

7408

Tourism in Istanbul; Past, Present And Future

Sezg GEDİK

Research Asistant

Department of Tourism and Hotel Management, İstanbul University

Istanbul, Turkey

sgedik@istanbul.edu.tr

Tolga Fahri ÇAKMAK

Inst. Dr.

Department of Travel-Tourism and Entertainment Services, Bartın University

Bartın, Turkey

tcakmak@bartin.edu.tr

Füsun İstanbullu Dinçer

Prof. Dr.

Department of Tourism Management, İstanbul University,

Istanbul, Turkey

istanbul@istanbul.edu.tr

Mithat Zeki Dinçer

Prof. Dr.

Faculty of Economics, İstanbul University,

Istanbul, Turkey

mzdiner@istanbul.edu.tr

Abstract

Istanbul is one of the most important city of Turkey, in terms of tourism. With its cultural values, geographical features and its development in the field of finance, it attracted and visited by local and foreign tourists for years. However, with the terrorist incidents, crises and actions that have lived in recent years, Istanbul has suffered a considerable loss in terms of tourism. Numerous reservations and programs have been canceled, security warnings have been issued, tourism occupancy rates have fallen and emergency plans have been developed. Positive developments have started since 2016.

The aim of this study is to reveal the changes and developments that have taken place in Istanbul tourism especially in the last 10 years and to present suggestions for future years. Within this scope, 35 people, including public and non-governmental organizations and private sector representatives, were interviewed individually and 15 people were contacted by mail and a total of 50 people were reached. The information obtained as a result of the talks and the statistical data are presented in the study, and proposals for the next five years are presented in an approach that enables the sustainable development of Istanbul tourism.

Keywords: İstanbul, tourism, crisis, tourism development

Introduction

Istanbul's fascination and aroused curiosity rests on Strabon, just before the start of the tourism event, which is accepted by the present literature. The city has been the stopover point of hundreds of travelers until the present day after Strabon, one of the first travelers. In parallel with the technological developments, Istanbul has become a mega city that welcomes tourists from all geographies of the world with the beginning of travel-friendly periods globally.

Istanbul is Turkey's most important city in terms of urban tourism, Rome, Byzantine and has made the citizen as head of the Ottoman Empire era guiding state. It is a unique destination in the world where many different cultures meet on a single route. This unique structure has deeply influenced the architecture, art, city life and culture of Istanbul, which has hosted many cultures, and has left erasable marks for centuries. As a bridge between the East and the West, Istanbul, which is the center of the bridge function, is an important center of attraction for both European and Asian and African tourists.

Istanbul, Turkey is one of the most important city in terms of tourism. It has attracted the attention of local and foreign tourists for many years with its cultural values, geographical features and development in the field of finance. However, the terrorist attacks, crises, incidents and especially tourism in the recent years have faced serious damage. While attacks, explosions and loss of lives targeting tourism centers have caused not only national but international crises, the perception of trust in Istanbul has suffered. Many of the experienced repeatedly the crisis, America, Germany major tourist has affected potential and other countries of tourists to also affect the strength of the countries with the order to warn their citizens abroad Internet and social media alerts they made about Turkey from network and proposals trip destinations are not particularly America and European countries for their citizens dramatically. Many tour operators as a natural consequence of this situation and cruise companies to remove their usual route from Turkey for security reasons.

Istanbul as a Tourist Destination

Istanbul seriously started his first destination of tourism activities in Turkey. Accommodation facilities and hotels, which have a primary priority for the realization of tourism activities, have started to be seen in Istanbul in the 19th century. Although it is not known exactly which first hotel started to serve in Istanbul, it is foreseen that the hotel sector started in 1830s. The first hotel in European standards was opened in 1841 under the name of Hôtel d'Angleterre (Yakartepe ve İnan, 2011: 82).

The development period of tourism in Istanbul as a sector with all its sub-units took place at the beginning of the 20th century. With the Orient Express that came to Istanbul in 1919, Istanbul has become an accessible destination for European tourists and in this case, it has started a significant influx of tourists. In 1924, the density of tourists was observed to be increasing with sleeping cars (İçöz 2014: 26). This increase in the number of tourists has also led to an increase in the sub-sectors of tourism and has led to an increasing number of hotel, agency and guidance activities.

Throughout the process in 1923 with the establishment of the Republic of Turkey Seyyahi Society (Touring and Automobile Club of Turkey) was established, Istanbul has started to be controlled by the state-based tourism activities. Within this scope, many laws and regulations have been enacted regarding the acceptance of tourist guides who will provide guidance / interpreting services to tourists who come to Istanbul by sea. During this period, Natta, Tutta, Paspardid travel agencies were established in Istanbul and

the Republic of Turkey has achieved very important things in terms of tourism history (Mısırlı, 2006: 16, turing.org.tr, www.tursab.org.tr).

