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ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY OF THE WEB HOSTING PROVIDERS TO THE TURKISH TRAVEL AGENCIES

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ABSTRACT

Outsourced website hosting is an extremely competitive business on a global scale. The aim is to search the economic geography of the web hosting providers to the Turkish travel agencies in the context of the overseas or domestic providers. Almost all of the domestic hosting providers are located in certainprovinces.The rate of the Turkish travel agencies preferring the overseas hosting providers is 27 %. More than half of the overseas providers (59 %) are located in North Cyprus.The cross sectional analysis results(P= 0.01) also prove that Turkish travel agencies located in the provinces getting overwhelminglydomestic (Turkish) touristsgive preference to domestic hosting providers.Consequently, apart from becoming an empirical study model regarding an outsourced online service in the travel agency industry, from the potential global players, this study findings should be consideredas the facts to be utilized to penetrate into a country market such as Turkey within the context of online services.

Keywords: Outsourcing, Web, Hosting, Travel Agencies, Turkey

Note:

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1. Introduction

Needless to say that the internet is made up of personal and business relationships.Today**,** a substantial amount of businessis done over the Internet by creating website, which is a way among other options to establish online presence (Kotler and Armstrong, 2012).Indeed, the fundamental part of the Internet marketing is to "create and maintain an effective online presence through a website" (Chaffey, 2006). Undoubtedly,the first step of having a website is to register a domain name (German, 2010; Leng, 2010). Indeed, each domain (website name)needs to be hosted on a web server in order to make itself available on the Internet. Hosting involves housing, serving and maintaining files so that visitors are able to view the content of a website. In other words,web hosting is the essential link between a website and the Internet (Netregistry, 2013).

Having own web server is sometimes justified by serious security concerns, off-color content or a very large-scale site. If a business organization hasn't got a business case for hosting its own server, then it can buy a hosting service from a third-party provider.

Obviously hosting task needs to have the right equipment, including a web server and a permanent connection to the Internet. As stated in Kossakowski and Allen's (2000, pp.13-15) study,web server host operating systemrequiresweb server administration skills such as managing/configuring a web server with appropriate object, device, and file access controls, patch management, firewalls and routers and virus protectionagainst common attacks etc. Namely, hosting task needs a few essential components required, such as, the hardware/server to run the hosting on, an internet connection, someone with the knowledge to manage the machine and internet connection,and also the ideal environment and reliability.

Accordingly, numerous companies charging a monthly hosting fee which is usually very reasonable are dedicated only to hosting websites.Considering thisfact and also the view that we live in an age of outsourcing (Grossman and Helpman, 2005),this paper investigates the outsourced hosting services and economic geography (localities) of the hosting providers to Turkish travel agencies. Economic geography and outsourcingterms is explained in the next sections, and then follows a section outlining our aim and methodology before we describe our data. We report the results regardingweb hosting service providers to the Turkish travel agencies before concluding in the final section.

2. Economic Geography of Today

As it is understood from thesimilar opinions of some authors in Sokol's (2011, Pp.20-21) study,the globalization and the ICT (Information Communication Technology) revolution have 'space-shrinking' effects on economic activities and will bringabout the 'death of distance' and thus, ultimately, the 'end of geography'Distance will no longer determine the cost of communicating electronicallyCompanies will locate any screen-based activity anywhere on earth, wherever they can find the best bargain of skills and productivity(Cairncross, 1977). ICTs will allow money to be moved around the globe without constraints, thus spelling the "end of geography". "The end of geography", as a concept applied to international financial relationships, refers to a state of economic development where geographical location no longer matters, or matters less than hitherto (O'Brien, 1992).In sum, they both seem to suggest that location in space is no longer an issue for firms as they can locate 'anywhere on earth'.

In summary, the fast diffusion of information and communication Technologies (ICT) obviously offer new obtainable opportunities to restructure firm activities, hence the importance of physical distance has unambiguously decreased. For the many service industries, which were in the past obviously location-specific and relatively sheltered from effects of international competition have become less independent from the location of consumption, the end of geography means a wide range of customers on a territorial and global scale.As such, they can even be located in a small number of global cities allowing them to find and exploit 'the best bargain of skills and productivity' on the world.Leamer andStorper (2001, pp. 4) state that the specialized firms tend to cluster tightly together in financial "districts". Although the clients of the specialized intellectual firms are sometimes far-flung, their competitors often are not.

