

**Motivation factors for visiting religious sites:
The case of Lesvos Island**

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Abstract

This study investigates tourist's motivations for visiting religious sites in Lesvos, a religious destination island in Greece. Data was collected in Lesvos during the Orthodox Easter period of 2013 implementing a sample of 210 tourists who had visited a monastery during their stay on the island. In order to measure tourists' motivation for religious site visitation in Lesvos, 15 motivation components were used. Data analysis included descriptive analysis and factor analysis. The findings based on descriptive statistics (Mean Scores) suggest that the main reasons for visitation to monasteries and churches in Lesvos Island were pilgrimage motives, i.e. "To worship", "I have made a vow" and "In order to get well (health reasons)". On the other hand, the reasons with the lowest Mean Scores regarding visitation to monasteries and

churches in Lesvos Island were secular reasons: “It is in “fashion”- it is trendy”, “To do shopping”, and for “Research /educational reasons”. Factor analysis of the motivations components identified 3 factors, interpreting 66.5% of the total variance, i.e. “Secular and cultural motives”, “Pilgrimage motives”, and “Spiritual motives”. The findings of this research offer important practical implications for promoting Lesvos for religion tourism.

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