

# RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS AND DESTINATION STAKEHOLDERS A RESEARCH IN REGIONS OF MARMARA, AEGEAN AND MEDITERRANEAN IN TURKEY

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## ABSTRACT

In today, there is a growing important on stakeholders in destination management. Defining stakeholders and understanding relations, potential for cooperation and threats between stakeholders is important factor for destination management. This study relates this reality to destination management organizations and their stakeholders. This study present some valuable data for future empirical research which is emphases on relationships between Provincial Directorates of Culture and Tourism and their stakeholders in three region (Marmara, Aegean and Mediterranean) in Turkey.

**Key Words:** Destination management organizations, destination stakeholder, Provincial Directorates of Culture and Tourism, Turkey

## DESTİNASYONU YÖNETEN ORGANİZASYONLAR ve DESTİNASYON PAYDAŞLARI ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİLER: TÜRKİYE' DE MARMARA, EGE ve AKDENİZ BÖLGELERİNDE YAPILAN BİR ARAŞTIRMA ÖZET

Günümüz destinasyon yönetiminde paydaşların önemi giderek artmaktadır. Paydaşları tanımlamak ve paydaşlarla olan ilişkileri anlamak, paydaşların yarattığı işbirliği ve tehdit potansiyelini ortaya koymak destinasyon yönetimi için önemli bir unsurdur. Bu araştırma, bu gerçeği destinasyon yönetim organizasyonları ve destinasyon paydaşları ile bağdaştırmaktadır. Bu araştırma, Türkiye'nin üç bölgesindeki (Marmara, Ege ve Akdeniz) İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlükleri ile destinasyon paydaşları arasındaki ilişkilere odaklanarak gelecekte yapılacak araştırmalar için değerli bulgular sunmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Destinasyon yönetim organizasyonları, destinasyon paydaşları, il Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlükleri, Türkiye.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Like any other organization, the establishment of collaborative relations with stakeholders is becoming important for tourism organizations. All tourism organizations have relations with their stakeholders. This makes the concepts of "stakeholder" and "stakeholder theory" important in destination management. Stakeholder theory argues that effective management is required for "consideration of the interests of all other stakeholders who are vital to the success of the organizations". Destination management organizations (DMOs) have a wide range of stakeholders that have potential for cooperation but also potential threats the ability of the DMO. Thus, if destination management organizations want to be successful, they should identify destination stakeholders and analyze relations with them. So, stakeholders who are likely to influence the destination management organizations must be identified and then assessed in terms of these stakeholders with their potential to threaten the organization and their potential to cooperate.

### **1. DEFINING AND ANALYSING RELATIONS WITH STAKEHOLDERS**

Among academics in general and management scholar in particular, there appears to be a growing interest in what has been broadly termed the stakeholder concept (Jones and Wicks, 1999:206). Freeman (1984), defines stakeholders as "any group or individual who can affect, or is affected by, the achievement of a corporation's purpose". From this definition, its obvious that the view of stakeholders is very broad indeed-going beyond those that have purely formal, official, or contractual ties to the organization. These other external groups increasingly have the ability to affect the organization. The importance of relationships with these organizations supports the need for a new stakeholder approach to strategic management (Sheehan and Ritchie, 2005: 711-734). Organization is aware of stakeholders and recognizes the need to deal with them (Jonker ve Foster, 2002:187-195). After Freeman (1984) presenting stakeholder concept, Mallot (1990), identifies a three-step framework for understanding stakeholder. These steps are;

Identify and specify the stakeholders,

Identify and describe the relations between the stakeholders and the organizations, and among the stakeholders,

Construct stakeholder and stakeholder map.

When players proactively consider the interests of all other stakeholders, the industry as a whole stands to gain significant returns in the long term (Sautter and Leisen, 1999:312-328). So that, it is essential to identify the relative importance of the different stakeholders faced by a corporation (Clement, 2005:255-264). Likewise, stakeholders who are likely to influence the organization must be identified. Then assessments about stakeholders, their potential to threaten with the organization and their potential to cooperate with organization must be mentioned.

Without the knowledge of opinions of stakeholders it is not possible to manage nature conservation and development in the protected area properly (Cihar ve Stankova, 2006). So, there is need to understand relations among stakeholders like problems, threats and cooperations exist between. Savage et all (1991) argue that is important to understand each stakeholder's potential to threaten the organization. Assessing the potential for threat is akin to developing a worst-case scenario of how that stakeholder may affect the organization.

In the next section we will briefly review the literature concerning destination stakeholders and destination management organizations (DMOs).