3. Relevance of Outsourcing

Businesses, instead of employing some specialist on a full time basis, "outsource" many task to specialized firms producing intermediate intellectual inputs. Since immaterial products can

be transported virtually without cost, the intellectual tasks are amenable to procurement at a distance (Leamer and Storper, 2001).

Outsourcing is defined as the delegation of business functions totally or partially to another company along with part of the administrative and operational control (Gomez *et al.*, 2009). The use of the term outsourcing has not been standardized. Outsourcing generally refersto the procuring of material inputs or services by a firm from outside the firm. Outsourcing can be domestic or international (Amiti and Wei, 2004).

Many studies have served as a reference proposing a number of reasons for outsourcing. Benefits of outsourcing may fall into a few major categories including focus on core activities/core competencies, cost saving, organizational finances, quality, access to technology and skills, flexibility, organizational change and organizational politics (Sourenkova and Louvieris, 2005). From recent studies, Gonzalez*et al.*'(2009, pp. 185-186) empirical study summarizes the following valid reasons linked with outsourcing: Focusing on Strategic Issues, Increasing Flexibility, Improve the Quality, Get Rid of Routine Tasks, Facilitating Access to Technology, Reducing the Risk of Obsolescence, Saving Staff Costs,Having Alternatives to the IS staff, Saving Technology Costs and Following the Trends.

Despite the repeated advice of outsourcing experts against basing outsourcing decisions on cost alone, the reality in today's economy is that cost savings is the prime motive for outsourcing(Jones, 2003).Thecost reduction is cited as a motivating factor in outsourcing by 87 per cent of customers and 86 per cent of suppliers(Norton Rose,2011).

Expanding on the benefits, admittedly, the major motivation for outsourcing is the intense competitiveness of the global economy. Moreover,the possibility to outsource over the internet is a revolution and its improvements increase the visibility of overseas services **(**Hanleyand Ott, 2012).

In summary, a growing consensus in the business literature is that we live in an age of outsourcing, and there are increasing number of outsourcing relationships between companies from different countries with different languages and cultures (Nguyen*et al.*, 2006). We have

to add that outsourcing very often serves to Get Rid of Routine Tasks— which are very time-consuming— in IT management(Gonzalez *et al.*, 2009).

Notwithstandingthe age of outsourcing, the literature has a small number ofempirical studies which only briefly mention IT outsourcing in tourism (Sourenkova and Louvieris, 2005). On the other hand, today, numerous companies worldwide are dedicated only to hosting websites with distinguished services according to different business needs (Jerman-Blazic, 2008). However, there is lack of research into understanding their market structure in the age of globalization.Considering these facts, in this paper, we focus on both international and domestic outsourcing established between the parties, hosting providers and the Turkish travel agencies.

Before analyzing the economic geography of the web hosting providers to the Turkish travel agencies, the next section is provided to appreciate and understand theaim, scope,methodologyand limits of the study.

4. Aim and Methodology

Transferring of some tasks such as web hosting and web designto the overseas and domestic third-party providers, firms from the four corners of the earth has become a significant element in online business planning.

Outsourced web hosting services offer more efficiencies, reliability and range of services when compared to in-house hosting. Using a third party hosting provider allows web owner to leave the hosting tasks up to a hosting provider which (presumably) specializes in web hosting. The providers charge a monthly fee which is usually very reasonable.

This study focuses on Turkish travel agencies.The aim is to search the economic geography ofweb hosting providers considering wherethe hosting firmsare located.

Regarding Cross-Sectional Statistical Modeling, our hypothesis reads as below;

- The Turkish travel agencies located in the provinces getting more domestic tourists give preference to domestic hosting providers located in the same province.

In broad terms, our research question is:Is there a relation between the economic geographies(localities) of the Turkish travel agenciesandthe web hosting providers?

a. Methodology

In terms of operating limits of this study, the provinces of Turkey are gathered under the five groups according to the Socio-Economic Development Ranking of Provinces (UNDP, 2012) and then analyzed in the last two groups (4^{th} and 5^{th}) be it very few and few developed provinces (Table 1).

To do a correlation study, the tourismstatistics by domestic and foreign (international)arrivals,the Turkish travel agencies number and their website server location information are used.

