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Introductory Chapter: Studying Tourism

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1. Introduction

Tourism is an important phenomenon within today's global world. It is regarded to be the world's biggest industry [1, 2]. Although it is considered to have a long history, it is generally accepted that modern society and industrial revolution have a huge impact on the today's tourism sector [2]. This is mostly due to the factors of twentieth century developments such as decrease in working hours and increase in the wages, existence of the concept of "leisure time," emergence of "consumer culture," and technological advancements [2]. Besides, it attracts corresponding interest within the academic area. The concept inspires attention from different scientific areas and can be considered within an interdisciplinary manner [2]. This is because of the reason that tourism is not a simple issue [1], and as a result, it is involved with different aspects and has both negative and positive effects [2] on economy, social structure, local and visitor people, environment, etc. For instances, local rituals may be commodified in order to attract tourist; however, this may end up with the loss of meaning and sacredness for that ritual [1]. Besides, tourism may be harmful to local environment or social structure. This is mostly because after it local people start to leave that area and accordingly ecotourism or slow tourism is proposed contrary to these negative effects [1]. In this context, this book aims to handle "tourism," within a comprehensive perspective considering economical, managerial, educational, and marketing point of view.

Addition to tourism's importance within the global scale, its impact on economy is not restricted on the global scale. Besides, in the national economies, it also plays specific roles such as "attracting capital investment, creating employment opportunities, stimulating foreign exchange rates, and facilitating innovation transfers" [3]. However, it is considered to be a complex academic job to analyze the total effect of tourism on a country's economy and this is mostly because of the lack of conceptual knowledge regarding the term [4]. However, due to its complex nature, the outcomes for the national economies are controversial. For instance, tourism sector generates huge amounts of money; however, it is argued that most of it does not stay within the local economy but transfer abroad via global hotel or tour operator firms [1]. The sector generates employment, but it is considered to be low-waged and seasonal [1]. As a result, mostly, tourism's impact on national economy is considered on the basis of consumption only [4], or studies try to examine partial effects of tourism on national or global economy.

Marketing and management of tourism sector is also a complex issue. There are multi-channels for tourists to hear from the firm in this sector or simply local destinations. Websites and word of mouth (WOM) recommendation are the mostly used ones [1], and both websites and WOM may not be fully under control for the respondent firm. Besides, within the managerial perspective, a new topic arouse beginning with the 2000s called "experience economy," which is different from the

service sector since it emphasize the “joy of the consumer” form the experience [5]. This term is especially important and will also gain more, since joy is one of the most important feeling within today’s consumption theory and consumption culture. One more concept time to time contradicting with the experience emphasis of tourism is sustainability, and it is also gaining importance within both academic literature and industry itself [6]. The increasing importance of sustainability is related to the double-faced nature of tourism, which means it has negative environmental impact along with the economical and managerial advantages.

Education for tourism is another important issue. Parallel with the term’s multi-disciplinary nature, it is proposed that tourism education needs to consider also different perspectives and disciplines [7]. However, it is argued that most of the existing educational system depends on the traditional point of views and methods [7]. A revolutionary and inter-multi-disciplinary curriculum is told to be needed [7], which may be helpful to absorb the multi-inter-disciplinary nature of the concept.

A complete discussion or even a complete introduction for all of the aspects of the tourism concept is beyond the scope of this chapter and accordingly, it may be considered to be a modest effort for a try to introduce the concept and the book as the chapter name implies. Due to this multi-disciplinary, multi-dimension, and multi-method character of the concept of tourism, it is appropriate to study it accordingly in order to understand the subject with its different aspects. This book is a modest try for that end. In the following chapters, the concept is tried to be held within economical, managerial, marketing, and educational perspectives, within different frameworks and methodologies. I hope you may have a joyful reading experience.

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