

Postmodern Tourism in a Mythological Destination: Exploring the Image of Olympos/Turkey

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Abstract

The preliminary study aims to understand the image of Olympos, a destination located in Antalya-Turkey, known to be a heaven for hippies and backpackers, with the potential of postmodern tourism. A long-term data is preferred to understand the changing image of the destination in time. Considering all Olympos accommodation enterprises registered for Tripadvisor, which is 63, 3795 tourist comments were posted between 2010 and 2020. Amongst these enterprises, 11 of them are selected as the sample due to being on Tripadvisor for more than 10 years with 1989 comments in total. Based on the content analysis, the perceived image of Olympos is identified as being different, comfortable, unobtrusive, environmental, non-luxury, communal, history-oriented, offering many activities etc. Whereas Olympos Spirit is claimed to be altered by some, the others claim that it has been the same for years. The findings both extend the literature on postmodern tourist behaviors, suggest practical managerial implications for the nature-focused destination authorities, and enlighten the research field for this mythological destination for scholars and practitioners.

1. Introduction

According to a visitor, there is a place in Turkey, where there are no bracelets on their wrists, meaning belonging to a hotel of a certain class and level; there are no pools near where tourists lie and loudly demand everything

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that is included in the accommodation; there are no discos, shopping and everything else with which most people associate Turkey (Antropov, 2014).

Destination image is an intangible (Gartner, 1986) cognitive representation of a place (Fridgen, 1987), which creates an objective reality (Myers, 1986) constructed by various sources of information (Assel, 1984) from a cognitive perspective. From the affective aspects of the perspective, the evaluation also involves the beliefs, biases, and emotions of the visitor (Gartner, 1986) which is interrelated to cognitive aspects (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999), leading to a complex, multidimensional image formation. In contemporary studies, globalization, the increasing use of technology, and the effect of social media content on the formation of the destination image are emphasized (Ghazali & Cai, 2013; Wang et al., 2021; Moradi & Alalhesabi, 2020). Since the assessment of images has become more difficult with the vast amount of information available on social media websites (Ghazali & Cai, 2013), a more comprehensive and complex assessment of the destination image is required.

Existing approaches emphasize quantitative (Wang et al., 2002), well-structured methods, revealing the well-categorized image of the destination. On the other hand, the postmodern period directed tourism studies towards diversity-oriented methods rather than generalization (Uriely, 2005). The case-oriented interpretation of postmodern tourism coincides with postmodern epistemology avoiding metanarratives with the purpose of generalization (Kilduff & Mehra, 1997), which emphasizes a more exploratory and case-based approach to revealing multiple meanings of the destination image in depth. Though understanding the destination images from a postmodern perspective is relatively new and there are only a few studies on the subject (Wang et al., 2021; Moradi & Alalhesabi, 2020).

Under the influence of postmodernism, the tourism sector also has diversified and increased the personalized service supply in terms of quality and quantity (Demir & Emekli, 2019), and improving the aesthetics of the destination (Genc & Temizkan, 2023), resulting in emerging the term 'postmodern tourism'. Although structuring a precise definition of postmodern tourism would be against the nature of the concept, a postmodern tourist is open to different cultures, pluralism, relativity, and diversity (Butler, 2013; Uriely, 1997; Yi et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2015), who uses the internet to collect information about the destination, and decides on their travel route by themselves rather than a travel agent, and generally is one of the first tourists visiting the destination (Lopez-Bonilla & Lopez-Bonilla, 2008) with the increased tendency to get individualized

services and stay in small-scale businesses (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2000). In this environment, specialized agencies, the growing attraction of nostalgia and heritage tourism, the flourishing of nature-oriented tourism, the increase of simulated tourism-related environments, and the inclusion of a variety of tourist experiences and different motivations are also labeled as aspects of postmodern tourism (Uriely, 1997).

The postmodernist methodology suspects metanarratives attained by generalizing (McKinley, 2003: 207; Lyotard, 1984) since various narratives are constructed by different socio-cultural factors (Firat & Venkatesh, 1993; McIntosh & Prentice, 1999; Mura, 2015). Adhering to this epistemology, Wickens (2002) states that studies to be carried out in the field of tourism should focus on different types of tourism, and specific definitions and examples of the subject studied. Since there is no previous study about the image of the Olympos area, an exploratory and time-depth approach is preferred to well-structured questionnaire-based classical research methodologies.

During the evaluation, the quality and quantity of the information about the destination affect the overall destination image of the visitors (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999) among other factors. Besides, there is difficulty in gathering longitudinal data on tourism (Gallarza et al., 2002). In the need for longitudinal data on tourist perceptions, online platforms such as social media, official websites, and traveler blogs are considered valid data resources used in contemporary literature. User-generated comments on social media platforms play an important role since they influence the cognitive and affective attitudes of visitors toward the destination (Gretzel, 2006; Miguéns et al., 2008; Pudliner, 2007; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010) and they create a more reliable resource than business generated contents (Wang et al., 2002). User-generated contents are subjective due to perceptual differences between the writer and the receiver as well (Ghazali & Cali, 2013) in accordance with the postmodern approach.

