

The Relationship of Destination Image with the Principle of Sustainable Tourism: A Case of Alanya

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to monitor how the destination image of Alanya is perceived by tourists as well as by local people and to examine the relationship of the findings with the principles of sustainable tourism. Alanya is one of the most mature touristic destination in Turkey and although it is relatively small district with a population of 250.000 people, hosts 6,5 % of the total foreign arrivals of Turkey which is over 31 Million in 2011. Particularly, the priority of the economic dimension of sustainability of a destination like Alanya, heavily dependent on tourism, is continuity rather than growth. This paper aims to contribute to tourism literature since there is no past research to measure destination image of Alanya has been conducted.

Keywords: Sustainable tourism, destination image, Alanya, sustainable development, sustainability.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors in the global economy considering especially last two decades. The major difference of tourism compared to other sectors is that tourism has been steadily growing regardless to general economic conditions with the exception of periods of security crisis and natural disasters. Therefore, although the economic crisis which started in 2008 particularly in EU and USA and its effects still continue, the international tourist arrivals and tourism receipts of Turkey have shown uninterrupted growth. Countries and even different destinations of the same country are in a severe competition in order to take a bigger share from 920 billion USD tourism expenditures worldwide realized in 2010. Destination image, quality, perceived value and the level of satisfaction of the expectations are gaining importance in the competition. Number of academic studies on tourism have also been increasing in line with these developments and as conclusion the conceptualization of sustainable tourism, destination, carrying capacity, destination life cycle have been added into the tourism literature.

2. ALANYA AS A TOURISM DESTINATION

Alanya is a resort in Antalya, and it's situated in the 135 km east coast of Antalya Gulf on the Anatolian Peninsula. Apart from the beach and the sea, there are a number of caves of interest to visitors. Following the arrivals of Germans in the late 1950s, Alanya met with tourism (Aktas et al., 2007). Today, Alanya has become one of the most important tourism destinations of Turkey with its 6.5% share in total, approximately 150.000 beds in 668 hotels and annual tourism receipts exceeding \$1 billion in 2009. Moreover, there is a steady increase in tourist number of Alanya, Antalya and Turkey, except 2006 and 2009. Due to global crisis, Antalya met with a decrease of 3,55% in tourist numbers.

At present, Germans, Russians, Dutch, Swedish and Ukranian are some of the largest groups visited Antalya and Alanya. Contrary to Germans, there is a steady increase in the number of Russians visiting Antalya and Alanya for last five years (Doğan et al., 2010; Directorate of Antalya Culture and Tourism, 2009; Economics Report of Alanya Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2008). Moreover, some tourists from different countries have bought real estate, after that, get residence permits in the Alanya. Therefore, Alanya is one of the famous destinations for the European tourists.

3. DESTINATION IMAGE AND SUSTANAIBLE TOURISM

By simplest saying, destination image concept is the individual's cognitive / perceptual and affective evaluation of a place positively or negatively. (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999). As commonly agreed, psychological factors, such as values, motivations, personality, demographic factors and stimulus factors such as organic and induced information sources and previous experience influence the image formation. Destination image is not only the key factor in pre-visit destination selection process but also influence after-visit tourist behavior like recommending the place or willingness to revisit.

Sustainable tourism contains three main principles of its parental concept; sustainable development that affects mechanism of global economy and changes behavioral forms, customs and perceptions of individuals since worldwide awareness of the concept has grew by the report called "Our Common Future" prepared by WCED and released in 1987. These principles can be summarized as the planning and realization of economic development can only be achieved by taking environmental and socio-cultural factors into account dynamically. However, some important differences especially in priorities may arise between sustainable tourism and sustainable development. Particularly, the priority of the economic dimension of sustainability of a destination like Alanya, heavily dependent on tourism, is continuity rather than growth.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this paper is to monitor how the destination image of Alanya is perceived by tourists as well as by local people and to examine the relationship of the findings with the principles of sustainable tourism. In this study, the image of Alanya has been analyzed from the

point of view of local people and examined the relationship between sustainable tourism and the image of Alanya. In this study, the pilot survey results are given which is done on the local communities. This study is going to continue on both local residents and tourists until end of the year. This paper aims to contribute to tourism literature since there is no past research to measure destination image of Alanya has been conducted and also to determine the conjunction of destination image perceived both locals and tourists. The importance of the latest is that, as the perceived image is the identity of a brand, the finding may play a key role as a component of a sustainable marketing mix by destination marketers.

Following to literature review, it was decided to apply a structured and unstructured survey in the pilot test since the destination image consists of two main component which are attribute based and holistic. The data were collected through a questionnaire designed by the authors (Ilban, 2007; Cakici ve Aksu, 2007; Guzel, 2007;) and 40 questionnaires were answered in the face to face survey. The data analysis utilizes the 40 usable surveys from the study. Demographic survey part of the questionnaire is composed of 6 variables. On the second part of the questionnaire, there are 33 variables to measure the destination image of Alanya. And finally one unstructured questions were asked. The instrument consisted of the perceptions of image of Alanya questions answered on a 1-5 likert scales labeled “strongly disagree” (1) and “strongly agree” (5). SPSS 16.0 was used for statistical analysis. Frequency and percentage analyzes were used. In order to determine the the dimensions of image of a destination, the data, has been applied factor analysis (Principal Component Analysis).

