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COMPETITIVENESS OF TOURISM AND THE EVALUATION OF TURKEY ACCORDING INTERNATIONAL TOURISM COMPETITIVE CRITERIA

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ABSTRACT

Key words: Tourism, Competitiveness, Turkish tourism,

According to the data obtained from World Tourism Organization (WTO) in 2009, Türkiye ranked 8th with 25 million visitors and 9th with an income 22 billion US dollars among the countries ranking top ten in tourism industry. This success cannot be undermined for a country which became aware of the importance of tourism industry in 1980s and accelerated the investments from then on.

Unfortunately, Türkiye hasn't been able to repeat the success it attained in tourism income and number of visitors in T&T (tourism and travel) competitiveness. According to the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index published annually by World Economic Forum (WEF), Türkiye ranked 56th among 133 countries. Taking this evaluation into consideration, it is obvious that Türkiye has to attain considerable advancement in T&T competitiveness. Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index consists of 3 main titles and 16 sub-titles.

The aim of this study is to evaluate Türkiye in accordance with all the titles in the competitiveness index, handle in detail the following issues in which Türkiye had a weak performance; environmental sustainability (104), price competitiveness in T&T industry (109) and to create a discussion atmosphere in order for Türkiye to repeat the success it attained in tourism income and visitors in T&T competitiveness index.

JEL CODE: K11

1.INTRODUCTION

In the recent years, the existing understanding of rivalry together with the rapid communication developments, the increase in the strategic cooperation between countries and contraction in the limitations. In the area of tourism, the countries' gaining power for rivalry and increasing their market share permanently in the long run depend on customer's satisfaction and quality of service. In this respect, the sectoral rules the countries made and natural, cultural resources need to be protected, hygiene and sanitation rules in the tourism establishments should be obeyed, the facilities of communication in the countries should be developed, the infrastructure and superstructure facilities of the country should be improved according to tourist and traveling sector, environmental permanence should be provided, the menaces towards local and foreign tourism should be minimized and necessary precautions should be taken.

The countries enterprises about the enhancement of these qualitative and quantitative factors will contribute to the increase in the income of this sector.

Indeed, tourism sector is more profitable than most of the other sectors. In the study named "Tourism Vision for 2020" which presents future perspective for tourism and was prepared by World Tourism Organization, it is predicted that the income of tourism around the world will reach 2 trillion dollars.

The aim of this study is to examine why Turkey ranks lower in the indication of competitiveness issued each year by World Economic Forum by analyzing environmental permanence and price competitiveness in traveling and tourism before all else and to determine the potential precautions.

2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM INDUSTRY IN THE WORLD

The first definition of tourism is made by Guyer – Feuler in 1905. Guyer and Feuler defined tourism as "a phenomenon unique to modern time which is dependent on the people's increasing need for a change and relaxing, the wish of recognizing the beauties of nature and art and the belief that nature gives happiness to human beings and which helps nations and communities' approaching to each other thanks to the developments in commerce and industry and the communication and transportation tools' becoming excellent." (Bahar, 2005: 2)

The origin of the term tourism which lies back to the 17th century is the word 'tour' which is derived from the Hebrew word 'torah' meaning 'learning, examining'. Hebrews called the people whom they sent to see far places and learn the socio-economic conditions of the people living in those places as 'tourist' and the action as 'touring'. (Bahar, 2005:2)

Indeed, Caspar defined tourism as "a global system dependent on the relations of sub systems of tourist, touristic establishments, and tourism organizations with the economic, social, politic, judicial, technological and ecological environment of these sub systems." (Olalı and Timur, 1986: 5-6)

As for the tourism for countries is a sector which contributes to the national income, increases employment, affecting the balance of payments positively, improves technology and information transfer, appealing to the foreign enterprisers and acting as loco in developments of countries. (Han and Fang, 1997:357)

The developments of tourism in the world can be considered as before Industrial Revolution and after Industrial Revolution. When the historical resources are analyzed, it can be said that the historical origin of tourism traces back to the Sumerian. In deed, it is a well-known fact that Phoenician travelers were the first to start commercial activities.

