Reflections of Booking.com Blockage on Local and International Media

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Abstract

In the process of the case opened by the Association of Turkish Travel Agencies (TURSAB), the court ordered the services of Booking.com which is one of the world leader companies in booking accommodations online to be blocked in Turkey on March 29, 2017. This study aims to examine the reflections of this blockage on national and international press. In this scope, the content analysis was performed on the news appeared on various press websites on the first day and the following week after the court decision was made. The content of the news was probed in relation to both quantitative aspects such as the length of the news and visuals; and qualitative aspects such as format of the news, keywords emphasized and the information given in the news. Findings revealed that national press handled the issue in terms of blocking the website as a result of court decision, prohibiting the access to the website and having Booking.com shut down by TURSAB. Besides international press emphasized the reason behind this blockage as a court order; mentioned about TURSAB very little or only on the bottom lines; and did not bring up any critics of this blockage. On the following days, the opposing declarations of TURSAB and various hotels associations appeared on national media. Besides, issues regarding tax payment - which were not mentioned on the first two days - were also handled as the center of discussions on blockage process. Although the appearance of the news faded in the following days on the international media, there were a few reports on the impacts of this blockage on Turkey’s tourism.

Keywords: Online Travel Agencies, Media Analysis, Booking.com, Destination Image.

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