## **2. DESTINATION STAKEHOLDERS**

Many have described categories or groups of stakeholders such as employees, customers, suppliers, lenders, shareholder, government and nongovernmental organizations. For a tourism destination, stakeholders are hotels, travel agencies, restaurants, universities, government and etc. There are many potential benefits when these stakeholders in a destination collaborate together and attempt to build a consensus about tourism policies (Healey,1998). Since tourism stakeholders have been considered as important key players or components that influence the success or failure of tourism in a region, their participation and involvement should be considered in tourism planning and development. (Yoon, 2002).

While locally- based tourism collaborations may offer advantages to stakeholders and destinations, their development gives rise to difficult challenges. For example, the resource allocations, policy ideas, and institutional practices embedded within society may often restrict the influence of particular stakeholders on the collaborative arrangements. The power of stakeholders is often unequal, and it is suggested that power governs the interaction of individuals, organizations and agencies influencing, or trying to influ-

ence, the formulation of tourism policy and the manner in which it is implemented (Hall 1994:52). Many organizations aspire to gain collaborative advantage by working in partnerships across organizational, sectoral, and even national boundaries. Such collaborations, however, are difficult to manage, and the likelihood of disappointing outputs is high. To create advantage, practitioners need to engage in a continuous process of nurturing the collaborative processes (Vangen and Huxham, 2003:5). So, in the tourism sector, there is a need to increase understanding perceptions within the destination, and a need for regulators to incorporate them into management strategies (Anne, 2005: 108-133). The current paper is important as being a step in furthering this understanding.

Some authors have taken a perspectives based on collaboration and interorganizational relations in tourism (Fridgen, 1986; Selin and Beason, 1991; Medina Munoz and Garcia Falcon, 1999:102-122; Medina Munoz and Garcia Falcon, 2000:737-762; Medina Munoz ve Diğerleri, 2002: 46-52; ). But there is few study that discuss destination stakeholders and their relations with DMOs. For example, Sheehan and Ritchie (2004:711-734) made the initial connection between stakeholder approach and destination management organizations. They examined relations between destination stakeholders and DMOs by a sample of North American CEOs. In their research, hotels appears to be most important stakeholder group, but less than half reported having formal relationships with DMO's, most of primary stakeholders are perceived as having high potential to threaten the DMO's and similar results. This research makes valuable contributions to the understanding of tourism from interorganizational perspectives and also provide argument for a stakeholder approach.

### **3. DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION IN TURKEY: PROVINCIAL DIRECTORATES OF CULTURE AND TOURISM**

Destination management plays a key role in addressing the many and sometimes conflicting issues that arise in contemporary tourism. Destinations present complex challenges for management and development in that they must serve a range of needs of tourists and tourism-related businesses as well as the resident community, local businesses and industries (Howie, 2003). Tourism is a rapidly evolving industry that has become increasingly competitive in the global marketplace. With destinations now competing directly with others around the world, it is possible to assert that

the tourism is a sector in a state of transition. For DMOs, this transition means becoming a destination management organization instead of just a destination marketing organization. In this regard, DMOs are becoming more prominent as "destination developers" by acting as catalysts and facilitators for the realization of tourism developments (Dore and Crouch, 2003: 137-151).

Destination management organizations act as an "hub firm" in tourism system which brings together different stakeholders' interests, coordinate activities, provide leadership in expanding the beneficial community impacts of tourism in the destination area and pool resources towards developing an integrated system. By creating a broad network of suppliers and centralizing a number of functions, destination systems presents synergies in management, marketing and planning, creates economies of scale in distribution, branding, advertising and technology adaptation whereas economies of scope are facilitated through product diversification and creative product packaging (Dargan and Prosser, 2001). Therefore, the most important challenge for destination organizations is to bring all individual actors together to cooperate rather than compete (Buhalis and Cooper, 1998). While considerable resources are being directed to DMOs in a major city and resort destinations, very little appears to be known regarding the degree to which they recognize stakeholders in their destinations and relations that occur between them. To fulfill its mandate, the DMOs must have an understanding of individual and organizations that can influence the achievement of its objectives (Sheehan and Ritche, 2005:711-734).

In Turkey, there are destination management organizations as named Provincial Directorates of Culture and Tourism (PDCTs) in each province. They coordinate efforts to attract tourist (business and leisure) to their geographic area (destination). PDCTs conduct services related to culture and tourism of Ministry of Culture and Tourism in provinces. On the other hand, PDCTs is a management and control mechanism to ensure conducting activities in reasonable and efficient way for development of tourism areas. (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2007).

