

Problematic of Tourism in Adıyaman: Multidimensional Barriers with a Community Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Tourism,
Community,
Socio-Culture,
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Geography,
Adıyaman

Tourism success is an important parameter of regional development. The way a society perceives tourism and existing issues and the rate of participation in political decisions are also important factors, particularly for developing regions. In this sense, the perspective of the locals provides a significant clue for researchers and policy makers. In this study, the tourism development of Adıyaman, one of the potential tourism destination of Turkey, has been analyzed through a societal perspective. 187 people have been selected through convenience sampling method under the scope of the study and they have been posed open-ended questions. The acquired data have been categorized under three sections as socio-cultural, socio-economic and geographic barriers. As a result of the study, the most significant barriers for tourism are defined as the local administration, investment, transport and promotion

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1. Introduction

The interaction between social structure and tourism development is important in any region. However, this interaction can turn into a social issue due to the complicated structure and mechanism of tourism (Kim, Chen and Jang, 2006; Lee and Chang, 2008). As such, tourism becomes the multi-dimensional outcome of relations formed within a community or with other communities (Avcıkurt, 2009). In a similar description, tourism is a system that is formed by local dynamics in economic and socio-cultural terms and reflects local characteristics (Rızaoğlu, 2003; Kim, Uysal and Sirgy, 2013). Therefore, community is the most important stakeholder of tourism (Choi and Sirakaya, 2005; Homsud and Promsaard, 2015). On the other hand, existing values are highly effective in a society's perception of tourism (Matthews and Richter, 1991; Liu, 2006; Eshliki and Kaboudi, 2012). At this point, social structure, which is the sum of existing values, becomes a factor that defines the level of social awareness, trust and partnership (Gulati, 1995). In other words, in a community's approach towards tourism

(Stylidis, et al. 2014; Lee, 2013), the way tourism has positioned itself within social structure (García, Vázquez and Macías, 2015), the way it penetrates social life (Tucker and Boonabaana, 2012) and benefit-cost ratio (Perdue, Long and Allen, 1990; Yoon, Gursoy and Chen, 2001; Gursoy, Jurowski and Uysal, 2002) are determinant factors.

As can be understood from the statements, the multiple and variable interaction between human and place (Giddens, 2013; Urry, 2015) is similar to the tourism and human interaction in that place (Bjeljac and Čurčić, 2006). This interaction becomes even more distinctive particularly in developing places (Morton, 2003), because the effects of tourism-based transition in these areas penetrate all areas of social life from physical infrastructure to living standards (Kim, Uysal and Sirgy, 2013). From this point of view, the subject of research was handled on the basis of Adıyaman. As a developing region, Adıyaman failed to gain the anticipated tourism development momentum despite its potential and tourism has rather become a multi-dimensional issue (Yılmaz and

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Çalışkan, 2015). At this point, Franklin and Crang (2001) emphasize the need to interpret tourism in different aspects (environment, economy and socio-culture) and from a social perspective. Therefore, in order to solve the dilemmas faced in tourism-development phase in Adıyaman (Çalışkan and Dedeoğlu, 2018), the first thing to do is to understand the community (Reisinger and Turner, 2003). Understanding the community could also become a functional data source for long-term planning and implementation practises (Gursoy and Rutherford, 2004). At this point, the perception of the locals towards tourism within the social structure (Chandralal, 2010) can become a significant reference point in the development of tourism (Andereck and Vogt 2000). In this sense, the purpose of this current study is to analyse barriers of tourism development in Adıyaman through the local perspective and within the context of various dimensions.

2. Literature

Regional Tourism Development

Tourism is a strategic driver (Usta, 2009; Kim, Uysal and Sirgy, 2013) of regional development (Budeanu, 2005) and it is an important interaction factor that generates outputs in social and economic dimensions (Ahmad, 2013) and affects social life (Haley, Snaith and Miller, 2005). The actual expectation from tourism development is contribution to living standards in economic, socio-cultural and environmental manner (McCool and Martin, 1994). With this aspect, regional tourism development is a complicated issue involving social, political and economic aspects (Grandpré and Py, 2007) and the literature on the subject includes various studies addressing the issue from different angles and different disciplines (Dowling, 1993; Telfer, 2002; Romão, Guerreiro and Rodrigues, 2013; Liang and Chan, 2018). A majority of these studies are on the time-wise and spatial transitions of regions, their development policies, planning difficulties, marketing difficulties and strategy development (Henderson, 2006). A more detailed analysis of the subject indicates that the barriers of regional tourism development consist of several factors such as indifference, institutional weaknesses, lack of investment and insufficient participation in decision-making processes (Aref, 2010; Karakuş, 2019). According to Jansen (2003), the main barriers are the lack of investors acting on a voluntary basis, expectation of revenues in short-term, ignoring population structure in planning, indefinite development limits geographically and resistance towards change. On the other hand,

