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Environmental Management Practices in Hospitality Establishments in Slow Cities: Akyaka Example

Yavaş Şehirlerdeki Konaklama İşletmelerinde Çevre Yönetimi Uygulamaları: Akyaka Örneği

Abstract

It is easy to see that tendency to environmentally-conscious practices is gradually increasing all around the world. Tourism sector inherently involves activities that develop and grow in conjunction with natural environment. As the criteria for Slow Cities are based on the principles of sustainability, they would provide convenience to carry out sustainable tourism activities in these cities. This study is aimed at investigating the current status of accommodation establishments in Cittaslow Akyaka in Ula county of Muğla province within the scope of environmental management practices. For this purpose, face-to-face interviews have been made with executives of 6 accommodation establishments in Akyaka. As a result of the research, it is determined that the participants don't have sufficient knowledge regarding environmental management practices and their benefits. Another finding of the research is that the accommodation establishments in Akyaka don't differ from each other with regard to their environmentally sensitive practices in terms of their types. Training programs organized for the executives of accommodation establishments within the scope of environmental management and practices may support Akyaka to pursue the path of being sensitive to environment.

Öz

Günümüzde tüm dünyada çevreye duyarlı uygulamalara olan eğilimin giderek arttığı görülebilir. Turizm sektörü yapısı gereği, doğal çevre ile gelişen ve büyüyen faaliyetleri kapsamaktadır. Yavaş şehirler sahip oldukları doğal güzellikleri, özgün tarihleri ve yerel kültürleriyle, alternatif turizm pazarında proaktif şekilde değerlendirilebilir. Yavaş Şehir kriterlerinin sürdürülebilirlik ilkelerine dayanarak hazırlanmış olması, bu şehirlerde sürdürülebilir turizm faaliyetlerinin gerçekleşmesine kolaylık sağlayabilir. Bu çalışmada, Muğla ilinin Ula ilçesine bağlıolan Yavaş Şehir Akyaka'da bulunan konaklama işletmelerinin çevre yönetimi uygulamaları kapsamında mevcut durumlarının araştırılması amaçlanmıştır. Amacın gerçekleşmesi için, Akyaka'daki faaliyet gösteren konaklama işletmelerinin 6'sında yöneticilik konumunda çalışanlarla yüz yüze görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda; katılımcıların çevre yönetiminin uygulamaları ve sağladığı faydaları hakkında, bilgilerinin yetersiz olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Akyaka'da konaklama işletmelerinin türlerine göre çevreye duyarlı uygulamalarında farklılık göstermediği de araştırmanın diğer bir sonucu olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Çevre yönetimi ve uygulamaları kapsamında konaklama işletme yöneticilerine yönelik düzenlenmiş olacak eğitim programları, Akyaka'ya çevreye duyarlı olma yolunda ilerlenmesine destek verebilir.

Feriyal Farhadi Andarabi
Ph.D. Candidate, Gazi University of Ankara, Institute of Social Sciences, Department of Tourism Management
feriyalfarhadi@hotmail.com

Azize Tunç Hassan
Prof. Dr. Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli Üniversity, Tourism Faculty, Department of Tourism Management, azize@gazi.edu.tr

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Introduction

The slogan of 2030 Sustainable Development Action Plan is "Transforming Our World". It is emphasized that this agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity and that sustainable development has three dimensions: the economic, social and environmental. The agenda states that people and planet have faced with critical problems in the last 15 years and emphasizes that there have been serious universal trials and tribulations in terms of welfare, peace, partnership and solidarity (2030 Sustainable Development Action Plan, 2015: 2).

In order for tourism industry to support the Sustainable Development Action Plan it should first endeavor to ensure sustainability of all resources and elements within the scope of the field (Maxim, 2016: 972). Building environmentally sensitive buildings, preserving the nature, wild life, vegetation, biodiversity and ecosystems and managing similar environmentally sensitive practices may serve as a model.

Respecting and preserving cultural diversity and improvement of local communities in terms of welfare and livelihood also establish the ground for sustainable tourism (Kilic and Aydogan, 2014: 2216). If the said environmentally sensitive practices are not actualized, current activities in tourism industry may not support 2030 Sustainable Development Action Plan as expected.

Some of the problems faced in the implementation of environmentally sensitive management policies are caused by accommodation establishments (Chan et al., 2017: 23). For example, some investors apply to build accommodation establishments in regions with natural beauties or in the vicinity of historic archeological sites. In all kinds of plans and actions within the coverage area of accommodation establishments sustainability policies can be implemented. According to environmental management mentality, environmentally sensitive plans and implementations are required to be completed before the construction of an accommodation establishment. As long as the accommodation establishment is active, policies of environmental management should be implemented.

Regardless of their size and type, accommodation establishments have adverse effects on environment such as energy and water consumption, waste production, utilization of chemical substances and carbon footprint (Kirk, 1995: 3); (Alexander, 2002: 2); (Bohdanowicz, 2005: 1643); (Kasim, 2006: 9); (Butler, 2008: 240); (Mensah, 2014: 459); (Sucheran and Bob, 2015: 12); (Wickramasinghe, 2016: 11), (Han and Hyun, 2018: 87).The level of value attached to environmental management by accommodation establishments at present times may provide important clues regarding the extent of success of sustainability efforts of tourism industry in the future.

