

Evaluation of Rural Tourism Potential and Practices in Bursa

Seyit UĞUZ^{1,*} Ercan ŞİMŞEK¹ Bilal ÖLMEZ¹

¹Uludag University, Agriculture Faculty, Biosystems Engineering Department, Nilufer, Bursa, Turkey

*Sorumlu Yazar
E-posta: seyit@uludag.edu.tr

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Abstract

The low level of income in the countryside, the attractiveness of urban life and the country politics increase the migration from the village to the city centers. This situation necessitates the improvement of rural development models which increase the level of welfare of the rural population. Achieving economic, social and cultural development in the rural area can be realized with holistic approaches. Rural tourism has become one of the important means of rural development in recent years. Rural tourism is an additional field of activity under the diversification of economic activities for small scale enterprises operating in the agricultural sector but unable to generate sufficient income and lack of competitiveness. Although rural tourism does not generate income in a short time, it is a very important economic activity in terms of long-term contribution to the regional economy and employment. In this study, the rural tourism potential of the enterprises established in Bursa province and rural tourism regions was evaluated by the SWOT analysis. As a result, it is emphasized that the promotion of rural development investments should be emphasized and related with agricultural activities, in order to create economic development and employment at national and regional level.

Keywords: Rural Area, Rural Development, Rural Tourism, Bursa

INTRODUCTION

Today, social, cultural, economic and technological changes in the world have caused the change of the tourism concept. This change has been particularly influential in the tourism sector. In developed countries, tourism sector has been explored differently and new tourism activities have emerged within the scope of alternative tourism. In this context, different tourism types such as eco-tourism, rural tourism, soft tourism are started to be considered as alternative tourism owing to integrate with the nature and therefore.

Rural tourism is a type of tourism that is easily integrated with rural culture, agriculture and natural environment and other alternative tourism types. It is possible to define rural tourism as a type of tourism that gives rise to new business opportunities and contributes to the development of the service sector as a result of leisure time, recreation, natural life exploration and integration [1]. For this reason, rural tourism, which has been enriched with hundreds of local, national and international initiatives, attracts people to rural areas for vacation in many countries of the world [2].

Since the meaning of "rural" in rural tourism is directly perceived as "rural areas" in our country, highland tourism, hunting tourism, cave tourism, eco-tourism and open-air nature sports are kept the same as rural tourism. It is also true that there is some difference between them in terms of purpose and activities since the main aim in rural tourism is to stay in a farm, in a mountain house, to meet with rural culture and to spend a holiday. In recent years, touristic coastal centers and villages around the big cities, rural settlements near the ancient cities, villages around the roads are familiar to rural tourism in Turkey. Rural restaurants and shopping exhibitions, even fish farms have met with tourists or day-trippers. In addition to individual trips, daily visits are organized by travel agencies to such places or rural areas in which they are located.

All these developments indicate that the use of

rural settlements for tourism in our country has become widespread in recent years. A small number of our villages are literally riddled with rural tourism today, but we also know the existence of a great potential. Even this potential; starting from our geographical regions which offer different features in terms of rural landscape and rural culture, it is very difficult to identify in a detail that goes down to our regions, our borders and our peasants. Because the potential determination is not limited to measuring the suitability of a place for rural tourism, it is a complicated interdisciplinary study where many factors need to be considered together [3].

In this study, the impact of rural tourism on Turkey and especially on the economic and social development of the Bursa region will be evaluated. In this article, it is aimed to reveal the importance of rural tourism as a concept covering village tourism, farm tourism, green tourism and agricultural tourism. Thus, rural tourism has been turned into many functional topics related to the tourism sector and evaluated in terms of tourism sector in Turkey and Bursa region.

EFFECT OF RURAL TOURISM IN TURKEY

Rural tourism plays an important role in promotion of countries. One of the main factors that play a role in the development of tourism in a country is the promotion. There is widespread belief that the promotion in our country has been insufficient for years. In 2000, a new campaign was launched by the Ministry of Tourism for promotion, and efforts were made to "reposition our country as a brand in the field of tourism". Turkey is emphasized not only with a single symbol but with its sea, history and culture. The idea of embracing diversity in this promotional campaign is based on the concept of serving three basic purposes. First one is to increase the number of tourists; second one is to diversify the tourist profile and to increase the quality and the last one is to initiate sustainable tourism movements [4].

