

PRESERVING CULTURAL HERITAGE AND POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT: CASE OF İZMİR

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ABSTRACT

World's leading category of international trade, tourism, is increasingly offering a range of cultural heritage products, from visiting monuments to discovering unique ways of life as supply for increasing cultural and heritage tourism demand. UNESCO defines culture tourism as "to create a discerning type of tourism that takes account of other people's cultures" (UNESCO, 2005). Indeed culture and heritage tourism has been gaining importance recently not only for its' economic gains but due to more sustainable approaches. As rural and regional economies go through difficult times of change, it may seem to some local communities that heritage can help in terms of economical gains. When what is old and valued in the community can no longer serve its original function, surely it can still attract funding and tourism as a part of cultural heritage. It is a well known fact that a natural link exists between cultural heritage tourism and regional development. Regional development is a key factor which contributes to economic welfare of the host country. The development and application of a system assessing the tourism potential of cultural and heritage assets including cultural, physical, product and experiential values is vital for the sustainability of the tourism attractions. The purpose of this paper is to determine whether there is a link between cultural and heritage tourism and regional development. Research method was identified as a qualitative technique – interview method-. The population consisted of the members of the governmental bodies as well as leading representatives of the tourism sector. The practical implication of this study is pointing out the possible policies and necessity of cooperation between government and private sector in Izmir, being the most populated and the most industrialized city, which plays a great role in the development of the Aegean Region.

Key words: Cultural heritage, regional development, effects of heritage tourism

Introduction

Tourism is a world-wide giant industry which has a high increase rate such that UNWTO's Vision forecasts that international arrivals are expected to reach over 1.56 billion by the year 2020, which were 842 million in 2006 (World Tourism Organization). Cultural heritage tourism is also, increasingly being used as a tool to stimulate regional development in rural and urban areas (New Zealand Tourism Research, 2007). In September 2002, World Tourism Organization executive Luigi Cabrini told a gathering in Belgium that "cultural tourism is growing faster than most other tourism segments and at a higher rate than tourism worldwide." (Parker, 2007). Actually spotlighting the arts, culture, history and heritage to

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attract tourists is nothing new, particularly in Europe and because travelers were becoming more and more interested in opportunities to learn about places through their art and history, cultural tourism consistently grows. Since tourism is nowadays used to stimulate regional development, cultural heritage tourism is used for, both preservation of regions as well as economic development of the regions. Cultural tourism can be defined as the subset of tourism concerned with a country or region's culture and its customs. Cultural tourism generally focuses on communities who have unique customs, unique form of art and different social practices, which basically distinguishes it from other types/forms of culture. Cultural tourism includes tourism in urban areas, particularly historic or large cities and their cultural facilities such as museums and theatres. It can also include tourism in rural areas showcasing the traditions of indigenous cultural communities (i.e. festivals, rituals), and their values and lifestyles. Preserving cultural heritage appears to be a key factor in economic policies supporting tourism development. It is a widely accepted fact that preservation of cultural heritage is important and it is also used as a tool for tourism product differentiation (Cuccia & Cellini, 2007:261). Cultural tourists as cited by Hughes (2002:164) are seen as “typically well educated, affluent and broadly travelled, [and] they generally represent a highly desirable type of upscale visitor”. It is generally agreed that cultural tourists spend substantially more than standard tourists do. Cultural tourists are expecting different experiences from their vacations and these expectations are becoming more important day by day. During these experiences tourist can interact with three kinds of cultural attributes; the physical (e.g. built heritage), the general (the daily life of the host community) and the specific cultural activities of the host community (e.g. rituals and festivals).

Mass tourism is a product of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Since then a number of interrelated developments in the world economy, have converted part of the industry from mass tourism to so-called “new tourism”. The new tourism, which is the idea of responsible, green, soft, alternative and sustainable tourism, basically refers to the diversification of the tourism industry and its development in targeted markets where cultural heritage tourism is in the first rank. Changing lifestyles of the new tourists are creating demand for more targeted and customized holidays. A number of lifestyle segments – families, single parent households, “empty nesters” (i.e. couples whose children have left home), double-income couples without children – will become prevalent (common) in tourism, signaling the advent (arrival – start) of a much more differentiated approach to tourism marketing. Changing values are also generating demand for more environmentally conscious and nature-oriented holidays.

