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**AN EVALUATION OF TOURISM ACTIVITIES IN TURKEY  
WITH REFERENCE TO SUSTAINABLE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**ABSTRACT:** As tourism becomes one of the most significant tools in regional development processes in developing areas, increasing interest turns toward the impact of tourism on environmental concerns. The changing processes and the results of many researches show if natural, historical and cultural environment could not be protected, there would be no expectations for sustainability in tourist destination areas. In this way, relevant policies on sustainable regional development appear to keep an optimality between development and environment when maximization policies for value added rates in tourism activities take priority for development plans in this respect.

The main objective in this paper will be to analyse the impact of tourism activities in Turkey in the framework of some case studies on special areas which are involved in the international cultural heritage. It is supposed that intensity of problems changes related to type of tourism and characteristics of the region. In this way, some analytical methods and techniques, e.g. semantic differential testing, factor analysis and cross-table will be used in order to evaluate the contribution of tourism activities on some sample areas in sustainable regional development in Turkey as a Mediterranean country.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

It is argued that the logic of a regional sustainable development analysis depends upon some functional interdependencies at the regional level when the regional scale is more suitable for control and transformation than the global scale from a number of points of view (Nijkamp, et.al,1992). Meanwhile, it is known that, technological innovations lead to an uneven increase in economic growth when investments in new technology are interacted with some environmental risks and uncertainties such as “accumulation, interaction, and spatial transportation of pollutants”, “damage caused by a given quantity of pollutants”, “the irreversibility of the environmental use” and “the costs of abatement” (Siebert, 1987).

Meanwhile, as tourism has become one of the most effective instruments in development processes, especially in developing areas, increasing interest has been turned toward the impact of tourism on natural and environmental issues. In this way, policies for ecologically sustainable development appear to protect the balance between development and environment when maximization policies for value added rates in tourism become one of the most important targets for national development plans (Atalýk, 1995).

Nevertheless, it is known that a central weakness in geography’s response to environmental problems and to issues of sustainability is the lack of engagement with the questions of ethics. In this sense, without explicit environmental ethical premises, the sustainability debate is indeterminate (Atalýk and Baycan Levent 1996 ; Reed and Slaymaker 1993). Just as, community perceptions of urban health risks is recognized as understanding how a community perceives health risks such as polluted water, inadequate drainage, or lack of garbage collection. Essentially, it should be accepted that, individuals perceive risks to their health through their cultural, economic, social and educational backgrounds and respond in accordance with what might be expected.

On the other hand, there are different approaches to regional development and environment in developing and developed countries. The developed countries have already met so many environmental problems during their development processes and now they give the priority to the sustainability of environment. But, the developing countries have to be developed and they give the priority to the economic growth more than environment. After realizing the meaning of “Limits to Growth” (Meadows, et.al, 1972), the concept of sustainable development took place in the world agenda with the

agreement that development and environment are not contrary but complementary to each other. To stimulate of development by economic activities, definitely means environmental and social sustainability (Hancock, 1996). As an economic activity, tourism has been noticed with its social and environmental contents beside the economic effects after 1970s (OECD, 1974).

The Report of EU Commission, it is mentioned that transportation, energy, industry and tourism are the effective key sectors on the quality of urban environment and sustainable development (Commission of the EC,1992). While tourism enhance the level of welfare on the one hand, it can enhance the environmental pressures on the other and it has a critical role for sustainable regional development (Nijkamp and Bergh, 1990). Accordingly, tourism should be used as a balance sector on this dilemma.

It is supposed that tourism provides the most harmonious development with the characteristics of regions and makes known the natural, historical and cultural values of regions. The regions which are tourism activities located in, are more filled with hope for “conservation of natural and cultural environment”. But, mass tourism and concentration on certain areas in a certain period, cause the negative effects on natural and cultural environment. The environmental problems which are caused by mass tourism especially in significant destination areas, need new approaches to tourism development in the world.

After realizing the importance of tourism and increasing mobility with the objectives in tourism, tourism destination areas have appeared and begun to examine where tourism mobility concentrate on. There are a number of interpretations about spatial and regional distribution of tourism. Firstly, it has been suggested that tourism by its nature tends to distribute development away from the industrial and metropolitan centers towards periphery and less developed regions of the country (Williams & Shaw, 1995; Pearce, 1992). Secondly, tourism is essentially an urban phenomenon rather than rural, and both primary and secondary attractiveness are mainly located in cities (Ashworth, 1990).

