

# Does Tourism Really Affect the Happiness of Residents? The Evidence from Turkey

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## Abstract

Tourism and happiness are highly related concepts. Research streams in happiness and tourism fall into two main categories: (1) tourists' happiness and (2) residents' happiness. In this paper, we followed the second research stream by focusing on the relationship between residents' happiness and tourism. The purpose of this paper is to discover whether tourism development in a destination contributes to the happiness of residents by analyzing secondary data sources, which differs from other studies that have examined this research question using primary data sources. The data used in this research comes from the records of public bodies. Our findings indicate that residents in marine-based mass tourism regions are less happy than residents in cultural heritage tourism destinations.

**Keywords:** happiness, life satisfaction, resident, tourism, Turkey, well-being

## 1. Introduction

Happiness is defined as the state of being happy, which itself is defined as feeling or showing pleasure or contentment (Oxford English Dictionary, 2017). Using this definition, it can be said that the main goal of every human being is to be happy. In the context of tourism, people often experience positive feelings during their holidays (Lohmann & de Bloom, 2015) while a growth in tourism can bring a number of benefits to destinations. These impacts can contribute to the well-being and happiness of residents. However, excessive tourism development in a tourism area may also irritate residents and negatively affect their well-being and happiness (Doxey, 1975). Happiness, in the context of tourism, is a multifaceted phenomenon. Participating in tourism activities as a tourist has a positive effect on subjective well-being (SWB), personal health, relaxation, and psychological well-being

(PWB) (Rubenstein, 1980; Hunter-Jones, 2003). In addition, numerous destinations utilize tourism as a tool to increase the well-being of residents (Rivera, Croes, & Lee, 2016). Although tourism can have some positive effects on the happiness of tourists and residents, it can also create unhappiness for both parties (Dolnicar, Yanamandram, & Cliff, 2012). For example, if a tourist unexpectedly experiences a poor quality holiday in a destination or if residents experience intense negative consequences of tourism, tourism development can become intolerable.

This paper attempts to examine the relationship between the flow of tourists arriving at a destination and the happiness of local residents. The aim of the study is to answer the question “does tourism really bring happiness to residents and does this vary with different types of tourism”. For this task, secondary data sources were employed. These data sources belong to the Turkish Statistical Institute (TSI) and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT). There are some variables used in the research, such as the “Life Satisfaction Survey” (LSS) and the “Accommodation Statistics” (AS) of Turkey. The data was used to make comparisons at the level of the city. The findings of the research show that the most popular cities among tourists are those that have lower levels of happiness. Moreover, the cities with the least happy residents are those in which marine-based mass tourism has developed.

## **2. Happiness in Tourism Content**

Every human being wishes to be happy; this is the driver of all actions (Mitas, Nawijn, & Jongsma, 2017). From drinking a bottle of water to visiting a unique historical monument, all actions aim to achieve happiness in some way or another. Happiness is an emotional state; in psychology, there are two research paradigms that focus on the happiness of individuals. These research paradigms include SWB and PWB (Liu, 2013). PWB is known as ‘eudemonia’ and deals with human potential, whereas SWB is often known as ‘hedonia’ and deals with happiness (Deci & Ryan, 2008). The concept of SWB has been extensively studied in happiness and tourism studies (Gilbert & Abdullah, 2004; McCabe, Joldersma, & Li, 2010; Nawijn & Mitas, 2012; Chen, Lehto, & Cai, 2013; Bimonte & Faralla, 2015; Ivlevs, 2017). SWB has three main components, which are (1) life satisfaction, (2) pleasant affect, and (3) unpleasant affect (Diener & Suh, 1997). In addition, SWB is mostly stable over time and is strongly related to personality characteristics (Liu, 2013).

By the 2000s, the number of studies examining the relationship between tourism and happiness had begun to grow; there is now an extensive literature on tourism and happiness. In addition, some related concepts, such as enjoyment, positive emotions, good mood and quality of life (QOL) have also been studied in the happiness and tourism literature (Mitas, Nawijn, & Jongsma, 2017). The concept of happiness is very important in tourism as going on holiday has an effect on the life satisfaction and SWB of tourists (Gilbert & Abdullah, 2004). At the same time, tourism development can affect the happiness of local residents (Rivera, Croes, & Lee, 2016). Thus, it can be argued that the relationship between happiness and tourism should be evaluated from both tourist and resident perspectives.