Cultural Heritage Tourism

There is no singular, specific definition of either cultural or heritage tourism. Some call it cultural tourism, some heritage tourism, some cultural & heritage tourism or shortly cultural heritage tourism (Cultural & Heritage Tourism Alliance, 2002). Culture is a set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group. It encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, values systems, traditions and beliefs (UNESCO, 2001). The World has some 6000 communities and as many distinct languages. The National Trust's definition of cultural heritage tourism is “traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. It includes historic, cultural and natural resources.” (Cultural Heritage Tourism, 2005). In 1985, World Tourism Organization (WTO) provided two

definitions of cultural tourism. The narrower definition includes: "movements of persons for essentially cultural motivations such as study tours, performing arts and cultural tours, travel to festivals and other cultural events, visits to sites and monuments, travel to study nature, folklore or art, and pilgrimages.' The wider definition includes: 'all movements of persons, ... because they satisfy the human need for diversity, tending to raise the cultural level of the individual and giving rise to new knowledge, experience and encounters.' (Canadian Heritage, 2006). Heritage is a broad concept and includes the natural as well as the cultural environment. It encompasses landscapes, historic places, sites and built environments, as well as biodiversity, collections, past and continuing cultural practices, knowledge and living experiences. It records and expresses the long processes of historic development, forming the essence of diverse national, regional, indigenous and local identities and is an integral part of modern life. It is a dynamic reference point and positive instrument for growth and change (The Charter Etos, 1999). Cultural tourism market share development strategy focuses on promotion of the unique cultural aspects of a city or region, in order to draw tourists interested in those particular cultural subjects to the area. Heritage management, on the other hand is defined as management of regions' natural, cultural and built environments. As a strategy, this focus is gaining widespread acceptance nation wide and internationally among tourism offices and bureau to differentiate their cities, regions and states as desirable tourist destinations in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

Figure 1. The Three Categories of Heritage Attraction

NATURAL	CULTURAL	BUILT
Landforms, rural scenery, flora and fauna	Festivals, arts/crafts, traditional practices/ products	Historic homes, monuments, industrial sites

Source: Jun, Soo Hyun; Nicholls, Sarah; Vogt, Christine, "Heeding the call for heritage tourism: more visitors want an "experience" in their vacations--something a historical park can provide", 9/1/2004, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G1-122660738.html>.

Heritage tourism refers to leisure travel that has as its primary purpose the experiencing of places and activities that represent the past. Heritage sites provide the tangible links between past, present and future. Heritage sites are in the centre of the struggle between the potentially conflicting aspirations of conservation and tourism.

Figure 2 - Conservation and tourism - complementary agents in the management of heritage attractions

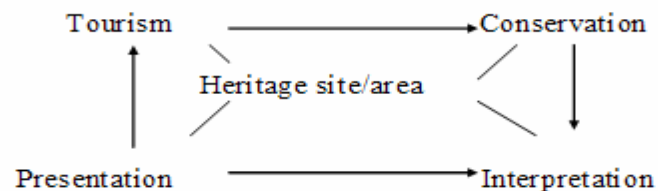
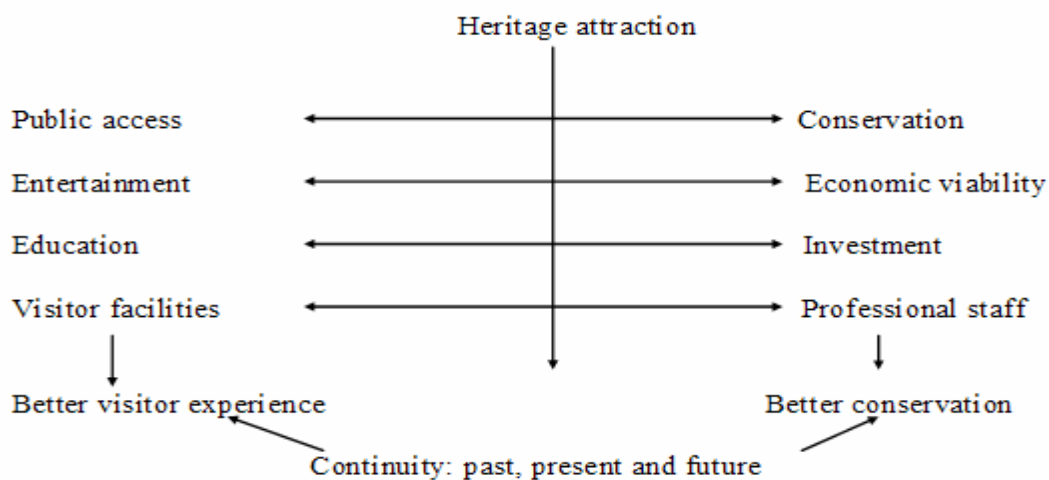


