

Economic Potential of Cultural Tourism In Terms of Tourism Marketing

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ABSTRACT

The concept of tourism marketing includes all activities related to marketing of the tourism sector. In tourism marketing, all activities which are applied to ensure participation of the customer who is referred as “tourist” in the tourism movements and satisfaction of this customer constitute the basic element of the mentioned concept.

As a result of the rapid development of tourism and the diversity within itself, cultural tourism has emerged as a different alternative. Travels and accommodations that tourists use to see and recognize different cultures belonging to societies are called as cultural tourism. It becomes possible to use all cultural values with cultural tourism in the best way and to provide tourism mobility in every region and all the yearlong. In addition, culture tourism raises the level of living of the local people by increasing the awareness of cultural heritage for the individuals and increases the economic viability by increasing the employment opportunities. In this study, the contribution of cultural tourism and national economy contributions shall be examined at a conceptual level.

Key Words: *Tourism, Tourism Marketing, Culture, Culture Tourism.*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism enterprises are labor intensive enterprises where the human factor is the most important input. Tourism marketing requires more rigorous effort than marketing any goods. Tourism is one of the important activities in the service sector that adds vitality to the economy. Geographical location and the natural, cultural and historical texture that we have make our country very advantageous in terms of tourism. The fact that the three sides of our country are surrounded by seas makes the seashore regions attractive for tourists and in recent years, the interest in cultural, ecological and natural tourism has increased considerably in the tourism market. (Gök, Tuna, 2013: 2).

World Tourism Organization defines tourism as ; “The activities of the people who travel places outside the perimeter of the environment in the course of work or other specific purposes and to best value their times not exceeding one year uninterruptedly” (Yüksel and Mermos, 2004:3)

In tourism marketing, the customer is generally called "tourist". Nowadays, most of the operators seem to use "guest" instead of tourist. The main theme of tourism marketing is all the tactics and activities in order to

ensure participation and satisfaction of the customer that is named as tourist in the tourism movements. On the other hand, the attitudes and behaviors of the customers before, during and after the vacation, their relations and the macro scale orientations that they reveal are among the areas of tourism marketing research (Karagöz, 2013: 9).

A marketing manager's decision variables are the elements of a marketing mix. As the marketing mix, which consists of Product, Price, Promotion and Placement factors have become insufficient over time, factors have been reached to 7P by adding People, Physical facilities and Process Management factors to the traditional 4P factors. (Van Waterschoot and Von den Bulte, 1992).

7P mix should be considered during tourism marketing activities as in other marketing activities. In tourism marketing, focusing only on the marketing of sea-sand-sun product, which is the product of traditional mass tourism, reduces the tourism to a short period like 1-2 months, which limits the income from tourism to a much smaller extent. On the other hand, the adherence to a single product leads to many problems such as the depletion of natural resources in the long run, lagging behind competitors and not optimizing the use of available resources. This situation emphasizes the necessity of developing alternative tourism types. In this way, it shall be possible to use all of your wealth in the best possible way and to provide a tourism mobility in all yearlong in every region. From this point of view, culture tourism is the most spectacular type among the alternative tourism types.

Cultural tourism may involve many activities such as visiting historic buildings, sites and museums, participating in festivals or special events, observing or experiencing the behavior of local people. People participate in cultural tourism to learn about the cultures of the places they visit and to experience folklore, traditions, natural beauties and historical sites, as well as to participate other activities such as nature, adventure, sports events, festivals and crafts (MacDonald and Joliffe, 2003: 308).

Culture tourism is divided into 3 in terms of its contents as follows (Fagence, 2003: 57);

- **High, Institutionalized Culture:** Museums, exhibitions, visual arts, historical places, theater, literature, science and technology centers,
- Community, Popular Culture:** Film, entertainment, sports, mass media, shopping, events, food, products, crafts, traditions, customs,
- **Ethnic Symbols:** Language, education, transportation, religion, clothing, ornament, dialect.

