Potential, thresholds and threats of tourism development in Bodrum Peninsula (Turkey)

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Abstract

Although Turkey has a variety of tourism attractions such as natural, historical and architectural heritage, “sea, sun, sand” factors have been the main components of tourism revenues. Especially after the realization of the problems of mass tourism towards coastal areas in the Mediterranean destination countries, Turkey has also evaluated the tourism development process with its spatial, environmental and socio-economic implications.

The aim of this paper is to discuss the findings of ongoing research and to put forward the thresholds and threats of tourism development in Bodrum Peninsula, which is located on the Aegean coast of Turkey.

In this paper, a three-stage perceptual analysis (scale impact of tourism) is conducted by a pilot survey in order to define the changes on the natural and built environment, socio-cultural development and economic welfare in the Bodrum Peninsula. These changes will be evaluated as thresholds and threats of tourism development. The belief component as an indicator for the level of change and the evaluation component as a level of like are the main components to the essential perceptual analysis. The findings of the research verify the process surpassing thresholds of developments and factors that constitute a threat for the sustainability of tourism. It was revealed that the effects of tourism on the economic environment were positive despite its adverse effects on the natural and social environment.

Keywords: tourism potential, thresholds, perceptual analysis, Bodrum Peninsula.
1 Introduction

Sustainability of tourism activities depends on assessing the specific features and values of the destination and presenting them as its unique identity. However, mass tourism and the pressure of economic return of tourism has led to the adverse effects of tourism as well as its positive contributions, which has led to coastal tourism areas that are loosing their unique characteristics and becoming similar to each other.

Especially the countries in the Mediterranean region have become the main attraction areas of holiday tourism with their climate and the trio of see-sun-sand, therefore they have faced unfavorable effects such as intensive constructions in coastal areas because of mass tourism directed to coastal regions, land speculation and environmental pollution. The attempts to prevent speculative growth and come up with alternative solutions have increased after the first Mediterranean Action Plan in 1975. Researches for solutions with the concept of sustainable tourism against all these unfavorable developments have become more important with the 2nd Mediterranean Action Plan held in Barcelona in 1995. Planning coastal regions, transformation and alternative tourism approaches and to increase quality have become more intensive among the solutions.

This paper aims to present the method of a research project that will evaluate the development of tourism in coastal areas of Turkey and to discuss the findings for further stages. However, Turkey increases the share it gets from tourism, it should be derived lessons from the tourism developments in the world. The unique identity and resources of the sample area chosen and how it has been affected from the development process of tourism, thresholds and threats of tourism development will be evaluated, while testing the assumption of the problems faced by coastal areas are more intensive when compared with interior regions. The set of conceptual components of analysis is constituted based on the concept of sustainable tourism and its components. The main feature of the methodology implemented in the survey is that it follows three stages for the perceptual analysis as effect, intensity and evaluation.

The next section will describe the concentration of tourism activities to coastal areas in Turkey. The third section will put forward the general characteristics of the sample area, the development process of tourism and the factors constituting the thresholds. The research methodology and the findings will be presented in the fourth section and the expectations of the research will be evaluated along with the future perspective.

2 Concentration of tourism to coastal areas in Turkey

“Coastal areas” are encountered as areas where tourism activities are intensified due to climatic, geographical and morphological characteristics. Mediterranean basin is the most attractive region for coastal tourism with its intensity. 1/3 of international tourism revenue is in the Mediterranean basin (WTO [1]). 5 Mediterranean countries (Spain, France, Italy, Greece and Turkey) were among
the 15 tourism arrival points in year 2001 (WTO [1]; EU Parliamentary Assembly [2]). A decrease in demand for coastal tourism areas have been faced since mid 1980’s and functional, environmental, and local/regional restructuring in the sector have become unavoidable for these areas (Marchena Gomez and Rebollo [3]; Robledo and Batle [4]).

According to the estimations of World Wildlife Fund (WWF [5]), Turkey, Greece and Croatia will be the leading tourism areas in the Mediterranean basin in the future. Despite its natural, historical and cultural appeal having tourism potential, Turkey has not been able to get the share it deserves from the Mediterranean basin. Date of year 2000 reveals that while the total number of tourists having visited to Spain corresponds to 125% with 49.5 million tourists, the number of tourists having visited to Turkey is 15% of the population of the country with 9.6 million tourists. When the level of income is compared, it is observed that the tourism income of Spain is 26% of the Mediterranean basin while the tourism income of Turkey corresponds to 7% of the basin.