The Cittaslow movement is a sustainable development model which contributes to ecological balance along with economic growth, addresses welfare legislation, emphasizes efficient utilization of natural resources, attaches importance to environmental quality and envisages for next generations to meet their own needs (Mayer and Knox, 2010: 1563); (Zawadzka, 2017: 104).

The criteria of Slow Cities Association determine policies to ensure preservation and enrichment of environment and a kind of urban life communed with environment. The affiliation criteria include policies under seven main titles and terms for the implementation of 72 criteria. These 72 criteria include articles regarding implementation of environmentally sensitive practices by the establishments in slow cities (URL-1, 2018). The level of environmentally sensitive attitudes and behaviors of the executives of accommodation establishments may play an important role in creation and execution of sustainable environmental management system in slow cities.

The aim of studying in this direction is determining the sensitivity of the executives of accommodation establishments in slow cities regarding environmental management practices for sustainability of resources in tourism industry. Accommodation establishments in Cittaslow Akyaka, which is an important tourism destination located in eastern end of Gulf of Gökova in Turkey, are selected as the sample of the research. Akyaka was qualified to affiliate with Cittaslow Association in 2011. Akyaka's vision Isdescribed as follows on promotional web site of Cittaslow Akyaka (URL-2, 2018): "Akyaka! Respectful to nature, maintaining its architectural structure, having a powerful service infrastructure, sustainable and alternative tourism oriented where people act in unison."

The most important to select Akyaka as the universe of this research is emphasize laid on actions focused on respect to nature, sustainability and alternative tourism within the scope of its vision stated on its promotional page. The information obtained regarding environmentally sensitive activities at accommodation establishments in Akyaka can be used to estimate the actualization ratio of this vision and it is considered that this would be beneficial for the research. The recommendations based on the obtained results may guide the accommodation establishments in

Turkish Slow Cities with respect to environmental management practices. This research is desired to make a contribution to development of sustainable tourism in Slow Cities.

1. Related Literature

1.1. Environmental Management andAccommodationEstablishments

A balanced and integrated plan for environmental and developmental problems is proposed within the scope of United Nations Environment Programme in 1989. The necessity of governments to cooperate with establishments and industries in particular is stated in Agenda 21 Action Plan. Efficient utilization of economic instruments and market mechanisms in the fields of energy, transportation, agriculture and forestry, water, wastes, health and tourism are emphasized. Introduction and development of environmentally sensitive technologies and transition to adjustment process are necessitated for this purpose(Agenda 21, 1992: 8).

Establishment of major groups such as Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) in United Kingdom in 1992 has enabled the stakeholders to have interactive dialogues to implement sustainable development (URL-3, 1992). However, it cannot be said that the accommodation establishments have paid regard to the issue of environmental management till establishment and development of the International Hotels Environment Initiative (IHEI) in 1993 by Charles, the Prince of Wales. When the Prince of Wales initiated IHEI (International Hotels Environment Initiative) in 1993, 11 international accommodation establishment chains are gathered and commenced the studies on the subject. In this context, a handbook is issued for adoption and progress of environmental performance in accommodation establishment sector (Chan and Lam, 2001: 371).

16 accommodation establishments on Asia-Pacific shores have gathered regarding environmental management practices in 1994. In regional context, environmental entrepreneur Asia Pacific Accommodation Establishment Group is founded and went into action in the same year. The same year Hotel Catering & Institutional Management Association (HCIMA) and World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) presented an environmental management awareness rising program under the name of "Green Globe" for accommodation establishments and commenced their related activities (Kirk, 1995: 3); (URL-4, 1999). In consequence, it can be said that the accommodation establishment sector within tourism industry has commenced the process of leading new initiatives and developments with regard to environmental management.

According to IHEI report; the long-term agenda topic of environmental management at accommodation establishments is energy saving. The cost increase arose from petroleum prices in the years of 1973-1974 made the executives of accommodation establishments to consider re-assessing the type of energy source. As the cost of energy increased in 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, most of the accommodation establishments began to adopt energy management policies. Energy Efficiency Office (EEO) stated in its 1994 report that accommodation establishments consume more energy than industrial buildings and schools. This report emphasized the importance of energy saving at accommodation establishments (Kirk, 1996:47). Lack of supply in utilization of nonrenewable energy sources is not a concern at the present time. Some adverse effects such as atmospheric pollution caused by utilization of fossil fuels, global warming, ozone layer depletion and acid rain also come into question. According to energy management principles, it is beneficial to reduce the amount and cost of utilized energy.

Many areas and operations may affect the environmental management performance at accommodation establishments. Energy efficiency, water saving, clean air and architectural regulations are just a few of important practices to be considered by accommodation establishments within the scope of environmental management.

