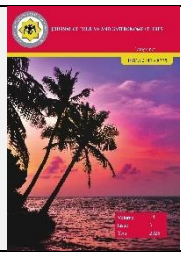
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Tracing the Path from Overtourism to Last Chance Tourism: Will Destinations Become Victims of Their Own Popularity?

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Abstract

Overtourism refers to tourism practices that push destinations beyond their physical, social, and environmental limits. In contrast, last chance tourism (LCT) emerges from the urge to experience threatened landscapes, seascapes, or cultural heritage before they are gone. This study explores how Turkish destinations move from overtourism toward LCT, showing how intense visitor pressure combined with weak governance can gradually transform places into sites perceived as "last chances." Drawing on a thematic content analysis of 35 studies published between 2019 and 2025, the research is structured around six key themes: visitor density and carrying capacity; visual representation and digital perception; governance shortcomings; environmental degradation; perceptions of threatened heritage; and emerging conservation demands, restrictions, narratives, and sustainability ethics. The findings suggest that overcrowding, amplified through digital media, fuels cycles of overtourism, while ineffective governance and environmental decline speed up the shift toward LCT. As destinations begin to be seen as facing imminent loss, they risk being framed as places that must be visited "before it's too late," further intensifying visitor pressure. By unpacking this progression, the study offers a conceptual framework for understanding the transition from overtourism to last chance tourism and highlights its implications for more responsible destination management and policy-making.

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