



Tour Guiding in Turkey: Outlooks from “Urban and Sustainable” Aspects

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ABSTRACT

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Also known as urban tourism, city tourism has been a central argument of some tourism studies especially over the last decade and its acceptance is on the increase more and more. Nonetheless, it is not an intangible theme in that the concept itself hints details regarding the connection between tourism. Per se, thanks to its intertwined association to tourism, some cities came to be called through a use of adjective like “love, smart, slow, gastronomy, etc... (cities)”. In other words, each city in question assumed a strategy in rendering the city-related qualities into tourism business. Additionally, it is not surprising that the problem of how sustainable is urban tourism made its way into the tourism literature. Owing to the cutting-edge transport tool and other developments, attraction to urban sides has been going up more than ever in the last decade considering tourism attractiveness and day-based excursions have taken their righteous place especially as weekend activities. Tour guiding in Turkey is a topic of everlasting discussion amongst the academics of Tourism Faculties or tourism-related fields in Turkey pertaining to the means through which an obligatory tourist guiding license can be obtained. Under the lights of the above-mentioned points, this paper sets out to present an assessment of the extant position of urban tourism and related studies in terms of sustainability in tourist guiding and run a conceptual analysis on the repercussion of sustainability and practices-related to sustainability under tour guiding business, then offering some practical implications for future studies.

ÖZ

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Şehir turizmi, özellikle son on yılda bazı turizm çalışmalarının temel bir argümanı olmuştur ve gün geçtikçe kabul görmektedir. Buna rağmen, kavramın kendisi turizm arasındaki bağlantıya ilişkin ayrıntıları ima ettiği için soyut bir tema değildir. Aslında turizmle iç içe olan çağrışımları sayesinde bazı şehirler “aşk, akıllı, yavaş, gastronomi vb... (şehirleri)” gibi sıfatların kullanımıyla anılmaya başlanmıştır. Diğer bir deyişle, söz konusu her şehir, kentle ilgili niteliklerin turizm işine dönüştürülmesinde bir strateji benimsemiştir. Ayrıca kent turizminin ne kadar sürdürülebilir olduğu sorununun da turizm literatürüne girmesi şaşırtıcı değildir. Modern ulaşım araçları ve diğer gelişmeler sayesinde, turizm çekiciliği göz önüne alındığında, son on yılda kentsel kesimlere yönelik cazibe her zamankinden daha fazla artmış ve gününbirlik geziler özellikle hafta sonu etkinlikleri olarak haklı yerini almıştır. Türkiye’de tur rehberliği, Türkiye’de Turizm Fakülteleri veya turizmle ilgili alanlardaki akademisyenler arasında zorunlu turist rehberliği lisansının alınabileceği araçlarla ilgili sonsuz bir tartışma konusudur. Yukarıda belirtilen noktaları ışıkları altında, bu çalışma turist rehberliği sürdürülebilirlik açısından kentsel turizm ve ilgili çalışmalar mevcut konumu hakkında bir değerlendirme sunmak ve tur rehberliği altında sürdürülebilirlik için, daha sonra gelecek çalışmalar için bazı pratik uygulamalar sunan sürdürülebilirlik uygulamaları ve yansımaları üzerine kavramsal bir analiz ortaya koymaktadır.

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1. Introduction

Cities make up a significant portion of tourism activities and, as a result, of the economic impact on the economy of the countries concerned (WTTC, 2017). According to the European Commission Report, urban tourism is a collection of tourist resources or activities based in towns and cities and made available to visitors from other places with a focus on the city dynamics that may appeal to tourists (2000, p.21). Apart from the appeal that any given city has as a destination, there is another issue to consider, which competition is, rather than the cities' pull factors. Cities battle with other potential competitors and put forth significant effort to make themselves different in terms of activities, services, and image, in addition to the severe competition on a worldwide scale to gain a larger slice of the "tourist pie"(Zukin, 2009).

According to Adamo et al. (2018), recent decades have seen competition based on each city's touristic attractions; but, starting from 1980s, the competition shifted from normal and natural offerings such as location and natural beauty to symbols and constructed images. In this approach, intangible and experiential features of cities began to play a larger role in rendering the city's image and place in the competitive environment, rather than the concrete aspects of cities (Papadimitriou et al., 2015). Cities have risen to the forefront through creativity as a means of defining a different image and gaining a competitive edge in order to create the ideal image in the eyes of tourists.

