concerning her participation in a yoga trip in North India, Dehradun. The owner of the area is from a Hindu family that turned their home to a yoga center. In this case, participants had the option to stay at their home or in villagers' houses. She says: “The area wasn't allocated for yoga. There were villagers going about their lives around.” She explains her interaction with local community by saying:

I stayed with a couple, who cooked for us and cleaned. We had communication with them frequently. It was a small village so we became friends with the people from the places where we ate and shopped outside during the program.

Another interesting issue is that in India many yoga centers give incentives for local people in order to make it affordable for the local community. P9 says: “Hindu people tend to do yoga because it brings some revenue to them afterwards. The community is not doing yoga but the rich people are doing it.”

P12 observes that Hindus can perceive practicing yoga as a status indicator (especially wealthy ones). Therefore, they want to practice yoga in yoga centers because Westerners do it in that way. As a result, in India, teachers and students are mostly composed of Westerners. There are very few Hindus as teachers and students in the yoga camps. Although yoga is spread all around the world from India, it is unexpected that most of the yoga centers are owned by foreigners in India. The most interesting case is that Hindus who want to learn yoga and be yoga teachers learn it from foreign teachers, in order to teach foreigners. P9 says: "There were Hindus in

our class but most of them were from other countries. Our group was about 60 people and 6-7 of them were from India, wanting to become a yoga teacher."

Similarly P10 says: "Our group was about 15 people and there was one Hindu couple who wanted to construct a yoga center in India; the rest was from all over the world."

In the case of Thailand, the situation is similar to that of India; most of the students and the teachers are Westerners. P11 explains his yoga camp in Thailand as:

Everyone in the retreat was a Westerner. Teachers were mostly from England and America. The owners were mostly from US, having bought the land beforehand and constructed a retreat. Even the workers in the area were not Thai; they hired people from Myanmar because they were fast and worked for peanuts.

Moreover, the interviews also highlighted some authenticity issues.

Especially in some parts of India, such as Rishikesh, which is accepted as a holy city, alcohol usage and meat consumption are forbidden. However, some of the interviewees observe that there are special places for tourists where someone can eat meat and drink alcohol. P10 tells about her experience:

Actually you cannot find chicken or red meat in the city. Rishikesh is a holy city; but we discovered a place in the hills of Rishikesh. After the yoga classes finished we went there and drunk some beer. There were also Hindu people. The beer, which was sold there, was produced in India. That place was close to the hotels in which tourists stayed. Therefore you can find beer and wine in those restaurants.

P14 who joined a yoga holiday in India and visited 5 cities says that: "There was meat in the hotel meals but our teacher (who is from Greece) advised us not to eat meat during the holiday. I did as recommended and felt calmer." She also adds about alcohol consumption: "There was a Hindu night as a part of a touristic attraction. We wore Hindu clothes that night and drunk wine only that day."

P9 observes in their yoga program in Rishikesh that Westerners are prone to try drugs and remarks that this is an inappropriate behavior according to the yoga philosophy. He says:

They (Westerner participants) were socializing with the local community and smoking pot with them. They were eager to try different drugs. I know that smoking pot and acid usage are more frequent in Goa. In our yoga class there were about 60 people and half of them were smoking pot. Although it was not allowed, it was a usual thing there, just like smoking cigarettes. Our teacher was recommending not to use it because of its harm to the body, but he was open and did not judge the pot smokers.

P12 similarly criticizes the alcohol and drug usage in India and says: “It was degenerated. In Rishikesh alcohol usage was absolutely forbidden. In Goa drug usage was widespread. In Rishikesh also you could see people who were high and had a blank stare.” She also criticized the commercialization of the yoga retreats by saying that:

When I started yoga teachers training program in Turkey, I wanted to visit India because I thought yoga was learnt there. It is not true; everything was also commercialized there. I would have felt sorry if I had joined the yoga retreat in Rishikesh instead of Dehradun. Rishikesh is a city just like an advertising board. It has a great nature, near the Ganges River, but all Western yoga lovers are gathered together there. Everywhere you could see teachers training boards or Ayurveda advertisements. The city is like a huge bazaar and it repulsed me.

In Turkey, thanks to yoga camps, people in villages have the opportunity to work in those camping places. P11 thinks that yoga camps create work availability for local people. Agricultural areas are used for yoga tourism as multifunctional agriculture in the farm area beside agriculture activities. There are those kinds of yoga camping places in Turkey, such as Pastoral Valley in Fethiye, which are organic agriculture farms and serve as yoga camp areas. Another similar example is Alişler Yurdu in Bursa. P5 is one of the participants of those yoga camps in the Pastoral valley and says: "I got information from the architect who is the owner of

Pastoral Valley. I am one of those people who thinks that yoga camps in ecologic agriculture areas and natural places should be done."

P6 is another participant of yoga trips in the Pastoral Valley and comments on the nature of the place: "The environment there, the fresh products of the farm, chlorine free pool were so enjoyable. This should be natural but after we became used to all kinds of artificial things, it became unbelievable. The place was very nice."

In addition, several groups of people go for yoga trips during the year. Numerous groups visit the same destinations. This mobility creates interactions between the locals around and those visitors which can contribute to the economic capital of the rural community. In the case of P13, participants of the trip went to cafes of the neighbors to eat cake and also bought some handcrafts from the locals during their yoga trip in Artvin. All these interactions create some social and economic benefits for the local community. In addition, P11 explains his observations towards this issue as

It is a big thing for their economy because there are many yoga tourists visiting there (Mehmetalán Village in the Kas Mountains). 13-14 distinct camps are placed during the year and participants visit the village before returning home. They buy some food items such as olive oil, cheese, etc. from the villages.