Applying a postmodern approach, this study focuses on a specific case, Olympos in Antalya/Turkey, which has the potential for postmodern tourism with the diversity of the touristic elements, such as interaction with locals, historical ruins, diverse tourist profiles, affordable prices, authentic experiences, and small scale family businesses. Understanding visitors' perception of Olympos in the long term on social media, is expected to reveal a part of the image of the destination, the possible change in the image of the destination, and the postmodern tourist profile of the area.

The study is expected to contribute to the postmodern destination image assessment literature, where there are only a few studies in the field.

2. Olympus with the Potential of Postmodern Tourism

Olympos is described in Greek mythology as the high mountain where the gods lived and from where they descended to the earth (Morford & Lenardon, 1985). Ancient City Olympos, located in Antalya, has given its name to the region. It is a port city affiliated with the Lycian Union, which was mentioned in the coins of the union in 167 B.C. (Antalya Culture and Tourism Directorate, 2012).

Olympos Beydağları Coastal National Park is an archeological site, known for Olympos Ancient City on the seaside and the forest around the area, offering tourists the opportunity to dive, bike, and hike on the Lycian route, etc. Being a protected area, legal restrictions limited the construction and the possibility of over-tourism in the area. Due to these restrictions, existing facilities serve as treeshouses and camping areas, which are believed to be a critical component of the authentic destination image. Considering Antalya as one of the cities known for all-inclusive mass tourism, Olympos is one of the alternative places, known for a hippie-style touristic experience, called by some visitors “*the name of the free spirit*” (Cicek, 2015) and the game-changer “Another Antalya” (Kaldirim, 2019). In addition, the backpacker tourist profile called post-tourist (Uriely, 2005) seems to be in line with the tourist profile in the region. There are traveler blogs for backpackers suggesting Olympos has a hippie vibe and intriguing ancient ruins (The Broke Backpacker, 2021; The Wayward Walrus, NA; Hatton, 2021; Hostel World, 2019).

According to an interview of Place Overseas Company with a traveler Karen Ormond, there was “*a commune on a farm near Mt Olympus*” in the ’70s, a few stone buildings and run by an Englishman named Ray (Easy Move to Turkey, 2013). According to Ormond, the commune was composed of foreign hippies, who lived naked and had troubles with the natives. This interview also points out the existence of the hippie culture far before the current businesses were established, since. Kadir’s Tree Houses were the first accommodation business in the area that started in the late 1980s. The surface exploration of Olympos Ancient City was actualized between 2000 and 2005 and the excavations started in 2006 (Olca, 2007), though research papers about the city can be dated back to 1909 (Ugurlu, 2002).

3. Methodology

In line with postmodern epistemology, exploratory content analysis is preferred for Olympos, a destination that offers a diversity of experiences on the other side of the mass tourism coin. To understand the change in the image in time, a longitudinal data set is required. Besides, change in the image of the destination is suggested to be assessed by not comparing different destinations but by gathering longitudinal data for a specific destination (Gallarza et al., 2002).

Tripadvisor, a website used by previous researchers (Miguéns et al., 2008) and popular in Turkey, is chosen to gain a deeper knowledge of the destination. As indicated by Xiang and Gretzel (2010), amongst travel-oriented websites, Tripadvisor is one of the increasingly popular websites that provide a comprehensive dataset. User comments for Olympos businesses from 2010 to 2020 are analyzed.

3.1. Sample

The study draws the boundaries by choosing a specific destination, Olympos, with the potential of postmodern tourism, as a case study. To understand the perceived spirit of Olympos, Tripadvisor is one of the most preferred user-generated content tourism-themed websites in Turkey. Tripadvisor lists 63 enterprises in the area by the end of 2021, with a total of 3795 comments. Amongst these enterprises, 11 of them were providing more than 10 years of data with 1989 comments in total. Being a new business on Tripadvisor does not necessarily mean being newly established, though comments 10 years and older are expected to shed a light on the changing image of the destination.



Figure 1: Pictures of random enterprises in the destination

3.2. Content Analysis

To understand the time-dependent construction of Olympos spirit/image, establishments having at least 10-year-old comments are selected and

all of the comments for these enterprises are gathered from TripAdvisor, which is 1989 in total. Besides the comments, time of stay, nationality of the user, time of posting, and gradings are also recorded. Content analysis is carried out which allows the researchers to perform an in-depth analysis of the comments. The categories emerged only after the analysis, and the structure of categories is solely based on the comments.

