



ISSN: 2651-2742
2023 - Cilt: 6 Sayı: 2
Sayfa: 72-93

Dergi Web Sitesi: <http://sita.cumhuriyet.edu.tr/tr/>

Gönderilme Tarihi: 08.11.2023

Düzeltilme Tarihi: 25.12.2023


Kabul Tarihi:26.12.2023

Arařtırma Makalesi (Research Article)

EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING IN WINTER TOURISM THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SATISFACTION AND INTENTION TO RECOMMEND: ERCIYES SKI RESORT EXAMPLE*

Kış Turizminde Deneyimsel Pazarlamanın Müřteri Memnuniyeti Ve Tavsiye Etme Niyeti İle İliřkisi: Erciyes Kayak Merkezi Örneęi

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the research is to try to determine the relationship of experiential marketing with customer satisfaction and recommendation intention in winter tourism, which is one of the most important alternative tourism types, with the returns provided by contributing to the spread of tourism throughout the year. In the study, local and foreign visitors staying in mountain hotels and city hotels located in the Erciyes Ski Resort, which provides services for winter tourism, were selected as the universe and as a sample. January, February and March of 2022, a total of 392 survey data were taken from the participants, but 10 of them were considered invalid and 382 surveys were included in the analysis. The normality test was applied to the data first and it was found that they did not show a normal distribution. For this reason, non-parametric tests were used. In the study, Mann-Whitney U Test was used for pairwise comparisons analysis, Kruskal-Wallis H Analysis of Variance was used for multiple comparisons analysis, and Spearman Correlation Analysis was used to determine the direction and level of relationship between variables. As a result of the analyzes, it was determined that the perceptions of experiential marketing, customer satisfaction and intention to recommend did not differ according to the demographic characteristics of the participants. As a result of the analysis, it was also determined that all five dimensions of experiential marketing in winter tourism have a significant and positive relationship with customer satisfaction and intention

* Bu makale “ Kış Turizminde Deneyimsel Pazarlamanın Müřteri Memnuniyeti ve Tavsiye Etme Niyeti ile İliřkisi” adlı tezden üretilmiřtir.

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Önerilen Atıf: Çelik K. ve Koç. H. (2023). Experiential Marketing in Winter Tourism The Relationship Between Satisfaction and Intention to Recommend: Erciyes Ski Resort Example, Sivas İnterdisipliner Turizm Arařtırmaları Dergisi, 6(2), 72-93

to recommend, and there is a significant and positive relationship between customer satisfaction and intention to recommend.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Winter Tourism, Experiential Marketing, Customer Satisfaction, Intention to Recommend

ÖZ

Araştırmanın amacı, turizmin yıl geneline yayılmasına katkı sunarak sağladığı getiriler ile en önemli alternatif turizm türlerinden biri olan kış turizminde deneyimsel pazarlamanın müşteri memnuniyeti ve tavsiye etme niyeti ile ilişkisini belirlemeye çalışmaktır. Çalışmada evren ve örneklem olarak kış turizmine yönelik hizmet veren Erciyes Kayak Merkezinde bulunan dağ otellerinde ve şehir otellerinde konaklayan yerli ve yabancı ziyaretçiler seçilmiştir. Ocak, Şubat ve Mart 2022 tarihleri arasında katılımcılardan toplamda 392 adet anket verisi elde edilmiş ancak 10 tanesi geçersiz sayılarak 382 adet anket analize dahil edilmiştir. Verilere ilk olarak normallik testi uygulanmıştır ve normal dağılım göstermedikleri tespit edilmiştir. Bu nedenle parametrik olmayan testlerden yararlanılmıştır. Araştırmada ikili karşılaştırmalar analizi için Mann-Whitney U Testi, çoklu karşılaştırmalar analizi için Kruskal-Wallis H Varyans Analizi, değişkenler arasındaki ilişki yönünü ve düzeyini belirlemek için de Spearman Korelasyon Analizi uygulanmıştır. Yapılan analizler sonucunda katılımcıların demografik özelliklerine göre deneyimsel pazarlama, müşteri memnuniyeti ve tavsiye etme niyeti algılarının farklılaşmadığı tespit edilmiştir. Yine analizler sonucunda kış turizminde deneyimsel pazarlamanın beş boyutunun da müşteri memnuniyeti ve tavsiye etme niyeti ile anlamlı ve pozitif yönlü bir ilişki içinde olduğu ve müşteri memnuniyeti ile tavsiye etme niyeti arasında da anlamlı ve pozitif yönlü bir ilişki olduğu belirlenmiştir.

Key words: Kış Turizmi, Deneyimsel Pazarlama, Müşteri Memnuniyeti, Tavsiye Etme Niyeti

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, in the competitive environment created by the rapid development of technology and globalization, customers are faced with an ever-expanding range of options. Especially enterprises in the service industry are trying to provide their demand ability and satisfaction by providing memorable experiences in line with customer requests and needs in order to make a difference. Marketing approaches to be applied by businesses are important in meeting the demands of customers. Among these marketing approaches, the experiential marketing approach used by businesses at the point of being demanded by customers stands out. Experiential marketing creates value with five different experience modules: sensory, emotional, intellectual, behavioral and relational. In an intensely competitive market environment that makes it difficult for businesses to differentiate themselves from their competitors, these experiential dimensions are considered very important for issues such as customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions.

The most important factor that determines the future of enterprises is the satisfaction levels of their customers rather than their profitability. Because today's customer puts the satisfaction he gets at the experience stage more in the foreground than the benefit he will get from the product or service he wants to buy (Howard 2007: 35). If satisfaction turns into positive customer feedback, it is reflected externally as a tendency to recommend.

One of the most important preferred alternative tourism types that have emerged in order to spread tourism throughout the whole year is winter tourism. Turkey has an advantage for winter tourism with its geographical features. As soon as it was realized that the income-generating aspect of tourism could be spread over four seasons, it is observed that the activation of winter tourism destinations has accelerated and the potential of domestic and foreign winter tourists is increasing day by day. In this context, scientific research is important both for these winter tourism destinations and for determining the relationship between experiential marketing and customer satisfaction and intention to recommend, which will benefit businesses.