Furthermore, in the cultural tourism focused yoga trips yoga is combined with socio-cultural activities, such as historical sightseeing, tasting traditional meals, etc. In those trips, traditional values and historical capitals of the community are discovered with yoga groups. Yoga tourists learn about the local culture and their values, and the local community meets with different tourists and learns different values such as yoga, in return. P11 supports this idea by explaining his observations about the new yoga trips which are combined with cultural activities:

Camping culture started in the highlands of the Black sea region. There is a cultural tourism part; yoga and culture are combined well. Meditation is done and yoga is practiced in the highlands. We also travelled to villages and visited the city.

Concerning the interaction with the local community in yoga trips in Turkey, diversity in the level of contact is observed. In some cases participants claim to be able to interact with the local community during their trips, while in others, respondents remark on the isolation of the destination, and on the lack of communication with the locals. As an example of the first type of experience P13 comments on the interaction with the local community during her trip; she enjoyed the local culture and felt relaxed being within the community:

We went to the highland and did yoga and meditation. Nobody said anything to us, and there were some people feeding their sheep. In another highland they offered us tea. I wasn't disturbed and I do not think there was anyone disturbed for this reason.

P14, in line with P13, tells about her experience with local people during yoga classes:

They (local people) were smiling and behaving like they were doing their jobs. They didn't have any prejudice towards us ... when we made a circle on the bridge, I saw that our driver was listening to our teacher. Even they did yoga with us; they joined us. The grandfather of the house came and joined us in the evening session and asked what we had been doing there. They were curious and tried to learn. I liked it. Nobody was disturbed.

In contrast, there are some cases in which participants cannot come across with any local community. P4 explains: "We didn't see anyone. Even we didn't know whether there were people living there." Another issue that came up during the interviews is that of the participation of the local community in the organization of the yoga trips. In most cases, the respondents state that these holidays and retreats are organized by the teachers, and even local workers are not employed. However, there are a few exceptions in which locals either own the facility where the yoga activity

takes place, or are involved in the organization of yoga tourism in the community.

There is an example in which the yoga trip is organized with the help of the local community. P13 explains where they stayed during the trip as:

The yoga teacher who was guiding us during the trip made a yoga camping area built with the help of a local family a few years ago. The place in which we stayed was actually a house of a local family in Maçahel, Artvin. The family turned their home to a pension. There were about 6 rooms in that house. Additionally, six more high legged traditional tiny houses and a yoga practicing space were built by locals in that area.

Yoga trips may also have some transformational power over the participants, as they become influenced by what they see during their trips or by their interaction with the community. Thus, in some cases yoga trips may influence the behaviors of the participants afterwards. For example P11 says:

I used to like luxury; now I am doing shopping in a more sustainable way. I buy shoes which can last for 2-3 years. I handed out the stuff that I didn't use, such as clothes and books that I accumulated in my house. I have learnt these things during yoga trips. There were people there who were living with only 100 objects, including items such as glasses and underwear. It is too minimalist. I decreased my object number to 500-600 and no more. My house is almost empty. You leave whatever you do not want in your life, including people. This transformation occurred in me after an Ashtanga yoga trip. The person went on the trip and the person who returned home was different.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Yoga has reached our daily lives from ancient times, with its journey starting in the East and continuing through the West. Many yoga trips with different concepts to various places all around the world are organized. In Turkey as well, yoga trips are planned, both to foreign and domestic destinations. All these yoga movements lead to questioning the sustainability of these trips, especially as related to socio-cultural aspects of the journey. That is, there is a need to consider yoga tourism from the perspective of the cultural values that are shared between yoga tourists, and from the viewpoint of the interaction between the visitors and the locals during these trips. Therefore, this research was conducted to bring light on yoga tourism practices in Turkey within the perspective of sustainability, especially looking at socio-cultural aspects. In this section, the contribution of this research to both theory and practice, as well as limitations of the study and suggestions for further research are outlined.

7.1 Theoretical implications

In this study, the evaluation of the interviews shows that there are significant differences among yoga trips, which can be divided into three distinct categories, including (1) yoga focused, (2) cultural tourism focused and (3) wellness focused yoga trips. These three groups have different emphases and varied experiences, including the way in which the participants interact with others and in particular with the local community.

In the yoga focused yoga trips, the journey concentrates on the yoga practice. The aim of the participants is mostly practicing yoga and self-improvement. This

kind of trip is generally organized in places that are isolated from the community and therefore participants have very limited interactions with locals during the visit. In this type of yoga trip, the cook of the retreat or the other workers in the facility where the activity is carried out may include locals, but not necessarily. There are also examples of yoga trips in which the facilities do not include any local workers.

Participants of this group spend their free time at the same location, often on their own searching/listening to their inner self, meditating, reading, writing, or swimming in the sea, the river or in the pool. The participants in this type of trip prefer to be close to nature and not to join activities that are irrelevant to yoga practices, such as boat trips. This type of trips show a parallel to the spiritual activities such as meditation, turning to inner self, etc. As Gerritsma (2009) explains, some yoga trips are referred to as “Spiritual Travels” and yoga tourism may be categorized under spiritual tourism under this perspective. Thus, the parallel of this type of yoga trip to spiritual tourism is particularly strong.

In the cultural tourism focused yoga trips, concentration is both on the yoga practices and on complementary tourism activities. In this kind of holiday, yoga practicing is combined with sightseeing, trekking or other touristic activities available in the destination, such as visiting a castle, eating a traditional meal, etc. This group frequently interacts with the local community during the trip and participants are eager to discover the local culture and traditions. However, when the yoga focused trip is to India, participants enjoy Hindu culture and visiting cultural heritage areas, but they may hesitate to communicate with locals.