These Provincial Directorates of Culture and Tourism have a great diversity of stakeholders in their destination. These stakeholders can be ranked as universities, governorships, municipalities, provincial authority, district administrator, chamber of commerce, travel companies (road, airline, seaway and railway), hotels, restaurants, hospitality industry (motel, hostel),

travel agency, fun and shopping centers, congress centers, sponsors, media, tourists, advertising agency, retail stores, community, citizens/residents (Sheenan ve Ritchie, 2005:711-734) and local headman, non-governmental organizations, tour operators, museums, culture and art centers.

#### **4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This empirical study identifies PDCT' stakeholders, examines their relation nature with PDCTs, differentiates them based on their potential to threaten and cooperate with PDCT's.

A questionnaire was used to collect perceptions from directors of PDCT's. Directors of PDCT's have management control over destinations, the final decision makers within PDCT and have the most interaction with stakeholder in destinations. This survey was conducted in three region, Marmara, Aegean and Mediterranean in Turkey. These three regions was chosen because they are most important for tourism sector in Turkey. Tourism revenues intensify in Marmara, Aegean and Mediterranean (Göçer and Çıracı, 2003:3-14). Data were gathered using a questionnaire delivered by mail and fax. In addition, a reminder phone call made if necessary. In this three regions, there are 27 provinces and each has PDCT's. So, final sample was 25 (a 92.5 % response rate). Perceptions will be reported by directors of PDCT's and measured using open-ended and closed-ended (5 point Likert type scale) questions. The instrument was developed, by using previous studies described by Selin and Beason (1991), Fowler (1998), Sheehan and Ritchie (2005) and Savage and others (1991).

#### **RESULTS**

Firstly, respondents were asked to reply some demographic questions. Demographics characteristics of the respondent shows that the majority of the sample (%72.0) indicates faculty level of education. All (%100) of the sample have different education than tourism. About half of the sample (%48.0) reports their work duration of more than 10 years in tourism sector. On the other hand, their work duration in this work is between 1-5 years (%52).

The second question group is based on the nature of relationships with stakeholders. Respondents were asked to sign to questions of whether "the relationship of the stakeholder to the PDCT is formal or official or contractual". If the relationship is formal or official or contractual, this time

stakeholders can be considered primary, if not, secondary. Table 1 shows all destination stakeholders have a formal or official or contractual relationships with PDCT's. So, all destination stakeholders are the primary stakeholders of PDCTs.

**Table 1.** Nature of Relationships With Stakeholders

Destination Stakeholders	f (n:25)	%
Universities	20	80
Governorships	25	<b>100</b>
Municipalities	24	<b>96</b>
Provincial Authority	24	<b>96</b>
District Administrator	23	92
Local Headman	16	64
Chamber of Commerce	20	80
Travel Companies (road, airline, seaway and rail-way),	15	60
Non-Governmental Organizations	21	84
Hotels	23	92
Restaurants	23	92
Hospitality Industry (motel, hostel)	21	84
Tour Operators	20	80
Travel Agency	23	92
Museum	23	92
Culture and Art Centers	17	68
Fun and Shopping Centers	10	40
Congress Centers	10	<b>40</b>
Sponsors	10	<b>40</b>
Media	18	72
Tourists	18	72
Advertising Agency	12	48
Retail Stores	6	<b>24</b>
Citizens/Residents	12	48

PDCTs have a formal or official or contractual relationships most with Governorships (% 100), Municipalities (% 96) and Provincial Authority (% 96). PDCTs have minimal communication with Retail Stores (%24), Fun and Shopping Centers (%40), Congress Centers (%40), and Sponsors (%40).

The third group of question asked directors of PDCTs to identify their stakeholder based on their importance. Importance was determined by asking each respondent to list up to ten stakeholders firstly. In the next step,

each respondent was asked to rank three most important stakeholders. Table-2 shows that the important ten and most important three stakeholders.

**Table 2.** The Ten Important and Three Most Important Stakeholders of PDCTs.

Destination Stakeholders	10 Important Stakeholders		3 Most Important Stakeholders	
	f (n:25)	%	f (n:25)	%
Universities	19	76	4	16
Governorships	23	92	21	84
Municipalities	25	100	15	60
Provincial Authority	20	80	14	56
District Administrator	17	68	1	4
Local Headman	6	24	3	12
Chamber of Commerce	17	68	1	4
Travel Companies (road, airline, seaway and railway),	8	32	-	-
Non-Governmental Organizations	14	56	3	12
Hotels	16	64	2	8
Restaurants	8	32	-	-
Hospitality Industry (motel, hostel)	13	52	2	8
Tour Operators	12	48	2	8
Travel Agency	20	80	3	12
Museum	11	44	3	12
Culture and Art Centers	4	16	1	4
Fun and Shopping Centers	1	4	-	-
Congress Centers	1	4	-	-
Sponsors	2	8	-	-
Media	6	24	1	4
Tourists	5	20	2	8
Advertising Agency	2	8	-	-
Retail Stores	1	4	-	-
Citizens/Residents	3	12	1	4