In Turkey, culture is one of the motifs used in presentation of tourism for years. Turkish people's hospitality, tolerance, importance to warm relationships, cultural riches, has always been the part of our culture. Rural culture is also an important tool for promotion and tourism. This is because, during the period of foreign tourists staying in rural tourism, there is a one-to-one relationship with the local community and its social and economic life. The bonds of friendship and relations that are established are becoming unforgettable for both sides. This publicity which can never be reached with various advertising and promotions is easily achieved by means of rural tourism. At the same time, bridges established through rural tourism are making the biggest strides in erasing previously acquired prejudices or consolidating the known truths. Undoubtedly, the contribution of other tourism types to the promotion of the country cannot be denied. However, tourism which proves the best way of Turkish hospitality that gives its room to tourists, sharing water, sharing bread, teaching how kilim is touched, how to make cheese, welcoming tourists to their weddings, and touring the untouched beauties of their countryside in the best possible way should be defined as rural tourism.

The reason for the introduction of rural tourism to the country is because it also loads the peace ambassador mission at the same time. Municipalities make common visits with each other, come together in festivals, fairs within the framework of brotherhood and friendship bridges established in villages. In particular, the city and village settlements on the Aegean Sea coasts of Greece and Turkey and the island societies (Marmaris, Bodrum, Datça, Kuşadası, İzmir, Çeşme, Ayvalık, Rhodes, Crete, Midilli) have the most suitable atmosphere for the development of such relations. For example, the people of the present day (1924 Thessalonians) of Sirince, an ancient Greek Cypriot village in the Izmir province of Selçuk, and the old people who migrated to Greece started to make reciprocal visits. The old Greek settlement near FethiyeKayaköy (Levissi) is rapidly advancing towards becoming a "Peace and Friendship Village" [5], [6]. Likewise, it is obvious that the city of Bursa is a potential area that should be assessed correctly when historical and cultural activity is taken into consideration. If we think that such friendship relations can be realized in other countries, we can say that rural tourism has an important function in terms of promoting and integrating the people.

The cultural heritage and historical background as well as the natural environment of Bursa city, has an important tourism potential when we look at the historical background of Turkey. When the historical richness of the region and especially its environmental effects are evaluated, it is seen that rural tourism investments are concentrated in settlement units based on economy in Bursa region such as İznik, Orhaneli, Keles, Harmançık. With the activities in the region in recent years and the incentive programs that are being implemented in the last years, the people of the region have wealthy resources in order to be able to produce new ideas and projects in this area.

RURAL TOURISM EFFECT ON NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURAL HERITAGE PROTECTION

Tourism is an economic sector that is shaped by the values that the region offers. Therefore, environment and tourism are in a vital relationship with each other. Today, we see that environmental problems have reached dangerous dimensions; on the other hand sensitivity to environmental

protection has also improved. It is now accepted that the contribution of tourism to the development of the awareness that a local richness is a universal value [7].

Rural environments are environments where traditionalism is felt in the foreground and cultural spread is slow. So the cultural geography of the countryside is very different from each other even at short distances. Some say that this cult is protected, but the disadvantages of living away from the contemporary world in its own shell are harassing rural people. The point that is sensitive here is that rural identity does not exist as a result of "corruption or disappearance" by the penetration of technology and non-agricultural sectors (such as tourism) to rural areas. As a matter of fact, in the face of the magnificent development of sea tourism in the Mediterranean region, many coastal villages have become "tourist villages".

It is a fact that tourism has positive or negative effects on the natural and socio-cultural environment. Among the tourism types, rural tourism, which cares protectionism mostly, has to use the whole environment with authenticity. So any kind of artificiality should not be put into the villages. On the other hand, rural tourism has taken on an important task in keeping the unforgettable values to be lost in the natural flow. In short, it is necessary to protect the nature and cultures for a sustainable rural tourism place.

RURAL TOURISM APPLICATIONS IN BURSA

Rural tourism is a balancing element in the geographical distribution of tourism. The richness of the traditional cultures and the untouched nature of the natural environment, nowadays, have led to turning the demand for tourism from the coast to the interior. As the attraction of the country as well as the people of the city to choose for the holidays, the need for and desire for the countryside to rest with another expression, the rural use of tourism is increasingly widespread.

Rural tourism is a kind of tourism that happens with accommodation in rural areas and rural settlements, so many geographical places outside the coast are acquainted with tourism. Turkey has begun to provide surplus in the supply of beds, particularly in the coastal regions towards the end of the 1990s. As far as the distribution of tourism in our country is concerned, rural tourism will have a very important role in spreading it to every corner.

In Turkey, various rural tourism projects are being implemented for the development of rural areas in both domestic and foreign projects. When we look at the applications of these projects, there are examples of successful projects with sustainability preliminary. Investments for rural tourism, initiated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs since 2007 and supported by the IPARD program, are being developed. Despite the fact that rural tourism is not a high income in the short term, in the places where it will be implemented, firstly employment, thus creating added value, local economy and thus national economy will bring a positive effect in positive direction. In particular, it is likely to be a significant income-generating activity for people living in mountainous areas with disadvantaged geographical conditions that are not suitable for making any economic activity. Along with the development of rural tourism, economic, social and cultural development of cities will constitute integrity [8].

