

A Study For the Evaluation of Alternative Tourism Opportunities in Fethiye Destination

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Abstract

This study has importance in terms of drawing attention to the alternative tourism opportunities of Fethiye destination for tourism; giving idea to public institutions and organizations and tourism operators and entrepreneurs for using Fethiye destination's alternative, existing and potential tourism opportunities more effectively; emphasizing the importance of this potential's contribution to the development of tourism activities in the region; and providing suggestions for the development of alternative tourism opportunities. In this context, existing and potential tourism facilities of Fethiye district were determined by using research methods such as interview, observation and document analysis. Within this scope, information on the current and alternative tourism of the region was gained by mutual interview techniques to be done with the public and private sector institutions, organizations and associations which are effective in decision-making and guiding the organization and implementation of tourism activities, and this data was analyzed by being evaluated scientifically. Alternative tourism potential of Fethiye destination was determined by making use of the data gained as a result of these analyses, and suggestions were offered to ensure a more effective use and involvement of the current alternative tourism potential of the region in tourism activities.

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INTRODUCTION

Along with an increase in the demand of today’s tourists for alternative tourism products apart from the sea-sand-sun trio, the increase of the touristic product diversity by the tourist destinations has now become a necessity. In this study, the concept of alternative tourism was identified by using the national and international literature. Then, methods that would allow collecting and analyzing information thoroughly were researched and the case study method was chosen as the most appropriate method. Fethiye was selected as the research area to apply the chosen method and as a subject of alternative tourism, and the general characteristics of the area were given.

Empirical evidence to investigate the current touristic product diversity and alternative tourism potential of Fethiye destination was gained through interviews with local tourism agency and hotel managers, academics, professional societies and associations, local authorities, local and foreign tourists and local people. In addition to the interviews, statistical data on Fethiye destination, written reports on the region and brochures were evaluated. After analyzing the data obtained, suggestions have been made for the establishment of alternative touristic products in Fethiye destination.

THE CONCEPT OF ALTERNATIVE TOURISM

Emerging technologies at the global level, the rising level of education and increasing welfare level of the current and potential tourist consumers lead people who have decided to take a touristic traveling to demand different expectations. In the world’s continuously and dynamically developing tourism activities, expectations and demands of touristic consumers differentiate and changes in this unstable time zone. Today's tourists behave more consciously, more sensitive to the quality, care for environmental quality and tourist safety, want to commune with nature, are in the habit of travelling frequently and go after different searching. (Ege & Demir, 2002; Fennell, 2002:12). Changes in the trends of touristic consumers towards their travel destinations in global tourism force touristic destinations to develop new and alternative tourist products in order to meet these changes. In this context, alternative tourism is defined as a tourism form which is in harmony with nature, social values and the values of local people, allows positive relationship of both visitors and local people, and enables them to share their experiences (Wearing & Neil, 2009:3; Günlü & Sahin, 2007:151). According to another definition of alternative tourism; it is a tourism form that was created to reduce the negative effects of traditional, classic mass tourism and city tourism, and is composed of a combination of new touristic products (Hacıoglu & Avcıkurt, 2008:8; Singh, 2004:4). In summary, alternative tourism can be defined as a tourism diversification activity which is considered to be created as an alternative to the available tourism types in a tourism destination.

Alternative tourism is intended to create new types of tourism in the region by evaluating the existing tourism supply potential. Alternative tourism concept refers to

tourism the presentation of a different product other than mass tourism (Wearing, 2001:6). This product represents a slowly developing tourism activity, consideration of the optimum profitability, touristic development in long-term programs, resistance to change, respect for environmental values and integration with the environment (Kulu, 1994:43; Stronza, 2001:276; Goeldner & Ritchie, 2003:12; Kılıçaslan et al., 2011).

Main alternative forms of tourism are classified in Table 1 as main topics by taking literature studies and alternative tourism type classifications of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism into the account (Kulu, 1994:80; T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2012).

Table 1. Alternative Tourism Types

1. Recreational Alternative Tourism	2. Sportive Alternative Tourism	3. Cultural Tourism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Astronomy tourism • Steam train tourism • Marine aquariums and tourism • Bird watching tourism • Speleological tourism • Landscape tourism • Eco tourism • Auto-caravan tourism • Rural tourism • Tableland tourism • Camping and tourism • National Parks • Botanical tourism • Photo safari tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horse riding and tourism • Cycling sport and tourism • Mountain climbing sports and tourism • Golf tourism • Skiing and winter sports tourism • Underwater sports and tourism • Water sports and tourism • Trekking • Hang gliding and tourism • Hunting tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Silk road • Ancient cities and historical places • Shooting areas
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Health Tourism 5. Yacht Tourism 6. Faith Tourism 7. Congress Tourism 8. Cruise Tourism 9. Youth Tourism

Search: Kulu, 1994:80; T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2012

In academic literature alternative tourism types can be classified under the main topics in the abovementioned chart.