1.2. Energy Efficiency

Energy consumption contributes significantly to a hotel's operating cost. Energy consumption contributes significantly to a hotel's operating cost, and in Pacific Developing Member Countries (PDMCs) this can reach up to 25% of operating cost. This results in expensive hotel rates that can lower a hotel's competitive edge in the tourism market. Energy efficiency offers hotels a quick and low-investment method of reducing energy-use without compromising guest comfort. Energy

efficiency can reduce a hotel's energy cost by 10%- 40% depending on the measures taken. This in turn lowers the hotel's operating cost, resulting in a higher profit margin and increased competitive ability of the business (International Institute for Energy Conservation, 2015: 3).

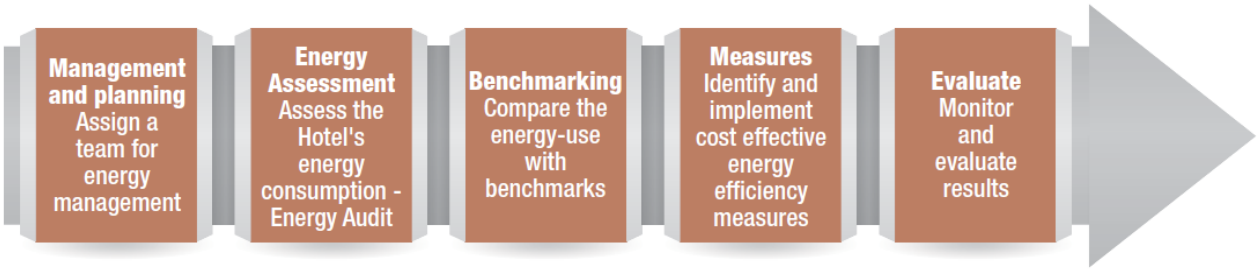

Figure 1: MEBME 5 Steps for Implementing Energy Efficiency in Hotels
Reference: IIEC (2015: 7)

As seen Figure 1, IIEC's energy management plan reveals all critical information, steps, resources, methods and functions to be considered in order to improve energy management.

The team may comprise an energy manager, someone from technician/maintenance staff, someone with financial or accounting knowledge, and a representative from the housekeeping department. In small hotels, one person may assume multiple roles; for example, the hotel owner may be both energy manager and finance expert (IIEC, 2015: 8).

The main energy consuming systems in hotels are (Kapiki, 2010: 80):

- Heating
- Air conditioning and ventilation
- Hot water production
- Lighting
- Electricity (lifts, etc.)
- Cooking

Energy saving methods might differ depending on the structure of accommodation establishment and climatic conditions. For example, Parpairi (2017: 176) has conducted a research on energy saving strategies and environmental policies of small accommodation establishments in Greece and determined that solar system is costly for such establishments. The researcher also states that all accommodation establishments should have a written energy saving plan regardless of their size.

Goussous et al., (2014: 440) conducted a research in Jordan and pointed out the importance of climatic conditions to achieve the expected results from environmental management practices. The researchers have recommended utilization of green roof technology in the buildings in Jordan instead of solar system. Upon installation of this system, it is determined that energy saving is achieved and energy consumption costs are reduced.

Kirk (1993: 412) has summarized his opinions and recommendations regarding energy management system and implementations at accommodation establishments as follows:

If the accommodation establishments want to succeed, they should assign managerial responsibility of energy consumption to one of their executives. Preferably this person should be responsible for creating and maintaining the whole environmental management strategy. The first phase of an energy management plan should be an energy audit. Energy performance of the whole facility can be measured with an analysis of hotels' past records and statistics. But one should be careful when they assess the energy performance and not combine guest floors and non-guest floor. On the contrary, separating them will provide a more accurate result. Assessing energy performances of different parts of an accommodation establishment such as clubs, restaurants and sports facilities may require some other measurement methods. Moreover, in order to be able to compare the results of the measurements, all energy units should have standard kilo-Watt hours.

Cost estimations should consider the unit price differences for each source of energy and their efficiencies.

The energy audit should provide:

- energy consumption and cost data for up to five years;
- frequent meter readings to show day-time, night-time and weekend energy consumption; and
- an inventory of all energy-consuming equipment showing age, power loading and maintenance record, together with data on frequency of use.

1.3. Efficient Usage of Water Resources

One of the important matters that include environmental management is water. Water is one of the main components of life on earth. It can be said that water consumption is intense in provision of food & beverage, cleaning and environmental services at accommodation establishments. Gradually increasing costs and resources of water supply necessitate implementation of environmental management at accommodation establishments.

Kirk (1996: 41) drew attention to consumption and quality of water at accommodation establishments and clarified the matter as follows:

- Waste water adversely effects existing scarce water resources and increases the cost of accommodation establishments,
- Hot waste water not only consumes water but also energy,
- Supply of poor-quality water creates a health risk for guests and employees,
- Supply of poor-quality water shortens the lives of the equipment at accommodation establishments and increases maintenance and repair costs,
- Contaminated waste water increases the load of waste water installation and makes purification of water difficult.

To make this comparison, it is necessary to know the annual consumption (C) of water for the hotel and the average number of guests per day (G) for the year.

Water consumption (m3 per customer per year) = C/G (Kirk, 1996: 41).

