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Innovative Approaches for Tourism: The Impact of Cittaslow

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OZ

Turizm İçin İnovatif Yaklaşım: Cittaslow Etkisi

Cittaslow (Slow City) Hareketi, yerel farklılığı ve sürdürülebilirliği vurgulayan ve bireylerin “yaşam kalitesini” iyileştirmeyi amaçlayan yeni ve gelişen bir uygulamadır (Pink, 2008: 163). Geçmiş gelenekleri çağdaş yaşam tarzlarıyla bütünleştiren Cittaslow hareketi, sürdürülebilirlik temelinde ilerlemeyi ve değişmeyi engeller. Kültürel mirasa sahip küçük şehirlerin özelliklerini ve kendine özgü kimliklerini ve özelliklerini koruyarak, Cittaslow Hareketi temel olarak yerel alanın özelliklerini ve özelliklerini, yerel alanın standartlarını ve yaşam tarzlarını ve diğer şehirlerden bölgeyi farklılaştıran genel şehir dokusunun kaybolmasını önlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu nedenle Cittaslow hareketi, turizm sektöründe yaşam kalitesi temelinde kültür, sürdürülebilirlik ve mirasın bir kombinasyonunu sunmaktadır.

Dünyanın dört bir yanındaki birçok Cittaslow şehri var ve etkileri uzun süredir geçmiş literatürde tartışılıyor. Ancak, bu çalışmaların hiç biri, kantitatif anlamda gerçek etkiyi değerlendirmek için Cittaslow Hareketinin etkisini modellememiştir. Bu çalışma, literatürdeki bu boşluğun doldurulmasını ve Cittaslow Hareketinin belirli şehirlerdeki olası etkilerini ölçmek için değişkenlerin memnuniyeti, zamanı ve benzeri ile ilgili bir matematiksel model sunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Makale, Cittaslow Hareketi'nin tarihsel gelişiminin sunumuyla başlayacak ve daha sonra kültür, miras, sürdürülebilirlik ve yaşam kalitesi gibi Cittaslow Hareketi ile ilgili temel kavramları tartışacaktır. Daha sonra, Cittaslow Hareketi'nin turistik mekânlardaki etkisi bir model sunulmasıyla tartışılacaktır. Model, Cittaslow Hareketinin, memnuniyet değişkeninin kantitatif bir yansıması olarak düşünülebilecek “yaşam kalitesi” (QoL) kavramı temelinde etkisini ölçmeyi önerecektir. Model, analiz amacına yönelik olarak sadece turistlerin yaşam kalitesindeki değişimi dikkate almakla kalmayacak, aynı zamanda hizmet sağlayıcıların yaşam kalitesinin (yani turistik destinasyonlardaki paydaşların) Cittaslow Hareketi'nin sunumundan nasıl etkilendiğini de dikkate alacaktır.

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Araştırmanın beklenen sonucu, hem turistlerin hem de yerel hizmet sağlayıcıların yaşam kalitesinde genel bir gelişmedir. Cittaslow Hareketi'nin etkisine yönelik bir model sunarak, hareketin katkıları daha iyi anlaşılacak ve inovasyon açısından bir sonraki adımlar için bir yol sağlayacaktır. Sonuç olarak, Cittaslow Hareketi, turizm faaliyetlerini yavaşlatıp eğlence ve keyif üzerine odaklanarak turizm sektörünün tüketici turizm anlayışından korunmasını hedefleyen yeni bir inovasyon olup, bilimsel araştırmalara büyük önem vermektedir.

1. Abstract

Cittaslow (Slow City) Movement is a new and developing practice which emphasizes the local distinctiveness and sustainability and seeks to improve “quality of life” of individuals (Pink, 2008: 163). Integrating the past traditions with the contemporary lifestyles, Cittaslow movement envelops progress and change based on sustainability. Through protecting the characteristics and its unique identity and features of the small cities with cultural heritage, Cittaslow Movement fundamentally aims to prevent local characteristics and properties, the standards and life styles of local area, and the general city texture which differs the area from other cities, from disappearing. Hence, Cittaslow Movement presents a combination of culture, sustainability and heritage in tourism sector on the basis of quality of life.

There are many Cittaslow cities all around the world and their impact has long been discussed in the past literature. However, none of these studies have modeled the impact of Cittaslow Movement in order to evaluate the real impact in a quantitative sense. This study aims to fill this gap in the literature and provide a mathematical model to measure possible effects of Cittaslow Movement in particular cities, with respect to the variables satisfaction, time, and so on. The paper will begin with the presentation of the historical development of Cittaslow Movement, and then it will discuss the key concepts with respect to Cittaslow Movement such as culture, heritage, sustainability and quality of life. Next, the impact of Cittaslow Movement in touristic places will be discussed by presenting a model. The model will suggest measuring the impact of Cittaslow Movement on the basis of the concept “quality of life” (QoL) which can be considered as a quantitative reflection of satisfaction variable. The model will not only take the change in the quality of life of tourists into consideration for the object of analysis, but it will also consider how quality of life of service providers (i.e. stakeholders in touristic destinations) is affected by the presentation of Cittaslow Movement.