FETHIYE AS A RESEARCH AREA

In this study, Fethiye, a district of Muğla Province, which has been an important settlement since ancient times, was chosen as the research area (Figure 1). Fethiye district which attracts attention due its natural beauty and wealth as well as its historical and touristic importance, is located at southwest of Anatolia and between 37o 00' north, 36° 15' south, 28o 50' west, 29o 50' east longitude lines. It is a typical coastal city in the Mediterranean region which is separating the Aegean region and the Mediterranean region.

Fethiye district has 2.686,411 km2 land area and the largest surface area including Muğla center. Besides, the population of Fethiye at the center is 77 237 according to 2010 data and is bigger than center of Muğla and other districts in terms of population density.

During the third geological time intense tectonic movements occurred around Fethiye, therefore risings and led to the formation of many small coves and forelands as well as the high mountains. As a result of subsidence, valleys

caved by rushing streams were filled by sea water and transformed into bays and gulfs which created a wonder of nature around Fethiye.

In the north of Fethiye district, western ends of the Middle and West Taurus Mountains rise parallel to the sea like a wall, and the district has a mountainous characteristics. In the southeast of Fethiye, Babadağ which is a mountain that has the closest (5 km) overlooking summit to the sea in the world, rises near Ölüdeniz, and is the highest western extension of the mountain run perpendicular to the sea until the beach of Patara (Kumluova). Akdag chain is located in the northeast with its 3050 m height, Boncuk mountains is in the north with 2700 m height and Çal mountains is located in the West with 2200 m height; all these mountains range in east-west direction.

There are beautiful 180 bays-gulfs most of which run perpendicular to the sea within the borders of the district. Coastal length of the district is 167 km and there are 18 islands located at the coastal line which are Şövalye, Kızılada, Katrancı, Tersane, Domuz, Yassıca, Gemile, Ayanikola ve Karacaören islands. The district has the characteristics of the Mediterranean climate; summers are hot and dry, and winters are mild and rainy. 72% of land area of the district is covered by forest and maquis (Fethiye Kaymakamlığı, 2012; FTSO, 2010: 13-14).

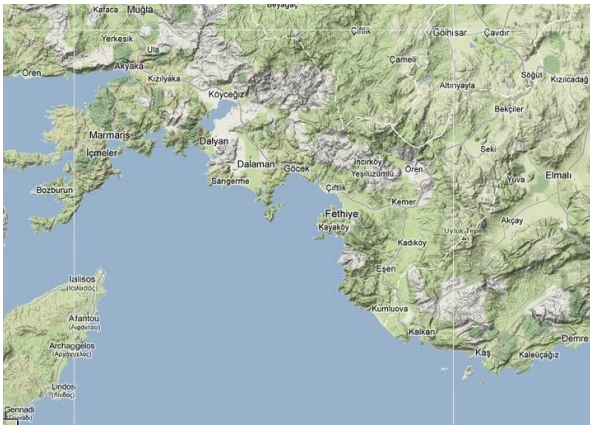


Figure 1. Research area

METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

As a research method case study is chosen. This method is preferred as it allows collecting and analyzing wide information about the topic, region, enterprise or event, and in order to develop new theories or reinterpret the present ones (Yin, 1994). Fethiye destination was chosen as the research area for this study by taking into account the natural and cultural structure of it. Interviews, observations, and document analysis techniques were used to collect empirical data. The use of multiple data collection techniques was considered to lead to more reliable and comprehensive research findings (Rabson, 1993; Veal, 1992). Also, Yüksel et.al. (1999), Okumuş & Topaloğlu (2004), Özer & Karakuş (2012) used the interview technique in a similar study, and recommended this data collection technique to be used in similar studies.