Table 1: Typical Water Consumption (m3 Per Person Per Year)

Type of hotel	Performance			
	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
Large hotel (more than 150 rooms)	<220	230-280	280-320	>320
Medium (50-150 rooms)	< 160	160-185	185-220	>220
Small (less than 50 room)	<120	120-140	140-160	> 160

Based on Tables: IHEI (1993: 197)

Many findings of researches show how water consumption amount at accommodation establishment changes in terms of their properties. For example, Kasim (2007: 27) states that daily water consumption at luxury accommodation establishments changes in the range of 1.000 m3 and 1.400 m3. It is also stated that the tourists visiting Spain consume 0.8m3 water per night in average and daily water consumption per tourist in Mediterranean is 0.4m3 in average. According to Alexander (2002:5) daily water consumption at luxury accommodation establishments in developing countries is around 396 gallons in average. This amount corresponds to water consumption of 14 people in rural areas. Bohdanowicz (2005: 190) stated that water consumption at accommodation establishments per night is estimated as 0.17 m3- 0.36 m3.

If water consumption cannot be controlled, it would increase more. Thus, water shortage might be a bigger problem in the years ahead. Kasim (2007: 27) asserts that accommodation establishments consume water roughly and this triggers the conflicts caused by water demand all around the world. It will be a right decision for accommodation establishments to implement environmental management principles to save water, control and minimize wastes and make the situation better.

1.4. Fresh Air and Waste Management

Literature review shows that the concerns related to clean and quality air are not recent. Complaints about air pollution in London in 13th century have been caused by usage of coal. The heavy air pollution experienced in Glasgow in 1909 was also experienced in December 1930, in Meuse Valley in Belgium. Another intensive air pollution was reported in Donova, Pennsylvania in October 1948. 1952 air pollution in London is recorded as the local air pollution that caused death of thousands of people in history (Akdur, 2005: 16). Air quality is determined by the ratio of normal gases in air and the ratio of pollution concentration (European Commission, 2013: 11).

Using fossil fuels such as coal or petroleum at accommodation establishments for heating, cooling and cooking pollutes the air. Although marginally, using imported electric energy also triggers environmental (Kozak, 2002: 299). Emissions such as carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons affect the health of people, plants and animals. Poor quality indoor air and polluted outdoor adversely affects both health of tourists and comfort of accommodation (Kuo et al., 2008: 145).

Another cause of air pollution at accommodation establishments is smoking. There are studies about smoking prohibitions at accommodation establishments (Field, 1999:60); (Scollo et al., 2003: 13). A study conducted by Field revealed that existence of non-smoking areas at an accommodation establishment has an importance ratio of 80% for non-smokers when selecting an accommodation establishment but only 54% for smokers. According to Scolloet et al., (2003: 13) the policies implemented at accommodation establishment to create a smoke-free zone don't have any adverse effects on economic incomes of the establishment. The study argues that creating a smoke-free zone would protect the personnel against carcinogen factors.

These evidences increasing the demand of tourists for non-smoking rooms show the importance of the policy to create smoke-free zones at accommodation establishments. Kuo et al., (2008: 140) have revealed in their study that guests prefer to be in places full of quality air at business meetings, at their leisure, when sleeping or eating and the personnel prefer the same to be able to work efficiently.

Rapid development of environmental consciousness towards the end of 1990s has carried the importance of environmental management mentality at accommodation establishmentsover national and international level. Increasing importance of the matter led the establishments to establish an environmental supply chain (Sarakis, 1998: 162). Supply chain management within the scope of environmental management at accommodation establishments is defined as the entirety of purchasing, production and material management, distribution and marketing processes. This process also includes conversion processes into reuse, other materials or other products with market value (Kirk, 1995: 4). Supply chain executed with environmental management system at accommodation establishments may reduce adverse effects of energy, chemical substance and air polluting emissions and solid wastes on environment.

Waste production of accommodation establishments is the most important example of adverse effects of an accommodation establishment on environment (Bohdanowicz, 2006: 666). For example, the amount of foodstuff and paper in solid wastes of accommodation establishments are most notable wastes. Trung and Kumar (2005: 111) stated the kitchens, restaurants, guest rooms, laundries and gardens of accommodation establishments as the main areas of waste production. However, Kasim (2007: 28) states that the amount of wastes at an accommodation establishment depends on the size of the accommodation establishment and the events conducted at certain times. Therefore; environmental management implementations towards reducing the amount of waste at accommodation establishments might be extremely important.

Stipanuk; defines waste reduction, reusing, recycling and waste recycling as the best practices of waste reduction (2002: 11). Practices of waste reduction might be beneficial to accommodation establishments in terms of advantages of marketing and stakeholders, cost saving, risk reduction, health and safety. Bohdanowicz (2006: 674) recommends examples of waste reduction such as using dispensers instead of keeping separate packaged materials for soaps, shampoos and similar toiletries, buying new furniture to replace old or damaged ones. Environmental Protection Agency

(EPA) recommends in (2017: 2) to deliver edible food wastes to food bank or distribute them as animal food.