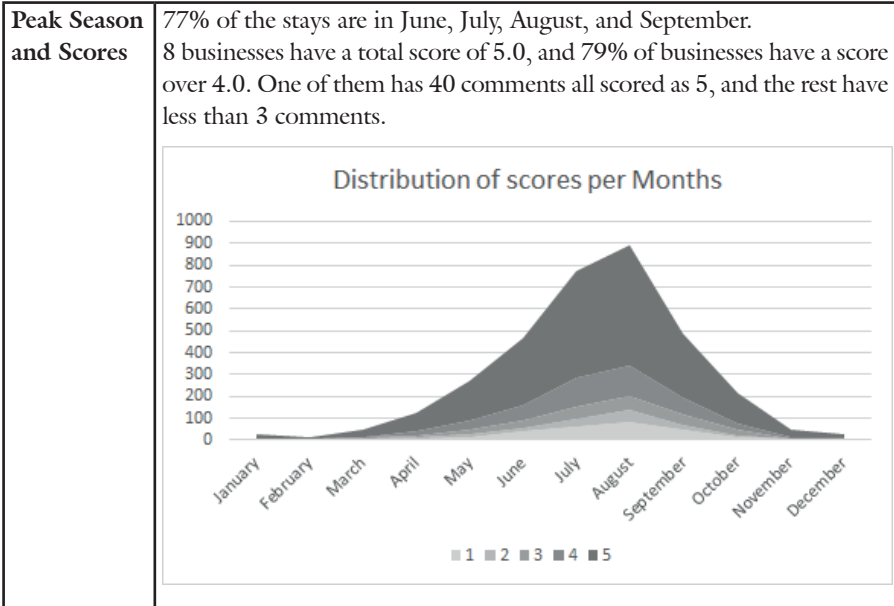
Syed and Nelson (2015) indicate that the reliability of coding can be increased by defining the unit of analysis, defining a coding manual, training codes, gold standard coder starting to code the narratives, and having the consensus amongst coders. The coding is carried out according to this suggestion, where the comments are numbered and each comment is the unit of analysis, two academics coded while one of them was the gold standard coder. Considering the validity (Whittemore et al., 2001), the authenticity of the research is supported by a high number of comments/users on TripAdvisor, and the credibility is high as the participants are assumed to have the actual experience of Olympus. Besides, regardless of the authenticity of the comment or the user, the reader is exposed to the data on the website, which affects the decision-making process.

4. Findings

There are a total of 3426 comments on TripAdvisor, about 63 businesses located in Olympus, dating back to June 2006, until June 2021. Although the demographics include all of the comments, the content analysis covers 11 businesses 1989 comments of 11 businesses that have 10 years long comments, for the sake of time-depth. The demographics are presented in terms of the country of respondents, business details, the peak time of visiting, and scores. Table 1 represents all enterprises in the area subject to the research. The enterprises are coded as B01- B62.

Table 1: Demographics

Item	Characteristics																																																
Country	<p>Comments from 74 countries in total 36.9% of total comments do not indicate any location, but 85% of the comments are in Turkish, 12% in English, 1% Italian, and the other languages less than 1% each.</p> <p>Distribution of most referred 11 countries amongst remaining comments; 60.9% Turkey 8.4% The United Kingdom 4.5% Australia 4.5% USA 3.8% Germany 2.1% Italy 1.9% Canada 1.4% Russia 1.3% France 1.1% Netherlands and Spain</p> <div data-bbox="322 789 994 1197" style="text-align: center;"> <p>Changing # of comments in Time</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Approximate data from the 'Changing # of comments in Time' chart</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Turkey</th> <th>Foreign Locations</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>2006</td><td>0</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr><td>2007</td><td>0</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr><td>2008</td><td>0</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr><td>2009</td><td>5</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>2010</td><td>15</td><td>15</td></tr> <tr><td>2011</td><td>30</td><td>30</td></tr> <tr><td>2012</td><td>50</td><td>50</td></tr> <tr><td>2013</td><td>70</td><td>70</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>100</td><td>100</td></tr> <tr><td>2015</td><td>150</td><td>100</td></tr> <tr><td>2016</td><td>120</td><td>100</td></tr> <tr><td>2017</td><td>150</td><td>100</td></tr> <tr><td>2018</td><td>230</td><td>50</td></tr> <tr><td>2019</td><td>250</td><td>40</td></tr> <tr><td>2020</td><td>120</td><td>100</td></tr> </tbody> </table> </div>	Year	Turkey	Foreign Locations	2006	0	0	2007	0	0	2008	0	0	2009	5	5	2010	15	15	2011	30	30	2012	50	50	2013	70	70	2014	100	100	2015	150	100	2016	120	100	2017	150	100	2018	230	50	2019	250	40	2020	120	100
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Business	<p>63 businesses are dominated by hostels, bungalows, and treehouses. For B63, the commenters are 100% located in Turkey, and nearly 90% of comments belong to the last 2 years, significantly high. This business is eliminated due to the suspicion of fake comments.</p> <p>On average, businesses exist on Trip Advisor for six years. B13 and B21 have comments going back to 15 years. The average number of comments per business is 60.</p> <p>B8, B18, and B21 have a high number of comments, aptly 300 comments per business.</p>																																																



