

Culture Tourism as a Sustainable Tourism Type: The Ephesus Example

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Abstract

Culture tourism is a worldwide mass trend and it is growing at a faster rate than any other form of tourism. Culture tourism is a term developed to encapsulate the interaction of culture and tourism (Stojanoski, Elmazi, 2008). Tourism activities generally develop in places where a natural balance is very sensitive and where this balance might be disturbed unless measures are taken. A sustainable tourism approach is critically important for transferring cultural and other resources to further generations without any damage. This approach has emerged to strike a natural balance as a reaction against negative environmental impacts, arising from the mass tourism. In particular, culture tourism in the long run can serve its aim much more appropriately in relation to mass and sustainable tourism. Cultural assets belonging to the area of Ephesus constitute an important part of the world history heritage. Therefore, in order for Ephesus to transfer its place to future generations, a balanced approach, enabling its application to fit sustainability principles, and its emergence as a tourist value, not giving rise to passiveness, must be put forward. At this point, the aim of this research is to emphasise the elements that would support such an approach as well as to create a theoretical frame that would contribute to the development of the Ephesus area as a touristic region. Ephesus, which has been chosen as a front field of the work, with its cultural values, is a destination which serves tourism at a much lower level than its capacity. Some general reasons of this can be pointed out, such as the fact that the tourism market is not continuously created, wrong strategic approaches are undertaken, and too little planning is employed.

Keywords: sustainable tourism, culture tourism, Ephesus, carrying capacity.

Introduction

In the modern world, cultural heritage and the evaluation of this heritage through tourism have gained importance during the last twenty years. It seems unavoidable that our country, Greece, which possesses a great part of world cultural heritage, should work in the above-mentioned field. The provision of prudential continuity of tourism is possible under a sustainable

understanding of tourism. In the countries which carry a high tourism preference and possess unworn natural, historical, and socio-cultural attractions, resources must be used in a planned way and conservation-exercising principles must be adhered. In addition to this touristic submission, alternative tourism activities that enable product diversity in tourism must be developed (Çeken et al., 2009). With this in mind, the article has the aim to emphasise the necessity of the application according to sustainable principles of these alternative tourism types and to evaluate how culture tourism activities, as a model in the Ephesus area, are in accordance with sustainability principles, considering the fact that the Turkish tourism sector has been restructured as a mass tourism centre and has just started to recognise other alternative tourism types.

The Ephesus area is considered to be one of the most important values of culture tourism, possessing an extreme magnitude of treasure. It has the history, formed by Greek and Roman cultures. The Ephesus area is one of the best examples and treasures of the antique age, recognized by archaeologists and historians. The largest theatre of the country, or houses on the slopes which have incredible mosaics and frescoes, symbolising the past, can be found in this area. Besides, one of the seven wonders of the world, 'The Temple of Artemis', is a symbol of Ephesus. Considering all these facts, the Ephesus area has been accepted as a symbol of history and culture. It especially strengthens the image of culture tourism in Greece. According to research results, for sustainable culture tourism, cooperation and coordination between all tourism organizations are crucially important. The Ministry of tourism and local governments are required to act together. As the first step, the current status is to be determined and the problems of the area are to be determined. In order to prevent the problem of seasonality in tourism activities, tour programs should be spread through all year (Eser, 2011).

In this work, first of all, the concepts of sustainability, sustainable tourism, and culture are touched upon. Then, the situation analysis is done in sustainable tourism scope, regarding the Ephesus area. Finally, a general evaluation and propositions are made, specifying how sustainable culture tourism can be developed in the region. The work differs from other pieces of research on sustainable tourism and culture tourism as this investigation has been based on unstructured field research.

Sustainability and sustainable tourism concept

Lately, together with the acceleration of globalisation and the increase in industrialisation, especially in developed countries, a life standard has risen and environmental degeneration has been further boosting as a consequence of the increased consumption inclination (Mebratu, 1998). As a result, preservation of the environment that people possess in line with the requirements of future generations has become a necessity. The sustainability concept, brought up as an issue in the report of the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development, titled 'Our common future' in 1987, has been gaining more importance in the world agenda. In order to understand the sustainability concept better, it is necessary to look up some definitions of the concept. Thus, Middleton and Hawkins (1998) outline sustainability as 'a balanced situation where harmony is present between the activities of human population and their natural, social, and cultural environments'. According to Coccossis (1996), sustainability is the total of approaches aiming to get ahead of the economic, social, and environmental negativities that emerge in the long term and rise from the effects of human activities upon environmental sources. Also, sustainability is outlined as a concept not only in relation with environment, but also in relation to social and economic dimensions.

