The Concept of Cittaslow as a Marketing Tool for Destination Development: The Case of Mugla, Turkey

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Abstract

Akyaka town situated in the southern coast of Aegean Sea in Turkey has gained a different status from other touristic destinations due to its participation in the Cittaslow network in 2011. The process of Akyaka's participation in this network; the effects of this participation on tourism and its usage as a marketing tool in destination development are the issues dealt in this study. The sample is Akyaka town in Mugla province of Turkey. Interview and observation techniques which are qualitative data collection methods are applied. As a result, it is determined that Cittaslow title has not been used for destination marketing on purpose; but rather it is considered as a factor of sustainability and as a factor increasing life quality and standards of locals. It is found that the priority of local administration is to protect natural environment and the sustainability of natural resources instead of increasing the tourist number.

Keywords: Cittaslow; destination development; destination marketing; local administration; Akyaka

1. Introduction

One of the most important tools that destination managements use for obtaining competitive advantage by differentiating themselves from others and for attracting more visitors and investors is destination branding (Govers& Go, 2009:5). Having a strong destination brand gives the destination an advantage in the struggle of product differentiation, substitutability and competitiveness regardless of the size or population of the destination (Morgan, Pritchard & Pride, 2011:5). Therefore, the concept of Cittaslow is discussed in a field in which it presents interesting options for traditional and growth-oriented destination development and marketing (Nilsson, Svard, Widarsson &Wirell, 2011).

As the effects of globalization have increasingly been felt today, human life has also become faster. So, the notion of 'fast' also influences communities, cities and regions. Some of these regions or cities have become tourism destinations due to their specific features and attractions they offer to tourists and have rejected 'fast'. Here 'Cittaslow' comes to stage which means 'Slow City Movement' (Yurtseven, Kaya & Harman, 2010, Baldemir, Kaya & Sahin, 2013, Bilgi, 2013). Knox (2005) considers Cittaslow as a counter cultural movement aiming to decrease harmful effects of globalization and urban life chaos without falling into retrospective conservatism trap. In many studies (Nilsson et al., 2011; Baldemir et al., 2013; Ergüven, 2011; Grzelak-Kostulska, Hołowiecka& Kwiatkowski, 2011; Keskin, 2012; Knox, 2005; Mayer & Knox, 2006; Miele, 2008; Ekinci, 2014) the role of Cittaslow in destination development and sustainable local development has been analysed; however there is not sufficient number of studies that are encountered about using Cittaslow as a marketing tool in destination development and its effects on the city in terms of tourism.

In this study, firstly conceptual framework about process starting with Slow Food movement and continuing with Cittaslow movement and how this process affects destination marketing was drawn. Secondly, in the light of obtained data, the notion of using Cittaslow in Akyaka for destination marketing and its effects upon destination was analysed and interpreted in relation to the opinions of the members of city council and local administration.

The current study presents the activities done within the Cittaslow concept in Akyaka which has been a member since 2011, usage of Cittaslow membership for destination marketing and its effects on destination development and sustainable tourism.

1.1. Slow Movements

Fast world is a product which has emerged as a result of capitalism's expansion globally. In global economic system, time is money and as an inevitable effect, life becomes fast, too. Fast world consists of people and places which are involved in a transnational industry surrounded by modern communication networks, materialist consumption, international news and entertainment. There is an intensive connectedness linking millions of people with global communication, information, production and consumption nets within a fast world (Knox, 2005). Accordingly, due to consumption movement which is the essence of globalization process, people in a lot of communities are confused by changes in traditional, cultural, spiritual and social values and norms. As a reaction against these, many local communities have discovered culture of place by emphasizing the importance of their own identities, roots, cultures, values, towns, cities or regions (UNCHS, 2001).

According to Honore, slow movement is a cultural revolution opposing to the notion that faster is always better. Slow philosophy is not about doing everything at the speed of a snail. Slow philosophy seeks to do everything at the right pace. Instead of counting hours and minutes, it is about enjoying them. The important point is that rather than doing everything in the fastest way, doing things as well as possible. This philosophy stands up for caring about quality more than quantity in everything from working, eating to parenting (www.carlhonore.com, 2014).

Slow philosophy has led to slow movements such as slow food, slow city, slow living between which there are close ties (Nilsson et al., 2011). According to Rossini (2010), the values of quality and originality and the concept of recovering time which are often neglected in mobile communities today constitute the core of slow movements like Cittaslow and Slow Travel which means a slow movement inciting people to travel locally; to accommodate in one place instead of various places during a vacation; to prefer walking and cycling in transportation (Molz, 2009).