It can be said that modern tourism started in Ancient Greek with Olympic Games. It is known that at that time, a lot of tourists went there in order to watch the Olympic Games,.

The most famous traveler in the Middle Ages is Marco Polo. Again in the Middle Ages, the most important events in terms of tourism are the travels and visits for religious purposes.

In the Renaissance Period in Middle Ages, tourism started to have prevalence among Turkish societies. Especially Anatolian Seljuk commissioned the first examples of modern tourism institutions by building caravanserais with different functions directed to service for the travelers.

Industrial Revolution was an important turning point in terms of its perceiving the tourism activities of the modern world. Indeed, Industrial Revolution helped develop tourism together with the developments and improvements in many fields. For example, the first packed tour in the history was that Thomas Cook brought 570 people to a festival in 1841.

Tourism is one of the most important sectors in the modern time. From the beginning of 1960s to this day, it is one of the fastest developing and profitable sectors. Although the sector is vulnerable to economic crisis, terrorist attacks such as 11th of September, Swine Flu (H1N1), it recovers fast and it is dynamic. So, the enterprisers have enough courage to enterprise. Since 1950, international tourist arrivals reached 903 million from 25 million. While 15 destination had the %98 of the tourist arrivals in 1950, it was %57 in 2007. All these numbers show us that there are new destinations.

According to the data by WTO, the number of the participants of international touristic activities was 903 million and the income is 856 billion dollars in 2007. According to the predictions of the year 2020, the number of the participants is expected to be 1.6 billion and the tourism income is expected to be more than 2.2 trillion dollars.

Table 1: Inbound Tourism, 1990-2007



Source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) ©

The graphic above indicates the arrivals of tourists and tourism income between the years 1990 – 2007. There is sharp increase in the international tourist arrivals and tourism receipts and there is a rise in general.

2.1. The Factors Affecting the Development of Tourism

Industrial Revolution played an important role In the development of tourism . The changes in the society together with the Industrial Revolution; the start of the immigrations from rural to the cities thanks to the increase in industry, the prevalence of education, the higher standards of living thanks to the increase in purchasing power, and so the changes in the

habits of consuming, less hours of working thanks to the technological changes, the right to have holidays for workers, the lengthening of the human's life time, the higher levels of culture and education helped tourism to develop. (Usta, 1997: 33-34)

3. THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN TURKEY

Tourism, in general, can be analyzed under two titles as before and after 1980. Until 1980s, Turkish tourism did not make a remarkable movement. The period between the beginning of planned era and the year 1983 is when the government led the movement by forming some conditions for tourism to develop and since 1983; the period is evaluated as “liberalization” period. (Briassoulis and Straaten, 2003: 150-157).

At the beginning years of Turkish Republic, the institution which was founded with the name “Turkish Traveler Association” and continued its activities with the name “Turkiye Touring and Automobile Club”, in 1940s took the name “Press- Publication and Tourism General Management” after taking many other names, and later in 1960s the institution continued its actions as “Tourism and Publicity Ministry”. In that period tourism investments were sponsored by various laws and institutions like TR Tourism Bank I.C. (Oztas and Karabulut, 2006: 8). The most important arrangement made in later period is “Travel Agency and Travel Agency Union Law” which was introduced in 1972. The period which follows the year 1960 is called “Planned Period”. The most important event happened in the very early 1980s when the main development occurred in terms of Turkish tourism is the decisions such as devaluation with the January 24 1980 Decisions, law on encouraging foreign investments, liberalization of foreign exchange, being allowed to go abroad, the improvement in amount of the foreign exchange that passengers can carry on themselves and the introduction of Tourism Promotion Law.

There are some of the promotions brought by Tourism Promotion Law Number: 2634: (Kozak, 2000: 120)

- Low- interest credit ,
- Investment tax credit,
- Building construction exemption,
- Tax and fee exemption,
- Incentive premium,
- Exchange allocation,
- Value added tax postponement
- Foreign worker employment,
- Electricity, gas and water fee rebate
- Communication convenience.

Since the early 1990s, along with mass tourism the efforts on some kinds of alternative tourism have gained speed and with demand it has started to show improvements in our country.