Figure 3- Conservation and tourism - public accountability of heritage management



Source: Medlik S., Managing Tourism, Butterworth- Heinmann, 1991, p.115-116

Cultural tourism brings increased revenue to the heritage sites and, more broadly, to the community and country that hosts them. It can be an engine of economic growth. Heritage management enables the critical balance to be maintained between the needs of the resource and the needs of the visitor. Through education and entertainment and the enjoyment of heritage attractions such as nature reserves, national parks, museums, historic houses and gardens, villages or towns by people of all ages and socio-economic groups with different life-styles, it is possible to develop a climate of conservation awareness. Heritage resources are not replaceable; therefore conservation is the critical point in heritage management. Cultural heritage tourism has gained a substantial attention in the tourism industry in recent years (McCain and Ray, 2003: 713-717). Because travelers are becoming more and more interested in opportunities to learn about places through their art and history, cultural tourism consistently grows. And also, nowadays, mass tourism is not recommended because, since the results are such;

- The majority of money goes to a small number of people.
- Tourists usually don't learn much.
- Low paid jobs for local people.
- Environmental damage.
- A lack of respect for traditional culture.

Cultural heritage brings solutions to disadvantages of mass tourism, though it has of course its' own problems. The disadvantages associated with the application of cultural heritage tourism in undeveloped regions are quite a few. One of the disadvantages is too much commercial emphasis: The tourism industry has used local cultures as part of the tourism product by taking traditional rituals, dances, music and crafts that formed part of local people's cultural heritage and 'packaging' it up for tourists. This often involves manipulating culture for tourists 'benefit' until they bear little or no resemblance to the original cultural experiences derived over centuries. In some cases the original meaning of the ritual or performance to local people is lost as the 'tourist' version takes hold (Francis, 2001). When this change continues it threatens culturally important places and artifacts. This leads to erosion of traditions where it may be seen as staged authenticity and assimilation. Perpetuates negative stereotypes leading to ethnocentrism, may led to conflict due to cultural differences. Also, when heritage tourism is applied in large scale in terms of mass tourism, heritage sites are negatively effected with too many visitors. For example, Ephesus, in Turkey is visited by more than 2 million visitors each year and it really damages this unique and very valuable heritage site. Therefore, the answer for the problem is achieving the right balance between encouraging the expansion of cultural heritage tourism and protecting heritage sites, resources and monuments by educating local people and keeping the volume of tourists to heritage travel destination areas to within optimum sustainable limits (Parker, 2007). Also, within the measures to be taken to overcome the problems with the development are:

- Zoning,
- Regional planning,
- Licensing regulations,
- Control in central areas and
- Decentralization of cultural supply (Paulo, 2002: 165-182).

When developmental and promotional strategies are analyzed; improvement in educational and cultural context of tourism, concentration of activities around important themes, strategic usage of mass media and development of out-of-season tourism seem to be the global issues concerning all areas using cultural heritage tourism for regional development.

Izmir and Cultural heritage tourism

Historic sites are a big draw for visitors and the Izmir's varied heritage assets have great potential to deliver economic benefits for the region. Izmir is known as a city with the history goes beyond 8000 years, which brings all the unique heritage resources available for cultural heritage tourism. The city is called "The Aegean Pearl" and has a tremendous potential for cultural tourism potential, although it is not utilized at full. It was cited that Izmir is well suit for city tourism in "Turkey's Tourism Strategy" which also suggests that national museums to be opened up in the city. Being besides a tourism center, Izmir is an important meeting point of cultural events and expositions with its universities, cuisine, museums, concert halls, cultural and art associations, annual national and international festivals and rich alternative media (Izmir Ticaret Odası). When the demand and market share of Izmir within the overall Turkish Tourism market is examined, it is easily seen that the share of the city is declining. The share of Izmir was 8% in 1982, 11%-12% in 1988-1989 and from then it has been steadily decreasing. Fort he past 5 years as can be seen form table, the share was lower than 5%. Despite the growing rate of Antalya, Izmir should use its potential for cultural heritage to increase the share and use tourism for regional development.