In the wellness focused yoga trips, the emphasis is both on the yoga practices and on wellness activities. The aim of the participants is to spend the holiday eating better food, relaxing, detoxing and practicing yoga as well. The individuals that take

this type of trip generally seek more comfort and hygiene and usually prefer gluten free foods, or meals based on fresh and raw ingredients. As with the yoga focused trips, limited community interaction is observed in this type of holidays.

Activities included in the wellness focused yoga trips, such as having a mud bath or a massage, are carried out at the facility and they do not create an opportunity to meet with the local community. This type of trips can be an example of yoga tourism which is categorized as a part of wellness tourism in the literature (Connell, 2006; Smith and Kelly, 2006a; Smith and Kelly, 2006b). Thus, in this type of trips, taking care of the body, eating better and healthy food is also important, as are the yoga activities.

As discussed in the literature review section, various studies may categorize yoga tourism differently. Some researchers include yoga tourism as a distinct type of tourism (Maddox, 2014; Liberman, 2004; Sharpley and Sundaram, 2005; Nichter, 2013; Aggarwal et al., 2008; Lehto et al. 2006). In contrast, some authors include it in larger tourism categories such as wellness tourism (Connell, 2006, Smith and Kelly, 2006 a; Smith and Kelly, 2006 b), rural tourism (Akça, 2006) and health tourism (Smith and Puczko, 2009; Koncul, 2012).

The results of this study may clarify this apparent confusion in the literature and explain why in some instances yoga tourism is classified under spiritual tourism or as part of wellness tourism. The findings derived from the interviews to Turkish yoga tourists show that there is more than one type of yoga tourism with different focus and community interaction level, which may be categorized under various tourism types. Therefore in this study it is found that yoga tourism is not a homogeneous activity and in some cases may have a very strong spiritual or wellness component, whereas in others it may be closer to cultural tourism.

In addition, yoga tourism is sometimes defined as a responsible tourism type because it is carried out in small numbers and often held in nature-based settings in small scales (Lehto et al., 2006). Responsible tourism also assumes a certain level of interaction with the local community that may result in mutual benefits for both parties (Frey and George, 2010). However, this classification of yoga tourism as a responsible type of tourism may be challenged in some cases. Indeed, yoga tourism in Turkey is not always carried out in small numbers, and does not always involve interaction with the locals or benefits to the local community. For example, in yoga festivals in the Kabak Valley (Turkey), there are more than 100 participants and there is no interaction with local people, no local workers or local community around. The results derived from the interviews in this research also highlight that many yoga trips by definition exclude the local community, and the yoga tourists wish to be left alone to concentrate on their practice and meditate. This situation is especially acute for the yoga focused trips, for which the spiritual content of the experience is most important. Thus, the transformational power of yoga as defined by Ponder and Holladay (2013) does not seem to take place for all yoga trips, and especially not for the yoga focused ones, since virtually not interaction between the tourists and the locals takes place.

The amount of benefit that is derived by the local community from the yoga trips in root destinations (India and Thailand) may also be questioned. In particular, some of the respondents mention the fact that some of the programs are run by Westerners for Westerners and provide very little opportunity for interaction with locals. In some cases though, the program is managed by a local Hindu family and may even entail staying with local families, thus presumably creating more benefits for the destination and the local people.

Indeed, community participation in the organization and development of yoga trips may change, with most trips being more similar to the bottom two steps – non-participation - of Arnstein's (1969) eight rungs on the ladder of citizen participation in the development of tourism in the destination. In this case, the local community does not participate in the decision making process, they cannot work in those areas and often they do not even know what is being done in the area; instead they maybe hear from someone else that there are yoga retreats carried out in their villages. Therefore, there is a lack of communication between visitors, decision-makers and the local community.

However, in other cases community participation is closer to higher levels. For example, in the case of the Artvin yoga trip, the yoga teacher, who was also the guide, organized the trip area with the help of the local community. The local people participated on the decisions concerning how to design the area, where to locate the yoga practicing platform, how to serve the yoga tourists, what to prepare as daily meals in order to offer traditional and cultural food items. As a result, a local family turned their home to a local pension for yoga tourists and other locals added some traditional tiny houses and a yoga practicing area. This example has some similarity with the highest three steps referred as citizen power in the study of Arnstein (1969), in which citizens are actively involved in the development process and have full managerial power in decisions.

Thus, as is the case with other kinds of tourism, yoga tourism does not automatically mean a more responsible kind of tourism and does not always include a participative approach or greater benefits for the community. This is an issue that needs to be further investigated, since it is important that yoga tourism, as an

emerging tourism type, be developed in accordance to sustainability and responsible tourism principles.

Authenticity is also an issue that comes up in the interviews in this research, especially in relation to yoga trips to roots of yoga destinations such as India. Participants of yoga trips to India cannot find what they are looking for, the roots of yoga. Instead they come face to face with a westernized version of the traditional yoga culture that is in their imagination prior to the trip. Thus, a recurring theme in some of the interviews with participants that traveled to India features the fact that the teachers, organizers and most of the participants are Westerners. There is also some criticism of the level of commercialization in these destinations, and of the behavior of the Western participants which is often described as being non-yogic. Similar criticisms are also found in the literature by some authors who determine that there is a gap between what the yoga tourists are expecting and what they actually experience (Maddox, 2014; Rana, 2015).