1.1.1. Slow Food

The principal incident which set stage for this movement described as a network of cities, is the International Slow Food Movement appeared led by Italian cooks in 1989 in Italy (Slow Food, 2014). Slow Food Organization aims to protect gastronomic traditions and organic agriculture from homogenization of food globally (Rossini, 2010).

The first spark of the emergence of this movement is the protest demonstration performed by a group under the leadership of Carlo Petrini in 1986 during an opening of a McDonalds restaurant in Piazza di Spagna (the Spanish Steps) which is one of the symbols of Rome, Italy (Cittaslow Türkiye, 2013; Nilsson et al., 2011; Petrini, 2001; Slow Food homepage, 2009; Mayer & Knox, 2006).According to the protesters, this fast food restaurant both disfigures the beautiful square and deals a major blow to Italian food culture and nutrition habits (Petrini & Padovani, 2011: 110). Consequently, this is not an ordinary reaction or protest. This act reveals the claim of doing and making real what McDonalds do not do or cannot do. It promises fresh, local and seasonal products. It defends enjoying delicious meals which are cooked with food recipes transmitted today from past with family members or close friends (Sırım, 2012).Slow Food movement is described as an ecological and gastronomic movement. The main purpose is to try promoting eco gastronomy and preventing the tendency towards fast living. Slow Food movement has three principal fields. The first of them is the protection of gastronomic traditions and biological diversity; the second one is the supporting the connection between producers and consumers, and the last one is to strengthen food, nutrition and environment knowledge of consumers (Parkins & Craig, 2006; Petrini, 2001; Nilsson et al., 2011; Miele, 2008). According to Radstrom (2011), Slow Food movement has inspired Cittaslow movement.

Slow food has been emerged as a movement adopting the principles of claiming local tastes, showing respect to nature, eating in a healthy and easy way, knowing what you eat, enjoying food and socializing via food. It has formulated the philosophy of 'good, clean and fair food.' In relation to this, the aim is to achieve the concept of 'Sustainable Quality Food' (Sırım, 2012; Tan, 2012).

Today with a community of 2000 quality food producers, 1300 convivium and more than 100.000 members in 153 countries, Slow Food is the leading active nongovernmental organization which links producers with each other and promotes good food and environmental awareness. Run by the supports of non-profit members, Slow Food is a movement started against disappearance of local food and loss of people's interest in what they eat, where food comes from, the tastes of food and how their choices of food affects the rest of the world because of the culture of fast living created by international fast food restaurant chains and multinational agriculture companies (www.slowfood.com, 2014; Radstrom, 2011).

1.1.2. Cittaslow

Cittaslow consisting of Italian word Citta (city) and English word Slow means 'Slow City'. It is a network of cities formed as a result of Slow Food Movement in order to prevent globalization from standardizing texture, tranquillity and life styles of cities and annihilating local attributes (cittaslowseferihisar.org, 2013; Çerçi, 2013; Nilsson et al., 2011; Cittaslow homepage, 2014; Baldemir et al., 2013).

Mayer and Knox (2006) define Cittaslow as destinations in which citizens and local authorities attach importance to local history and benefit from various authentic and local values for developing better methods.

Slow Food and Cittaslow movements have not been started for influencing tourism directly, although they put an emphasis on hospitability in their principles. Along with this, Cittaslow can affect tourism efforts of the member city in two ways generally. One of them is to develop a tourisms product in accordance with increasing quality by protecting local identity and cultural values and adopting a development and growth policy based on this quality. In this sense, singular attributes or conditions of Cittaslow model are not different from other sustainable development tools. However, Cittaslow model as a whole means to be the factor that creates the main difference. The second way is to recognize 'slow' brand or label as a quality sign by using the familiarity of slow food brand as an advantage and by this way local community may be proud of its own city and the image of the city may get better in the eye of visitors and potential residents (Dietz, 2006; Radstrom, 2011).

According to Pink (2009), Cittaslow has some administrative purposes such as increasing the quality of life of local people, sustaining local differences and promoting sustainable city economy.

This movement seeks to give its main message through snail figure which is the symbol of movement itself. Snail moving slowly, carefully but decisively covers great distances which are not expected from it and while doing this, it leaves thin traces where it passes (Kavas & Kavas, 2012; Honore, 2004).

