

Research Article

# Evaluation of Yoga Tourism Within the Scope of Motivation Theories

Ceren Ilayda Basol<sup>1,\*</sup> , Sehnaz Demirkol<sup>2</sup> 

<sup>1</sup>Department of Tourism Administration, Bogazici University, Istanbul, Turkey

<sup>2</sup>Department of Tourism Administration, Istanbul University, Istanbul, Turkey

## Abstract

Well-being and yoga activities, which are among the types of tourism that have attracted increasing attention among people in recent years due to their various benefits, also have a place in the field of tourism as they have an entertainment aspect and are considered as leisure activities. These activities are mostly visible as participation in yoga tourism. There are tools and academic resources that help examine the motivations that lead individuals to these tourism activities. As it is important to determine the motivating reasons to join tourism, specifically yoga tourism activities, at this point, motivation theories can be supportive to understand tourists' attitudes and behaviors towards travel. Hence, these theories are adopted to understand some underlying causes of yoga travelers to join yoga tourism. The aim of this study is to evaluate the motivations of tourists participating in yoga tourism, which is shaped around entertainment and spiritual purposes, in terms of these theories. Based on results, it is interpreted that motivation theories offer significant insights for tourism professionals in the yoga tourism sector on how to develop and implement p strategies to serve a variety of tourist needs.

## Keywords

Healthy Living, Yoga Tourism, Motivation Theories

## 1. Introduction

Awareness and interest in yoga practices, rooted in ancient times, are increasing day by day. According to societal perception, yoga, especially popular in India, has become accessible globally through yoga programs, courses, camps, and digital channels. [40, 42] suggests that approximately 300 million people, equivalent to 4% of the world's population, practice yoga. Although not a religion, yoga signifies individual development, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual balance [17]. Defined as the union of body, mind, and soul, yoga is perceived as a means to achieve holistic balance and well-being [22].

Additionally, yoga is known to provide benefits such as flexibility, strength, enhanced breathing, and stress [8, 9, 33, 35]. Various practices and names exist globally, including Hatha Yoga, Ashtanga Yoga, Bikram Yoga, Dharma Yoga, Yin Yoga, and Acro Yoga. Conducted under the focus of well-being and entertainment, yoga plays a significant role in the tourism sector under the name of yoga tourism. Despite its origins in India, yoga has gained acceptance in many places today. Individuals showing special interest derived from their interest in yoga are called yoga tourists [4]. Categorically, yoga tourism can be examined under the umbrella of wellness

\*Corresponding author: [ceren.basol@bogazici.edu.tr](mailto:ceren.basol@bogazici.edu.tr) (Ceren Ilayda Basol)

Received: 24 December 2024; Accepted: 8 January 2025; Published: 13 March 2025



Copyright: © The Author(s), 2025. Published by Science Publishing Group. This is an **Open Access** article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

tourism [14]. Wellness tourism, considered a branch of the growing global tourism industry [47, 48], is defined by the pursuit of well-being as the primary purpose of travel [15]. The central focus of yoga tourism's values lies in an approach to the unity of body, mind, and soul. Consequently, [8] argue that wellness tourism represents achieving health and fitness through a holistic (physical and mental) approach [12] to vacations without the need for medical intervention. Destinations for wellness tourism can vary, with some of these attractions listed as SPAs, healing retreat places, or resorts focusing on these services [47]. The longstanding association of SPAs and health centers with wellness tourism and recreation [21] highlights these areas in terms of experiencing wellness tourism. Given the increasing demand, the target audience of this growing tourism sector includes travelers with various characteristics who seek to benefit from recreational services in addition to striving for health and well-being. [45] mentions that some Europeans are taking their lives into their hands and focusing on these types of trends. As mentioned above, these individuals are motivated to travel based on motivations related to well-being and health. In this study, the examination of wellness and one of its subheadings, yoga tourism, will be evaluated within the framework of motivation theories. Incorporating these theories into the study will contribute to a broader perspective and interpretations of understanding individuals' needs and motivations. The scope theories, including Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, McClelland's Needs Theory, Alderfer's ERG Theory, McGregor's Theory X and Y, and Mayo's Motivation Theory, and the process theories, including Adams' Equity Theory, Vroom's Expectancy Theory, Taylor's Motivation Theory, Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory, Skinner's Reinforcement Theory, and Locke's Goal-Setting Theory, which can be categorized into two main groups, will be examined in the scope of motivation theories. While the scope part of motivation theories focuses on what individuals need in their lives and what motivates them; process theories examine psychological and behavioral processes influencing individuals' motivation.

Wellness and yoga tourism, mostly examined in terms of their characteristics and motivations in the literature, are believed to contribute to examine together within the framework of motivation theories in this research paper.

## 2. Motivation Theories

In light of the general information available on yoga tourism, it is crucial to understand the factors motivating individuals to participate in these types of tourism. The scope part of motivation theories, which can be examined under two main groups: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, McClelland's Needs Theory, Alderfer's ERG Theory, McGregor's Theory X and Y, and Mayo's Motivation Theory, focuses on what individuals need in their lives and what motivates them. On the other hand,

process theories, such as Adams' Equity Theory, Vroom's Expectancy Theory, Taylor's Motivation Theory, Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory, Skinner's Reinforcement Theory, and Locke's Goal-Setting Theory, focus on how motivation is formed. The place and applicability of motivation theories in yoga tourism, which can be examined in two parts, are worth investigating.

