

Analysing Online Customer Experience with Tripadvisor: the Case of Konya

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Abstract – The number of participants to tourism activities are rapidly increasing. In this conjuncture, internet visitors are exploring the destinations before they visit. Applications and web sites that shared experience of visitors become more important. The aim of this study is how can we use tripadvisor for Konya destination with use its comments and advises about best prices, hotels and social activities. There are about 9176 comments has been made until the date of 03.16.2016 for Konya Destination. As samples from 71 locations under the title of places to visit in Konya, we chose 5 destination which get top points from the users.

Key words – TripAdvisor, Online Comments, Konya, Tourism, Tourist Satisfaction.

I. Introduction

Nowadays, with the technological advancements, visitors make investigations from the internet before they plan their journeys. In this regard, the importance of the internet and the information technologies are increasing day by day for the selection of the destination. Number of the destination experience sharing applications which visitors are using for having an idea about their plans are increasing rapidly. These applications can either affect the destination in a good way by having good reviews or they can affect it badly in regard to how is it perceived by the visitors. Visitor experiences and comments are one of the most important criteria for the users by means of having an idea about a destination by making an online research. In this regard, comments must be taken seriously and by eliminating those deficiencies it can increase the visitors' satisfaction levels and it can contribute positively to the destination image.

In this research, the aim is analyzing the user comments in the site TripAdvisor – which also has a mobile application – about Konya and reveal the imperfections of the city and making predictions about how to eliminate them.

II. Role of The Internet in Destination Selection and Online Comments

By the development of computers and internet technologies, their impact on human lives are increasing every day. The number of the important applications any

new technology would create is increasing day by day and there are many activity on the internet about destinations (Ozdemir, 2007: 890). Most important ones of these activities are web sites about featuring destinations' cultural, historical, touristic attractions, to narrate local activities about a location and inform about the needs like transportation, accommodation, dining, entertainment in the destination (Sari ve Kozak, 2005: 258). To attract new tourists to a destinations, web sites hosting content about destinations have a strategic importance. In addition to this, web sites about destinations shape the potential tourists' before-visit plans, make them get informed and create a destination image. Considering the technologic changes and development nowadays, importance of the websites for the tourists' selection of destinations are increasing (Çiçek vd. , 2013: 2).

As a result of communication between customer and company, learning customer demands and needs easier and faster, with the help of active customer care, reducing the costs are affecting customer satisfaction by the means of being able to serve with lower prices and similar advantages positively (Inan, 2002: 124-125). Great progress of the internet, especially web, destination management organizations are using technologic systems as an important tool for creating an effective image, because there is a strong bond between image and technology (Pender ve Sharpley, 2005: 254).

III. Tripadvisor Website and Application

The site TripAdvisor serves in 28 languages and also has a mobile app, serving freely. It's a site that users rate their visitations out of 5 and share their experiences from where they go, give advices and share photos. With over 225 comments provided by the travelers, it offers best ticket prices, best hotels, best restaurants, social activities in that locations and advices. Also there are reservation options for hotels, restaurants and flight tickets (www.tripadvisor.com.tr, 2016).

TripAdvisor's features;

- Millions of comments shared by travelers, opinions, videos and photos shared by users
- Restaurants can be discovered by food options, price range and user experiences.
- It offers the opportunity of comparing flight tickets with alternatives.
- It offers the opportunity of discovering nearby options.
- Users can share their experiences.
- It offers the opportunity of getting an adequate answer from certain forums about travel planning.
- It is possible to add an un-listed hotel, restaurant or ambulatory to TripAdvisor.
- It offers features like maps and comments for free while traveling without a necessity of having roaming data (www.tripadvisor.com.tr, 2016).

IV. Konya as a Destination

Because of it's geographic location, alongside its on the center of the Turkey, it has a very advantageous position

by the means of transportation. For the Konya and its surroundings, faith and cultural sources are the most important features. Mevlana Museum, which has the shrine of Mevlana, has an important role for making Konya known world-wide and making it a center for faith tourism (Bilim ve Özer, 2013: 4). There are 11 museums in Konya in total, with 7 in the centrum and 4 in the districts (www.konyarehberi.net, 2016). Konya's traditional handicrafts and its folkloric values are also a part of the cultural tourism. In Konya, handicrafts like felt making, carpet making, weaving, jug making, tile-making and calligraphy are attracting foreign tourists (Turizm Sektör Raporu, 2008: 41). In the direction of 2023 strategies, against the Turkey – aims to reach 50 million tourists – Konya aims for 10 million tourist alone (www.tuyed.org.tr, 2016). According to Konya Provincial Directorate of Tourism 2016 data, while there are 32 hotels with tourism operation certifications, there are 2659 rooms and 5319 beds (Konya Turizm İl Müdürlüğü, 2016).

