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NEW PRODUCT OF CULTURAL TOURISM: A RESEARCH ABOUT OLIVE OIL MUSEUMS

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EXTENSIVE SUMMARY

Due to the diffusion of the sustainable tourism approach and the changes in the consumption conception, changes in tourism activities have started and in particular the tendency towards cultural tourism has increased. Museums are among the elements of tourism supply that the interaction between culture and tourism is at the most intense level. As a result of cultural interaction in the world and the desire to exhibit the works of the collectors in larger areas, there has been a need to establish private museums. These museums have increased the interest in museums by creating environments that provide interaction with society (Altunbaş ve Özdemir, 2012). As of the date of January 8, 2018 there are 239 private museums which are under supervision of Ministry of Culture and Tourism in Turkey.

In recent years, as well as traditional museum activities, new museums that focused on different cultural elements emerged within the scope of sustainable tourism concept. In this context, one of the museum practices that started is the olive oil museum. The cultural value of olive and olive oil throughout the world gives olive oil museums a universal character than the others. Olive oil museums are one of the five basic elements of olive oil tourism. Olive oil tourism is carried out by conducting various activities in combination with tourism services such as olive cultivation opens to the visitors, selling olive and olive oil-related foods, providing on-site visits and/or accommodation (Alonso and Northcote, 2010).

In this study, olive oil museums operating in Turkey are examined by qualitative research method. In the research, the main characteristics of olive oil museums, the products and services they offer, the activities they performed and their activities were evaluated. In the study, seven olive oil museums were determined by using printed and virtual document review. It was determined that olive oil museums were in three different regions and in six different provinces; predominantly in the Aegean Region, followed by the Marmara Region and the Mediterranean Region. Five of the museums are operated by entrepreneurs as private enterprises; while the rest are operated by Municipalities. Only two of the olive oil museums have the status of a private museum affirmed by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. A total of three museums are also placed in the list of olive oil museums prepared by the International Olive Council. Apart from two museums, no entrance fee is charged. When the buildings hosting the olive oil museums are examined, it is seen that all of them have an authenticity. Four of the museums have restored historical buildings, while two of them were newly constructed by using local and original spolia. And the last one was after repairing and restoring an old factory and transforming it into a museum.

All the museums other than the ones operated by the municipalities, have olive and olive oil mills and stores with various products produced there. In all of these stores, olive and olive oil products produced by the company were sold. When the integration of olive oil museums with tourism enterprises is examined, it is seen that there are mostly food and beverage enterprises in olive oil museums, followed by accommodation and travel companies respectively. When the status of olive oil museums was evaluated in terms of activities, it was

determined that all museums participated in festivals. Although some of them are within the festival, it has been observed that concerts are organized in olive oil museums and there is also widespread participation in olive harvesting activities and various fairs and publicity organizations. When the educational activities that are mentioned as another element that constitutes the supply of olive oil tourism are evaluated, it was seen that more than half of the museums host various trainings for children and adults, as well as various workshops, conferences and so on. It was also determined that all the museums have participated in the scientific activities.

Considering the settlement of olive oil museums, there was a cluster on the Aegean coast. It can be said that the locations of olive oil museums are consistent with the distribution of olive production areas throughout the country. However, it is thought that the reason for not having a museum in the Mediterranean Region where the olive cultivation is widespread is that the focus of tourism enterprises operating in the region has not the perspective of sustainable tourism yet. In this context, it is suggested to open olive oil museums and to pioneer olive oil tourism activities in the South Aegean and Western Mediterranean regions.

In terms of operating time, there is tendency towards olive oil museums in the last 10 years, although the oldest olive oil museums have been operating for 17 years. This is an important finding in terms of indicating the similarity with the development of olive oil tourism worldwide. However, it is seen that the accreditation and promotion of olive oil museum activities nationally or internationally is limited. In this context, it is thought that development of an administrative body could be beneficial by providing the most effective evaluation of the potential of our country in olive oil tourism. By means of a central administrative body, criteria for olive oil museums can be determined and quality standards can be increased. However, while determining the criteria, it should not be disregarded that special attention should be paid to not limiting the authenticity of museums. In this context, many of the old olive mills in the country can be restored and their authenticity can be supported by integration with the olive oil museums.

Olive oil museums can be certificated according to the meeting of the determined standards or the nature of the services provided. And the certification could be symbolized with an olive branch with one, two, three olives and / or olive leaves to make it distinctive. Thus, an awareness of the quality of services and products can be provided for the visitors and differentiation and competitiveness can be provided to museums. Another point to be considered at this point is that olive oil museums are generally private enterprises. Therefore, the development of grant programmes to encourage or support entrepreneurship in this area could be a significant tool in the increase of olive oil museum initiatives and activities. Besides, product sales are suggested to increase the experiential elements (seeing, tasting, touch etc.) in the museums belonging to local governments. It is also possible to open stores belonging to local producers' union or associations as well as opening stands for the local people.

As a result of the research, it was determined that olive oil museums have food and beverage enterprises in general. This result is also important in terms of pointing out that olive oil museums are a gastronomy museum. Furthermore, it is recommended to increase the cooperation between olive oil museums and accommodation and travel companies. Developing products and services in the form of packages or private tours containing olive oil museums and compatible accommodation establishments by developing olive routes as in Europe, especially in Spain and France; will provide competitiveness to olive oil museums and increase the number of national and international visitors. In the future researches, it is recommended to apply multiple case study method by using interview and on-site observation techniques. Thus, it would be possible to gain much more detailed information and contribute the related literature.