Firstly, within the scope of the Need Theory among the scope theories, [26] presents a model that extends from basic to higher-level needs of individuals. These needs represent requirements for physiology, safety, love/belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization. This model can be adapted to understand travel motivations. Many researchers have used this theory in the theoretical analysis of travel motivation research [19]. The two main conceptual frameworks of travel motivation, Travel Career Ladder (TCL) by [32, 33], and Travel Career Patterns (TCP) by [34], are based on this theory. While TCL focuses on changes that come with travel experiences and travel motivation [37], the TCP model offers different travel motifs at each layer. The core layer consists of significant motifs such as novelty, escape/relaxation, and relationships. The subsequent layer includes moderately important motifs such as self-actualization driven by intrinsic motives and external motives like nature and accommodation [38]. The outer layer consists of relatively stable and less important travel motifs such as nostalgia and isolation [38]. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, another scope theory, is based on the feedback from two hundred engineers and accountants in the United States about their personal feelings towards work environments. Herzberg identified two groups of factors called Motivation and Hygiene Factors to determine employees' work attitudes and performance levels [36, 51]. Motivation factors are internal factors that increase job satisfaction for employees. Hygiene factors are external factors to prevent employee dissatisfaction. Improvements in motivation factors increase job satisfaction, while weak hygiene factors decrease it. This theory, which also assists in examining tourist motivations, can be adapted to the sector. Another scope theory is David McClelland's Needs Theory, which suggests the existence of three basic needs: Achievement, affiliation, and power needs [27]. In the context of tourism, motivation can be integrated into tourism participation and the connection between local-tourists and tourists. Alderfer's ERG (Existence, Relatedness, Growth) theory [3] is considered a simplified version of Maslow's Needs theory from one perspective. Constructed from the initials of the words Existence, Relatedness, and Growth, this theory provides flexibility between need categories without relying on a strict hierarchical order, allowing for transitions or regressions between categories and simultaneous pursuit of needs in different categories. By integrating the ERG theory into tourism experiences and business design and management, stakeholders can better understand and address the different needs and motivations of both tourists and tourism professionals, ultimately enhancing the quality, sustainability, and competi-

tiveness of the tourism industry. On the other hand, McGregor categorizes the concept of motivation under the headings Theory X and Theory Y. According to this theory, employees belonging to Group X represent lazy and profit-focused characteristics, while personnel in Group Y are described as ambitious and motivated. This theory can also be inferred to support the travel attitudes and preferences of tourists with different personality traits and various motivations. Before moving on to process theories, Mayo's Motivation Theory can be examined in the scope of scope theories. In this theory, Mayo argues that two fundamental factors determine the norms and group loyalty of a company's employees. If there is a high level of group loyalty and positive norms in an organization, it is claimed that this can elevate motivation to the highest levels. This theory can be adapted to understand how human relations, motivation, and group dynamics affect employee performance, customer satisfaction, and overall success in the tourism sector.

In this section, the scope and application areas of process theories will be discussed. Firstly, Equity Theory, proposed by [1], argues that employees will only be motivated when they are treated fairly like other employees in a company. Derived from a psychological concept suggesting that individuals are motivated by fairness and try to establish a balance between their inputs (efforts, contributions) and outputs (rewards, benefits) compared to others, this theory suggests that individuals may experience feelings of inequality when they perceive imbalance, leading to behavioral changes to restore perceived fairness. Fairness can be implemented in the tourism industry to increase employee motivation and customer satisfaction. Another process theory is Vroom's Expectancy Theory [49]. According to this theory, an individual chooses a behavior by evaluating the outcome it will cause. Employee motivation depends on three factors (expectancy, instrumentality, and valence). In the expectancy part, the individual evaluates the result he/she will obtain as a result of any behavior, while instrumentality refers to the perception of whether the desired result will be achieved as a result of this behavior. Businesses in the tourism industry can create a work environment where employees are motivated to do their best, customer satisfaction increases, employee involvement increases, and ultimately leads to more business success. In addition, [46] Scientific Management Theory, which is well-known in the business field, can be mentioned in this context. According to Taylor's view, the only factor that will motivate employees is monetary gain. Therefore, he proposed making payments based on performance rather than fixed wages. In addition to these theories, [5] self-efficacy theory is also included in the process theories. According to this theory, the higher an individual's self-efficacy, the more proportional their belief in their ability to succeed in a task will increase, and this will create motivation. The four main components determining an individual's self-efficacy [23] are the positive or negative experiences the individual has, the experiences of those around them, the suggestions and warnings from their

family and surroundings, and the individual's psychological state [6]. The application of Bandura's theory in the tourism industry can help increase employee confidence, improve performance, and enhance the quality of customer experiences. Additionally, the Reinforcement Theory proposed by [44] determines individuals' motivations through positive and negative reinforcements (driving forces) and punishment and extinction (restrictive forces). According to this view, the consequences of behaviors are effective in strengthening or weakening these behaviors. In the tourism sector, reinforcement theory principles can be applied to motivate and empower employees to provide exceptional service and achieve performance goals. Finally, within the scope of process theories, Locke's [25] Goal-Setting Theory argues that an individual's motivation will increase when the right goals are set. The criteria to consider in setting the right goal are clarity, challenge, commitment, feedback, and task complexity.

In conclusion, motivation theories, divided into two categories as scope and process theories, seek to understand what and how employees can be motivated. These theories, which can find application areas through employees in various businesses, can also be adapted to the tourism sector.

