

CHILDREN OF TOURISM: CHILDREN ON DEMAND AND SUPPLY SIDE OF TOURISM

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Abstract

Tourism for children is a strategically important and stimulating topic in the field of tourism studies and it has also been an ignored research topic in tourism for a long time. There has been a low number of studies observed in tourism literature about children and their choices as tourists. Therefore, further studies targeted this age group can reveal their market significance for long-standing tourist destinations, which has been neglected compared to the adult tourist target groups. Historically, the tourism practised in industrial and post-industrial western society paid less attention to children market. Prior to the 21st century, changes in the family structure have given rise to new situations as tourism with relatives, from traditional holidays to cultural trips, study trips abroad participating events. The decisions of family members about where to go and what to do during their holidays are being increasingly influenced by the presence of children nowadays. The tourism industry is now paying much more attention to children market and *child-friendly services* are now available in many destinations. Depending on the above mentioned for the demand side of tourism markets, this segment needs to have more attention than ever, and new approaches and new products should be developed by the tourism services providers in order to meet their expectations.

On the other side of the medallion, a big problem is arising for “*the children of tourism*” known as “*children abuse or exploitation*”. Children abuse and exploitation is now mainly a domestic and international dishonor and the studies report that they are victimized everywhere. Despite 20 years of efforts, the children abuse in tourism has spread out the world and no region is untouched by this crime and no country is “immune” according to SECTT. In other words, risks of child exploitation are increasing all over the world and inaction on this crime has a great potential to create serious social and economic consequences. According to the studies, potential reasons for children exploitations can be listed as; to earn money from tourists, gang use them for pretty crime or begging, for cheap labour, to support families under poor conditions, to support their personal needs, and for domestic work. As a result, the children abuse is the biggest shame of international tourism that needs to be im-

mediately resolved by the public authorities and international organizations who are directly or indirectly involved in this matter.

The basic objective of this presentation is to take attentions of the public to this problem, while to motivate the tourism services providers to concentrate more on children market segment in order to meet their holiday needs and expectations more satisfactorily.

Keywords: Children as Market Segment, Child Friendly Tourism, Children Abuse and Exploitation, Child as a Decision Maker, Changing Family Structures.

Children on Trips

For many years, when it comes to tourism for children, the theme parks and school trips and camps are just for the sake of children's fun, and Disneyland centers and school camps are the best examples. The types of holiday in different categories have not been given much importance for children. Even a small number of studies on the topic show that families who are going to spend a holiday are significantly affected by their children's assets. For example, families with children younger than 5 years traditionally prefer sea coast and mountainous areas, while older families with children are able to travel to foreign countries with more allocentric behaviors. However, with the changes provided by the tourism industry over the last 20 years, smaller families travel outside the country, and destinations have more children oriented services.

In addition to sea and coastal tourism, experiences such as cultural visits, schools, summer and winter camps are becoming increasingly common. Research has shown that school and cultural trips for children between the ages of 14 and 15 have benefited so much from their communication with their peers. Similarly, it has been determined that children in the growing age provide important contributions to the socio-cultural development of their participation in activities such as agricultural harvesting, creative workshop studies, archaeological site visits and festivals (Dallari and Mariotti, 2016). Today, the tourism industry is more concerned with children's participation in tourism and is trying to create more opportunities for them. In many destinations and regions, there are child-friendly services and hospitality-oriented hotels, and the importance of this marketplace is getting better every year.

Children may also be an important decision-making actor on family travels. Kotler et al. (2003, 235) lists the persons involved in the consumer decision process as follows:

1. User
2. Impressive
3. Decision maker
4. Certifier
5. Buyer

In this order, children may have one or more roles. For example, children may be direct users of some services during a holiday, or they may be impressive in deciding where to go.

The age requirements of the children and the wishes and needs at the time of the holiday may dictate specific regions or types of tourism to the families, with significant limitations in the family decision-making process. When parents decide on the effect of children on their holiday choices, sometimes they can choose holiday types that suit children's wishes, wishes or needs and expectations. An example for the first case is an example of the second situation where destinations addressing children directly are an additional decision element in the care of the children during family reunions and services in which their benefits are also observed.

