

## **A Study into Safety Perceptions of Tourist Visiting İstanbul**

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### **Introduction**

Security is the most essential issue among the internal and external factors to form tourism mobility. It's too hard to mention about security in an unsafe and uncertain situation. Tourism means moving from a familiar environment to an unfamiliar one. Consequently, security factor having of great importance is natural to realize tourism mobility.

Tourists decide where and how to spend their holidays in a safe place before deciding to set off, so that they make their holidays more determined. Security problem results either from the lived experience or from the image of the ones who experienced it and comparatively plays an important part to determine the correct holiday place. In other words, the image for maintaining and protecting the public order influences the tourists' choice as a touristic attraction to go on a holiday

Tourism is the first sector to be taken into consideration among health, security, relaxation, hygiene etc. sectors. It's even impossible to consider the terms war and tourism or terror and tourism together because tourism is a phenomenon that is related to having a rest, entertaining, seeing different people, different cultures, natural beauties and historical places. The existence of war and terror, not having security not only prevents tourism but it also causes hostility, terror and prejudice among people

How tourists perceive the country should be determined initially in order to attract them. Since the image in tourists' mind determines the choice of their holiday place, it is important to realize what this image is. If tourists have negative aspects about a country then image refreshing and informing activities should be enforced by the authorities.

### **Method**

The search consists of two sections that are both theoretical and practical. Initially literature scanning has been done and theoretical frame has been formed by examining the various studies, articles and books done on this subject which are mentioned in the bibliography. In the second phase of the research, the survey has been conducted which was prepared in accordance with the purpose of the research and the field research of the study has been realized.

In the research, through the relationship between the tourism and security how the tourists perceive İstanbul in terms of security has been inspected. With this aim, a related survey has been conducted on 207 randomly selected tourists who visit İstanbul.

By installing the obtained data to the computer, a database has been formed to make analysis. After installing the database to the computer, the analysis process has been performed. All statistical process has been done through Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) package program. The indications as a result of the analysis have been interpreted.

### **Results**

It is worth noting that a vast majority of the tourists have bachelor and/or masters degrees. This shows that the intellect level of the tourists visiting İstanbul for cultural tourism is high. Considering nationalities, Europeans form the biggest group within foreign tourist with a share of 44.5%. Yearly statistics indicate that Europeans are the biggest group of foreign tourists visiting Turkey. Airway is the means of transport most preferred by the tourists surveyed, and the most frequent choice to the question of the duration of the visits is 0-7 days with 52.7%.

The first question to determine the perception of the tourists of safety in İstanbul was whether the tourists find İstanbul safe for pedestrians. which 55.5% of the answers was negative. The ratio of those who find İstanbul somewhat safe for pedestrians is 29.0%.

The question about the safety of İstanbul regarding vehicular traffic was answered safe by 33.8%, somewhat safe by 40.6%, and unsafe by 25.6%.

The tourists were asked whether they find mass transport vehicles safe, and 52.6% responded that they were not.

The ratio of the tourists that indicated that they find the hotel that they stayed in İstanbul safe is 70.5%.

The tourists were asked whether they find the entertainment venues safe. 47.8% of the tourists answered unsafe, while 39.6% answered somewhat safe.

Another question was whether the tourists find İstanbul safe regarding terrorism risk. 45.0% of the tourists answered unsafe, while 39.1% answered somewhat safe.

46.4% of the tourists declared that they found İstanbul unsafe regarding health risks, as opposed to 44.9% who said that İstanbul was somewhat safe in that aspect.

To the question of safety of İstanbul considering earthquake risk, 61.4% indicated that they found İstanbul somewhat safe.

### **Conclusion**

- Determining how İstanbul is perceived in terms of security by the tourists and obtaining information to guide security politics and education is aimed through this research. When the results are examined, it can be seen that İstanbul has a negative image in some aspects. Secure destination image is also an important factor used in marketing politics.
- The relationship between tourism and security has been inspected in the research. How the tourists perceive İstanbul and Turkey as a whole has been put forward.

When these results are obtained, the dissemination of the education for tourism security must be done in order to take the necessary precautions and to form politics.

- Hotels should provide in-service training to their employees on hygiene, food safety, customer relations and tourism safety.
- Constant surveillance should be done using cameras, whose number should be increased in areas where tourism is intensive, resulting in the ability to act quickly in any event.
- Information desks that will solve any safety problems of tourists and provide them with the information necessary should be disseminated.
- States should set rules and build policies regarding consumer rights and tourist health.
- The police and gendarme forces should be trained for crimes against tourists.
- Tourism, with the increase in the public welfare, has become one of the most profitable sectors. Educating the native public with this concept will contribute to the relations between the natives and the tourists.
- The completion of legal actions and paperwork quickly and meeting the standards of European Union will produce in an image of a safe country in the minds of the tourists.
- Tourist-sending and tourist-hosting countries should collaborate in safety issues.
- Clear and comprehensible printed and visual materials should be prepared to inform tourists regarding risky and dangerous areas.
- Studies in tourists' languages should be conducted to resolve communications issues of tourists, taking their cultures into account. For instance, executives should facilitate communications in various languages. These facilities may include employing tourism police that speak foreign languages and are informed about different cultures, mobile information personnel, information desks and electronic information machines that can answer to several languages.
- Another tool of safer communications with tourists is the international symbols and signs. These symbols, which have utmost importance to tourist safety, should be used in all institutions wherever needed. For example, symbols like exit, fire exit, telephone and arrows that give directions will help tourists to understand the information they need easier.
- The discrepancy between the fares for natives and tourists should be abolished.
- Public institutions, schools and especially universities, establishments in tourism sector, the media, private education institutions and nongovernmental organizations should take the main tasks and responsibilities in educating the native public and groups that are in relation with the tourism sector in health and safety.
- The general public has insufficient information regarding health and safety in tourism. This situation shows itself in the interactions between the natives and tourists. The relation between the natives and tourists should be enhanced by prevailing the awareness of tourism.