The expected result of the study is a general improvement in the quality of life of both tourists and local service providers. By presenting a model for the effect of Cittaslow Movement, the contributions of the movement will be better understood and it will provide a pathway for next steps in terms of innovation. All in all, Cittaslow Movement is a new innovation, targeting to protect individuals from consumerist understanding of tourism sector by slowing down touristic activities and focusing on entertainment and pleasure, it gets significant attention for scientific investigation.

Introduction

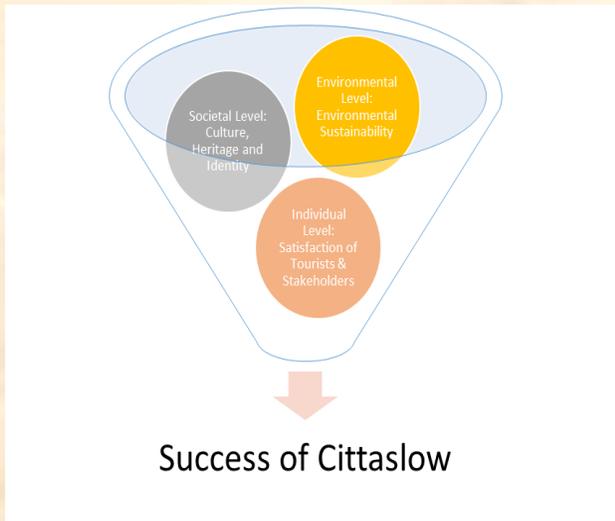
The Cittaslow Movement was born in 1999 in Chianti which is a little town in Tuscany, Italy. Literally “citta” means city in Italian and the term “Cittaslow” indicates a slow city where people are offered a different pattern of consumption as compared to fast- and mass consumption in the city life. Considering the town itself and thinking of different way of development appears a brand new idea in a sense that improving the quality of life of tourists as well as service providers in a given destination. These ideals were endorsed by some of the Mayors in a short term as well as the president of slow food, Carlo Petrini. The municipalities joining the association are expected to care about healthy succession of seasons, the general health of their citizens, the authenticity of products and good food, sustainability of craft traditions and valuable works of art, common places such as squares, theatres, shops, cafés, restaurants as well as unspoiled landscapes and most importantly, respect of traditions through the joy of a slow food and quiet living (Rodenburg, 2015).

The aim of Cittaslow is to enlarge the philosophy of slowness to local communities, to government of towns all around the world, while applying the concepts of ecogastronomy in everyday life practices (Ekinci, 2014; Rodenburg, 2015). Besides, Cittaslow movement initiates to preserve the quality of life that is integral to sense of place in each city, and creates an environmentally sustainable touristic activity opportunity (Radstrom, 2014). For example, as a part of Cittaslow activity, Slow Food has taken considerable attention as a social movement, which claims to counterpart enlarging globalization in terms of eating habits and the international food production (Genç, 2016). The network of these towns is working with the local urban

development in order to achieve a high quality on the basis of similar principles as Slow Food (Nilsson et. al., 2011). In addition to Slow Food, slowness philosophy of Cittaslow is applicable on various areas including hospitality, environmental policies, infrastructure policies and so on (Radstrom, 2014; Yurtseven & Kaya, 2015).

The Cittaslow movement highlighting the concept of slowness has received growing interest from researches of various fields such as geography, sociology and tourism, yet the research on Cittaslow in tourism discipline is limited (Park & Kim, 2016). Only a few researches have empirically investigated the sustainable tourism potential of Cittaslow (Ekinci, 2014; Presenza, Abbate & Micera, 2015). This manuscript intend to fill the gap in the literature by discussing major aspects of Cittaslow movement, mainly on culture, heritage and identity, sustainability and quality of life, and after the discussion, a model will be suggested in order to measure the impact of Cittaslow on the basis of these variables. Considering the societal, environment and individual level at the same time will be useful to explain the success behind the Cittaslow movement, as shown in *Figure 1*.

Figure 1



Culture, Heritage & Identity

First of all, the impact of CittaSlow starts from preserving the local culture and heritage. The “McDonaldization” of towns throughout the world is one of the growing trends in tourism sector (Knox, 2005). The global culture penetrates into countries, replaces the culturally distinctive aspects of a particular destination with standardized and fabricated ones implemented by global companies. People have started to eat the same meals, drive same cars, dress alike, etc. all around the world and cultural/local values are under the threat of extinction.

