

Gunduz, Elif; Erdem, Rahmi

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The Perception of Tourism Development in a Less Developed Region- Mardin Sample

Elif GÜNDÜZ¹

Rahmi ERDEM¹

egunduz@selcuk.edu.tr

rerdem@selcuk.edu.tr

¹ Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Selcuk University
Campus of Alaaddin Keykubad, 42003, Kampus, Konya, TURKEY

Abstract

Mardin is a candidate city for the World Heritage Sites List with its stone architecture and unique religious and traditional buildings in Turkey. The city is defined as “cultural landscape area” with its medieval view. It appeals to the visitors as one of the most attractive cities, which has unique cultural heritage and socio-cultural aspects. Tourism has been considered as a main component enlivening the city’s economy especially in recent years. To sustain the tool illustrated above, the local view towards tourism and tourists needs to be measured.

The aim of this paper is to measure the local’s attitudes towards tourism and economic development relations in a less developed region. The study is focused on findings about socio-demographic analyses and perception of local people’s view towards tourism. Development of the study involved a staged process of survey, analysis and assessment which included public consultation.

Keywords: Tourism, Local People, Less Developed Region, Tourism Perception, Economic Development, Mardin

Introduction

Tourism is one of the most dynamic and largest industries in terms of providing foreign currency flow through its striking effects on economic activities particularly in developing countries at a macro scale, enhancing employment opportunities and contributing to the establishment of an international lifestyle. It creates labor force and

develops the local people socio-economically at local scale; and also it is one of the important industries bearing a high potential with regards to regional development. Tourism industry supplies 11% of Gross National Product (GNP); 200 million job opportunities and 8% of total employment (Rita, 2000).

It was Klöpper (1955) who for the first time emphasized the effect of touristic development on region planning in this region (Jurzek, 2003). Applied tourism studies have gained importance and tourism has started to be mentioned as an economic factor among development tools in regional development plans because of the social and economic importance of tourism, which has been developing since 1970s. The relationship between tourism and regional development is one of the subjects handled and evaluated at length both in developing and industrialized countries.

According to the estimations of tourism organization, tourism sector gradually accelerated its development speed and tourism arrivals reached up to 763 million in 2004 achieving a growth rate by 11% compared to 2003, despite a world-wide economic recession. Growth has been observed in all the regions; however, the highest increase has been in Pacific and Asia by 28% and in Middle East by 18% (WTO, 2005). World Tourism Organization envisions for 2020 that international tourist arrivals in this year will be 1, 56 billion, 717 million of which in Europe, 397 million in Far Asia and Pacific, 282 million in America and Africa, Middle East and South Asia following them (WTO, 2005).

Tourism has been evaluated as the industry whose dependence is least in terms of its sources and supplying potential of developing countries. The fact that tourism has influence over balance of payments, infrastructure, superstructure and other sectors, particularly on economically underdeveloped ones; it creates employment and income and has high added value (Roe, 2001) supports its usage as a tool to erase the regional imbalances in underdeveloped regions. It is observed that tourism has been an alternative sector for a long time in the development processes of underdeveloped cities and regions, as long as natural and cultural circumstances allow. Putting the potential to use and making the locals participate in tourism in the most indigent regions of less developed countries, particularly in rural areas, may be an important alternative in the fight against poverty.

Reducing poverty in the world has been determined as an international priority and objectives have been set to reduce poverty by half by 2015 (UNDP, 2005). In the last decade, governments and organizations helping development have more clearly focused on reducing poverty as a central ground for tourism and its activities. The fact that cultural, natural, social and historical concepts have been among the primary sources of attraction for tourism since the middle of the 1990s developed the approach of improvable tourism planning through export and variation options in marginal and poor regions. This kind of regions attracts the tourists with their high cultural values, wild life and landscape (Ashley, 2000).