Considering the studies conducted in the field of winter tourism (Karaçor, Temizer 2022; Sakcalı, Büyükippekçi 2022; Neşe, Bozkurt 2022, Arslan, Kendir 2019; Evren, Kozak 2019), it is understood that winter tourism is an important alternative tourism type for our country. Within the scope of alternative tourism, scientific studies on these regions are important for the regions with winter tourism centers to improve their opportunities and possibilities. This research is also important in terms of determining the relationship between experiential marketing dimensions and customer satisfaction and recommendation intention in winter tourism.

Experiential marketing approach has gained application in many service sectors such as health, shopping centers, restaurants and hotels. In line with the information obtained in the literature review (Wahyuningtyas, Achmad, Zainul 2017; Saruhanoğlu, Kerim 2020; Karo 2020; Naser Alsaïd 2020), it is understood that experiential marketing is related to customer satisfaction. Customers who are satisfied with experiential marketing practices feel the need to tell their experiences to others, especially their close circle. Satisfied customers recommend the satisfaction they have experienced to others, making them less sensitive to the practices of other competitors (Torres Moraga, Arturo Z, Vasquez- Parraga 2008: 303). When we look at the studies conducted in this direction (Hall, O'mahony, Gayler 2016; Su, Swanson, Chen 2016; Silik 2018; Aydın, Onaylı 2020; Cesur, Çam 2021), it is seen that customer satisfaction is related to recommendation intention.

Close to the research to be conducted; Kınıklı (2019) "The effect of experiential marketing on customer satisfaction: The case of Cappadocia" concluded that according to the experiences of the participants staying in themed and standard hotels, the experiential marketing perception and customer satisfaction of the participants staying in themed hotels were higher than the participants staying in standard hotels. In another close study; Özer (2019) "The effect of customer satisfaction on customer loyalty in experiential marketing: An applied research in hotels serving for winter tourism in Erzurum" revealed that sensory, emotional, relational and behavioral factors of experiential marketing are statistically significant on customer satisfaction, while intellectual factors are not effective on customer satisfaction. In another study, Araci (2017), "The relation among experiential marketing, customer satisfaction, and behavioral intention: a study on food and beverage businesses" showed that the sensory and relational dimensions of experiential marketing are related to customer satisfaction and that customer satisfaction is effective on the intention to recommend.

However, as a result of the literature review, there is no study on the relationship between experiential marketing in winter tourism and customer satisfaction and intention to recommend. With the results obtained, it is thought that the determination of the relationship between experiential marketing perception in winter tourism and satisfaction and

recommendation intention will provide important ideas for hotels serving for winter tourism in Erciyes ski resort. In addition, the research is important in terms of providing findings that can reveal the relationship between experiential marketing dimensions and customer satisfaction and intention to recommend.

Based on this point, the research was conducted to examine the relationships between experiential marketing in winter tourism and customer satisfaction and intention to recommend with the participation of local and foreign visitors of hotels serving in Erciyes Ski Center, one of the leading winter tourism centers in Turkey, and Kayseri city center.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. The Scope of Winter Tourism

Alternative tourism types have been focused on for reasons such as spreading tourism throughout the year, minimizing seasonal fluctuations, ensuring that existing resources and workforce are not ineffective, and especially directing people to different holiday preferences (Ülker 1992: 8; Kılıç, Kurnaz 2010: 41). Winter tourism is the most prominent alternative tourism type that enables tourism to spread throughout the year.

The definition of winter tourism can be made as follows, it is a type of tourism that is carried out in winter destinations where physiological needs and entertainment can be met, as well as snow sports in mountainous regions, and benefits as a result of this tourism movement.

2.2. Winter Tourism in the World and Turkey

Winter tourism has an above-average tourism return. Therefore, local managers and their stakeholders are turning to invest in regions that have the potential to become winter tourism destinations. Thus, the supply capacity of winter tourism in the world is increasing and new destinations are being built.

Winter tourism is considered to have originated in Switzerland in the 1860s in the town of St. Moritz as a result of an attempt by a hotel manager named Johannes Badrutt to invite his guests to enjoy the snow in the winter season. It really took off in the 1970s. Since then, investments in ski resorts and accommodation facilities have accelerated (TÜRSAB 2015: 3).

Winter tourism started in the Swiss Alps, and then mountain regions such as the Austrian and French Alps were equipped with ski resorts, accommodation facilities and other tourist infrastructure. since the 1990s, the skiing element has been used in winter tourism (Hudson 2004; Shackley 2006). Especially with the introduction of new skiing techniques such as Mathias Zdarsky Alpine technique, the popularity of winter tourism has started to increase even more worldwide. In recent years, winter tourism has been seen as an important source of income in the tourism sector due to the fact that it provides an above-average return. Many countries aim to attract domestic and foreign tourists by investing in winter tourism and ensure that it contributes to their economic development.

According to the data of the World Tourism Organization, 963 million people made trips worldwide in 2022. While this number was 1.46 billion in 2019, it has decreased to 447 million in 2021 and 409 million in 2020 due to Covid-19. Due to the decline experienced, 2020 has been described as the “worst year” in the history of tourism (UNWTO, 2021). The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the tourism sector continue to persist, and the number of international trips remains below the number of the period before the pandemic. Due to travel restrictions and other measures taken by countries, the winter tourism sector has also faced difficulties

during the winter seasons during the pandemic. There has been a 37% decrease in skier visits worldwide due to Covid-19 (Vanat, 2022:10).

For winter tourism, Eastern Europe and China are the leading destinations, but there are also emerging small player destinations such as Cyprus, Greece, India, Iran, Israel, Lebanon, Morocco, New Zealand, Pakistan, South Africa and Turkey (Vanat 2022: 15).

Turkey's first mechanical plant was established in Uludağ in the 1950s. Later, mechanical facilities were established in Elmadağ in 1956, Erciyes in 1963 and Bitlis, Palandöken and Sarıkamış in 1969 (Demiroğlu 2014: 116; KUDAKA 2014: 14). In recent years, the construction of ski resorts has gained momentum. According to the data of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (2022), there are 47 winter tourism centers in Turkey, 9 of which are active, 7 of which are not fully operational and 31 of which are inactive. Turkey has 9 active ski resorts; Bursa-Uludağ, Erzurum-Palandöken, Kayseri- Erciyes, Bolu-Kartalkaya and Kars-Sarıkamış. Looking at these destinations, it is understood that Turkey has a high potential for winter tourism compared to other countries.