In the context of Turkey, it is fair to say that the number of cities playing a legitimate role in urban tourism is on the rise, particularly in the previous five years. Furthermore, in order to grow touristic services and make the tourism company more profitable and sustainable, tour guiding and tourism must work hand in hand in Turkey.

According to the tour guiding professional law number 6326, which was passed in 2012, organized tours provided by travel firms must be led by a licensed guide issued by an appropriate body, which in Turkey is the TUREB (Union of Tourist Guides' Chamber). That is to say, guiding without a license or illegally guiding is a felony in Turkey. According to TUREB data, there are approximately ten thousand licensed tourist guides in Turkey nowadays. As far as the growing popularity of urban tourism in Turkey, as well as the very formal structure and central role of tourist guides in organized tours are concerned, the main goal of this paper is to assess the current state of urban tourism from a sustainability perspective, as well as to conduct a conceptual analysis on the extent to which the subject of

sustainability is covered by tourist guiding programs, and to make recommendations for future directions.

2. Literature Review

Sustainability

As its name implies, sustainability refers to a group of efforts aimed at making tourism operations more long-term, inclusive of future generations, and so on. This section will not discuss tourism sustainability, but rather the notion and what it entails. As a reaction to the rise of mass tourism around the world in the late 1980s, the phrases and concept of sustainability became a topic of attention on a global scale (Jamal, et al. 2013).

Sustainable tourism is described as "the current and future demands of tourists as well as the host community, while also taking into account social, economic, and environmental concerns" in a formal definition (UNEP, p. 11-12). A continuous course of controlling and observing the tourism flow in a given destination or point of interest is maintained with the goal of preserving the social, economic, and environmental characteristics, and in the event that anything against the sustainable framework, which is economic, social, and environmental, occurs, not only preventive but corrective precautions and actions are taken to convert the situation into a sustainable framework. With this in mind, government initiatives may not be adequate on their own, and a assisting hand from tourists or the demand side could be extremely beneficial for the purpose of sustainability.

In terms of the demand side, Lerario et al. (2017) argue that involving tourists in the sustainability process will increase awareness, and that as a result, the product of good applications by tourists will positively influence the position and development of a given destination, thanks to the collaboration of tourists, resulting in more sustainably conscious tourists in the first place. Furthermore, when it comes to concepts like environment, society, and economics, sustainability is not a basic notion.

Although tourism is recognized as the key motivating force of many local economies throughout the world, these three central elements do not always have the same consequence for all levels of tourism activity. According to Saarinen (2014), by focusing on specific locations, sustainability has lost its essence, and by focusing primarily on local markets and economic impact, it has missed the essence for the global scale. Moreover, it is claimed that inhabitants' roles are undervalued (Moscardo, 2011). The function of inhabitants in choosing and developing a sustainable stance toward tourism, on the other hand, are just as important

as the tourism assets themselves, because residents are the ones who have to cope with the repercussions of tourism in many facets of the society they live in. As a result, residents should be included in tourism planning as part of any sustainability efforts (Moscardo and Murphy, 2014).

Along with sustainability, various other concepts have evolved, such as "ecotourism" and "responsible tourism," both of which focus on environmental awareness and are considered sub-categories of sustainability. Ecotourism is "responsible travel to natural regions that conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of local people," according to Blangy and Wood (1993, p36). Responsible tourism, on the other hand, reduces adverse effects while increasing good benefits in terms of social, economic, and environmental aspects by balancing consumption and production by all shareholders under consideration (Saarinen, 2014).

City Tourism

Sustainability is a concept that has a positive outcome when properly implemented, while real-life practices do not always meet expectations. This is due to the fact that tourism has its roots in business and, like many other sectors, is profit-driven, so it does not always give priority to sustainable features. It is unsurprising that the interactive character of cities eventually exhausts all of the resources at their disposal. The development of megacities is closely tied to the advancement of urbanization, and it is expected that by 2030, more than half of the world's population will have relocated to urban regions (UNDESA, 2011).

Urban tourism is difficult to describe, according to Lerario and Turi (2018), and the idea is significantly more sophisticated than "tourism done in cities." Urban tourism is examined and investigated from the perspectives of multi-functionality, micro-destination, cohabitation of built forms and cultures, and idiosyncrasies such as short stays, repeat visits, and ability to reinvent themselves to meet tourists' ever-changing needs (Asworth and Page, 2011; Barrera-Fernandez et al. 2016).