The concentration of tourism on coastal areas especially in the Mediterranean Countries of Europe which have significant share in international tourism, has caused population increase, urbanization and also increase on regional differentiation's. Continuous urban sprawl along the Mediterranean coast is mostly as a result of tourism (Valenzuela, 1991; Blue Plan, 1989). The

high concentration of developments also generates intense environmental problems and socio-economic integration problems especially in small and dependent economies.

The objective in this paper will be to analyse the impact of tourism activities in a Mediterranean country on some sample areas in sustainable development.

## **2. AN EVALUATION OF TOURISM ACTIVITIES IN TURKEY: STRATEGIES AND POLICIES**

At the beginning of the planning period in Turkey in the early 1960s, it was assumed that tourism should take place in the national economy like industry, agriculture and external trade. Turkey is well situated geographically for all the main tourist generating countries of Europe. Since, the 1st Five Year Development Plan, tourism development policies have been focused on mass tourism, and investments have been orientated to the regions or centers which cause minimum cost of transportation and infrastructure facilities.

“Priority Regions for Tourism”, which are included physical planning, have been orientated to the coastal areas of Aegean and Mediterranean Regions. In the studies of tourism planning, “primary touristic attractions” have not been considered in an effective way. Moreover, “Priority Regions for Tourism” on the coast of Aegean and Mediterranean, have not only the richness of sea-sun-sand, but also the historical and archeological values. The concentration of tourists on the regions which have the historical and cultural richness, explains transformation of tourism demand in the world.

Both the protection of natural and cultural environment and social dimension of tourism have been considered in the planning period, but economic profit of tourism and increasing number of beds have gone further in practice. In 1982, the Law for Encouragement of Tourism was a turning point for tourism development in Turkey. During this process, there were so many opportunities for private sector and foreign capital, after 1985, international tourism become more important. During the 6th Five Year Development Plan, harmonious development with the policy of EC has become important. International treaties and transformation of tourist demand in the world have influenced the concentration of studies on socio-cultural and environmental dimensions of tourism activities. In the 7th Five Year Development Plan, the priority targets of tourism sector are defined to satisfy of local people and tourist aspects and provide natural and cultural sustainability.

During 1990s, Ministry of Tourism has begun to make project for diversification of tourism activities for providing more balanced distribution of tourism and evaluating the other potential regions. This transformation process and new tourism activities are important, because of attracting tourism activities to inland and being alternative to the seasonal concentration of tourism. At this point, it is noticed that alternative tourism type and regions should consider as complementary tourism activities for all over the country.

In 1995, touristic supply and demand and also investments are still continued to be concentrated on especially three developed regions of Turkey as Mediterranean, Aegean, Marmara regions. It is examined, whether there is a relationship between distribution of tourism encouragement and credits to the regions, and development level of the regions, depending on the share of “Development Priority Regions”. 17 Touristic Provinces determined by Ministry of Tourism, are examined for evaluating the relationship between tourism development and population mobility with the indicators of socio-economic development. The population increase and migration ratio show a relationship between tourism and concentration of population, and migration to the touristic provinces. Touristic Provinces take place in the group of “second and third development level” by the majority. Thus, we can say that tourism activities prefer relatively developed provinces which are especially on the coasts of Mediterranean and Aegean, and accelerates development on these regions.

### **3. SAMPLE AREAS: CAPPODOCIA (ÜRGÜP) AND SÝDE**

The contribution of tourism to the national economy, is an evidence that tourism is an effective sector. But it is important to be proved this foresight on regional and local level. For this purpose, Cappodocia (*Ürgüp*) and *Side sub-regions* have been chosen as planning areas to examine tourism development and significant destination points for international tourism and heritage. Two cases represent different regions as coastal and inland of Turkey. Both of the cases have taken place in the “five tourism development regions” during the planning period. In both of the cases, *tourism development process*, its effect to *regional/local development* and *environmental problems* have been considered for the future strategies. The framework of this study is based on “*sustainable tourism model*” which is developed by WTO (1993), related to a conceptual model on sustainable development. In this conceptual model, it is required to examine the goals and objectives of different groups of tourism industry, community and environment supporters which are

considered as tourism components or partners and to obtain common concerns for sustainable tourism.