The results of this research also determine that in some cases, especially during trips in India, some participants hesitate to communicate with the local community. They avoid eating something from the streets or practicing yoga in ashrams, traditional yoga practicing areas in India. This reluctance of Turkish yoga tourists to interact with the Indian local community and culture may be explained via the literature on cultural distance and intercultural differences. Cultural distance is explained as the cultural gap among different countries; when the intercultural differences increase, cultural distance increases as well (Reisinger, 2009). Intercultural differences occur because of the differences between the tourist and the host community with respect to worldviews, beliefs, verbal and non-verbal codes, perceived relationships and goals (Reisinger, 2009). When these differences increase

and the distance between them enlarges, the tourist can experience difficulties, and inaccurate communication occurs as a result. Therefore the cultural differences between the Turkish yoga tourists and the host Indian community can create some difficulties and anxiety of the tourists during the trips, leading them to avoid contact with locals. This effect is not observed in those tourists that traveled in Turkey.

Furthermore, for some respondents in the current research, the yoga trip and the interaction with the local community may result in changing the individual and his or her subsequent view of life. Thus, the research also confirms the possible transformational power of yoga tourism as explained by Ponder and Holladay (2013). In this sense, this is also a topic that needs to be further investigated within the perspective of sustainable tourism.

In addition, the interviews provide information concerning the motivations of Turkish yoga tourists, which can be compared to those described by the literature. General motivation factors mentioned during interviews are learning more and in depth, improving the self and continued yoga practice, practicing with well-known teachers, listening to inner self and inner voice, meditation, mental rest and relaxation, as well as getting rid of addictions. However, a divergence in the motivations of tourists participating in different kinds of yoga trips may be observed.

Motivations of the individuals joining yoga focused trips emphasize mental environmental and educational motives, such as continued yoga practice, meditation, being close to nature, relaxation, etc. These motivation factors are similar to those found in the study of Lehto et al. (2006), which are more related to mental relaxation of the participants, and to those determined by Aggarwal et al. (2008), which are connected with spirituality.

On the other hand, motivations of cultural tourism focused yoga trips, especially trips to India, include aspects such as exploring the local culture, doing activities within nature, trekking on highlands, searching for the roots of yoga, etc. These motives are in line with those found in the study of Ambili (2016), which include cultural and environmental motivations. This kind of trips also includes some social motivations, such as meeting with different people and having group synergy.

Lastly, motivations of wellness focused yoga tourism have some similarity with motivations of wellness tourists, especially those portrayed in the research of Chen et al. (2008), which include relaxation and health consciousness. The current research determines that important motivation factors for wellness focused yoga trips include such aspects as taking care of the body, eating better and healthy fresh foods. Thus, this study, based on the interviews of Turkish yoga tourists, determines that varied motivations may exist for different kinds and yoga trips. This is also another topic that should be further researched.

The study also highlights some differences between the initial conceptual model, which was prepared based on the literature, and the actual findings of this study. In Figure 4, a revised conceptual model is proposed, which is based on the findings of the research.