Bursa is between 40 degree longitude and 28 - 30 degree latitude circle. It is surrounded by Bilecik, Adapazarı in the east, Izmit, Yalova, Istanbul and Marmara Sea in the north, Eskişehir, Kütahya in the south and Balıkesir in the



Figure 1. Gököz Natural Park [12]



Figure 2. Iznik Eco-Tourism Facility [13]



Figure 3. Harmancık Eco-Tourism Facility [14]

west. Bursa has 17 districts (Büyükorhan, Gemlik, Gürsu, Harmancık, İnegöl, İznik, Karacabey, Keles, Kestel, Mudanya, Mustafakemalpaşa, Orhaneli, Orhangazi, Yenisehir, Nilüfer, Osmaniye and Yıldırım) 230 towns and 659 village settlements with a total area of 11,027 square kilometres [9].

Bursa is wealthy city for natural vegetation. Approximately 40% of the province is covered with forests. The vegetation in the southern plateaus, where the forests have been largely destroyed, is usually steppe. Maquises and olive groves dominate in Marmara region. The lowland forests are mostly hornbeam, lime, chestnut and alder. There are beech, oak, fir and larch forests on the higher parts of the mountain. The forests of pure Uludağ forests are located at 1600 meters higher in Uludağ [10].

17% percent of Bursa lands are lowland. The most important of these is the Bursa Plain. Yenişehir, Karacabey, Orhangazi and İznik plains with fertile soil are places where plant production concentrates. The most important stream in the province is the Nilüfer Stream, a branch of the Susurluk Stream. Other important rivers are Mustafakemalpaşa Stream, Göksu Stream, Kocadere and Aksu Stream. There are two important lakes within the borders of Bursa. One of

them is Lake Iznik, which is the largest lake in the Marmara Region and the other is Uluabat Lake [11].

The main reason for choosing the remaining areas within the Bursa region is its proximity to tourism centers and its wide variety of natural and cultural assets. Project areas are determined on the basis of natural values, cultural values and touristic product variety. Bursa has attracted great encouragement and investments in tourism in recent years. Because Bursa was the first capital of the Ottoman Empire, it became the foreground as a city of history and culture with the works of the founding period of the empire. The possibilities of thermal water are trying to be active in the field of thermal tourism. Below, some of the rural tourism facilities established in Bursa in the near future have been briefly evaluated with various features.

Gököz Natural Park

It is a clean and high quality accommodation facility with nature right beside the Gököz Lake, which is leaning to the south slope of Uludağ, in the town of Keles in the Bursa region. Gököz Natural park is a place where the four seasons can be experienced away from the noise and pollution at the

Table 1.SWOT Analysis Table

STRENGTHS		WEAKNESSES
1.	Historical and cultural capital of the Ottoman Empire	Seasonal difficulties
2.	Having wealthy underground resources	Staffing for employment
3.	Turkey's 4th Great City	Villagers are pessimistic for projects
4.	The region is suitable for winter tourism	Distance to city centre
5.	The region is rich in hot water resources	Transportation problems in winter conditions
6.	To have a rich history from the historical point of view	Difficulties due to excessive protection areas.
7.	Having tourism attractions such as Museums, recreation areas, national parks, etc.	Inadequate information about investment incentive programs
8.	Easy of transportation to major cities such as Istanbul, Izmit, Izmir,	The cost of planting in rural tourism is economically more expensive
9.	Besides winter tourism, other walking sports such as mountaineering and trekking can be done easily.	Natural resources and Cultural riches are not adequately evaluated.
10.	The number of similar establishments in rural tourism is low.	Cannot prevent the migration from the rural areas to the city
OPPORTUNITIES		THREATS
1.	Allowing people who want to get away from city density	The possibilities of establishing similar rural tourism facilities
2.	There are not enough rural tourism facilities in the region	The reputation of the region is high.
3.	Provide opportunities for new business areas.	Decrease in agricultural lands
4.	Grant support for rural tourism investments	Unconscious practices to protect natural and environmental life
5.	Prevention of immigration to the city and increase of employment power.	Predictability of economic conditions is low.

skirts of Uludağ at 1120 altitude [12].

Iznik Eco-Tourism Facility

The eco-tourism facility located in the town of Iznik seems to be a well-designed and well-known project considering the economic contribution to tourism in the light of historical and cultural structure. The facility, located in the town of Iznik in the Bursa region, has a scenic view of Iznik and offers opportunities for walking in the nature and setting up campsites. It is a ceremony to present a thousand pieces of green and blue to the ground [13].

Harmancık Eco-Tourism Facility

Harmancık, at the intersection point of the Bursa-Balikesir-Kütahya province, has an altitude with 700 meters in height with nature and oxygen storage in the inner circle. In the project prepared for the implementation of Harmancık Eco Tourism facilities, it was aimed to reveal the current tourism potential in the region and to contribute to the diversification of region and country tourism by using existing cultural and natural values that can be transformed into touristic product [14].