4.1. Content Analysis

Coding categories are defined based on the comments and clustered under positive, neutral, and negative categories, presented in Table 2, Table 3, Table 4, Table 5, Table 6, Table 7, Table 8, and Table 9. Neutral statements mostly cover the technical details about the destination or business. Some issues can be interpreted as an advantage for one, and a disadvantage for another, which results in repeating a group of codes both in positive (P) and negative (N) interpretations. Besides, the sub-categories are classified under cognitive (C) and affective (A) perspectives.

Table 2: Positive and Negative Comments on Tourist Profile with Sub-Categories

Tourist Profile		
P/N	Sub-Category	Details
P	Marginality and Freedom	Bohemian, Hippie, Marginal, No one interferes/be who you wanna be, for people want to have fun
	Age	Young, Adventurous Youngs, Mostly 20's
	Nationality	Customers all around the world, Customers mostly from abroad, International, European, A place to practice English
	Hobbies	Climbers, Bicyclers, Nature lovers, Travelers (Backpackers, Flashpackers, Travelers, Independent Travelers, Interesting Travelers), Just drinking alcohol, Just lying around, Pick fruits from the trees, Reading books in swings, Gather around campfire (in winter), Meal Gathering, Gathering customers, Meet new people / make friends, Photography, Watching the stars at night, Sea Sun Sand, Watch turtle eggs hatch, Beach Facilities, Just sitting on the beach
	Accommodation Type	Single / Solo, Families / Couples, Friends
N	Attitude / Style	Hippies, Pseudo Hippies, Bogans, Noisy people, Low profile tourists, Not for people with disabilities, there are sex workers
	Age	Party hungry kids, Suitable for students, More for youngs than older, Not suitable for kids
	Nationality	-
	Hobbies	Party hungry kids
	Accommodation Type	Not suitable for family

Table 3: Positive and Negative Comments on Business & Territory with Sub-Categories

Business & Territory Characteristics			
P/N	C/A	Sub-Category	Details
P	C	Weather, Nature & Location	Suitable Weather, Better in proper season, Known for nature sea and history, Beach not overcrowded Good Location, On the main road, Advantageous location, in the heart of the mountains, Close to beach / ancient city / bus stop / small shops / restaurants / dance club / Museum / ATV tours / Diving, Tour Agency in the area
	C	Accommodation Options	Original tree houses, Many tree houses (referring the options), Many alternative businesses in the area, known with small close rooms, Has area for tents/camping
	C	Activities in Region	Hiking, Olympos Rock Climbing Festival, Rock climbing to Olympos, Yanartaş / Chimera, Ancient City, Çıralı / Adrasan, Kekova, Lycian Way, Suluada, Ulupınar, Kayaking, ATV tour, Snorkeling tours, Diving, Sailing, Fishing, Boat tour, Sailing, Rafting (River)
	A	Lifestyle	Hippie lifestyle, Like a summer camp, Communal, has the Olympos Spirit
	A	Simplicity	No luxury, Olympos is not perfect service, Returning to simplicity, Casual / Simple, Tacky /Shabby, Rustic, Did not change in years
	A	Marginality	Unique, Out of common, Authentic, Unbelievable, Different experience / looking for difference, Need to adapt (to the unexpected), Paintings/Graffitis on the walls/trees, New York Times Awarded Business
	A	Coziness, Familiarness	Warm/ cozy Place, Like a family and home, Lovely / Cute, Great vibe, Sympathetic, Welcoming, Family business, Feels like you lived there years ago, Did not change in years
	A	Entertainment	Joyful, Entertaining, Happiness, Funky, Self indulging, Active even in low season, Feel like 20s, Feels alive
	A	Comfort	Laziness, Comfort/Rest, Chill out / Relax, Peaceful, Cool, Feeling safe, zero risk
	A	Environmental Awareness	Animals well treated, Pets allowed, environment friendly, A break from the sterility, Retreat from busy life, Decompress from hectic city, Away from stress, Away from concrete, Away From city crowd, Back to nature, Like Jurassic Park (referring to nature)
	A	Comparison	Better than competitors, should be model to others, One of the oldest in the area, Recommended to others, Will come back again, No different than luxury hotel
	A	General Feedback	Decent, Perfect / Very Good, Legendary, Great vibe, Great atmosphere, Elegant, Charming, Satisfying, Great Value, Magical, Like heaven