Table 2 lists the ten important stakeholders. Municipalities (%100), Governorships (% 92), Provincial Authority (% 80), Travel Agency (% 80), Universities (% 76), District Administrator (% 68), Chamber of Commerce (% 68), Hotels (%64), Non-Governmental Organizations (% 56), and Hospitality Industry (motel, hostel) (% 52) appears to be the ten important. Three most

important stakeholders are listed as Governorships (% 84), Municipalities (% 60) and Provincial Authority (% 56). From the findings, Governorships (% 84) appears to be the most important with 21 of the 25 respondents mentioning them among other stakeholders.

With fourth group question, respondents were asked to state “why you selected this three stakeholders as being important” for each of top three stakeholders. Responses by taking open-ended questions were groups into five themes. These themes are determined bureaucracy requirements, being in coordination, providing local support, infrastructure support and financial source. Table 3 shows stated reasons for three most important stakeholders, Governorships, Municipalities and Provincial Authority.

**Table 3.** Reasons For 3 Important Stakeholders

Stakeholders	Bureaucracy	Coordination	Local Support	Infrastructure Support	Financial Source	Total
Governorships	9	4	5	-	-	18
Municipalities	-	3	6	3	1	13
Provincial Authority	-	4	3	1	3	11

So, the most common reasons for Governorships are bureaucracy, local support and coordination. For Municipalities most mentioned reasons are providing local support, coordination, infrastructure support and financial source. Provincial Authority is important stakeholder as being in coordination with PDCTs and providing local support, infrastructure support and financial source to PDCTs.

After determining important stakeholders and reasons, additionally, Table 4 shows comparison of important stakeholders in Regions of Marmara, Aegean and Mediterranean.

**Table 4.** Comparison Importance of Stakeholders in Three Region

Three Important Stakeholders in Three Regions								
Destination Stakeholders	Mediterranean	Aegean	Marmara	Total	Mediterranean	Aegean	Marmara	Total
Universities	7	5	7	19	1	-	3	4
Governorships	8	7	8	23	7	6	8	21
Municipalities	8	7	10	25	3	5	7	15
Provincial Authority	7	7	6	20	6	4	4	14
District Administrator	6	6	5	17	1	-	0	1
Chamber of Commerce	6	6	5	17	1	-	0	1
Travel Companies (road, airline, sea-way and railway).	1	1	6	8	-	-	3	3
Non-Governmental Organizations	4	6	4	14	-	-	3	3
Hotels	6	3	7	16	1	1	0	2
Hospitality Industry (motel, hostel)	3	4	6	13	1	-	1	2
Tour Operators	3	3	6	12	-	-	2	2
Travel Agency	7	6	7	20	1	1	1	3
Museum	4	5	2	11	1	2	0	3

The findings of the survey show that Universities, Governorships, Municipalities, Provincial Authority, District Administrator, Chamber of Commerce and Travel Agency are in ten important stakeholders in all three regions. Because, Governorships, Municipalities, Provincial Authority and District Administrator are public corporations and their work with another public corporation, PDCT. PDCTs are in collaboration with Chamber of Commerce and Travel Agency as destination stakeholders. Besides, there are some differences about ten important stakeholders between the regions of Marmara, Aegean and Mediterranean. While Travel Companies and Tour Operators are only in ten important stakeholders in Marmara, Non-Governmental Organizations and Museums are in ten important stakeholders in Aegean and Mediterranean. While Hotels are in ten important stakeholders in Marmara and Mediterranean, Hospitality Industry (motel, hostel) is in ten important stakeholders in Marmara and Aegean. Likewise, Hospitality Industry (motel, hostel) is not expressed by directors of PDCTs in Mediterranean between ten important stakeholders. The other finding that museums are not expressed by directors of PDCTs in Marmara between ten important stakeholders.

At the fifth group of questions, directors of PDCTs asked about potential threats from stakeholders by explaining about their level of agreement (on a

5-point Likert type scale) with “This stakeholder has the potential to threaten to PDCT”. Table 5 shows level of agreements of directors for each stakeholder.