5. RESEARCH FINDINGS

60 questionnaires were analyzed with using SPSS program. Table 1 presents characteristics of the sample. Among 60 respondents, 28,3% were Female, 71,7% were male. The participants were examined according to marital status and almost equal distribution (% 53,3 married, % 46,7 single) is observed. As to the monthly regular income, the majority of respondents is clustered in the second group which may be considered poor living standards. Education level of pilot test respondents are mainly high school and university (51% and 31,7 % in a row). The relation of their employment with the tourism is distrusted equally as directly related to tourism sectors 33 %, indirectly related to tourism is 31.7 % and not related at all is 35 %.

Table 1: Demographic Findings

| Gender | n | % | Marital Status | n | % |
|---------------|----------|----------|-----------------------|----------|----------|
| Female | 17 | 28,3 | Maried | 32 | 53,3 |
| Male | 43 | 71,7 | Single | 28 | 46,7 |
| Total | 60 | 100,0 | Total | 60 | 100,0 |
| Age | n | % | Education | n | % |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|----------|--|----------|----------|
| 18-25 years | 11 | 18,3 | Primary education | 7 | 11,7 |
| 26-32 years | 18 | 30,0 | High school | 31 | 51,7 |
| 33-40 years | 20 | 33,3 | University | 19 | 31,7 |
| 41 years and over | 11 | 18,3 | Master's Degree | 3 | 5,0 |
| Income | n | % | Status of working in the tourism sector | n | % |
| Minimum wage | 14 | 23,3 | To direct | 20 | 33,3 |
| 751-1500 TL | 24 | 40,0 | To indirectly | 19 | 31,7 |
| 1501-2500 TL | 17 | 28,3 | Diffrent sectors | 21 | 35,0 |
| 2501 TL and over | 5 | 8,3 | | | |

Unstructured part of the survey is to define Alanya with 3 words. Alanya is most identified with the sea, tourism and sun by participants. 3S (sea, sand and sun) constitute the basic components of mass tourism. In this context, it could be said that natural attributes is the mainstream of tourism in Alanya.

Table 2: Mentioned in Alanya comes first thing to mind

| Statements | N | % |
|-------------------|----------|----------|
| Sea | 17 | 28,3 |
| Tourism | 12 | 20,0 |
| Sun | 8 | 13,3 |
| Antalya Castle | 4 | 6,7 |
| Banana | 3 | 5,0 |
| Natural Beauties | 2 | 3,3 |
| Entertainment | 2 | 3,3 |
| History | 2 | 3,3 |
| Other | 10 | 16,8 |

According to vast majority of respondents, Alanya has developed through tourism as indicated in table 3. On the hand, 43,4 % of respondents has no idea or disagree that the total income generated through tourism is fairly distributed in the society. According to sustainable tourism principles, tourism income shall serve to develop totally the welfare of the host people. Another missing point from sustainability point of view is the consideration of society and all stakeholders while realization of tourism planning. 50 % of respondents (30 % disagree and 30% no idea) indicates that only a part of the stakeholders define the planning of tourism activities and the concerns and ideas of the others are not taken into account. On the other hand, 60% of participants responded as tourists are satisfied and their expectations from Alanya visit are fulfilled. This finding is also in line with another survey conducted in 2010 (Doğan vd. 2010) that indicates 62 % of German and 35% of Russian tourists have visited Alanya more than one time for touristic purposes. Participants of the survey believe that tourists who visit to Alanya belong to low income group and the total expenditure realized by tourists is low compared to what is offered.

Table 3: Reflections of Tourism Phenomenon to Alanya: From the point of view of Local People

| Statements | Disagree | | Undecided | | Agree | |
|--|----------|------|-----------|------|-------|------|
| | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| 1. Alanya has developed through tourism. | 2 | 3,3 | 2 | 3,3 | 56 | 93,4 |
| 2. The revenue of all segments of the population has increased through tourism. | 22 | 36,7 | 4 | 6,7 | 34 | 56,6 |
| 3. Alanya meets holiday expectations of tourists. | 15 | 25,0 | 9 | 15,0 | 36 | 60,0 |
| 4. Tourists are satisfied with their destination choice. | 12 | 20,0 | 12 | 20,0 | 36 | 60,0 |
| 5. Spending of tourists which come to Alanya is high.. | 36 | 60,0 | 11 | 18,3 | 13 | 21,7 |
| 6. High income earning tourists come to Alanya. | 40 | 66,7 | 12 | 20,0 | 8 | 13,3 |
| 7. The tourism strategies is generated by taking ideas of all stakeholders into account. | 30 | 50,0 | 12 | 20,0 | 18 | 30,0 |
| 8. Alanya reflects its cultural characteristics on the tourism | 19 | 31,7 | 14 | 23,3 | 27 | 45,0 |

In order to determine the the dimensions of image of a destination, the data, has been applied factor analysis (Principal Component Analysis). Thus, the data reduction was provided. The principle component analysis was performed to identify the dimation of destination. The 25 destination image statements were subjected to factor analyzed with varimax rotation. It has been decided that factor analysis is interpreted by looking of KMO and Bartlett's test results. The minimum item loading of 0,35 was selected to interpret variables considered significant. After the application of factor analysis, six factors was identified. These factors were named as follows. Tourist Facilities and Infrastructure (Factor 1), Natural Environment and Its Protection (Factor 2), Destination Identity (Factor 3), Local People (Factor 4), Social and Physical Security (Factor 5) and Cultural Enrichment (Factor 6).