The tourism activities that are more intensive in coastal areas in the Mediterranean basin display a similar structure in Turkey as well. Among the 17 tourism provinces determined by the Ministry of Tourism in Turkey; 3 provinces (Antalya, Muğla, Aydın) in coastal areas account for %52.55 of the total bed capacity in the country.

Tourism investments and incentives have been directed to coastal areas in precedence during the period of plans since 1963. The seeking of alternatives for coastal tourism, establishment of new tourism centers in the interior regions and attempts to distribute tourism in a more balanced manner within the country were observed in 1990’s. However, the development of tourism with emphasis on coastal areas continues.

During the period of 1st Five Year Development Plan covering the years of 1963-67, tourism investments mainly directed on regions having a potential to attract tourists and 11 tourism centers were determined in the Marmara, Aegean and Mediterranean regions as 3 regions with precedence. Within the scope of the Policies of the Transition Period in 1979 the concept of coasts as the driving force of tourism in Turkey was taken up and a comparative tourism research was conducted in the Marmara, Aegean, Mediterranean and Black Sea regions with a “Hypothetical Study on the Spatial Development Model”. The centers possessing the characteristics of a tourism province and potential were put in order and 12 Centers with Precedence, which seemed most suitable for tourism investments, were determined (Ministry of Culture and Tourism [6]). These centers were: Bodrum, Marmaris, Kuşadası, Akyar, Çeşme, Alanya, Kıyıkış-Dalyan, Foca, Ayvalık, Side-Manavgat, Kemer and Fethiye. In addition to these, the opportunities and facilities were brought by the Law of Tourism Incentives dated 1982 also led to an increase in the investments focused on the Mediterranean and Aegean coasts.

Besides these studies and decrees to direct the tourism investments throughout the country, the researches have been made and are being made on certain sample areas in the field of determining the potential of tourism in a more detailed manner and evaluate its development (Var et al. [7]; Korça [8];
The contribution of tourism to the economy of the country is an evidence of the fact that it is an effective sector. However, what are the evidences put forward the contribution of tourism to the region where it takes place, its constructive and adverse effects? The best way to evaluate these evidences seems to be the local level. Therefore, the field studies have become more important. The findings of such researches will contribute to the control and sustainability of tourism along with local characteristics- unique features, potentials, thresholds of development.

3 The process of tourism development in the Bodrum peninsula and thresholds of development

The Bodrum peninsula in the province of Muğla is located at the southwestern end of Western Anatolia between the Güllük and Gökova Gulf. Bodrum has an exceptional significance for tourism as a peninsula in the Aegean region. The peninsula displays richness of natural characteristics with its wavy coasts in its gulfs. There are 3 natural harbors and 13 bays along the coasts of the peninsula of length 174 km. The fishermen’s village Bodrum, is located one within another with historical Halicarnassos and the peninsula has been transformed into an attractive tourism area with the natural and cultural opportunities that it presents. The total population in the Bodrum Peninsula is 97,826 according to the General Census results for year 2000 and the number of tourists is 167,342 (State Statistics Institute [11], Ministry of Tourism [6]).