2.2.1. Erciyes Ski Resort

Mount Erciyes, located in Kayseri province, is the fifth highest volcanic mountain in Turkey and the highest in Central Anatolia with a height of 3916 meters. Erciyes was declared as a "Tourism Center" in 1989 with the decision of the Council of Ministers. With the investments made since the 2000s, it has become one of the well-known ski centers both in the country and abroad. Erciyes Ski Center is 60 kilometers close to the Cappadocia region, which welcomes tourists all year round, where it contributed to its formation with volcanic eruptions during its active period. The ski center attracts the attention of tourists visiting the Cappadocia region with this proximity advantage. The peak and high parts of the Erciyes mountain are covered with snow throughout the year. The snow thickness reaches up to 2 meters. March December The winter season lasts from the beginning of December to the end of March. It is generally preferred for various skiing sports with its powder snow feature and convenient pistes.

There are 41 pistes with different grades in Erciyes Ski Center, including easy, medium and difficult. The ski center also offers service with 14 mechanical facilities and 5 walking bands with a capacity of carrying 26,750 people per hour. According to the data of Kayseri Erciyes A.Ş., there are 41 pistes in the range of 1800-3000 meters with 18 slopes between 0-25 degrees with Easy, 17 slopes between 25-40 degrees with Moderate and 6 slopes above 40 degrees with various degrees of difficulty. There are a total of 5 escalators between 50-200 meters, 1 each at Hacilar, Tekir and Develi gate entry points and 2 at Hisarcık gate. There are 14 mechanical facilities in total at Tekir, Develi, Hisarcık and Hacilar entry points. These mechanical facilities have a capacity of approximately 26,750 people per hour.

There are 12 hotels with a total capacity of 1450 beds on Erciyes mountain. In addition to these hotels, there are also hotels in Kayseri city center. In Kayseri in 2022, there are a total of 69 hotels, 27 of which have Tourism Management Certificates, 8 of which have Tourism Investment Certificates and 34 of which have Municipal Certificates. These hotels are located both on Erciyes mountain and in the city center. Hotels provide free shuttle service to their customers for transportation to the ski resort. in 2019, 584 thousand 174 tourists made accommodation in Kayseri. This number has decreased to 310 thousand 291 tourists in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. With the reduction of the pandemic risk, the number of tourists increased to 503 thousand 328 in 2021. Finally, in 2022, 553 thousand 372 tourists, including

488,333 domestic and 65,039 foreign visitors, approached the pre-pandemic state and stayed in hotels in total.

2.3. Experiential Marketing

In order to respond to the increasing customer expectations, businesses have revised their marketing strategies and turned to offering experiences to attract customers to them (Lagiewski, Zekan 2006: 165). The concept of experience has thus shaped the understanding of marketing by providing significant competitive advantage. This concept was first to handled by Schmitt (1999a: 58) as a new approach to marketing. Although it initially attracted attention in the field of tourism, it has gained application in many fields. There is more than one definition for experiential marketing in the literature. Experiential marketing; according to You-Ming (2010), it is a communication strategy that increases the emotional and physical responses of consumers, and according to Smilansky (2017), it is a process that provides interaction by identifying customer wants and needs and satisfying customers accordingly, bringing the brand's character to life and adding value to the target audience.

Based on these definitions, it is possible to define experiential marketing as a marketing approach that prioritizes the expectations and demands of the customer and triggers loyalty to the brand and product through the experiences provided. Experiential marketing goes beyond customer loyalty and aims to establish an emotional bond with the customer. This emotional bond is the key element that differentiates experiential marketing from traditional marketing. Businesses aim to create this bond by offering unique and distinctive experiences. In this direction, businesses should design effective experiences using various experience providers. In this way, businesses gain competitive advantage in the market by offering personalized and effective experiences to their customers.

Schmitt (1999a), in his study, divided the experiences to be delivered to the target audience into sub-dimensions as sensory, emotional, intellectual, behavioral and relational experiences and gathered them under the name of strategic experience modules (SEM). In the related study, it is emphasized that these experience modules constitute the basic elements of experiential marketing.

Sensory Experience (Sense):

Sensory experience is the experiences we perceive through our senses such as sight, touch, hearing, taste and smell. When the consumer has an experience, they first encounter the sensory Experience (Tsaur, Chiu, Wang 2006: 52). The feeling of customer satisfaction provided by the products and services offered with these different sensory stimulations increases the sensation of the business. In this way, the customer remembers the unique elements of the business such as sound, smell, visuality, taste and texture.

Emotional Experience (Feel):

Emotional experiences are those that appeal to customers' inner worlds, create positive emotions and the key word is to make them feel. Emotional experiences aim to create strong emotions in customers by making them feel kindness, care and authenticity. Today, the focus is on the emotional experience that the product or service makes the consumer feel, even before its benefits (Schmitt 1999b: 61). In order to design these emotional experiences, it is necessary to accurately perceive the target audience's perspective and feelings.

Intellectual Experience (Think):

Attracting customers by surprising them and activating their thoughts has been defined as an intellectual experience. The intellectual experience includes experiences that encourage customers to direct creativity by thinking and focus on the topic being thought about (Schmitt 1999b: 148-149). In order for an intellectual experience to emerge, the business or brand should focus on topics that will interest the target audience, arouse curiosity and thus motivate them to think.

Behavioral Experience (Act):

Experiences that lead consumers to have physical experiences and aim to enrich their lives by showing them different ways are called behavioral experiences. These experiences are usually motivated by a role model, such as an actor or an athlete, to take action. Different characteristics of consumers such as social identity, cultural characteristics, lifestyle and demographic characteristics play an important role in shaping the behavioral experience (Schmitt 1999b: 68).