Table 4: Dimensions/Attributes Determining the Perceived Destination Image

| Factors | Disagree | | Undecided | | Agree | |
|---|----------|------|-----------|------|-------|------|
| | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| Tourist Facilities and Infrastructure | | | | | | |
| Accommodation facilites of Alanya are sufficient. | 5 | 8,3 | 8 | 13,3 | 47 | 78,3 |
| There are a variety and quality entertainment facilities in Alanya. | 8 | 13,3 | 11 | 18,3 | 41 | 68,3 |
| Transportation facilities within the city of Alanya is sufficient. | 11 | 18,3 | 10 | 16,7 | 39 | 65,0 |
| Alanya has a rich and quality leisure facilities. | 10 | 16,7 | 13 | 21,7 | 37 | 61,7 |
| Shopping facilities of Alanya is sufficient. | 17 | 28,3 | 10 | 16,7 | 33 | 55,0 |
| Infrastructure of Alanya is sufficient. | 18 | 30,0 | 17 | 28,3 | 25 | 41,7 |
| Natural Environment and Its Protection | | | | | | |
| Alanya has an unexcelled natural beauty. | 7 | 11,7 | 7 | 11,7 | 46 | 76,7 |
| The environment of Alanya is orderly, clean and hygienic. | 12 | 20,0 | 14 | 23,3 | 34 | 56,7 |
| In Alanya, Sea and beaches are well protected | 29 | 48,3 | 10 | 16,7 | 21 | 35,0 |
| In Alanya, natural environment is protected in a good way. | 26 | 43,3 | 14 | 23,3 | 20 | 33,3 |
| Alanya has a pristine and original nature. | 33 | 55,0 | 9 | 15,0 | 18 | 30,0 |
| Destination Identity | | | | | | |
| Vacation in Alanya is relaxing | 7 | 11,7 | 9 | 15,0 | 44 | 73,3 |
| Alanya is a global brand in tourism. | 14 | 23,3 | 8 | 13,3 | 38 | 63,3 |
| Alanya is a cheap region | 16 | 26,7 | 14 | 23,3 | 30 | 50,0 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Tourism in Alanya is well planned. | 24 | 40,0 | 16 | 26,7 | 20 | 33,3 |
| Local People | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| Locals of Alanya are helpful and hospitable | 12 | 20,0 | 13 | 21,7 | 35 | 58,3 |
| Locals welcome tourists in good manner. | 12 | 20,0 | 14 | 23,3 | 34 | 56,7 |
| Alanya has well educated and skilled population. | 24 | 40,0 | 13 | 21,7 | 23 | 38,3 |
| Social and Physical Security | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| Alanya is a safe town. | 6 | 10,0 | 13 | 21,7 | 41 | 68,3 |
| Shops in Alanya are trustful and offers good quality products | 22 | 36,7 | 16 | 26,7 | 22 | 36,7 |
| Tradespeople of Alanya are customer oriented | 24 | 40,0 | 18 | 30,0 | 18 | 30,0 |
| Cultural Enrichment | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| Alanya offers historical and cultural attractiveness. | 5 | 8,3 | 6 | 10,0 | 49 | 81,7 |
| Alanya has a wide variety of local food and beverage | 12 | 20,0 | 11 | 18,3 | 37 | 61,7 |

The determinants of destination image is surveyed by having categorized in six dimensions. According to the findings indicated in table 4, majority of participants believe that accommodation and entertainment facilities are sufficient in Alanya. The local transportation is also found satisfactory although general infrastructure is not considered sufficient. Shopping facilities is one of the weakest point in the tourist facilities and infrastructure dimension. As the confirmation of the unstructured part of the survey, participants believe that Alanya has a natural beauty but this is not well protected. The locals perceive Alanya as a clean place as well as relaxing place but the problem in tourism planning subject is re-confirmed by the participants. Although it is agreed by 58,3 %, we may consider this number low in a touristic destination. Another threat to sustainable tourism is the lack of educated and skilled population.

6. CONCLUSION

The early findings indicate that, the core elements of tourism in Alanya which are sea and beaches must be well preserved and further plans and politics of tourism shall focus on this issue rather than expansion. Shopping facilities, quality of products in the shops and manners of retailers shall also improve. Perceived manners of local people towards tourista are not in line with the past researches, it may be caused of the participants are from low income group and does not benefit from tourism so this point shall be re-measured.

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