In the Sixth Development Plan covering the years 1990- 1994, some policies took place that are about preserving scenic beauties and cultural heritage and about the kinds of alternative tourism like winter, health, third age tourism, besides the precautions taken such as making charter transportation improve, making the load factor increase and making the tourism season expand. (DPT, 1989: 281-282)

In 1990s, public sector was active about the planning and Turkiye became an international tourism destination and stood in the first ranks of the list of foreign tour operators. (Cooper and Ozdil, 1992: 377)

Despite the positive improvements occurred in the Sixth Plan period, compared with the other countries placed on the Mediterranean Region, deficiencies on some essential issues –such as technical infrastructure, tourism education, tour operating, travel agency, advertising and

marketing, total bed amount, transportation- could not be made up. Because of financial problems, some of the local projects could not reach the intended level. Besides the incompetence of marinas and unfinished constructions of buildings, being unable to diversify the tourism posed also an important problem. (DPT, 1995)

In the Seventh Plan period, it was given importance to preserve and improve the quality of touristic services, and within this context, while the investments in accommodation were made to slow down, investments in infrastructure, renovation and marketing were encouraged. (DPT, 2000: 78)

In the early 2000s, Turkiye's unpolluted sea and Mediterranean and Aegean coasts were the destinations coming into prominence at the international tourism market. For this reason, 2/3 of existing total bed amount and most of the target increment in the Eighth Plan were directed to beach tourism. (DPT: 25)

According to the Eighth Development Plan Special Expert Commission Report, tendencies in the tourism around the world began to change in the 2000s. Demanded activities have been heavily on culture, health, congress, yachting and entertainment instead of sea-sand-sun tourism. Tourism has spread out to the whole country from the coasts, so the time for vacation has expanded - no season limit, and long-distance oversea journeys have been increased. Internet has taken much more place in travel decision making and organization. The profile of tourists also has been changing; while the tourists who has got much time and money, who are difficult to be satisfied, who are curios, more selective and conscious have been gaining importance, the expectations of quality, hygiene, environmentally-consciousness and hospitality have been moved high above. In that report, in order to adapt Turkish Tourism to these changes happening around the world, the necessity of forming Tourism Master Plan, reconstructing, investments in diversifying of tourism by using the existing potential of Anatolia and in making it spread out to the whole year and keeping the other actions going was emphasized. (DPT: 3-4-6)

The items taken place In the Ninth Plan formed for the years 2007-2013, are that alternative kinds of tourism -mentioned since the Fifth Plan will be continued to be encouraged and also health tourism services having the competitive advantage will be developed.

Towards the information given above, there is a chart below showing the data which is about the precautions taken by Turkiye from the 1950s up to now, especially the ones taken in planned period and the amount of how much these precautions have been put into the practice and about the development of Turkiye on Foreign Travel Income from the year 1963 to the year 2009 and the information including the international tourist arrival and receipts in the year 2009.

Table 2: Development of Turkey on Foreign Travel Income (Billion Dolar)

Years	World Tourism Receipt	Turkiye's Tourism Receipt	Turkiye's share (%)
1963	8.887	7.7	0.09
1970	17.90	51.6	0.29
1980	102.363	326.7	0.32
1985	108.091	1.482	1.37
1990	269.000	3.225	1.19
2000	477.300	7.626	1.59
2009	950.000	22.000	2.30

Source: TÜİK and Culture and Tourism Ministry

When analyzed, it is obvious that Turkiye's Foreign Tourism Receipt had risen nearly three times, from 7.7 billion dollars to 22 billion dollars since the year 1963.

The benefit of each 5-year Planned period in terms of development of tourism in our country can be observed here.