Modern daily life pushes individuals to consume and work, putting pressure on individuals and causing stress. It is believed that holidays are a time for mental and physical relaxation,

for forgetting work and the stress of daily life, for enjoyment and the building of social relationships (Gillet, Schmitz, & Mitas, 2016). All of these factors, if combined with positive experiences during the holiday, can contribute to the happiness of tourists. The relationship between tourists and happiness has therefore been intensively studied by tourist behavior researchers (Gilbert & Abdullah, 2004; Pesonen & Komppula, 2010; McCabe, Joldersma, & Li, 2010; Nawijn, 2010; Nawijn et al., 2010; Nawijn & Peeters, 2010; Corvo, 2011; Nawijn, 2011a, 2011b; Bimonte & Faralla, 2012; Dolnicar, Yanamandram, & Cliff, 2012; Chen, Lehto, & Cai, 2013; Filep & Pearce, 2014; Bimonte & Faralla, 2015; Peng & Ye, 2015; Gillet, Schmitz, & Mitas, 2016). Tourism development can have an effect on the economic, environmental and socio-cultural conditions of a destination (Rivera, Croes, & Lee, 2016). Different residents will perceive the consequences of tourism activities in different ways; some may be positive while others may be negative (Nawijn, 2011a). The perceptions of residents and their attitudes towards tourism development may change depending on socio-economic characteristics, lengths of stay, and the distance from residents' homes of the tourism development (Chen, Chhabra, & Tatsugawa, 2004). According to Ozturk, Ozer and Çalışkan (2015), the positive cultural and environmental impacts of tourism in Kusadasi Turkey significantly affected local residents' happiness levels. Moreover, Aref (2011) found that tourism had a positive impact on the happiness of residents in Shiraz. In Yu, Cole and Chancellor's (2016) study, it was pointed out that environmental sustainability and perceived economic benefits significantly affect residents' happiness. Also, in Lin, Chen and Filieri's (2017) study, it was indicated that perceptions of the economic and socio-cultural benefits of tourism development has a positive effect on the life satisfaction and happiness of residents. A positive correlation was found between tourism development and happiness in the study conducted by Rivera, Croes and Lee (2016). In Hue, Vietnam, it was found that tourism provides Hue residents with a sense of community well-being (CWB) and community pride (Suntikul et al., 2016). In addition, Park, Lee and Lee (2017) suggest that the CWB of residents is shaped by the effects of tourism development on income, social participation, safety services, infrastructure services, and the environment. Woo, Kim and Uysal (2015) found that, in general, tourism development contributes to QOL.

On the other hand, Ivlevs (2017) found that the arrival of tourists reduced life satisfaction among residents in 32 European countries. These contrasting results show that there is a need for detailed tourism policies and planning in tourism destinations. If tourism development is allowed to grow unplanned, it will have a negative effect on residents. In Fiji, the connection between residents' involvement with the tourism industry and residents' happiness was examined. The results showed that residents with minimal connections to the tourism industry were happier than those with more significant connections with the tourism industry (Pratt, McCabe, & Movono, 2016). In addition, Okulicz-Kozaryn and Strzelecka (2016) used their findings to confirm Doxey's Irridex Theory (Doxey, 1975), which argued that more tourism development is likely to make residents unhappier. When comparing the number of studies that focus on tourism and happiness, it is clear that there are fewer studies examining residents' happiness compared to those focusing on tourists' happiness (Chen, Chhabra, & Tatsugawa, 2004; Nawijn & Mitas, 2012; Ozturk, Ozer, & Çalışkan, 2015; Uysal et al., 2016; Rivera, Croes, & Lee, 2016; Okulicz-Kozaryn & Strzelecka, 2016; Ivlevs, 2017). Therefore,

this paper aims to examine the concept of happiness in relation to residents.

### 3. Methodology

In this paper, secondary data sources were employed to examine the relationship between residents' happiness and tourist levels. Next to primary data resulting most often from interviews, surveys or (and) observations, secondary data are an important source of information for tourism researchers (Decrop, 1999). Statistics on tourism are held by government and non-governmental organizations (Lee, Var, & Blaine, 1996), while other secondary data sources of use to researchers may include textbooks, tourist diaries, promotional material, minutes of meetings, newspapers, letters, and travel blocks (Decrop, 1999).