When tackled from the point of view of development, sustainability and tourism concepts need to be dealt from an integral perspective. Sustainable development is expressed as fulfilling the necessities of our days without damaging the abilities of future generations to meet their needs (Collins, 1999). When the importance of tourism income, viewed from the development perspective, is taken into consideration, for many countries, the enforcement of the ongoingness and sustainability of this income presents big importance. Negative effects of the activities, pursued by countries possessing important touristic display value with an avaricious approach, shown in the past for gaining maximum favour of these values, emerge in time. As a reaction to these negativities, the importance of the sustainable tourism concept gradually increases. Sustainable tourism can be defined as enabling the conservation, development, and continuum of regional and domestic attractions which are a resource to tourism (Avcıkurt, 2003). Furthermore, Kuntay (2004) defines sustainable tourism as the tourism which understands where perspectives are developed for the future, tourists and the daily necessities of the hosting region are carried out, all source management together with aesthetic social economic needs are integrated and which takes into consideration the living live systems, biological variety, basic ecologic phases, and cultural integrity.

The relationship between tourism and natural environmental sources has been shaped as a two way relationship. On the one hand, natural environmental sources constitute a fundamental input for the tourism sector, on the other hand, tourism activities cause the usage of natural environmental sources with the aim of economic activities. Natural environmental sources which otherwise

do not create added value and remain passive, bring in income to the national economy via tourism activities (Küçükaltan and Yılmaz, 2011). In the situation where cultural and natural sources continue to be damaged rapidly, many resources constituting the basis of tourism will disappear. The realisation of negative effects by mass tourism upon a domestic environment and society especially encourages a search for alternative tourism types which carry a more sustainable feature. Today, the understanding of tourism slowly distances from the approach aiming at the mass tourism which excessively destroys the nature and the socio cultural values that it harbours. Tourism moves towards a 'nature based tourism' approach which uses nature more, but does it in an educated and respectful towards nature way. Even if mass tourism protects its big share in the context of world tourism, nature based tourism continuously prolongs its flight in increasing its share internationally (Akesen, 2009).

One of the important tools of sustainable tourism is the carrying capacity concept. Carrying capacity expresses enabling the continuum of service and activity capacity without reducing the satisfaction level of the people who take advantage of the environment and without causing the loss of value of the environment (Küçüktopuzlu, 1990). Carrying capacity is defined as the maximum number of tourists who can take advantage of a certain attraction without giving damage to the environment (Kahraman and Türkay, 2009). In ensuring tourism sustainability together with the carrying capacity, it is necessary to identify the fundamental principles and to deliver the activities justified by these principles. The sustainable usage of resources, the reduction of extreme consumption and waste, the sustainability of variety, the taking of tourism in to the planning scope, the support of domestic economies, the consideration of views of the concerned groups, the understanding of a responsible tourism marketing fall within these principles (Garrod and Fyall, 1998). Together with this, the fundamental purposes of sustainable tourism are listed below in the form of clauses, in order to make sustainable tourism more understandable (WTO, 1997; Erdoğan, 2003):

- to enable the sustainable usage and conservation of resources;
- to reduce extreme usage and wastes, to prevent long term environmental damage;
- to increase the life quality of domestic society;
- to protect the equality principle between generations;
- to protect environmental quality with the continuum of ecological systems and biologic varieties;
- to enable social and cultural integrity of society;
- to enable the experience of high quality for visitors;
- to raise awareness on the subject of sustainable tourism among the tourists and the personnel working in tourism.