Table 3: The number of international tourists on the basis of countries (2009)

THE NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS IN 2009			
No:	Country	Million People	Worldwide share (%)
1	France	79,3	8,6
2	USA	58,0	6,3
3	Spain	57,3	6,2
4	China	53,0	5,7
5	Italy	42,7	4,6
6	England	30,2	3,3
7	Ukrain	25,4	2,8
8	Turkey	25,0	2,7
9	Germany	24,9	2,7
10	Mexico	22,6	2,5

Source: WTO, 2009

Table 4: The international tourism receipts on the basis of countries (2009)

THE INTERNATIONAL TOURISM RECEIPTS IN 2009			
No:	Country:	Billion \$	Worldwide share (%)
1	USA	110,1	11,7
2	Spain	61,6	6,5
3	France	55,6	5,9
4	Italy	45,7	4,8
5	China	40,8	4,3
6	Germany	40,0	4,2
7	England	36,0	3,8
8	Australia	24,7	2,6
9	Turkiye	22,0	2,3
10	Austria	21,8	2,3

Source: WTO, 2009

The data above shows us that the measures, precautions taken for tourism and the strategies that were planned to be realized in the development plans first of which was published in the year 1963 and ninth of which was published in the year 2007 could not be exactly accomplished.

If the strategic decisions made had been exactly realized today, the tourism receipts that Turkiye got and tourists arrival today would have been in the same scale with the countries such as France, USA, Spain that are premier at the subject of international tourist arrival and their receipts.

By examining the 2008 Index of Travel and Tourism Competitiveness, it is so obvious that the amount of the tourism receipts that Turkiye got and why the rate of tourists arrival are not on the demanded level.

In fact; Turkiye has taken place in the list of top 10, the tourism receipts and the tourist arrival. However, Turkiye could not manage to do the same in the Index of Travel and Tourism Competitiveness. Among the 133 countries joining the index, Turkiye is the 56th. As a matter of fact, in the year 2009, it was observed that Turkiye retrogressed two number more compared with the year 2008 (54th).

4. COMPETITIVENESS IN TURKISH TOURISM

It has been observed that the Turkish tourism receipts and the tourist arrival do not show a parallel improvement when it is examined on the base of the criteria that are determined by WTO and 133 countries are evaluated by. It is seen that Turkiye ranks in the low lines in the index year by year.

Table 5: The index of competitiveness in travel and tourism, the comparison of the years 2008 and 2009

COUNTRY/ ECONOMY	RANK / 133 2009	SCORE	RANK/ 130 2008
SWITZERLAND	1	5.68	1
AUSTRIA	2	5.46	2
GERMANY	3	5.41	3
FRANCE	4	5.34	10
CANADA	5	5.32	9
SPAIN	6	5.29	5
SWEDEN	7	5.28	8
ABD	8	5.28	7
AUSTRALIA	9	5.24	4
SINGAPORE	10	5.24	16
TURKEY	56	4.20	54

Source: World Economic Forum (WEF)

Initially, when the index of competitiveness in travel and tourism is examined in general and when the years 2008 and 2009 compared, Turkiye, in the index where there are 133 countries, receded two lines and took the place of 56th line in 2009.

Table 6: The index of competitiveness in travel and tourism and the place of Turkey in the ranking

	INDEX OF COMPETITIVENESS IN TRAVEL AND TOURISM OF TURKEY (YEAR 2009)	RANKING	POINT
		133	(1-7)
	2009 Index	56	4.2
	2008 Index	54	4.2
A	T&T REGULATORY FRAMEWORK	63	4.6
1	Policy rules and regulations	44	4.8
2	Environmental sustainability	104	4.1
3	Safety and Security	92	4.6
4	Health and hygiene	62	4.8
5	Prioritization of travel and tourism	46	4.7
B	T&T BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE	60	3.7
6	Air transport infrastructure	44	3.8
7	Ground transport infrastructure	62	3.6
8	Tourism infrastructure	44	4.0
9	ICT infrastructure	57	3.1
10	Price competitiveness in the T&T industry	109	4.0
C	T&T HUMAN, CULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES IN	44	4.3
11	Human Resources	72	5.0
12	Education and Training	79	4.5
13	Availability of qualified labor	49	5.5
14	Affinity for Travel % Tourism	47	5.0
15	Natural resources	89	2.8
16	Cultural resources	27	4.3

Source: World Economic Forum (WEF)

When the index of competitiveness in travel and tourism is examined with the subtitles, Turkey, within the 133 countries, is in the 63rd line for the subtitle: T&T Regulatory Framework; in the 60th line for the subtitle: T&T Business Environment and Infrastructure, in the 44th line for the subtitle: Human, Cultural And Natural Resources In Travel And Tourism Industry.