What may be included in a package for Izmir may include:

- Cultural tourism which is travel to experience and in some cases participating in lifestyles
- Performing Arts,
- Visual Arts and Crafts,
- Festivals,
- Museums and Cultural Centers, and
- Historic Sites and Interpretive Centers.

Table 1 - The Distribution of International Tourist Arrivals Among Important Centers (Numbers and Share)

	2005	%	2006	%	2007	%
Antalya	6.884.636	32,6	6.011.183	30,3	7.291.734	31,2
İstanbul	4.849.220	23,0	5.346.681	27,0	6.453.598	27,7
Muğla	2.835.893	13,4	2.345.485	11,8	2.571.920	11,0
İzmir	788.999	3,7	776.689	3,9	966.693	4,1
Aydın	338.923	1,6	404.631	2,0	509.872	2,2
Others	5.427.215	25,7	4.935.164	24,9	5.547.257	23,8
Total	21.124.886	100,0	19.819.833	100,0	23.341.074	100,0

Source: Derived from Ministry of Culture and Tourism Statistics (2008)

Methodology

Qualitative Research Method

Historically, quantitative research methods became popular since it was believed that it proves to be a method providing tangible and hard data. In contrast the research which is less quantitative such as social sciences is referred to as soft to underline the lack of dependability (Milliken, 2001: 71-77). Today, the researchers claim that qualitative research may be certainly used in every field as well as in social sciences (Burton, 2007; Vaivio, 2008; Northcott and Doolin, 2008). Stainback and Stainback (1988) identified the “qualitative paradigm” as one where “reality changes with changes in people’s perceptions”; where “reality is what people perceive it to be” and where “values will impact on the understanding the phenomena” (Lawrence and Ul-Haq, 1988:15-24).

In this study, since social sciences are proved to be a confident field for qualitative research methods, interview technique is preferred. The interviews were semi-structured and the population was consisted of 11 people who are the members of the governmental bodies as well as leading representatives of the tourism sector in Izmir. The data gathered through qualitative techniques may be analyzed in various ways such as descriptive analysis and content analysis. If requested the findings may be numerically summarized and the process lasts with reporting.

In this research the content analysis is used. The steps of the content analysis are summarized as following;

- Coding: The data gathered is coded by the researcher and there are various ways of coding such as;
 - Coding according to previously identified concepts,
 - Coding according to the concepts identified through the data being analyzed,
 - Coding in a general framework.

In this research the second coding type is preferred since there is no previously defined conceptual structure guiding the analysis of the data.

- Definition of the theme: Coding and classifying the data should be supported with another step as defining general themes which collects the codes under specific categories and explains the data in general.
- Setting and Describing the Data According to the codes and themes.
- Commenting on the Findings.

Content Analysis

Coding and Definition of the Theme

Coding is done to the data which is gathered from each of the interviewees. The second step of the content analysis is the definition of the theme. What is suggested in this step is gathering all of the codes under a broader theme which best describes the relationship between each code.

The codes defined under Cultural Heritage, Putting Cultural Heritage to Use, Efficiency and Effectiveness of Policies and Plans, Expo 2015 and Conservation and Recovery should be defined under some themes with regard to their relationship. The broader themes that contain the codes are listed below;

- Cultural Heritage in Destinations and the Most Effective Use
- The Policies and Plans for the Conservation and Recovery of Destinations
- The Events in Destinations: Expo 2015

Setting and Describing the Data According to the Codes and Themes

Cultural Heritage in Destinations and the Most Effective Use

The History (8.000 years) of a destination containing historical ruins, socio-cultural values, the wealth and richness of each civilization, the community, their religion, the antecedents, as well as the natural structure which symbolizes natural wealth, its rich texture, the traces that carry the past to present are the most important accepted indicators for a destination to be counted unique. These issues counted above are the symbols of cultural health and a destination should make best use of them. The codes that are taken into account for underlying the best way to make use of them are in such a relation according to the interviewees;

