Stakeholder-based problems in the local benefit chain of tourism: A study in Adıyaman

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Abstract

The geographical movement of large human societies is the phenomenal phenomenon of our time. This mobility is also a social event, and the cause-effect relationship has an impact area extending from the individual to the general. Similarly, tourism as a system is complex. Each element constituting this system operates on the axis of different purposes and processes and affects the tourism system. Based on this starting point, this study aims to examine tourism development problems in Adıyaman. In the research, data were collected from eight (8) tourism stakeholders between 05.01.2022 and 15.02.2022 by semi-structured interview method. The data were analyzed by content analysis and descriptive analysis methods. The results of the research show that the primary problem in tourism development in Adıyaman is the lack of publicity. However, it was determined that bureaucratic support, service quality, lack of cooperation and coordination are other factors that limit tourism development. On the axis of the research results, theoretical and managerial suggestions were made.

Keywords: local stakeholders, stakeholder theory, tourism, Adıyaman

Introduction

The geographical movement of large human populations is the phenomenal phenomenon of our time. This mobility is also a social event, and the cause-effect relationship has an impact area extending from the individual to the general (Rızaoğlu, 2003; Doğan, 2004). Similarly, tourism as a system is complex structure. Each element constituting this system operates on the axis of different purposes and processes. For example, visitors' aiming for maximum benefit in travel experience, administrations focus on socio-economic benefits of tourism. Naturally this is related to how tourism is viewed. Because tourism is an industry with an economic title; It is an important market from the marketing perspective and a pattern formed by human relations in terms of social science. However, the existence of tourism as a system ultimately depends on the relationship and harmony between different stakeholder groups (İçöz, 2005; Roney, 2011; Arıca, 2020). Thus, every stakeholder group that the tourism system comes into contact with directly or indirectly, is affected by tourism activities or relatively affects these activities, depending on their location (Waligo et al., 2013). According to Freeman (1984), stakeholders have a share in success as influencing and affected, and are characterized by their relationship structures among themselves.

The concept of stakeholder is one of the most frequently mentioned issues especially in the field of tourism. In the practical setting, stakeholder partnership (Sautter ve Leisen, 1999; Aas et al., 2005) and participation (Araujo and Bramwell, 1999; Byrd et al., 2008) is seen to be very important, while stakeholders again form the pillar of the issue in tourism management (Caffyn and Jobbins, 2008) and sustainable development (Byrd, 2007; Arıca and Çorbacı, 2017). Clearly stakeholders, become an important actor in tourism development, while they are the main framework in the development of management strategies and tourism sustainability (Pepperdine and Ewing, 2001; Çetin et al., 2021). In the current study, it is aimed to investigate the positive and negative roles of stakeholders, which are an important link in the local benefit chain of Adıyaman tourism.

Stakeholder Theory and Tourism Practices

The stakeholder theory, prioritized by Freeman (1984), deals with the factors necessary for institutions to effectively manage their stakeholders. In this context, analysis of relevant stakeholders, relationships and strategies are in topic (Dönmez, 2008: 92). The stakeholder approach, which started with Smith's researches suggesting mutual benefit, changed direction with the acceptance that businesses are an open system and gained today's perspective. Whereas, businesses can affect other institutions and society or be affected by these factors as external environmental dynamics (Ertuğrul, 2008: 200). According to the stakeholder theory, businesses are associated with many interest groups that affect and are affected by their decisions (Freeman, 1984). Similarly, theory is concerned with the nature and processes of relationships between institutions and stakeholders (Jones and Wicks, 1999). According to Donaldson and Preston (1995), stakeholder theory; It has been quite influential in the management literature on the basis of descriptive, instrumental and normative validity. In general terms, stakeholder theory refers to the satisfaction of every level stakeholder group within the system surrounding an enterprise. What is important here is the value the business places on its relationship with critical stakeholders. This effort, which increases business performance, can also be a factor that strengthens the organizational structure (Arıca, 2020). When the stakeholder theory is considered in terms of tourism, it is seen that tourism is a sector that is directly or indirectly affected by and affects these groups (Araujo and Bramwell, 1999). Thus as Cooper *et al.* (2009) states, the organizational structure of a tourism destination is described by a network of interconnected stakeholders. In this network, the importance of multi-stakeholder partnership is very major (Carlisle et al., 2013). According to Selin (1999: 262), stakeholder partnership has a dynamic structure and is in constant interaction. Therefore, role analysis between stakeholders and profit/loss balance are very important. At this point, the conditions under which stakeholder support is shaped and how and in what direction the stakeholders are affected by tourism are important questions that await answers (Yoon, 2002).