Relational Experience (Relate):

The last of the experience modules, which enables the customer to relate the product or service they experience with the group they belong to or want to belong to, is defined as relational experience (Schmitt 1999b: 40). Relational experience encompasses the other four experience modules. Individuals are related not only to the personalities and emotions they have, but also to what they gain from other people and their personal experiences (Sheu, Yan-Hua, Ko-Tsung 2009: 11). In relational experiences, which also include the other four modules, it is important to build relationships with other consumers by belonging to a group rather than individuality, increasing social effects. As an example from the tourism sector, a customer staying at a hotel will be both peaceful and satisfied with the unforgettable holiday experience where he/she does not feel alienated and the hotel staff will help him/her with all his/her needs from the warm welcome during his/her vacation. This positive experience will affect the customer's next choice. This situation shows that a relationship is established between the hotel and the customer and that the customer has a sense of belonging with the established bond, thus experiencing a relational experience.

2.4. Customer Satisfaction

The concept of customer satisfaction, which was first mentioned by Cardozo in 1965, was recognized by a conference held in the USA in 1980 that it was necessary to adopt and understand this concept in order to create an effective market strategy (Gök 2006: 80). Customer satisfaction; Parasuraman and others (1988:28) defined the global assessment or attitude of the consumer about a product and service, Hunt (1977) as the process by which the consumer evaluates the experience as good as it should be, and Yi (1990:21) as a result of the customer's consumption process. In summary, customer satisfaction is the feeling created by the consumer as a result of interaction with a product or service.

Customers have expectations for a product or service they will buy. They are satisfied if their expectations coincide with what is offered to them. Customer satisfaction occurs as a result of the needs and motivations met. Satisfied customers turn to the same business for the next purchase. Therefore, customer satisfaction is at the center of marketing strategies. Satisfaction can be created by making decisions in line with the information and accurate analyzes about customers and taking action on these decisions (Chan, Cathy, Baum 2013: 7). The satisfaction created in the customer leads to customer loyalty and long-term relationships between the

business and the consumer by increasing loyalty to the business (Yokuş, 2016: 2). In addition, customer satisfaction has become one of the topics of interest in the literature due to its potential to influence behavioral intentions, especially recommendation intentions (Söderlund 1998; Hunt 1977).

2.5. Intention to Recommend

In the most basic terms, recommendation is a concept in which customers make positive or negative recommendations to another buyer about a product or service (Harrison 2001: 63). The intention to recommend is defined as the intention of consumers to pass on the experience of the product or service they have purchased to others and to encourage other people to have the same experience (Zeithaml, Berry, Parasuraman 1996: 28).

These recommendations are very important because they affect consumers in the purchasing decision process and will be a good advertisement for the business marketing the product or service. For this reason, businesses aim to increase the recognition and profitability levels of the business by focusing on customer satisfaction rather than product or service marketing and, as a result, the intention to recommend the satisfied customer.

3. METHOD

Today, businesses are trying to gain an advantage over their competitors by creating personalized experiences in order to attract existing customers and new customers who are faced with a wide range of options. At this point, the experiential marketing approach stands out as it interacts with customer satisfaction and the intention of satisfied customers to recommend to their close environment. The purpose of this study is to examine the level of the relationship between the five dimensions of experiential marketing in winter tourism, namely sensory, emotional, intellectual, behavioral, and relational experience modules and customer satisfaction and intention to recommend. It is aimed to contribute to businesses in determining their marketing strategies by measuring the relationship between the perceptions of experiential marketing approach of tourists visiting hotels serving for winter tourism and their satisfaction and the relationship between these perceptions and their intention to recommend. Another aim of this study is to provide new information and contributions by filling an important gap in this field due to the limited number of related studies in the existing literature.

As a data collection tool, the data obtained as a result of a detailed literature review The questionnaire form created based on the information was used. The questionnaire consists of a total of 43 questions in 7 sections; sensory 5, emotional 5, intellectual 4, behavioral 5, relational 3, customer satisfaction 5, recommendation 3 and 6 questions to measure demographic characteristics. It was used in 4 languages: Turkish, English, Russian and Ukrainian. Between January and March 2022, a total of 392 questionnaires, 188 of which 188 online, were applied to local and foreign visitors staying in hotels serving for winter tourism in Erciyes ski resort and the city center, both online with QR codes and face-to-face survey technique. When the data obtained were analyzed, 10 questionnaires with missing information and markings were considered invalid. Of the 382 questionnaires, 132 were answered in English, 25 in Russian, 6 in Ukrainian and 219 in Turkish. The survey data were analyzed using SPSS Version 26 (Statistical Packages for Social Science).

Prior to the research, approval was obtained by the Ethics Committee of Sivas Cumhuriyet University Ethics Committee on 31.01.2022 (Number of studies: E 60263016-050.06.04-125689,

Decision number: 21). The participants were informed about the study before and their consent was obtained.

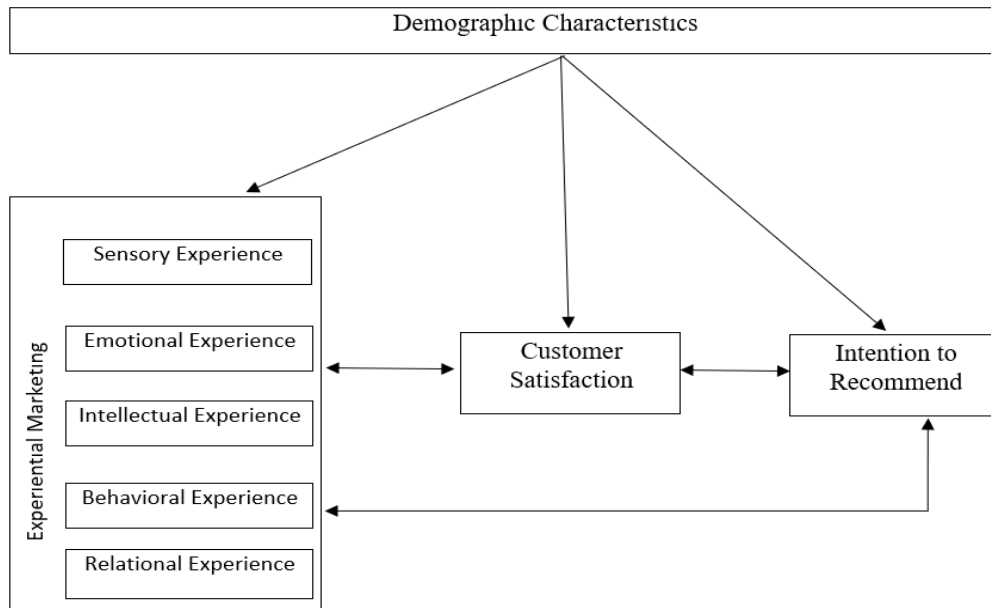


Figure 1. The Research Model

In the first stage of the developed research model, the relationship between experiential marketing dimensions and customer satisfaction and recommendation intention variables will be tested. In the second stage of the research model, the relationship between customer satisfaction and intention to recommend will be examined. According to the information obtained through literature research, a total of 6 main hypotheses were created and this model was created for the purpose of the study.