To sum up, Cittaslow brings forward an alternative philosophy. This philosophy is a form of 'campaign against globalization' describing development as a rooted, sustainable, egalitarian and authentic. The cities in the network of Cittaslow opposes to consumption culture and ongoing economic growth by adapting their own identities and rediscovering their own 'culture of place' (UNCHS, 2001; Knox, 2005; Mayer & Knox, 2006; Pink, 2008; Semmens & Freeman, 2012).

1.2. The Effects of Cittaslow on Destination Development and Marketing

The marketing of cities for tourism is an activity causing improvements in operational environments of cities and economic, social and political changes in a city. As cities increase their attractions thanks to city marketing today, they are able to turn mobile resources and investments of companies into beneficial factors for visitors and residents. With this concept and similar methods, cities can be brands and all the products and services produced by the city become more desirable for target market (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2007).

The philosophy behind the slow city movement is to provide protection for local values, culture and architecture by resisting to daily life and urban macro form standardized by globalization. With the structural change resulted from globalization process, the meaning and the role of city in a global platform have started to change. The portrayal of the city is now imposed upon the understanding of a world which is dependent to sovereignty of capital (Ocak, 1996: 35). In this process, Slow City concept bearing an important brand duty in city marketing has become a remarkable factor in terms of tourism market. In order to make a city an attractive destination for tourists, besides natural or cultural attractions, experiences and hospitality are among the most important factors of Cittaslow policy. These efforts are a part of urban features of cities rather than commercial aims (Nilsson et al., 2011; Cittaslow charter, 2011). According to Pink (2008), destinations which are members of Cittaslow continue to develop through their policies, projects, activities and events. In other words, Cittaslow philosophy is considered both as a social movement and a development policy for local administration.

Slow city movement providing sustainable local development for destination improvement (Sezgin & Unuvar, 2011) contributes heavily to the promotion of the region in national and international press in destination marketing. When a city is accredited as a Cittaslow member, it contributes to local sustainability and tourism potential of this city and also it helps this city improve by strengthening allegiance between economy, environment and equity (3E) (Mayer & Knox, 2006; Baldemir et al., 2013).

1.2.1. Cittaslow in Turkey

The first member city of Cittaslow in Turkey is Seferihisar town of İzmir province. Since 2009, the city has been using Cittaslow title. After joining in the network, a lot of new policies and projects have been put into practice in infrastructure, city planning, agriculture and tourism in Seferihisar (Ekinci, 2014). After Seferihisar, 8 towns from different cities joined in Cittaslow network. These towns are Çanakkale-Gökçeada, Ayrın-Yenipazar, Sakarya-Taraklı, Isparta-Yalvaç, Ordu-Perşembe, Şanlıurfa-Halfeti, Kırklareli-Vize and Muğla-Akyaka. Slow city movement has started to draw attention as a potential local development and tourism improvement model for many little towns and cities in Turkey (cittaslowturkiye.org, 2013; Ekinci, 2014). The logo of National Cittaslow Network of Turkey is presented in Figure 1(www.cittaslow.org).

1.2.2. Cittaslowconcept in Akyaka

Slow city Akyaka located in the mouth of Gokova Bay, is a kind of model city succeeding to keep away from inevitable ending which some cities has to face because of unplanned structuring of coastal settlements in Aegean and Mediterranean Regions today. This little town is surrounded by the Mount Sakar in the North, the Creeks of Kadin and Akcapinar in the east, fertile plain lying between the creeks and isolated coves in Gokova Bay. As it is within an archaeological site and has a status of specially protected environmental area, the geography of Akyaka is very special also due to the traditional frame houses in which Mugla-Ula architecture is stylized by Nail Cakirhan (Bilgi, 2013). Along with the famous Blue Flag Beach of Akyaka, Kadın Creek which is one of two rivers vitalizing its geography offers a natural aquarium with underwater plant populations for diving enthusiasts.This river with mineral water which keeps its high flow and temperature is called Kadın Creek colloquially because rural women used to do laundry in this river in the past. Akcapinar, the other river in Akyaka forms a long coastal line between itself and sea from the point it gets near to sea. Between Kadın Creek and Akcapinar Creek which is a natural protected area, alternative nature sports such as canoeing, kite surf and tandem attract attention (Tuvi, 2010). Making a creek tour with little boats, wandering in the street which is named after Nail Cakirhan, the creator of architecture texture of Akyaka, steaming leer fish near Azmak coast and tasting Citirmak made with Akyaka honey and sesame that are among examples of Akyaka's local cuisine (Bilgi, 2013) are what one can do to enjoy Akyaka. Some pictures of Akyaka are shown in Figure 2.