Sustainable tourism basically includes *satisfaction of the community, tourist and tourism investor/managers*. The main point is whether all groups realize the importance of natural, historical and cultural environment for sustainability of tourism or not, for the questions of ethics. The questions which are essentially to evaluate *tourism potential and environmental resources*, are orientated to all groups, while the questions are also prepared in order to evaluate the data on characteristics of each group and their views to regional development.

One of the essential parts of the research is to make a comparison on the qualities of the two cases, to define similarities and differences and also to put out causal relations with tourism development (Gezici,1998). For this purpose, the perceptions of *tourists* on the regions are analysed. “*Semantic differential testing*” which was used earlier (Eastwood & Pollard, 1994), includes to evaluate 10 couple contrary qualifications in order to measure the perceptions of tourists on the regions concerned.

According to the results of “semantic differential testing” in the two sub-regions in Turkey, main findings are given below (Figure 1):

(1) The main common qualifications with the value of over 80%, are “Beautiful”, “Safe”, “Attractive”, “Cheap” and “Hospitable”, in both of the cases. In addition to these, “Quiet” and “Clean-Unpolluted” which are the qualifications have higher value in Cappodocia (Ürgüp) than Side.

(2) The qualifications which are difficult to make a decision by tourists, are “Planned development-Unplanned development”, “Getting better-Getting worse”. There are 24 persons (32%) having no idea particularly in Cappodocia (Ürgüp), in the evaluation of “Getting better or worse”, and this result is related with the staying duration of tourists. Tourists emphasize that their staying duration is not sufficient to make some decisions.

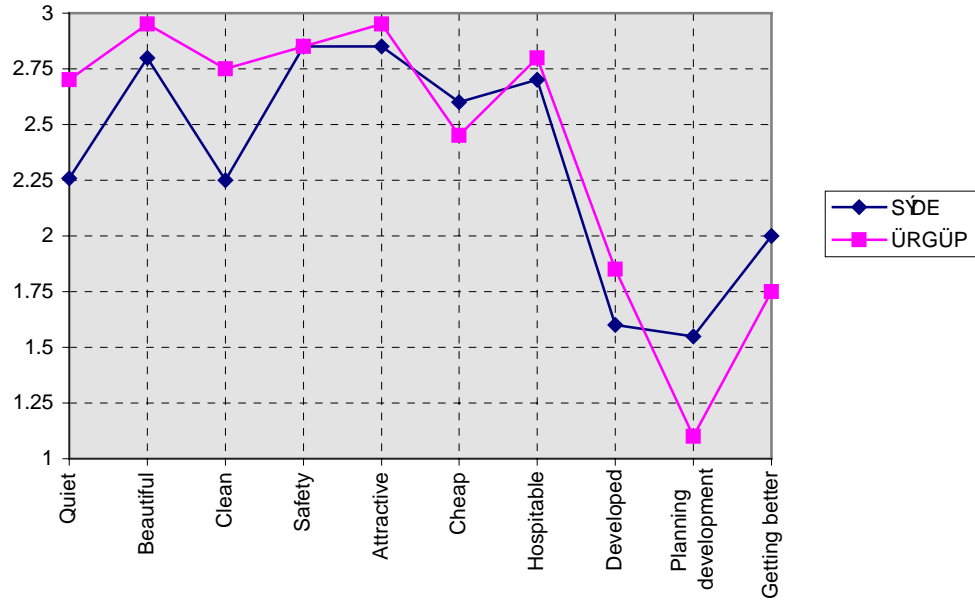


Figure 1. Results of Semantic Differential Testing for Evaluating Tourists Satisfaction in the Sample Areas (Turkey), 1997

(3) In both of the cases, the most qualifications are “Less-developed” and “Unplanned development”. But, the high value of “Getting better” qualification is an indicator that there is still hope of future.

