

Section 1

Special Interest Tourism

Introduction

The concept of special interest in tourism (SIT) operations has been frequently observed in the tourism literature after the social and environmental deteriorations created by mass tourism applications because mass tourism applications generally result in huge number of visitors. As a consequence of these massive tourist mobilities, the concept of visitor management revealed. In order to manage the destinations in a sustainable manner, some precautions are utilized such as carrying capacity, destination lifecycle, and environmental impact assessment. Moreover, destinations needed the product diversification through creating new sorts of tourism which is conceptualized as alternative tourism.

Most of the alternative tourism types have a fundamental of special interest such as battlefield tourism, adventure tourism, dark tourism, etc. For this reason, before examining the battlefield tourism as the topic of the book, editors decided to launch into the peculiar features of the special interest tourism. In this respect, this section is dedicated to shed light on the conceptualization of special interest tourism, some related definitions, similarities, and distinctions with alternative tourism. Sustainability is also the crucial issue for the evolution and development of special interest tourism.

SIT can reflect postmodern production philosophies such as consumer-oriented production, tailor-made products, and sustainability in the tourism sector (Uluçeçen, 2011). However, two essential elements are needed to define a leisure activity as SIT. One is that individuals devote a specific time to realize their interests. The other is that providing efficient and satisfactory supply for such events gains a commercial dimension (Trauer, 2006). Thus, what is essential for SIT is the availability and decisiveness of the interest that leads the person to travel (Tanrısevdi, 2009).

The following chapters in this section discuss the theory-based SIT, the benefits and limitations of SIT, and identification of the gap in the literature respectively.