It is seen that Cittaslow criteria seeks to be carried out in order to increase the quality of life of visitors and residents by local administration and city council. Therefore, Cittaslow logo is used as a 'quality sign' in the member cities. In Figure 3, the logo of Cittaslow can be seen (www.cittaslowturkiye.org/cittaslow/, 2014).

2. Method

This research was conducted in Akyaka, Mugla in Turkey which was joined in the Cittaslow network in 2011. Akyaka is situated in the eastern part of Mugla province and in the eastern point of Gokova Bay. The population of this little city is almost 1500 in winter; 3000-4000 in summer. Used to be a little fishing village, Akyaka has started to draw attention with its nature since 1970's and it has begun to look like a tourism city since 1980's. In general known as an appropriate place for paragliding, Akyaka is a destination where visitors come for eating fish specifically (www.akyaka.org, 2013).

This study was done with qualitative research methods and interview was applied as data collection tool. Before data collecting, required permissions were gained from local authorities that are responsible from Cittaslow projects in Akyaka and interview time was determined; then interviews were conducted. As this study was conducted from the view of local administration and city council, AhmetCalca, the mayor of Akyaka and CaglarBozkurt, the president of city council who are responsible for Cittaslow membership and activities in behalf of the municipality were interviewed formally. The data was collected in December in 2013.One of the interviews was made in municipality building; the other interview was conducted in private place of business of council president. The interview with the mayor lasted for almost 40 minutes; the interview with the president of city council lasted for almost 30 minutes.

The interviews weresemi-structured; therefore comments of the president and the mayor during interviews were added and interpreted in this study. The interview questions were about Cittaslow organizations and concepts, activities and applications, the potential and development of local resources, destination marketing, target groups and future strategies. Both of the interviews were recorded and also researchers took notes while interviewing. The records were transcribed later. The data collected through interviews was examined with descriptive analysis. The names of interviewees were used within this study.

In Akyaka, researchers made some observations, too. These observations were made both before and after the interviews. By this means, the opportunity to observe how the topics explained during interviews were actualized was found. During those observations, notes and photographs were taken (see Figure 2). Also, brochures which were mostly about Cittaslow and regional promotion taken from the mayor and information and visual materials on the website of municipality and city council were used in this study.

3. Findings and Discussion

Having a local administration or local leadership is very important to the development of a society or a region. In parallel with this view, it has been observed that the mayor Ahmet Calca and the council president CaglarBozkurt have carried out necessary projects in a very active way for Cittaslow membership.

The first part of the study is about the process of being a Cittaslow member and the activities conducted after this process. The second part focuses on the concept of destination marketing and the effects of Cittaslow membership on tourism.

3.1. Cittaslow Adaptation Process and Activities Afterwards

The interviews with local authorities who are responsible for Akyaka's Cittaslow membership process were made with Ahmet Calca the mayor of Akyaka and CaglarBozkurt, the president of Cittaslow city council and firstly some questions about the process of Cittaslow membership and the activities carried out during this process were asked. As a mayor of Akyaka since 2004, Mr.Ahmet Calca explained that they had been working since 2007 actively in order to make natural resources and tourism sustainable and to increase the quality of life of locals. He also said that in 2010 after Seferihisar joined in the Cittaslow network, Akyaka joined in the Cittaslow network too for locals to adapt sustainability and for maintaining the vision of 'Akyaka which solves its infrastructure problems, is respectful to nature, protects the architectural structure and has a community socialized by events and activities.' The council president Mr.Bozkurt emphasized that Akyaka was the first city in Turkey which was joined in the Cittaslow network *with referendum* and 911 people voted in the referendum; 95% voted for 'Yes' to the membership of Cittaslow. Mr.Bozkurt stated that the other cities in the network had joined in the network before asking for their locals' opinions; however in Akyaka that decision was made with local people and emphasized that was very important for a little city.

