

Associate Professor Career Title in Tourism Academia: Blocked Career Path and Its Effects

Bilgehan GÜLCAN

Kırgızistan Türkiye Manas University

bilgehan70@gmail.com

Some of the data have supported the idea that tourism as a distinct discipline in large quantities of academical milieus. Most important evidence among them are number of scientific periodicals, congresses and conventions, textbooks, higher educational schools and research institutes in tourism field and the doctoral programmes in many countries. On the other hand it has been seen that there is no consensus about the disciplinar status of the tourism in the academical milieus. Minority of tourism academicians have not also approved tourism as a distinct discipline (Gülcan, 2009b).

Increments of academical studies on tourism are one of the most important factors of the evolution of tourism as a distinct discipline. This can help to synthesize the fragmented theoretical structure, to ensure the therminological unity and to emerge the more powerfull theories in tourism. Additionally Turkey Higher Education Committee (YÖK) has also strived to increase the academical knowledge productions. For this reason YÖK has promoted the Tourism Faculties that includes different four year tourism programs and focus on academical knowledge production, apart from existing Highschool that includes four year programs and focus on practical competencies. YÖK has promoted seven Tourism Faculties since 2009. Furthermore YÖK has also encouraged to open the new tourism doctoral degree programs.

Under all this circumstances, research independence and limitations of motivations tourism academicians who is in tourism academical carreer path and responsible for tourism research primarily have become the main issue.

Tourism has already become an academic career field for the lots of researchers in Turkey as well as in other countries in the World. Nevertheless, as an exception, career path can't come to the end in the Turkey's academical system. In 2000 in the tourism field, Associate Professor academic title was abrogated. Thus, tragically, in tourism there is no Associate Professor academic title in the academic career path although there is doctorate degree which is the highest academic degree. In other words academic career path in tourism has been closed because of Associate Professor academic career title's inaccessibility. This may be diversion of Turkish tourism academicians' focus from their own fields and it may be limit of their research

independence in a way. It may be resulted that the potential contributions of the Turkish tourism academicians to disciplinar evolution of tourism are limited.

Associate Professor career title affects the academicians both economically, managerially and as well as socio-culturally in Turkey according to definitions and descriptions in Act of Higher Education with 2547 number. Literature of Management has mentioned that principally there are three motivational tools: economical tools like a wage claim, managerial tools like a promotion and socio-cultural tools like a social scale (Sapancalı, 1993; Batmaz, 2002 ; Eren, 2004). Thus Associate Professor career title is a substantially motivational tool for the Turkish academicians and Turkish tourism academicians are incapacitated from this motivational tool.

In this research results ensured from 207 tourism academicians by the questionnaire form are classified in three groups. The first group of results consists of relationship between the academic degrees and career titles of the tourism academicians. It shows that %29 of bachelor degree, %34 of master degree and %28 of doctoral degree of tourism academicians do not belong to tourism programs. Among these degrees Economics and Administrative programs as a social sciences branch considering all level of higher education (bachelor, master and doctoral) becomes the first. Additionally some of these tourism academicians have a degree on the natural science such as food engineering, even formal disciplines such as mathematics and statistics. Perhaps this results can be considered as a reflection of multidisciplinary nature of tourism. There is a similar picture in the tourism academicians who have an Associate Professor title. Most of the Associate Professor titles belong to out of the pure tourism area. Reason of this picture is the absence of the Associate Professor career titles in tourism field naturally. Most of the Associate Professor career titles also belong to Economics and Administrative branch like degrees. They are especially in Management and Organization and Marketing field.

Second group of the results concern with the academicians's evaluations of the absence of the Associate Professor career titles in tourism. Most of the tourism academicians (%88) have advocated that Associate Professor career titles must be put into action in tourism. Primary assertors of this idea are the Research Assistant, secondary are Professors and Associate Professors are tertiary. On the other hand, this idea has been advocated mostly by the academicians who have worked in faculties. This results based on the work area and career title of the academicians are considerable, because main responsibilities of academic knowledge production in existing higher education system in Turkey belong to Professors, Assoc.Professors, Asst. Professor and Research Assistant as titles and belong to faculties staff as an educational unit. According to higher education field, the academicians who advocate this idea are owners of doctoral degree in tourism area.

It is naturally that an academic degree indicates the high level of knowledge and awareness in that academic field. In connection with it is meaningful that academicians, first, who have a doctoral program in tourism, second, who have a master degree in tourism and third, who have a bachelor degree in tourism are believed that associate professor career title must exist in tourism. In contrast some academicians don't agree with the others on this idea. These are as a first who have a doctoral program out of tourism, as a second who have no master degree in certain area and as a same degree who have bachelor degree out of tourism.

While the considering the tourism academicians who have an associate professor career degree in tourism or out of tourism, the different results have been emerged. Unlike the academicians who hold an associate professor career title out of tourism, academicians who hold an associate professor career title in tourism have advocated the idea about the existence of the associate professor career title in tourism. On the other hand it is surprising that an academician who hold associate professor career title in tourism does not agree with the idea of associate professors career degree must exist in tourism.

The third group of results of the study includes the effects of associate professor career titles absence in the area of tourism. According to the results, the most of tourism academicians think that their colleagues are facing with the problem of not being focused on their own study areas but they tend to study at different subjects. Two reflections can be discussed concerning the focusing deviation. The first one is about the amount of tourism academic knowledge, namely quantity. Approximately the half of tourism academicians in Turkey believe that there is haven't enough amount of academic knowledge have been produced on tourism, although major responsibility of these academicians are the academic knowledge production. Thus these comments indicate to the negativity as clear as daylight about the academic knowledge producing. The second reflection is about the quality of produced knowledge. The economical feedback is the most important feature to evaluate the quality of academic knowledge. In this line, approximately half of the academicians suppose that the academic knowledge produced in Turkey is not as quality as to guide for the sector. Therefore in paralell with the previous studies (Gülcan, 2009b), it is concluded that the most of the tourism academicians in Turkey believe that the quality and quantity of academic knowledge in Turkey are not enough to guide the tourism sector.

Most of the tourism academicians (85%), the research assistants at first, share the same idea about the negative effects of associate professor career absence on the academic knowledge produced. The most agreement to this idea comes from the academicians who are already staff in tourism faculty and the academicians whose associate professor title in tourism. In contrast, the academicians who do not agree with this idea are mainly professor titles.

As a conclusion, according to the dominant sight among the tourism academicians, absence of associate professor career position in tourism field deprives the tourism academicians from some benefits stated by the law. Furthermore, the lack of this career position creates unwillingness on the field of tourism which negatively affects both the quality and the quantity of tourism research and development of the tourism as a distinct discipline. This problem at least avoids the support coming from Turkey for the evolution of tourism as an distinct discipline.