According to this classification, visits to museums, exhibitions, historical places, theater and visual arts, literature, science and technology centers are defined as a high culture element; as well as visits to films, events, traditions and customs are defined as a folk culture, and finally, language, religion, education and clothing purpose visits are defined as distinct cultural elements of a community (Fagence, 2003: 57).

Cultural tourism is a sub-type of tourism and one of the alternative tourism types. Tourists no longer prefer mass tourism, but they travel to get to know the cultures of many different countries that that they do not know. Thus, tourists are able to see the cultural values belonging to different nations on the spot and get the opportunity of recognition. The desire of tourists to visit the regions due to their cultural wealth, in another words gathering of culture and tourism resources, can provide significant gains to the countries and especially to the national economy.

Although cultural tourism has different definition forms, it is one of the most preferred tourism types and the market is gradually developing. It is a kind of intellectual and qualified activity that gives importance to local culture and values.

It is stated in the development plans of cultural tourism that one of the aims is to create an opportunity for the region and the local people. For example, in the cultural tourism project developed in Mexico, it is said that "the main objective of the culture tourism policy in this project is to create benefit for the social and economic development from the different forms of cultural expression in the targeted regions" (Cano and Mysyk, 2004: 882).

An important issue in the concept of cultural tourism is that people shall travel according to different elements of the culture and shall be called as cultural tourists during this travel process. For example, a visitor who goes to Vienna to listen to classical music or a visitor who goes to Belgium to visit a museum, or a tourist who visits Topkapi Palace all are called as cultural tourists. Another issue that needs to be taken into consideration that cultural tourism aims to raise the quality of life of local people and to preserve traditional lifestyles by increasing awareness of history and cultural heritage in individuals (Cave, Ryan and Penakara, 2001: 372).

If it is desired to summarize the characteristics of cultural tourism as items, the followings may be mentioned (Beijing, 2011: 152-153);

- In economic terms, cultural tourism is a rare product. For this reason, cultural tourism has the "comparative advantage" in the economy.
- The social status of those who participate in cultural tourism is higher than the average mass tourism customers.
- Travelers who attend cultural visits are more educated, more inquisitive, more concerned, more free, and able to spend more time and money in their destination, sensitive to cultural and artistic activities, more respectful to the cultures and traditions of the destination.
- Cultural tourism is much less affected by the developing virtual environment and global capital movements than by the sun-sea-sand tourism.
- At the cultural tourism, tourist revenues are spread to wider areas at the national level and the people of the region have a wider share of tourism and so cultural levels of the regions rise.
- Cultural tourism has the potential to spread the tourist activity up to 12 months.
- Cultural tourism is more sensitive to the surrounding, historical and cultural heritage.
- If it is managed well, culture tourism shall not exhaust or shall not be exhausted.

Although cultural tourism is mostly offered for rural areas, it seems to be important for metropolitans as well. Cultural tourism is important in terms of the restoration of cultural places in rural areas and metropolitans, emphasizing the importance of these places, providing employment and thus economic vitality. We can say that cultural tourism can be applied to metropolitans by visualizing cultural elements of a metropolitan like Istanbul and using it for tourism purposes.

Perhaps the most important positive effect of cultural tourism is the economic effect caused by raising the living standards of local people and creating new business opportunities. The awareness of the local people shall provide increase in the investments to protect culture.

By culture tourism, millions of tourists visit museums, art galleries and historical sites every year and on this count, thousands of people are employed, the occupancy rates of the accommodation enterprises are being increased and this process is influenced positively by many other sectors as well as other tourism enterprises and tourism movements are spread all over the year (Kızılırmak and Kurtuldu, 2005: 103).