About the process before Cittaslow membership, Mr.Calca and Mr.Bozkurt mentioned that locals were informed about Cittaslow and Cittaslow membership before referendum. The council president gave some examples related to those activities: 'We scheduled all the things we were going to do and firstly we asked what Cittaslow was. We prepared a brochure about this. In the marketplace, a workshop of t-shirt with Cittaslow logo was conducted; we read books to children' (Interview: Mr.Bozkurt). The Mayor Calca explained this process with these words: 'After efforts for one year, we asked craftsmen, students and locals what slow city meant, what kind of a life culture this concept included. We showed them that apart from a standard life culture, there was a right road map in order to protect our local values and that was Cittaslow membership. With campaigns, we held a referendum for our craftsmen, students and all our people.'

The purpose of Akyaka in joining the network was to make life quality of locals better and to carry values belonging to this region's local identity into future and the Cittaslow network was considered as a qualified development target (Interview: Mr.Calca). It was observed that Mr.Calca put an emphasis on the idea that the process of developing Akyaka was crowned by joining the network of Cittaslow and the membership supported their vision.

The council president Mr. Bozkurt stated that council's duty was to protect and control the concept of Cittaslow. He told that their secondary duties were to support and guide locals; support administration in terms of locals' needs and to bridge the gap between locals and local administration.

Claiming that local people sometimes saw Cittaslow 'title' as a populist approach, Mr.Calca stated that they needed to keep informing people, revive agricultural activities in parallel with slow city notion. He believed that first of all they had to inform municipal employees about this concept. As an example, he mentioned about olive cultivation: 'We are telling olive farmers that they should not use antidotes and they should change collecting methods with more modern methods.'

The council president mentioned as examples for contributions of Cittaslow membership to Akyaka that the beaches were cleaner and the plant population surrounding the creek was protected more carefully. Also, as required by the Cittaslow criteria, listening music very loudly was prohibited, so people were not disturbed by this anymore and that was an important improvement according to local people. In the light of observations made during data collection, it could be said that value given to environment and cleanliness increased; for example the number of trash bins and warning signs were increased and, local people were acting more consciously.

In their study done in the Cittaslow member cities in Germany, Mayer and Knox (2006) found out that local administrations determined alternative urban improvement strategies; the support of public and private sector was very significant and the development plans were always updated. Likewise, the mayor of Akyaka explained that they continued their activities; as local authorities, they acted in parallel with the slow city criteria and they would try to maintain their efforts for sustainability of application of those criteria and they would update their activities.

On the subject of future activities and plans, Mr.Calca expressed that there were some problems about the cleanliness of beaches and picnic areas with the increase in the number of visitors in summer and they would seek to continue their efforts to solve those issues. Also, he admitted that their priorities were to increase the activities related to environmental protection and landscaping. While mentioning about joint efforts with Seferihisar, he gave using cloth bags in the market and seed exchange festival as examples to these efforts. He also said that some events were being prepared in order to bring traditional food culture to light. To take Gokova Bay into the scope of UNESCO, to make it one of the world heritage site and to hand sea, land and biological diversity down the next generations were among their future purposes.

3.2. The Cittaslow Effect on Destination Marketing and Tourism in Akyaka

Small towns adopting Cittaslow model for local development and tourism improvement, succeed to differentiate themselves from other destinations with their authentic local identities, their hospitalities and their cultural differences (Karabag, Yücel and Inan, 2012). The network members both take advantage from the recognition of Cittaslow brand known globally by guaranteeing that they will comply with the terms and conditions of the network and obtain the opportunity to access vast knowledge of other cities within the network (Radstrom, 2011).

According to Mr.Calca, 'slow city does not mean places where there is no music. It means life cultures in which people are respectful and helpful to each other; high quality products are manufactured; and modern and environment-friendly technologies are used.'

The most remarkable explanation about the effect of Cittaslow membership on marketing of Akyaka was made by the mayor. Mr.Calca admitted that they considered slow city concept as a regional development and improvement tool rather than a promotion tool; because as local administration, their foremost priority was to make natural resources sustainable. That idea proved that local authorities did not approve using Cittaslow title and membership as a promotion and marketing tool.

The reason why a tourism phenomenon was created in Akyaka was that Akyaka was the front garden of Mugla province and that people dwelling in the industrial cities around Mugla came to Akyaka on weekends. This concept had to continue in a qualified way. It was intended that Akyaka would be a tourism destination hosting culture tourism, gastronomy tourism, and trekking and kite surf tourism. This could be called as development of Gokova culture in tourism unlike Marmaris or Bodrum (Interview: AhmetCalca).

