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Analysis of Antalya Tourism Cluster Perceived Performance with Structural Equation Model*

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Abstract

This study presents the findings of a research project regarding analysis of Antalya Tourism Cluster performance. Findings of the study reveal characteristics of Antalya Tourism Cluster by contributing to the discussions of cluster performance taking place within the industrial networks and clusters. Structural equation model was used in the study. Diamond model factors having impact on the perceived performance of Antalya Tourism Cluster were found out after analyzing data taken from 2020 samples in the study.

Keywords: Antalya Tourism Cluster, structural equation model, performance, networks

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1. Introduction

Antalya, which includes 630 kilometers of coastal area in terms of tourism, ancient cities, mausoleums, caves, harbors, waterfalls as well as lots of natural and cultural attraction centers, is the 10th city among 81 provinces in Turkey in terms of development sequence according to State Planning Organization (DPT, 2003). Antalya is a quite favorable city for tourism clustering because of its geographical position and natural, cultural and historical characteristics. Regional clusters have been increasingly drawing attentions of academicians and policy makers for the last twenty years.

Cluster, network and agglomeration researches (cited from McCann and Folta 2008) which depend on the studies of Adam Smith (1776) and Alfred Marshall (1890) became popular concepts which started to be popular and comprehensively recognized in terms of inventiveness and effectiveness of the enterprises with Porter's 1990 dated study named "the Competitive Advantage of Nations" (Clar and others, 2008).

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This popularity reflected on regional and sectorial studies as well as governmental policies. Clustering became a research area in disciplines such as geography regional planning, management and of course tourism with the effect of studies of Coase (1959) on exteriority (Sarvan and others, 2012). The number of studies in tourism sector are still insufficient when compared to the clusters and networks which have become much more research subject in the sectors such as manufacturing industry (Novelli, 2006; Bulu and Eraslan, 2008; Erkuş-Öztürk, 2009). This study provides significant preliminary findings of a large scale research aiming at measuring perceived performance of Antalya Tourism Cluster.

2. Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses of the Study

The concept of networks and clusters has been examined also in tourism sector for the last ten years (Novelli and others, 2006) and its popularity is rapidly increasing. Naturally, this popularity creates impression in Turkey, as well. For example, it includes supporting 9th Development Plan clustering (DPT, 2011) and it is specified that one of the four main objectives of New Incentive System took effect in 2009 was supporting sectorial clustering (Republic of Turkey Official Gazette, Date: 16.07.2009, Number: 227290). Reflections of the clustering whose scope of application is valid in all over the world are not restricted with these issues. The first important activity regarding application of clustering approach in Turkey was Competitive Advantage of Turkey – CAT platform which was commenced in 1999 under the leadership of Michael Porter’s team who developed clustering approach. After support to the platform increased gradually both in public and public sector, the idea for institutionalization of the platform came out and National Competition Researches Institution Association (URAK) was established in 2004 (www.urak.org, 2010). In addition to these, Undersecretariat of Foreign Trade also runs a project under the name of “Development of Clustering Policies in Turkey”. The project of development of clustering policy for Turkey is a project whose co-beneficiary institution is Undersecretariat of Foreign Trade and which is financed by EU (www.clusterturkey.com, 2010).

Clusters on which countries, especially EU member countries, focus with great significance in terms of regional and national development issues (Novelli and others, 2006) bring the enterprises in different scales together by means of supply chain and mutual interdependencies among these enterprises provide integrity of the cluster (Van den Berg and others, 2001).

In Diamond Model (Porter, 1990) which is accepted as one of the leading studies in cluster literature, it is explained that geographical concentration increases local competitive power. According to the model; consistent and strong relations among buyer, supplier and other organizations are highly important in terms of performance of the cluster. Competition supply chains are experienced in the level of networks or clusters because of alliances and coalitions among the enterprises and this situation encourages cluster formation (Wilk and Fensterseifer, 2003).

It should be created competition advantage and this advantage should be kept for the long term sustainability of institutions, regions and countries (Porter, 1990). Similarly, sustainability of a cluster also depends on this fact (Bulu and Eraslan, 2008). Porter’s diamond model is not a determinist theory except from being a good intuitive model and an explanatory framework – actually, there are not lots of alternatives- (Düzen, 2008). Insufficiency of this quantitative approach can be compensated through using a quantitative tool. This problem will be tried to be compensated by using structural equation modeling due to the fact that there are some relations among diamond model criteria, but there are not any specific hierarchical structure of the relations in the model. Structural equation modeling (SEM) is a method which enables researches to examine cause and effect relation. It is possible to examine the direction of

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