Hypotheses of the Study;

H1: All dimensions of experiential marketing differ according to demographic characteristics.

H2: Customer satisfaction differs according to demographic characteristics.

H3: Intention to recommend differs according to demographic characteristics.

H4: There is a significant and positive relationship between experiential marketing and customer satisfaction.

H5: There is a significant and positive relationship between experiential marketing and

H6: There is a significant and positive relationship between customer satisfaction and intention to recommend.

4. FINDINGS

When the reliability analysis results of the scale are examined, Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of sensory experience dimension is 0.933; Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of emotional experience dimension is 0.983; Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of intellectual experience dimension is 0.966; Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of behavioral experience dimension is 0.922; Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of relational experience dimension is 0.929; Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of customer satisfaction is 0.980; and Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of recommendation intention is 0.906.

When Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients are analyzed, it is understood that this study has a high degree of reliability.

The questions asked to determine the demographic characteristics of the individuals participating in the research the findings related to the questions are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Participants According to Demographic Characteristics

Gender	N	%	Marital Status	N	%
Male	178	46,6	Married	180	47,1
Female	204	53,4	Single	202	52,9
Age			Income		
9-18	33	8,6	No income	91	23,8
19-28	77	20,2	3000 or less	18	4,7
29-38	147	38,5	3001-4500	41	10,7
39-48	100	26,2	4501-6000	92	24,1
49-68	25	6,5	6001-7500	55	14,4
Education			7500 or above	85	22,3
Elementary	6	1,6	Occupation		
Highschool	42	11,0	Employed	277	72,5
Associate Degree	31	8,1	Unemployed	105	27,5
Bachelor's Degree	192	50,3	Total	382	100,0
Master Degree/PhD	111	29,1			

46.6% of the participants were men and 53.4% were women. 47.1% were married and 52.9% were single. Age range 9-18 is 8.6%, age range 19-28 is 20.2%, age range 29-38 is 38.5%, age range 39-48 is 26.2% and age range 49-68 is 6.5%. It is understood that 23.8% of the participants have no income, 4.7% have an income of 3000 and below, 17% have an income of 3001-4500, 24.1% have an income of 4501-6000, 14.4% have an income of 6001-7500, and 22.3% have an income of 7500 and above. When we look at the educational status of the participants, it is seen that 1.6% of the participants are primary school-middle school graduates, 11% are high school graduates, 8.1% are associate degree graduates, while 50.3% of the participants have bachelor's degree, followed by 29.1% master's/doctorate degree. When we look at the occupations of the participants, we see a wide range of occupations such as health personnel, civil servants, guides and business owners, and therefore they are divided into two groups: employed and unemployed. 72.5% of the participants have a profession and are employed, while 27.5% are unemployed.

4.1. Findings Related to Normal Distribution

The normality test was applied to determine which of the statistical tests, parametric or nonparametric tests, would be used in the analysis of the research data. Since the research sample was more than 50, it was evaluated with Kolmogorow-Smirnov results (Büyüköztürk 2018: 82).

Looking at the results of the Kolmogorow-Smirnov test for the experiential marketing scale, customer satisfaction scale and intention to recommend scale, it is seen that the significance level ($p < 0.5$) is less than 0.05 and does not show a normal distribution. As a result of the analysis, it is understood that the scales are suitable for nonparametric test analysis.

Skewness and kurtosis values should also be examined to determine the suitability of the expressions of the scales for normal distribution. If these values are in the range of (+1.5) - (-1.5), it is concluded that the data exhibit a normal distribution (Büyüköztürk 2018: 83).

Looking at the skewness and kurtosis values, it is understood that they are not in this range and nonparametric tests can be applied.

4.2. Mann-Whitney U Test

This section presents the findings of the study obtained by using Mann-Whitney U test for experiential marketing, customer satisfaction and intention to recommend variables and gender, marital status and occupation demographic characteristics.

Table 2. Mann-Whitney U Test According to Gender of Participants

Variables	Gender	N	Rank Mean	Rank Total	Mann Whitney U	Z	p
Sensory Experience	Male	178	195,97	34883,00	17360	-0,810	0,417
	Female	204	187,60	38270,00			
Emotional Experience	Male	178	193,05	34362,50	17880,5	-0,292	0,770
	Female	204	190,15	38790,50			
Intellectual Experience	Male	178	194,61	34640,50	17602,5	-0,586	0,557
	Female	204	188,79	38512,50			
Behavioral Experience	Male	178	202,34	36016,00	16227	-1,886	0,059
	Female	204	182,04	37137,00			
Relational Experience	Male	178	195,86	34863,50	17379,5	-0,860	0,389
	Female	204	187,69	38289,50			
Experiential Marketing	Male	178	199,17	35451,50	16791,5	-1,307	0,191
	Female	204	184,81	37701,50			
Customer Satisfaction	Male	178	199,13	35445,50	16797,5	-1,515	0,129
	Female	204	184,84	37707,50			
Intention to Recommend	Male	178	192,82	34322,00	17921	-0,267	0,789
	Female	204	190,35	38831,00			

In the analysis conducted to determine the perceptions towards experiential marketing (sensory experience, emotional experience, intellectual experience, behavioral experience and relational experience), customer satisfaction and recommendation intention variables according to gender, the values obtained ($p > 0.05$) were found to be greater than 0.05 significance level. Statistically, there is no significant difference according to the gender of the participants.

