

ASSESSMENT OF API TOURISM IN TURKEY BY SWOT ANALYSIS

Sağlık Turizmi Açısından Api Turizmin SWOT Analizi İle Değerlendirilmesi

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ABSTRACT

In this research, the api tourism potential of Turkey was evaluated by SWOT analysis. The purpose of the study is to determine current situation of api tourism in Turkey within the scope of health tourism. Statistical databases of Turkey Bee Breeding Center Union, Turkey Statistical Institute and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the findings achieved by international and national studies have been utilized in the paper. At the end of the SWOT analysis strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and risks of the api tourism in Turkey has been determined. According to the findings, having the 3rd most significant beehive reserve in the world, being one of the 12 most essential gene centers of the world concerning flora, and applying apitheraphy methods that are considered as a part of the traditional and complementary medicine in accommodation centers is already legalized by the Ministry of health. Its weaknesses are absence of provinces that have the most beehives in Turkey among the api routes, deficiency on promoting and marketing as a bee route, and underdeveloped api tourism consciousness.

Keywords: Health Tourism, Traditional and Complementary Medicine, Api tourism, Turkey

ÖZ

Bu araştırmada Türkiye'nin api turizm potansiyeli SWOT analizi ile değerlendirilmiştir. Araştırma; api turizmin Türkiye'deki şimdiki durumunu tespit etmek ve sağlık turizmi kapsamındaki potansiyelinin değerlendirilmesi amacını taşımaktadır. Çalışmada, Türkiye Arı Yetiştiriciliği Merkez Birliği, Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu ve Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)'a ait istatistiki verilerinden ve konu ile ilgili uluslararası ve ulusal düzeyde yapılmış çalışma bulgularından yararlanılmıştır. Yapılan SWOT analizi sonucunda, Türkiye'de api turizmin güçlü ve zayıf yönleri ile fırsatları ve tehdit unsurları tespit edilmiştir. Elde edilen bulgulara göre, Türkiye'de api turizmin en güçlü yönleri; dünyada üçüncü sırada kovan varlığına sahip olması, flora açısından dünyanın en önemli 12 gen merkezi arasında yer alması ve geleneksel ve tamamlayıcı tıp yöntemlerinden biri olarak kabul edilen api terapinin konaklama tesisleri içinde uygulanmasının Sağlık Bakanlığı'nca onaylanmış olmasıdır. Api turizmin en zayıf yönleri ise; Türkiye'de en fazla arı kovanına sahip olan illerin henüz arı rotası kapsamında değerlendirilmemesi, arı rotası olarak tanıtım ve pazarlama çalışmalarının eksikliği ve yeterince gelişmemiş api turizm bilinci olduğudur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sağlık turizmi, Geleneksel ve Tamamlayıcı Tıp, Api turizm, Türkiye

GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Amaç: Araştırma; api turizmin Türkiye'deki şimdiki durumunu ortaya koymak ve tedavi amaçlı kullanılan, arıdan elde edilen polen, propolis gibi tıbbî ürünlerin geleneksel ve tamamlayıcı tıp uygulamalarında sağlık

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turizmi kapsamındaki potansiyelinin değerlendirilmesi amacını taşımaktadır. Bu araştırma sağlık turizmi açısından api turizmin yeri ve Türkiye için önemini belirtmek amacıyla hazırlanmış bir derleme çalışmasıdır. Bu çalışma api turizmin sağlık turizmi içindeki yerini belirleyerek, arıcılığın yaygın olduğu ülkemizde, çeşitli bölge veya illerde api terapi uygulama merkezleri kurulması konusunda farkındalık yaratması açısından önem taşımaktadır.

Gereç ve Yöntem: Bu araştırma kavramsal nitelik taşımaktadır. Bunun yanı sıra araştırma için Türkiye Arı Yetiştiriciliği Merkez Birliği, Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu ve Food and Agriculture Organization of The United Nations (FAO)'a ait istatistiki verilerinden ve konu ile ilgili uluslararası ve ulusal düzeyde yapılmış çalışma bulgularından yararlanılmıştır. Yapılan SWOT analizi sonucunda, Türkiye'de api turizmin güçlü ve zayıf yönleri ile fırsatları ve tehdit unsurları tespit edilmiştir.