Culture tourism as a sustainable tourism type: the Ephesus example

The success and competitiveness of a tourist destination depend largely on the strength and diversity of touristic elements, particular to that destination, which are presented to its visitors (Cracolici and Nijkamp, 2008). When evaluated in this context, the Ephesus area with the touristic display sources, possessed in the context of culture tourism, owns the potential of being a very important destination. Culture tourism is a kind of tourism which is the element of fundamental attraction caused by definite and abstract cultural values of a particular region. These values are sometimes the modes of living of inhabitants in the region, sometimes the historical locations and objects peculiar to the region, and sometimes the museums where artwork is exhibited. Culture tourism encompasses such activities as seeing the districts that present differences from the cultural point of view, or observing the modes of living that gradually perish, or sightseeing historical arts belonging to past cultures. Aydın (1990) defines culture tourism as tourism activities, implemented with the aim of participating in art activities, such as festival, folk dancing, theatre, exhibition, of recognising past and living civilisations and cultural values, and of seeing historical places and modes of living of society. 'Religious tourism', defined as touristic activities directed towards holy places, presents importance as a lower dimension of culture tourism. In religious tourism, the object of a tourist attending the journey is visiting religious places and fulfilling his/her worship need in these places.

Culture tourism, in the long run, serves the object of sustainable tourism much more than the mass tourism (Özdal and Yürük, 2007). The European Tourism Institute (ETI) singles out the following economic, social, and cultural benefits, enabled by cultural tourism, as well as negativities that may arise (Emekli, 2006):

- ensures that the natural and cultural heritage, traditions particular to the region be used as a cultural tourism resource,
- enables a high added value for the region due to a high purchasing power of participants, engaged in cultural tourism,
- prevents an extreme usage of tourism resources by creating a demand variety,
- creates new job opportunities,
- enables additional contributions to traditional tourism activities by developing the existing contributions.

The Ephesus area is an important place from the religious tourism point of view, because, together with possessing the arts which carry holy characteristic for Christians, it embodies Muslim monuments of the ottoman period. Ephesus, one of the rare antique cities that sees uncut settlement since the old ages to our days, is known in each period as an important culture, art, and civilisation centre. Ephesus, which is one of the most important civilisation centres of the antique age, is an important piece of universal world heritage. The Ephesus area possesses the past, composed by the Greek and Roman cultures. The biggest antique theatre of the country is situated in the

Ephesus area. The Hillside houses, which have had their restoration completed by Austrian and Turkish archaeologists, the 'Artemis Temple', recognized as one of the Seven Wonders of the World, are the cultural works of art which have become symbols of Ephesus. Furthermore, Virgin Mary's house, where Mother Mary spent the last days of her life and which carries a holy value for Christians, is located in Bülbül mountain in Ephesus. Other culture resources, located in the Ephesus area, are Celsus Library, Education Building, Stadium, Agoras, City Hall (Prytenion), Domitian Temple, Trajan Fountain, Ephesus Museum, St. John Church, Seven Sleepers Cave and Isa Mosque.

Research object and method

The present research aims to contribute to the works related to the Ephesus area and intends to emphasise the importance of culture tourism as an alternative tourism type. The cultural assets peculiar to the Ephesus area constitute an important piece of world history heritage. Due to this reason, in order to transport the Ephesus area to future generations, it is of utmost importance to present a balanced approach which would enable its usage in accordance with sustainability principles and would allow the revelation of its touristic value without leaving it inactive. At this point, the aim of this research is to emphasise the facts that support such an approach and to present a theoretical frame which would enable contributing to the development of the Ephesus area as a touristic region. If it is assumed that culture tourism is a type of tourism that brings more income, compared to other tourism types, or that it is a type of tourism, more relevant to sustainable tourism logic, and that the Ephesus area embodies superior assets resources oriented towards this tourism type of the Ephesus area, then the importance of this research, contributing to the development of culture tourism in the Ephesus area, comes to light more distinctly.

In previous sections, first of all, sustainability was given attention with the aim of constituting a theoretical infrastructure of the work; secondly, the sustainable tourism and culture tourism concepts were reviewed in the light of scientific literature. For this work, unconfigured observation technique has been used as a data accumulation method and technique. According to this research method, individuals and objects related to the research subject and problem within a time section are kept under supervision (Aziz, 2008). As a result of the data obtained, evaluation is being made using a SWOT analysis technique from the point of view of sustainable culture tourism. The analysis is completed in accordance with the environment in the researched subject. On the basis of this analysis, strong aspects and opportunities are to be implemented, weak aspects are to be developed, and threats are to be eliminated. With the particular inputs, obtained with the help of SWOT analysis, the development potential of the Ephesus area on sustainable culture tourism is attempted to set forth. The issues that need to be implemented in relation to the region development are evaluated.