Since the founding of the Republic, Istanbul, Turkey has become one of the most important trump card in the hands of power in terms of tourism. The increasing number of tourists, accommodation, travel and guides has also increased day by day. This increase was even higher with the support of the planned period. In Istanbul today this point, one of the destinations with the largest capacity in terms of tourism supply is in Turkey.

According to the statistics of Ministry of Culture and Tourism (03.09.2018) 566 operating certificated accommodation facilities in Istanbul, 56 286 rooms and 113 370 beds; There are a total of 171 investment certified accommodation facilities, 14843 rooms and 31 142 beds. 62 of these facilities are environmentally friendly accommodation establishments. The facilities are mainly clustered on the European side (<http://www.istanbulkulturturizm.gov.tr>).

Bringing tourists to Turkey and planning of tour including eat, drink, entertainment needs, is extremely important in terms of maximizing tourism income. For this reason, the presence and intensification of travel agencies is a very important competitive power in terms of the relevant destination. 35% (3.391) of the 9.836 travel agencies in Turkey (2017) are located in Istanbul. 97.6 % of 3391 tourism travel agencies in Istanbul are Group A, 1% are Group B and 1.4% C Group (<https://www.tursab.org.tr>).

Another important profession is the tourist guides. In accordance with the law numbered 1618, tours can be organized by travel agencies, but these tours cannot be organized without guidance. When examining the figures of the year 2017 it is observed that all tourist guide Tourist Guide Associations in Turkey due to a ratio of total 10283 units guide found that about 40% of the members of the Chamber of Istanbul Guide tourist guides that figure. According to the 2017 statistics announced by the Tourist Guides Association, it is seen that 38% of the tourist guides to the Istanbul Chamber of Guides are inactive, is not on tours. The fact that the rate of inactivity, which was 25% in the previous year, increased by 50% to 38% in a year, is seen in relation to the decrease in the number of tourists and the fact that the tours are made less than in the past (<http://tureb.org.tr>)

This Day of Istanbul Tourism

The international and national crises in Turkey, acts of terrorism, the wars in the border region, migration and crises with neighboring countries, especially recently has become a serious problem for Turkey. Refugee crisis in Syria, economic crises, ISIS and PKK attacks which happened in Turkey, especially in the last 5 years, have directly affected the Turkish tourism and has created a negative image.

According to the European Commission's July 2017 report, the total number of refugees in Turkey is over 3.4 million, and only 9% of these refugees remain in camps ([the ec.europa.eu](http://ec.europa.eu)). As part of this report, Istanbul is the city where most refugees living in Turkey. Refugees who do not live in any camps in Istanbul are mostly living in the streets and parks or living in low-income neighborhoods by creating their own conditions.

The Center for Middle Eastern Strategic Studies (ORSAM) in its report on the situation of Syrian refugees in the neighboring countries states that Syrian migrants are met with reaction by indigenous people due to lower labor prices. We can observe this situation very clearly in the Istanbul tourism market. For

example, the daily wage of tourist guides was determined as 338 TL by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. According to the information received from the tourist guides in the Arabic language, it was found that the Syrian refugees who were illegally guided received a daily wage of 35-60 TL daily. It is also reported that there are serious security problems in these regions.

Especially in the last five years, terrorist activities in Istanbul damaged the image of the city, has been an important problem in terms of security. In the last five years, 112 people died and 359 people were wounded in the five different bomb attacks carried out in Iraq and the Islamic State of Damascus (ISIS) in Istanbul. Similarly, in the last five years, 4 terrorist attacks by PKK terrorist organization in Istanbul, 105 people were killed and 376 people were wounded (compiled from AHA). When we look at the regions of the attacks, it is noteworthy that there are tourism centers. Sultanahmet, Taksim, Istanbul, such as the absolute stop of tourists visiting Istanbul and the important entertainment centers such as Reina has been attacked. Istanbul is one of the most important tourism centers of Turkey, experienced adversely affected by these events and this is reflected in the tourism statistics.

Results

After 2016 began to positive developments in terms of tourism in Turkey and this situation it has also affected the tourism Istanbul. An increase in the number of tourist arrivals and tourist spending has begun to be seen. In the course of these developments, in order to carry Istanbul to a more important place in terms of tourism, to use its existing potential and to adapt to the changing world conditions, interviews were held with civil society organizations and sector representatives, especially TUROB, TÜRSAB, TUREB, TURİYİB. The data obtained within the framework of these interviews and the predictions for the next 5 years are given below.