The data utilised in the research are derived from statistics recorded by public bodies. The first part of the data is the AS collected by the MCT. AS have been collected since 1974. In 2013, in total, 3092 facilities, 78 from province and 365 from district were questioned which was intended to determine number of arrivals and nights spent, average length of stay of foreign and Turkish tourists in the facilities with touristic operation licence (MCT, 2017a). The second part of the data is gained from the LSS held by the TSI. The purpose of LSS is to measure the general happiness perception of the individual, the general satisfaction from main life areas, the satisfaction from public services, and to follow up these changes in this satisfaction in time. It covers all the localities within the borders of Turkish Republic. Its data is collected by questionnaire was filled by face to face interviews and all the citizens with age 18 and over living in households in Turkish Republic have been covered (TSI, 2017a).

AS are collected via a survey that the MCT distributes every year (MCT, 2017b). The LSS is also a survey, this time distributed by the TSI, and began in 2013. To answer the research question, the ten most popular cities among tourists (in terms of numbers of tourist arrivals) were determined based on statistics for the year 2013, and analysed in relation to their total happiness scores.

There are some limitations with this comparison. The first is the inability to obtain happiness data for every year, as the LSSs are distributed every three years (TSI, 2017b). The most recent LSS scores available at the city level date from 2013. Alongside the LSS data, we also used AS data from the same year in order to get some accordance between the data sets. This raises another of the limitations of the data, that it is not current.

### 4. Results

In this paper, the tourism statistics used include the number of tourist arrivals, nights spent in the destination, and the average length of stay. Meanwhile, the happiness scores were grouped into five broad categories according to their happiness rating, ranking from "the most happy" to "the least happy". The percentage categories are (1) 42.0 – 53.5, (2) 53.6 – 58.4, (3) 58.5 – 61.5, (4) 61.6 – 68.2, and (5) 68.3 – 77.7. Finally, we calculated each city's ranking according to their happiness score.

Table 1 shows that Antalya, the most significant tourist city both in terms of the number of

tourist arrivals in the city and the number of nights spent there, seems to be the least happy among the ten most popular tourist cities. In terms of its economy, Antalya is mostly dependent on tourism and agriculture (ATSO, 2017; TSI 2017c). Its happiness score is 49.8; it is the only city in the top ten that has a happiness score below 50 percent. In addition, Antalya ranks 78 out of 81 cities and falls within the first (1), and lowest, happiness category. Muğla has the longest average length of stay (6.2 days), and the second lowest happiness score (52.4), ranking 72 out of 81 cities. Muğla too falls within the first (1) happiness category. The economies of Antalya and Muğla are both heavily dependent on tourism. Aydın is another city that falls within the first (1) happiness category. Its average length of stay is 3.8 days and it ranks 68 out of 81 in terms of its happiness score. These three cities are located in the coastal region of Turkey and are famous for their marine-based mass tourism. It is surprising that these three cities, which are all heavily dependent on marine-based mass tourism, appear in the first (1) happiness category.

Table 1. Comparison of tourism statistics and LSS scores

City	Tourism Statistics			Happiness Statistics		
	Number of Arrivals	Nights Spent	Average Length of Stay	LSS Scores	Ranking by Cities	Category
Antalya	13.794.072	66.376.698	5.3	49.8	78	1
İstanbul	6.314.969	14.106.080	2.5	58.4	50	2
Muğla	2.686.304	13.098.440	6.2	52.4	72	1
İzmir	1.729.975	4.490.603	4.0	58.2	51	2
Ankara	1.709.556	2.978.118	2.4	56.2	64	2
Aydın	1.135.494	3.731.753	3.8	53.5	68	1
Denizli	824.396	1.039.942	1.2	56.7	59	2
Bursa	669.625	1.218.061	2.1	61.1	35	3
Nevşehir	783.944	1.645.397	2.3	64.5	26	4
Çanakkale	489.508	667.097	1.1	63.6	29	4

**Source:** Ministry of Culture and Tourism (2017), Turkish Statistical Institute (2017a).

İstanbul and İzmir rank 50 and 51 out of 81 cities, respectively, in terms of their happiness scores. While both of these cities have cultural and marine-based tourist attractions, their economies are mostly dependent on industrial production. Thus, their residents feel themselves less happy so İstanbul and İzmir fall within the second (2) happiness category. The capital and second most crowded city in Turkey is Ankara, a terrestrial city that is also the center of government bureaucracy. The tourism sector in Ankara consists of business/congress, cultural, and capital city tourism (Uslu & Kiper, 2006; BAKA, 2017). Ankara hosted nearly 1.8 million visitors in 2013 and its average length of stay is 2.4 days. Its residents are less happy (56.2) than those in İstanbul and İzmir. This may be due to Ankara's specific characteristics. Denizli is the last city in the second (2) happiness category. Denizli hosted 824,396 visitors in 2013, while its residents reported a score of 56.7 in the LSS. In addition, Denizli's economy is mostly dependent on industrial production, agriculture and



tourism (TSI, 2017d). Seven out of the ten most popular tourist cities belong in the (1) and (2) happiness categories.