Table 1

The SWOT analysis of the area of Ephesus

| Strong Sides | Weak sides |
|---|--|
| Rich history, culture, and natural assets Geographical location and closeness to the market The asset of labour force that can be directed towards tourism Regional festivals High tourist potential Ephesus museum The fact of being an important religious centre Tours organised by tourist agencies The fact of owning one of the Seven Wonders of the world Climate and natural surrounding The fact of possessing a population that can adjust to a tourism event quickly | The fact that enough advertising and marketing are not done The fact that tourism consciousness has not developed enough Short period visiting dominates The fact that the visitors are not directed in a proper manner The fact that excavation works are not done continuously and in a consistent way Insufficiency of the budget reserved for advertisement and marketing The fact that not enough importance is placed on the preservation of natural and cultural assets |
| Opportunities | Threats |
| Increase in the interest in history and culture tourism High potential for alternative tourism types Proximity to big cities Increased attractiveness of the Aegean region Growing world tourism Application of the museum card Lighting of Ephesus Development of natural sport activities in the environment of Ephesus | Damaging cultural structures Dirtiness Rare supervision Destruction that the visitors cause Restoration works done by eloigning from the original structure Privatisation Structures that spoil the landscape Extreme crowd Negative changes in the outlook to tourists Commercial mentality Fire risk Condensation of tour programs in specific times |

Findings and results

Sustainable tourism, providing for the needs of current tourists and domestic communities, is an approach that puts forward the necessity of prioritising protection for the future and the appropriate usage of opportunities. The most important point to pay attention to here is considering, together with the needs of the community, the needs of future generations in the enabling of sustainable tourism. The Ephesus area region, chosen as the main field of the work, is a destination that provides tourism services much beneath its capacity, considering the cultural values it possesses. Among the general reasons, a continuous creation of tourism market, wrong strategic approaches, and insufficient domestic planning can be mentioned. In the marketing of cultural places, it is of utmost importance to feature cultural image destinations like Ephesus, which possesses cultural tourism attraction.

Within a plan, the success of sustainable tourism development depends, first of all, on cooperation and harmony. It is quite important that all the organisations within the tourism structure exchange ideas and cooperate. At this point, in order to enable the Ministry of tourism and domestic administrations to act in cooperation and to secure a balanced development of the region from the point of view of tourism, an integral strategy needs to be developed. In the development of these strategies, firstly, region's resource opportunities and dangers in relation to

tourism must be evaluated. By relying on the data of the research, strong and weak sides, opportunities and threats of the Ephesus area from the point of view of tourism are shown in the table below (Eser, 2011).

To evaluate this cultural treasure only as a source of income brings about a destruction of these assets by managements that seek profit in short terms. As destroying these assets for the sake of high earnings or damaging them is unacceptable, being left completely as waste is also not correct. Because of this the rare cultural structure and assets in the state of touristic submission source, it must be determined objectively and scientifically, at what level it will be opened to tourism. A planned and sustainable structuring in line with this must be realised. Furthermore, it is important that the destination identity is constituted, so that the region is used correctly from the point of view of tourism. Cultural assets at the destinations must be determined, so that sustainable culture tourism is procured. Also, it is of utmost important provision to identify new strategies within the cooperation of all official and private sector units that possess initiative upon the region and to arrange planning. Lebe and Milfelner (2006) in their works talk about the importance of the establishment of a destination management organisation that takes into consideration the structure of the regions. To form a new and strong destination image with settler tourism consciousness is accepted as a very important step for the continuum and sustainability of cultural tourism activities.

Furthermore, it is of utmost importance to identify various positive and negative effects that may arise upon the destinations; if necessary, precautions are to be taken.