Tourism is an important opportunity for the variation of local economies in that it has economic effects such as enhancing the life quality of the locals and creating new job opportunities. Socio-cultural development accompanies the economic one. Raising the social awareness of local people enables the increase of investments to protect the values. Nevertheless, merely economic planning done without regarding the values and expectations of locals cannot be successful. If plans are not made in the light of sustainability principles and necessary control mechanisms are not arranged while a region is opening for tourism, a social stress may be observed in local people in parallel with the gradually intensifying tourism activities. “Irridex Model” developed by Doxey (1975) examines the stages of social stress rising from the complicated relations between the locals and tourists by reducing it to simple terms according to visitor volume (Table 1). That is why local people should be incorporated in the plans and their opinions and suggestions should be taken into account in order to increase the advantages and achieving a sustainable tourism type (Gunn, 1988).

According to this model, local people are content to see that investments are made and new employment fields are created at the first stages of touristic development. Relatively low number of tourists and the expectation that “researcher” traits (accepting the local norms and values) of these people will be permanent lead to welcoming and the desire to make friendships. As the local people get accustomed to the benefits and problems of tourism they get in a more commercial relationship with the tourists. However, the influx of tourists in masses causes the locals to realize how tourism can

transform the societies and culture, and to find the tourists “disturbing” rather than “beneficial”.

At the last stage, local people, who are invaded by the masses owing to the fact that touristic development cannot be made sustainable, will display hostility towards “charter” type of tourists who perceive the locals as servants and insist on Western standards (Holloway, 1994). Much as it has been reduced to simple terms, Doxey’s model can be supported by real life examples and lays bare the necessity of “sustainable tourism”.

For planners, the principal goal is to create a strategy for minimizing the adverse impacts and maximizing the gains from tourism. This would have to include the management of the cultural resources and the quality of new development, the uses and activities the built environment sustains, and the integration of both these factors with the socio-cultural needs of the local community.

What is intended in this study is contributing to developing approaches to minimize these possible negative effects by assessing how the locals economically perceive the tourists and tourism in its entirety, and how tourism activities and habits are shaped.

Stages	Features	Symptoms
Stage 1	Euphoria	Welcoming, less formality
Stage 2	Apathy	Getting accustomed, commercialization of relations
Stage 3	Irritation	Anxiety, efforts to ameliorate the infrastructure
Stage 4	Antagonism	Aggression, attempts to curb the tourist influx

Table 1: Doxey’s “Irridex Model”*

Study Area

The city of Mardin, located on the Tigris side of Southeastern Anatolia has become one of the most attractive cities of Turkey with its natural beauties, cultural heritage and socio-cultural elements. It is surrounded by Syria on the south, by Şırnak and Siirt on the east, by Diyarbakır and Batman on the north, and by Şanlıurfa on the west (Figure 1). It has a settled history dating back to B.C.8000.



Figure 1: Location of Mardin-Turkey

57% (422, 284) of the population is living in the cities and 43% (315, 568) in rural areas in Mardin, which consists of 9 districts, 31 municipalities, 579 villages and 378 **mezra**¹. Population density is below 500 people in almost 90% of village settlements. Men comprise 52% of the population (TUIK, 2009). The social structure is characterized by large familiar nuclei composed by 8 members mainly constituted by young/adult people. 30% of population owns Green Card² which is an official indicator of poverty. Mardin ranks fifth according to “Development Index” of DTP, which is the bottom rank; and 72nd out of 81 cities in the socio-economic development order (DTP, 2003).

The time span between 1990 and 2000 is remarkable in terms of population dynamics because annual population growth rate was ‰ 23,4; ‰ 45,16 in cities and ‰ 1,48 in villages. In this period, a migration movement stemming from terror led to the abandonment of rural areas and crowding of the cities (Table 2) (Günay, 2006). It is also known that Mardin is allowing immigrants from Şırnak, Siirt, Diyarbakır and Batman.

Years	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	2000	2007	2008	2009
Mardin City Total Population	397,880	453,092	519,687	564,967	652,069	557,727	705,098	745,778	750,697	737,852
City Population	90,093	119,852	155,876	192,004	244,000	249,032	391,249	428,611	422,537	422,284
Rural Population	307,787	333,240	363,811	372,963	408,069	308,695	313,849	317,167	328,160	315,568

Table 2: Population of the City by Year, (TUIK, 2009)

¹ settlements smaller than villages getting busy with farming.