In order to define the approaches of different groups among tourism components to the relations between tourism and environment, it is made use of the method of *EBT model* (*Environmentally-based Planning Model for Regional Tourism Development*) which is put out by Ross Dowling (1993). The model is based on the evaluation of environmental attributes and tourism resources. These two essential factors which are required to evaluate of different groups, are also classified sub-factors according to the several criteria in Dowling’s research. A framework is constituted depending on the purposes of this research, the characteristics of the cases and the ability of evaluation of all groups, among the attributes and criteria of the model (Gezici,1998). It is required all groups to evaluate each criterion of tourism and environment, according to three significance levels as high, moderate and low. As a general principle in this model, if the areas have high significance for tourism and environment, *environment* should take the *priority*.

The results of analysis in Cappadocia (Ürgüp) ignoring the differences of groups are determined as follows (Table 1):

(1) In *tourism resources*, natural attractions, accommodation capacity and cultural attractions have the high significance with 50% of total, respectively.

(2) Except the attributes of *urban and natural site* and *land forms* in environmental attributes, the others have low or moderate significance. The main source of natural attractions in Cappadocia Sub-region is its specific geomorphologic forms.

Table 1. Evaluation of Tourism Resources and Environmental Attributes in the Sample Areas (Turkey), 1997

	Attributes	ÜRGÜP				SÝD E			
		High	Mod	Low	A.A	High	Mod	Low	A.A
<b>Tourism Resources</b>	Cultural Attract.	128	42	13	2.6	159	34	13	2.7
	Natural Attract.	161	18	4	2.9	163	39	4	2.8
	Accessibility	77	88	18	2.3	106	85	15	2.4
	Accommodation	133	47	3	2.7	128	70	8	2.6
<b>Environmental Attributes</b>	Climate	82	83	18	2.3	192	13	1	2.9
	Flora	18	51	114	1.5	105	54	47	2.3
	Fauna	12	38	133	1.3	15	45	146	1.4
	Aqua/Sea	0	0	0	0	190	13	3	2.9
	Land Forms	140	36	7	2.7	95	61	50	2.2
	Site Areas	158	22	3	2.8	189	11	6	2.9

A.A= Arithmetic Average

(3) In this region, tourism has high significance on the one hand, special land forms and site characteristics have also high significance on the other. So, it is necessary to search for *compatible activities* more detail in these areas.

(4) *Accessibility* is the only factor of having moderate significance on the evaluation of tourism resources. But a known dilemma appears if an area is more accessible, then destruction will be increased on environmental attributes depending on increasing the number of tourists.



The main findings of the same evaluation in Side are as follows (Table 1):

(1) The attributes of *tourism resources* all have high significance over 50% of total and *natural attractions* have the highest significance.

(2) Among both tourism and environmental attributes, *climate* has the highest significance with the share of 93.20% of total. After this, the attributes like aqua/sea and archeological site have also high significance, respectively. The necessity of priority and conservation of the characteristics of the ancient city, is realized from its high significant value. Briefly, “compatible activities” are required to develop towards providing the balance of *conservation-use* in these areas.

The main and common results are as follows:

1) Tourism activities depend on “environmental resources” in both of the cases.

2) In environmental attributes, “urban and natural site”, “land forms” are important factors in Cappodocia (Ürgüp), while “climate”, “aqua/sea” and “archeological site” are important in Side.

3) Planning process of the two cases and the implications of the EBT model, put forward the necessity of knowing regional potential and resources.

After that, the relationship between the attributes is examined by using factor analysis. The variables which have the factor weight between 0.5 and 1.00, accept as attributes which explain the factor. In this respect, the results of analysis are more significant in Side sample:

Factor 1-	Site areas = 0.68346
	Natural attractiveness = 0.67973
	Historical-cultural attractiveness = 0.56763
	Flora = 0.53780
	Aqua/ Sea = 0.45450
Factor 2-	Accessibility = 0.77993
	Accommodation = 0.80030
Factor 3-	Fauna = 0.80530

Land forms = 0.50629

These values put out that factor 1 explains as priority attractiveness, factor 2 explains as tourism infrastructure and factor 3 explains as natural forms and environment.

#### **4. RESULTS OF COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

For testing hypotheses and explaining the relationships, cross-table is used as an instrument. In both of the cases, it is recognized that similar problems depend on tourism development, but the intensity of problems changes related to tourism type and characteristics of regions (Gezici,1998):

1) Tourism is a dominant sector in Side and all characteristics and functions like shopping, arise due to tourism. There is a different structure in Cappodocia (Ürgüp) and economic activities like agriculture, transportation and storing contribute regional economy, beside tourism.