In the rest of the study, information will be given about the two subjects on which Türkiye is the least successful in the index, Environmental Sustainability (104th) and Cost Competition in Tourism (109th), which are the two subtitles of Türkiye's Index of Competitiveness in Travel and Tourism.

4.1 EVALUATION OF TURKIYE BY MEANS OF COMPETITIVENESS

Being one of the criteria of competitiveness of the world economic forum the sustainable tourism and the environment is a qualitative factor. Therefore, tourism industry is an appropriate environment in which natural beauties, resting, health, sports, and entertainment activities are held. (Dindar, 2002)

4.1.1 Environmental Sustainability

These are many components of the physical environment are attractions for tourism. Tourism with its facilities and utilities is a part of environment. Developments in tourism and the use of an environment create environmental effects. (Demir, 2002) There are three important factors relating tourism and the environment.

Table 7: Environmental Sustainability

INDEX		RANK / 133
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY		104
2.01.	Stringency of environmental regulation	84
2.02	Enforcement of environmental regulation	86
2.03	Sustainability of T&T industry development	55
2.04	Carbon dioxide emissions	61
2.05	Threatened species	98
2.06	Environmental treaty ratification	125

Source: World Economic Forum (WEF)

The best thing about tourism is that we do not separate it from the natural and historical beauties and the attractions. It is inescapable that in order to run away from the business and the stress of the day today's people tend to attend plateau tourism, culture tourism and mountain tourism. Therefore, it is required that instead of affecting the environment we should do tourism activities which aims to be in accordance the environment instead of affecting it, and which provide benefits without giving harm to it. In turn this means protecting the raw material of the tourism. If it is desired to benefit from the economic effects of the tourism, it is required that there is a consistency between tourism activities and the environment. Although the competitiveness power of Turkiye in terms of environment factor is better than the other Mediterranean countries, the tourists choose our country for sea, beach and the sun tourism. However, Turkiye is a unique country to do alternative tourism activities with all aspects. On the other hand, Turkiye has not solved the problems related to the tourism utilities completely yet. There is not enough advertisement about the natural beauties. It should be provided that the natural beauties such as flora and fauna are utilized in terms of alternative tourism and these areas should be in the catalogs of the agencies and the tours. It appears that in our country the tourism facilities hardly show sensitivity to the sewerage, waste water and garbage, and hardly apply the laws of environment, and many areas are allocated to the tourism without a plan and the tourism activities take place in Mediterranean and Aegean regions more densely. As there are not long-term plans about this sector, the problems will go on increasingly. Another issue that must be pointed out is the sensitivity of the foreigners coming from the Europe to the environment protection. Because of this the application of "Blue Flag" which is an indicator of a clean and controlled environment should be carried on larger areas. The beaches and marinas which are shown as candidate to the "Blue Flag Prize" are evaluated according to four main criteria which are;

- * Water quality (just visuality for marinas)
- * Life safety, equipments and services
- * Environment education and information
- * Environment management

Turkiye was ranked as the third with its 258 beaches with Blue Flag in the world. According to the international standards the cleanest beaches are in the Turkiye after Spain and Greece. The number of blue flags reaches to the number 258 beaches and 13 marinas which were 235 beaches and 14 marinas. In terms of the flags Turkiye ranked as the third country in the world. As a result, in the future the tourism environments will be evaluated according to their being in consistency with the environmental standards (such as ISO 9000, Blue Flag or pine symbol) and those countries which protect their environment without giving harm will benefit from the world tourism activities and will have the chance to maintain their competitive power. (Bahar,2003: 150-157)

4.1.2. Price Competitiveness in Travel and Tourism Industry

The success of the tourism region on the market is determined by the competitive capacity. Being able to sustain and increase the tourism receipts in a region depend on its competitive advantage in presenting touristic product.(Brassoluis and Straaten, 1995)

