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CONTENTS

Determining the Effective Factors on the Tourism Income and Tourism Expenditure of Turkey Via Classification Regression Trees Approach	
Ece ÖZGÖREN, Sinan SARAÇLI, Cengiz GAZELOĞLU.....	1
Forecasting Tourism Income and Tourism Expenditure of Turkey Via Artificial Neural Networks	
Berkalp TUNCA, Sinan SARAÇLI.....	8
Bibliometric Analysis of Studies Related to Perspectives of the Managers Working in Accommodation Enterprises on Accessible Tourism: 2006-2019 Period	
Zeki AKINCI, Dilara Bahtiyar SARI, Murad Alpaslan KASALAK.....	17
The Impact of Private Sector Theme Parks on City Hotels: The Case of Antalya Province	
Serkan YORULMAZER, Murad Alpaslan KASALAK, Zeki AKINCI	25
The Role of Unique Attractions in the Formation of City Image: The Case of Eskişehir Sazova Science Culture and Art Park	
Samet ÇEVİK, Semih SARIİPEK.....	33
Managing Consumer Complaints: Tripadvisor Case in Çanakkale	
Çiğdem ÖZKAN, Mustafa BOZ.....	42
Comparative Analysis of the Views of the Stakeholders Regarding the Needs of Tourism Faculty Undergraduates for the Development of Their English Communication Skills	
Davut UYSAL, Cihan SEÇİLMİŞ.....	48
Is the Availability of Mobile Augmented Reality Applications in Tourism Education Possible? Thoughts of Tourism Academicians: The Case of Eskişehir	
Duran CANKÜL, Batuhan SÖNMEZ.....	58
The Effect of Urban Renewal Projects on Urban Identity in Turkey: Case of Istanbul and Antalya	
Sibel MANSUROĞLU, Veysel DAG, Feyzanur DEMİR	66
Qualitative Research on Individual Transformation Based on Travel Experiences	
Özer Mesut ÖZÇELİK, Ece ÖMÜRİŞ, Duygu AYDIN	74
Analysis of Factors Affecting City Brand Loyalty: A Structural Equality Model Proposal	
Erkan ARI , Yasin Emre OĞUZ, Veysel YILMAZ	79
Gastronomy as a Tourism Resource: The Case of Gaziantep	
Zeynep KARSAVURAN, Onur DİRLİK.....	86
An Econometric Analysis on Determining the Relationship Between Employment and Tourism: The Case of Turkey	
Yaşar SARI, Yasin Emre OĞUZ, Cansev ÖZDEMİR.....	95
The Role of Local Entrepreneurs in Urban Tourism: A Study on Hotels in Edirne City Centre	
Bilge ÇAVUŞGİL KÖSE, Serol KARALAR.....	102

Determining The Contributions of Archeological Sites in Turkey’s Cultural Tourism Competitiveness	
Eda HAZARHUN, Ceren İŞÇİ, Mustafa TEPECİ.....	108
Relationship Between Service Orientation Status and Demographic Characteristics of The Front-Line Employees in Hotel Enterprises	
Begüm İLBAY, Meryem AKOĞLAN KOZAK	114
A Comparison of Perceptions of Local People Regarding Tourism and Tourism Support According to Their Socio-Economic Status and Educational Level	
Ayşe Nevin SERT, Sıla KARACAOĞLU.....	125
Concept Restaurants	
Pınar ŞENEL, Hakan YILMAZ	134
Developing and Validating a Gastronomy Experience Scale	
Ahmet YARIŞ	142
Corporate Social Responsibility Activities in Food and Beverage Enterprises: The Case of Eskişehir	
Duran CANKÜL, Selçuk YÜCESOY.....	152
Tourism Market Research of Antalya City Against Competitors in The Scope Of Destination Competitiveness	
Mehmet BAHAR, Nedim YÜZBAŞIOĞLU	164
Happiness Among Tourism Students: A Study on The Effect of Demographic Variables on Happiness	
Boran TOKER, Mehmet Bahadır KALIPÇI	172
Is It Only “Urban” That Counts: An Extra-Urban Approach in Tourist Guiding Training	
TOLGA GÜL , Yalçın ARSLANTÜRK	180
Environment and Tourism In Sustainable Cities	
Tuğba USTA, Adem Usta, Aslı TENDERİS	186
Smart Cities in The Scope of Industry 4.0: Analysis Of Official Applications	
Ebru GÖZEN	187
The Web-Based Travel Intermediaries Loyalty: The Influences of Trust and Satisfaction	
Şükrü Fırat ÇİFTÇİ , Beykan ÇİZEL.....	195
Dehumanizing Tourism and the Despair	
Atilla YÜKSEL.....	204
A Model Recommended in ECSI Scope for Measurement of Quality Service	
Erkan ARI , Yasin Emre OĞUZ, Veysel YILMAZ	208
The Evaluation of Business Travelers Profiles and Preferences from The Perspectives of Hotel Executives in Manisa	
Mustafa TEPECİ , Eda HAZARHUN, Ceren İŞÇİ,	218