Various motivation theories in the literature provide valuable perspectives for understanding and addressing the needs of both tourists and personnel, leading to enriched experiences and increased productivity as a result. Among the scope theories, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory emphasizes a hierarchy of desires and needs ranging from basic physiological needs to self-actualization. Understanding tourists' needs allows tourism businesses to customize their services and experiences accordingly, catering not only to basic needs like comfortable accommodation but also to deeper desires such as cultural interaction or adventure-filled quests. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Hygiene and Motivation highlights the importance of both hygiene factors (e.g., salaries, working conditions) and motivating factors (e.g., recognition, achievement) in increasing job satisfaction and motivation among employees. By nurturing a positive work environment and integrating motivating factors like appreciation initiatives, tourism businesses can positively impact the motivation of their personnel and deliver higher customer services. McClelland's Needs Theory identifies three basic needs: achievement, affiliation, and power. Recognizing and addressing these needs can shape tourism marketing strategies and destination offerings. For example, incentives for challenging outdoor ventures may appeal to achievement-oriented tourists, while keeping opportunities for social participation at the forefront can resonate with individuals seeking membership. Alderfer's ERG Theory concentrates on three categories: existence, relatedness, and growth, simplifying Maslow's hierarchy. Understanding the various needs of tourists in these segments provides insights into destination development and marketing efforts. For instance, offering healthy lifestyle retreats fulfills the need for connection and personal growth by encouraging relationship-building and growth. Addition-

ally, McGregor's X and Y Theory categorizes managerial approaches as Theory X (authoritarian) or Theory Y (participative). Embracing Y Theory principles such as empowerment of employees and fostering a collaborative work environment can lead to increased customer service and employee satisfaction. This participative approach can also have an impact in fostering connections between visitors and the local community in a tourism destination context. Mayo's Motivation Theory underscores the importance of social factors in motivating employees. Developing a positive organizational culture, promoting teamwork, and providing avenues for social interactions and recognition can enhance morale and productivity among those working in tourism.

On another note, process motivation theories can also play a role in the tourism industry. Adams' Equity Theory posits that individuals are motivated in the workplace only when they are treated fairly compared to other employees. This theory suggests that perceived injustice can trigger feelings of inequity, leading to behavioral adjustments aimed at restoring fairness. Embracing the principle of equity can be utilized to enhance both employee motivation and customer satisfaction in the tourism sector. Another process theory, Vroom's Expectancy Theory, suggests that individuals choose behaviors based on the expected outcomes of those behaviors. Employee motivation is dependent on three factors (expectancy, instrumentality, and valence). Organizations in the tourism industry can advocate for a work environment where employees are encouraged to strive for excellence, leading to increased customer satisfaction, enhanced employee engagement, and consequently, increased job welfare. Additionally, Frederick Taylor's Scientific Management Theory, a well-known management theory in academia, suggests that financial gain is the sole motivator for employees. Taylor advocated for performance-based pay rather than fixed salaries to motivate employees. Besides these theories, Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory also falls within the scope of process theories. According to this theory, an individual's belief in their ability to accomplish a task increases motivation. The primary determinants of self-efficacy include personal experiences, observations of others, persuasion and encouragement from peers, and individual psychological predisposition. Applying Bandura's theory in the tourism sector can increase employee confidence, improve job performance, and enhance the quality of customer experiences. Additionally, Skinner's Reinforcement Theory suggests that individuals' behaviors are influenced by positive and negative reinforcements. In the tourism industry, applying the principles of reinforcement theory can motivate employees to strive for outstanding service and performance criteria. Lastly, Locke's Goal-Setting Theory, examined within the scope of process theories, argues that motivation increases when individuals are presented with clear, challenging, attainable, and feedback-driven goals. Parameters to consider in setting appropriate goals include clarity, complexity, commitment, and feedback mechanisms.

In summary, by assimilating insights from these motivation

theories, tourism businesses can gain a deeper understanding of the diverse needs and motivations of both tourists and employees and address them accordingly. This can ultimately result in enriched experiences and enhanced performance within the sector.

### 3. The Concept and Varieties of Yoga

Yoga is described as one of the most powerful tools for overcoming the ailments resulting from modern life [41]. Given the practices of yoga that are based on the concept of well-being, this powerful impact seems inevitable. It has been revealed that the movements and techniques during practice not only address physical problems but also create mental relaxation and stretching positions. [20] have stated that the word 'YOG' in the ancient Indian language Sanskrit, from which yoga originates, means 'courage'; and this is meaningfully described as it implies the essence of body, mind, and soul.

Many people from different nations travel to India, especially due to the influence of being the birthplace of yoga. Various definitions of yoga have been expressed. Yoga, which has been evolving for many years, is also referred to as a vibrant branch of science based on individuals' needs [43, 28] defines yoga as a philosophy aimed at controlling individuals' minds with their five senses. There is also an evaluation of yoga as 'reaching the unattainable' [11]. The first source presenting the fundamental principles and teachings of this philosophy, which can be examined starting from India, is the Yoga Sutras compiled by the Sage Patanjali in 200 BC [39]. The content of this book describes the relaxation of the conscious mind and the positive control of mental and physical energy [50, 7]. Another historical finding is the discovery of tablets of people practicing yoga dating back to 5000 years ago, found during excavations of a Neolithic settlement in eastern Baluchistan, Pakistan, considered as the oldest evidence of yoga [17]. In light of this information, it can be accepted that it is a philosophy based on Eastern origins. Furthermore, it is expressed that the philosophy of yoga has gone through different periods historically. [50] divides these periods into four: Vedic Yoga, Pre-Classical Period Yoga, Classical Yoga, and Post-Classical Period Yoga. Vedic Yoga, based on the Vedas, the sacred texts of Hinduism, promotes spiritual development through mantras, prayers, and rituals; the Pre-Classical Period Yoga covers yoga practices before the Vedic period. Classical Yoga, as described in texts like Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, represents an approach where spiritual and physical practices are systematically organized, and Post-Classical Period Yoga, indicating the evolution of the modern yoga movement, has shaped the philosophy's process with these practices.