Tourism investments that gained a large acceleration in Turkey especially after 1980, were seen in Bodrum as well. Besides the construction of the Dalaman Airport in 1982, the announcement of 5 tourism centers with a total bed capacity of 33,499 in Bodrum by the year of 1985 have accelerated this process (The Bodrum Peninsula Strategic Development Plan [12]). Hence, Bodrum has taken its place in the tourism market as an entertainment holiday center. This image of the settlement has initiated a process of evolution in urban space. The pressure towards the land has increased in the Bodrum peninsula within this process; however the architecture in the region has been able to carry on its unique features to a certain extent. In 1998, the opening of the Bodrum-Milas Airport of 40 km distance to the Bodrum district center, provided easier accessibility to Bodrum. Today, the Bodrum peninsula has 11 municipalities and this constitution is a major threat for future development and integrity of peninsula. Besides the tourism activities (hotels, restaurants, bars) that have been incorporated to the existing settlement, metropolitan urban functions (banks, offices, shopping centers, supermarkets) along the Bodrum–Turgut Reis road as the backbone of Bodrum has been increased rapidly. Although there are various reasons for the claims that Bodrum more intensively faces the adverse effects of tourism and it goes through the stagnation stage according to the tourism lifecycle of Butler [13], the increase of constructions especially as secondary housing pressure in the coastal areas has become the most important factor in this respect. (Bodrum Socio-Economic Spatial Organization Application Report [14]). Bodrum has not been able to utilize its unique features sufficiently.
The coastal areas have been opened to tourism facilities while especially the sides have been invaded by secondary housing development in accordance with the decisions of the Regional Master Plan. The bed capacity of secondary housing was 57,000 in year 1995, while it is estimated around 158,500 in year 2020 according to feasibility report prepared by the Ministry of Tourism. The plans for 1982, 1998 and 2003 foresee that secondary housing areas spread especially to the northern parts of the peninsula within the process.

Natural values are present in the entire peninsula as thresholds of development. Forest and lands for special cultivation areas, productive agricultural lands, natural and archeological sites are the main thresholds that need to be preserved (see Fig. 1.). Furthermore, areas in which development cannot be foreseen due to geological drawbacks, intensive erosion and lands with slope more than 25% also constitute adverse thresholds of development. At that point, both the existing land-use and the developments due to planning decisions put forward to overcome the thresholds.

The development process and tendencies of tourism in the Bodrum peninsula put forward certain threats on sustainability of tourism. Overcoming thresholds of development in the peninsula, encouraging construction along the coast, the fact that the secondary housing areas compete with tourism facilities and the formation of idle stocks of housing, the insufficiency of infrastructure and especially supply of water and the presence of 11 independent municipalities instead of a local government covering all peninsula impose threats for the future of tourism in Bodrum. Sustainability of being attractive for tourists is important for a tourism destination area. Therefore, the effects of tourism development and the threats for future expectations were dealt with in more detail within the framework of strategies.
4 Research methodology and the findings

4.1 Research methodology

Firstly, data set and sampling design were put forward in a framework. The aim of the research is to examine how the concept of sustainability is perceived in coastal tourism areas with the specific example of the Bodrum peninsula, to evaluate the effects of tourism development process on natural, built and the socioeconomic environment, to evaluate the transformation process and to provide direction to future tourism strategies within the framework of the findings.

The sustainable tourism planning criterion are defined as four sub-vectors (identity-originality, tourism planning, effect-transformation and socio-economic structure) and it is emphasised on effect-transformation vector to evaluate the effect of development on tourism within different contexts. At the initial stage of the research, the survey is conducted to the group called as key persons such as taking an effective role in the planning, implementation, administration, investment and operation (deputy mayor, chairman of the chamber of urban planners, chairman of the chamber of architects, urban planners, hotel and restaurant managers and tour operators). Hence, this will provide an opportunity for experts to make more detailed observations and to evaluate neglected dimensions.

Further, both the consistency of the survey form within itself and also whether the relation between expectations from the research and the survey forms will be displayed following to this pilot survey. The total number of surveys are determined as 10 since it is aimed to test a detailed survey form and it is included in a normal distribution and sufficient for a pilot study.

4.2 Findings

When the findings of effect-transformation vector are put forward, at first vector components (natural values–cultural values, built environment, social environment, economic environment), sub-components and the factors constituting them have been displayed (see Fig. 2.). Then, the frequency values of the responses to the components are put forward. The response of each component is obtained in three steps. The first step is about putting forward the effect of the factor by a scale of “yes-no” opposite response. The second step is the definition of the intensity of the effect with a Likert scale of 5 (1: did not protect/increase at all, 2: did not protect/increase, 3: not sure, 4: it protected/increased, 5: it protected/increased a lot). The third step is the definition of how the effect and the intensity have been evaluated as a function of satisfaction with a Likert scale of 5 (1: I am not satisfied at all, 2: I am not satisfied, 3: not sure, 4: I’m satisfied, 5: I’m satisfied very much). Ap and Crompton have adopted this survey implementation that they based on the “tourism effect index” concept of Fishbein (Fishbein [15]) because it provided the opportunity to minimize the deviated results to be obtained from its yes-no
opposite response. It helps to see behind the real meaning of the response and helps to get rid of generalizations and provide the opportunity for analytical interpretations (Ap and Crompton [16]).