The creation of an effective marketing strategy according to various resources that the tourism region and the tourism managements possess will be important for the right shaping of the destination image and for the awareness of the destination (Kozak, 2008). Apart from using the elements that emphasise cultural richness in the advertisement of the region, it must be realised in accordance with the structuring and cultural identity in the region; it must not carry irregularities with the cultural elements. A balanced structuring that carries features, particular to the region, rather than a mass structuring in relation to tourism must be developed. In order to follow the duration of the development of the region, it is important to keep statistics of the entry-exits of the area of Ephesus and to form the necessary databases. In order to ensure the continuum of tourism development in a healthy manner in the region, the awareness and participation of the domestic community living here must be enabled (Alaeddinoğlu, 2008; Topaloglu et al., 2010). In the future research, the investigation of perceptions in relation to tourism of the domestic community living in Ephesus area would be important for the enabling active participation of the domestic community in the development of sustainable cultural tourism.

Conclusions

Greece is the luckiest country among the neighboring countries due to its nature, culture, and values. But the country has not made considerable progress in terms of sustainability. The concept of 'sustainable culture tourism' has not been completely understood in Greece, and its importance has not been comprehended either. This case study aims at analyzing such an important issue for the country and thus establishing a model as well as determining strategies for the development, so that sustainable culture tourism is ensured and improved in the ruins of Ephesus, which has been covered by this study.

The following principles can be summarized as suggestions for the development of culture tourism in the area of Ephesus:

- All the organizations, located in the structure of tourism, cooperate and exchange ideas and works,
- The consciousness of tourism should be spread among local people and foreign visitors,
- The Ministry of tourism and local governments are to develop an integral strategy for the balanced development,
- Ideas and new strategies, based on all public and private sector units, should be identified and planned,
- Inventory of the cultural heritage is to be completed,
- The promotion of museums should be done more effectively,
- The creation of a strong destination should be implemented,
- An effective marketing strategy should be established,

- All national and international agencies are to be contacted and explained how the Ephesus area is important.

The above-mentioned aspects of culture tourism in the Ephesus area are extremely important for different nations. The values should be introduced and used as elements of tourism attraction.

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Kultūrinis turizmas kaip tvaraus turizmo rūšis: Efeso (Graikija) atvejis

Santrauka

Turizmas paprastai vyksta tokiose vietose, kuriose gali būti lengvai pažeidžiamas natūralus aplinkos balansas. Kad to neįvyktų, svarbu imtis tinkamų priemonių. Viena jų – tvarus turizmas. Tvaraus turizmo koncepcija susiformavo kaip atsakas į greitėjantį mus supančios aplinkos nykimą, ypač galvojant apie tai, kaip išlaikyti masinio turizmo įtakoje kintantį natūralų aplinkos balansą. Tvarus turizmas akcentuoja vystymąsi, kuris tenkina šių laikų poreikius, nesumažindamas galimybių ateities kartoms tenkinti jų pačių poreikių. Tvarus turizmas – tai regioninių ir vietinių traukos objektų, turizmo šaltinių eksploatavimas, išlaikymas ir vystymas. Kultūrinis turizmas ilgalaikėje perspektyvoje turėtų padėti vystyti tvarų turizmą daug labiau, nei masinis turizmas.

Efesas (Graikija) – vienas iš retų išlikusių Antikos miestų, iki šių dienų išlaikęs senovinę gyvenvietę. Visais civilizacijos laikotarpiais Efeso miestas pasižymėjo kaip svarbus kultūros, meno ir civilizacijos centras. Tai ne tik vienas didžiausių antikinių civilizacijos centrų, bet ir svarbus bendrojo pasaulinio paveldo pavyzdys.