CittaSlow movement aims to engage the soul of local community with modernity, without being excessively influenced by globalization. Moreover, cultural activities are argued to have public good attributes, contributing to general welfare of individuals in a society (Choi et al., 2010). Provision of cultural services by local governments as well as stakeholders increases the tourism potential in a given destination, especially for CittaSlow cities or towns. The institutional framework for CittaSlow accreditation process is closely related to the collaboration among community members (Park &

Kim, 2016). Therefore the recurrent theme of CittaSlow appears as identity

(<http://www.cittaslow.org/content/our-principles>).

Creating an identity should be compatible with the identity of city itself. According to Radstrom (2014) the underlying philosophy of CittaSlow is to identify and bolster the regional assets of each city as well as preserving the lifestyles which have traditionally framed its identity. The fast-paced everyday life in today’s cities based on standardization and modernization results in anonymity of cities and increasingly globalized identities (Petrini, 2003). The organized network of small cities under CittaSlow focuses on place-based identity in order to preserve the unique characteristics of each city (Radstrom, 2014).

Furthermore, creating this identity is also connected with the applicability of CittaSlow movement itself, since the success of CittaSlow towns is dependent on the support of existing active community organizations, local business activities, alternative development programs provided by local municipality, and above all, a strong sense of community (Semmens & Freeman, 2012). The identity formation on the basis of a shared understanding of CittaSlow goals as well as a mutual agreement to maintain these goals is fundamental for local stakeholders, which, in turn, allow tourists to create themselves an identity in accordance with this slowness philosophy (Parkins & Craig, 2006; Semmens & Freeman, 2012).

Sustainability

Secondly, rediscovering the concept of “slowness” has been understood as choosing a future of quality not only for people in a particular destination but also for others, in the spirit of solidarity created by CittaSlow movement.

Therefore the responsibility towards the natural world and next generations engenders some concerns about the environment. Through rediscovering traditional know-how, applying new technologies, and recycling and reusing Cittaslow movement ensures working towards sustainability, protecting the environment and reducing the excessive ecological footprint (<http://www.cittaslow.org/content/our-principles>).

The tourism resources can be listed into two main parts: Natural Tourism Resources and Developed Tourism Resources. Natural Tourism Resources include climate, land structure and shape, plant cover, natural monuments, thermal springs, mineral springs, beaches, natural wonder, geological formations, potable water resources, and animal species. On the other hand, Developed Tourism Resources are composed of qualified labor, information sources, transportation, sewerage and waste water, electricity, communication systems, infrastructure and superstructure (i.e. airport, resort, hotel, restaurant, shopping center, recreational area, aqua park and museum (Lerner and Haber, 2001). As Ekinci (2014) argues, sustainable tourism requires the safeguarding of the natural tourism resources and improvement of developed tourism resources on the basis of sustainability. Moreover, while touristic activities take place, natural resources are expected to be principle concern and developed tourism resources are supposed to be compatible with the sustainability of flora and fauna systems (Ekinci, 2014).

Environmental policies regarding to Cittaslow is fundamental as the potential for high quality life in a city is directly dependent on the environmental quality and sustainability of the city. These environmental policies have some common aspects including the protection of the air, water and soil, the promotion and dissemination of policies for the recycling urban refuse and other

wastes, an energy-saving plan, ban the use of genetically modified entities in agriculture, and adaptation of environmental management systems (Radstrom, 2014).

Quality of Life

Finally, Cittaslow philosophy is based on the desire to provide a high quality of life (QoL) for its residents (Radstrom, 2014). Increasing the quality of life is not an easy task. First, the authorities should determine the quality level that they want their people to achieve. According to Cittaslow philosophy, slower pace of life is equal to quality of life, since the slowness ensures environmental quality, physical wellbeing, and active and alternative transportation (Radstrom, 2014). For instance, compared to a life in metropolis where people are suffering from stress, excessive traffic jams, air and noise pollution, environmental degradation and so on. Besides, people spend most of their time for reaching some place to the other in big urban areas. On the other hand, Cittaslow enables people to live slowly, such as walking around the city, explore new places, engage in social interaction, promote personal health and environmental health, and as a result, general quality of life of individuals increases.

In the next section, a model will be suggested which combines these three main aspects of Cittaslow movement namely culture, heritage and identity, sustainability and quality of life.