**Figure 2:** Structure of effect-transformation vector.

The results of the three stages defined in terms of factors are put forward in two phases in the paper. The results of “yes-no” opposite response are reflected in the 1st phase while the responses for the intensity and evaluation are reflected in the 2nd phase.

**1st Phase** The “yes-no” opposite response: First level findings are reflected both on the basis of factors constituting the components and on the basis of components in the order.

Natural values–cultural values component: It is believed that the forests, productive agricultural lands, special cultivation areas, coastal areas, coastline, fauna and flora constituting the sub-components of the natural values are not protected. On the other hand, they believe that the archaeological areas as sub-component of cultural values are protected.

Built environment component: It is believed that the expansion of residential areas, central areas, secondary houses, distortion of the old urban texture, the transformation of residential areas to the tourism function as the sub-components of functional use of areas, have increased. It is believed that health, education and cultural functions, communication and transportation opportunities have increased as well. On the other hand, the insufficiencies of technical infrastructure opportunities are emphasized. They put forward that the sewerage system did not have any significant extension and that the opportunities for drinking water did not enhanced. Among the factors defining the sub-component of the quality of built environment, it is believed that except for air pollution all other factors, namely density of constructions, population density, traffic density and noise pollution have all increased.
Social environment component: It is believed that among the factors constituting the sub-component of migration, except social cluster, all other factors namely, population, migration, social differentiation caused by migration, and volatility of the population within the settlement have increased. They think that tourism did not increase the factors of neighborhood relations and safety that constitute sub-components of safety and that they increased the factors of crime rate and social reaction factors in a manner supporting this opinion. Among the factors defining social conscience-identity-participation sub-component, it is believed that all factors other than development of local identity and transparency of local government policy, namely, cultural level, level of education, and the participation of the local population to the development process of tourism have increased.

Graphic 1: Level of effect based on sub-components and components.

Economic environment component: It is believed that among the factors constituting individual prosperity sub-component, except for unequal income distribution and the allocation of resources by the local government, all factors such as number of family members working, number of women working, opportunities to find jobs, individual income and entrepreneurship opportunities have increased. While the increase of objective ones among these factors are approved, this clarity is not observed in factors that are more open to interpretation. Among the factors constituting the economic contribution aspect, except for agricultural economy, it is believed that all other factors such as diversity of shopping activities, secondary houses, private sector investments and contribution of investments to the budget of the local government have increased.

The summary of findings of all these factors are put forward on the basis of components can be followed in Graphic 1. In summary, the responses of the key persons have put forward that development of tourism did not contribute to the protection of natural values.
2nd Phase: The second and third phase findings reflecting the intensity and evaluation form of the effect displayed in the first phase are put forward on the basis of factors. It is indicated that the factors constituting the natural value sub-component were not protected at all and that they were not satisfied with these conditions and that the factors constituting the cultural values sub-component were protected and that they were satisfied with it (Graphic 2).

It is pointed out that among the factors constituting sub-component of the functional use of land, there was an increase in residential areas, secondary houses in coastal regions and in distortion of old urban texture and that they were not satisfied about it. They indicated that among the factors determining the sub-component of infrastructure areas, increases took place in the areas of health and education, communication and transportation and that they were satisfied about these increases but on the other hand cultural areas, the existing water system and sewerage system did not increase at all and that they were not pleased about it. They revealed that among the factors constituting the sub-component of the quality of built environment, density of constructions, population, traffic and noise pollution increased a lot and that they were not pleased about it at all, but they also indicated that air pollution did not increase at all and that they were pleased with it (Graphic 2).

It is revealed that among the factors constituting the sub-component of migration defining the social environment component, the settled population and in-migration have increased a lot and that they were not pleased with it. Indecisiveness is more common about social differentiation and social clustering. They indicated that among the factors constituting the safety sub-component, neighborhood relations and the feeling of security have decreased while crime rates and social reaction have increased and that they were not pleased about it at all. They noted that among the factors constituting the sub-component of social conscious-identity-participation, the level of culture and education, the transparency of local government policy and local identity values did not increase and that they were not pleased about it. It was noted that indecisiveness was common for topics such as participation to administration, provision of directions by the administration and the participation of the local population to the development process of tourism (Graphic 2).

