

# 5 The Instagram effect on the transformation of tourist behavior to overtourism

*Ilke Basarangil*

## Introduction

Tourists can easily access the information through the Internet; for example, tourists can get information about a destination, provided by people who have experience of it, and decide from different opinions. The rapid advance in technology related to Internet and social networks has led to changes in the demands and needs of tourists, and the emergence of different sales and marketing methods. With the widespread use of Internet, the global communication network, and with the development of social networks, tourist behavior has been rapidly changing. The use of social networks like Instagram has made them the focus of tourism marketers who want to increase profits. Among the behaviors of the new generation of tourist, feedback such as liking, being different, being noticed and appreciated from Instagram have been extremely important. These kinds of feedback affect people quite a lot.

This effect is called the 'Instagram effect', 'bandwagon effect' (herd mentality) and the 'snob effect'. Instagram, which is the most popular social network of recent years, has attracted the attention of social media marketers because of this effect on its users. The rise of Instagram has brought some problems in tourism. Due to the Instagram effect, some problems have begun to be experienced in destinations. The most important of these is overtourism, with its harmful impacts on people and the environment. Overtourism worsens tourist experiences in tourist destinations and

lowers the quality of life of local residents. The Instagram effect continues to inspire tourists today about their travel decisions and destination experience. In this research, various examples will be given about how today's tourist behaviors transform into overtourism with the Instagram effect, bandwagon effect, snob Effect. This study is a literature review. As a result of this study, useful suggestions were developed for tourism marketers for the problems of destinations exposed to overtourism due to the effect of Instagram.

*"A clear definition of overtourism does not yet exist. By its very nature, the phenomenon of overtourism is related to the number of tourists, the type and time frame of their visits, and the carrying capacity of the destination. Perspectives on overtourism may include the views of various stakeholders, such as residents, tourists or businesses"* (Peeters *et al.*, 2018: 21). A great photo should be the result of a great experience, not the reason for going to a destination. But today the concept of travel is changing. People want more than life-enriching experiences or searching for casual destination experiences through social media. The desire to capture the same iconic square as your favorite celebrity contributes to overtourism, which makes the trip less enjoyable for travelers as well as for local residents. (Wayfairer, 2019). Social media applications are the area where companies reach millions of consumers and sell their products and talk about services, not only in travel and travel areas but also in boutiques or businesses marketing through Instagram (Onurlubaş & Öztürk, 2018: 989). Social media also has benefits. The holiday experience of the tourist who can use his social media account at any time, at any place and at any quality and speed is positively affected and any complaints about the internet services provided by the enterprise are minimized (İlban & Güleç, 2018: 71).

Many people travel only to capture a particular image and verify their online presence. If a traveller does not receive hundreds of likes on a page, the traveler may ask if it was worth going. If a person can not post anything about a holiday on social media, would the person go anyway? *"Almost everywhere I travel, I witness the growing trend of "doing it for the 'gram." In every hotspot, you can feel the desperation as people clamour to get their flawless shot. Glamorous women pose at the top of a mountain, changing into gorgeous dresses and reapplying their makeup after a hike. Tourists prance and pose in picturesque locations, posting their images with narcissistic hashtags like #mylifeisbetterthanyours or #fromwheredyoudratherbe, perpetuating a competitive atmosphere."*(Wayfairer, 2019). In this study, the instances of tourist desti-

nations exposed to overtourism by the Instagram effect and the behavior of tourists causing overtourism have been examined in detail. A literature review was used in this study. The research questions are as follows:

1. What are the tourist behaviors that encourage overtourism within the scope of the Instagram effect?
2. What has happened in destinations around the world that are subject to overtourism?
3. Is there anything that destination managers/marketers can do to prevent overtourism with the Instagram effect?