Table 3. Mann-Whitney U Test According to Participants' Marital Status

Variables	Marial Status	N	Rank Mean	Rank Total	Mann Whitney U	Z	p
Sensory Experience	Married	180	198,34	35700,50	16949,5	-1,252	0,210
	Single	202	185,41	37452,50			
Emotional Experience	Married	180	195,23	35141,00	17509	-0,710	0,477
	Single	202	188,18	38012,00			
Intellectual Experience	Married	180	195,02	35103,50	17546,5	-0,671	0,502
	Single	202	188,36	38049,50			
Behavioral Experience	Married	180	202,74	36493,00	16157	-1,977	0,048
	Single	202	181,49	36660,00			
Relational Experience	Married	180	198,34	35701,50	16948,5	-1,363	0,172
	Single	202	185,40	37451,50			
Experiential Marketing	Married	180	202,64	36474,50	16175,500	-1,918	0,055
	Single	202	181,58	36678,50			
Customer Satisfaction	Married	180	199,41	35893,00	16757	-1,586	0,112
	Single	202	184,46	37260,00			
Intention to Recommend	Married	180	196,51	35372,00	17278	-1,024	0,305
	Single	202	187,03	37781,00			

In the analysis conducted to determine the perceptions towards experiential marketing (sensory experience, emotional experience, intellectual experience, behavioral experience and relational experience), customer satisfaction and intention to recommend variables according to marital status, the values obtained ($p > 0.05$) were found to be greater than 0.05 significance level. Statistically, there is no significant difference according to the marital status of the participants.

Table 4. Mann-Whitney U Test According to Participants' Occupations

Variables	Occupation	N	Rank Mean	Rank Total	Mann Whitney U	Z	p
Sensory Experience	Employed	277	190,28	52708,00	14205	-0,384	0,700
	Unemployed	105	194,71	20445,00			
Emotional Experience	Employed	277	188,98	52348,00	13845	-0,826	0,408
	Unemployed	105	198,14	20805,00			
Intellectual Experience	Employed	277	188,44	52197,00	13694	-1,005	0,314
	Unemployed	105	199,58	20956,00			
Behavioral Experience	Employed	277	187,63	51972,50	13469,5	-1,172	0,241
	Unemployed	105	201,72	21180,50			
Relational Experience	Employed	277	189,74	52557,50	14054,5	-0,604	0,545
	Unemployed	105	196,15	20595,50			
Experiential Marketing	Employed	277	189,38	52457,50	13954,500	-0,629	0,529
	Unemployed	105	197,10	20695,50			
Customer Satisfaction	Employed	277	189,38	52457,50	13960,5	-0,725	0,468
	Unemployed	105	197,10	20695,50			
Intention to Recommend	Employed	277	190,08	52653,00	14150	-0,498	0,618
	Unemployed	105	195,24	20500,00			

In the analysis conducted to determine the perceptions towards experiential marketing (sensory experience, emotional experience, intellectual experience, behavioral experience and relational experience), customer satisfaction and recommendation intention variables according to their professions, the values obtained ($p > 0.05$) were found to be greater than 0.05 significance level. Statistically, there is no significant difference according to the occupations of the participants.

4.3. Kruskal-Wallis H Test

This section presents the findings of the study obtained by using the Kruskal-Wallis H test for experiential marketing, customer satisfaction and intention to recommend variables and demographic characteristics of age, education and income.

Table 5. Kruskal-Wallis H Test According to Age of Participants

Variables	Age	N	Rank Mean	Ki Kare	p
Sensory Experience	9/18	33	189,00	10,153	0,071
	19/28	77	173,17		
	29/38	147	204,77		
	39/48	100	178,72		
	49/68	25	416,02		
Emotional Experience	9/18	33	202,47	6,135	0,293
	19/28	77	180,71		
	29/38	147	199,29		
	39/48	100	178,26		
	49/68	25	421,75		
Intellectual Experience	9/18	33	196,74	5,078	0,406
	19/28	77	179,33		

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	29/38	147	198,63		
	39/48	100	181,98		
	49/68	25	426,09		
Behavioral Experience	9/18	33	189,56	4,294	0,508
	19/28	77	176,10		
	29/38	147	199,79		
	39/48	100	185,69		
	49/68	25	439,16		
Relational Experience	9/18	33	191,77	2,932	0,711
	19/28	77	178,86		
	29/38	147	195,98		
	39/48	100	189,87		
	49/68	25	409,99		
Experiential Marketing	9/18	33	187,47	10,409	0,064
	19/28	77	168,72		
	29/38	147	206,63		
	39/48	100	179,42		
	49/68	25	227,90		
Customer Satisfaction	9/18	33	188,41	3,735	0,588
	19/28	77	181,69		
	29/38	147	198,05		
	39/48	100	185,09		
	49/68	25	409,54		
Intention to Recommend	9/18	33	184,24	4,934	0,424
	19/28	77	179,97		
	29/38	147	197,16		
	39/48	100	190,41		
	49/68	25	367,27		

In the analysis conducted to determine the perceptions towards experiential marketing (sensory experience, emotional experience, intellectual experience, behavioral experience and relational experience), customer satisfaction and recommendation intention variables according to age, it was seen that the values obtained ($p > 0.05$) were greater than 0.05 significance level. Statistically, there is no significant difference according to the age of the participants.

Table 6. Kruskal-Wallis H Test According to the Education of the Participants

Variables	Education	N	Rank Mean	Ki Kare	p
Sensory Experience	Elementary	48	430,12	5,751	0,218
	Highschool	31	195,50		
	Associate Degree	192	199,50		
	Bachelor's Degree	111	176,61		
Emotional Experience	Elementary	48	419,89	6,744	0,150
	Highschool	31	193,27		
	Associate Degree	192	201,13		
	Bachelor's Degree	111	174,63		
Intellectual Experience	Elementary	48	414,82	6,661	0,155
	Highschool	31	192,76		
	Associate Degree	192	201,37		
	Bachelor's Degree	111	176,42		
Behavioral Experience	Elementary	48	419,43	3,804	0,433
	Highschool	31	184,89		

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	Associate Degree	192	199,09		
	Bachelor's Degree	111	182,01		
Relational Experience	Elementary	48	399,80	6,038	0,196
	Highschool	31	184,39		
	Associate Degree	192	201,50		
	Bachelor's Degree	111	180,57		
Experiential Marketing	Elementary	48	432,46	5,489	0,241
	Highschool	31	190,58		
	Associate Degree	192	199,99		
	Bachelor's Degree	111	178,64		
Customer Satisfaction	Elementary	48	398,46	6,517	0,164
	Highschool	31	182,10		
	Associate Degree	192	202,05		
	Bachelor's Degree	111	180,30		
Intention to Recommend	Elementary	48	399,60	4,933	0,294
	Highschool	31	199,66		
	Associate Degree	192	199,03		
	Bachelor's Degree	111	178,69		

In the analysis conducted to determine the perceptions towards experiential marketing (sensory experience, emotional experience, intellectual experience, behavioral experience and relational experience), customer satisfaction and intention to recommend variables according to educational background, it was seen that the values obtained ($p > 0.05$) were greater than 0.05 significance level. Statistically, there is no significant difference according to the education of the participants.