To test the hypothesis, Eviews (7) statistical software is used.The result is shown in table 2.

b. Study Data

Given in table 1, the numbers of thetravel agencies in all provinces of Turkey and their web address are obtained from TURSAB-Association of Turkish Travel Agencies (TURSAB, 2013). All domestic and foreign tourist arrivals are compiled from the Minister of Culture and Tourism's statistics of accommodation (RTMCT, 2013). The website location finder tool of whois.com,which is popular in searching web domain name registration records, is used tofind out the geographical locationinformation of the web serversregarding the travel agencies.

Table 1: Datafor allProvinces of Turkey (2011)

PROVINCES		Tourist Numbers		Number of	
	Sege	Foreign	Domestic	Agencies	Website
1.Group –The Most Developed Provinces of Turkey					
İstanbul	1	5.263.782	3.359.759	2.339	1.141
Ankara	2	371.256	1.690.760	528	256
İzmir	3	844.563	2.174.721	349	176
Kocaeli	4	52.574	343.820	71	24
Antalya	5	11.464.875	2.739.665	1.105	471
Bursa	6	173.054	1.041.765	171	71
Eskişehir	7	11.583	239.764	51	15
Muğla	8	2.758.896	1.816.645	618	237
Tekirdağ	9	19.234	218.182	33	9
Denizli	10	1.081.175	451.024	30	16
Bolu	11	29.338	345.389	15	5
Edirne	12	23.486	270.615	8	1
Yalova	13	26.570	154.226	24	8
Çanakkale	14	445.766	951.532	28	10
Kırklareli	15	5.834	122.867	8	2
Adana	16	40.672	378.092	112	33
Total		**22.612.658**	**16.298.826**	**5.490**	**2.475**
2. Group - More Developed Provinces of Turkey					
Kayseri	17	28.597	297.219	68	35
Sakarya	18	14.339	268.527	26	6
Aydın	19	1.440.600	790.871	174	94
Konya	20	166.553	446.362	102	32
Isparta	21	32.146	228.945	17	6
Balıkesir	22	240.031	1.787.325	61	17
Manisa	23	11.073	313.406	24	6
Mersin	24	82.230	631.967	80	18
Uşak	25	2.139	77.215	6	4

Burdur	26	4.787	62.835	5	2
Bilecik	27	2.949	36.784	4	2
Karabük	28	38.879	172.733	7	3
Zonguldak	29	3.333	134.891	10	3
Gaziantep	30	72.574	377.098	64	27
Trabzon	31	96.867	683.955	59	16
Karaman	32	1.407	50.908	7	-
Total		**2.238.504**	**6.361.041**	**714**	**271**
3. Group - Average Developed Provinces of Turkey					
Samsun	33	9.325	222.007	46	11
Rize	34	30.591	168.414	15	7
Düzce	35	6.091	173.540	10	3
Nevşehir	36	796.110	495.305	96	55
Amasya	37	8.040	110.900	5	1
Kütahya	38	4.324	227.781	25	5
Elazığ	39	2.453	147.152	26	3
Kırşehir	40	2.551	68.172	4	-
Kırıkkale	41	126	12.137	6	3
Malatya	42	6.606	196.162	24	3
Afyonkarahisar	43	7.951	568.197	23	2
Artvin	44	55.616	217.932	9	1
Erzincan	45	1.787	97.541	11	5
Hatay	46	54.415	304.014	61	15
Kastamonu	47	5.401	202.395	5	2
Bartın	48	2.976	172.083	4	-
Total		**994.363**	**3.383.732**	**370**	**116**
4. Group - Less Developed Provinces of Turkey					
Sivas	49	1.833	174.749	11	3
Çorum	50	5.302	167.595	15	4
Sinop	51	2.871	145.193	4	2
Giresun	52	2.801	110.818	12	3
Osmaniye	53	629	54.239	8	-