Evaluation of Ecomuseum Concept in Terms of Sustainability	
Halil KORKMAZ, İlayda Zeynep NIYET.....	224
A Theoretical Proposal For Modelling Tourist Types and Behaviours	
Engin BAYRAKTAROĞLU.....	227
The Effect Of Customers’ Satisfaction Of Tourism Transportation On Their Intention To Revisit: A Case Of Yht	
Cihan SEÇİLMİŞ, Davut UYSAL, Ebru Tespire AYDIN	232
Disabled Tourists’ Access At Kyrenia Sea Front, North Cyprus	
Gizem GÜVENBAŞ, Mukaddes POLAY	241
The Impact of Cultural Tourism Activities on the Sustainable Preservation of Heritage Places: Birgi	
Özge YİĞİT, Hümevra BİROL.....	252
Cultural Benefits of Former Military Buildings Reuse: Public Room, Skopje, Republic Of North Macedonia	
Olgica GRCHEVA.....	258
An Assesment on Tourism Precariat: Examples From Eskişehir	
Barış ÇIVAK, Engin BAYRAKTAROĞLU	267
A Research on Walkability Perception of Tourists Visiting Old Town Mardin	
Kadir ÇAKAR , Serhat HARMAN, Şehmus AYKOL	273
A Study on the Perceptions of Congress and Fair Organizers on MICE Tourism	
M. Murat KIZANLIKLI, Havva ÇIVGIN	280
A Bibliometric Analysis on Articles About Tourism and Virtual Reality In Turkey	
Altan ÇETİN, Mustafa ÇOŞKUNER, Nesrin SAVAŞ, Gökçe YÜKSEK.....	289
Determination of Resident Opinions on Global Warming and Climate Change in Tourism Cities: Case of Antalya City	
Sibel MANSUROĞLU, Veysel DAĞ, Gülcan CÖMERT	299
The Idea of Divine Mercy and Its Religious Cult in Krakow as Impulse on Urban Tourism	
Paweł PLICHTA	308
Turkey’s Metropolitans in Terms of City Tourism: A Review of Tourism Brochures	
Burçin KIRLAR CAN, Mehmet ERTAŞ, Sonay KAYGALAK ÇELEBİ.....	310
The Need For A Tour Guide While The Cities Get Smarter	
Grant Altay TAŞKIN	312
Tracing Industrial Heritage: The Case Of Berlin Bicycle Route	
Evinç DOĞAN.....	313
Analysis of Tourist Attraction of Brand Cities: The Cases of Antalya and St. Petersburg	
Güneş SÜTÇÜ, Oktay EMİR.....	314