Table 8: Price and competition in t&t industry

INDEX		RANK/ 133
	PRICE AND COMPETITION IN T&T INDUSTRY	109
10.01.	Ticket taxes and airport charges	22
10.02	Purchasing power parity	96
10.03	Extent and effect of taxation	122
10.04	Fuel price levels	127
10.05	Hotel Price index	57

Source: Word Economic Forum (WEF)

Competitive capacity in terms of price gains importance when similar preferences, similar travel motivation and similar goods are in question. In this case, prices and rate advantages constitute the competitive capacity and attraction of the region. (Dwyer, Forsyth and Prasada,2000:228-336)

According to this, the competitive capacity of the tourism region in terms of price is defined as “the ability to present the touristic product in lower prices than rival tourism markets to the consumers who have similar preferences”. Thus, the prices of touristic products in certain standards appear in the countries’ domestic markets, and exchange rates appear in national and international markets as an important factor of the competitive capacity.

Differences in price, variance of exchange rates, service quality and quest satisfaction in tourism sector, productivity in tourism sector and supplementary sectors and the quality and

the variety of supplementary activities, all the unique attractions of the touristic region and the attitude of the local people are the elements related to competitive capacity.

(Hassan,2000: 239-245)

Among the business firms presenting similar featured touristic product, the competitive capacity of the business firms which present the lowest cost will be higher. We can call this situation "Total Cost Leadership." Thus, differences in local prices underlie in the price differences among the regions. Prices may differentiate among the countries and regions for many reasons. For instance, if the equity capitals of a tour operator are more secure, it can market tours with lower profit margins. A lot of factors that stem from regional reasons or nature of the goods may prevent the appearance of the law of one price on the markets. Competition of price is an important economic value that motivates rational tourist. Recent studies emphasize that differences in price among the tourism regions have an impact on the tourists' travel preferences. (Dwyer, Forsyth, And Prasada , 2000 : 232)

One other element of competitive capacity differences on the local level is that the tourist group visiting the region may change according to the value of the currency they use depending on their nations. Especially with regarding the Euro as the common currency in EU member states, the competition of price is becoming different between the tourists coming from EU member states and the tourists coming from other regions. For example, there will be differences between the rate of touristic product and service that can be bought with 1 Euro and that with 1 Dollar. This situation will develop in favour of Turkiye. Such that, instead of Greece, which uses euro, a tourist will prefer to spend his/her holiday in Turkey, which produces similar touristic products and service, since purchasing level will be higher in Turkiye. It is anticipated that with the global crisis European tourists will prefer higher quality with lower prices in such countries as Turkiye. This situation, as opposed to the belief that the demand for tourism, which is perceived as luxury consumption with the crisis, will decline, is an important competition element.

In addition to the fact that the fundamental determinants of price competitive capacity are price and Exchange rates, the success in marketing the region and advertising it in local and international markets is regarded as important in terms of the competitive capacity of the touristic region. (Crouch,1999:137-152)Moreover, the hospitality of the Turkish people and their attitude towards the tourists are considerably superior to the rivals.

In the T & T Industry in competition of price the most important element that causes Turkiye to be 109th in the competition of price is the effect and the content of taxation. (122nd)

The point that needs to be initially touched is the taxes collected on sectoral base in Turkiye. It is as this that in Turkiye a lot of taxes are collected from complexes under different titles. Corporate tax (20 %), stoppage at profit distribution (15 %), income tax (15-35 %), VAT (18%), special consumption tax on beer, wine and raki, property tax (2-6/1000), motor vehicles tax, sanitation tax, stoppage at income tax, announcement and advertisement tax, revenue stamps, fees, etc. If we add Ssi Premium, Unemployment Premium, the amount of servitude that reaches 3 % on endorsement, and other payments to this list, we can say that a large amount of the income of the people in tourism sector is transferred to staff costs and taxes. Apart from this, if we take into consideration that a great majority of the tourists visiting the complexes come here by means of agency, and that complexes make an agreement with the agencies on low prices, raising the prices will be compulsory for the people on the tourism sector in order to balance income-expense. Collecting this much taxes under different titles from business firms that are on the sector is not correct. The situation unfortunately will push the people on the tourism sector to informality. In this way, while prices are rising in the business firms, the quality will decline, and it will cause a dramatic loss of taxes led by VAT and corporate tax.