Bulgular: Türkiye'de api turizmin en güçlü yönleri; dünyada üçüncü sırada kovan varlığına sahip olması, flora açısından dünyanın en önemli 12 gen merkezi arasında yer alması ve geleneksel ve tamamlayıcı tıp yöntemlerinden biri olarak kabul edilen api terapinin konaklama tesisleri içinde uygulanmasının Sağlık Bakanlığı'nca onaylanmış olmasıdır. Api turizmin en zayıf yönleri ise; Türkiye'de en fazla arı kovanına sahip olan illerin henüz arı rotası kapsamında değerlendirilmemesi, arı rotası olarak tanıtım ve pazarlama çalışmalarının eksikliği ve yeterince gelişmemiş api turizm bilinci olduğudur.

Türkiye'nin api turizmi açısından fırsatları arasında, Avrupa'da yaşayan yaşlı nüfusun fazla olması sebebiyle bazı hastalık durumlarında uzun süre beklemek yerine farklı ülkelerde tedavi olma arayışları içerisinde olmaları, bununla birlikte turizm anlayışının değişmesi ile birlikte doğaya ve doğal olana talebin artması sonucu arının ekolojik denge içindeki öneminin artması sayılabilir. Türkiye'nin Ortadoğu'da olan savaflara olan yakınlığı, siyasi krizler ve terör olaylarından kaynaklanan diğer ülkelere karşı bazı olumsuz imajı olması ve Avrupalı seyahatlerin çoğunun Slovenya, Polonya ve Ukrayna gibi api turizmde gelişmiş bu ülkelere gitmeyi tercih etmesi, Türkiye'nin api turizm açısından karşı karşıya kaldığı tehditlerden bazılarıdır.

Sonuç: Api turizmin Türkiye'deki şimdiki durumunu ortaya koymak ve tedavi amaçlı kullanılan, arıdan elde edilen polen, propolis gibi tıbbî ürünlerin geleneksel ve tamamlayıcı tıp uygulamalarında sağlık turizmi kapsamındaki potansiyelinin değerlendirilmesi amacını taşıyan bu çalışmada Türkiye'nin api terapi uygulamalarının gerçekleştirildiği api turizm türü için çok elverişli bir altyapı sergilediğini söylemek mümkündür. Ancak var olan bu potansiyelin farkında olarak doğru adım atmak henüz gelişmekte olan bir api turizm türünün daha sağlam temellere dayandırılmasını sağlayacaktır.

Bu kapsamda yapılması gereken en önemli şey Sağlık Bakanlığı, Turizm Bakanlığı, Tarım Bakanlığı, Arıcılar Birliği, Arıcılık Araştırma Enstitüsü, Api terapi Derneği, Arı Üreticileri ve TURSAB yetkililerinin bir araya gelerek bu konuda bir fikir birliğine vararak Api terapi uygulamaları için Api Turizm Modeli geliştirmek olacaktır. Aksi takdirde uyumlu bir hareket planı olmadığı için dünyada var olan arı turizmin Türkiye'de hak ettiği yere gelmesi zaman alacaktır. Bu gecikme başlangıçta arı üreticileri ve yerel halk için bir kazanç kaybı olabileceği gibi uzun vadede ülkemiz için döviz girişi kaybı şeklinde sonuçlanacaktır.

INTRODUCTION

The standard definition of tourism includes the travel of people away from their traditional residing or working places, amenities provided within the interval of traveling and established facilities to respond to the needs of travelers (Mathiesson and Wall, 1982).

As a result of technological developments, increased tourism demands resulted in the emergence of different tourism types such as mass tourism, alternative tourism, cultural, nature, social and, recreational tourism (Tutorialspoint, 2016). Health

tourism, one of the recently emerged tourism types, can be defined as the travel made to improve or maintain one's health by visiting weight-loss camps, naturopathy centers and, health resorts (Tutorialspoint, 2016). For the case of the api tourism that is a subtype of the health tourism, products obtained from bees such as honey, pollen, propolis, bee venom is used in the habitat of bees with the goal of improving and maintaining human health (Suna, 2018).