James (1998) emphasizes that bureaucratic and politic factors are significant dilemmas, while Waligo, Clarke and Hawkins (2013) believe one of the greatest barrier is the fact that stakeholders are failing to provide sufficient contribution for tourism development. On this bases, Walmsley (2002) emphasize the need to have a strong communication between stakeholders. The actual problem in here is that tourism is generally considered from an economic perspective (Furmolly & Kirkulak Uludağ, 2018). This approach, in a way, is actually ignoring the social aspects of tourism, which offers more than economic contribution in regional development. The reality is that community factor must be included in the process as an integral part of regional development strategy (Macbeth, Carson and Northcote, 2004). Therefore, it should be noted that the social, environmental and economic aspects of the issue should be equally treated (Hancock, 2001) and they need to be addressed through a social perspective.

Community Perspective in Regional Tourism Development

Social perspective is highly important in regional tourism development. The approaches of local people towards tourism can also provide clues about the development and transition capability of a region. According to Urry (2015), the main dimensions in tourism approach are economic, social and geographical factors. Accordingly, it is possible to say that the main factors affecting the perception of a community towards tourism are geography, socio-economy and socio-culture (Akama and Kieti, 2007; Çalışkan, 2015; Wu and Chen, 2015; Çalışkan and Dedeoğlu, 2018).

• *Geography*

Geography defines the quality of life (Knox and Pinch, 2014). According to Rentfrow, Jokela and Lamb (2015), interpretation of geography is important to understand and make sense of the connection between the place and lifecycle. Stoltman (1997) describes geography as a local's adaptation tool for change. Farole, Rodriguez-Pose and Storper (2011) associated a region's development potential with the interaction between human and geography, further to the socio-politic and economic factors. Furthermore, place-tourism interaction is another important issue (Harrill, 2004) and the perception of this interaction by the local community can vary depending on time, place and geography (García, Vázquez and Macías, 2015). It should be emphasized that geography is also a way of communication between regions (Giddens, 2013).

This is no different when it comes to tourism. For instance, accessibility and distance are two important factors for the formation of a connection between a visitor and the visited area and these two factors are directly related to geography (Akdağ and Öter, 2011; Joo et.al., 2017). Hence, geography accommodates deep-rooted meanings for the formation of tourism perception.

- *Socio-economy*

Socio-economy is a multi-dimensional concept building bridges between different disciplines (Jakobsen, 2017) and it covers different overlapping subjects (Jiang et.al., 2016). When reviewed in terms of economy and community, it becomes clear that the concept is an important variable for tourism. Economy forms the basis of tourism and depending on human mobility, tourism creates new revenue items in different fields (Sanmargaraja and Wee, 2013), hence it becomes influential on a wide area (Akinboade and Braimoh, 2010). To be more precise, this has deep-rooted effects on the social lives of individuals (Ghanian, Ghoochani and Crott, 2014), from new employment opportunities to income growth (Archer, Cooper and Ruhanen, 2005). Hence, the relation of tourism with socio-economy can turn into a significant parameter in terms of social perspective.

- *Socio-Culture*

Socio-culture is a phenomena that is reflected through several variables such as values, norms, beliefs, education, social stratification, profession, behavioural patterns and traditions (Mutsikiwa and Basera, 2012: 115). Therefore, the attitude that occurs within a socio-cultural structure is the starting point of regional development and transition (Larsen, 2008). And tourism is being shaped within this structure. According to Dinu (2018), tourism is a socio-cultural experience that help people to satisfy their needs to relax, travel, discover or socialise with other people (Dinu, 2018: 183). At this point, socio-culture also becomes a factor that illustrate the geography an individual is in (Robinson, 1999; Lin, Li and Hong, 2012) and can influence the social perspective in any given subject. As expressed by Doğan (2004), tourism is a social fact and the most important dynamics that influence the development process of tourism are the changes observed in social life. In this sense, social perspective towards the development of tourism can possibly reflect the existing culture. In other words, socio-culture is not only an interpretation tool of a community but it can also

become the way of interpretation of the same community.

