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CLUSTER ANALYSIS OF THE SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF FOREIGN TOURISTS IN TURKEY

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EXTENSIVE SUMMARY

In the 1980s tourism in Turkey which developed with a focus on Istanbul has gone through a propagation process and extended spatially to include the Mediterranean and Aegean coasts. Increase in tourism investments in the new tourism areas where tourism is developing and the concentration of a tourist flow has generated spatial clustering. This spatial change and development in Turkey tourism has manifested the necessity for a spatial analysis of tourism.

The fact that studies regarding the spatial and temporal propagation of Turkey tourism, its mobility and distribution are rather limited and particularly the fact that no studies have been encountered regarding the spatial analysis of tourism destinations preferred by foreign tourists are the main motivation for our study. The objective of this study along the lines of this motivation is to manifest whether there is a spatial association in terms of the destinations frequented by foreign tourists visiting Turkey. A literary search has concluded that no study is available regarding the spatial association of the distribution of foreign tourists in Turkey according to districts. Therefore, it is one of the objectives of the writers that this study will contribute to researchers involved in studies about tourism, executives in the public and private sector, non-governmental organizations, tourism planners and other tourism related stakeholders.

The spatial distribution of foreign tourists accommodated in facilities which have an operator's license from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in Turkey between the years 2000-2015 according to districts has been used as an indicator for this study. The data used for the study has been obtained from TUİK, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and TÜRSAB. The acquired data has been transferred onto a spatial database and traditional statistical methods have been compared with spatial statistical methods to calculate whether a significant clustering is manifested by foreign tourist demands. Furthermore, Spatial Autocorrelation Analysis (Moran's I, LISA)

methods have been used to interpret the spatial clustering of foreign tourist indicators accommodated according to districts.

According to the findings for the years 2000-2015 for which the study was made, all the spatial statistical analyses revealed a positive spatial autocorrelation association and medium level spatial clustering. It is shown that the weighted average centers of the districts in which foreign tourists are accommodated are westerly and have shifted southerly in time and that the geographical tourism attraction center of Turkey is southwesterly and during recent years there has been a significant spreading in a southerly direction. It has been manifested that in Turkey, there is high level spatial clustering particularly in the districts of Antalya and Istanbul which have a high international tourism flow.

If tourism clustering which is an effective method in generating a competitive environment is well planned it will have a major contribution to the productivity of the tourism sector in Turkey as well as contribute to quality employment, facilitated access with less cost to modern information and technology, enhanced cooperation between the executives in the sector and executives from universities, state and non-governmental organizations, contribute to the development of an innovation process with comprehensive and efficient communication and the establishment of an information network, launch local entrepreneurs into action for the establishment of new work branches, stronger competition with global competitors in the tourism market, ability for rapid adaptation to the innovations of the modern era, a decrease in the fluctuation of tourist demands, the development of more efficient marketing techniques, achieve stability in prices, enable the execution of structural and legal regulations, the protection of natural and cultural values as well as contribute to a more rational utilization of venues.