2) Though the number of tourists is lower than Side, tourism also revives traditional productions in Cappodocia (Ürgüp).

3) For continuity of tourism employment and contribution to the regional development, duration of annual usage of establishments should be longer. The ratio of the establishments which can be used during the whole year, is 60 % in Cappodocia (Ürgüp), while 33 % in Side (Figure 2).

4) Among the establishments, the ratio of local capital is 80 % in Cappodocia (Ürgüp), while the capital from outside the region is 60 % in Side (Figure 3). When the capital comes from outside the region, 95 % of tourism employment comes from outside also.

5) In both of the cases, tourism is evaluated as an effective sector for local development by over 90 % of questionnaires and adopted by local people, though it is known that tourism has caused problems as well.

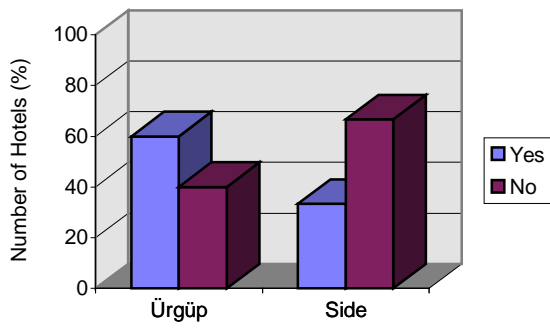


Figure 2. Possibility of Annual Usage of Establishments/ Hotels in the Sample Areas (Turkey), 1997

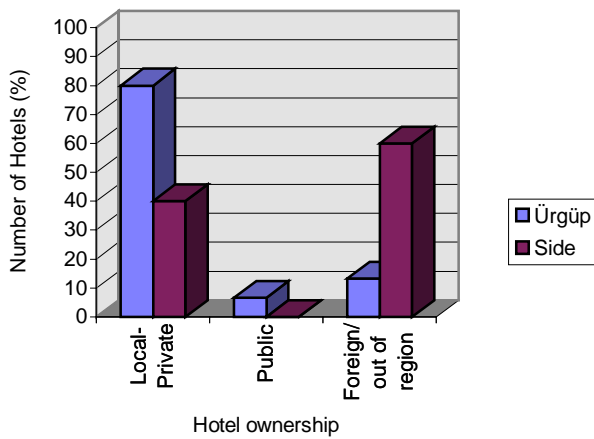


Figure 3. Ownership of the Establishments/ Hotels in the Sample Areas (Turkey), 1997

6) As parameters of the quality of life for the community, the lack of infrastructure and environmental problems which are effected by tourism activities, are more emphasized in Side than Cappodocia (Ürgüp), due to the tourist intensity (Figure 4).

7) However, tourists perceive both cases as “less-developed”, transportation and accommodation facilities as the main services satisfy them. But, they are not satisfied on diversity of tourism activities, infrastructure and environmental protection (Figure 5).

