The Turkish Tourism Policy and the Considerable Difficulties Facing the Travel Sector

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The National Markets

The national markets for Turkish tourism mainly include European countries. In recent years, the tourist numbers from the primary markets have been reducing due to the various political unrests witnessed in the country, as well as the cases of insecurity due to terrorist attacks. Turkey's primary national tourist markets in their respective order include Russia, Germany, Iran, Georgia, Bulgaria, the United Kingdom, Ukraine, Iraq, Netherlands, and Azerbaijan. The high number of tourists from such countries has made Turkey a top tourism destination, ranked 6th globally.

Type of Tourism and the Areas Visited

Turkey is attractive to tourists because of the many facilities that it offers them. Even with the high number of visitors, many destinations work well to accommodate all the visitors. However, tourism is not evenly distributed throughout the country. Therefore, specific areas are set aside by the government and private sector to accommodate the tourists. Istanbul is one of the major tourist attractions destinations. Istanbul is the largest city in Turkey and thus presents a couple of attractive sites for visiting individuals (Dogru 53). In this case, the town provides accommodation for vacationers and professional visitors who probably visit the country for training and business. Istanbul presents historical sites such as the blue mosque, Basilica Sisterm, Galata Tower, Grand Bazaar, and Spice Bazaar. Istanbul also has the largest shopping mall in Europe and the Metrocity and Cevahir malls. Also, Istanbul accommodates other facilities such as museums and cultural and sporting events. Therefore, visitors go to Istanbul for various reasons. First, tourists visit Istanbul to watch the various attraction sites. Also, they visit the places where they shop in the stated malls due to their size, fame, and variety of available products. Other tourists visit Istanbul to enjoy the sporting and cultural activities presented. Each tourist comes to Turkey with a different motive, depending on what he or she finds attractive.

Also, the country presents highly attractive beaches. The beaches are located on the southwestern and southeastern coasts of Turkey. The beaches are referred to as the Turkish Riviera. Towns such as

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Bodrum and Marmaris offer resort facilities along the shores, thus providing comfort for a more extended stay. The Turkish beaches were selected in 2015 as the second most attractive, giving the country a mileage in tourism (Hatipoglu 317). As stated earlier, tourism is not distributed all over the country. Other parts experience low tourism levels but significantly contribute to the national income. Such places include sites of Ephesus, the House of the Virgin Mary, the Church of Antioch, and Didyma. Many of the isolated attraction locations only offer viewing comforts and fewer sporting activities. The main reason for the low levels of tourism in some of the stated areas is the rising armed attacks from terrorists.

Challenges Affecting the Tourism Industry in Turkey

Various problems have affected the country's tourism level over the past few years. For instance, the number of tourists dropped from 41 million in 2014 to 26 million in 2016. However, strategies put in place by the government have revived the industry significantly. One of the significant challenges is the conflict with the Kurdish population. The population argues that the tourists are taking their place and infringing on their privacy. For this reason, they have objected to the move to create more tourist destinations in their locality. There are persisting border issues affecting the country and leading it into conflicts. The border conflicts have also led to a decline in tourism levels. Tourism has declined and remained unstable over the past few years (Muangasame 503). This is a negative aspect in that it demoralizes potential visitors as they fear for their safety. Marketing states that a stable flow of customers attracts even more of them, while an unstable level of customers chases others away due to uncertainty.

Seasonality is also a major challenge to the tourism sector in Turkey. Various factors affect the seasonality of the tourism industry. Some factors include changes in weather conditions, such as fluctuation from summer to winter, in which extreme conditions chase away visitors. These are factors that are beyond the control of the government and thus have to be tolerated. Besides, the holiday seasons affect the seasonality as many visitors get time during the holidays. This affects the income of the sector.

Overreliance on low-yield packages is another challenge for the tourism sector. In many cases, the packages accommodate only small activities and visits. This chases away tourists who love having a more significant form of a package for convenience.

Another bigger challenge is the high level of competition from neighbouring countries. Due to the high number of tourists visiting Turkey, the neighbouring nations identified this as an opportunity (Akay 68). As such, Turkey loses more and more clients to neighbouring countries and others in Europe that they consider more attractive and safer.

Private Sector

The private sector is significant in developing Turkey's tourism sector. The main private stakeholders include the major hotels, resorts, airports, shopping malls, and tourism agencies. Such stakeholders work hand in hand with the government to offer a comfortable stay for the tourists. Each of the stakeholders contributes to the tourism policy development. For instance, the airports' authority advises the government on the possible high seasons for travel, thus enhancing better planning (Zaman 283). Also, the tourism agencies offer advice on the best areas that are likely to be visited and thus have the government invest more in the infrastructure in such areas. The public and the private sectors interact in the sharing of ideologies on the areas to prioritize regarding development due to the limited resources.

The tourism sector spends about $10 billion to put up the requirements. However, the figure will change as more is directed toward improving the industry. The value will likely reach $ 15 billion within the next few years. The policy's main objectives include restating the sector to its global positioning a few years ago. Also, the policy targets stabilizing the peace around the country to ensure the citizens and tourists are safe.

Recommendation

The main problem affecting the tourism sector in Turkey is insecurity. In recent years, domestic violence, as well as border conflict with Syria, has intensified the threat of tourism. However, The government has remained positive about its ability to bring tourism back to booming levels. It is not possible to do this with all the pending threats. As a recommendation, the government needs to invest more in security rather than better infrastructure. Tourists are more concerned with their safety than the infrastructure. Improving the level of security would redeem Turkey's image in the global market and thus boost the tourism sector. The recovery process lies in the ability to tackle the identified challenges amicably.

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