

TOURISM ANALYSIS OF CILICIA CORRIDOR¹

KİLİKYA KORİDORUNUN TURİZM ANALİZİ

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ABSTRACT

Anatolia, as being in the cross-roads of different cultures, still has many assets waiting to be explored. One of these regions is called Cukurova (Cilicia-Kilikya as it was called in the past), starting from Anamur to the Amanos mountains. Consisting of different routes, the area dates back 5 BC. The region hosted different civilizations and found its place in the Greek mythology. On top of offering the classical sea, sun and sand tourism, Cilicia is an important part of cultural and pilgrimage tourism. Furthermore, the region could offer diversification such as gastronomy, health and rural tourism to the visitors. Compared to 1.4 million tourists visited the area in 2011, the number increased to 2.1 million with an increase of 45%. Investing these figures revealed that, despite being relatively lower, international visitor numbers also increased 54.9% in the same period. Within the region, highest tourist intake belongs to Mersin with 68.6%. This could be associated with the city's seaside location. In total, 75% of the guests stayed in local council rated establishments, which is also higher in Mersin. The reason with the increase in guest visitation could be associated with increase in the number of different accommodation types, increase in popularity and the improvement of the infrastructure of the region. However, it could be claimed that Cilicia is far from using its full potential. Despite its obvious potential, this study aimed to present the reasons behind why the resources have not been fully used for the region, along with the suggestions for the area.

Keywords: Cilicia Tourism, SWOT Analysis, Tourist Attractions, Tourist Destinations.

JEL Classification: Z300

¹ This study presented as an abstract presentation on 6th World Conference on Business, Economics and Management (BEM 2017) that was held in North Cyprus between 04-06 November 2017.

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ÖZ

Medeniyetler müzesi olan Anadolu'nun pek çok bölgesi hala keşfedilmeye devam edilmektedir. Her geçen gün insanlık tarihine yeni bulgular sunsa da yeterli ilgi ve korumanın gösterilemediği alanlar da bulunmaktadır. Keşfedilmesi daha uzun yıllar sürecektir. Bölgeleden biri de eski adıyla Kilikya ve günümüzde Çukurova olarak bilinen Anamur'dan başlayıp Amanos dağlarına kadar olan bölgedir. Dağlık ve ovalık olarak ayrılan Kilikya koridorunun tarihi M.Ö. 5. Yüzyıla dayanmaktadır. Yunan mitolojik efsanelerinde de yer alan bölge birçok uygarlığa vatan olmuştur. Kilikya koridoru, deniz-kum-güneş turizminde çoğunlukla yerel turistler için cazip bir merkez olmanın yanı sıra inanç ve kültür turizminin önemli bir parçasıdır. Kilikya koridoru, turizm tanımının çerçevesinde yaşanan genişleme doğrultusunda, alternatif turizm arayanlara da gastronomi, yayla, sağlık ve kırsal turizm gibi farklı seçeneklerin sunulabileceği potansiyele sahip bir bölgedir. 2011 yılında gelen 1,4 milyon turiste karşılık bu rakam %45'lik bir artışla 2016 yılında 2,1 milyona çıkmıştır. Elimizdeki verileri dikkatlice incelersek aynı dönem gelen yabancı ziyaretçi sayısında da %54,9'luk bir artış olduğunu görürüz. Bölgede yabancı turistleri en çok şehir ise %68,6 ile Mersin'dir. Bunun sebeplerinden bir tanesi şehrin deniz kıyısında yer alması, bir diğer sebebi ise kalacak yer miktarının fazlalığı ve çeşitliliği olabilir. Ayrıca bölge genelindeki artışın da sebeplerinden bir tanesi olarak altyapıda genel olarak yapılan iyileştirme gösterilebilir. Bütün bunlara rağmen bölgenin potansiyelini tam olarak kullandığını söylemek mümkün değildir. Bu çalışma bu sebeplerin bazılarını tespit etmenin yanında bölge için önerilerde de bulunmayı hedeflemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kilikya Turizmi, SWOTT Analizi, Turist Çekme Nedenleri,
Turist Çeken Bölgeler