Empirical data of the study were collected between November 2011 and February 2012. The interviews were made with the local tourism agencies and hotel managers, academicians, professional societies and associations, local authorities, local and foreign tourists and local people. These interviews were conducted as mutual dialogs for products within the scope of alternative tourism. Information relating to the interviews with the organizations, institutions, tourists and local people is given at Table 2. The interviews last about half an hour or an hour. The researchers took note of data in detail during the interviews. The data collected through the interviews were written down exactly, and general themes were obtained by comparing the responses for each question (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Participant-observation data collection techniques were used in order to obtain more reliable data and a better analysis of the subject. In addition, statistical data on Fethiye destination, local reports and brochures were evaluated.

Finally, the findings obtained by different data collection techniques were analyzed. First of all, the findings gained by with interviews and observations in accordance with the advice of Yin (1994) and Miles & Huberman (1994) were written down. Also a summary form describing the content of each document studied was prepared. Then the findings were classified according to the research of alternative tourist products in Fethiye destination. Similar and different views were included when the research findings were presented. Miles & Huberman (1994) stated that empirical findings obtained by interview, observation and document analysis data collection techniques consist of explanatory, depictive, and descriptive verbal statements rather than numerical and statistical analysis.

Table 2. Institutions and organizations interviewed

- Çalış Tourism and Promotion Association
- FTSO No 1 Mining and Manufacturing Industry Professional Committee
- Fethiye Tourist Hoteliers Association (FETOB)
- Municipality of Fethiye
- Fethiye Tourism, Promotion, Training, Culture and Environment Foundation (FETAV)
- District Governorate of Fethiye
- Muğla University
- Turkish Aeronautical Association, Young Wings Fethiye Branch
- Domestic and Foreign Tourist
- Local People

Fethiye is an extremely convenient destination with its different geographical structure and climatic characteristics, different and exceptional landscape values, traditional way of life for which rural and cultural elements are important, underwater diving activities, horse trekking, trekking, paragliding, flora/fauna study, jeep safari, rafting, etc., water sports and areas available for nature sports.

Outstanding statements from the focus group discussions made with local tourism agencies and hotel managers, academics, professional societies and associations, local

authorities, local and foreign tourists and local people in Fethiye destination for alternative tourism and tourism products:

- Making Kayaköy a city of culture,
- Construction of the marina,
- Ensuring the entrance to cruises,
- Organizing international swimming competitions,
- The creation of Turkish Village representing Yoruk culture,
- Traditional Yoruk festival organization,
- Revitalization of the Lycian way,
- Revitalization of Eren Mountain ski resort,
- Extending organizations such as air games due to so many tourists visit for paragliding,
- Putting Amphitheater into service,
- Construction and implementation of Babadag telpher,
- Competition of nature-based competitions watched on the TV,
- Opening new walking paths,
- Construction of a sea aquarium,
- Building secure cycling roads in the town center and natural areas,
- Enhancing and organizing the water-based activities,
- Making organizations for cooking Turkish foods,
- Easy accessible tourist map for common use,
- Organizing nature and adventure sports in addition to sea, sand and sun trio.

In addition, when the studies on Fethiye destination is examined, it is seen that (FTSO, 2011) has conducted a survey with German, British, French, Dutch, American and Scandinavian tourists which come to Fethiye destination relating to the touristic products they demand and the participate in. The activities that German tourists participate in this study are listed respectively as scuba diving, trekking, rafting, gastro tourism, Turkish nights, fishing, boat tours, sea sports, shopping, jeep safari, canyoning, visiting museums and historical ruins. The activities that British tourists participate in this study are listed as boat tours, visiting museums and historic ruins, sea sports, jeep safari, Turkish night, shopping, scuba diving, rafting, gastro tourism, canyoning, fishing, trekking. The activities that French tourists participate in this study are listed as boat tours, visiting museums and historic ruins, shopping, sea sports, Turkish nights, jeep safari, scuba diving, canyoning, rafting. The activities that Dutch tourists participate are listed as boat tours, museums and historic ruins to visit, jeep safari, scuba diving, sea sports, rafting, trekking, Turkish nights, shopping, canyoning. The activities that American

tourists participate are listed as visiting museums and historical ruins, shopping, boat tours, Turkish night, gastro tourism, jeep safari, trekking, scuba diving, canyoning, sea sports. The activities that Scandinavian tourists participate are listed as boat tours, shopping, jeep safari, Turkish night, scuba diving, visiting museums and historical ruins, sea, sports, rafting, fishing, gastro tourism.

Innovative touristic products which are demand by the tourists participated in the survey in Fethiye destination are;

- Innovative product demands of German tourists have been identified as boat trip with different activities, traces of Turkish culture, shopping venues that sell traditional products in the city centers, hiking trails, jeep safari, paragliding and baths.