This study is crucial to determine the position of the api tourism in the health tourism and to raise awareness about establishing api therapy centers in

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certain locations among various regions or provinces where beekeeping is common.

Although tourism has been realized in the first ages for economic, faith, health, and sports purposes, it has become a phenomenon aimed at free time, rest, relaxation, adventure and hobbies (Yıldız, 2011). This changing phenomenon has caused the emergence of different types of tourism such as cultural heritage tourism, ethnic tourism, plateau tourism, camping and caravan tourism, cave tourism, sports tourism, hunting tourism and so on. Health tourism is the tourism types that has emerged as a result of this change.

Health tourism is activities of one's visits and accommodations in facilities with natural resources with the aim of treatment, health protection, surgical intervention, cures, and other similar needs for a while (Albayrak, 2013; Cemal, 2000). Another definition of health tourism is travel of one to other countries from the residential country in order to regain health (Albayrak, 2013; Salem, 2002).

Cultural differences and similarities between societies, differences between the levels of income, education, knowledge among the people are among the variables of health tourism. Accordingly, some people who benefit from health tourism are only interested in the medical services they will receive, while others are researching package tourism services (Lagiewski and Myers, 2008). Some of the main reasons why people consider health tourism are high costs of alternatives, long waiting lists, differences in quality levels and social reasons. (Albayrak, 2013).

Health tourism is handled in two categories as medical tourism and thermal tourism. Thermal tourism is a tourism type does not require medical treatment. During thermal tourism curing natural water containing salts and minerals at a certain temperature covers the need for resting and recreation. On the other hand, medical tourism consists of travels for the needs of medical treatment or medication (Albayrak, 2013). Api tourism, subject of this study, includes both types of health tourism. While the products obtained from bee such as pollen, propolis, bee venom, honey, beeswax can be evaluated within the scope of medical tourism. It is necessary to go to the place where the service is offered, as in thermal tourism, to perform other treatment applications such as api bed (bee bed) or api air (bee air). For these reasons, while api tourism is considered within the scope of health tourism, it is

included in both medical tourism and thermal tourism type.

Apitherapy is a method of treatment by using bee products such as honey, pollen, royal jelly, and propolis to improve health or prevent disease (Çelik and Aşgun, 2014). Api-tourism's definition starts with bee culture and continues with raising the awareness of the environment and human life together with travel and education experiences. As a new concept in the travel and travel industry, api-tourism has emerged and developed as an essential component of the green economy (Korosec, 2016). In other words, api tourism is a collection of activities that occur in a period when a special mass having knowledge of the bee culture goes to bee's natural environment and accommodate there in order have a better grasp of apiculture, to maintain a healthy life or for treatment. (Suna, 2018).

MATERIAL and METHODS

This research is written in the conceptual type. SWOT Analysis has been used for this paper in order to determine the situation of Api Tourism in Turkey within the scope of health tourism. The SWOT analysis (assessment of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) is not a new technique but has been developed previously to assess the situation and expectations of businesses, a particular region or a new concept.

RESULTS

Strengths and weaknesses are the characteristics of the region or organization that under the assessment. Opportunities and threats address the broader context or environment of the existence of the organization or region (Lawhead, Veglak & Thomas, 1992).

Strengths

Turkey's strengths and weaknesses concerning api tourism is as follows:

- By comparison, hospitals in Turkey has better infrastructure and technological equipment than other countries (Albayrak, 2013).
- There are cheaper health services compared to other European countries in Turkey which provides a price advantage to people (Selvi, 2008).
- Quality of accommodation, recreation, and

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entertainment services are adequate (Edinsel and Adıgüzel, 2014).