The Model

The impact of Cittaslow relies on three main variables. Starting with the cultural aspect of Cittaslow movement, culture, heritage and identity are necessary for both implementation as well as maintenance of Cittaslow cities. In the accreditation process, the city or town is investigated for its cultural values, heritage sites and the

potential for social cohesion for the implementation of Cittaslow and eventually the activities lead to the emergence of new cultural values, cultural heritage sources, and identities. However, quantitative expression of such values is partially complicated. Nevertheless, previous studies shed light on the evaluation of cultural values. The economic valuation of cultural goods and heritage sites on the basis of choice modeling as applied by Choi et. al. (2010) will be used for cultural variable.

Satisfaction of tourists as well as service providers is another crucial aspect of Cittaslow movement. When tourists visit a touristic destination, they engage in new experiences, meet different people, taste different foods and wines, and spend good time that will recover their energy which they lost in long-term working periods. On the other hand, stakeholders in a particular touristic destination invest in some tourism activities such as restaurants, hotels, bars, etc. and they also engage in interaction with tourists. As a result, both tourists and service providers are affected by the tourism activity, and they need to make final judgment whether they are satisfied or not from their overall experience. This satisfaction can be measured by quality of life variable in a quantitative sense.

And lastly, environmental sustainability is fundamental for Cittaslow activities. The sustainability refers to the protection of environment and natural resources, therefore the level of sustainability can be measured from the damage received by the nature due to tourism activities in Cittaslow cities. The so-called environmental degradation including pollution, waste disposal, urban sprawl etc. has an adverse impact on tourism activities. Compatible with the philosophy of Cittaslow, local governments and stakeholders work together in terms of developing precautionary policies with respect to environmental sustainability, which, in turn, helps to

protect physical and psychological health of people in a specific Cittaslow city or town. Parallel to the previous aspect, the environmental impacts decrease the quality of life of people. The natural drawback is also subject to time variable, because environmental depletion grows exponentially.

Hence our model can be considered as:

$$IC = \beta_0 - \beta_1 CH_{(ev)} + \beta_2 QoL - \beta_3 ED^t + \varepsilon$$

Where,

IC implies *impact of Cittaslow*

$CH_{(ev)}$ implies *Cultural goods and Heritage sites (Economic Valuation)*

QoL implies *Quality of Life (for both tourists and service providers)*

ED implies *Environmental Degradation*

t implies *time* (or periods/seasons in which touristic markets work)

$\beta_0, \beta_1, \beta_2$ and β_3 imply coefficients

ε implies residual

According to the model, economic valuation of cultural goods and heritage sites, quality of life of tourists and stakeholders, and environmental degradation subject to time are three main variables by which the impact of Cittaslow movement is explained. Environmental degradation variable is suggested as negatively related to the impact of Cittaslow, as it would damage not only the possibility of a candidate Cittaslow city or town to become full member but also the sustainability of tourism activities in a particular destination. There may be additional variables that can explain the variance in

the impact of Cittaslow movement that the suggested model fails to capture. Thus, a residual is presented in the model, denoting the variance that cannot be explained by two variables.

Concluding Remarks

In general, the main aim of this manuscript is to explain the interconnectedness of three major levels that forms the basis of Cittaslow movement; these are cultural/societal, environmental and individual levels. For societal level, the community is at the center of sustainable tourism since the common goal of sustainable tourism development is to provide benefits to the environment as well as to local communities in economic, social and cultural sense (Park & Kim, 2016). Social cohesion and identity creation appear as the principal element in creating a commitment for environmental protection, along with ensuring the quality of life of tourists and stakeholders in Cittaslow destinations. As discussed in the previous sections, a considerable level of social commitment is necessary not only in Cittaslow accreditation process but also for the maintenance of tourism activities, and this will include the sustainability of environment and providing satisfaction for all residents (Üstündagli et. al., 2015). Similarly, environmental sustainability is essential for sustaining the quality of life in a particular destination (Ekinci, 2014; Presenza, Abbate & Perano, 2015) as well as protecting cultural values, heritage sites and identity regarding to a certain place and its surroundings. Finally, satisfaction received by these activities give incentive to the residents to protect their environment and cultural values by identifying themselves with the destination, which has distinctive properties compared to standardized and fabricated hegemonic culture all around the world.

Although the success of Cittaslow in Italia has been argued to become a failure in other parts of the world, since many towns do not meet the idealistic Cittaslow requirements such as sustainable physical environment, rich cultural traditions and heritage, community interaction, active local business, architecture and climate (Bjelland, 2010), these three aspects maintain their importance regarding to the success of Cittaslow movement. All in all, one activity at either societal, environmental or individual level has a significant impact on the others, the interconnectedness of these variables should be carefully analyzed in order to achieve efficient outcomes in the future of tourism sector.

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