There are eight stages that should be considered in yoga practices. Categorized as Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi, these stages of yoga [13, 15, 18, 50] exhibit various characteristics. Yama,



which contains universality regardless of place, time, and age, focuses on practices of self-compassion, non-violence, honesty, truthfulness, and moderation; Niyama, expressed as personal moral actions, encompasses practices of purity of mind, body, speech, contentment, discipline, self-study (insight), and devotion [13, 15, 18, 50]. While Asana indicates posture practices based on strength, flexibility, and vitality principles and practices aiming for mental/physical calmness, Pranayama aims for breath control. In addition to Pratyahara, which allows controlling emotions leading to controlling the mind, Dharana provides gains in concentration and focus. Derived from the root meaning concentration, Dhyana signifies being one with the object of focus effortlessly with uninterrupted flow, and in the Samadhi stage, it is based on pure awareness centered around states beyond the mind, enlightenment, being within the self, and happiness [13, 15, 18, 50].

Since the practices of yoga philosophy aiming at harmony between the human mind, body, and soul can be adopted in various ways, it is important to mention some known types of yoga. The most well-known of these types are Vinyasa, Hatha, Ashtanga, Yin, Restorative, and Kundalini. In addition to Vinyasa yoga, which involves sessions where breath and movement flow together, Hatha yoga is generally recommended for beginners as it encompasses the most basic styles. While Ashtanga yoga is practiced by following a specific series containing all eight stages, Yin yoga is achieved through passive application of postures on the floor. Restorative Yoga aims for deep relaxation and renewal, while Kundalini is known as mindfulness yoga. Individuals can participate in these different yoga sessions individually or as a group, according to their levels, and can also educate themselves about yoga practices in open or closed spaces. Nowadays, accessing various books, video tutorials, and online applications containing the essence of this philosophy and various physical practices of yoga is possible. It can also be noted that due to the principle of calmness, there is a low risk of injury and minimal need for equipment. For these reasons, it is possible to benefit from yoga education packages prepared for children and pregnant individuals. Awareness and experience regarding this philosophy can also be gained by participating in camps organized for this purpose or by attending various courses and schools.

## 4. Yoga Tourism

Building on the foundation of wellness tourism, informing about yoga tourism, one of the subtopics of this tourism type, will be guiding in examining this tourism type within the framework of motivation theories. Yoga tourism, which provides opportunities for interaction with different cultures and exploring new places [4], can be practiced in the form of yoga vacations, retreat visits, or weekend travels with a backpack for yoga [22]. At this point, personal preferences and motivations can be decisive in determining how individuals will participate because individuals exhibit a subjective structure

in terms of what kind of yoga tourism experience they want.

In recent years, awareness and interest in yoga tourism have risen in line with the increasing popularity of yoga practices and activities. This rise undoubtedly harbors some underlying reasons. According to the model developed by [24], these reasons include improving physical conditions, seeking spirituality, increasing mental well-being, helping individuals to treat themselves well and not feel angry or anxious. When the literature is reviewed, the inadequacy of academic research on yoga tourism stands out. In this context, when searched with the keyword 'yoga tourism', only two postgraduate theses registered in the National Thesis Center are encountered. One of these, conducted by [29] in 2017 and internationalized in 2020, aims to understand the motivations, expectations of yoga tourists, and the socio-cultural dimension perception of yoga tourism, focusing on the views of tourists; while the study completed by [39] aims to determine the dimensions of yoga tourism experience, identify the characters of yoga participants, and determine the perceptions of individuals experiencing yoga tourism on quality of life [16]; researched yoga activities in the Netherlands, where yoga has become a continuous lifestyle through workshop activities and yoga travel opportunities [48]. If an example from Turkey is needed, [2]; described the retreats in Huzur Vadisi as an example of yoga vacations that serve as an example to rural tourism.

Especially participants are one of the most important stakeholders in the implementation of yoga tourism. For this reason, it is necessary to classify tourists and then explain what yoga tourists mean. In the broadest sense, a tourist refers to an individual who participates in the travel movement for various motivations. [10] and [31] are prominent in the study and modeling of tourist categorization. Cohen classified tourists into drifters, explorers, individual mass tourists, and organized mass tourists. Drifters' main motivation is the search for novelty, and they do not hesitate to take risks during their travels, while explorers are individuals who want to experience comfort and novelty in a coordinated manner and focus on experiencing beyond the ordinary. While individual mass tourists take advantage of corporate facilities such as scheduled flights and central reservation systems, organized mass tourists represent individuals who carry familiarities from their own lives and avoid risk. In the following years, Plog also divided tourists into groups according to certain characteristics. In Plog's tourist typology consisting of 3 groups, psychocentrics (preferring habits and avoiding risks), mid-centrics (willing to take risks and explore according to the situation), and allocentrics (taking the highest level of risk, curious, and taking rapid action) are categorized. Similarities can be found in these two different models developed by Cohen and Plog. For example, when evaluated in terms of risk factor and search for novelty, drifters and explorers in Cohen's model exhibit similar characteristics to Plog's allocentrics, while individual mass tourists [10] display a stance close to mid-centrics [31]. Finally, it would not be wrong to conclude that Cohen's organized mass tourists, who avoid risks and

adhere to habits, are included in Plog's psychocentric category.