Çankırı	54	1 550	48 603	2	-
Aksaray	55	15.257	91.589	11	3
Niğde	56	3.364	43.605	9	6
Tokat	57	780	182.110	13	-
Tunceli	58	382	18.593	3	-
Erzurum	59	44.050	382.354	18	5
K.Maraş	60	3.261	449.298	13	2
Ordu	61	8.460	234.822	20	4
Gümüşhane	62	355	29.276	3	1
Kilis	63	459	6.447	2	-
Bayburt	64	-	9.345	3	-
Total		**89.804**	**2.100.033**	**147**	**33**
5. Group – The Least Developed Provinces of Turkey					
Yozgat	65	1.891	90.399	8	1
Adıyaman	66	11.195	61.833	11	3
Diyarbakır	67	38.192	417.088	54	7
Kars	68	16.813	111.125	14	-
Iğdır	69	11.310	50.330	11	-
Batman	70	28.518	80.505	14	2
Ardahan	71	1.934	63.142	4	-
Bingöl	72	146	27.622	3	-
Şanlıurfa	73	17.516	210.967	31	6
Mardin	74	10.172	118.214	17	2
Van	75	28.191	289.115	40	4
Bitlis	76	2.862	50.256	8	-
Siirt	77	1.279	19.322	7	1
Şırnak	78	9.589	51.016	5	-
Ağrı	79	14.171	39.780	15	3
Hakkâri	80	1.086	60.137	8	-
Muş	81	2.528	60.281	5	-
Total		**197.393**	**1.801.132**	**255**	**29**
G.TOTAL		**26.132.722**	**29.944.764**	**6.976**	**2.924**

5. Findings

Table 1 lays bare the provinces of Turkey receiving both the most foreign and domestic tourists apart from the travel agencies number in 2011.The provinces receiving 87% of the total foreign tourists, 54 % of domestic tourists and also79 % of the travel agencies feature in the 1st group including the most developed provinces of Turkey in the meaning of the socio-economic development ranking of provinces.

On the other hand, the least and less developed provinces of Turkey, figure in the last two groups, receive 13 % of the total domestic tourist number and also 1 % of foreign tourists. According to the TURSAB's registered document, only 6 % of thetravel agencies are located in the provinces named the least and less developed ones. When the server location information of these travel agencies' websites hosted on is analyzed, as seen in table 2, 27 % prefer overseas hosting firms. According to "whois" query from whois.com, the fact of the matter is that more than half of the firms (59 %) are located in North Cyprus. When it comes to domestic hosting firms,almost all of them are located in Kayseri, Izmit, Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir. Istanbulis in the lead with 46%.

Table 2: Datafor the Least and LessDeveloped Provinces

Provinces		Tourist Numbers		Number of		Hosting Providers	
	SEGE	Foreign	Domestic	Agencies	Website	Domestic	Foreign
Less Developed Provinces of Turkey							
Sivas	49	1.833	174.749	11	3	3	-
Çorum	50	5.302	167.595	15	4	4	-
Sinop	51	2.871	145.193	4	2	1	1
Giresun	52	2.801	110.818	12	3	2	1
Osmaniye	53	629	54.239	8	-	-	-
Çankırı	54	1 550	48 603	2	-	-	-
Aksaray	55	15.257	91.589	11	3	3	-
Niğde	56	3.364	43.605	9	6	4	2
Tokat	57	780	182.110	13	-	-	-

Tunceli	58	382	18.593	3	-	-	-
Erzurum	59	44.050	382.354	18	5	4	1
K.Maraş	60	3.261	449.298	13	2	2	-
Ordu	61	8.460	234.822	20	4	3	1
Gümüşhane	62	355	29.276	3	1	1	
Kilis	63	459	6.447	2	-	-	-
Bayburt	64	-	9.345	3	-	-	-
Total		**89.804**	**2.100.033**	**147**	**33**	**27**	**6**
The Least Developed Provinces of Turkey							
Yozgat	65	1.891	90.399	8	1	1	-
Adıyaman	66	11.195	61.833	11	3	3	-
Diyarbakır	67	38.192	417.088	54	7	4	3
Kars	68	16.813	111.125	14	-	-	-
Iğdır	69	11.310	50.330	11	-	-	-
Batman	70	28.518	80.505	14	2	-	2
Ardahan	71	1.934	63.142	4	-	-	-
Bingöl	72	146	27.622	3	-	-	-
Şanlıurfa	73	17.516	210.967	31	6	5	1
Mardin	74	10.172	118.214	17	2	1	1
Van	75	28.191	289.115	40	4	2	2
Bitlis	76	2.862	50.256	8	-	-	-
Siirt	77	1.279	19.322	7	1	1	
Şırnak	78	9.589	51.016	5	-	-	-
Ağrı	79	14.171	39.780	15	3	1	2
Hakkâri	80	1.086	60.137	8	-	-	-
Muş	81	2.528	60.281	5	-	-	-
Total		**197.393**	**1.801.132**	**255**	**29**	**18**	**11**
G.TOTAL		**287.197**	**3.901.165**	**402**	**62**	**45**	**17**