1.5. Environmentally sensitive architecture and landscape designs

Taking shelter and living in comfort under all circumstances in terms of physical environment is the biggest problem that every living being should solve. Because solution to this problem does not include only provision of comfort in the artificial environment but also correct utilization of resources in designing and maintaining the structure or structured environment and being respectful to environment. When today's architectural design criteria are examined, efforts in ecological, environmentally sensitive and green architecture discourses require being in close relationship with nature (Tekin and Kurugöl, 2011: 944); (Demircan and Toy, 2018: 812).

It is observed that an architectural style which uses machinery to heat or cool the buildings, which consumes energy and which relies on technology was common before energy and environmental problems became an affective criterion of architectural designs. However; the purpose has changed due to energy concerns today and now the aim is designing buildings that don't consume but generate energy and respectful to environment throughout their life cycle. Ultimately; it is important for the future buildings to generate their own energy like living organisms in an exchange with nature without consuming resources in terms of the sustainability of natural balance (Dönmez Polat and Demir Harputluoğlu, 2017: 31).

Environmentally sensitive architectural approach became an important design input for the buildings of accommodation establishments. Environmentally sensitive architectural approach for the buildings of accommodation establishment has emerged as concepts like sustainable buildings became widespread. Thus, it provided the basis for the construction of environmentally sensitive buildings in the design of different types of accommodation establishments (Erdoğan, 2003: 120).

When the principles of constructing the buildings for environmentally sensitive accommodation establishments are examined, it is seen that ecological materials are being used and they are designed as small structures which will not create any waste in the nature when their life cycle is over. Measures taken at the establishments to save energy, for instance purifying water and using it for landscape designs, are examples of environmentally sensitive buildings (Pehlivanoğlu, 2010: 374).

Hix Island House Hotel on Vieques Island in Caribbean Sea has been designed with an ecological architecture understanding. The hotel has a modern design by which human beings and nature embrace each other. The establishment uses solar energy and trees are irrigated with waste water. As the building has no windows, ventilation of indoor area is provided with natural air circulation but not with air conditioning. Electric energy is generated by solar panels and waste water is re-used for irrigation, cooling, toilet cleaning, fire extinguishing etc. but not for drinking (URL-5, 2018).

Internationally active accommodation establishments in tourism industry use numerous environmental management certificates called eco labels to preserve environment, to reduce energy costs, to satisfy the changing tourist profile and to gain competitive advantage in the market. There are more than hundred certificates used by tourism establishment in the world: Biohotels, Energy Star, Enviro-Mark, European Ecotourism Labelling Standard, Florida Green Lodging Program, Green Star Hotel, Green Flag Award, International Eco Certification Program, National Tourism Accreditation Framework, Responsible Tourism System, Sustainable Tourism Eco-Certification Program are some of the environmental management certificates received by accommodation establishments (Gössling and Buckley, 2016: 360).

1.6. Cittaslow

Paolo Saturnini and mayors of four small Italian cities (Orvieto, Greve, Positanoand Bra) had a meeting in Orvieto, in 1999 and brought forward the Cittaslow model to provide sustainable development of cities. According to this model cities with a population of less than 50.000 which have products, culture and life style specific to region would have the chance to Cittaslow Association to ensure sustainable development. Following the Slow Food Movement in Cuneo City

in Langhe, Italy in 1986, Carlo Petrini has brought the Foundation Philosophy of Cittaslow into question (Semmens and Freemen, 2012: 358).

When membership criteria on the website of Cittaslow Association are examined, it is seen that policies are formed under 7 main titles and implementation terms are 72 criteria in total. These seven main policies are prepared in terms of (URL-1, 2018) environment, infrastructure, urban life quality, agriculture, tourism, crafts, artists, hospitality, awareness and training, social adaptation and partnerships. There are essentiality and perspective criteria among the membership criteria prepared by Cittaslow Association Committee that includes 72 articles.

Cittaslow movement, which was initiated in Italy in 1999 by four cities, became an international body covering 236 cities in 30 countries after 18 years. One of the most important countries that joined the Cittaslow Association, which was founded in Italy within the boundaries of Europe, was Spain. The next country that has joined the Cittaslow Network of Europe was Poland. Poland was also one of the few companies which have implemented the criteria seriously during its participation process. Currently Poland ranks second in Cittaslow network after Italy with a total of 27 settlements (Zawadzka, 2017: 98).

Cittaslow movement supports social, environmental and economic sustainability of the society (Presenza et al., 2015: 470). It also assists local governments to assess themselves in terms of their criteria and then observes them if they are involved in establishing and maintaining the quality of life for their citizens and tourists (Pink, 2007: 59).

Applications of Cittaslow for sustainable development in various places largely depend on local characteristics and people. When Cittaslow movement was dealing with sustainable urban planning and development, they have taken earlier studies on the impact of globalization on urban design and landscape into consideration and reviewed the relationship between the design and homogeneity of cities and authenticity of the regions. In this sense, Cittaslow contributes to reducing damaging effects of globalization. It also helps to maintain the identity of the locality by preserving its distinctiveness and this is an essential component for a place to be a sustainable tourism destination. The major goal of the Cittaslow network is to provide a quality life to locals but when the literature is reviewed, it is seen that the most significant property of Cittaslow is working on a smaller scale to ensure sustainable tourism development (Park and Kim, 2016: 354). When the local residents in slow cities become aware of the effects of tourism and development of touristic activities is controlled by the local community, local resources can be used efficiently and without being exposed to any harm (Su et al., 2017: 277).

