The Role of Marketing Mix Components in Destination Choices of Visitors and the Case of Dalyan

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Introductıon

This study investigated the impact of the eight components of the marketing mix, as being product, price, distribution, promotion, person, partnership, program and package, upon choice of a destination.For this research purpose, data was collected by face-to-face interviews and survey from 260 foreign tourists visiting the region of Dalyan. First, the marketing mix components were classified according to their importance determined by the arithmetic averages. Then, multiple regression analysis was performed to determine whether the marketing mix components had an effect on the destination choice. The analysis found that the variables of 'product' and 'person' had an effect on the Dalyan destination choice. This result shows that the'product' is an influencial factor, as expected, on the choice of the Dalyan destination, within the scope of ecotourism, visited by the tourists. In addition, 'person' is also important factor on the destination choice for the Dalyan region.

Tourism has become a monetary and mass activity and this has created direct, indirect and induced impacts on destination economies so that tourism has a crucial economic impact on the destinations visited. In the international tourism market, consumers have become extremely logical and selective for their holiday decisions and today's tourism supply has exceeded the demand on macro level. Consumers select primarily the destination in their travel choice. Destination creates competitive advantages and this depends on the effective use of contemporary marketing methods.

Destination marketing is the crucial activity of tourism marketing. Marketing of tourism destination resources in the most effective way can be realised by establishing the most suitable marketing mix components in the process of marketing decisions on target tourism markets. This study focuses on what is supposed to be done for the destination to get the desired share in the tourism market and to set up an effective marketing mix strategy on this purpose.

Methodology

This study consists of three parts. The first and second sections being literature research, and the third section is a field survey. The concept of destination, destination

supply and demand data, and destination image are described in the first section. Destination, destination marketing and destination marketing mix componenents türe described in the second section.

In the final section, the findings of the survey regarding Dalyan as a preferred destination are evaluated and suggestions are made according to the results.

The resort of Dalyan was chosen for this study because of its natural beauty and tourist potential. Dalyan is a unique and attractive place. This research, as a method was evaluated in two stages. First of all relevant literature research was conducted. In the second phase, in order to make an application on the subject research was carried out in the region and survey technique was applied for this purpose. Especially tourists who preferabliy had chosen Dalyan as a holiday destination were selected for the survey. The survey consists of 52 questions appropriate for this research. The first 10 are demographic questions and 42 questions are related to the research topic. 5-point Likert scale was applied in questions. Data obtained from the questionnaires was analyzed by means of SPSS statistical program. The data was discussed in terms of descriptive and inferential statistics. First the reliability of the data (Cronbach's alpha) was tested. As a result the rate of general reliability of the test (Cronbach's alpha) was determined as 0,93. Following the reliability test (Cronbach's alpha) according to the results, the data were averaged on the basis of descriptive statistics. The overall average of the variables (mean 3,873) emerged as a high value and the examination of the level of validity (sig, 0,0001) led to a significant conclusion. After the analysis of reliability and validity of the overall marketing mix in tourism internationally recognized as the (8 P) factors (product, price, place, promotion, programs, packaging, partnership, person) were analyzed separately for reliability and validity.

Accordingly the levels of reliability (Cronbach's alpha) and validity of (0,74) Sig, 0,0001 for the first factor "product" are significant. The average value (4,306) of the product factor represented by 9 variables is the highest of the marketing mix components. By examining the average values of the variables the expression "Dalyan is a beautiful place" was found to represent the highest average value. Average values of the variables representing the product were examined. By examining the average values of the variables the expression; "Beautiful place" (mean 4,708), "Attractiveness of natural environment and beaches" (mean 4,635), "Convenience to the airport" (mean 4,435), "Clean and quiete place"(mean 4,304), "Historical and Archeological site" (mean 4,231), "Accommodation services and facilities" (mean 4,199), "Availability of local transport services" (mean 4,4077), "Nightlife and entertainment (mean 3,612). According to the a.m. results the tourism product Dalyan is a preferred destination because of its natural beauty, although in terms of night life and entertainment the region is not adequate.

The second factor is "price" (price); reliability (Cronbach's alpha) was measured at 0,77 and the validity (0,0001) is at a significant level. The average value (mean 3,979) of the price factor represented by 5 variables is the second factor of the marketing mix components.