N	C	Weather, Nature & Location	No ATM around, No entertainment facilities nearby, Away from Sea, Need car to go to the beach, Dirty road to the beach, Dried-up swamp, Rocky beach, No Air/Wind
	A	Accommodation	Like Nazi's Camp (due to restrictions), Like a school camp, Like a college dorm
	A, C	Activities in the Region	Nowhere to hang around, Beach forbidden at night
	C	Tendency to Visit Again	Early Check-out, No check in at all, Will not be coming back
	A	Change in Time	Dying Olympos Spirit / used to be better, Does not have hippy culture
		Comfort	No resting, Overcrowded, Robbery
		Comparison	There are better options nearby
	A	General Feedback	Disappointing, Terrible

Table 4: Positive and Negative Comments on Food with Sub Categories

Food		
P/N	Sub-Category	Details
P	Taste	Delicious, Good, Fresh, Food like Mommy's, Healthy
	Variety	High variety in meals, Varies each day, Open buffet, Veggie Varieties, Gluten/Nut-free options, Hookah available
	Meal Program	Breakfast and Dinner included, Turkish Cuisine
	Treats	Free tea/coffee all day for free
	Hygiene	Food made in front of customer
	Food Service	-
N	Taste	Low-quality meal
	Variety	Low variety meal, need extras for vegetarians, need tea for Breakfast
	Meal Program	Weak breakfast, Cartoon cubs for tea, Insufficient amount of food, Small portions, Monotonous breakfast, Mostly vegetables
	Treats	-
	Hygiene	Food Poisoning
	Food Service	Waiting line for food

Table 5: Positive and Negative Comments on Room with Sub Categories

Room		
P/N	Sub-Category	Details
P	Size	Wide Bungalows, Average size Rooms
	Housekeeping	Hygiene in WC, Clean place and rooms, No insects in the room, good smell
	Decoration/ Design	Beautiful Design / Decoration, Beautiful Bungalows/Rooms, Unique concept for each room / Novelty, Options of different room types
	Infrastructure	Hooks for clothes, with Balcony, Sufficient Bathroom Facilities, with Air Conditioning, with Fridge, with Washing Machine, Sufficient TV Channels, Comfortable/Functional Room/beds, Free Wi-Fi
N	Size	Small / Tiny / Narrow Rooms, Narrow Bathroom
	Housekeeping	Bed Bugs, Insects, Bad smell
	Decoration/ Design	-
	Infrastructure	Air Conditioner not working well / loud / poor located, No TV, No Fridge, No wi-fi, Insufficient sockets, Power failure, insufficient lighting, Sound penetrating walls, No lockers, No washing lines to hang towels, No Shower Cabin, No heat isolation (in Winter), No Balcony, Window nets broken / absent, Lumpy mattress Bathroom/Shower door hardly locked/broken, Bathroom need construction, Water problems, No jacuzzi Tree houses shaking, Bungalows are shacks, Destroyed tree houses due to fire, Needs renovation, Old and ruined, So basic
	Misinformation	Not a tree house but cabin

Table 6: Positive and Negative Comments on Other Services with Sub Categories

Other Services		
P/N	Sub-Category	Details
P	Transportation Options	Help with transportation, Shuttle to the seaside, Airport Pick Up, Bar delivers order to the bungalow
	Service Recovery	Save food for late arrivals, Available for walk-in customers, Service recovery, Efficient Failure recovery, extra blanket when requested, Supporting Civil Society Association,
	In-Business Activities	Have activity center / tour planning, Party, Lovely (Live) Music, Able to choose the music, Camp fire, Playing Chess, Event - Film Screening, Backgammon games, Playing scrabble, Yoga classes, Volleyball
	Security	Feeling safe
	General Feedback	High Quality Service, Same service to all customers (no discrimination)
N	Cleaning	Room Cleaning low frequency, Place not clean, No Hygiene, No hygiene in bathroom, No clean sheets, Dirty / Old Towels, No mask controls (Pandemic), Toilet papers not always available, No Garbage collection, Remove the garbage by yourself
	In-Business Activities	Dissatisfaction about tours organized by the business, Avoid their tour agency, No activities, Closed after midnight
	Security	Insufficient security, No outsiders are allowed for the bar, Feeling insecure due to cameras
	General Feedback	Low Service Quality