² health card for uninsured people in Turkey

Although agriculture sector is regarded as the primary sector of employment the share of agricultural production in Turkey is below 1% and this figure ranks 75th on a national scale. Mardin is among the last ten cities with regards to the sum of entrepreneurs and industry workers (Mortan and Arolat, 2005).

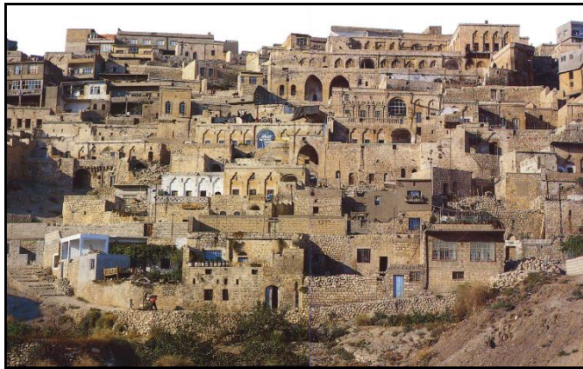
Despite these unfavorable indicators, Mardin has a quite advanced stone architecture, ethnical and religious structure. It is one of the cities having unique population diversity in Turkey. Christians, Assyrians, Sunnis, Arabs (Mahalmis), Turks, Kurds, Yezidis and Armenians live in the city (Günay, 2006).

Its cultural, demographic and spatial diversity and richness make Mardin a privileged city. Topography of the city, spatial relation between the fortress and valley, integrity of the buildings, organic urban fabric consisting of streets and districts earn the city distinction. Along with these tangible cultural items, the city has intangible cultural potential such as language, cuisine and religion. Thanks to this potential, the working area has recently been a destination where cultural and touristic activities are increasing.

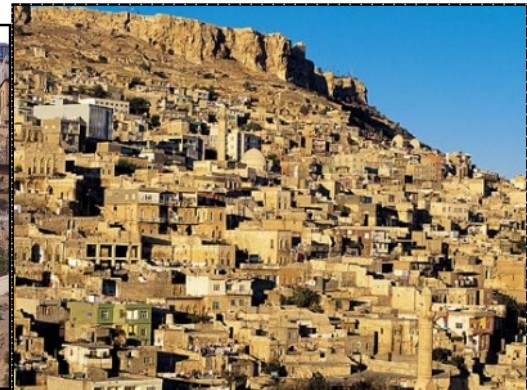
Historical city of Mardin, which is among our few cities trying to protect its identity and urban fabric in the rapid process of urbanization, and evaluated within the scope of “Cities protecting themselves”, has been toiling to enter UNESCO’s list of World Culture Heritage. In order for Mardin to enter UNESCO’s list of World Culture Heritage, there has been a struggle since the beginning of 1980s. For this purpose, an application was made to UNESCO in 1981, yet due to terrorism in the area this application was withdrawn. With the alleviation of security concerns, actions were retaken in 1998. In this respect, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism presented to UNESCO a list of 18 new items, the first one being Mardin. However, the officials withdrew the candidacy of Mardin from World Heritage List seeing that Mardin’s file lacked important documents.

The city, which was settled after B.C. 4500 is an important open-air museum hosting a lot of works from Subaris, Sumerians, Akadians, Babylonians, Mitanis, Assyrians, Persians, Byzantines, Arabs, Seljuks, Artuks and Ottomans (Anonymous, 2008). Because of the fact that it is located between the Anatolian and Middle East cultures and on the important trade routes of Eurasia, Mardin has a cosmopolitan structure with

different geographies, religions, languages and cultures. Immovable culture assets, 353 of which at the city center and 293 in towns and villages, belonging to the civilizations above mentioned are registered by the Ministry of Culture (Anonymous, 2008) It hosts inimitable religious and traditional examples of stone architecture which occurred as a result of natural structure and human interaction Mardin is recommended for World Heritage List as “cultural landscape area” according to the criteria of II, III and IV defined by WHC.