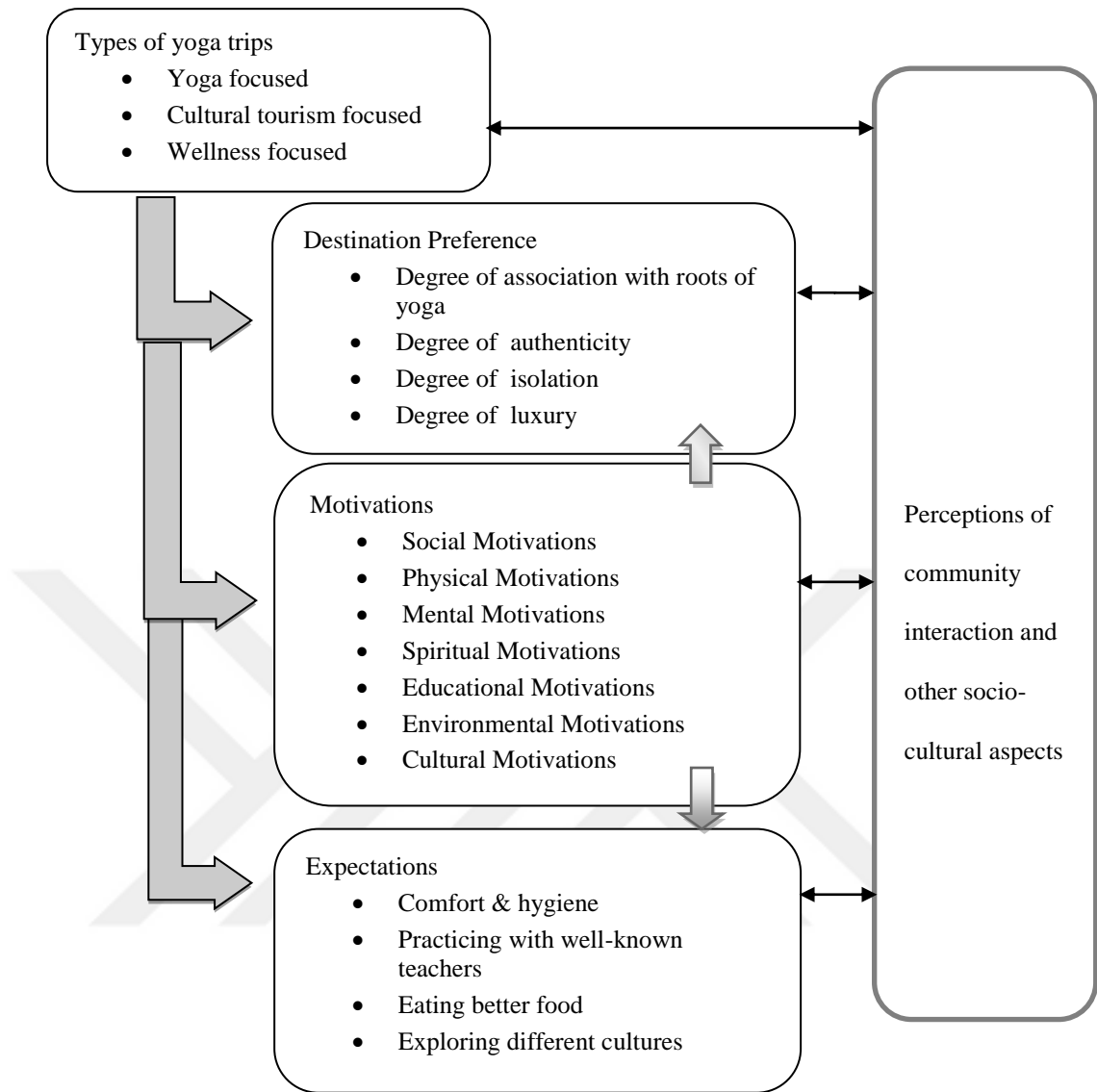


Fig. 4 Revised conceptual model of yoga tourism

The most important difference from the initial model is that instead of distinguishing between yoga tourists, it is more relevant to differentiate between various yoga trips. That is, various kinds of trips are different from each other and have diverse focuses. One participant can join more than one kind of trip and may have different motivations, expectations and destination preferences accordingly. In addition, in the initial model, destination preference was assumed to be related to the geographic differences, such as being a rural, sea side or root destination. However,

it is found that the destination preferences are more related with the degree of authenticity, luxury, isolation and the level of association with the roots of yoga. Therefore, one participant may visit a rural or seaside destination in order to practice yoga heavily in a dedicated and isolated way. In both destinations the participant can find yoga retreats, but the choice may focus on the degree of isolation to be experienced during the trip.

Spiritual and educational motivations are added to the previous model. The findings show that participants also have such motivations as listening to inner voice or inner self, practicing all day yoga, improving the self and learning more/ in depth. There are also some differences found in the expectations of the yoga tourists. Quality of the place is changed to comfort and hygiene, which is a frequently mentioned expectation among participants. Quality of teachers is modified to include practicing with well-known teacher or good teachers. Participants didn't state anything about the quality of the teachers during interviews, but instead they mentioned how good it was to practice with them and how influential they are. Quality of food was changed to eating better food because the participants were looking for healthy and fresh food. In some cases, exploring different cultures were also expected from these trips.

In the new model, it is also observed that the type of yoga trips may influence the motivations, expectations and destination preference of the participants. In addition, motivations may also have an impact on expectations and destination preferences. As a result, these four components, types of yoga trips, destination preferences, motivations and expectations, may be related to the perceptions of community interaction and other socio-cultural aspects of yoga tourism.

7.2 Practical implications

The current research also provides some practical insights about yoga tourism in Turkey. However, as explained in the previous part, different kinds of yoga trips may exist, and therefore the practical implications for each type of yoga trip can differ.

In the yoga focused trips, because the concentration is more on nature, inner self and yoga practices, the destination should be arranged accordingly. That is, for this type of yoga trips participants expect to find a quiet destination and a tranquil environment that facilitates meditation and relaxation. Since the participants in this kind of trips are not really looking to get in touch with the local community, opportunities for interaction and to foster benefits for the locals are limited. Despite this, these yoga trips are also associated with nature and may be complemented to a certain extent with agro-tourism to provide some benefits to the community. Thus, yoga tourism may be combined with some agricultural activities that allow participants to spend time close to nature. There are some examples referred to during the interviews in which agricultural areas may also be employed for yoga tourism and participants may join certain agricultural activities. Examples include the Pastoral Valley in Fethiye and Alişler Yurdu in Bursa, which are organic agricultural farms that also serve as yoga retreat areas. In the Pastoral Valley, participants of yoga trips can gather eggs from the chickens, feed the goats, pick some fruits or just enjoy the meals prepared with farm foods as an agricultural activity. Multifunctional agriculture, using the farm area for other activities, in this case for yoga trips, helps the farmers create an additional source of income and provides a platform for yoga tourists to interact with the local community and their culture effortlessly.

In the cultural focused yoga trips, because the concentration is on cultural activities beside yoga practices, the trips should be designed taking cultural

dimensions into consideration. In this kind of trips participants give importance to traditional foods, handcrafts and heritage attractions. Although opportunities for interaction with the local community are valued and welcomed by yoga tourists in Turkish destinations, they are not always favoured for roots of yoga destinations, such as India. Encouraging these tourist-local interactions may increase the benefits for both the visitors and the locals in cultural focused yoga trips.

In the wellness focused yoga trips, since the focus is on taking care of the body while practicing yoga, trips can be arranged with this objective in mind. In this type of trip food is also crucial. Gluten free diets and healthy fresh foods are frequently referred to and preferred items. Participants in these types of yoga trips are also concerned with quality, hygiene and comfort. Thus the level of luxury that needs to be provided in this type of yoga tourism trips is higher than in the other kinds.

Given the difference between the expectations and motivations of tourists attending each of these different kinds of yoga trips, it is important that trip organizers are able to successfully segment the market and target those individuals that are most suited to each kind. Thus a prior understanding of the tourists' needs and expectations may help create a more successful and meaningful yoga tourism experiences.

Moreover, in the research it has been found that most participants are influenced by their teachers and friends to attend yoga trips and also frequently referred as influential decision factors. Therefore it is important for organizers to know that teachers are influential intermediaries to reach yoga students and lead them to join yoga trips. Thus, word of mouth seems to be a prominent tool to communicate

with and attract potential yoga tourists, and teachers especially should be considered and treated as opinion leaders.