1.7. CittaslowAkyaka

Akyaka, which is located within the boundaries of Muğla province in southeastern end of Turkey is at the east end of Gulf of Gökova. Winter population of Akyaka located within the boundaries of Ula County between Marmaris and Muğla is around 2.815 but it doubles in summer. Boat excursions are organized with yachts and motorboats. There are picnic areas suitable to pitch tents. Akyaka's coastal and marine fauna are rather rich. Mediterranean seals (Monachus monachus), sand sharks (Carcharinus plumbeus) and dolphins are some members of its rich marine fauna and there are also some rare and internationally protected species like sea otters (Lutra lutra) which increases the importance of its fauna (URL-6, 2018).

Gulf of Gökova has the status of Special Environment Protection Area and Natural and Cultural Protection Area. Mediterranean Seal Research Group of Association of Underwater Research and Ecology Group of Association of Underwater Research have jointly conducted some studies and at the end of these studies a government decree was published in Official Gazette dated July 10, 2010 and immediately entered into force. Pursuant to this decree, six regions in the Gulf of Gökova; Akyaka, Akbük, Çamlık, Bördübet, Karaca Bays and İngiliz Limanı are declared as "Marine Protected Areas". Consequently, all kinds of hunting and fishing are prohibited in an area covering 23 km2(URL-7, 2018).

Actually, town of Akyaka was included in "Gökova Special Environment Protection Area" determined and declared by the Cabinet Decree dated 12.06.1988, No. 88/13109. Even so,

approximately 60 meters erosion is observed when the coast line of Akyaka in 1945 and current cost line are compared (Balas et al., 2011: 463).

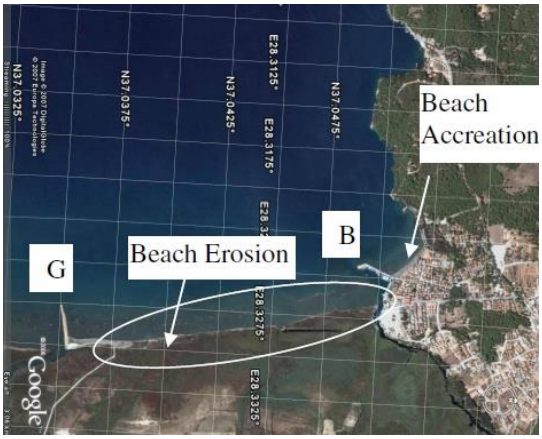

Figure 2: The Coast Line of Akyaka Balas et al. (2011: 461)

General Assembly Meeting of Cittaslow was held in Seferihsar, Cittaslow capital of Turkey, in 2011 and the list of candidate cities was announced. According to this list, Akyaka (Muğla), has gained the right to affiliate with Cittaslow Association (URL-2, 2018).

Akyaka was named as "Akâbâd and Akova" in Cadastral Record Books in Ottoman Period. It was named "Akyaka" in time. Akyaka is one of the paradise tourism destinations with abundant alternative tourism options to prefer for a beautiful and pleasant holiday. Bird watchers can watch various bird species in the reeds in Azmaklar in spring. It is possible to go fishing by fishing boats in Akyaka. Gökova can be explored by bicycling. In brief, Akyaka is convenient for alternative touristic activities (URL-8, 2018).

In general, there are boutique hotels, guesthouses and apart hotels in Akyaka. In addition, there is a 4-star and two 2-star accommodation establishments in the town. Total bed amount of the accommodation establishments in Akyaka is 2.500. There is also a tent camp center with 1.500 person capacity and numerous summer houses (Directorate of Municipal Police, 2018:1-2).

2. Purpose and Importance of the Research

Purpose of this research is examining the extent of environmental management practices of accommodation establishments in Akyaka. Although there are researches conducted on environmental management practices of the accommodation establishments that the research is based on in literature, no researches regarding the slow cities in Turkey were found. By conducting the research in Akyaka, it is considered that the research will help to determine the current status of local accommodation establishments with respect to environmentally sensitive practices. In addition, finding out the views of the executives of accommodation establishments participated in the research regarding environmentally sensitive implementations would guide other researches to be made on the subject in other slow cities. Since the research is a case study, it is important as a preliminary study to determine the extent of environmental management practices of accommodation establishments in other slow cities.

3. Research Method

The data within the scope of the research are obtained from the interviews made with the executives of establishments by visiting the establishments and semi-structured interview questions are prepared by considering the implementations in literature and criteria of Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism with reference to Environmentally Sensitive Accommodation Establishments (Green Star). Sample of the research are selected from among accommodation establishments in the important tourism destination Akyaka in the "Gökova Special Environment Protection Area". According to the list issued by Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism in 2018, 45 accommodation

establishments in Muğla province have Green Star Certificates. However, no establishment in Akyaka has applied for this certificate yet and thus it became necessary to examine the current situation. Moreover, intention to develop suggestions to encourage the executives of accommodation establishments in slow cities to apply for Green Star Certificate is one of the reasons to select Akyaka for the research.