Children of Tourism Destinations

The other face of the child-tourism medallion is not as cute as the front face. Because, in all countries of the world, child abuse is a fact of today's societies, irrespective of the rich and poor countries, and it is a problem that can not be easily prevented. Children in tourism destinations can be under two important clamps. The first of these is that children, especially in some countries in Far East Asia and Africa, are victims of sexual tourism, which is considered to be the biggest disaster of tourism. The second major problem is child trafficking, especially in poor tourism destinations, although that is not a direct consequence of tourism. This is especially acute when it comes to international smuggling. The main causes of child trafficking are;

- Commercial use of children for sexual purposes
- Use as cheap labor
- Hazardous and illegal employment, especially in the area of drug trafficking
- Unintentional marriages (child brides)
- Other forms of child abuse

Tourism towards child sexuality is travel made with the aim of sexual exploitation of children in their own country or in another country. People deliberately demand children for this purpose, and even want to own a child for that purpose. This can happen during a holiday, or it can be a journey that is aimed directly at it.

The general recommendations presented for the prevention of exploitation of children for tourism or other purposes are as follows;

- Children should be trained in this respect and in relation to their rights and responsibilities,
- Children should always be protected and observed by the state and the public
- Children should be constantly monitored, especially when they are concerned about their anxious behavior and should be more sensitive to following issues:
 - Does the child spend more time outside school and home?
 - Do children possess money they can not afford?
 - Do the children come home with new clothes and gifts?

- Does the child make secret and private phone calls?
- Is there an adult who is close to children?

Another problem of destination children is child labor. In other words, young children are forced into inappropriate jobs. This situation is again common in some poor destinations and the reasons are as follows;

- Poor families send their children to the streets to make money,
- Illegal organizations use children for minor crimes and begging,
- Their acceptance as cheap labor,
- In order to support poor families, children have to work themselves,
- Children want to work to meet their needs (clothes, food)
- They should be used as a labor force in domestic affairs.

Such children are most likely to work in tourism destinations without direct interest in tourism or not;

- Agriculture
- Mining
- Hospitality industry
- Entertainment sector
- Retail sector
- Rural areas
- Body trade

Vulnerable and poor children and their families are mostly oriented towards providing income to tourism destinations. This may mean that traditional livelihoods, social bonds and / or social support networks are left behind. It can also result in girls and boys working in the tourism sector under insecure and bad conditions. Similarly, children earning money from tourists in various ways probably can not continue to study and may be more vulnerable to different types of abuse, including sexuality. Due to the inadequacy of protective mechanisms for children in many countries, these children can easily be targeted by child abusers and juvenile sexual offenders.

In a study on the situation of children in travels to the Far East, it is observed that tourists observe children in different ways and that those observations are positive; activities such as talking to them, teaching them English, getting information about local life and playing games with them, negative observations include child beggars, children trying to sell something to tourists, and child abuse (Child safe tourism, 2012).

Conclusion and Evaluation

Many negative aspects have been neglected for the reasons that tourism has created contribution for communities and economies for many years. Among these negativities, only

the environmental impacts have been studied extensively, but the effects on women, children and indigenous communities have not been much discussed (Equations, 2008).

The destruction of child abuse in tourism is the responsibility of all relevant organizations and the state. In many countries, there are many children working especially in the restaurant industry. Nevertheless, the most important advantage over other sectors is that tourism child abuse is easy visibility and detectability. Especially sexual abuse of children can be easily identified and destroyed in a shorter time. Children roughly constitute half of the world's population, even more in some poorer countries. In India, it was found that 15% of the 2.3 million people who work for sexual purposes are children. Tourism is concerned with areas of child abuse such as hotels, nightclubs, escort services, and even train / bus stations.

In addition to the heavy legal sanctions that will be brought about the topic, the most important duty for the scientists should be to clarify this problem more evidently by investigating this issue and to develop suggestions for solution. Children's friendliness and safe tourism strategies for the state and tourism industry stakeholders to develop in tourism destinations will be able to develop a more positive destination culture and image and furthermore sustainable tourism development from the socio-economic point of view. Organizations such as the World Tourism Organization, the World Organization for Workers (ILO), Human Rights and UNICEF should work to resolve the problem by focusing on this issue.

The most basic measures to be taken in this regard are as follows;

- Child friendly areas
- Child friendly destinations
- Child friendly activities
- Safe areas for children
- Supportive and encouraging areas for children
- Guide to child friendly areas developed by UNICEF With a tourism wish that children will always be happy.

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