JEL Sınıflandırması: Z300

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the world's largest and fastest growing industries, contributing 10% of the global GDP, 7% of world exports, 30% of services exports and accounts for one in eleven jobs worldwide. Statistics on inbound tourism are relatively well developed in many countries and statistics on domestic and outbound tourism, employment and the tourism industries are becoming increasingly available to the general member of public (Retrieved from <http://www2.unwto.org/content/why-tourism>). The UNWTO Secretary-General underscored the continued growth of tourism since the beginning of the crisis – “in 2016, more than 1.2 billion people travelled around the world for tourism purposes and another 6 billion people travelled domestically” – and emphasized the need to move towards more sustainable tourism in all its dimensions. As a result, “The International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017” was declared in December 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly (Retrieved from <http://media.unwto.org>). As being one of the driving forces, tourism is very important particularly for the developing economies, Turkey included. Recent years its direct and indirect contribution to the Turkish GDP steadily increased and it reached 5.6 billion TL (Turkish Lira) direct contribution amount in 2012. The same year its indirect contribution to the economy was estimated around 120.6 billion TL (Kalkınma Bakanlığı- Ministry of Development, 2014). The share of total employment of tourism sector generally was 9.94% in 2015. According to an estimate, it will reach 10.55% in 2025 (Sit, 2016). In 2016, due to political and economic conflicts in the region, amount of Russian tourist in take to the country (one of the highest nationals in the previous years) dropped by 76% (Retrieved from <http://www.tursab.org.tr>). Based on UNWTO figures, in 2014 Turkey was amongst the 6. most visited countries in the world and 11. in terms of tourism income. In 2016, however, income from tourism dropped 10% (Retrieved from <http://www.tuik.gov.tr>; <http://www.turizmdatabank.com/>).

Tourism became an important industry for the developing countries in particular. Many countries discovered this great contribution to the economy, resulting looking for new ways to improve it (Bozgeyik and Yoloğlu, 2015). Starting from top as nationwide, this approach extended to different regions as well. Moving from the traditional sea-sun-sand trio and looking alternative approaches to use the resources all through the year is something all countries aim for. Cilicia region of Turkey, which is the target area for this study, has a great potential to offer these alternatives to tourism. Taking its name Kilikya (Cilicia) from the rich clay and flint, the region supports a very rich cultural background. Some artefacts dating back to Sumerians, the region is called Cukurova by Turks, which could be translated into “lower plato” (see figure 1). Besides Sumerians, the region also hosted Kitvanza, Cilicia and Cue kingdoms, Assyrians, Persians, Macedonians Romans and even pirates.

Cukurova area and Adana started to developed with the bridges and canals built by Romans and became one of the most important trade centres in the region (Retrieved from <http://www.adana.gov.tr/tarih>). Both still hold their value as an important trade centre in the region, along with their importance in accommodation different religions, intake people movements, population and geopolitical importance. Despite their potential, the region could offer limited alternatives and requires a major and carefully structured master plan. The key issue in this master and strategic planning is taking a snapshot of the current situation and taking it from there with implementing

improvements. This will inevitably benefit all the stakeholders of the tourism in the region.

Taking into account all the above mentioned points, this study will outline the current state and the potential of tourism in namely Adana, Mersin, Hatay and Osmaniye.

Figure 1. Cilicia



Source: Adapted from <http://bibleatlas.org/cilicia.htm>

2. CILICIA CITIES AND TOURISM

Based on TÜİK data in hand, Turkey received most of her visitors for sightseeing, entertainment, sports and cultural related. The cities received most visitors are İstanbul, Antalya, Mugla, Ankara, Izmir and Nevsehir (Retrieved from <http://www.tuik.gov.tr>). Cukurova region cities served mostly to the pilgrims since they were located on St. Paul's route (<http://www.ispartakulturizm.gov.tr>). However, due to a recent change on this mentioned pilgrimage route may result receiving less pilgrim related tourist to the region. CEKUL Foundation with the help of Turkish Councils Association devised a programme called "Regional Cultural Road Maps" in 2012-2013. For the Cilicia region, this programme established "Cukurova Natural and Cultural Vision Plan" in 2012 and "Cukurova Vision Plan" in 2013, for potential route planning (Retrieved from <http://www.tarihkentlerbirligi.org>). These plans tried to establish these routes mainly with different approach and different themes for each region, along with implementing alternative tourism. This approach helps to include a niche market within tourism.