- Innovative product demands of British tourists have been identified as flight in winter terms, rafting, Turkish bath and massage, scuba diving, water sports, mountain hiking and canyoning.

- Innovative product demands of French tourists have been identified as hiking trail, water sports, golf, cultural activities, traditional shopping tours, and dance competitions.

- Innovative product demands of Dutch tourists have been identified as bicycle path, youth hostels, more frequent and easy flights, hiking paths for the elderly, traditional Turkish organizations.

- Innovative product demands of American tourists have been identified as cultural activities, sightseeing tours, shopping tours, concerts and living a typical Turk's daily life.

- Innovative product demands of Scandinavian tourists have been identified as original Turkish bath, massage, activities related to the sea except for swimming, children's activities, open-air disco, different Turkish dishes at the hotel, canyoning, mountain climbing, seeing wild animals in the mountains, rafting, different activities on the mountains in a warm climate.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was carried out to evaluate the alternative tourism possibilities and tourism products in Fethiye destination. Some basic conclusions can be drawn out of the findings and the discussion of these findings. First of all, as a result of interviews, the participants demand recreational and sports-oriented alternative tourism in Fethiye destination and Kayaköy's being turned into a culture city.

As it is stated in the FTSO (2011) report, the activities in which the tourists who visit Fethiye destination participate show some obvious differences depending on the nationalities of the tourists. In this context, for German tourist scuba diving and Turkish night; for British tourist boat tours, visiting museums and ruins and sea sports; for French tourist boat tours, visiting museums and ruins and shopping; for Dutch tourist visiting museums and ruins and boat tours; for American tourist especially visiting museums and ruins and shopping; for Scandinavian tourist boat tours and shopping become prominent.

The second conclusion is that as specified by FTSO (2011) when the innovative product demands of the tourist who visit Fethiye destination are classified, for German tourists boat tours including different activities, for American tourists cultural activities, for French tourists trekking paths, for Dutch tourists cycle paths, for Scandinavian tourists traditional Turkish bath become prominent.

Comprehensive and long term plans and programs should be made for every new innovative touristic product in Fethiye destination. Some suggestions for Fethiye destination is presented below:

- Kayakoy is the only settlement in the region describing the recent history. As Kayaköy is still standing, it can be restored without the need of excavation and so on. Besides the restoration of the church in Kayaköy and its opening to worship during the certain times of the year symbolically would be an important innovation for the region.

- Along with the construction of the Marina and the development of cruise tourism in Fethiye destination, touristic activities also in the city center will improve as well. In addition, due to the cruise tourism, natural and cultural touristic supply sources of Fethiye may become more active and participation of the local population can be achieved.

- A traditional and international Yoruk festival may be organized at the certain times of the year, especially at the beginning and the end of the tourism season. It is important that the festival's being organized as a reflection the natural life and not to become ordinary. In addition, owing to the organization of the festival cultural values will survive for years by passing on to the new generations.

- Organizations such as cooking Turkish meals can be done in the villages and at natural habitat. In this way, both tourist attraction and participation will increase and the villagers in the destination will profit economically.

- Without damaging the natural beauty of the nature of Fethiye and the environment, bicycle paths in suitable routes and mapping can be done.

- The routes and camping areas for daily hiking, accommodated trekking should be established. Mapping for these routes and camping areas should be created. In the field, benchmarks and guidance for the camping areas on the route should be located from beginning to end of the route, these benchmarks and guidance should be marked on the map. Additionally, observation terraces overlooking the sea can be built without damaging the natural habitat, for example with nature compatible materials, where the sea and the nature come together.

As a result, while a tourism product is developed any activity that will prevent the continuity of the natural structure of the region should be avoided because the attractive natural structure of the region. Therefore, spatial planning should be done when creating a spatial area for a new touristic product. During this planning, the protected

status of the region should be kept in mind and the sustainable environment concept's being in applicable level should not be ignored. Finally, sustainability of the regional tourism and the environment should be ensured by taking the tourism potential and bearing capacity of the region into account. As specified by Yücel (2005), ensuring the sustainability of the environment will makes a clean, quiet and a rich part of nature as of people for recreation and entertainment. Fethiye destination can become a primary choice in terms of nature-oriented alternative tourism activities by sustainable environmental. Planning and implementation of the tourism activities existing and planning to be constructed in Fethiye destination in accordance with the characteristic of the region will allow a healthy touristic life development in the region.

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