Bursa, Nevşehir and Çanakkale share a common characteristic in terms of tourism. They all have famous cultural heritage attractions; the Blue Mosque in Bursa, Fairy Chimneys in Nevşehir, and Troy and World War I (WWI) Battlefields in Çanakkale. Nevşehir is ranked as the happiest city among the top ten tourist cities. Çanakkale follows Nevşehir with a happiness score of 63.6. They both appear in the happiness category (4). Bursa's residents are less happy than those in Çanakkale and Nevşehir and so the city is placed in happiness category (3). Bursa's ranking may be explained by its industrial production development, which differs from Çanakkale and Nevşehir.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

The relationship between happiness and tourism is a widely discussed topic in the tourism literature due to the huge impact of tourism on destinations and their residents. The concept of happiness can be seen in tourism studies under different headings, such as tourist and resident happiness, well-being, QOL, and life satisfaction. In this paper, we aimed to discuss the relationship between tourism development and residents' happiness using secondary data sources.

Our research indicates that the residents of seven out of the ten most popular tourist cities seem to be less happy, confirming the findings of studies by Okulicz-Kozaryn and Strzelecka (2016), Pratt, McCabe and Movono (2016) and Ivlevs (2017). These seven cities fall within happiness categories (1) and (2). Why this is may depend on various factors. The current literature shows that despite the positive impact of tourism on destinations, local residents may be unhappy and dissatisfied. That is dependent on how residents perceive the impact of tourism. If the tourism industry is concentrated in a specific location and the length of the tourist season is limited, this may lead to increased negative perceptions among residents (Nawijn, 2010) as well as irritation and unhappiness. Doxey's (1975) seminal work proves that extensive tourism development in a destination may irritate residents.

Bimonte and Faralla (2016) found that during the peak tourist season, residents perceive tourism as a source of hidden-costs. In Turkey, Antalya, Muğla and Aydın are cities that are heavily dependent on the tourism industry and in particular marine-based mass tourism. Therefore, the lower levels of happiness in these three cities may be explained by high pressure placed on local resources and local residents during the peak tourist season. Cultural tourism and other forms of alternative tourism differ from marine-based mass tourism, most notably in terms of the degree to which the tourism activity is concentrated in a particular location and over a specific, and limited, length of time (Cuccia & Rizzo, 2011). In our research, the moderate levels of happiness in Bursa, even higher levels in Nevşehir and Çanakkale, may be explained by the development of cultural and other alternative forms of tourism in these three cities.

The existing literature shows that residents' perceptions are also dependent on the material and non-material or tangible and intangible benefits of tourism development. Studies by

Kaplanidou (2012), Woo, Kim, & Uysal (2015) and Okulicz-Kozaryn and Strzelecka (2016) prove that residents' happiness or QOL can vary according to residents' perceptions of the tangible and intangible or material and non-material outcomes of tourism development. This may explain the studies that have found a positive relationship between tourism development and residents' positive perceptions of tourism (Aref, 2011; Rivera, Croes, & Lee, 2016; Lin, Chen, & Filieri, 2017).

Reducing the negative impact of tourism and increasing the happiness of both residents and tourists requires detailed, well-organized and collaborative tourism policy development and planning activities. Vogt et al. (2016) and Boukas and Ziakas (2016) point out that tourism policies should bring together all stakeholders, including residents, in the policy development process. Otherwise, tourism development may be misguided, mismanaged, poorly conceived, and non-local (Bimonte & Faralla, 2016).

The tourism system has both a complex and dynamic nature. Thus, a number of different factors may shape the happiness of local residents. While this study only attempted to examine some tourism related variables, it found that tourism development does not always affect residents' happiness, *ceteris paribus*. This could be seen as a limitation of our paper. The concurrency of the data is another limitation of this study.

Our discussion raises some other questions for further research. Firstly, the specific characteristics of a destination may affect residents' perceptions of tourism development and their happiness. Happiness studies must therefore continue to be undertaken. As mentioned above, happiness and tourism studies fall into two broad categories (tourist and resident happiness). Nevertheless, there is a need to integrate and measure these categories together. Future research should employ a triangulation method in order to increase the robustness of the findings.

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