Šiuo tyrimu siekiama prisidėti prie darbų, analizuojančių Efeso regioną, taip pat pabrėžti kultūros turizmo, kaip alternatyvaus turizmo tipo, svarbą. Efese esantys kultūros turtai bei paminklai yra svarbi pasaulinio istorinio palikimo dalis. Todėl, siekiant išsaugoti Efesą ateinančios kartoms, yra ypatingai svarbu pasirinkti subalansuotą požiūrį, kuris leistų naudotis šioje srityje esamomis kultūrinėmis vertybėmis, išlaikant tvarumo ir darnos principus, bei kartu Efesą vystyti kaip veiklų regioną, o kartu ir kaip turistinę vertybę. Todėl tyrimo tikslas yra, viena vertus, išryškinti faktus, kurie leistų laikytis tokio požiūrio, antra vertus, suformuoti teorinį pagrindą, įgalinantį Efesui vystytis kaip turistiniam regionui. Tyrimu siekiama prisidėti prie kultūrinio turizmo vystymo ir įtvirtinti nuomonę, jog kultūrinis turizmas atneša didesnį pelną, nei kitos turizmo rūšys, kad toks turizmas labiau atitinka tvaraus turizmo logiką bei parodyti, kad Efeso sritis pasižymi pranašiaisiais ištekliais bei didžiausiomis vertybėmis. Atkreiptinas dėmesys, jog šis regionas labai svarbus ir žvelgiant iš religinio turizmo perspektyvos, nes jame randama tiek krikščionybės šventumą demonstruojančių vertybių, tiek ir musulmoniškojo prado relikvų bei pastatų, siekiančių otomanų laikus Graikijoje. Efeso regione susilieja graikų ir romėnų kultūrų praeitis.

Būtų neteisinga traktuoti šias kultūros vertybes tik kaip pajamų šaltinį, nes taip būtų akcentuojamas tik destruktivus trumpalaikis valdymas ir greito pelno siekimas. Taip pat būtų neteisinga tiesiog palikti šiuos objektus nusidėvėti. Kadangi tai labai reta kultūrinė vertybė, naudojama turizmo poreikiams, yra būtina objektyviai nuspręsti ir moksliskai pagrįsti, kiek šis objektas turi būti atvertas turizmui; tuo pačiu svarbu įgyvendinti planingą ir tvarų jo formavimą. Be to, labai svarbu suformuoti šios vietovės identitetą, kuris įgalintų teisingą viso regiono naudojamą turizmo tikslams. Kad tvarus kultūrinis turizmas gautų reikiamą aprūpinimą, pirmiausia būtina nustatyti kultūros vertybes ir kryptis. Be galo svarbu yra, bendradarbiaujant su valdžios institucijomis bei suinteresuotu privačiu sektoriumi, imtis naujų strategijų kūrimo bei planavimo.

Šio straipsnio pradžioje, remiantis moksline literatūra, apibrėžiami ir analizuojami tokie konceptai kaip ekologinis pusiausvyros išlaikymas – tvarumas, tvarus turizmas bei kultūrinis turizmas. Empiriniams duomenims surinkti buvo naudojama nekonfigūruoto stebėjimo technika. Šis tyrimo metodas leidžia tam tikrą laiko tarpą stebėti individus ir objektus, susijusius su tyrimo objektu bei problema. Gauti duomenys buvo įvertinti, naudojant SSGG (SWOT) analizę, ir analizuojami darnaus kultūrinio turizmo požiūriu. SSGG analizės metodu gautos informacijos pagrindu buvo stengiamasi išskirti turimus Efeso, kaip viso regiono kultūros objekto, privalumus, išanalizuoti jo vystymo(si) potencialą, taip pat įvertinti tobulintinas sritis.

Senojo Efeso miesto kultūros vertybės sudaro ženklų pasaulinio istorinio paveldo dalį, todėl siekiant perduoti jas ateinančios kartoms, yra labai svarbu pasirinkti optimalų požiūrį, kuris leistų tvariai naudoti šio miesto įžymybes kaip turistų traukos objektus. Taigi šiuo tyrimu ir siekiama sukurti teorinį pagrindą bei išskirti elementus, kurie leistų įgyvendinti tokį požiūrį, vystant Efesą kaip turistinį regioną. Šiuo laikotarpiu, nepaisant daugybės turimų neįkainojamų kultūros vertybių, Efeso potencialas nepilnai išnaudojamas turizmo tikslams. Todėl svarbiausia šiuo metu – suformuoti nuoseklią turizmo rinką, imtis tinkamo planavimo ir būtinų strateginių veiksmų.

Straipsnyje pateiktos išvalgos taip pat padės ir kitiems kultūrinio turizmo regionams, viena vertus, išlaikyti istorinį ir kultūrinį paveldą, kita vertus, vystyti tvarų turizmą.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: kultūrinis turizmas, tvarus turizmas, Efesas, ekologinės pusiausvyros išlaikymas.

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