7.3 Limitations

As with all investigations, this research is subject to several limitations. First of all, since the preliminary list of interviewees is selected by the researcher, the results that are obtained may be influenced by this choice. Therefore it is important that the respondents are selected with as much objectivity as possible among the most suitable persons. Although the participants in this research are chosen to maximize variety in the demographic characteristics, such as age, typology, years of practice and destination preference, gender is not equally distributed. More females were interviewed during the study. However, the reason for this gender imbalance derives from the fact that most yoga practitioners and yoga professionals (yoga instructors) in Turkey are women. This situation is similar to that experienced by Maddox (2014) who only interviewed three males.

Moreover, the findings of this research are based on the interviews to 15 respondents, and therefore the results obtained may provide some insights into the topic, but may not be generalized. In addition, as seen in Appendix C, Table C1, no differences among respondents with different years of yoga practice, age or gender can be observed. This may be related to the low sample size. For this purposes, a quantitative study that builds on the results obtained in this study is recommended.

Qualitative data analysis may also be subject to bias if the researcher only focuses on those issues that are in line with pre-research thinking. In order to avoid this, a systematic methodology, well thought to avoid bias is needed to minimize subjectivity. This research attempts to minimize bias in two ways. First of all, the

interviews are analyzed using both content analysis and ethnographic summary. These two methods to analyze the data complement and support each other, thus reducing subjectivity. Secondly, the categorization derived from the content analysis of the data is assessed using inter judge rating to reduce bias in the classification of the themes obtained from the interviews. Accordingly, the reliability of this categorization of the various themes is calculated and found to be 82.98%. Therefore, the classification of the themes in this research is believed to be reliable since it is above the minimum of 80% suggested by Perreault and Leigh (1989).

Finally, the results of this study are based on the findings of interviews to Turkish yoga tourists. Since differences across tourism practices, motivations and experiences may be found across diverse cultures, the findings obtained in this research may not be readily generalized to yoga tourists from other countries. Therefore, it is important to carry out research in other cultural contexts in order to better understand yoga tourism as an emerging tourism type.

7.4 Further research

As explained previously, this study is carried out via interviews to Turkish yoga tourists, thus shaping the results accordingly. Therefore, further research in other countries, especially in those in which yoga tourism is more widespread than Turkey, is recommended. In particular, since the incipient literature on yoga tourism has not dealt with the question of its socio-cultural aspects and impact on the community, futures studies should focus on how yoga tourists coming from other cultural contexts interact with locals, and how they perceive the socio-cultural impacts of this activity.

In addition, yoga activities are a women dominated area in Turkey as in many parts of the world. Consequently this study includes insights from only 3 male participants. Thus, future investigations should be carried out in order to obtain the male perspective towards yoga trips.

Furthermore, this study determined that there are three types of yoga trips which are yoga focused, cultural tourism focused and wellness focused. Each trip has distinct characteristics with various concentrations and level of interactions between tourists and locals. These three kinds of yoga tourism can be studied using quantitative methodologies in order to ascertain whether the differences in the three kinds of trips are statistically confirmed.

Additionally, the low sample size did not allow for an analysis of the differences among respondents. Thus, if the sample size is increased in future investigations cross tabulation analysis can be applied in order to investigate the differences between various types of respondents.

Finally, this research especially focuses on socio-cultural aspects of yoga tourism. As sustainable tourism should consider all three pillars of sustainability, namely economic, environmental and social sustainability, future studies should also address environmental and economic aspects of yoga tourism. Thus, it is important that yoga tourism as an emerging tourism kind is developed within a sustainability perspective that includes a holistic view of the concept. Therefore the impact that yoga tourism has on the economy and on the environment of the destination should also be investigated

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APPENDIX A

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Personal information / Kişisel Bilgiler:
 - a. Age / Yaşınız:
 - b. For how many years have you been practicing yoga / Kaç yıldır yoga pratiği yapıyorsunuz?
 - c. Where do you practice yoga / Nerede yoga pratiğinizi sürdürüyorsunuz /?
2. How did your yoga story begin / Yoga ile hikayeniz nasıl başladı?
3. How did you decide to join this trip / Tatile katılmaya nasıl karar verdiniz?
4. Could you describe your trip / Tatiliniz nasıldı anlatabilir misiniz?
5. Was there any activity other than yoga classes, how did you spend your time / Yoga dersleri dışında farklı bir aktivite var mıydı, zamanınızı nasıl geçirdiniz?
6. Did you interact with the local community during this trip / Tatil süresince yerel halk ile bir araya geldiniz bir ortam oldu mu?
7. Did you find what you expected from this holiday / Beklediğinizi bu tatilde bulabildiniz mi?

APPENDIX B

CONTENT ANALYSIS FINDINGS

Table B1. List of Themes

#	List of Themes	Frequency
1	going to the sea / swimming	12
2	busy yoga program	12
3	enjoyable	11
4	comfortable	8
5	knowing the teacher	8
6	participating / going with friends	8
7	wonderful / beautiful nature	7
8	touristic attractors	6
9	visiting temples	5
10	practicing with good teachers	5
11	learning more/in depth	5
12	delicious food	5
13	all day practicing yoga	4
14	improving the self / yoga practice	4
15	clean / hygienic	4
16	being close to nature	4
17	Affordable	4
18	knowing people attending	4
19	Coincidence	4
20	participation of well-known teachers	4
21	inner self / inner voice	4
22	visiting source / root of yoga destinations	3
23	concentration on yoga	3
24	nice / attractive facility	3
25	being close to the sea	3
26	warm environment	3
27	good/continuous yoga practice	3
28	Hindu people do not do yoga as we do	3
29	date of the trip/program	3
30	meditation	3
31	transforming	3
32	shopping	2
33	going to the pool	2
34	nice environment	2
35	disciplined	2
36	Rishikesh (India) is a city just like an advertising board	2