Developing the concept of cultural tourism and actualizing it is really a difficult and complicated process. The biggest problem is the problem of authenticity. Cultural tourism needs to be unique in the products and services offered around it, but many products or services without cultural specificity or newly produced products can be offered as culture-based products. However, cultural tourists are seeking authenticity and real experience (Garden, 2009: 4). Another problem is that when the wearing effect of tourism as a result of unconscious actions is taken into the consideration, if a controlled development is not achieved within the scope of tourism activity it can be harmful to cultural resources. Undoubtedly, the culture and cultural assets of every nation are very valuable. However, this value is sustainable when it is well preserved and well managed.

When we examine Turkey in terms of culture tourism concept, we see that Turkey has very rich cultural values. As a result of publicity and marketing efforts made during tourism marketing activities, it would be wrong to constrain Turkey to mass tourism connected to sea, sand and sun. Turkey is a country that has high cultural values because of its natural beauties as well as the fact that it has been hosting many civilizations. Diversification of tourism policies are tried to be applied by public and private sector organizations that guide tourism and especially by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. In recent years, it has been seen that there are increasing efforts to provide suitable adjectives for cultural tourism along with other alternative tourism types reflected in the five year development plans and decisions of tourism councils and to create appropriate promotion and marketing policies by examining the expectations and preferences of tourists traveling for this purpose (Kızılırmak and Kurtuldu, 2005: 105).

CONCLUSION

Looking at the world economy, it seems that the importance of services has increased. Within the service sector, tourism has a special share. The tourism industry manages the inter-border movement of millions of people in the world. Increase in the number of people participating in tourism movements shows the importance of marketing for success in tourism. As the flow of customers in tourism enterprises is increased, the income is increasing at the same rate. With this in mind, attention should be given to tourism marketing in order to closely monitor markets and consumer behaviors. Tourism marketing is marketing that takes place within the service sector and requires more rigorous efforts than marketing any goods. As tourism enterprises are offering many services like other services in the service sector, they need to compose marketing mix in order to be competitive and to be successful. Marketing mix elements which are known as 7P are; the product, the concept of promotion, price, placement, people, physical possibilities and process management. After choosing target in competitive market, the tourism business is successful with a marketing mix strategy that includes an appropriate pricing and distribution channel and makes sufficient efforts in the positioning and promoting phase of its products. One of the things to be considered in tourism marketing is existence of alternative tourism types. Importance should be given to alternative tourism types that provide tourism mobility to all regions and all months of the year instead of mass tourism which is

reduced to a limited amount of time, such as a couple of months. One of the factors that cause people to travel among alternative tourism types is cultural tourism which is caused by the desire to see different cultures and lifestyles.

Cultural tourism has been an important asset in recent years. Cultural tourism is an important factor in ensuring the competitiveness at an economy and in the tourism area, in contributing to local and regional economies, and in maintaining natural, historical and cultural values to be sustainable. In other words, cultural tourism contributes to economic development, regional diversity, development of understanding among cultures, and sustainable development. It is important to note that cultural tourism is important today, not only because of economic gain but also because it is more sustainable. However, in order to ensure these positive developments, it is necessary to prevent the wearing effect of tourism by providing a controlled development within the scope of tourism activity, since tourism may cause damage over cultural values. As a matter of fact, the culture and cultural assets of every nation are very valuable. Pre-requisite for sustainable tourism activities is undoubtedly protecting and well managing of these values. In addition, the culture presented must be relevant to the territory to which it belongs.

Cultural tourism seems to be important in rural areas as well as in metropolitans. Thus, besides providing support for economic development by raising the standard of living of local people and providing new job opportunities, if it is well managed then there is no chance of exhaustion or being exhausted. The concept of cultural tourism is also important for our country. Considering rich cultural values that our country have and considering tourism marketing activities, it shall be a wrong attitude to constrain tourism only to mass tourism such as sea, sand and sun due to the advantages provided by cultural tourism. To this end, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and many other tourism-oriented institutions are attempting to implement policies concerning the diversification of tourism. Attention is given to culture tourism and studies are being carried out to create marketing policies that are in line with the expectations of tourists traveling for this purpose.

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