In order to make best use of cultural heritage in a destination is linked to some important factors that is why lack of financial resources, lack of local development plans, lack of coordination, lack of assessment, lack of citizen consciousness, lack of interest, lack of infrastructure, lack of cultural significance, lack of attractions, lack of resources, lack of archives as well as multi-sectional policies, deficiency in marketing, conservation, improvement and keeping alive, inefficient assessment, inadequate foreign originated tours are regarded as the obstacles in using the cultural heritage for the benefit of a destination. The immigration problems, crooked urbanization and degeneration of social values are seen as other problems that are faced in destinations. In order to come over these kind of problems it is mentioned that government applications, local administrators' action & contingency plans, private entrepreneurs, civil community organizations, cooperation between these mentioned groups and the governmental policies are the key issues that should be existing in a destination. The interviewees also mention that Izmir as a modern, best coastal and metropolis destination has some important attractions and resources that should be used best for such as Izmir International Fair, cruise and health tourism capability, general view of the city, blue bead, Efe Rakı, swashbuckling hero of Southwestern Anatolian Villages, West Anatolian music, cultural city image, cultural heritage, historical wealth, architecture, historical ruins, historical- cultural and natural resources, social and traditional cultural heritage. It is also mentioned that mass tourism, foreign visitors are the representatives of the shift in demand. This development is considered very important for the future promotion of Izmir and the sustainability of tourism. In order to meet the expectations of tourist demand; private and government agencies, chamber of commerce and civil society-organizations should provide hospitality services such as accommodation, food&beverage, as well as tourist products, some alternative tourism types such as shopping tourism, active promotion strategies, art production workshops, nostalgic clubs, creative designs, restored and very well conserved attractions, increase in number and content of tour programs, museums, better infrastructure and superstructure. One other important thing is the sensitivity of Izmir citizens to the developments and their support. Unless the governmental policies, creative teams and education of the community exist within a destination there will never be a better assessment of opportunities.

The Policies and Plans for the Conservation and Recovery of Destinations

Tourism planning, short and long term regional development policies and strategies, development plans, their implementation, tourism inducement act, strategic goals, projects are the most mentioned terms for the conservation and recovery of any destination. The bodies that are entitled to perform these tasks and responsibilities are accepted as stakeholders such as community & industry representatives, civil community organizations, Izmir Development Agency, local development agencies such as EGEV, local management agencies with political power and competent, creative and hardworking teams consisting of volunteers. That is why it is essential to see cooperation of government, local authority and private sector in order to stimulate awareness, sensitivity, consciousness, public interest, support, teamwork, motivation and more accurate public opinion.

They are ought to preserve and recover cultural heritage, socio-cultural values, touristic characteristic, destination image, environmental composition, Port of Izmir, thermal resources, tourism products of the region, alternative tourism types as thermal tourism, health tourism and religious tourism. What these bodies should use as mediums for the conservation and recovery are listed as; education centers, informative meetings, project competition, promotions, inducement, marketing of some values including Aegean cuisine, handicraft, folklore, rich cultural heritage, museum culture, Restoration of houses, attractions, effective management, precaution strategies, realistic policies, call (search) conferences, fairs, meetings and congress, touristic attractions, trade and related tourism investments. In order to preserve physical carrying capacity, psychological carrying capacity, social carrying capacity, ecologic carrying capacity it is considered necessary to make analysis of demand structure, analysis of market segments, sustainable regulations and pursuit of a systematic process.

There are also some problems to which attention is drawn; seasonality, all inclusive, infrastructure problems, emergence of second houses, false practices in highway construction and air transportation, family corporations' existence, waste of resources, inadequate and unsuccessful policies, lack of planning, lack of financial resources, lack of investment, multi-sectional policies, being unable to keep up with era. Overcoming these obstacles and problems are going to result with economical advantage, demand creation, diversity of service sectors, increase of responsibility, added value, investments, production, more bed capacities. The most important factors needed to accomplish this performance is continuous help of stakeholders and their coordination, the accurate decision making of leaders, exterior support to the destination, prevention of excessive bureaucracy, the efforts of community, the adaptation of technology.

The Events in Destinations: Expo 2015

The events are considered as important activities within a destination which causes urban development, regional sustainability, active way of promoting, increase of investment especially tourism investments, increase in employment, socio-economic contribution to the region and development of infrastructure and superstructure such as transportation, accommodation. With the special events the increase in supply is seen in accommodation, f&b services, facilities, alternative medicine centers, bed capacity, attraction centers, congress and fair centers.