Tourist Guiding

As the name implies, a tour guide will take the lead. Although they were considered "scouts/pathfinder" in ancient times, the complexity of the role of signposts today ranges from finding a way to act like a compass to becoming a cultural intermediary or educator. A formal definition was created by the European Committee for Standardization. According to this, a tourist guide is a person who guides visitors in the language of their choice and interprets the

cultural and natural heritage of the area and they usually have subject-specific qualifications issued and / or approved by the competent authority (CEN, 2007).

With this in mind, the roles assigned to tour guides are much more complex. They are informal representatives, mentors and translators who combine the social, cultural and historical pillars of their visitors to not only educate the group but also guide them. Owing to the interpretation, the tour guide's task is more than just reciting names and facts. If not, a smartphone with internet access would be a good guide. Tour guides are a tool for raising awareness of a particular destination or global awareness.

Pereira and Mykletun (2017) describe sustainability as follows: a tour guide is an innovative tool for inspiring tourists and communicating sustainable principles to influence potential behavioral and attitude changes. That is to say, the role of the tourist guide is not only to guide the place itself, but also to guide the "soft" issues related to the destination of interest.

Official units in the United Nations have so far emphasized that education is an efficient tool for achieving sustainability goals (UNESCO, 1997; United Nations, 2017). All the roads to becoming a tourist guide in Turkey may not be possible without the solid educational background and practical training provided by TUREB (Union of Tourist Guide Chambers) or the University.

Assessment of the Programs with Specific Reference to Sustainability and Discussion

The term "sustainability" in its current context dates back to the 1987 "Brundtland Report," also known as "Our Common Future." According to the report's definition, sustainability is "progress that satisfies the requirements of current generations without jeopardizing future generations' ability to satisfy their own needs" (WCED, 1987). From the standpoint of tourist guidance, sustainability is critical in tourism in order to ensure its long-term viability. As a result, spreading the thoughts and values of sustainability across society is critical, and experts and university graduates with this notion are what a study need (Kagawa, 2007).

As previously stated, the three traditional points of sustainability are economic, social, and environmental. These three parts comprise the analysis's primary criterion. TUREB establishes the primary reference to the courses offered in tourist guide programs. According to the most recent rules, there are now 16 courses available in certificate programs, including Sociology, History of Anatolia Civilizations, General Tourism, Turkish Folklore and Traditional Handicrafts, History of Arts, Communications Skills, and so on. Surprisingly, no course relating to sustainability was discovered among the 16 courses indicated. Could you

convey the concept of sustainability through courses if there were courses dedicated to sustainability?

Table 1. Undergraduate Programs

Program	State	Foundation	Total
Travel Management and Tour Guiding	2	-	2
Tourist Guiding	36	3	39
Total	38	3	41

Kaynak: YÖK ATLAS (2021)

Table 2. Associate's Degree Programs

Program	State	Foundation	Total
Tourist Guiding	25	13	38
Total	25	13	38

Kaynak: YÖK ATLAS (2021)

Furthermore, there are now 38 tourist guiding programs in Turkey that provide an Associate's degree, 41 programs that give a Bachelor's degree. The overall number of two-year and four-year programs, excluding Master's degree programs, is 79. Twenty four-year programs and ten two-year programs were chosen at random, and their curriculum were analyzed to see if the issue of sustainability was included. There is a mention of sustainability in the programs evaluated, which is normally covered in General Tourism or Introduction to Tourism courses. Furthermore, it is unsurprising that "urban tourism" has received special attention, despite the fact that this was not the paper's primary focus.

The guides' power to promote and propagate the concept of sustainability is evident, since they are a required component of all scheduled excursions in Turkey. When educators do their duties, they bear far greater responsibility than just disseminating information. The contribution of tourist guides to sustainability, through their educator-function, might be of enormous opportunity and value. Considered the rising star of tourist kinds, urban tourism is on its way to absorb the interest of scholars, while on the provider side, it is a source of money for residents and those providing service and facilities. According to the findings of the curriculum review, prospective tourist guides are not prepared to cope with sustainability challenges, much alone sustainability in urban tourism, under the current state of tourist guiding education. In terms of future research, it is advised that studies encompassing all curricula be undertaken, and that a comparison study between Turkey and certain European nations would be much more beneficial for the sake of sustainability and urban tourism. Furthermore, in addition to course-related issues, real-life experiences might be an alternative to sticking just to curricula or a list of courses. At a higher level, an intriguing question may be if the concept of sustainability is taught.

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Yazarlar, bu çalışmanın etik kurallara uygun olarak hazırlandığını ve araştırmada herhangi bir etik ihlal olmadığını beyan etmektedirler. Çalışmanın araştırma ve yayın etiği sorumluluğu yazara aittir.

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