3. Methodology

Qualitative method has been used in the study and this method has made it possible to collect data realistically and without being manipulated (Yüksel and Yüksel, 2004). Hence, data has been collected from 187 people selected through convenience sampling method in central Adıyaman. An open-ended question form has been used as data collection tool. Open-ended question form has provided advantage in collecting more detailed data related to the subject of the study and reaching a greater number of people. Asking too many questions in interviews makes the participants get bored. Therefore, participants have been posed with three questions only, all of which cover the purpose of the study (Kozak, 2015). These questions were: The “socio-cultural”; “socio-economic” and “geographical” barriers preventing tourism development. Demographic data were the first to be reviewed during the analysis process. The second stage consisted of categorizing the responses as per the number of recurring responses (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2011). Then descriptive analysis method has been used in the final stage to categorize user comments under certain themes and turned into statements by keeping loyal to the original (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

4. Findings

Data acquired in the study have been categorized into three groups. The first group includes demographic data; second group includes data acquired through content analysis; while the third group includes data acquired through descriptive analysis.

First Group Data

As indicated by demographic data (see, Table 1), male and married participants constitute the majority. In terms of employment status, public workers are in first place. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that a great majority of the participants are native. Age groups had similar distributions. In addition, individuals with a bachelor's degree ranked first in the education category, while the number of people in age and income variables were similar.

Table 1. Demographic Data

Age	N	%	Gender	N	%
18-25	35	18.7	Female	83	44.4
26-35	53	28.3	Male	104	55.6
36-45	44	23.5	Income		
≥ 46	55	29.5	≤ 237\$	27	14.4
Marital status			238\$-385\$	74	39.5
Married	113	61.4	386\$-533\$	29	15.7
Single	74	38.6	534\$-681\$	24	12.8
Profession			≥ 682\$	33	17.6
Unemployed	42	22.4	Education		
Private sector	61	32.6	Primary education	24	12.8
Public sector	84	45.0	Secondary education	29	15.5
Birthplace			Associate degree	30	16.1
Adıyaman	135	72.1	Bachelor's degree	83	44.4
Other	52	27.9	Postgraduate	21	11.2
Total	187	100	Total	187	100

Source:

Second Group Data

The first question posed to participants was the socio-cultural barriers preventing development in tourism. Their responses and percentage distributions are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Socio-Cultural Barriers

Theme	N	%
Style of operation of local authorities	139	26.5
lack of advertisement	121	23.1
Lack of development consciousness among community	94	17.9
Political and bureaucratic problems	63	12.0
Dereliction	35	6.7
Lack of tourism consciousness among community	34	6.5
Natural and cultural environmental destruction	28	5.3
Negative perception towards Adıyaman	9	2.0
Total	523	100

Source:

In terms of socio-cultural barriers preventing tourism development, the main issues pointed out by participants were the style of operation of local authorities, lack of advertisement and a lack of development awareness among community.

In the second part, participants were asked about the socio-economic barriers preventing tourism development. Their responses and percentage distributions are given in Table 3.

Table 3. Socio-Economic Barriers

Theme	N	%
Lack of investment	98	55.5
Insufficient quality in touristic infrastructure and service	25	14.2
Local economy	22	12.4
Lack of tourism-related investment	18	10.2
Unplanned physical environment	16	7.7
Total	176	100

Source:

In terms of socio-economic barriers, one of the important issues pointed out was the lack of tourism-related investment, not only in Adıyaman but as a general issue in tourism. Furthermore, insufficient quality in touristic infrastructure and service is being perceived as another barriers.

Participants have been finally asked about the geographical barriers preventing tourism development. Their responses and percentage distributions are given in Table 4.

Table 4. Geographical Barriers

Theme	N	%
Transportation problem	34	55.6
Geographical location	13	21.2
Terror perception	8	13.1
Proximity to provinces with touristic varieties	6	10.1
Total	61	100

Source:

According to Table 4, the issue of transport has been perceived as the most important geographical problem. In addition, the location of the problem, perception of terror and proximity to provinces with touristic varieties have been listed as other barriers.