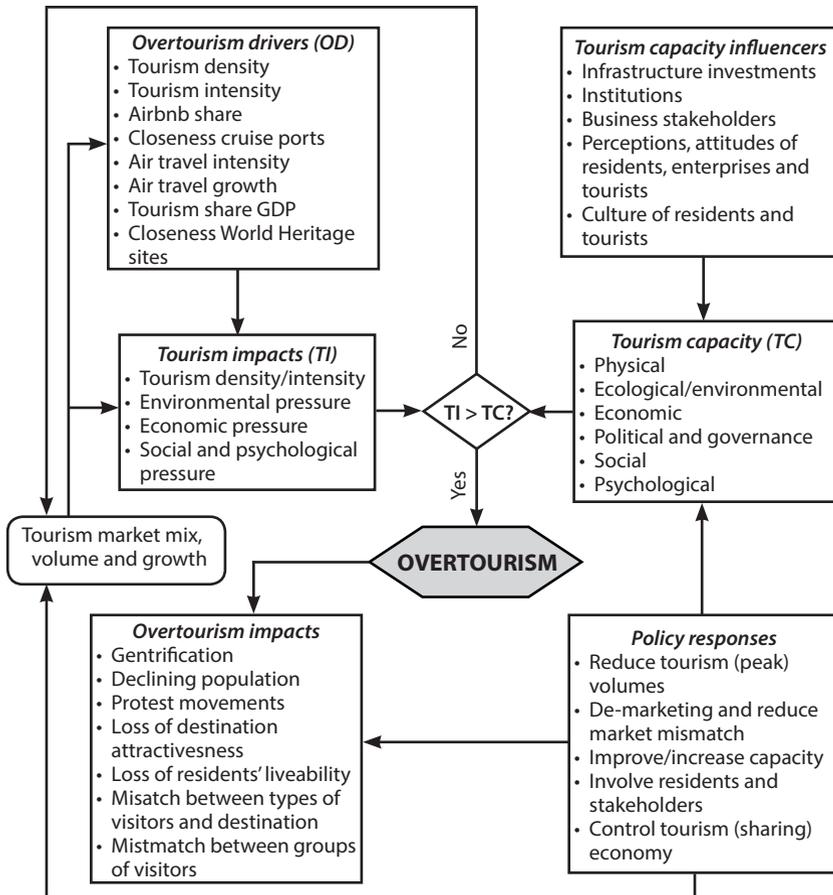
## Literature review

### Overtourism

Overtourism means that, for local people or visitors, there are too many visitors in an area and an unacceptable deterioration in the quality of life or tourist experience in the area. Among the factors that cause excessive tourism, there are reasons such as overcrowding, privatization of public spaces, increase in cruise tourism, and an increase in the number of seasonal and daily visitors. Due to the increase in tourism in the region, tourism speculation and purchasing power parity are decreasing. As a result, people living in highly popular tourist destinations oppose unlimited tourist growth. As a result, when destinations cannot be managed with sustainable tourism growth, attitudes towards tourists emerge in some of the most preferred destinations, especially Venice and Barcelona (Duyar & Bayram, 2019: 347). Goodwin of the Responsible Travel Partnership defines overtourism as destinations where the quality of life or experience at the destination is irreversibly deteriorated when locals or visitors have too many visitors in the area (Goodwin, 2017). Overtourism has emerged as a new structure to study potential dangers to popular destinations worldwide (Sheivachman, 2016). *“Overtourism describes the situation in which the impact of tourism, at certain times and in certain locations, exceeds physical, ecological, social, economic, psychological, and/or political capacity threshold”* (Peeters et al., 2018: 22).

In Figure 5.1, it is emphasized that each destination has an existing ‘tourism market mix, volume and growth’. The share of Airbnb offerings in the accommodation sector has an impact on overtourism. Overtourism causes tourism impacts that are not dependent on tourism intensity, environmental pressure and lack of policies. Complex thresholds are available for each domain. Each of these thresholds is not fixed or equal for certain targets. Even if only one of these thresholds is exceeded, the target may return to the

overdrive state. Otherwise, the destination will follow the current growth process. If a destination reaches an overtourism situation, it may result in social and/or cultural conflicts, as well as socialization, between visitors and residents. Political reactions include changes to the tourism market mix, volume and growth, as well as a reduction in the carrying capacity of destinations and the multifaceted effects of overtourism (Peeters *et al.*, 2018: 23).



**Figure 5.1:** Conceptual model of overtourism. Source: (Peeters *et al.*, 2018: 23).

Social media has enabled interaction and communication to grow in a way that has never been seen before in any media technology. The opportunities provided by social media have started to be used as important tools for both consumers and businesses. Especially for tourism businesses and tourists, the use of social media offers significant advantages (Eryılmaz & Yüçetürk, 2018: 210). Overtourism is a growing problem. “Over one billion