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Last Chance Tourism Motivation of Visitors in Hasankeyf

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Last Chance Tourism in Hasankeyf

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Abstract

It is not a new phenomenon that the destinations and places to visit before disappearing or vanishing in the leisure and tourism literature (Lemelin, Stewart, & Dawson, 2012: 3). But as a new travel trend “last chance tourism” brings desire for tourist to witness disappearing flora, fauna, landscapes and seascapes (Ahmad et al., 2014: 343). In some studies, this travel trend has been reported various terms as endangered destination tourism (Ruiz, 2008), doom tourism (Salkin, 2007; Tsiokos, 2007), doomsday tourism (Shipman, 2007) and last-chance tourism (Lemelin & Johnston, 2008; Smith, 2008; Dawson et al., 2010; Dawson, Stewart, & Scott, 2010;

Lemelin et al., 2010; Dawson et al., 2011). In this study, the use of the “last chance tourism” term was preferred because it was thought to better explain the related to specific travel motivation.

The last chance tourism (LCT) is defined as a niche tourism market where tourists explicitly seek vanishing landscapes or seascapes, and/or disappearing natural and/or social heritage (Lemelin et al., 2010: 478). Although LCT has been generally linked to the melting of polar glaciers and the disappearance of species living there depending on the climate change in the world (Dawson et al., 2010; Lemelin et al., 2010; Becken, Hay & Espiner, 2011; Jones & Phillips, 2011), the destruction of cultural heritage sites is also considered in this context (Lemelin et al., 2010; Dawson et al., 2011; Johnston, Viken, & Dawson, 2011; Lemelin, & Baikie, 2011). In fact, it can be said that the history of travels to the cultural heritage sites for this purpose is older than the polar glaciers. However, due to the increasing prevalence of environmental changes caused by climate change, LCT is mostly associated with polar areas (Dawson et al., 2011: 254). Therefore, the concept of LCT has started to be used as a concept in the tourism literature with the increase of the tourism activities in the Polar Regions (Dawson et al., 2010; Eijgelaar, Thaper, & Peeters, 2010).

Hasankeyf, which is cradle of various civilizations as Assyrian and/or Urartian, Roman, Byzantine, Arab, Artukid, Ayyubid, Akkoyunlu, and Ottoman, is an impressive medieval town located in Mesopotamia (between the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers) region in Turkey (Sener, 2004: 5; Topal, & Kaya, 2016: 130). The town was constructed on both banks of the Tigris River and is now within the borders of the province of Batman in southeast of Turkey (Fındık, Akyol, & Sarı, 2014: 262; Topal, & Kaya, 2016: 130). The town is on the Silk Road and remains a castle, mosques, tomb, 12th century ruined bridge and many man-made caves (Sener, 2004: 5; Ronayne, 2006: 223). With a unique cultural heritage of Hasankeyf will be flooded soon by the reservoir Ilisu Dam, which has been building within the Southeastern Anatolia Project, is the biggest regional development project in Turkey (Ronayne, 2006: 224).

Dam and HEPPs are responsible for meeting the water and energy needs and also cause adverse environmental impacts on the area. For this reason, dams and HEPPs play an important role in the social and environmental issues discussed in recent years. (Akkaya, et al. 2009: 2). Totally 108 settlements in the provinces of Mardin, Diyarbakir, Batman, Siirt and Sirnak provinces will be affected by Ilisu Dam and HEPP Project. At the same time, there are a large number of archaeological sites in the location of the project, including Hasankeyf (Başkaya, & Türk, 2015: 352-353). Hasankeyf, once a trading centre on the silk route and continuously inhabited for the last 10,000 years, will be flooded (Eberlein et al., 2010: 291) after the complete of construction of the Ilisu Dam. For this reason, Hasankeyf is considered as an endangered site (Topal, & Kaya, 2016: 130) and can be evaluated within the scope of last chance tourism.

Due to the lack of accommodation establishments and touristic products for tourists to stay overnight in Hasankeyf, tourists who come to the region through cultural tours are staying overnight in accommodation establishments in Mardin or Diyarbakir. At the same time Hasankeyf Ruins, which is the only place open to the ticket entrance in Hasankeyf, is closed due to renovations (www.muze.gov.tr). For this reason, it cannot be determined whether there has been an increase in the number of visitors to Hasankeyf after the dam threat. On the other hand, the recent security problems in Turkey and especially in the South Eastern Anatolia Region where Hasankeyf is located may have reduced the number of visitors (Çoban, Dilek, Harman, 2017: 453). The fact that Hasankeyf is not sufficiently marketed within the scope of the last chance tourism is one of the main problems. With this study, we will possibly contribute promotion of Hasankeyf within the scope of last chance tourism.

In this study, it was investigated whether the last chance tourism is effective in visiting to Hasankeyf on visitors. For this purpose, an exploratory study has been carried out using the interview method in the study. The data were gathered by the researchers, face to face in Hasankeyf between September 11, 2017- February 5, 2018 through semi-structured interview form. There were 8 open-ended questions in the interview form, and different questions were also asked to the visitors according to the progress of the interview. The average duration of the interviews is 15 minutes; the shortest interview was 3 minutes and the longest interview was 23 minutes. Interviews were recorded with voice recorder by obtaining permission from the participants and all interviews were resolved afterwards. The data of the study is still being analyzed.

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Destination Development, Management and Marketing: Strategies for “Ski Silk Road”

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Destination Development, Management and Marketing: Strategies for “Ski Silk Road”

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Abstract

A transnational tourism development among the historic Silk Road countries are fostered by various international organizations including UNWTO and Shanghai Cooperation in order to utilize tourism potential in the region through international cooperation. The main objective of this study is to explore strategies for creating winter tourism corridor along the Silk Road starting from the North East part of Turkey under the theme “Ski Silk Road (SSR)”. Turkey, being consistently ranked as one the top destinations along the Silk Road, is also the bridge between Europe and the Belt. Turkey has also been investing heavily to diversify its tourism offer from sun-lust to other alternatives such as winter tourism. As an initial research to launch an integrated transboundary Winter tourism corridor along the Silk Road, the study examines alternative strategies for the SSR that were proven successful in other established winter tourism destinations.

Because of the study's exploratory nature, a two-step qualitative approach has been pursued. Initially 21 winter tourism experts from 16 benchmark destinations in France, Austria, Italy, Bulgaria and Turkey have been identified and interviewed for best practices in destination development. Then, suggested strategies were validated by three different meetings with 61 stakeholders from the three initial provinces of the SSR (Erzurum, Erzincan and Kars), located in Turkey. Based on analysis of qualitative data, the authors reached a consensus on a list of 20 destination strategies suitable for SSR. These strategies were further grouped under three main categories: development, management, and marketing.

Hence, the study offers suggestions on creating an initial winter tourism corridor located at the North Western part of the Silk Road. As the link to most tourist generating countries this region offers an immense potential to be expanded to include other potential winter tourism destinations along the Silk Road starting from Turkey, Georgia, Iran and Azerbaijan. Such joint transnational winter tourism branding has proven successful in other destinations such as Alps covering France, Switzerland, Austria, Italy and Slovenia. Yet the future of these established winter destinations is controversial because of the climate change and consequently winter tourism