Table 7: Positive and Negative Comments on Common Area with Sub Categories

Common Area		
P/N	Sub-Category	Details
P	Infrastructure	Open courtyard, A Sitting Area, Çardak, Lounges, Tables, Garden Benches / couches, Hammock, Swing, Parking Lot, Couches with power outlet, Phone chargers in open area, Good wooden structure, Outdoor turbines to cool, coal burning stove in winter, Clean Pool, Large-size pool, No pool, Laundry
	Facilities for Activities	Bar, Library room, Disco, Sufficient number of Toilets, No Playground, Renewed facility, Renewed after fire
	Environment	Good garden, Garden Plant variety, Flower Smells, Trees (Lemon, Lime, orange etc), Owners takin care of garden, Clean Garden, Birds singing, Beautiful View Wide space, Distanced bungalows
N	Infrastructural Problems	Pool water temperature, Pergola cushions are hard, Parking Problems, Poor Wi-Fi, Wi-Fi in the common area only, Common Toilets, Place needs renovation, Smoking in common area
	Environment	Garden needs organizing, Bees/Insects
	Noise Pollution	Loud Music at night, Loud Music in neighbors, Noisy at night, Noisy due to party, Bad live music
	Space	Close bungalows, No privacy (hear and see others)

Table 8: Positive and Negative Comments on Finance with Sub Categories

Finance		
P/N	Sub-Category	Details
P	Without Extra Payment	No need for extra spendings, No need to carry wallet with you
	Affordability	Price/ Quality, Worths money, Cheap / Affordable, For budget travelers, Affordable Prices, Extra Discount, Extras for fair price, Fair Restaurant Prices for Extra, Charge extras to room
	Failure Recovery	Had refund when asked
N	Extra Payment	Loundry expensive, Expensive Alcohol, High prices for extra, Wi-Fi should be free, Bar entrance fee, Pay to reach beach
	Affordability	Price/Quality, Double Menu / rip off
	Failure	Double Price /Rip off

Table 9: Positive and Negative Comments on Employee with Sub Categories

Employee		
P/N	Sub-Category	Details
P	Attitude	Positive, Smiling, Helpful, Warm/cozy,
	Capabilities	Experienced, Speaking English, Giving info, Give bar suggestions in the area
N	Attitude	Apathy, Overfriendly, Poor greeting, Employee fiddle about, Bad management Male employees positively discriminate female customers, Customer discrimination, Low responsiveness to emails
	Hygiene	Personal hygiene problems

Apart from categorizing the comments, comments on tourist profile and activities enlighten the postmodern approach. Comments refer to having basic rooms with no luxury, making staying outdoors more interesting, and the common spots a place to socialize (since the tourist profile is international and interesting). As seen in Table 2, the customer profile of one of the businesses is defined as; independent, adventurous travelers who are not interested in all-inclusive or five-star resorts. Even though customers are mostly “youngsters”, “... a mix of ages, retirees, backpackers, young families hanging out in the orange groves chatting round the fire” (The Jackalope, 2011). There are also controversial comments about the business such as; “A lot of 18 or 20-year-olds are drinking to oblivion and smoking pot, dancing in flip flops around the fire...” (Susimiga, 2013). Some claim that Olympos is for young people only, and some claim the opposite (2016, line 472). Besides, our interview with one of the business owner’s grandsons (Anonymous J, personal communication, 2 October 2021) revealed that Turkish families are the main customers of the bungalows and camping areas. On the other hand, customers are mostly called hippies/backpackers.

The distinction between the traveler and “pseudo” hippy is made by one of the visitors in 2012 (line 1650), experienced travelers sleep before 3 a.m. and enjoy the next day, while pseudo hippies party with popular music and sleep the next day. This understanding can also be related to the fading spirit of Olympos. One of the commenters (2012, line 1640) addresses the increased number of foreign tourists as a reason for the fading spirit. The recent study of Seyhan (2023) also discusses the impact of overtourism in Olympos. Besides, comments indicate that the motivation to go to Olympos

is also related to running away from the city crowd and being in nature. Some customers appreciate the novel design of the business B21, though others indicate their expectations of treehouses are not met, since there were only wooden houses. The sub-category of ‘misleading online information’ covers this issue.