2.1. ADANA

Adana name was first mentioned by Hittites in 1650 BC. Called as "Bogazkoy" Adana was mentioned in these tablets as "Uru Adana" (Kaplan, 2001). If we take these historical artefacts, the given name Adana to the city is 3640 years old. The city is rather important in the region in terms of topography and ecology and received a steady number

of people moving in as part of migration, resulting a population of more than 2.2 million in 2016 (Retrieved from www.tuik.gov.tr). It has two seaside towns by the Mediterranean Sea (Karatas and Yumurtalik) and docklands for transporting crude oil in Ceyhan. The Adana city centre and its surrounding towns accommodate various historical, cultural and religious sites. Among these are Tepebag, Misis, Magarsus, Anawarza, Aegeai ancient cities; Agyatan and Yumurtalik lagunas; Tas Kopru (Stone Bridge), Yag Camii (Mosque) and Arasta bazaar some of the examples.

In recent years Adana became rather popular in terms tourism with the help of coordinated marketing campaigns. Altin Koza movie, international theatre, portakal cicegi, kebab and salgam festivals all contributed these marketing efforts. Despite receiving its fair share in the congress tourism in the region, it is difficult to say that some other types of tourism investments such the famous 3S receives enough investment from its stakeholders.

There in total 64 different rated hotels in the city with a total number of 4,485 rooms and 9,068 beds (Table 1). This number greatly increased in recent years due to the city's long-lasting agriculture related background, along with the recently developed activities such as festivals as mentioned.

2.2. MERSIN

As being one of the most attraction centres in the region throughout the history, there are two variations about the origins of the name. One claims the name originated from Myertus tree that grows in the area, the other claims its roots in "Mersinogullari", a Turkic clan lived in the area in the past. Current most important city for the Cilicia region was also vary critical for the states or dynasties that reigned in the past. The most significant example to support this claim is Tarsus (currently a town belongs to Mersin), being the capital city of Roman Cilicia, which was a cornerstone for the region (Retrieved from <http://www.mersinkulturturizm.gov.tr>)

Current name of the city decided in 2002, which before the city was called Icel dating back 1933. Currently reaching over 1.7 million, the city's population steadily increasing due to migration from East and South East Turkey along with Syrian refugees escaping from the war (TUIK, 2016). Perhaps another contributing factor to the rise could be Mersin's reputation of accommodating people from different ethnic background and religion throughout the history.

Mersin is the city in Cilicia region benefits most from the coastal tourism. However, due to wrong national and local governmental choices, the city became a place for camping and locals' summer house investment location. Despite all these, due to a number of towns located by the sea and their rich historical backgrounds, the city attracted quite a number of visitors. Mersin has 13 outer towns and almost all of them has something to offer to visitors including historical attractions. Among these includes Tarsus which offers 7 sleepers, St. Paul's well, prophet Daniel's tomb, Bilal-i Habes mosque, Old mosque for religious tourists and pilgrims; Roman and Sahmaran public baths, Cleopatra's gate, Tarsus waterfall, Roman tombs, Gulek fortress and Nusret warship for history and culture seeking tourists. Town centre itself hosts Dikilitas, Tirmil tomb, Anchiale ruins, one Latino Catholic and one Arab Orthodox churches and Bezm-i Alem fountain. Mezitli district offers Soli ruins, Kuzucubelen fortress; Erdemli district

offers Korykos, Elaiussa-Sebaste, Kanlıdivane and Akkale (Tırtar); Anamur district offers Mamure fortress, Titiopolis, famous historical Anamur houses, Altı kapi bazaar, lighthouse, Mediterranean seals and caretta caretta turtles to the visitors. Silifke district hosts a Roman temple, Uzuncaburç ancient city, Cennet-Cehennem pit, Aya Tekla church, Zeus and Jupiter temples, Adam rocks, Silifke fortress and Taskopru, whereas Mut district has Alahan monastery, Mavga fortress, Kızıl minaret Alaoda caves, Mut fortress, Balabolu (Adrasos) and Sinobic ruins. Other important attractions worth to mention are Kızlar monastery, Gedigi, Namrun and Hisar fortresses, Mugdat mosque, Nagidos, Arisone and Zeyne tombs.

Mersin also enjoys many activities such as Mersin Turuncgil festival, International Music festival, Soli Sun festival, Karacaoglan poetry evenings, International Silifke festival, Republic wrestlings and Mersin movie days for attracting visitors to the area.

Despite having a summer house fashion among the locals hence a reasonable amount of unregistered accommodation, Mersin offers 35 certified establishments (tourism investment) with almost 11,000 beds capacity and 49 certified establishments (tourism management) with more than 7,000 beds to its guests (Table 1).