Table 7. Kruskal-Wallis H Test According to the Income of the Participants

Variables	Income	N	Rank Mean	Ki Kare	p
Sensory Experience	No income	91	186,97	6,552	0,256
	3000 or less	18	207,69		
	3001-4500	41	183,32		
	4501-6000	92	180,80		
	6001-7500	55	183,05		
	7500 or above	85	213,91		
Emotional Experience	No income	91	191,96	3,499	0,624
	3000 or less	18	195,56		
	3001-4500	41	181,54		
	4501-6000	92	179,47		
	6001-7500	55	198,08		
	7500 or above	85	203,71		
Intellectual Experience	No income	91	193,13	4,426	0,490
	3000 or less	18	193,36		
	3001-4500	41	177,33		
	4501-6000	92	179,43		
	6001-7500	55	196,34		
	7500 or above	85	206,14		

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Behavioral Experience	No income	91	194,90	9,967	0,076
	3000 or less	18	186,97		
	3001-4500	41	163,82		
	4501-6000	92	176,21		
	6001-7500	55	194,30		
	7500 or above	85	216,91		
Relational Experience	No income	91	190,99	7,262	0,202
	3000 or less	18	184,97		
	3001-4500	41	176,13		
	4501-6000	92	179,52		
	6001-7500	55	193,13		
	7500 or above	85	212,75		
Experiential Marketing	No income	91	188,03	6,903	0,228
	3000 or less	18	200,75		
	3001-4500	41	167,26		
	4501-6000	92	182,41		
	6001-7500	55	192,00		
	7500 or above	85	214,46		
Customer Satisfaction	No income	91	193,21	7,375	0,194
	3000 or less	18	183,42		
	3001-4500	41	178,29		
	4501-6000	92	177,72		
	6001-7500	55	192,31		
	7500 or above	85	212,15		
Intention to Recommend	No income	91	192,36	8,901	0,113
	3000 or less	18	190,14		
	3001-4500	41	177,37		
	4501-6000	92	175,66		
	6001-7500	55	193,66		
	7500 or above	85	213,43		

In the analysis conducted to determine the perceptions towards experiential marketing (sensory experience, emotional experience, intellectual experience, behavioral experience and relational experience), customer satisfaction and recommendation intention variables according to income, it was seen that the values obtained ($p > 0.05$) were greater than 0.05 significance level. Statistically, there is no significant difference according to the income of the participants.

4.4. Correlation Analysis

Experiential marketing, customer satisfaction and recommendation intention variables of the research Spearman Correlation Analysis was used to explain the relationship between the two. The findings obtained as a result of the analysis are given below.

Table 8. Spearman Correlation Analysis Results between Experiential Marketing and Customer Satisfaction

		Sensory Experience	Emotional Experience	Intellectual Experience	Behavioral Experience	Relational Experience	Experiential Marketing	Customer Satisfaction
Sensory Experience	r	1						
	p							
Emotional Experience	r	,903**	1					
	p	,000						
Intellectual Experience	r	,899**	,960**	1				
	p	,000	,000					
Behavioral Experience	r	,761**	,793**	,828**	1			
	p	,000	,000	,000				
Relational Experience	r	,831**	,895**	,917**	,827**	1		
	p	,000	,000	,000	,000			
Experiential Marketing	r	,909**	,889**	,896**	,920**	,846**	1	
	p	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000		
Customer Satisfaction	r	,843**	,886**	,914**	,813**	,925**	,836**	1
	p	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	

** p=0,01

When the findings regarding the relationship between the variables are examined, there is a strong and very strong relationship between each of the dimensions of sensory experience, emotional experience, intellectual experience, behavioral experience and relational experience of experiential marketing and customer satisfaction at 0.01 significance level (,843** ; ,886** ; ,914** ; ,813** ; ,925**). This relationship shows that as the sensory, emotional, intellectual, behavioral and relational experience increases, customer satisfaction will increase linearly. The experiential marketing dimensions that have a very strong relationship with the customer satisfaction variable are relational experience and intellectual experience.

Table 9. Spearman Correlation Analysis Results between Experiential Marketing and Intention to Recommend

		Sensory Experience	Emotional Experience	Intellectual Experience	Behavioral Experience	Relational Experience	Experiential Marketing	Intention to Satisfaction
Sensory Experience	r	1						
	p							
Emotional Experience	r	,903**	1					
	p	,000						
Intellectual Experience	r	,899**	,960**	1				
	p	,000	,000					
Behavioral Experience	r	,761**	,793**	,828**	1			
	p	,000	,000	,000				
Relational Experience	r	,831**	,895**	,917**	,827**	1		
	p	,000	,000	,000	,000			
Experiential Marketing	r	,909**	,889**	,896**	,920**	,846**	1	
	p	,000	,000	,000	,000			
Intention to Satisfaction	r	,804**	,818**	,849**	,741**	,841**	,787**	1
	p	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	

** p=0,01

When the findings regarding the relationship between the variables are examined, there is a strong relationship between each of the dimensions of sensory experience, emotional experience, intellectual experience, behavioral experience and relational experience of experiential marketing and recommendation intention at 0.01 significance level (.804**; .818**; .849**; .741**; .841**). This relationship indicates that as the sensory, emotional, intellectual, behavioral and relational experience increases, the intention to recommend will increase linearly.