It is evident that tourists with different characteristics and motivations will also guide yoga tourism. Visitors to beauty spas, lifestyle resorts, spiritual retreats, and wellness tourism participants working part-time or retired can also be grouped [47]. Within the scope of this study, various studies expressing yoga tourists with various groups under the concept of wellness tourism can be encountered. According to [30], yoga students, yoga travelers, and yoga professionals were considered as part of yoga tourists. [40] in a study they conducted, categorized Western tourists visiting Sri Aurobindo Ashram and the town of Auroville in Southeast India into two groups: a permanent tourist group formed by Auroville residents and temporary visitors.

Among the main topics discussed in the limited literature on yoga tourism are the typology and characteristics of yoga tourists, the motivations and reasons for individuals to participate in yoga tourism, problems and barriers in yoga tourism, uniqueness in the context of yoga tourism and other socio-economic issues, and cultural issues related to yoga tourism activity [29]. Accordingly, investigating various topics will contribute to the diversification of academic issues and increasing awareness of this alternative tourism type.

By examining the meaning of yoga tourism, tourist classifications, and motivations, general information about this tourism movement has been provided, and it would be beneficial to examine both its advantages and disadvantages in various aspects in order to examine this tourism movement from various angles.

#### 4.1. Advantages and Disadvantages of Yoga Tourism

Up to this point, the relaxing and healing power of yoga and yoga tourism movements on individual life has been discussed.

Evaluated within the scope of healthy living or wellness tourism, yoga tourism finds its place in the lives of enthusiasts by retreating, attending camps, or actively participating in different sessions for reasons such as relaxation, calming, and acquiring new experiences. Firstly, speaking of the positive aspects of this tourism movement, it is possible to mention its health-related advantages such as stress reduction, flexibility enhancement, and increased mindfulness. Additionally, yoga tourism, which also contributes to cultural gains through visits to cultural destinations and local experiences, offers opportunities for personal development in terms of gaining personal awareness levels. Yoga tourism, which opens the door to meeting new people through the groups and activities attended, plays a role in the development of community spirit and strengthening interpersonal bonds. Moreover, since natural areas constitute the practice environment for yoga tourism in many examples, this type of tourism, which plays an active role in developing and revitalizing connections, also

plays a role in interaction with and connection to nature for yoga tourists.

Looking at it from another perspective, knowing the potential negatives that may exist in yoga tourism plays a key role in awareness. The first disadvantage may be related to the costs of participating in this type of tourism. While it is possible to practice yoga tourism under more economical conditions, if individuals are planning to visit retreats, yoga camps, and other attractions in distant countries as part of a travel program and prefer a comprehensive program, rising costs may lead to disadvantages for individuals experiencing difficulties in accessing this type of tourism due to budgetary constraints. Another negative aspect is the cultural appropriation attitude that could be developed by the local people, which lies in the idea that commercialized and westernized yoga activities may cause the philosophy to lose its originality and spiritual value. Additionally, since yoga tourism is a type of tourism preferred to be carried out in natural and ecological areas, when appropriate planning and sustainable tourism practices are not considered, it is inevitable that this will cause environmental damage. Another negative situation may be encountered in terms of service quality because as the visibility of yoga tourism increases, many organizations develop packages in this direction, but the scope and quality of the programs they offer vary. Therefore, the lack of proper research can lead to encountering a business that will create a negative tourism experience. Finally, if culturally and environmentally insensitive individuals participate in this type of tourism, this can create disadvantages both in terms of damaging the identity and feelings of the local community and in terms of not preserving natural beauties.

In summary, it is possible to examine both the advantages and disadvantages of yoga tourism. Yoga tourism offers many benefits that promote general health and well-being, including stress reduction, increased flexibility, and increased mindfulness. Additionally, it provides opportunities for cultural interaction, personal development, community building, and strengthening connections with nature. However, there are also disadvantages to consider. These include the potential high cost of participation, the risk of cultural destruction, the risk of blurring the authenticity of yoga, environmental impact, variability in service quality, and the possibility of cultural and environmental insensitivity among participants. Therefore, it is important to approach yoga tourism with caution, considering both its advantages and disadvantages.

#### 4.2. Motivation Theories in Yoga Tourism

In general, motivation theories that can be adapted, especially from the perspective of visitors, in the tourism sector can be effective in examining alternative tourism types such as healthy living and yoga tourism, which are the main components of this study.

In terms of content theories, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory supports travelers in achieving self-actualization and

fulfillment by seeking personal development, spiritual awakening, and a sense of purpose through participating in healthy living and yoga practices, while Herzberg's Hygiene and Motivation Factors Theory is important in achieving customer satisfaction by providing comfortable accommodation, clean facilities, and competent instructors that constitute hygiene factors. Additionally, this theory serves as motivating factors that enrich the overall tourist experience by offering ways for personal development and encouraging positive social interactions. Moreover, McClelland's Needs Theory contributes to visitors' motivation through their pursuit of success, physical health, mental clarity, and overall well-being. It is also effective in examining tourists who aim to develop meaningful relationships within healthy living communities. Alderfer's ERG Theory plays a role in meeting tourists' needs for connection and personal development by offering opportunities for health and yoga tourism, personal growth, and spiritual discovery. McGregor's X and Y Theory can significantly enhance the overall tourist experience by adopting the principles of Theory Y, such as empowering travelers and nurturing a supportive atmosphere. Lastly, within the scope of content theories, Mayo's Motivation Theory serves as fundamental motivational factors for travelers through social elements such as enhancing the sense of community and providing positive feedback from their surroundings. Increased social interaction and personalized attention support these factors.