#	List of Themes	Frequency
37	recommended	2
38	natural/healthy food	2
39	organic and vegan food	2
40	our host cooked and served for us	2
41	local aunts and uncles joined us	2
42	not being disturbed by locals	2
43	locals with no prejudice towards yoga tourists	2
44	communicating with locals	2
45	facility isolated from the community	2
46	went some neighbors / cafe of a neighbor to eat pie	2
47	isolation	2
48	feeling safe	2
49	silence	2
50	mental rest	2
51	getting rid of addiction	2
52	relaxation	2
53	feeling uncomfortable because of other people	2
54	socialization	2
55	being in a group / being together	2
56	visiting a castle	1
57	going to ashrams	1
58	getting a massage	1
59	having a mud bath	1
60	joining a Hindu night	1
61	attending classes from different teachers	1
62	obtaining experience	1
63	better understanding	1
64	place is very important	1
65	wonderful houses in nature	1
66	environment is important	1
67	interested in natural places	1
68	tiring	1
69	workshops	1
70	good yoga classes thanks to teachers	1
71	India was full of education, stricter and more intense	1
72	yoga is very nested within Hindu religion	1
73	India has free yoga sessions open for local community	1
74	Hindu people are connected with the Indian culture	1
75	Hindu people tend to do yoga because it brings some revenue to them	1
76	everyone in the retreat in India was a Westerner	1
77	the retreat owners were mostly from US	1
78	Westerners are prone to try drugs in India	1
79	in Rishikesh (India) alcohol usage was absolutely forbidden	1
80	Rishikesh (India) is a holy city	1

#	List of Themes	Frequency
81	yoga journal's ads	1
82	yoga camps mentioned in yoga studios	1
83	available season	1
84	gluten free food	1
85	paying attention to diet	1
86	eating natural	1
87	having fresh products	1
88	eating raw food	1
89	foods prepared with coconut oil and almond milk	1
90	there was meat in the hotel meals in India	1
91	no interaction with local community	1
92	chatting with locals	1
93	buying handcrafts	1
94	locals offered us tea	1
95	villagers going about their lives around	1
96	our host guided for us	1
97	became friends with the locals	1
98	smoking pot with local people	1
99	liberalization	1
100	awareness	1
101	calm	1
102	nice / warm people	1
103	group synergy	1
104	common areas for chatting	1
105	meeting with new people	1
106	getting together with different people	1

Table B2. Categories and Their Group Frequencies

Activities/tourism (35)	Decision making factors (40)
going to the sea / swimming touristic attractors visiting temples visiting source / root of yoga destinations shopping going to the pool visiting a castle going to ashrams getting a massage having a mud bath joining a Hindu night	knowing the teacher participating / going with friends Affordable knowing people attending Coincidence participation of well-known teachers date of the trip/program Recommended yoga journal's ads yoga camps mentioned in yoga studios available season
Aspects of the place/environment (38)	Interaction with locals (23)
comfortable wonderful / beautiful nature clean / hygienic being close to nature nice / attractive facility being close to the sea warm environment nice environment place is very important wonderful houses in nature environment is important interested in natural places	our host cooked and served for us local aunts and uncles joined us not being disturbed by locals locals with no prejudice towards yoga tourists communicating with locals facility isolated from the community went some neighbors / cafe of a neighbor to eat pie India has free yoga sessions open for local community no interaction with local community chatting with locals buying handcrafts locals offered us tea
Social aspects of the program/trip (11)	villagers going about their lives around
feeling uncomfortable because of other people Socialization being in a group / being together nice / warm people	our host guided for us became friends with the locals smoking pot with local people
group synergy common areas for chatting meeting with new people getting together with different people	Food related aspects (16)
Yoga program and educational aspects (32)	delicious food natural/healthy food organic and vegan food gluten free food
busy yoga program Enjoyable good/continuous yoga practice Disciplined Tiring Workshops good yoga classes thanks to teachers	paying attention to diet eating natural having fresh products eating raw food foods prepared with coconut oil and almond milk There was meat in the hotel meals in India
	Mental aspects/benefits (25)

India was full of education, stricter and more intense	inner self / inner voice
Aim of participation in program/trip (24)	meditation
practicing with good teachers	transforming
learning more/in depth	isolation
all day practicing yoga	feeling safe
improving the self / yoga practice	silence
concentration on yoga	mental rest
attending classes from different teachers	getting rid of addiction
obtaining experience	relaxation
better understanding	liberalization
Tourism impacts (7)	awareness
Rishikesh (India) is a city just like an advertising board	calm
Hindu people tend to do yoga because it brings some revenue to them	Cultural roots of yoga (6)
everyone in the retreat in India was a Westerner.	Hindu people do not do yoga as we do
the retreat owners were mostly from US	Yoga is very nested within Hindu religion
Westerners are prone to try drugs in India	Hindu people are connected with the Indian culture
in Rishikesh (India) alcohol usage was absolutely forbidden	Rishikesh (India) is a holy city