**Table 5.** Directors’ Perceptions of Potential Threats From Destination Stakeholders

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Universities	25	1,6400	,48990
Governorships	25	1,5600	,50662
Municipalities	25	1,6800	,55678
Provincial Authority	25	1,6000	,50000
District Administrator	25	1,5200	,50990
Local Headman	25	1,6400	,48990
Chamber of Commerce	25	1,6000	,50000
Travel Companies (road, airline, seaway and railway)	25	1,6800	,47610
Non-Governmental Organizations	25	1,7600	,52281
Hotels	25	1,6000	,50000
Restaurants	25	1,6400	,48990
Hospitality Industry (motel, hostel)	25	1,6000	,50000
Tour Operators	25	1,6800	,55678
Travel Agency	25	1,6400	,56862
Museum	25	1,5600	,50662
Culture and Art Centers	25	1,6400	,48990
Fun and Shopping Centers	25	1,6800	,47610
Congress Centers	25	1,7600	,59722
Sponsors	25	1,9200	,64031
Media	25	1,8800	,66583
Tourists	25	1,8000	,50000
Advertising Agency	25	1,8800	,52599
Retail Stores	25	1,9600	,61101
Citizens/Residents	25	1,7600	,52281
Valid N (listwise)	25		

**Note:** (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree and (5) strongly agree

From the Table 5, it can be seen, the directors perceived the none of destination stakeholders as potential threat. Means are ranked between “1=strongly disagree and 2= disagree”. Means also ranked low than 1,96.

At the fifth group of questions, directors of PDCTs also asked to indicate their level of agreement with stakeholder has potential to cooperate with the PDCT with "This stakeholder has the potential to threaten to PDCT". Table-6 shows level of agreements of directors for each stakeholder.

Findings show that all stakeholders identified as having the potential to cooperate with the PDCTs. Means are ranked above 3,48. This means all stakeholders that were identified as most important were also perceived as having potential to cooperate with the PDCTs.

**Table 6.** Directors' Perceptions of Potential Cooperation From Destination Stakeholders

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Universities	25	3,8800	1,12990
Governorships	25	4,2000	1,00000
Municipalities	25	4,1200	1,01325
Provincial Authority	25	4,1200	1,01325
District Administrator	25	4,0800	,95394
Local Headman	25	3,8400	,74610
Chamber of Commerce	25	3,9600	1,05987
Travel Companies (road, airline, seaway and railway)	25	3,7600	1,05198
Non-Governmental Organizations	25	3,9200	,90921
Hotels	25	3,9200	1,07703
Restaurants	25	3,9600	1,09848
Hospitality Industry (motel, hostel)	25	4,0400	1,09848
Tour Operators	25	4,0400	1,05987
Travel Agency	25	4,1200	1,05357
Museum	25	4,0800	1,07703
Culture and Art Centers	25	3,9200	,90921
Fun and Shopping Centers	25	3,6800	,98826
Congress Centers	25	3,9200	,99666
Sponsors	25	3,5600	1,04403
Media	25	3,7600	1,05198
Tourists	25	3,7600	1,01160
Advertising Agency	25	3,6800	1,14455
Retail Stores	25	3,4800	1,00499
Citizens/Residents	25	3,8000	1,11803
Valid N (listwise)	25		

**Note:** (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree and (5) strongly agree

## **CONCLUSION**

This study attempts to present the perceptions of directors of PDCTs regarding stakeholder assessment and management. This attempt is critical in helping to understand platforms in tourism as conveners that affect tourism destinations. Findings takes on added importance in successful tourism destination management involves primary voices from tourism management organizations, Provincial Directorates of Culture and Tourism in Turkey.

This study provides some striking results. One of them, directors of PDCT's have education except tourism area. It is essential to note that all stakeholders are primary to PDCT's. This may be explained the fact that destination management requires to communicate with all stakeholders. PDCTs are public corporation and they communicate with other public corporations for bureaucratic process required.

In this study, Governorships, Municipalities, Provincial Authority appear to be the most important ten and three stakeholders. Being a public corporation is a common characteristic for these stakeholders and they are a management and control mechanism in destination. A possible explanation for ranking of these stakeholders as most important may be related to the critical relationships with PDCTs in providing some advantages (local support, financial support etc.).

When comparing important stakeholders in three regions, some interesting findings is acquired. For example; hotels are not expressed by directors of PDCTs in Aegean between 10 important stakeholders and museums are not expressed by directors of PDCTs in Marmara between 10 important stakeholders. Additionally, Governorships, Municipalities, Provincial Authority appear to be the most important three stakeholders in all three regions. These findings reflect bureaucratic structure in destination management.

Most important aspect of tourism sector, it occurs interrelationships of different organizations. Therefore, cooperation between stakeholders is important. The findings show that the directors of PDCTs perceived the none of all destination stakeholders as potential threat. All stakeholders identified as having the potential to cooperate with the PDCTs. These findings support the nature of tourism sector.

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