Universe of the research is composed of accommodation establishments licensed by the municipality in Akyaka. In this context, the list of licensed accommodation establishments in Akyaka is obtained from the Directorate of Municipal Police of Ula Municipality. According to this list, there are mostly boutique hotels, guesthouses and apart hotels in Akyaka. The list also includes one 4-star and two 3-star accommodation establishments licensed by the municipality. Total bed amount of the accommodation establishments in Akyaka is 2.500. There is also a tent camp center with 1.500 person capacity and numerous summer houses. According to the information received from the Directorate of Municipal Police of Ula Municipality, 17 accommodation establishments carry on business in Akyaka with licenses obtained from the municipality. In addition, there is no accommodation establishment in Akyaka which has obtained Tourism Operation License from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (Directorate of Municipal Police, 2018:1-2); (URL-8, 2018).

In order to determine the sample of the research, first top executives of accommodation establishments licensed by the municipality are called and informed about the research. At this stage, top executives of some accommodation establishments stated that they don't want to participate in the research. Top management of 6 municipally licensed accommodation establishments which are open for twelve months a year accepted to have an interview and actualized this research.

The data within the scope of the research are obtained with semi-structured interview method by making interviews with responsible people at the management level of 6 municipally licensed accommodation establishments which constituted the sample of the research. They were asked questions regarding environmental management practices of their accommodation establishments and their answers were recorded and interpreted. Obtained data are interpreted in line with the purpose of the research, and relevant model practices and literature and recommendations are generated.

In 15 interviews permission is obtained from respondents and the interviews are recorded with a tape recorder. Then the document of the interviews is reviewed. All 15 interviews are made one-to-one with respondent and researcher. 4 respondents are females and 11 are males. One of the respondents works at a 3-star hotel, two of them work at boutique hotels and three of them are guesthouse managers.

4. Findings

The findings related to the status of environmental management practices at accommodation establishments in Cittaslow Akyaka are presented under 5 headings. First of all, information is received from top managers whether their accommodation establishments have any national or international environmental management system certificate or not. In addition, they are asked if their accommodation establishments have a written plan for environmental management practices. Then information regarding energy and water efficiency, air pollution and waste management, environmentally sensitive architectural and landscape arrangements and the actualized practices at the said establishments are received from respondent executives.

- **Availability of any national or international environmental management system certificate (ISO 14001- ISO 50001- EMAS, Green Star etc.) and a written plan at accommodation establishments**

First of all, information the respondents are asked whether their accommodation establishments have any national or international environmental management system certificate or not. The aim of this question is determining whether the accommodation establishments in Akyaka are operating in compliance with the standards specified by any environmental management system or not. None of the executives gave a positive answer to this question. They have stated that they don't need such

certificates at their establishments or they don't know anything about such certificates. A 58-year old female executive who was born and raised in Akyaka expressed her opinion about environmental management system certificates as follows:

"I was engaged in agriculture in Akyaka once. But as time passed and tourism activities in Akyaka are intensified, I have sold some of my lands and opened a family guesthouse on the beachfront. The locals generally left agriculture and engaged in tourism activities. I am one of them. I have no knowledge about this business and my son deals with it. One of the reasons of opening this guesthouse is providing a job to my son. He is graduated from the department of accounting of a university."

Then we had an interview with her son. Her 32-year old son is engaged in accounting and supply for the said family guesthouse. He expressed his opinion about environmental management system certificates as follows:

"I don't think such certificates are necessary for our establishment. Ig I need to be more open, these certificates bring extra costs to an establishment and I don't think they provide any benefit at all. We also need to spend time to receive such certificates and I consider spending time for this is uncalled for."

In line with the answers of respondent executives with regard to obtaining an environmental management system certificate, the respondents are asked if they have any written plan at their establishments "to preserve the environment and reduce adverse effects". All respondents mentioned that competitive pressure among the accommodation establishments in Akyaka in conjunction with development of tourism activities. Their priority became attracting guests and having a profit in the current competitive environment caused by economic conditions instead of focusing on environmental management system certificate. Some respondents expressed their concerns regarding natural environment in Akyaka and said that they don't want to be like Marmaris and Bodrum. However, the respondents generally believe that Akyaka is preserving its nature. In addition, the respondents stated that they regard the state and local governments as responsible for preservation of nature and resources and planning and implementation of environmental management system. The respondents believe that state and local governments jointly make decisions in this respect. The respondents strongly believe that local governments should ask for the opinions of tourism establishments with respect to decisions about Akyaka.

"…. Local governments should ask for our opinions regarding their tourism plans for Akyaka. In addition, it is their duty to convey the new developments in this sector and inform us about issues like environmental management. It is the duty of local governments to provide moral and material support we need in this respect".