APPENDIX C

RESPONDENT LIST WITH FINDINGS

Table C1. Detailed List of Interviewees with Findings

Participant	Age	Gender	Years of Practice	Typology	Destination Preference	Themes	Type of Yoga Trip
P1	34	Female	18	Yoga Professional	Roots of yoga	going to the sea / swimming visiting temples visiting source / root of yoga destinations shopping learning more/in depth participating / going with friends knowing people attending coincidence busy yoga program	Yoga focused
P2	28	Female	4	Yoga Professional	Sea Side	going to the sea / swimming practicing with good teachers improving the self / yoga practice comfortable wonderful / beautiful nature nice environment wonderful houses in nature environment is important knowing the teacher participating / going with friends knowing people attending practicing with well known teachers date of the trip/program yoga journal's ads paying attention to diet eating natural facility isolated from the community isolation feeling uncomfortable because of other people	Yoga focused
P3	38	Female	15	Yoga Professional	Roots of yoga, sea side, rural	going to the sea / swimming touristic attractors visiting temples going to ashrams practicing with good teachers all day practicing yoga attending classes from different teachers wonderful / beautiful nature being close to nature nice / attractive facility Hindu people do not do yoga as we do organic and vegan food meditation being in a group / being together group synergy enjoyable	Yoga focused, Wellness focused

Participant	Age	Gender	Years of Practice	Typology	Destination Preference	Themes	Type of Yoga Trip
P4	30	Female	3	Yoga Professional	Sea Side	going to the sea / swimming practicing with good teachers knowing people attending practicing with well-known teachers yoga journal's ads busy yoga program good yoga classes thanks to teachers	Yoga focused
P5	55+	Female	2	Yoga Practitioner	Rural	obtaining experience comfortable being close to the sea nice environment interested in natural places affordable organic and vegan food meeting with new people	Yoga focused
P6	42	Female	23	Yoga Professional	Rural	going to the sea / swimming learning more/in depth nice / attractive facility warm environment affordable coincidence having fresh products inner self / inner voice getting rid of addiction liberalization common areas for chatting busy yoga program enjoyable	Yoga focused
P7	50	Female	8	Yoga Practitioner	Sea side, rural	going to the sea / swimming improving the self / yoga practice wonderful / beautiful nature nice / attractive facility knowing the teacher affordable practicing with well-known teachers date of the trip/program natural/healthy food facility isolated from the community busy yoga program	Yoga focused
P8	38	Female	6	Yoga Practitioner	Rural	going to the pool improving the self / yoga practice concentration on yoga comfortable clean / hygienic being close to nature being close to the sea knowing the teacher available season delicious food natural/healthy food feeling safe silence mental rest socialization busy yoga program good/continuous yoga practice	Yoga focused

Participant	Age	Gender	Years of Practice	Typology	Destination Preference	Themes	Type of Yoga Trip
P9	26	Male	4	Yoga Practitioner	Roots of yoga	visiting source / root of yoga destinations learning more/in depth being close to nature Hindu people do not do yoga as we do participating / going with friends communicating with locals smoking pot with local people Hindu people tend to do yoga because it brings some revenue to them Westerners are prone to try drugs in India	Yoga focused
P10	26	Female	3	Yoga Professional	Roots of yoga	Hindu people are connected with the Indian culture Rishikesh (India) is a holy city participating / going with friends busy yoga program good/continuous yoga practice	Yoga focused
P11	38	Male	2	Yoga Practitioner	Roots of yoga, sea side, rural	going to the sea / swimming knowing the teacher yoga camps mentioned in yoga studios eating raw food locals with no prejudice towards yoga tourists transforming silence getting rid of addiction relaxation Everyone in the retreat in India was a Westerner. The retreat owners were mostly from US disciplined	Yoga focused, Cultural tourism focused, Wellness focused,
P12	32	Female	4	Yoga Professional	Roots of yoga, sea side, rural	going to the sea / swimming visiting temples shopping wonderful / beautiful nature Yoga is very nested within Hindu religion our host cooked and served for us India has free yoga sessions open for local community villagers who going about their lives around our host guided for us became friends with the locals Rishikesh (India) is a city just like an advertising board. In Rishikesh (India) alcohol usage was absolutely forbidden busy yoga program India was full of education, stricter and more intense	Yoga focused, Cultural tourism focused
P13	52	Female	1	Yoga Practitioner	Rural	going to the sea / swimming learning more/in depth participating / going with friends our host cooked and served for us local aunts and uncles joined us not being disturbed by locals locals with no prejudice towards yoga tourists went some neighbors / cafe of a neighbor to eat pie chatting with locals buying handcrafts locals offered us tea awareness busy yoga program enjoyable	Cultural tourism focused

Participant	Age	Gender	Years of Practice	Typology	Destination Preference	Themes	Type of Yoga Trip
P14	32	Female	3	Yoga Practitioner	Roots of yoga, sea side, rural	<p>going to the sea / swimming</p> <p>touristic attractors</p> <p>visiting temples</p> <p>visiting a castle</p> <p>having a mud bath</p> <p>joining a Hindu night</p> <p>practicing with good teachers</p> <p>concentration on yoga</p> <p>comfortable</p> <p>wonderful / beautiful nature</p> <p>clean / hygienic</p> <p>warm environment</p> <p>place is very important</p> <p>knowing the teacher</p> <p>participating / going with friends</p> <p>recommended</p> <p>delicious food</p> <p>There was meat in the hotel meals in India</p> <p>local aunts and uncles joined us</p> <p>not being disturbed by locals</p> <p>inner self / inner voice</p> <p>transforming</p> <p>relaxation</p> <p>calm</p> <p>socialization</p> <p>busy yoga program</p> <p>enjoyable</p> <p>tiring</p> <p>workshops</p>	Yoga focused, Cultural tourism focused, Wellness focused,
P15	32	Female	6	Yoga Practitioner	Sea side, rural	<p>going to the pool</p> <p>clean / hygienic</p> <p>coincidence</p> <p>delicious food</p> <p>gluten free food</p> <p>foods prepared with coconut oil and almond milk</p> <p>meditation</p> <p>nice / warm people</p> <p>getting together with different people</p>	Yoga focused, Wellness focused