Table 10. Spearman Correlation Analysis Results between Experiential Marketing and Intention to Recommend

		Customer Satisfaction	Intention to Recommend
Customer Satisfaction	r	1	
	p		
Intention to Recommend	r	.853**	1
	p	.000	

** p=0,01

When the findings regarding the relationship between the variables are analyzed, there is a strong relationship between customer satisfaction and intention to recommend at 0.01 significance level (.853**). This relationship shows that as the satisfaction increases, the intention to recommend will increase linearly.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

With the diversity of products and services offered in today's increasingly competitive environment, customers want to experience customized products or services beyond their expectations and benefits. In this direction, the experiential marketing approach, which has sensory, emotional, intellectual, behavioral and relational experience modules, gains importance. With the experiential marketing approach, businesses attract the attention of their customers and offer products and services beyond the expectations and benefits they desire to experience. Customers who experience these products and services experience a sense of satisfaction and become satisfied customers. This customer satisfaction provided by the business triggers the intention of recommendation in satisfied customers and turns into business advertisement as feedback when they recommend the product or service they have experienced to their environment. As a result, the experiential marketing approach utilized by businesses is a concept related to customer satisfaction and intention to recommend, and scientific studies support this. For the tourism sector, which is based on experience, concepts such as experiential marketing approach, customer satisfaction and intention to recommend are important. In this respect, winter tourism, which brings the chance to spread tourism throughout the year as an alternative to mass tourism, has been chosen for the research. In the research, the relationship between experiential marketing in winter tourism and customer satisfaction and intention to recommend was tried to be determined and mountain hotels and city hotels in Erciyes Ski Center were preferred as the application area. Survey data for the research were obtained both face-to-face and online. The survey data were analyzed in line with the six main hypotheses and sub-hypotheses formed as a result of the detailed literature review.

As a result of the analysis, it is seen that 53.4% of the majority are women, 52.9% are single, and they are between the ages of 29 and 38 (38.5%). The participants consisted of individuals with incomes between 4501-6000 (24.1%) or 7500 and above (22.3%). Their education level is

bachelor's degree (50.3%) and master's/doctorate (29.1%). 72.5% of the respondents were employed, while 27.5% were unemployed.

A normality test was conducted to determine whether there was a significant relationship between the variables of the study. As it was seen that the data were not normally distributed, nonparametric tests were applied.

In the Mann-Whitney U tests, it was determined that there was no statistically significant difference since the values ($p > 0.05$) obtained from the analysis to determine the perceptions towards experiential marketing (sensory experience, emotional experience, intellectual experience, behavioral experience and relational experience), customer satisfaction and recommendation intention variables according to gender, marital status and occupation were greater than 0.05 significance level.

In the Kruskal-Wallis H tests, it was determined that there was no statistically significant difference according to the age of the participants, since the values ($p > 0.05$) obtained from the analysis to determine the perceptions towards experiential marketing (sensory experience, emotional experience, intellectual experience, behavioral experience and relational experience), customer satisfaction and intention to recommend variables according to their age, education level and income were greater than 0.05 significance level.

When the correlation analysis conducted to show whether the participants' experiential marketing experience in winter tourism has a significant and positive relationship with customer satisfaction and intention to recommend is examined; it is found that there is a strong and very strong relationship ($.843^{**}$; $.886^{**}$; $.914^{**}$; $.813^{**}$; $.925^{**}$) between each of the sensory experience, emotional experience, intellectual experience, behavioral experience and relational experience dimensions of experiential marketing and customer satisfaction at 0.01 significance level. Again, it was found that there is a strong relationship ($.804^{**}$; $.818^{**}$; $.849^{**}$; $.741^{**}$; $.841^{**}$) between each of the sensory experience, emotional experience, intellectual experience, behavioral experience and relational experience dimensions of experiential marketing and recommendation intention at 0.01 significance level. The significant and positive relationship between experiential marketing and intention to recommend in winter tourism shows that the intention to recommend will increase linearly as the sensory, emotional, intellectual, behavioral and relational experience increases. In addition, there is a strong relationship ($.853^{**}$) between customer satisfaction and intention to recommend at 0.01 significance level. The significant and positive relationship between customer satisfaction and intention to recommend in winter tourism shows that as the satisfaction increases, the intention to recommend will increase linearly. As a result of these analyzes, the data on the acceptance or rejection of the hypotheses are presented in the table below.

Table 11. Acceptance and Rejection of Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Accepted	Rejected
H1: All dimensions of experiential marketing differ according to demographic characteristics.		⊙
H2: Customer satisfaction differs according to demographic characteristics.		⊙
H3: Intention to recommend differs according to demographic characteristics.		⊙
H4: There is a significant and positive relationship between experiential marketing and customer satisfaction.	⊙	
H5: There is a significant and positive relationship between experiential marketing and recommendation intention.	⊙	

H6: There is a significant and positive relationship between customer satisfaction and intention to recommend.

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As a result, it has been revealed that all five dimensions of experiential marketing in winter tourism have a significant and positive relationship with customer satisfaction and intention to recommend. In addition, there is a significant and positive relationship between customer satisfaction and intention to recommend. It is understood that experiential marketing increases customer satisfaction and this satisfaction is transformed into recommendation intention. Other studies on experiential marketing, customer satisfaction and recommendation intention prove the accuracy of these significant and positive relationships.

The study reveals that the sub-dimensions of experiential marketing, namely the ideational and relational experience modules, are the most influential dimensions on both customer satisfaction and intention to recommend. In this context, it is understood that these two experience modules are the dimensions to be taken into consideration in customer experiences to be designed using an experiential marketing approach in winter tourism. For this reason, businesses serving in winter tourism can design experiences that will make the customer think, arouse curiosity and establish a bond by considering the intellectual and relational dimensions.

The limitations of the study are that the convenience sampling method was preferred and the study was conducted only in mountain hotels and city hotels in Erciyes ski resort. Since there are few experiential marketing studies in winter tourism, this alternative tourism type has been preferred as a study area. In addition, studies can be conducted to see the relationship between experiential marketing and customer satisfaction and recommendation intention in different alternative tourism types and contribute to the literature. In addition, the research can be reapplied and compared on different domestic or foreign ski centers that are leading in winter tourism. As another research suggestion, the effects of variables on each other can be examined.

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