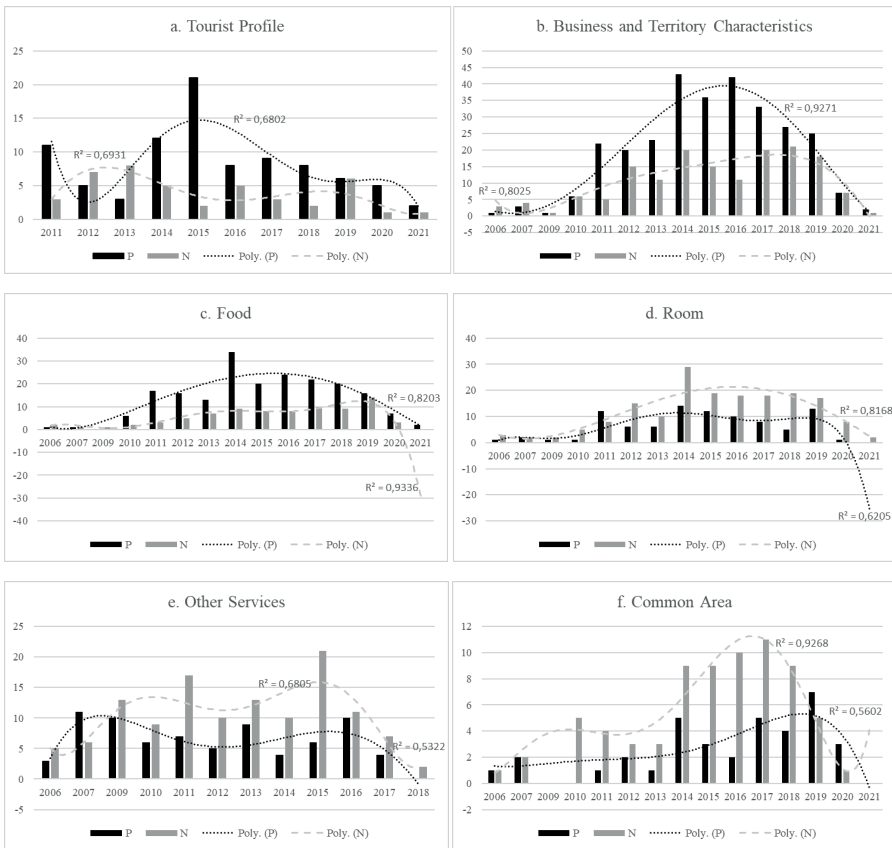
Complaints are mostly related to infrastructure and then lack of service in certain issues. Comments about the quality of the service or the adequacy of the facility have two sides. One of the sides is about this place being “*totally out of standards that modern world lines out*” (2012, line 1656), not expecting housekeeping (2011, line 1681), living a commune life (2013, line 1618), and enjoying the simplicity since this is a place for backpackers, travelers. A comment emphasizes travelers’ expectations as “*this place was for those who do not need a TV or hairdryer*” (2018, line 1415). The other side is about complaints concerning missing or broken room facilities, lack of cleaning service, dirty sheets, bedbugs of insects around, etc. Poor service recovery is also categorized as problems with finance, room facility, employee attitude, food, and service. Amongst the complaints, some visitors indicate that despite their awareness of the concept, the service or facility premises were still poor.

Besides, some of the comments cover the Olympus area as a whole, such as; “*The atmosphere is unique and cozy and located in a stunningly beautiful natural surrounding full of history*” (Anja, 2016, October 7). A bungalow holiday or Olympus is a place where you don’t look for luxury (2019, line 459; 2015, line 481), “A place to be just if you know what you want” (2012, line 1656). According to this perspective, Olympus is a place of freedom, entertainment, or a place to relax and find yourself (2015, line 1526), where “every activity is there” (2016, line 1509).

4.2. Change of Image in Time

Changing image of Olympus is indicated in the comments of individuals, while some claim no change at all. In order to comprehend the change in numbers of positive and negative comments in a specific category for 10 years, the business coded B21 is selected, since it has received comments for almost every dimension for 10 years. Based on the number of comments for each category, and at least 5th order polynomial trendline with R² value is provided in the graphs (Figure 2). The trendlines which had less than 0.5 for R² value, are observed to have missing data in the first or the last years. To increase the value above 0.5, the data of the ‘other services’ graph ends in 2018, the ‘employee’ graph starts in 2007, and the ‘tourist profile’ graph starts in 2011.

The effect of the pandemic is clearly seen in the decreasing number of comments in every category, starting from 2019. Apart from the effect of the pandemic, for this business, tourist profile, business and territory characteristics, food and employee-related comments are mostly positive. On the other hand, room, common area facilities, and other services are recognized to be mostly negative. The results are naturally expected to change according to the business, though the infrastructural obstacles of the area can be considered a common issue for the Olympos businesses. Other than constructional restrictions, changing positive and negative comments in time may be related to staff turnover, obsolescence of materials, price policies, profile and expectations of the visitors, etc.



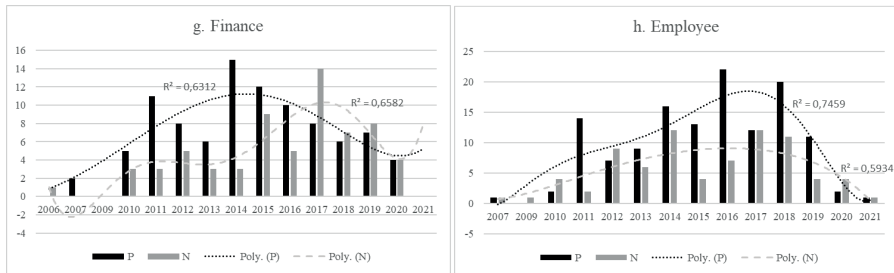


Figure 2: Change in the number of comments in every category for business coded B21

Apart from graphics, comments also refer to the dying spirit of Olympos. The visitor claims that wanting too many tourists is the reason for dying spirits (2008, line 485). According to some visitor comments starting in 2017, the popularity of the business, B21 specifically, has decreased, the place needs renovation, and the customer profile has also changed. One of the repeat customers expresses the negative change as “*the place has lost its passion about everything.*” Another comment in 2019 expresses the lack of solo travelers and the place “*is relying far too much on the name it probably managed to build for itself about twenty years back*” (2019, line 1338). On the other hand, some customers claim that the vibe carries on even after years; “*Spent time here 10 years ago...was happy to see the chilled out vibe hadn't changed when I came back*” (2011).