Among process theories, Adams' Equity Theory is of vital importance in motivating tourists towards healthy living and yoga tourism by ensuring fairness when situations, programs, and experiences exist. Maintaining fairness in pricing, accommodation quality, and access to healthy living activities can increase customer satisfaction and encourage repeat visits. Secondly, Vroom's Expectancy Theory can be applied to wellness tourists in terms of expected outcomes such as physical and mental rejuvenation, health improvement, and spiritual development. Integrating the benefits and outcomes of healthy living programs designed within the scope of these tourism types can adaptively increase tourist motivation and satisfaction. From another perspective, Taylor's Motivation Theory can inspire tourists to participate in healthy living activities and repeat visits through benefits such as discounts or loyalty rewards, although its connection to healthy living and yoga tourism is limited. Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory can be effective in examining tourists who have confidence in increasing their health and well-being through healthy living activities. Providing supportive environments and knowledgeable guides can further increase tourists' confidence and motivation. Additionally, Skinner's Reinforcement Theory can be motivating for tourists to continue healthy habits and participate in healthy living activities by offering positive reinforcements such as praise and tangible rewards like certificates for healthy living retreats. Lastly, Locke's Goal Setting Theory positively impacts motivation in wellness and yoga tourism by establishing well-defined, challenging goals

through feedback mechanisms. Tourists can set personal goals related to gaining fitness, managing stress, or achieving inner peace, and tourism businesses can assist in goal setting to help them achieve these goals.

In conclusion, these theories collectively provide valuable insights to service providers in the yoga tourism sector to meet the different needs and motivations of travelers.

## 5. Conclusion

This study addresses the increasing popularity of yoga tourism due to its various benefits. Among these benefits is its consideration as entertainment elements and leisure activities. The text emphasizes the importance of understanding the motivations that lead individuals to participate in such tourism activities, similar to other types of tourism. It mentions the availability of tools and academic sources to examine the motivations of individuals participating in yoga tourism. The study aims to evaluate the motivations of tourists participating in yoga tourism within the framework of entertainment and spiritual purposes, using motivation theories for this purpose. These theories are used to understand the attitudes and behaviours of tourists in the travel industry.

Yoga practice has deep roots and people's interest and awareness are increasing. While yoga is perceived as a popular activity, especially in India, it has become accessible worldwide through yoga programs, courses, camps, and digital content. It is estimated that approximately 4% of the world's population practices yoga. Although yoga is not a religion, it represents individual development, emotional, and intellectual balance. Defined as the union of body, mind, and spirit, yoga has benefits such as providing flexibility, developing strength, improving breathing, and reducing stress. Yoga can be practiced in different types and names. Yoga tourism, as a wellness-focused and entertainment-oriented activity, plays a significant role in the tourism sector. With the increasing demand for yoga tourism, it attracts the interest of various travellers who seek not only health and well-being but also recreational services. This study aims to examine yoga tourism within the framework of motivation theories. This review provides a broad perspective to understand people's needs and motivations.

Yoga tourism, in particular, deals with various motivations for participants. Scope and process theories are used to understand these motivations. While scope theories focus on understanding people's basic needs and higher-level requirements, process theories examine how motivation is formed. Among scope theories are Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, and McClelland's Needs Theory. These theories can be adapted to understand travel motivation in the tourism industry. Process theories, on the other hand, examine the psychological and behavioural processes that affect motivation. Notable among these theories are Adams' Equity Theory, Vroom's Expectancy Theory, and Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory. In the tourism

sector, these theories can be used to motivate employees, increase customer satisfaction, and improve business performance. In conclusion, motivation theories play an important role in the tourism sector and are applied in various businesses.

Motivation theories are used to understand what motivates people and how they become motivated. They are examined under two main categories: scope and process theories. Scope theories focus on what people need in their lives, while process theories examine how motivation is formed. Scope theories include Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, McClelland's Needs Theory, Alderfer's ERG Theory, McGregor's X and Y Theory, and Mayo's Motivation Theory. These theories can be applied in the tourism sector by focusing on people's basic needs, job satisfaction, and motivations. Process theories, on the other hand, examine the psychological and behavioural processes that affect motivation. Among these theories are Adams' Equity Theory, Vroom's Expectancy Theory, Taylor's Motivation Theory, Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory, Skinner's Reinforcement Theory, and Locke's Goal Setting Theory. These theories can be used to motivate employees and improve their performance in various businesses.