It is indicated that among the factors constituting the sub-component of individual prosperity defining economic environment component, the number of working women, the opportunities to find jobs and investment opportunities have increased and that they were satisfied about it. They have pointed out that the municipality did not use the income generated from tourism for the inhabitants and that they were not pleased with it. Indecisiveness was observed for topics such as the number of persons working in the family and unequal income distribution. They have pointed out that among the factors constituting sub-component of the economic contribution aspect, diversity of shopping activities, public and private sector investments and contribution to the budget of the municipality have increased and that they were pleased with it. They have indicated that agricultural economy has not become activated and that they were not pleased about it (Graphic 2).
When the components and sub-components are dealt with the tools of the survey, the general evaluation table in Figure 3 is revealed. This table provides hints that need to be queried in the future steps of the research. Distortion of the natural values and the built environment and decrease in the feeling of safety are features emphasized most as the adverse effects of tourism both in the yes-no opposite response (no), and in the intensity scale (1: not protected at all) and in the level of satisfaction (1: I am not satisfied at all). Indecisiveness is observed only for the sub-component of migration-demographic structure in the social environment component. The fact that tourism increases economic contribution to a high level, it will increase satisfaction to a high level as well. Although the level of satisfaction from infrastructure is at a high level, it is observed that the increase in functional uses of lands or constructions does not lead to satisfaction.

Figure 3: Components and sub-components according to response intensity.

5 Conclusion

Description of sustainable tourism criterion along main vectors in terms of components, sub-components and factors has been effective in achieving an analytical query order. The methodology used in this paper provides the
opportunity to test the perception of key actors and verify the responses and hence probability of error has decreased. The “yes-no” type of responses then become stronger with intensity and the evaluation and is finalized by satisfaction from the results achieved. Testing of the survey methodology with three phases and the benefits of it encourages its implementation in other case studies. When the findings of the effect-transformation vector are scrutinized in general, it is put forward that tourism has been maintaining its development process without considering importance of natural values that constitutes the main sources of tourism and its sustainability.

It is a known process that many coastal tourism areas lead to loss of agricultural lands especially in rural or peripheral regions. The development of tourism in the Bodrum peninsula has also followed this trend as well. Especially the transformation of citrus trees known as special agricultural production fields to tourism and secondary housing areas and the fact that fish breeding farms are taking place of fishing as the basis of traditional economy, are consequences of the development process of tourism. The expansion of residential areas, secondary housing areas and shopping facilities display the effects of transformation in the economic structure and land use patterns. It was noted that the level of insufficiencies in terms of technical infrastructure increase especially during the peak tourism season. As a consequence of all these factors, it was revealed that besides the loss of the natural environment, the quality of the built environment has worsened as well. This condition is an inevitable consequence of proceeding with spatial growth and transformation without taking into consideration the thresholds of that region. The findings of the research verify the process surpassing thresholds of developments and factors that constitute threat for the sustainability of tourism.

One of the effective consequences of spatial expansion based on tourism is the transformation in the social environment as well. The social structure has become more heterogeneous caused by in-migration and this has led to problems of social differentiation, communication-interaction, and lack of safety. It was revealed that the effects of tourism on the economic environment were positive despite its adverse effects on the natural and social environment. The effectiveness of tourism was emphasized both for increasing individual prosperity and determination of the economic role and identity of the region. This statement is consistent with the opinion in the literature defending that the adverse effects of development in tourism can be tolerated based on its economic yield.

Sustainability of long term effectiveness and productivity of economic gains constitute the most important topic for economic gains. Within the framework of the consequences determined in essence, there are difficulties in terms of long-term effectiveness and productivity of tourism activities in Bodrum. The fact that natural and historical values can not take part effectively in tourism due to the “coast and entertainment focused marketing” of Bodrum, transforms the peninsula into a tourism region that cannot utilize its unique features on the way of tourism development and imposes the risk of standardization. The losses that take place in the natural values, lack of promotion of historical and cultural values and the
transformations in the social environment are significant threats for the sustainability of tourism. At this stage, the development of policies and strategies aimed at especially solving the problems of the two main values and social environment to achieve sustainability.

References