Picture1: Scene from Mardin



Picture 2: Another Scene From Mardin

Study method and Data Analysis

This paper is an exploratory case study investigation. In order to assess local people's preferences on the issue of providing a more sustainable environment and high quality life standards via the effects of tourism on local development a survey was developed. The questionnaire was based on the literature examined and in specific it was based on the research works of Pérez and Nadal (2005) in their study for the Balearic Islands and that of Akis *et al.* (1996) in Cyprus. Specific questions on the field were developed by the researcher and the resulting questionnaire was applied during the first two weeks of July 2009. Respondents were asked to evaluate economic attitudes using a five-point Likert-type scale. Participants were required to indicate on a 5 point scale (Definitely Agree, Agree, Neutral, Do Not Agree, Definitely Do Not Agree) to what extent they agreed with 13 statements on the effect of tourism on economy.

Respondents were selected from residential areas, commercial business districts (e.g., shops, restaurants, lodgings, etc.), public places. A total sample size of 225 was completed. No particular attempt was made to apply a random sample or to select particular segments. A self-completed questionnaire was administered to those who

preferred to respond to the questionnaire by themselves. Otherwise, the field researchers completed the questionnaire via personal interview.

The data analysis of the study was done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences 15 (SPSS 15). Factor analysis was conducted to create correlated variable composites from the original 13 economic attributes and to identify a smaller set of dimensions, or factors, that explain most of the variance between the attributes and the derived factor scores.

In this study, factors were retained only if they had values greater than or equal to 1.0 of eigenvalue and a factor loading greater than 0.4 were selected for the study analysis. A reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) was computed for each factor to estimate the internal consistency of each factor.

Findings

CATEGORY		%	CATEGORY		%
Gender	Male	74	Religion	Muslim	90
	Female	24		Christian	7
	No response	2		Other	2
Age	15-18	4		No response	1
	19-25	19	Ethnicity	Turk	20
	26-35	27		Kurd	19
	36-50	32		Arab	53
	51-65	16		Other	5
	66+	2		No response	3
	No response	1	The time of residence	Less than 12 months	1
Educational Background	Illiterate	11		1-5 years	4
	Literate	14		6-10 years	7
	Elementary School	14		11-20 years	21
	Junior high School	13		More than 21 years	64
	High School	29		No response	5
	Collage	7	Ownership	Tenant	38
	University	10		Homeowner	59
	Master-Doctorate	2	Relationship with the tourists	Never	35
	No response	1		Barely	23
Income	0-500 TL	18		Sometimes	25
	501-1000 TL	30		Regular	14
	1001-1500 TL	10		Never	3
	1501-2000 TL	3	Sectors related to tourism	Hotel, motel and other accommodation facilities	7
	2001 +	1		Restaurant-food service	7
	No response	38		Touristic activities	5

Table 3: Demographic Variables

It is not surprising that 74% of the participants were men in Mardin, which is socio-economically a male-dominant city. When gender and education levels are evaluated together, 17% of the women have received university education. More than half of the residents are Arabs (53%). Regarding the age of participants, it can be seen from the data that the 36-50 age group, which is known as the middle ages, is predominant. The rate of working young population is considerable (27%). In the region, contrabands brought from Syria are important sources of income, yet are not registered. Therefore, those who prefer not to respond are majority. 30% of the participants have an income of 501-1000 TL (250-500 €). 64% have been residing in Mardin for more than 21 years. 59% have their own houses. 58% never or rarely get in touch with the tourists. The rate of workers in tourism-related areas is quite low.