- Level of knowledge and experience that allows doctors and services in Turkey conform to specified standards (Edinsel and Adıgüzel, 2014).
- Due to its long-lasting climate and its location in the middle of Asia and Europe, it has geographic areas with historical, natural and cultural attractions.
- Thanks to its close relationship with the European Union and Muslim society, it can be easily incorporated into both western and eastern markets.
- Due to the beautiful and diverse climate, a tourism package including other types of tourism can be easily prepared.
- Turkey has placed the first ranks in the world in beekeeping industry which consist production of bee products such as honey and beeswax (Food and Agriculture Organization,2013).
- The beekeeping activities are carried out in almost every region of Turkey and Turkey has been located as an essential gene center between the three continents (Çelik and Aşgun, 2014).
- It has 75% of the world's honey producing vegetation and also has more than 9000 flowery plant species, of which 3000 are endemic within the 11,500 flowery plants species of Europe continent (Beekeeping Sector Meeting Report, 2016).
- The 80% of pine honey production in Turkey is carried out in Muğla. Its sixth position concerning tourist attraction among Turkey cities will contribute positively to the creation of an api tourism package (Bahar and Yılmaz, 2016).
- According to the data of the beekeeping sector meeting in 2016, Turkey ranks 3rd in the world concerning hive assets (Beekeeping Sector Meeting Report, 2016).
- The implementation of apitherapy, which considered as one of the traditional and complementary medicine methods, within the accommodation facilities has been approved by the Ministry of Health (Ministry of Health, 2017).

Weaknesses

- Api tourism does not have the necessary organization to perform activities because it is a new type of tourism in Turkey.
- Apitherapy practices have been applied in hospitals in a separate department, but it has not been noticed that apitherapy can also be applied in the accommodation centers.
- Owing to the insufficient knowledge of the

tourism agencies, promotion, and marketing activities have not started yet.

- The marketing and strategy development efforts required for Turkey's api tourism, have not been started yet.
- Although some countries like Slovenia, Germany, Britain, Ukraine and, Poland have already formed a bee tourism trail, Turkey is not placed in that route yet (Apimondia Working Group, 2014; Hellner et. al.2008)
- Besides that, no cooperation or connection has been established with api tourism routes in other countries.
- Activities of api tourism will be carried out in rural areas (near the hives), it will take time to inform beekeepers, local people and local governments about.
- Similarly, the lack of adequate accommodation, food, and beverage companies to accommodate tourists for these activities which will be carried out in rural areas (near the hives) poses a problem.

Opportunities

The opportunities and threats concerning Turkey's api tourism are as follows:

- The importance of bee in the ecological balance is the attraction for tourists because of the understanding of tourism that shaped by the increase in demand for natural and natural products (İçöz, 2009).
- Airline companies and airports are owned by Turkey can even facilitate transportations from far away (Albayrak, 2013)
- Because of the large number of older adults living in Europe, in some cases, patients tend to seek treatment in different countries instead of waiting for a long time (Gülen and Demirci, 2012).
- Bee products gained from Turkey's 3,000 endemic flower plant will provide extra charm (Semerci, 2017).

Threats

- Turkey has a negative image resulting from its proximity to war in the Middle East, political crises and terrorism (Ministry of Health of Turkey, Strategic Plan, 2013-2017)
- This negative image leads to bad publicity and lobbying against Turkey applied in some countries.
- Most European travelers go to developed countries concerning Api tourism such as Slovenia,

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Poland, and Ukraine (Gleeson, 2014; Wos, 2014).

• In Turkey, the average efficiency is 14.3 kg per colony, which is 32% lower than the world average. As a result, Turkey has a low efficiency in the production of honey per colony (Çevrimli and Sakarya, 2018).

• There is the danger that apitherapy, which can be administered unconsciously by beekeepers, will spread away from the legal framework (Ministry of Health, 2017).