Problems in Tourism Practice

The ability of the tourism business to provide quality service to its customers depends on its relationship with the components in the relevant stakeholder network (such as; hotel, food and beverage business, tour operator). However, a more important issue is cohesion between stakeholder groups in the same network (Sautter and Leisen, 1999: 326). In some cases, the interests of the stakeholders can get ahead of the common goals (Getz and Timur, 2005). Therefore, the definition of the role of any stakeholder in the tourism system in the

implementation practices has strategic meaning (Byrd, 2007). The role definition of the stakeholders can also be reflected in the development process of tourism as profit or loss (Getz and Timur, 2005). At this point, the main priority is the analysis of direct and indirect stakeholder distinction in role distribution. Moreover, each stakeholder group needs to have a positive perception of tourism and be included in a well-organized information chain (Byrd et al., 2009).

Dynamic nature of the stakeholder cycle ise another important issue. Accordingly, global competition wars also change the stakeholder mix. In clear terms, any stakeholder of a business may not exist in the future, or new stakeholders may join the process in the future. It is likely that this will depend on the correct reading of the converted time (Elias et al., 2002).

Method

Qualitative research method was used in the research. The data were compiled by semi-structured interview method. The data collection technique in which the individuals in the research sample actively express their knowledge, feelings and thoughts about the research subject and reveal their life history is called interview (Seidman, 2006). Content analysis and descriptive analysis methods were used in the analysis process of the data compiled by interview. Content analysis is the careful, detailed and systematic treatment, examination and interpretation of research data with the aim of revealing the patterns, themes, prejudices and meanings of the research (Maxwell, 2008). The purpose of descriptive analysis is to bring together the data collected as a result of interviews and observations with the reader in an organized and interpreted way (Kitzinger, 1995).

Findings

In the current research, it was determined that the participants saw the lack of publicity (21%) as the primary problem in the development of tourism in Adıyaman. In addition, lack of bureaucratic support, service quality problem, lack of cooperation, lack of tourism awareness, deficiency of coordination are other components that hinder tourism development in Adıyaman (See Below: Table 1).

Table 1. Content Analysis Results

Questions	Themes	n	%
Priority problems in tourism development in Adıyaman in the context of sectoral and local governments	Lack of advertisement	12	21
	Deficiency of bureaucratic support	9	16
	Physical superstructure and infrastructure	8	13
	Social infrastructure	6	11
	Individuality and communication problem	6	11
	Perception of terror	6	11
	Duration of stay	5	9
	Transportation barriers	4	8
	Service quality problems	8	29
	Failure to act	8	29
Your own mistakes as a stakeholder	Insufficient vision	6	21
	Individuality	4	14
	It's not my fault	2	7
Points you criticize other tourism stakeholders	They are not collaboration	10	48
	Selfish competition	7	33
	Salvage the day	4	19
The reasons why the perception of tourism is	Lack of consciousness	12	48

not sufficiently embodied among the public	The problem of ownership of tourism values	8	30
	Passivity	6	22
	Alliance/Coordination	11	32
	Active participation in tourism	8	23
Steps to be taken by stakeholders	Investment	6	17
	Institutionalization	5	14
	Improving service quality	5	14

The primary problem in the development of Adıyaman tourism is the lack of advertisement. In this regard, the participants emphasize that there is not enough participation in international and national fairs, and therefore Adıyaman is not sufficiently promotion. For example, some participants stated the following about the subject:

"One of the biggest reasons why Adıyaman tourism has not developed is the lack of advertisement... Few of us attend events held in big cities or abroad..." (P. 4).

"... I think that it is insufficient especially in the field of promotion. Moreover, we should first start with our own people to introduce our city and give information about our historical and touristic values...." (P. 11).

Another important problem related to tourism development has been experienced in bureaucratic support. Accordingly, participants expect more support from local governments in areas such as infrastructure and superstructure investments and advertisement activities.

"We must start the change from ourselves. Local administrators can develop quality projects together. It can be continuously offered from our state elders to allocate more budget to our province." (P. 6).

In the interview, the participants were asked to make a self-criticism and their own mistakes were asked about the development problem of regional tourism. In this regard, while the participants mostly criticized the service quality and not taking action, two participants stated that they did not have any mistakes.

"Personally, I say it myself, there is a chronic problem and we deliberately do nothing to find a solution to it... And everyone is in trouble for their own livelihood....." (P. 9).

"I don't see any fault in myself. We gave 35 years to this profession. Making money is always secondary for us, the aim is to bring more tourists at a more affordable price...." (P. 7).

In the research, the participants were asked about the points they criticize other stakeholders in the problems faced by Adıyaman tourism. The most criticized issues are the lack of cooperation and selfish competition.

"... I request a common price policy here. I have forwarded it to other friends. But nobody was there. Each tourist is served at different prices as it suits their business..." (P. 14).

When asked about the reasons why the perception of tourism in Adıyaman is not sufficiently solidified among the people, the participants stated that the lack of awareness and the problem of protecting tourism values are the most important problems.