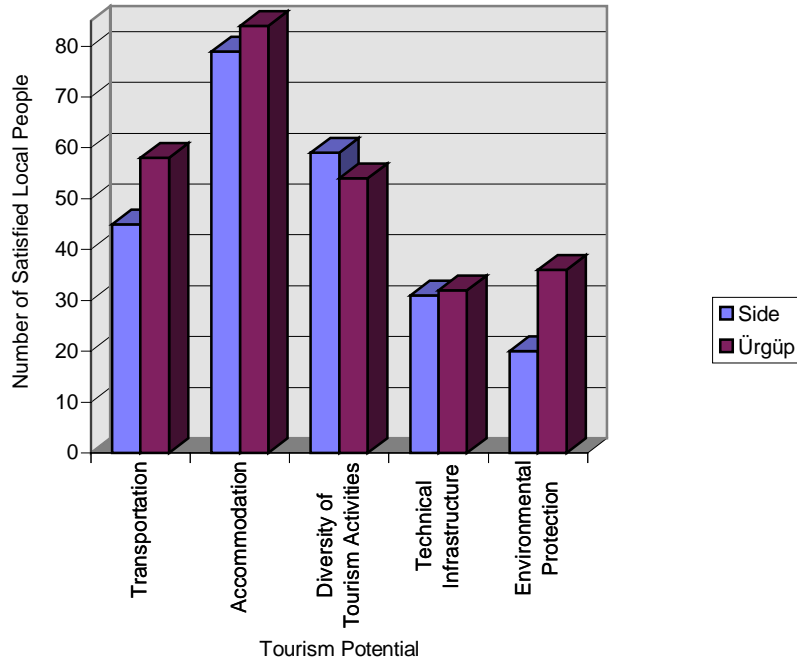


Figure 4. Satisfaction of the Local People on Tourism Potential in the Sample Areas (Turkey), 1997

8) There is a relationship between perception of environmental problems and duration of tourist stay. The direction of the relationship changes due to tourist profile and the type of tourism. The shortness of duration of stay makes difficult to perceive environmental problems in Cappadocia (Ürgüp), while tourists stay at least two weeks and can not perceive environmental problems of Side, sufficiently.

9) Tourism investors/managers which determine the region is not suitable for investments further, evaluate the regional weakness of environmental protection at the same time. Thus, they realize the importance of natural, historical and cultural environment for sustainability of tourism.

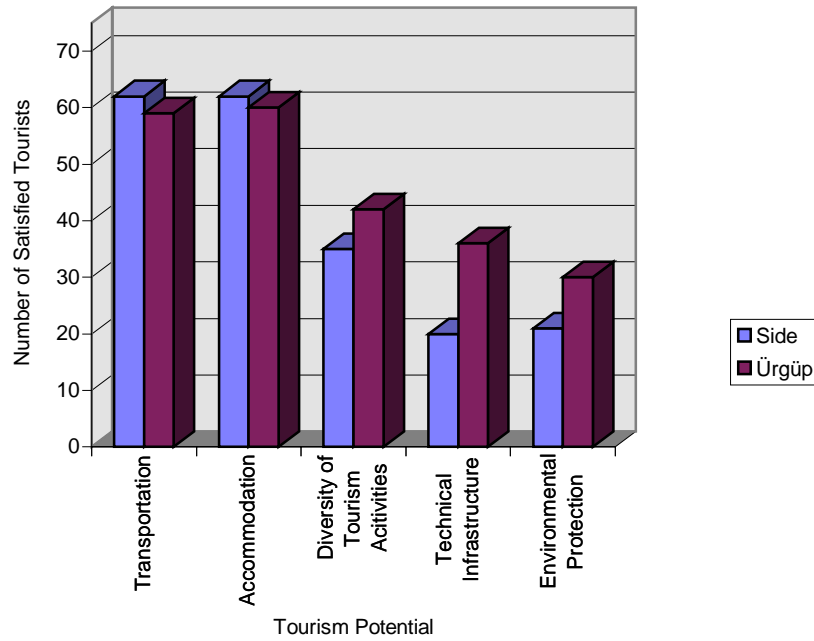


Figure 5. Satisfaction of Tourists on Tourism Potential in the Sample Areas (Turkey), 1997

## 5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

A number of works on the impact of tourism activities in regional level prove that the performance should not be measured only for its economic assets, but also for its environmental concerns in the long run. In this way, it is expected to protect the environment for the renewability of natural resources in reaching higher living standards.

Despite environmental policies and international commitment to promote a sustainable future for Mediterranean Regions, to a certain extent degradation of coastal area in Turkey has become inevitable. As a matter of fact, urbanisation trends since the Fifties are major forces influencing the spatial distribution of population at an annual rate over 4 percent. In recent years, this basically rural to urban migration has become a social transformation from the Eastern and inland areas towards the Western and Southern coasts (Atalýk, 1997). As tourism becomes one of the most significant tools in sustainable regional development processes in developing areas, it may be useful to analyse the impact of tourism activities in the country in the framework of some case studies on special areas.

In this stage, it may be required to measure the performance of tourism activities beside the measures for sustainable development. “Sustainable Tourism Model” covering satisfaction of the community, tourists and tourism investors/managers with “Semantic Differential Testing” involving some qualifications in order to measure the perceptions of tourists on the regions concerned could give us some explicit environmental ethical premises. The application of these models on some major sub-regions in developing areas may promote further studies in the subject.

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