Does The Destination Decision Of Inbound Tourists From Different Counters Affect Each Other? The Case Of Turkey	
Selim YILDIRIM, Burak EROĞLU	315
Not Every Small Hotel is a Boutique Hotel	
Eda AVCI	316
Consumer Personality Traits and Their Influence on Brand Experience and Satisfaction	
Ridhwan Olatunji OLAOKE, Steven William BAYIGHOMOG	317
Prediction of Number of Foreigners Visiting Turkey with LSTM and Feed-Forward Neural Networks	
Baki ÜNAL, Çağdaş Hakan ALADAĞ	319
Modelling Inbound Tourism Demand for Istanbul	
Deniz GÖKTAŞ, Dilara ORUÇ	320
Readiness the Small Town of Pangandaran – West Java, Indonesia, As a World-Class Tourist Destination	
Heru Purboyo Hidayat PUTRO.....	321
Urban Tourism Development Through Creative Economy and Green Tourism: The Case of Jakarta	
Rusdi ABBAS, Dzikri Abdul AZIS, Heri KURNIAWAN, Rahmadha Akbar SYAH Arinda SHABRINA, Dianissa SCHEHERAZADE, Zaki Khudzaifi MAHMUD	322
Revisiting the Old Issue: Workplace Incivility and Employee Emotional Exhaustion	
Uju Violet ALOLA, Andrew Adewale ALOLA	323
Social Production of Street Food Markets in London	
Fatos Ozkan ERCIYAS	324
Horizontal Individualism, Authenticity and International Tourist Behaviors	
Hakan SEZEREL, Deniz KARAGÖZ	325
The Core Principles for an Effective City Tour Design	
Orhan YABANCI.....	326
Which European Union Countries Turkey is similar in Hosting Foreign Tourists	
Selim YILDIRIM, Burak EROĞLU	327
Winter and Urban Tourism Duality Under Climate Change: Case of Erzurum, Turkey	
Neslihan KULÖZÜ UZUNBOY, Osman Cenk DEMİROĞLU	328
Destination Perceptions and the Relation Between Satisfaction and Repurchase Behaviour	
İbrahim ÇETİN	329
The Contribution of Opet Respect to History Project, An Unique Social Responsibility Project, to Historical, Social and Cultural Change in Gallipoli Peninsula and Its Effect on Domestic Tourism	
Burhan SAYILIR, Ferdi BOZKURT	330

The Relationship Between Economic Policies and Tourism Policies in Turkey	
İnci Oya COŞKUN, Fırat ÇİFTÇİ.....	331
A Trip to Bursa: A Multi-Sensory Experience	
Ebru GÖKDAĞ, Özge BOZDOĞAN	332
Agri-Tourism Potential of Gazipaşa as an Alternative to Urban Tourism	
Gözdegül BAŞER.....	333
Tourism and Media: False, Additives, Outputs	
Sedat CERECİ	334
An Oasis in a Complex World: Slow Cities	
Fulden Nuray KÜÇÜKERGİN, Cemal Ersin SİLİK	335
Pastry (Borek) Culture in Uzbek Tatars: Böğrüdelik Village Sample	
Nisa Nur KAYA, Osman GÜLDEMİR, Nermin IŞIK.....	336
The Impact of Architectural Heritage on the Tourism: The Case of Walled City of Famagusta, Cyprus	
Nazife ÖZAY, Maryam GHASEMI	337
The Effect of Website Features on the Visiting Levels of the Destination Website at Destination Selection	
Sami ÖZCAN	347
How Sustainable is Tourist-Guiding Education in Turkey? : Perspectives from the “Urban Side”	
Yalçın ARSLANTÜRK, Özlem ALTUNÖZ.....	356
Urban Tourism in Scope and Its Repercussions on Turkish Tourism Academia	
Özlem ALTUNÖZ, Yalçın ARSLANTÜRK.....	361
Environmental Problems and Sustainable Tourism at the Golden Horn, Istanbul	
Özgür ZEYDAN.....	369
The Impact of Instagram Influencers on Tourists Hotel Perceptions: A Study on A Five Star Hotel In İstanbul	
Zehra YARDI, E. Ozan AKSOZ.....	374
Bibliometric Analysis of Tourism Economics Field Studies	
Sezi AYDIN, Cem IŞIK.....	381
A Study on Exploring the Tourism Potential of Altınköy as a Rural Tourism and Recreational Activity Area	
Ayşe ATAR, Seda ÖZDEMİR AKGÜL, Muharrem TUNA.....	388
Analysis of the Concepts of Tourism and Tourist by Metaphors	
Günay EROL, Ebru DÜŞMEZKALENDER.....	399
Natural Disaster Threat on World Heritage Sites in Turkey and the Effect on Cultural Tourism	
Doğa Dinemis Aman.....	408

A Comparison of Perceptions of Local People Regarding Tourism and Tourism Support According to Their Socio-Economic Status and Educational Level

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ABSTRACT

The robust development of tourism is not possible without the support of the local people. On the other hand, the local people are the main stakeholders who are directly affected by the development of tourism in a destination. Therefore, it is very important to determine the perceptions and attitudes of the local people towards the effects of tourism for the sustainable and successful development of tourism. The aim of this study was to compare the perceived effects of tourism by local people and their perceptions of support in terms of tourism development according to income and education levels. The questionnaire prepared for this purpose was applied to the local people residing in Beypazarı district of Ankara between September 25 and October 1, 2018 selected by the convenience sampling method. A total of 418 usable questionnaires were analyzed. In the study it was determined that those with lower education and income levels had a higher perception about the negative effects of tourism while their perceptions about the positive effects of tourism were lower.