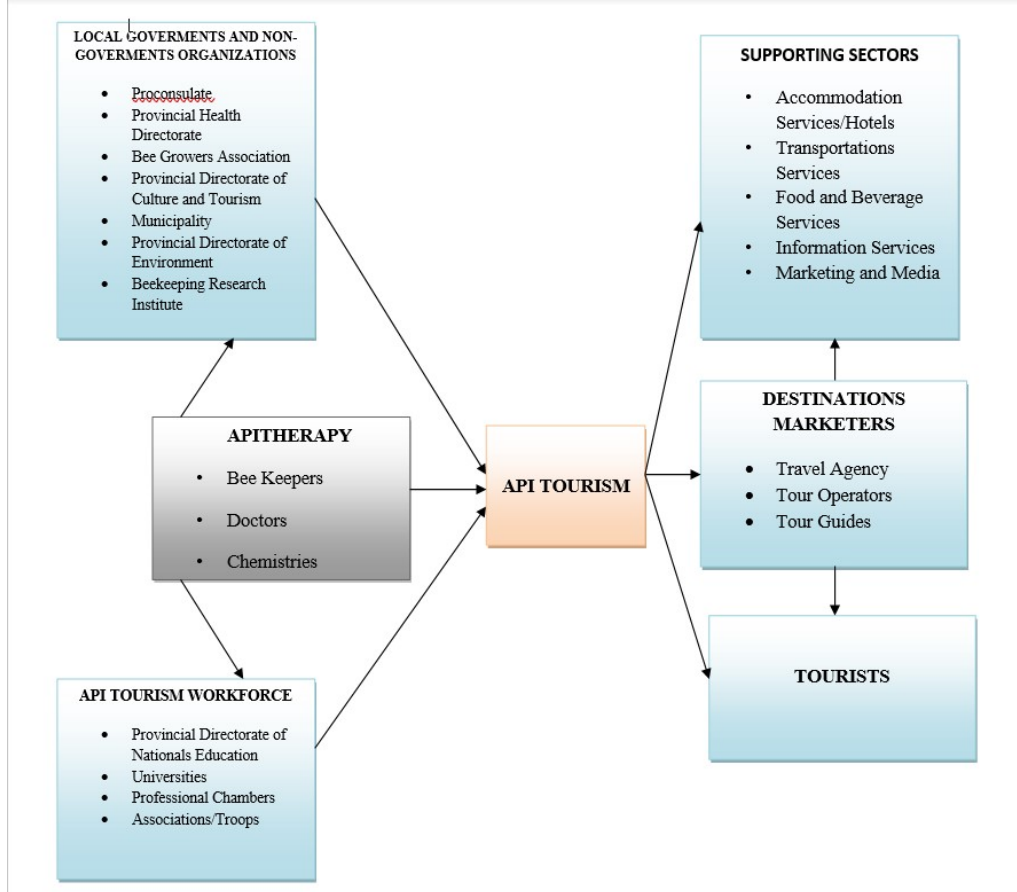


Figure 1: A Model of Api Tourism Development

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The first purpose of this research is to determine the current situation of Api tourism in Turkey. The second one is to evaluate the potential of bee products used in traditional and complementary medicine applications within the scope of wellness tourism. As a consequence, the most remarkable result is that Turkey has sufficient substructure for api tourism where api therapy implementations are applied.

The most important thing to be done within this

scope will be gathering of Ministry of Health, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Agriculture, Beekeepers Association, Apiculture Research Institute, Api Therapy Association, Bee Producers and TURSAB officials for the agreement on this issue and the development Api Tourism Model for Apitherapy applications. Otherwise, since there is no compatible action plan, it will take time to come to the position Turkey deserves among all the api tourism points that exist all over the world. This delay will initially be a loss of earnings for bee producers and residents. However, in long-term, it will result in a loss of foreign

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exchange flows to our country.

Another problem that the lack of coordination and action plan might reveal is that people ability of implementation of whom is not qualified for apitherapy. This kind of implementations might cause death and cause undesirable results by putting people who are allergic to bee and bee products into more significant hazards. In the light of the findings obtained an api tourism improve model are given Figure 1:

Consequently, in our country, which has a vibrant flora of plants, the indispensable value of the bee in the ecological balance should be kept in mind. Basing on this logic api tourism will provide extra income for beekeepers and local public. Thus, it will contribute to regional development. Also, api tourism implementation plan which can be applied for both therapeutic and preventive, protection purposes should be laid out to cover all stakeholders and must be urgently implemented.

Finally, this research has been limited as a conceptional article; this issue can be studied as a research article for further investigation.

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