Third Group Data

Issues related to the activities of local authorities have been listed as an important barrier by the participants, who also believe that lack of regional investments creates a dilemma in tourism development. Local authorities bear important responsibilities during the regional development process (Cavaye and Cavaye, 2000), therefore it is important that they prioritize all types of investments related to tourism (Tosun, Okumuş and Fyall, 2008). Related to this point, the following expression has been stated by one of the participants:

"...Local authorities do not perform strong and credible projects."

Furthermore, another participant made an assessment of the local authority in terms of investments and stated:

"...Unfortunately, public and private sector instruments are not being used sufficiently to make tourism better."

Similarly, another participant stated:

"Local administrators should pay attention to tourism as much as other areas."

Failing to make sufficient amount of advertisement, issue of transportation and lack of development awareness among the community have been listed by the participants as the noteworthy barriers. A study by Yılmaz and Çalışkan (2015) listed transport, lack of marketing and lack of local interest towards tourism as structural issues in tourism development. Participants have stated the following on this subject:

"Transport is difficult in Adıyaman to go sightseeing..."

"The connection to neighbouring provinces is not sufficient."

"...No large-scale festivals are being organized... Adıyaman should not be a forgotten city."

"Most of the locals spent their leisure time by doing traditional activities, such as visiting their families, and they do not have any intention to seek any new social or cultural activity... Indeed, people of Adıyaman are indifferent towards tourism being developed"

5. Conclusion and Discussion

Despite a potential to become a tourism destination, Adıyaman cannot fulfil this potential and it is understood that this issue has a social aspect (Yılmaz and Çalışkan, 2015). As such, the above listed barriers have been analyzed from a social perspective thanks to this foresight.

Analysis of the demographic structure of participants indicate two main points. The first one is the young-population potential and the second is the fact that majority of the participants are from Adıyaman. It must be emphasized that the acquired results tally with the actual demographic structure of the province (see TUIK, 2020). On the other hand, it is believed that these two elements are offering great opportunities for Adıyaman. As such, it can be said that both of these two elements are important factors to help achieve dynamism (Paksoy and Aydoğu, 2010) and the sense of ownership/belonging (Çalışkan, 2015).

According to data acquired from the study, issues such as bureaucracy, lack of investment, transport and social awareness are the main barriers preventing tourism from growing. Considering the relevant literature, it is indeed the bureaucratic dilemmas (Liu, 1994; Yüksel, Bramwell and Yüksel, 2005), insufficient investment level (Surugiu, 2012), transportation problems (Kantawateera, et. Al., 2015) and insufficient social awareness (Saarinen, 2010) are observed to be

important obstacles. In fact, for the efforts aiming to develop tourism in a region to gain momentum (Singgalen, Sasongko and Wiloso, 2018) the foremost requirement is to have a fast-running bureaucratic process (Tosun, 2000). Furthermore, it is also essential to ensure that the efforts in question are society-oriented (Meppem and Gill, 1998) and socio-cultural values are taken into account (Neto, 2003). However, the perception of local communities towards tourism are influenced by ethnicity, beliefs and existing social perceptions (Liu, 2006). At this point, having administrators who are familiar with social structure and analysing tendencies would be a strategic approach (Macnaghten and Jacobs, 1997).

Another matter revealed by the study data is geography. Participants believe accessibility is a geographical dilemma. However, it is also true that an allegedly disadvantageous geographic location of a region could be turned into advantage. For instance, even though Adıyaman is ranked among developed touristic provinces, it can be turned into an area of social interaction among the other regions through an effective tourism planning (Haley, Snaith and Miller, 2005). At this point, the importance of advertising and marketing is once again revealed and it should not be forgotten that geographical uniqueness is an element of attraction (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006).

In conclusion, Adıyaman is located in a unique and rich geography and it should be able to use its social dynamics. In this sense, it is believed that increasing tourism-related social awareness, availing of the potential of young population and concentrating on cultural elements are important factors (Çalışkan and Dedeoğlu, 2018).

The findings of this current study should surely be assessed specifically for Adıyaman. With regards to future studies, comparison of different regions with similar social structures can be recommended.

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