TABLE 1

VISITORS AND INCOME STATISTICS OF KONYA
FOR 2011–2015

Year	The Number of Visitors	Income
2011	1.900.406	3.438.099
2012	1.811.335	3.509.413
2013	2.313.293	3.917.341
2014	2.298.027	5.224.175
2015	2.711.192	297.210

Source: <http://www.konyakultur.gov.tr/>, 2016

When the Table 1 is examined, it can be seen that there is a constant increase in years except for 2014, which has a slight drop. Also, until 2014, Konya's tourism income was constantly increasing. After the year 2014, because of the Mevlana Museum's entrances became free, a considerable drop on the incomes can be monitored.

V. Material and Method

TripAdvisor is available as a web site and also as Android and IOS based mobile applications. Application is being sold as a pre-installed app in some Android based smart phones. In the research, it has been tried to get data from TripAdvisor internet web site. There are 9176 comments in the TripAdvisor app about Konya destination until 16.03.2016. There are 3553 user reviews for 44 hotels, 2 user reviews for 3 rental summer houses, 2754 review for 71 units under "places to see" and 448 review for restaurants create the base of the research. As sample, top 5 best voted places to see are considered out of 71 total. Those 5 places are respectively; Mevlana Museum, Sille Village, Whirling Dervish Shows, The Shrine and Mosque of Şems-i Tebrizi, Aziziye Mosque.

VI. Findings and Comments

Mevlana Museum

Mevlana Museum, which is in service since 1926 is also known as Mevlana Shrine. While the Museum is 6.500 square meters with the garden, it has reached 18.000 square meters with the parts expropriated and organized as rose garden. It was the second most earner museum after Topkapı Palace Museum to the Ministry of Culture before its entrance became free. Mevlana Museum is at the top rank with 4+ user ranking at TripAdvisor with user votes and there are 1090 reviews about it. Mevlana Museum has been voted perfect by 596 people and it has, 347 very good, 133 normal, 13 bad votes and 1 terrible vote. When the review comments are investigated, most used words for the comments are peaceful, impressive, indulgence and perfect (www.tripadvisor.com.tr, 2016).

- While the free entrance pleases visitors, cutting trees as a result of the landscape regulations were caused reactions from them. It also means there are so much visitors that are visiting Mevlana Museum more than once.

- Despite there is a parking garage in front of the museum, users stress that there is a parking problem around the Museum.

- It has been stressed that night illumination of the Mevlana Museum is beautiful and it is admirable when watched at night.

- Cafes, restaurants and souvenir shops are found pleasing by the visitors while they complain about the souvenir shop inside the Mevlana Museum is too expensive.

- It has been stressed that museum is quiet at weekdays but it is overcrowded at the weekends, making it not possible to see everything inside the museum.

- It has been stressed that it is easy to access to museum with all the direction signs all around the city.

- It has been stressed that museum employees and security are not cheerful.

- It has been stressed that because it is overcrowded during the weekends, air conditioning is not enough and there is too much noise caused by the crowd.

- It has been stressed that under-heated prayer room inside the dervish room is appreciated, but ablution places for the visitors needs regulations.

- It has been stressed positively that the service given by earphones enabling visitors get information is appreciated.

- Cleanliness of the museum and regulations for the disabled visitors are appreciated by the visitors.

- Visitors stress that there are not enough toilets.

- Visitors indicate that there are too much beggar kids around the museum and they are uncomfortable about it.

Sille Village

Sille Village, which has been voted 4+ over 5 in TripAdvisor by the visitors has the second place after Mevlana Museum and it has 135 user reviews. Mevlana

Museum has been voted as perfect by 66 people and it has 55 very good and 13 normal votes, even though it has no bad votes, it has 1 terrible vote. When the review comments are investigated for the Sille Village, most used words for the comments are authentic, ideal for drinking coffee and having breakfast, affordable prices (www.tripadvisor.com.tr, 2016).