In order to advancement of tourism sector, which is one of the leading sectors in our country, it is necessary to lowering the taxes or not collecting, or bringing a new tax regulation by collecting them under a different title.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

After the world war 2, tourism sector has been one of the sectors that has improved in parallel with the improvement of service sectors. In Turkiye, actions that need to be done have been planned in five-year development plans, and they have been partially realized. The most important event that has gained speed to the tourism sector in our country is the 24 January decisions. Thanks to the facilities provided for the entrepreneurs in the tourism promotion law that are passed with the decisions taken in 24 January 1980, tourism in our country has reached its current place.

Although Turkiye deserves to be at the top in the preferred places list because of its rich historical, cultural and natural sources, and experiencing the four seasons at the same time due to its geopolitical position, it is seen that it is in the low lines in top 10. When WTO data of 2009 are examined, it is seen that Turkiye ranks 8th with 2,7 % portion in tourist arrivals and 25 million tourists, and 9th with 2,3 % portion in tourism receipts and 22 billion dollars income.

When Tourism Competitive Index, which is discussed under three titles, is examined, it is seen that among the 133 countries in the index, Turkiye ranked 63rd in the judicial environment, 60th under the title of workplace environment and infrastructure, 44th under the title of human resources, natural and cultural sources in travel and tourism. That is to say, Turkiye has not been able to show a parallel success in competitive index to that of tourist arrivals and tourist incomes. When the travel and tourism competitiveness index of 2008 is compared with the one of 2009, while Turkiye ranked 54th in 2008, it receded to 56th line.

The causes of Turkiye's downfall in competitive index can be seen when the sub-elements of the index are examined in detail. Among these sub-elements, one of the titles that Turkiye is in the lowest lines is environmental sustainability (104th), and one other is the price competition in T&T Industry (109th)

Being a qualitative factor, environment is an indispensable source of attraction. Such that, tourism cannot be figured apart from the environment.

Turkiye is a rich country in terms of natural attractions. However, in spite of this, it is observed that sea-sand-sun tourism, which we can call 3S, is gaining importance. We can say that the income that our country gains is earned from sea-sand-sun tourism. So, this means the tendency to alternative tourism types is rare in our country. It is necessary that action plans that are related to the extension of tourism varieties such as tableland tourism, cultural tourism and mountain tourism should immediately be realized.

Apart from this, while complexes are established mainly on the Mediterranean and Aegean coasts for the last 30 years, it occurs that environment factor has constantly been ignored. It is observed that until the last years, the complexes whose infrastructure has not been completed yet empties its sewage to the sea, and that they cannot carry out the essential work on such topics like garbage collecting and refinement. However, especially the European tourists', who visit our country, preferring to stay at complexes that are sensitive to the environment, should constitute a motive for complexes to take the necessary precautions.

Price competition of tourism can be defined as to enable the consumers to prefer the lowest price among the similar products and services. The quality and the variety of the products that are presented in a touristic region or destination, the degree of satisfying the guests, all the unique attractions the destination presents to the quests are the elements related to the competitive capacity.

The most important element of Turkiye's competition of prices at the international level will be the agreements it will make with the big tour operators. Such that, especially the big tour operators with the Europe origins are the business firms that mainly guides the movements of tourism.

More than 90 % of the tourism firms in our country are small, family owned companies. This situation bears the fact that the companies are not enough in terms of the quality of service. Although there is a sufficient number of high schools and universities that raise mid and high level staff in our country, it is observed that a large number of the graduates do not work in the sector because tourism is perceived as working as a seasonal sector in our country due to the lack of labor-job protection. Low quality of service causes the decline of the price of the presented products and services, and so it is a factor that causes the income to decrease.

One other issue that needs to be mentioned is the taxes that are collected with different names in sectoral base. The taxes that are too high to push tourism companies to informality should be abolished or new tax regulations should be done.

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