SWOT ANALYSIS OF BURSA CITY TO RURAL TOURISM

The province of Bursa, which is a historical and cultural city with its long history, is the first capital of the Ottoman Empire. Bursa is a city of culture and history that carries the spatial and architectural features of the Ottoman and Republican era day by day. Bursa is the 4th largest city in Turkey with 2,901,396 people according to the population censuses of the year 2016 in terms of population density [15]. Swot analysis of Bursa province which is going to become a tourism city next to much potential such as history, culture and art will be emphasized on the strengths and weaknesses of other cities and opportunities and possible threats will be examined. The suggestions presented after the analysis will be useful for the further development of Bursa in terms of rural tourism.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Rural tourism is a type of tourism both inland with the rural settlements and also based on natural resources. Rural tourism has a great appeal within the range of resting tourism types. Rural areas with rich, natural and cultural potential are highly suitable for tourism. Rural tourism has great importance in preserving our natural and cultural heritage and introducing it to future generations and promoting it worldwide. Rural tourism can be defined as "the whole of events and relations arising from temporary accommodation, by visiting rural areas outside the places where people are permanently resident, by demanding the goods and services produced by agricultural producers in the places appropriate for the natural texture of the area, and by minimizing their desire to raise money in the area". Because of its many positive effects, the importance of tourism is increasing day by day as an alternative or complement to existing tourism types in developed or developing countries. These changes have not only been reflected in the increase in the number of tourists and tourism revenues, but also in the preferences of the tourism movements.

From the beginning of the 1990s, there has been a trend towards a product that requires individual and special attention from the sea, sand and sun trimesters, which are known as classical tourism products in touristic consumers intensively. Rural tourism in Turkey can give great support to the tourism of our country with its numerous benefits. In particular, tourism may have the effect of reducing the intensity during a certain month during the year, and tourism may contribute to the uneven distribution of the tourism in country's geography. The classical holiday concept that has been going on for many years leaves its place to tourists who are moving away from the noise, facing human relations, and heading towards the rural areas where the natural structure has not deteriorated. Thus, the changing tourism demands revealed a variety of tourism types. On the other hand, it can create a demand from different and conscious tourist groups to expand our market. In order to sustain the tourism sector, tourism types such as rural tourism, alternative tourism, eco-

tourism, nature tourism and green tourism have been created.

An influencing factor in demand of nature-based tourism is growing environmental awareness around the world. The power to easily integrate rural tourism with other types of tourism can give them dynamism. Rural tourism is the type of tourism that is most compatible with sustainable tourism concept. Besides the economic and social effects of tourism, as a result of this environmentalist discourse put forward new types of tourism have emerged not to change the nature, use it without disrupting and consuming resources.

In rural tourism activities; hiking, cycling / cycling tours, horseback riding, walking, climbing, adventure holidays, canoeing, rafting, ranching, snow plows, low landing slopes, bird watching, photography rides, landscaping, doing rural heritage studies, making small town/village tours, rural recreational holidays, small-scale conferences, rural festivals, fishing with a fishing pole and sports requiring natural environment.

Recently a big breakthrough in tourism has been realized in Bursa. Restoration of the works belonging to the old Ottoman era is the foreground of steps taken in the field of cultural tourism. The re-planning and arrangement of the Uludağ area and the existing cableway is modernized and the line is extended to the Hotels Area; clearly demonstrates the steps taken in the field of winter tourism. In addition to this, with the drilling works, the capacities of the thermal hot waters are increased and it is desired that Bursa has a word for thermal tourism in the world.

As a result of the surveys carried out in and around Bursa, we can see that natural beauties are given importance to nature tourism by getting them to the forefront. If the distance between Istanbul and Bursa is considered to be shortened by the start of the construction of Istanbul-İzmir Highway as of 2012, the infrastructure of the innovations made in the field of tourism is strengthened.

There is no step in the field of rural tourism although Bursa has made great strides in the field of culture tourism, nature tourism, thermal tourism, congress tourism and winter tourism. The implementation of the rural tourism concept, which could easily integrate with all of the above mentioned types of tourism, in the mountainous region of Bursa's backward and inhospitable rural regions, will contribute to both the development of this area and the increase of the tourism diversity of Bursa.

The issue to be argued is that attention should be paid to ensuring rural development, taking a holistic approach to cultural and natural values, and planning the parts to support each other. At this point, there are suggestions for the correct use of the investments and cultural resources that can be made for the Bursa region. This approach, which can bring the interaction between local people and tourists to the highest level, predicts that the people of the region will also gain a share in tourism and develop well in terms of employment area and rural development.

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