On the other hand since special events are good promoters and motivators the touristic treasure becomes more important and the number of tourist visit increases. This also results with cultural, social and financial wealth. Expo 2015 is an example for special events which is seen as an opportunity for the physical and financial development of Izmir. By the help of Expo2015 it is accepted that the promotion of Izmir will be accomplished and Izmir is going to be a brand, gain an identity, an image and a vision. Izmir is seen as a candidate which is one of the congress and fair cities, center of trade and art, a city full of cultural heritage & diverse religions. Expo 2015 is going to be a motivation for the tourism revival in Izmir by stimulating rebirth of trade & investments, employment, new business fields and thermal tourism. It is also admitted that success is depending on governmental support, official

administration, civil community organizations and a well designed implementation of strategies to start a new era in Izmir.

Commenting on Findings

In light of the interviews made with the representatives of the tourism sector in Izmir, some important facts are enlightened regarding the preservation of cultural heritage and its possible impacts on regional developments. Regarding the speeches of the interviewees, it is seen that cultural heritage is one of the most important issues for the livability and sustainability of a destination. Cultural heritage includes so many aspects from socio-cultural values to historical traces and ancient history. This diversity usually causes problems and in addition the threat of the external environment generally doubles these problems. The most important things to be always remembered are the need for a definite strategy of governmental bodies and cooperation between the stakeholders (community, government, civil organizations etc). Izmir is the case to be presented within this research. That is why, regarding the findings of the content analysis, it may be appropriate to admit that Izmir has a cultural heritage with a history of more than 8.000 years. The most important aspect here is the conservancy of this treasure. In order to preserve all the values on hand, it is mentioned that Izmir has a lack of policy and a systematic process. The lack of cooperation between the governmental bodies and the private sector is always being felt heavily and this causes a great problem for the promotion of Izmir as a touristic destination. The historical ruins are not protected, the promotion is very weak and the stakeholders are acting as partners of a rival. This is the most important obstacle for the conservation and sustainability of Izmir's cultural heritage.

The policies and regulations are not adequate for Izmir that is why it still cannot be seen as a tourism center. For being such a brand it is essential to make best use of cultural heritage. Unless the governmental policies, creative teams and education of the community exist within a destination there will never be a better assessment of opportunities. What these bodies should use as mediums for the conservation and recovery are including some steps as establishing education centers, offering informative meetings, application of inducements, promoting some values such as Aegean cuisine, handicrafts and rich cultural heritage. One important stage that waits for Izmir is the gain of Expo 2015. In order to develop a region, according to the interviews made, preserving cultural heritage is important but there is one more important reality which emphasizes the impacts of a special event in a destination.

Expo 2015 is such an event which is going to stimulate the development and improvement of Izmir. There are going to be so many investments which are going to urge the emergence of trade, tourism, diversity, wealth and achievement of being a brand with a broader vision for the future. The cooperation of government, community, education centers, private sector, and civil organizations is becoming more and more important in order to make Izmir a center with an identity.

Conclusion

Heritage is a comprehensive concept that consists of many diverse values like cultural, natural, historical, architectural, archaeological, and geological values. Heritage is a mirror of different ways of lives and habits, in other words, different cultures and eras of the mankind and the society they live in. A well-preserved heritage enables communities to learn about their cultural history truly and chronologically. After the World War II, the world has seen a gradual increase in technology and urbanization resulting in a series of threats to heritage; social, environmental and economical. Because of migration and industrialization population density between rural areas and cities differ greatly. Globalization changed people's lives in an undeniable way, a way that is mostly stereotyped. These kinds of facts pose a great threat to intangible cultural assets. Heritage is not a renewable resource; therefore it should be conserved in the most efficient way. The word "preservation" has existed from the beginning of the very early times of human history, but its definition. Until recently preservation is nearly equal to just protecting the physical assets, but now it is seen as a clear fact that when trying to protect heritage national, social, cultural and economical aspects of the protection process should be taken into account. It aims to conserve, use and develop the heritage and to sustain it values and significance by giving the heritage a compatible use. It is worth of mentioning that, the most important innovation of the management approach involves the sustainability principle. The lack of cooperation between the governmental bodies and the private sector is always being felt heavily and this causes a great problem for the promotion of Izmir as a touristic destination. Therefore it is essential that a master tourism marketing plan is prepared in coordination with all the authorities either from public or private sector. It is also necessary to overcome infrastructure problems such as transportation in order to ease reaching heritage sites. Izmir should make use of its well-known attractions such as its coastal line, historical sites and history dating back to ancient times. An inventory study should be made in order to define these attractions and a unified body consisting of members from government and private sector should define and direct efforts which could be used in marketing these attractions.

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