



A New Trend in Tourism Industry: Bleisure Travels and Their Motivation Elements

Burçin Cevdet ÇETİNSÖZ ^a

Eda HAZARHUN ^b

^a Mersin Üniversitesi, Anamur Meslek Yüksekokulu, Mersin / Türkiye. (cetinsoz@yahoo.com)

^b Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi, Turizm İşletmeciliği Ana Bilim Dalı, İzmir /Türkiye. (edahazarhun@gmail.com)

Extensive Summary

For a long time people have been traveling not just by motivations of entertainment and leisure but also for fulfilling their occupational duties or participating in meetings. Therefore, business tourism is among the oldest types of tourism (Seebaluck and Naidoo, 2015). Formerly business trips were boring, stressful and serious but nowadays they have become more entertaining with the addition of leisure and entertainment activities (Tala, Schiopu, Brindusoiu, 2011). Thus, the concept of bleisure has emerged as a combination of business activities and leisure activities (The Future Laboratory, 2019) and turned into a trend that grows rapidly (Sardest and Ivanauskas, 2019). Bleisure can be defined as “filling the spare time that is left from the time allocated for business activities with programs and activities that can be considered as holiday activities” (Beken, 2019). On the other hand, bleisure tourism is defined as “travels that is a combination of both business and leisure intentions” (Sardest and Ivanauskas, 2019). There are several motivations that direct individuals towards bleisure travels. Seeing the world, having new cultural experiences (Bridgestreet Global Hospitality, 2014), discovering new things, sharing knowledge and information, and finding business partners or funds (Lichy ve Mcleay, 2018) are among these motivations. Sardest and Ivanauskas (2019) state that individuals participate in bleisure travels on account of personal motivations and company policies. Within this scope, personal motivations that impel individuals to participate in bleisure travels are; a) keeping occupational life and domestic life in a balance, b) having enjoyable time with friends during business travel, c) attractiveness of destination: especially, destinations that have not been visited before and the ones that offer new experiences are more attractive for bleisure tourists. On the other hand, motivations that impel individuals to participate in bleisure travels due to company policies are; a) having

given the opportunity to take family and friends along for travel, b) flexible working conditions.

In this study, it is aimed that evaluating bleisure travels conceptually, compiling existing studies on this subject, and determine the motivational elements of the participants. Within this scope, semi-structured interviews have been carried out with 18 business people from several provinces who work in the branches of industry and participate in international or domestic business travels. The data acquired from the interviews have been analyzed by content analysis which is a qualitative method. Four main themes as “Motivations of Bleisure Travels, Activities During Bleisure Travels, Effects of Bleisure Travels on Business and Life Motivations, Benefits of Bleisure Travels for Companies” and 32 codes under those main themes have been emerged from the content analysis. Through this study, it has been determined that driving factors for people to participate in bleisure travels are doing business, visiting new places, meeting new people, having a rest, blowing off steam, and having fun, while attraction factors are cultural heritage of destinations, shopping, and local food and beverage. According to the study, within bleisure travel, participants do several activities in both during their time in hotels and outside the hotels. Most common indoor activities are swimming in the pool, getting a massage, and joining sports activities while most common outdoor activities are visiting historical and cultural places, having lunch and dinners in restaurants, visiting museums, experiencing regional foods, shopping, and spending time in night clubs. In addition, it is emphasized that bleisure travels reduce individuals stress, increase their joy of life, expand their vision through the experience and knowledge they acquire from different cultures, and provide them new business opportunities by having meetings with potential customers and partners during their travels. In other respects, during international and domestic travels it is possible to blend in different countries’ cultures and to keep up with industrial and technological investments, new products and services in those countries. In sequent studies, interviews may be carried out with business people from sectors other than industrial branches. Generalizability of results may be increased by also conducting quantitative researches on the subject. On the other hand, since there are no other studies on this subject in domestic literature this study expected to contribute domestic literature and also due to its structure of providing info on participants of bleisure travels, this study is considered to be a guide for hotel and destination administrations, sector actors such as restaurants and travel agents to shape their products and services.