- *Separation of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism;* such as Turkey, tourism potential is very high and when payments are considered to be a great role of tourism in the balance, leaving the ministry to ensure more rapid adaptation to the world in terms of development can take place within the scope suggestible subjects. The fact that tourism is directly connected to the administration with a single Ministry branch can make decisions faster, especially in times of crisis, and these decisions can be implemented and control is easier. In addition, the presence of experts in the ministry and the fact that they are in unchanged positions can provide accurate statistical data retention, storage and accurate analysis for the future.
- *Creating a current, applicable tourism plan;* In the framework of Turkey Development Plans, under the leadership of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, public institutions, civil society organizations, universities and cooperation with the local population the development of a new tourism plan in are among the suggestions. Within the framework of the General Tourism Plan to be established, development of regional tourism plans is important. For tourism destinations such as Istanbul it is suggested that different tourism types as cultural tourism, religion tourism, business tourism, cruise tourism, congress and exhibition tourism and even gastronomic tourism should be planned separately and brought together under a single master plan. In the regional tourism plans, the changing city structure, the tourist profile and the tourist behaviors that change according to the tourism trends should be taken into consideration.
- *Developing products and services suitable for changing conditions;* When the tourism statistics of Istanbul are examined, it is seen that the tourist profile has changed especially in the last five years. It has begun to change in this direction in the products and services offered by the Istanbul

destination, which the Middle East tourist preferred more. Looking at the demands of the Middle Eastern tourists, it is observed that they spent most of their time in shopping centers, visited the Sultanahmet area where religious tourism is intense, preferring to stay in hotels in Taksim area and like to be in the city. Even in times of crisis, it is recommended to develop appropriate products and services to increase the number of the Middle East tourists who continue to visit Istanbul.

- *Determination of new publicity policies;* Promotional policies should be developed urgently by taking into account the changing tourism movements. In recent years, marketing activities aimed at Middle East tourists who have increased in Istanbul should gain momentum. In addition, the potential tourists in China and India should come to Istanbul. These new regions, such as the Middle East market, attract the attention of the whole world and create a serious competitive environment. For this reason, marketing activities for the Middle East, China and India market, where Turkish tourists are increasingly interested, should be carried out. Participating in fairs in these regions and developing bilateral relations should be developed. In this context, Istanbul Gastronomy Association invited representatives of this region to sample Turkish cuisine Turkey has developed bilateral relations by visiting representatives of related associations have also made presentations. Again, Turkish agencies have been developing their relations with these regions and increasing their promotion in congresses and fairs.
- *Developing relations with neighboring countries:* Tourism is a sector that can create warm relations between countries and open to development. Turkey's foreign policy is within the scope of the development of friendly relations with neighboring countries. This situation allows the development of tourism. In this context, it is possible to assist in the development of these relations by continuing the visa-free transitions implemented, increasing the number of flights with THY and creating campaigns, developing agreements that include discounts for tourism in one-to-one neighboring countries, and increasing the promotional activities.
- *Issuing new laws for operations;* In particular, new laws on agencies and guidelines should be issued and existing laws should be updated. Within the scope of these laws, it is possible to plan and increase the number of operations carried out in travel and subsequent operations.

Conclusions

The data obtained in the study showed that the city of Istanbul had a rising momentum in terms of the number of tourists and tourist expenditures that came up until 2015, but in 2016 there was a significant decline. It is among the predictions that this acceleration which has increased in 2017-2018 will continue in 2019 as well. In the interviews, it was stated that the tourism potential of the city of Istanbul was further increased by the new investments made especially and suggestions for the reflection of this development on tourism revenues were also presented. These recommendations include the creation of an emergency tourism master plan for Istanbul, the promotions for the Middle East, India and China, the creation of new laws, the development of public-private sector cooperation. It was seen that the same expectations were made not only in the private sector but also in the public sector, and the studies were carried out in this direction but it was slow.

References

AHA, <http://aa.com.tr/tr> Erişim Tarihi: 14.09.2017

E. O. (2010) Otel İşletmelerinin Pazarlanmasında Seyahat Acentalarının Rolü: Otel İşletmeleri Tarafından Bir Değerlendirme, **Ege Akademik Bakış**, C: 10, S:4, 1245-1256.

Avrupa Komisyonu Raporu, http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/turkey_syrian_crisis_tr.pdf Erişim Tarihi: 12.09.2018.

İ. O. (2014) **Seyahat Acentaları ve Tur Operatörlüğü Yönetimi**, Ankara: Turhan Kitabevi.

M. İ. (2006) **Seyahat Acentacılığı ve Tur Operatörlüğü**, Ankara: Detay Yayıncılık.

ORSAM, <http://www.orsam.org.tr/index.php/orsam/reports?s=orsam|turkish> (12.09.2017)

Y. Ç. E. B. C. (2010) İstanbul'un Modernleşme Dönemi Otelleri (1840 – 1914), **Megaron** C:6, S:2, 79-94

<http://tureb.org.tr/tr/Page/Detail/91> (12.08.2018)

https://www.tursab.org.tr/tr/seyahat-acentalari/dunden-bugune-seyahat-acentalari_501.html
(12.08.2018)

<http://www.turing.org.tr/tarihce/> (12.07.2018)

<http://www.kulturvarliklari.gov.tr> (12.07.2018)

<http://www.istanbulkulturturizm.gov.tr/TR,71515/turizm-istatistikleri.html> (06.08.2018)