- **Activities done within the scope of energy and water efficiency practices**

The respondents are asked about the methods they use at accommodation establishments regarding energy and water efficiency. It is determined in the research that the executives of accommodation establishments attach importance to energy and water saving. However, they mentioned that the devices installed to use renewable energy sources are costly. None of the respondents are using this kind of energy. It is determined that most of the respondents are trying to minimize the cost at their accommodation establishments by keeping water, electricity and energy consumption under control. Some opinions of respondents in this respect are below:

"We efficiently use computer software. Thus, efficient control of energy utilization for heating, ventilation and lighting is possible. Thus, the energy of all unused units and electricity in rooms and corridors are automatically turned off".

A respondent, who is the manager and owner of a boutique hotel explained their methods of water saving:

"We use drip irrigation method in our garden to save water. We regularly check if there is any water leakage indoor and outdoor. We use water saving washing machine and dishwasher (Class A) at our establishment".

A male guesthouse manager emphasized that they use solar energy to increase energy efficiency at their establishment.

"We pay attention to dry our guests' laundry in natural environment. We actively use solar energy to supply hot water".

It is observed that the respondents generally use solar energy instead of other types of energy.

- **Activities within the scope of reducing wastes and air pollutants**

Respondents stated that they have some implementations regarding waste management. Some of them are below:

"*We sort the wastes at our establishment, collect them and protect them in containers in a confined space. We don't prefer single use foodstuff in reduction of kitchen wastes. Remaining edible foodstuff are consumed by our employees".*

A female executive responsible for housekeeping at a 3-star accommodation establishment explained their sensitivity in cleaning materials to preserve the environment as follows:

We regularly warn housekeeping personnel to use disinfectants only when it is necessary for hygiene purposes. We are careful to use environmentally sensitive chemicals in cleaning. We have minimized usage of hazardous chemicals like anti-lime acids and drain openers by explaining this situation to our employees and guests.

A male guesthouse manager stated that they try to procure their supplies from immediate vicinity:

"*We are happy to support local craftsmen but our main aim is minimizing the carbon emissions".*

With this, he also proved their love for people and nature.

- **Activities within the scope of environmentally sensitive architecture and landscaping**

Along with activities to beautify the environment at accommodation establishments, activities and events conducted for the preservation of endemic plants and arrangements to protect ecosystem are within the scope of environmental management practices. Indoor and outdoor landscaping and forestation, visual compliance of buildings with nature, protection of wild animals or pets can be assumed as features of an accommodation establishment managed with the understanding of environmental sensitiveness.

"We try to grow endemic plants on the verge of extinction inside and outside of the establishment. We build bird nests. Thus, we endeavor to maintain the life under protection in the region".

One respondent answered the question about the architectural arrangements at accommodation establishments as follows:

"We use special glass on the exterior of the building which prevents the heat in summer and reduce heat loss in winter. We have also mounted construction elements that control the sun on the exterior of the establishment".

Discussion and Conclusion

Environmental policies are included in membership criteria for Cittaslow. It is observed that the association included articles that necessitate the individuals and establishments to be sensitive to environment and displayed their sensitivity in this respect. Ultimately, it is obvious that it is compulsory to comply with and implement the criteria related to environmental issues to be affiliated with this Association. As mentioned previously, none of the accommodation establishments in Akyaka is not on the list of Green Star Accommodation Establishments announced by Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism in 2018. In line with these basic information, 15 executives of accommodation establishments in Akyaka mentioned their activities within the scope of environmental management practices in the interviews. In line with the information received from the respondents, general results are enumerated below:

- Respondents don't consider environmental management at their establishments as a basic operational policy. None of the respondent executives keep records of statistical data regarding energy and water consumption, solid wastes and air pollutants at their establishments.
- Respondents implement environmental management policies with limited financial means and limited knowledge.
- Although the respondents don't have a systematic management awareness regarding environmentally sensitive architectural practices, they don't need to receive support in this respect.

- When the opinions of respondents are assessed, it is perceived that they generally don't endeavor with respect to environmental management and implementations at their accommodation establishments.

Recommendations below may be made in line with the information about the current situation:
- Ensuring environmental sensitivity at accommodation establishments in member cities of Cittaslow Associationis generally the duty of Cittaslow Association and local governments. Necessary legal regulations regarding standard environmental management practices for all establishments should be made with cooperation of them.
- In order to raise awareness of executives and employees of accommodation establishments in Akyaka about environmental management and practices, local governments and the municipalities in particular should organize regular training programs and trainings in this respect should be compulsory.
- Local governments in Akyaka should implement encouraging policies for accommodation establishments to consume environmentally sensitive packages and products and direct the executives to supply all materials from environmentally sensitive suppliers.
- Primary priority of the executives of accommodation establishments in Akyaka is preventing the functions which are not sensitive to environment. Arrangement and implementation of managerial and marketing functions in compliance with environmental management system standards by the executives of accommodation establishments would support Akyaka to have an environmentally sensitive structure. Executives of accommodation establishments in this city may have the chance to be preferential for conscious and quality customers by adopting environmental management practices and thus creating an environmentally sensitive brand.

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