<i>Factor 1: positive economical effect</i>	Factor 1	Factor 2
Tourism's economic advantages are more than the damages.	.644	-.246
For the locals, tourism will bring more money than other commercial activities.	.767	-.148
Tourism will develop and modernize the city.	.795	-.238
Tourism invigorates the city by creating new working areas	.807	-.119
Tourism speeds up back-migration to the city through the job opportunities in urban touristic regions.	.818	-.147
Tourism brings more money to the city than other sectors or industry branches.	.803	-.130
Enhancing and organizing touristic activities in the city make the tourists spend more money.	.752	-.155
<i>Factor 2: negative economical impact</i>		
Tourism firstly led to the association of earning money in people's minds.		.758
Working areas created by tourism are despising and humiliating for the local people.	-.235	.739
Rents increased due to the development of tourism.	-.186	.844
The number of shops to meet the needs of local people has decreased since tourism started to develop.	-.145	.796
Traditional arts and handicrafts are produced at low quality aiming at the tourists.	-.162	.829
As the tourist number increases, their average expenditure decreases.	-.155	.819
Eigenvalue	5.916	2.473
Variance(%)	45.508	19.026
Cumulative variance(%)	45.508	64.534
Reliability alpha(%)	89.6	89.7
Number of items (total=13)	7	6

Table 4: Factor Analysis Results of Perception of Economic Effects of Tourism Development³

³ Extraction method: Principle component analysis
Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

Table 4 is illustrated for the results of the factor analysis. Thirteen perception items for Mardin data were factor analyzed using a principal components method with varimax rotation. The eigenvalues suggested that two-factor solution explained 64,53 % of the overall variance in destination attributes. These factors were found to exceed the minimum required reliability coefficients recommended by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994).

The first factor labeled 'Positive Economical Effect' explained 45.50% of the total variance with a reliability coefficient of 89,6 (see Table 4). This factor contained 7 perception items including creating new working areas and developing the city form a majority, back migration, more money spent by the tourists and more job opportunities.

The second factor named as 'Negative Economical Effects' accounted for 19.02% of the variance with a reliability coefficient of 89.7. This factor incorporated six items of negative impacts of tourism such as rent increases, average expenditure decrease, decrease in local shop number, low quality in traditional arts and handicrafts for gifts, dispising and humiliating working areas.

Discussion and Conclusion

According to the data, Turkey's share in the total tourism income all over the world in 2003 is only 2.5% and 13,2 billion dollars (Bahar and Kozak, 2005). The enhancement of the share of Turkey in international tourism income up to 4% and 80 billion dollars by the year of 2020 will provide economic growth and a prosperous life for the citizens. That Mardin can have a big share of the cake is only possible by a tourism master plan and a rural development plan. During the implementation process of this development plan local people should be encouraged to participate. The efforts of developing tourism which do not take into account the locals are meaningless and any attempt unsupported by the people is doomed to fail; because, an economic planning disregarding the locals' values and expectations cannot succeed.

As can be seen in Table 4, the first seven statements denote the favorable effects of tourism and the last six the unfavorable ones. It can be said that people have great expectations with regards to favorable effects of tourism. The finding that the economic effects of tourism are perceived most favourably by local residents tends to support the view that tourism acts as export industry and contributes to the Mardin's balance of payment. People living in the study area display supporting attitudes towards tourist influx because of their knowledge about the favorable effects of tourism. The fact that Mardin is one of the most underdeveloped cities in Turkey in terms of socio-economic development leads to a perception of tourism as "saver", having the potential of stimulating the economy, and to the salience of only its favorable effects. High percentage of young and working population is an important power source in terms of making use of employment opportunities of tourism.

On the other hand, in rural settlements that are close to city center, it is possible to form a system feeding the sub-branches of tourism (producing ecological foods, handicrafts, getting to know farm life etc.) and spreading the income growth to rural areas, too. Creation of side jobs in rural areas in the field of tourism, which has a rich social aspect, will make a social and economical contribution from developed urban areas to less developed rural areas. In this sense, back-migration to the city with the help of job opportunities created by tourism will save Mardin from being an emigrant city. The opinions of local people and Mardin facts overlap at this point.

Visitors' demands in Mardin are recently at their highest levels. It is seen that the demands for touristic activities are growing year by year. While 400 thousands domestic and foreign tourists visited the region in 2006, during the first 5 months of 2007 the number reached 350 thousands and in the last five years a total of 2, 500, 000 people have visited Mardin (www.mardin.gov.tr).