Average values of the variables representing the price were examined. By examining the average values of the variables the expression; "Price of accommodation" (mean 4,211), "Price of food and beverages " (mean 4,200), "Price of transportation

" (mean 4,146), "Price of the package tour " (mean 3,719), "Price of nightlife and entertainment " (mean 3,619).

The third factor is "Place" (place); reliability (Cronbach's alpha) was measured at 0,77 and the validity (0,0001) is at a significant level. The average value (mean 3,849) of the place factor represented by 4 variables is the third factor of the marketing mix components.

Average values of the variables representing the place were examined. By examining the average values of the variables, the expression; "Opportunities of travel choices" (mean 3,969), "Confidence of tour operator's services" (mean 3,873), "Reservation possibilities" (mean 3,823), "Facilitate provided by tour operators" (mean 3,731).

The fourth factor is "Person" (person); reliability (Cronbach's alpha) was measured at 0,71 and the validity (0,0001) is at a significant level. The average value (mean 3,842) of the person factor represented by 4 variables is the fourth factor of the marketing mix components.

Average values of the variables representing the person were examined. By examining the average values of the variables, the expression; "Level of hospitality and customer care at destination" (mean 4,427), "Accomodation facilities employee characteristics" (mean 3,881), "Transportation companies employee characteristic" (mean 3,754), "Destination government offices employee characteristic" (mean 3,308).

The fifth is "Package" (package); reliability (Cronbach's alpha) was measured at 0,74 and the validity (0,0001) is at a significant level. The average value (mean 3,830) of the package factor represented by 5 variables is the fifth factor of the marketing mix components.

Average values of the variables representing the package were examined. By examining the average values of the variables, the expression; "Value of Money for services" (mean 4,170), "Possibilities of choosing accomodation facilities" (mean 3,873), "Possibilities of transportation" (mean 3,873), "Orgainzed tour possibilities to the destination" (mean 3,731), "Travel insurance" (mean 3,504).

The sixth is "Program" (program); reliability (Cronbach's alpha) was measured at 0,86 and the validity (0,0001) is at the significant level. The average value (mean 4,492) of the program factor represented by 4 variables is the sixth factor of the marketing mix components. Average values of the variables representing the program were examined.

By examining the average values of the variables the expression; "Convenience of getting information about destination " (mean 3,770), "Convenience of travel buying" (mean 3,758), "Availability of tour program " (mean 3,683), "Alternative travel choices " (mean 3,508).

The seventh factor is "Partnership" (partnership); reliability (Cronbach's alpha) was measured at 0,71 and the validity (0,0001) is at the significant level. The average value (mean 3,533) of the partnership factor represented by 4 variables is the seventh factor of the marketing mix components. Average values of the variables representing the partnership were examined. By examining the average values of the variables the expression; "Cooperation between agencies and accommodation facilities " (mean

3,639), "Cooperation between agencies and transportation companies " (mean 3,639), "Convenience of visa and passport procedures " (mean 3,542), "Cooperation between agencies and goverment offices " (mean 3,265).

The eighth factor is "Promotion" (promotion); reliability (Cronbach's alpha) was measured at 0,77 and the validity (0,0001) is at a significant level. The average value (mean 3,505) of the promotion factor represented by 5 variables is the eighth factor of the marketing mix components. Average values of the variables representing the promotion were examined. By examining the average values of the variables, the expression; "Information about destination " (mean 3,758), "Internet (Web pages and last minute sales" (mean 3,642), "Effectiveness of advertising and promotion activities " (mean 3,400), "Tourism information office orientation " (mean 3,400), "Effectiveness of Tourism fairs" (3,323).

To sum up, the regression analysis found that the variables of 'product' and 'person' had most effect on the Dalyan destination choice. This result shows that the'product' is an influencial factor, as expected, on the choice of the Dalyan destination, within the scope of ecotourism, visited by the tourists. In addition, 'person' is also important factor on the destination choice for the Dalyan region.

It can be concluded that the Dalyan region is not sufficiently promoted by private and public agencies. It should be confessed that environmentally responsible visitors to Dalyan do not want the region promoted, they want it to be kept as a secret natural paradise. Dalyan is an important destination in the tourism sector in our country. The results of the survey on the preference of Dalyan as a destination have been evaluated and necessary suggestions have been made.