City council members considered Cittaslow membership as a way for protecting nature, natural resources, cultural heritage, adopting sustainability and increasing life quality rather than attracting tourists. Mr.Calca also admitted that Akyaka was hosting visitors ten times more than it could endure and that density was too much for a first degree protected site as Akyaka. When asked Mr.Bozkurt if there was a change in tourist profile after becoming a Cittaslow member, he said that visitors had been in the ages of 30 and 40 and families with children in general; however that profile did not change so much after becoming a member. On the other hand, the number of young visitors increased due to kite surf activities.

Apart from people coming for kite surf, people coming to Akyaka were families with children, and council members and local authorities did not want this profile to change. Accordingly, it was understood that authorities did not wish a change in tourist profile because they did not want a decrease in service quality.

Mr.Calca and Mr.Bozkurt stated that after becoming a member, the number of tourists increased up to 30%. In this increase, the appearance of Akyaka in national and international press was an important factor.

Pleased with the number of tourists and tourist profile, Mr.Calca answered to the question of how the region was promoted as: 'In advertisements and other kinds of promotions, we bring kite surf, trekking and culture tourism into the forefront.' Mr. Calca also made some explanations about promotions: 'I think that Akyaka is promoted sufficiently. The visitors of website are almost 7 million people in a year. This is a serious number. Akyaka has become the point of interest with its architecture, its creek, its location in the bay of Gokova and in the junction where Karia paths are crossed, its closeness to Bodrum and Dalaman Airports, its cultural heritage.' As it could be understood from these explanations, local administration did not have any inclination towards showing Cittaslow membership in promotions and increasing tourist number by using Cittaslow membership as a tool.However Mr.Calca claimed that they hoped that the thought of Ankara would bring to people's minds some specific attributes such as 'the creek, trekking, waking up early in the morning with birds' singing, eating high energy foods like sesame and honey and Gokova fish.' These were specific attributes which could be used in advertisements and enable the town to become a brand city within the Cittaslow framework. When compared to other tourism destinations, Akyaka was a place nearer to the sea and because of this; it succeeded to overturn its disadvantage to an advantage after the Cittaslow membership. Cittaslow became a brand, a flag and a system protecting, promoting and providing self-expression for Akyaka (Interview: CaglarBozkurt).

The promotions of local food and slow city concept were made through TRT (Turkish Radio Television) channel. Also, various events such as 'Nail Çakırhan on the Street' were held in Akyaka. As in other slow cities, there were some slow routes set in Akyaka, too. These were the creek tour, Blue Voyage, Karia- Idyma Route and biking tracks. Pink (2008) asserted that Cittaslow projects should be sensorial rather than economic, intellectual and emotional in his study. The attributes of Akyaka mentioned above were sensorial destination attractions for visitors. The question if tourism investments increased after the Cittaslow membership was answered by the council president as: 'First of all, new hotel investments and the number of accommodation facilities have increased. Restaurants have made the quality of service and food and beverages better; they have begun to be more meticulous about cleanliness.' The point emphasized the most by the president was that the number of boutique hotels had to increase by protecting architectural structure. Also thanks to Cittalow criteria, it was significant that food and beverage facilities and accommodation facilities enhanced their quality.

When asked about the effect of the Cittaslow membership on the employment of people living in Akyaka, the council president admitted that they shut down the Art Street because the things sold had not been original products; however on weekends they let people especially women open stalls to sell their handicrafts and he concluded this subject by saying, 'One can get a job by producing something handiwork thanks to Cittaslow here in Akyaka.'

Sungur (2013) explained that the number of Cittaslow members in Turkey would increase in near future and therefore women should be play a more active role in decision-mechanism as entrepreneurs; by this way, women labour would become more visible and economic and social status of local women would develop. As it could be seen from the comments of council president, in Akyaka specifically women were supported more by local administration. Mr.Bozkurt also stated that they had demanded handicrafts with Cittaslow logo in which labour and art had met; as a result of that some original products such as pictures on pebbles and hand-woven products with snail figures came up. It was observed that a slow city market was set up every two weeks. Handicraft ornaments and needlecraft products were sold in those markets and stalls set at the beach.