As specified in aim and methodology, the research object of this paper is whether there is a relation between the economic geographies (localities) of the Turkish travel agencies andthe web hosting providers. In this respect, the cross sectional analysis results (P= 0.01) prove that

Turkish travel agencies located in the provinces getting domestic tourists more than foreign tourists give preference to domestic hosting providers (Table 3).

To sum up, the research findings confirm our hypothesis that the Turkish travel agencies located in the provinces getting more domestic tourists give preference to domestic hosting providers.

Consequently, with reference to the server location information of the travel agencies' websites hosted on,this paper statesthe presence of a significant relation within the context of thedifferences in theeconomic geographies (localities) of the travel agencies andthe web hosting firms. It can be concludedthat the hosting firms are clustered in certain provinces whereas the travel agenciesare not located in the same provinces with the hosting firms.

On the other hand,table 3also reflects that there is no a significant relation between foreign tourist arrivals and domestic hosting provider numbers in the provinces.Admittedly, this findingbrings about a new research question regarding the relation between foreign tourist arrivals and overseas hosting provider numbers in the provinces.

Table 3: The Cross Sectional Analysis Results

Dependent Variable: Domestic Hosting Firm Number
Method: Least Squares
Included observations: 33

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	0.431783	0.360309	1.198368	0.2408
Foreign Tourist Number	2.19E-05	2.64E-05	0.829588	0.4138
Domestic Tourist Number	6.51E-06	2.56E-06	2.540065	0.0169
R-squared	0.343309	Mean dependent var		1.451613
Adjusted R-squared	0.296402	S.D. dependent var		1.609114
S.E. of regression	1.349736	Akaike info criterion		3.529461

Sum squared resid	51.01006	Schwarz criterion	3.668234
Log likelihood	-51.70665	Hannan-Quinn criter.	3.574698
F-statistic	7.319006	Durbin-Watson stat	1.835263
Prob(F-statistic)	0.002774		

($nR^2 = 33 \times 0{,}343309 = 11.32 > \chi^2_2 = 9.21$)

6. Conclusion

Today many businesses "outsource" many task to specialized firms. Outsourced online services have enormous potential to help us to understand a globalizing world.

According to this study, 73 % of Turkish travel agencies leaving the hosting tasks up to a hosting provider which (presumably) specialize in web hosting give preference to domestic hosting firms (providers). The firms tend to cluster tightly together in certain provinces "economic geographies", Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Kayseri and Kocaeli. Istanbulis in the lead byhousing nearly half of the hosting providers**.**

The rate of the Turkish travel agencies preferring the overseas hosting providers is 27 %. When checked, the server location information of the overseas firms, where the Turkish travel agencies' websites hosted on, it appears that more than half of them are located in North Cyprus.

The research findings confirm the hypothesis that the Turkish travel agencies located in the provinces getting more domestic tourists give preference to domestic hosting providers.However, since it is a different research dimension, this paper says nothing about why there is no a significant relation between foreign tourist arrivals and domestic hosting provider numbers in the provinces.

In conclusion,this paper states the presence of a significant relation within the context of the differentness in the economic geographies (localities) of the travel agencies andthe web hosting firms.Itshould be considered as a basis toempirical outsourcing studies regarding travel agency industry and also economic geographies (localities) of online service providers

such as web hosting firms.Within this frame, this paper can be a model for new researches regarding the economic geographies of the other website services such as web design and software.

In a globalizing world, global hosting firms as well as all global firms strive hard to penetrate into a county market with communication facilities for customer service and technical supportvia phone, e-mail and chat or ticket system with variety of different languages.Alsothe affiliate marketing system is becoming a main form of marketing employed online and a system of services marketing for other companies in exchange for a commission.

Without any doubt, trust between transacting parties is a vital factor in business relationships.The affiliate systemmaybe already in use as a method of building, maintaining, strengthening and enhancing trust in Turkish hosting and tourism market. Even if this is not the case, domestic hosting firms should be ready alreadyto deal withthe international competition arising from this system.

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