The tourism potential of the region is expected to grow when the completion of a lot of hotel constructions including Hilton. It is possible to enlarge incomes with the diversification and improving of tourism activities. The awareness level of the local people who want to invest in tourism in relation to the increasing demand is quite high. Service management (such as food and pension management) is one of the promising sectors. Personnel to be employed should be picked up from the local people.

Coppersmith, jewelry, filigree, point lace, painting, printed cloth, spinning, twilling, socks knitting, carpet weaving, saddle and felt works, carpentry, wood engraving, nacre engraving, confectionary, roasted chick pea production, soap making and embroidery are the handicrafts performed for long years. The important point here is that, except from service management, local entrepreneurs in Mardin can also obtain income by taking part in these activities individually, cooperatively or by establishing organizations. Tourism can directly enliven traditional handicrafts and help increase the income. However, local people are not equipped with the necessary information about the long terms problems they may encounter regarding the traditional products. The profit-oriented productions may in the course of time turn into second or third class souvenirs. The investors have hard times with the unsold products. This reduction in quality harms the image of the city and may lead to a decrease in tourist number. Local organizations can set projects by according on quality standards and thus surmount the unfavorable effects. Development of the local capacity by small and medium scale projects should be an issue of high priority so as to success in plans and project implementations in less developed regions as Mardin.

Tourism is regarded as one of the important sustainable income sources that serve to improve life quality and increase the income of the local people in Mardin. In Mardin, tourism season starts in March or April. It comes to a halt with summer heat and revives in September and lasts through winter. However, the purpose of tourism investors in Mardin is to attract tourists in summer as well and expand tourism activities through 12 months. For this reason, hotel managements that construct swimming pools and also aqua parks aim to revive the quite inactive summer season and thus to increase their income. Increasing incomes can be achieved with increasing the number of the visitors. At this point, the increase in the number of visitors will trigger an increase in accommodation facilities in the region and transporting capacity problems in long term.

In tourism types, which particularly call for special attention such as culture tourism in Mardin, satisfaction levels of people should be well determined by focusing on the target masses. Demands and expectations of people should be analyzed at length and touristic products should be presented according to the results of this analysis. Tourist profile in Mardin is to be taken into consideration as much as the local people for a

sustainable tourism approach. Spending tendencies of the visitors during touristic activities may be guiding while re-determining the entrance and accommodation fees. No fee is demanded to visit the cultural heritage sites in Mardin, other than the entrance fee of the museum, which is determined by the Ministry of Culture. Therefore, fee policy must be established by taking into account visitors' profiles and their paying tendencies in the region, because income losses occur. Some of the income may be spent for the preservation of cultural heritage values in this region.

With all these in mind, tourism can be said to be the focus of regional development in terms of mobilizing the cultural heritage, encouraging entrepreneurship, increasing the income and employment rate of the region and enhancing life quality. Through a socially, economically and physically effective planning and a detailed analysis of local priorities, tourism will be a sector useful in regional development and also in the elimination of regional imbalances. As for sustainability, it can be achieved only if all those involved in this issue (local people, tourists and administrators) are in constant communication with each other and are eager to sustain the role of the city in the future.

Expectations on the modernization of the city can only be satisfied by a strong tourism infrastructure. These expectations can only be reinforced by the activities in city center and accommodation opportunities. The lack of a planned infrastructure is provided in a region with touristic development results in both the destruction of environmental values and also dissatisfaction of the tourists. Mardin has not completed its tourism infrastructure yet. Infrastructure opportunities of local administrations are so limited. Policies on national and local levels should be developed and implemented immediately.

For the communities which adopted tourism as one of the development alternatives, they would put more effort in developing the tourism industry. The relationship between economy and tourism development underpin the issues that shape agendas, drive interests and, ultimately, influence decision-making processes. This paper has sought to investigate and critically discuss relationships between economical effects of tourism and tourism development in the case of Mardin, Turkey.

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