Yoga is considered an important tool in coping with the discomforts brought about by modern life. Yoga practices are based on the notion of well-being and provide solutions to physical problems as well as mental relaxation and stretching positions. The term yoga comes from the Sanskrit word 'YOG', meaning 'courage', and expresses the foundation of body, mind, and soul. Although yoga is a philosophy of Indian origin, it has many definitions. The basic principles and teachings are presented in the Yoga Sutras, written by the Sage Patanjali around 200 BCE. The philosophy of yoga has gone through different stages: Vedic Yoga, Pre-Classical Yoga, Classical Yoga, and Post-Classical Yoga. Yoga practices include 8 stages: Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Prathayara, Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi. These stages have various characteristics and aim to achieve harmony of body, mind, and soul. Common types of yoga include Vinyasa, Hatha, Ashtanga, Yin, Restorative, and Kundalini, each offering different approaches and techniques that can be chosen according to individual preferences and needs. Yoga practices can be performed individually or in groups in various settings and levels. Today, there are various sources and training opportunities available to learn about yoga and practice it, reaching a wider audience.

Yoga tourism encompasses various tourism types focused on health and entertainment. It also offers opportunities for interaction with different cultures and exploration of new places. This type of tourism can be implemented in various forms such as yoga retreats, retreat visits, and weekend yoga travels. In recent years, the popularity of yoga practices and activities has increased. Among the main reasons for this increase are improvements in physical conditions, the search for spirituality, mental well-being, and stress reduction. It is observed that there is insufficient academic research on yoga tourism. However,

studies in this field focus on the motivations, expectations, and perceptions of yoga tourists. Participants are the most important stakeholders in yoga tourism. Tourists are generally classified according to Cohen and Plog's tourist classification models. According to these models, tourists can be classified as drifter, explorer, individual mass tourist, and organized mass tourist. The main topics of yoga tourism include the typology, motivations, issues, and obstacles of yoga tourists, as well as authenticity and cultural issues. By examining the meaning of yoga tourism, tourist classifications, and motivations, we provided a general overview. It is useful to research the advantages and disadvantages of this type of tourism to examine it from various perspectives.

Motivation theories play a significant role in understanding tourists' participation in and experiences with alternative tourism types such as yoga tourism. Comprehensive theories like Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, McClelland's Needs Theory, and others elucidate the factors shaping travelers' interest in health and yoga experiences. Additionally, process theories such as Adams' Equity Theory, Vroom's Expectancy Theory, and others address the equity, expectancy, and outcome expectations that influence tourists' participation in these holiday experiences. These theories provide valuable insights for service providers in the yoga tourism sector on how to develop strategies to meet the diverse needs of tourists.

## Abbreviations

ERG Existence-Relatedness-Growth

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

## References

- [1] Adams, J. S. (1963). Towards an understanding of inequity. *Journal of Abnormal & Social Psychology*, 67, 422-436. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0040968>
- [2] Akça, H. (2006). Assessment of rural tourism in Turkey using SWOT analysis. *Journal of Applied Sciences*, 6(13), 2837-2839.
- [3] Alderfer, C. (1969). An empirical test of new theory of human needs. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 4(2), 142-175.
- [4] Ali-Knight, J. ve Ensor, J. (2017). Salute To The Sun: An Exploration Of UK Yoga Tourist Profiles. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 42(4), 484-497.
- [5] Bandura, A. (1994). Self-efficacy. In V. S. Ramachaudran (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of human behavior* (Vol. 4, pp. 71-81). New York: Academic Press. (Reprinted in H. Friedman [Ed.], *Encyclopedia of mental health*.) San Diego: Academic Press.