5. Discussion

This study aimed to understand the spirit of Olympos, offering a post-modern environment in a historical and natural place, having non-luxurious businesses, offering adventurous activities away from the hectic city crowd, such as hiking, climbing, and diving. Some visitors even indicate that the authentic and peaceful environment would be disturbed by luxury and high prices (2014, line 1561) because these facilities are not for the ones who are looking for comfort or a five-star hotel.

Defining the area as a place away from the crowd indicates the problems of overtourism. One of the comments refers to being afraid of this place turning into a chaotic destination like others (2015, line 1506). One of the comments (2019, line 1827) emphasizes the risk of having B&B service while all-inclusive hotels are favorable in Antalya. All-inclusive service is also criticized as no visitors in this destination have bracelets as a sign of “*belonging to a hotel of a certain class and level*” (2014, line 1580).

Olçay (2007) also reports increased touristic activity in the area for the last few years, due to the illegal construction of treehouses. The development of the destination is shaped by the legislation, as indicated by one of the commenters that Olympos is one of Turkey's most amazing national parks and historical sites, and thank God it is under protection (2011, line 1680). Besides legal restrictions, having family businesses, and having business owners that are relatives or acquaintances in the area (Anonymous, personal communication 2 October 2021), is assumed to protect the culture of the area.

Some visitors point to the changing culture, or as some call 'corruption' of Olympos, even in 2006. Although there are comments on the opposite view, the nationalities of TripAdvisor users support the nationality-based change in time. Comments indicating the fading spirit also emphasize the facility problems such as cleanness, understanding the hippie style but not appreciating the functionality, or hygiene problems, such as to be natural is not to be dirty (2016, line 1480).

Despite the complaints about the destination, Olympos is recognized as having authentic non-luxurious establishments, providing adventurous and physical activities, away from the hectic city environment. This understanding reminds the "reverse holiday" defined by Gottlieb (1982). Gottlieb states that people prefer a holiday that is opposite to what they do in their daily lives, such as being a farmer or a king/queen. According to this approach, in the ideal of being a farmer, tourists gain a chance to understand the culture of the region, with a more egalitarian and democratic holiday, understanding the distance of their own culture from causality. This quest for contrast to mass tourism as also supported by the literature (Dujmovic & Vitasovic, 2015), may be one of the reasons motivating tourists to find authentic destinations such as Olympos.

6. Conclusion

This unique study aimed to understand the postmodern image of an authentic destination from the visitor's perspective and define the components of this image on a case basis. Results reveal the characteristics of Olympos create a unique image of the area/business, mainly identified as being different, comfortable, unobtrusive, non-luxury, social, authentic, environmental, and history oriented. Comments on the fading spirit of Olympos are also discussed involving recent legislative changes in the region. The findings both extend the literature on postmodern tourist behaviors and expectations and enlighten the image of this mythological destination for scholars and authorities.

Exploring a part of the image of Olympos from the perspective of tourists is beneficial to address several components of the image, only specific to the case, without the intention of generalizing the postmodern image. On the other hand, defining the change of this image in time may be a futile effort, since the visitors' comments make the reality of each writer and create a pre-reality for the visitor, which may be subject to change after the actual visit or after reading this article. Therefore, while trying to simplify this complex structure, it may be beneficial to prefer semi or unstructured methods as possible to preserve the depth of the data.

This exploratory study comes with some limitations. Although the effect of user-generated content on destination image is expected to increase over time (Ghazali & Cai, 2013), the visitor experiences are only analyzed for a specific website 'TripAdvisor'. Other travel sites may have different visitor perspectives on this unique destination. Further studies may focus on the interaction between the local community and the international visitors and the young generations to see the rising conflicts and the acceptance/disapproval of the visitors from different nations/cultures and understand the reactions to excessive tourism development in Olympos. Environmental awareness of the businesses in the area and analyzing carbon footprints/carbon handprints can be other research subjects. The pollution in the river due to businesses is indicated by Aslan et al. (2017) and one of the personal communications (Anonymous, personal communication, 2 October 2021).

Acknowledgements

No potential conflicts were declared by the authors.

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