On the subject of traditional food culture and slow food activities in Akyaka, Mr.Bozkurt claimed that as they had observed that visitors had not chosen meals which could have been found anywhere like grilled fish but they had preferred to eat some specific meals of Akyaka, they added meals like 'citirmak', 'keskek' and fried 'cıntar' which was a kind of mushroom. He said that they were working on the preparation of a pamphlet for some foods of ancient history and a course of regional cuisine had been taught to locals. In their study, Yurtseven and Karakas (2013) claimed that Gokceada, a Cittaslow, could be a sustainable gastronomic destination in tourism market and focused on what could be done for this aim.

In terms of Akyaka, it could be said that it might be both a gastronomic destination and sea-sand-sun destination for tourists preferring slow tourism which can be discussed from marketing, consumer behaviour or sustainable tourism perspective according to Yurtseven and Kaya (2011). To sum up, as a Cittaslow, Akyaka could differentiate from others with its multiple specific attributes and get a bigger share from tourism market than other Cittaslow members.

The representatives of local administration, who expressed that their priorities were the development of local people, claimed that they supported locals financially and gave example of offering them free selling spaces in the marketplace so that they could sell their products manufactured in villages.

As it could be concluded from the interviews, Akyaka's joining in the Cittaslow network developed the city and increased its share in tourism market. However the point emphasized mostly by the interviewees was that the Cittaslow membership was targeted primarily for local people and using this membership for tourism was their secondary purpose. Nilsson et al. (2011) obtained similar results in their study, which was parallel with the current study. In that study conducted in Italy, it was determined that the Cittaslow projects and policies were not directly related to tourism or destination development. It was found out that the focus of Cittaslow was local heritage, environment and social economy rather than tourism. As a result of that study, it was concluded that there was a resistance towards overcrowding and massification caused by tourism in the Cittaslow cities the study conducted.

4. Results and Suggestions

Cittaslow concept has been followed by an increasing interest in Turkey. As one of the significant tourism destinations in Turkey, Akyaka joined this network in 2011. As a result of this study, it has been observed that Akyaka is an environment-friendly town, which cares about the Cittaslow criteria and protects its natural and architectural identity. In Turkey, studies on Slow Food are not sufficient. Especially studies on local flavours should be done and these flavours should be enriched. After obtaining Cittaslow title, in Akyaka the increase in economic income of local people is considered important by local people dwelling in Akyaka.

It can be also seen that there are some other important practices such as producing and consuming the products which are not environmentally hazardous and can be recycled and placing separate bins in a lot of areas around the city for wastes which can be regained into economy. Setting up a slow market every two weeks for local products grown in the region is a significant activity for the promotion of these products. After becoming a member of Cittaslow network, the number of tourists coming to Mugla has increased. In this sense, additional accommodation investments have emerged. The protection of Nail Cakirhan architecture in the building of these facilities reflects that natural architectural identity of the city is protected carefully. The number of joint projects with other Cittaslow members in Turkey such as seed exchange festival and usage of cloth bags in the market should be improved. The council of Cittaslow should focus on gastronomic projects.

As in the study done on sustainable city concept by Baldemir et al. (2013), the most important points in the Cittaslow criteria are found out to be environmental arrangements, environmental policies and developments in this study and it seems obvious that local administration cares mostly about environmental protection and development. Although Akyaka is not as famous as other slow destinations in terms of gastronomy, local authorities seem to aim to develop the city with local markets, educational courses for locals, and financial supports in terms of gastronomy, too. Lowry and Lee (2011) explained in their study that there would be an increase in the number of environment-friendly holidays in the next five years; consumers have changed their life styles and the cities in the Cittaslow network would always be attractive destinations for socially conscious tourists.So, even though the representatives of local administration admit that their priority is the development of local people, as tourism is a very substantial income item for Akyaka, tourism marketing should be managed wisely.

In this study, what local leaders think about the Cittaslow membership is examined. As a sequel to this study, an evaluation of the opinions of locals and tradesmen on Cittaslow concept may be made and how they look to the subject of the effect of Cittaslow on tourism and destination development in Akyaka may be determined. In their study, Grzelak-Kostulska et al. (2011) find out that the participation and appreciation of local people in the Cittaslow concept are highly low. Even though this situation has not been observed in Akyaka, participation and support of local people may be studied in scientific terms in future.

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List of Figures

Figure 1: The Logo of National Cittaslow Network of Turkey



Figure 2: The Photos of Akyaka



Figure 3: The Logo of Cittaslow