2.3. HATAY

Hatay is another city in the region famous for accommodating different religions and cultures with harmony throughout the history. As being located to the very end of South, it is the gateway to Middle East for Turkey. Despite recent conflicts in the region hence the reduction in numbers, this geographical position of the city helped it to receive a great number of mostly Arab foreign guests.

Although there are different types of tourists visiting the city, most visitors arrive for pilgrimage. Christians particularly visit Hatay because it has St. Pier church and Virgin Mary fountain which it was believed she bathed in (Asci, 2008). Other famous attraction points could be named as Sheikh Ahmet Kuseyri mosque, Ulu mosque, St. Simeon monastery, tomb of Beyazıt-i Bestami, Sokullu Mehmet Pasha library, Isos ruins, Rock tomb, Suleyman the Magnificent bazaar and Habib-i Neccar mosque. In addition, the city enjoys a mosaic museum and many historical sites.

When it comes to number of beds it offers to the visitor, Hatay has 38 tourism management and 16 tourism investment certified hotels with the total number of beds just exceeding 8,000 (Table 1). With the help of Asi river, Amanos mountains and Amik plato, guests involve in different activities such as rural tourism means the number of beds to offer are on increase.

2.4. OSMANIYE

Osmaniye was not a city in Ottoman's time, however the young republic granted it a city status until 1933. At this date Osmaniye became part of Adana until 1996. With its current population of more half a million people, the city also has much to offer to the visitors.

Most famous tourist attractions in the city are Kastabala-Hierapolis, Karatepe-Aslantaş open museum, Babaoglan, Karafenk, Savranda, Cardak, Harun Resid, Hemite and Toprakkale fortresses; Agcabey, Envar-ul-Hamid and Ala mosques. Most of the visitors,

however, travel to the city for rural tourism. Zorkun plato on Amanos mountains, Maksutoglu plato with its local wooden houses, Alman Pinari plato with camping facilities and Bagdas plato are worth to mention for this reason. In addition, the city receives increasing number of guests for bird and butterfly watching, along with botanical and sports tourism enthusiasts.

There are many, mostly national festivals and activities also take place in Osmaniye. Among these are Tirsik, Hidrellez, Cukurova poets and Karatepe culture and arts festivals are worth to mention. Karatepe also attracts visitors for its famous rugs and wooden hand crafts (Retrieved from <http://www.osmaniye.kultur.turizm.gov.tr>).

In Osmaniye, due to its geographical location, the number and types of accommodation are the lowest in the region. There are 6 listed establishments with a total bed number of 879 (Table 1). However, this is also expected to increase to the city's recent popularity in renewal energy sources (wind turbines), recently unearthed Kastabala ancient city and the mosaics.

Table 1. Number of Accommodation Establishments of Cilicia Cities 2016

	CERTIFIED BY TOURISM INVESTMENT CRITERIA			CERTIFIED BY TOURISM MANAGEMENT CRITERIA		
	Number of Establishments	Room Numbers	Bed Numbers	Number of Establishments	Room Numbers	Bed Numbers
ADANA	18	1,391	2,882	46	3,405	6,857
MERSİN	35	5,265	10,996	49	3,446	7,336
HATAY	16	2,088	4,414	38	2,111	4,302
OSMANIYE	3	231	466	3	213	413

Source: Ministry of Culture and Tourism

As it could be seen from the table above, Mersin has the highest room and bed numbers in the region on both categories (tourism investment-tourism management), whereas Osmaniye has the lowest. This is rather self explanatory considering Osmaniye being the smallest of towns among the rest and Mersin enjoyed quite a steady tourism investment over the past years.

Table 2. Rated Establishments of Cilicia Cities 2016

Cilicia Cities		2001	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Adana	Number of Guests	168,446	241,331	307,432	322,804	324,175	415,794	458,006	540,306
	Number of Nights	266,002	411,135	467,541	496,910	550,013	679,495	749,805	845,234
Mersin	Number of Guests	186,785	272,142	246,840	283,513	300,946	355,218	366,222	369,902
	Number of Nights	339,129	489,391	426,394	502,792	529,464	608,274	603,305	623,152
Hatay	Number of Guests	87,596	116,990	232,822	213,290	201,910	227,273	254,921	280,570
	Number of Nights	113,537	188,542	409,778	392,751	383,957	425,228	443,770	461,554
Osmaniye	Number of Guests	6,651	13,015	13,762	21,316	25,016	26,682	23,556	29,551
	Number of Nights	9,331	19,969	24,181	37,585	45,661	49,971	55,069	54,831