"We must first ask ourselves this. Because we could not create this perception in our own people. We could not explain tourism to the citizens of the region..." (P. 10).

"How can I say... Adıyaman is a bit different....What I see here is that the people don't embrace the values related to tourism..." (P. 13).

Finally, the participants were asked about the steps that should be taken by the stakeholders for the development of Adıyaman tourism. According to this; The most anticipated steps were alliance/coordination and active participation in tourism. As a matter of fact, it is seen that the problems of cooperation and taking action come to the fore in the previous statements.

"No matter how many businesses there are here, the media, the university, everyone; what kind of path to follow, what to do, that is, a common path must be followed. For example, was it a fair, with the support of the local administration, most businesses and institutions should attend there together..." (P. 5).

Discussion

Tourism development is a complex process involving different stakeholder groups brought together by plans, policies and various regulations. The resulting form of tourism can affect not only the host community but also indirectly a large area (Tefler and Shapley, 2007: 80). While identifying stakeholders in tourism practices has a critical technical and political importance, role definitions are very important in the implementation and conclusion of activities (Araujo and Bramwell, 1999).

It is clear that the partnerships that are expected to be formed in some tourism regions are not realized at the expected level due to some geographical, organizational and political reasons. For this reason, the planning and implementation of cooperation between stakeholders is seen as a priority in terms of preventing long-term conflicts and the costs that may arise from these conflicts. In this way, it will be possible to follow a more open and sustainable path by determining which stakeholder will act within which legal limits and for what purpose (Yüksel et al., 1999; Elias et al., 2022).

The location of different stakeholder groups is important for long-term sustainability. Stakeholder perception of the impacts of tourism is very important in terms of understanding the attitudes of the stakeholders regarding development and gaining their active support (Banki and Ismail, 2014: 44). Similarly, regional tourism development needs to be based on the shared values and consensus of stakeholders centered around a vision, rather than specific goals. On the other hand, it is expected that the stakeholder-based tourism movement will of course contribute to individual goals (Morgan et al., 2003). Because the success of cooperation depends on the partnership perception of the stakeholders. Admittedly, stakeholders will be willing to cooperate when their perception of benefits outweighs costs and risks (Presenza and Cipollina, 2020: 28).

Conclusion and Suggestions

Adıyaman has a remarkable tourism potential. However, it has not yet been able to make the development move foreseen by both the stakeholder and the administrative wing and has not been able to catch up with the touristic development momentum. In this context, investment,

promotion, marketing, low service quality, transportation barriers, organic image, trust and distance from society-tourism have been important development barriers. Similarly, the concretization of the tourism potential is only possible with the construction of a strong society on the basis of stakeholders. Regardless of the field, it is thought that tourism resources will provide an output in regions where there is social acceptance and participation, and the development momentum will only be caught at this level (Arıca, 2020). At this point, each stakeholder or stakeholder group within the tourism industry has five critical questions (Crotts et al., 2000). (i) Do we want to be partners?, (ii) Do we have the ability to partner?, (iii) Who do we do business with?, (iv) How do we become partners? and (v) How can we sustain and renew a partnership over time?. The establishment of stakeholder partnership, with these questions being the primary step, brings along the next processes.

The following points should be noted in the mentioned processes: *Firstly*; public-private partnership needs to be carefully structured and managed sensitively. It should be ensured that associations related to the tourism sector take a more active role. Because associations are also the voice of the private sector. *Secondly*; it is important to identify the factors that prevent and facilitate interaction in the stakeholder network. For example, the financial, social and moral benefits arising from participating in the stakeholder network should be clearly communicated to all members (Jesus and Franco, 2016). Thirdly, it should be understood that a tourism region is an open system of many interconnected stakeholders. It should not be forgotten that this bond will create a power shield economically in reducing the possible risks of the tourism sector, which is especially vulnerable to situations such as terrorism, natural disasters and calamity (d'Angella and Go, 2009). *Fourthly*, not every stakeholder in the industry has the same power. Therefore, the current balance of power and how it will be used is important. In this context, local governments as political power; The integrity of formations such as the media platform as a legal force, non-governmental organizations and private enterprises, local and national resources as a stimulating force, and educational institutions such as universities as a competent/expert force will be the determining parameters in the activities carried out with the stakeholders (Saito and Ruhanen, 2017: 194). In short, Adıyaman tourism should be planned as sustainable, comprehensive, participatory and most importantly sharing in the long term, and this process should be managed with effective projects (ATTMP, 2013).

In the present study, the positive and negative roles of stakeholders, which are an important link in the local benefit chain of Adıyaman tourism, were investigated. Undoubtedly, the current study is specific to Adıyaman and its results are not expected to be generalized. In future studies, it will be possible to obtain comparable results by adding more stakeholder groups and neighboring regions to the research.

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