- It has been stressed that destination signs for access to the village is insufficient.

- It has been stressed that there are not enough souvenir shops and there are too much cafes.

- It has been stressed that employers are not cheerful but local residents are cheerful and hospitable.

Whirling Dervish Shows

Whirling Dervish shows, which has been voted 4+ over 5 in TripAdvisor by the visitors has the third place after Mevlana Museum and Sille Village and it has 343 user reviews. Whirling Dervish shows has been voted as perfect by 217 people and it has 85 very good and 34 normal votes, 5 bad and 2 terrible votes. When the review comments are investigated for the Whirling Dervish Shows, most used words for the comments are impressive, beautiful and peaceful (www.tripadvisor.com.tr, 2016).

Whirling Dervish Shows performed free at Mevlana Cultural Centre every Saturday at 19.00 are attracting attention of people

- It has been stressed that long speeches before the shows makes people bored.

- It has been stressed that architecture of the Mevlana Cultural Centre is very beautiful and employees are cheerful and hospitable.

- It has been stressed that Mevlana Cultural Centre is beautiful and clean.

- It has been stressed that air conditioning is insufficient and people must be warned about take their phones to silent, not to take photos with flash on etc. and not to disturb whirling dervishes and visitors.

Şems-i Tebrizi Shrine and Mosque

Şems-i Tebrizi Shrine and Mosque, which has been voted 4+ over 5 in TripAdvisor by the visitors has the fourth place after Mevlana Museum, Sille Village, Whirling Dervish Shows and users have made 111 reviews about Şems-i Tebrizi Shrine and Mosque at total. Şems-i Tebrizi Shrine and Mosque has been voted as perfect by 64 people and it has 28 very good and 16 normal votes and 3 bad votes. When the review comments are investigated for the Şems-i Tebrizi Shrine and Mosque, most used words for the comments are impressive, sun of science, beautiful and peaceful and indifference (www.tripadvisor.com.tr, 2016).

- Even though it is ten minute distance to the Mevlana Museum, it is not as intense as Mevlana Museum and it has been stressed that the most important reason for that is lack of advertisement.

- While it has been stressed that environmental planning is beautiful, it has been pointed that beggars nearby are making visitors uncomfortable.

- It has been stressed that as a most important deficiency is the lack of direction signs to access Şems-i Tebrizi Shrine and Mosque.

Aziziye Mosque

Aziziye Mosque, which has been voted 4+ over 5 in TripAdvisor by the visitors has the fifth place after Mevlana Museum, Sille Village, Whirling Dervish Shows, Şems-i Tebrizi Shrine and Mosque and users have made 84 reviews about Aziziye Mosque at total. While the Aziziye Mosque has been voted perfect by 56 people, 24 people has voted very good and 4 people voted normal. When the review comments are investigated for the Aziziye Mosque, most used words for the comments are masterwork, impressive and perfect (www.tripadvisor.com.tr, 2016).

- It has been stressed that architecture of the Aziziye Mosque is perfect and also spacious.

- While it has been stressed that environmental planning is good it has been pointed that the only problem is the lack of parking lots.

Conclusion

As a result of the surveys made, even though Mevlana Museum takes good notes from the visitors, lack of parking lots, being overcrowded especially at weekends and employees working at the museum are not cheerful, lack of toilets, inadequacy of air conditioning due to being overcrowded at weekends and beggars around the museum are the prominent negativities of the museum. For the Sille Village, lack of direction signs, inadequacy of souvenir shops, having too much cafeterias and employees being not cheerful are the prominent negativities of the Village. Having long speeches before the Whirling Dervish shows, inadequacy of the air conditioning and not giving enough consciousness raising before the shows are the prominent negativities of Whirling Dervish Shows. Not having enough direction signs and beggars around the Şems-i Tebrizi Shrine and Mosque are the prominent negativities of it. Lack of parking lots are being considered as a deficiency by the visitors at the Aziziye Mosque.

It is foreseen that if there would be a regulation for the entries at the weekends because of it being overcrowded at the Mevlana Museum, that would increase the visitors' satisfaction levels. If the research object at this project, Konya's 5 prominent destinations' deficiencies would be solved, it would increase the visitors' satisfaction levels and it would contribute the destination's image positively.

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