Source: Ministry of Culture and Tourism

Table 2 presents that all 5 cities in the region enjoyed a steady increase of inbound tourism. When compared with each other, unlike the Table1, Adana received most of the guests with the highest amount of nights these guests stayed in. This could be the reason of guests stayed in Mersin mostly for touristic reasons during the high season, but Adana attracted a more steady inboudg tourists spread throughout the year.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study presented cultural richness and latest improvements in terms of tourism for the cities consist of Cilicia region. When have done SWOT analysis was used in particular for analysing the current situation in the region. SWOT is often used to analyse a company or a sector’s internal and external environment. And it will not only present the current situation but will also projects the future (Altunışık, 2009). SWOT analysis help to focus on organization’s strengths, minimized weakness, and take the greatest possible advantage of opportunities available. It can be subjective, however, because it also contains personal opinions. Being aware of this downside, it was minimised by using previous studies, as well referring to the experts in the field.

4. SWOT Analysis

Table 3. Cilicia Corridor’s Statement Analysis (SWOT)

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism could be conducted throughout the year • Hosting different religions and cultures together and also receiving pilgrims • Having established reasonable transportation infrastructure • Hosting institutions that provide education in tourism and archaeology • Having implemented tourism action and master plans, investment guides • Having infrastructure for health tourism • Having infrastructure for activity sports • Having customs access with neighbouring countries • Being located by the Mediterranean Sea • Having a wide variety of local cuisine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough promotion by the local stakeholders • Not enough planning by the local authorities • Poor or not enough coordination between stakeholders • Poor or not enough knowledge by the locals about the region • Having not enough tourism information centres • Having not enough local guides • Having not enough investors • Having not enough hotels • Having a common summer or winter house ownership in the region • Having not enough government spendings for the entire region • Having some local establishments that are run unprofessionally • Not protecting unique architectural buildings • Having a poor public transport infrastructure • Having not enough or properly trained front line staff

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a rich cultural and natural inventory • Having some tourism investment support by the local authorities (including health tourism) • Having a reasonable infrastructure investment for the activities such as fairs, congresses and festivals • Plans for building an international airport • Having efforts of registering different cultural heritage assets throughout the region (including local cuisine and beverages) • Being located between Europe and Middle East • Having plenty of untouched sectors for the investors • Having a potential for the improvement of railway connections in the region • Plans for all cities in the region to act in harmony 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not caring enough for the environment and the natural resources • Illegal activities for unearthing archaeological artefacts • Exporting quality immigrants, importing poor ones • Conflict in the neighbouring countries and immigration • Negative or unjustified news on the media about the region • Residents' ill-informed or poor approach to the development of tourism • Local investors' reluctance to invest for the region • Unstable exchange rates • Poor or not enough knowledge about destination management by the stakeholders • Having not enough or ill-educated tourism staff • Having unregistered accommodation • Not fully included by the travel agencies • Having occasional rioting and conflicts • Unplanned or poor habitation (including coastal regions) • High staff turn-over at mid and low management levels

Unlike the previous tables (1 and 1), Table 3 chose to explain the SWOT analysis for the entire region, rather than presenting them city by city. This is because the study tried to include reasons that are applicable for the whole region, instead of specific and pinpointed ones. Another advantage of presenting the analysis in such a manner is to allow following studies to understand and duplicate the findings better.

5. RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Over the decades, tourism has experienced continued growth and deepening diversification to become one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world. Tourism, as well as its direct effects, its indirect contribution to the economy also increases the importance of the sector. On top the classical sea, sun and sand mixture of tourism, Cilicia region of Turkey has a big potential due its cultural, natural, religious background. This potential should be appreciated and supported by all stakeholders in the region. Well known and famous assets that belong to the region should be preserved and made aware of its residents if there are any. For this, all stakeholders should join their resources and try to reach as many people as possible for this matter. With only these types of coordinated efforts, the region should move forward and start to use otherwise wasted its tourism potential. Future plans should include different aspects of

tourism such as rural and alternative tourism. When doing so nature should be preserved and all the efforts should be coordinated. Despite similarities, policy planners should also take into account each city's differences and use these as strengths. Another should be taken into account is the region's exemplary ability to host different religions and cultures with different backgrounds in harmony through the history. Considering many conflicts occur in the world on contrary, this strength could be used to promote region particularly on international arena. This will not only increase the popularity of Cilicia but also import foreign investors to the area, hence reducing the burden on local authorities.

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