- [6] Bandura, A., (1986), Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive.
- [7] Bell, R. (2017). *Basit Yoga Teknikleri* (Çeviri: Elif Demir) Arkadaş Yayınevi, Ankara.
- [8] Cave, J and L. Jolliffe (2012) *Urban Tourism. Tourism: The Key Concepts*. Robinson, P. (Ed.) London: Routledge. pp 268-270.
- [9] Cheer, J. M., Belhassen, Y., & Kujawa, J. (2017). The search for spirituality in tourism: Toward a conceptual framework for spiritual tourism. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 24, 252–256. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2017.07.018>
- [10] Cohen, E. (1972). Towards a sociology of international tourism. *Social Research*, 39, 164–182.
- [11] Desikachar, T. K. V. (1999). *The Heart of Yoga: Developing a Personal Practice*. Rochester, Inner Traditions/Bear, Vermont.
- [12] Dillette, A. K., Douglas, A. C., & Andrzejewski, C. (2021). Dimensions of holistic wellness as a result of international wellness tourism experiences. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 24(6), 794-810.
- [13] Dönmez, D. ve Emir, C. (2019). *Sanskrit Yoga ve Vedanta Sözlüğü*. Okyanus Yayıncılık, İstanbul.
- [14] Dryglas, D., & Salamaga, M. (2018). Segmentation by push motives in health tourism destinations: A case study of Polish spa resorts. *Journal of Destination Marketing and Management*, 9, 234–246. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2018.01.008>
- [15] Freeman, H. Vladagina, N. Razmjou, E. ve Brems, C. (2017). Yoga in Print Media: Missing The Heart of The Practice. *International Journal of Yoga*, 10(3), 160- 166.
- [16] Gerritsma, R. (2009). The growing yoga community in the Netherlands: How yoga is becoming a lifestyle product including tourism activities. In Smith, M. K. and Puczk6, L. (Eds) *Health and Wellness Tourism* (pp. 361-366). Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann.
- [17] Global Wellness Institute (2018). <https://globalwellnessinstitute.org/wellnessevidence/yoga/> (Erişim Tarihi: 22.09.2018).
- [18] Iyengar, B. K. S. (1989). *The Tree of Yoga*. Boston: Shambhala Publications.
- [19] Jang, S., & Cai, L. A. (2002). Travel motivations and destination choice: A study of British outbound market. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 13(3), 111-133.
- [20] Kamthe, A., Lahoti Y, & Inamdar, I. (2022). Tourism and Yoga: A Phenomenological Analysis with Reference to Select Places in India. *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, 6, (2), 820 – 829.
- [21] Kulczycki, C., & Luck, M. (2009). *Outdoor adventure tourism, wellness, and place attachment*. In R. Bushell & P. J. Sheldon (Eds.), *Wellness and Tourism: Mind, Body, Spirit, Place* (pp. 165-76). New York, NY: Cognizant Communication Corporation.
- [22] Kumar, P. (2015). Yoga Tourism—A Unique Feather in the Cap of Indian Tourism”. *Advances in Economics and Business Management*, 2(9), 919-924.
- [23] Lee W. S. (2005), *Encyclopedia of School Psychology*, Sage Publication.
- [24] Lehto, X. Y., Brown, S., Chen, Y., & Morrison, A. M. (2006). Yoga tourism as a niche within the wellness tourism market. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 31(1), 25–35. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2006.11081244>
- [25] Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P. (2006). New directions in Goal-Setting Theory. *Sage Journals*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8721.2006.00449.x>
- [26] Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4): 370–396.
- [27] McClelland, D. (1988). *Human motivation*, Cambridge University Press.
- [28] Osho, B. S. R. (2005). *Yoga 2 - Zamanın, Mekânın ve Arzunun Ötesinde* (Çeviri. Yaprak Köroğlu, Kübra Bahar) Omega Yayınları, İstanbul.
- [29] Öznalbant, E. & Alvarez M. D. (2020). *A Socio-cultural Perspective on Yoga Tourism*, *Tourism Planning & Development*, 17(3), 260-274, <https://doi.org/10.1080/21568316.2019.1606854>
- [30] Nichter, M. (2013). The social life of yoga: Exploring trans-cultural flows in India. In *Yoga Traveling* (pp. 201-224). Germany: Springer.
- [31] Plog, S. C. (1974). Why destination areas rise and fall in popularity. *The Cornell H. R. A. Quarterly*, 4(4), 55–58.
- [32] Pearce, P. L. (1988). *The Ulysses Factor: Evaluating Visitors in Tourist Settings*. New York: Springer- Verlag.
- [33] Pearce, P. L. (1993). Fundamentals of tourist motivation. In: Pearce D and Butler R (eds) *Tourism Research: Critiques and Challenges*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. pp. 85–105.
- [34] Pearce, P. L., and Lee, U. I. (2005). Developing the travel career approach to tourist motivation. *Journal of Travel Research*, 43, 226–237.
- [35] Ponder, L. M., & Holladay, P. J. (2013). The transformative power of yoga tourism. *Transformational Tourism: Tourist Perspectives*, 7, 1.
- [36] Robbins, P. S. (2009). *Organizational Behavior: International Version*. 13th Edition, Pearson Higher Education.
- [37] Ryan, C. (1998). The travel career ladder An Appraisal. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 25(4), 936-957.
- [38] Sanjay, K. & Kumar, S. S. (2017). A Theoretical Framework for Wellness Tourism Motivation Factors. In P. S. Sibi, Mathew R, Mohanty P and Rao Y V (Eds) *Contemporary Research and Practices in Tourism and Hospitality- with special focus on Accessibility*, 214-223. Himalaya Publishing House. India.
- [39] Sayman, E. & Bertan, S. (2021). *Yoga turizmi deneyimi ile yaşam kalitesi arasındaki ilişkide kişinin aracı etkisi*. Pamukkale Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Yüksek Lisans Tezi.

- [40] Sharpley, R., Sundaram, P. (2005). Tourism: A sacred journey? The Case of Ashram Tourism, India. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 7, 161–171.
- [41] Sharma, P., & Nayak, J. K. (2019). The role of destination image as a mediator between tourists' emotional experiences and behavioral intentions: A study of wellness tourism. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*.
- [42] Shift. (2016). *Infographic: The Growing Yoga Industry – Our Insights and Conclusions*. Retrieved April 3, 2017, from <https://www.shift.is/2016/04/infographic-growing-yogaindustry-insights-conclusions/>
- [43] Sivanda Yoga Center (2000). *Sivananda Companion to Yoga*. Simon and Schuster New York: Rockefeller Center.
- [44] Skinner, B. (1938). *The behavior of organisms: an experimental analysis*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.
- [45] Smith, M., & Puczko, L. (2010). Taking your life into your own hands? New trends in European health tourism. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 35(2), 161-172.
- [46] Taylor, F. W. (1911). *The principles of scientific management*. Harper and Brothers.
- [47] Voigt, C., Brown, G., and Howat, G. (2011). Wellness tourists: In search of transformation. *Tourism Review*, 66(1/2), 16-30.
- [48] Thal, K. I., & Hudson, S. (2019). A Conceptual Model of Wellness Destination Characteristics That Contribute to Psychological Well-Being. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 43(1), 41-57.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1096348017704498>
- [49] Vroom, V., Porter, L., & Lawler, E. (2005). *Organizational behavior*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- [50] Worby, C. (2018). *Everything Yoga Book* (Çeviri: Çiğdem Fromm) Akılçelen Kitaplar, Ankara.
- [51] Yusoff, W. F. W., Kian, T. S., & İdris, M. T. M. (2013). Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory on Work Motivation: Does it Works for Today's Environment? *Global Journal of Commerce and Management Perspective*, 2 (5), 18-22.