Key Words: *Local People, Effects of Tourism, Support to Tourism Development, Beypazarı.*

INTRODUCTION

The perceptions of local people about the positive and negative effects of tourism is critical to the success of the planning and management of a sustainable tourism development through support and participation in tourism development (Gursoy, Jurowski and Uysal, 2002). Although the ways in which the host community members perceive the effects of tourism differ, in general, a positive perception of the effects of tourism by the local people increases their likelihood of supporting tourism development whereas a higher perception of negative impacts makes them indifferent to such support (Perdue, Long and Allen, 1990; Andereck, Valentine, Knopf and Vogt, 2005; Látková and Vogt, 2012, Nunkoo and So, 2015). Changes between individual and community benefits and costs perceived by local people are often explained by the theory of social change which suggests that if perceived benefits are greater than perceived costs, individuals will support tourism development and participate in tourism activities (Ap, 1992; Látková and Vogt, 2012). In other words, if local people perceive more cost than benefits from tourism development, they are likely to oppose and generate conflict (Lankford, 1994; Chen and Chen, 2010). The change can be based on economic and concrete resources such as goods and money, as well as intangible social ties such as mutual trust and friendship (Lambe, Wittmann and Spekman, 2001). Therefore, change can be realized with both economic and social resources (Nunkoo, 2016).

Most studies indicate that perceived costs adversely affect the support of local people for tourism development (Jurowski, Uysal and Williams, 1997; Gursoy et al., 2002). In this respect, it is important to balance the benefits and costs of tourism development (Ap, 1992; Andereck and Vogt, 2000; Dyer, Gursoy, Sharma and Carter, 2007). Therefore, it is necessary to evaluate the current perception of local people about tourism development (Nunkoo, Gursoy and Ramkissoon, 2013). In this way, it may be easier for tourism planners to strengthen positive elements and develop optimal strategies for the development of sustainable tourism for the benefit of the local people (Sinclair-Maragh, Gursoy and Vieregge, 2015). Although the effects of tourism development on local people, perceptions and attitudes of local people about tourism development have been investigated by many researchers especially in developed countries and / or regions (Perdue, et al., 1990; Carmichael, 2000; Ko and Stewart, 2002), it can be said that this issue is a relatively

new source of concern for developing countries and / or destinations (Long, 2012). The aim of this study has been to examine the perceptions and attitudes of local people living in Bey pazari district of Ankara, which is a rural tourism destination within the scope of some socio-demographic characteristics.

LITERATURE

Many studies have been carried out on the impact of tourism in the last 30 years. Most of these studies examined the impact of tourism development on local people and their perception and attitudes towards tourism development (Gursoy and Rutherford, 2004; Dyer, et al., 2007; Nunkoo and Ramkisson, 2011). The main reason for this interest is the awareness that tourism development has positive and negative impacts at the local level (Ko and Stewart, 2002). As a result of the studies, there is a common consensus in the literature that tourism development in a region has mainly economic, socio-cultural and environmental positive and negative effects (Belisle and Hoy, 1980; Liu and Var, 1986; Choi, 2003; Kuvan and Akan, 2005; Chen and Chen, 2010). Like many other industries, tourism is often used as a national and / or regional development tool (Jackson, 2008; Liu and Var, 1986), however with proper planning, integration with local values and the environment, socio-cultural, environmental and economic benefits can be achieved for the local community (Lee, Li and Kim, 2007; Long 2012).

Increased household incomes (Haralambopoulos and Pizam, 1996; Jurowski et al., 1997), diversification of shopping opportunities (Liu and Var, 1986; Choi, 2003), strengthening the local economy (Perdue et al., 1990; Gursoy and Rutherford, 2004), creating more jobs and employment (Belisle and Hoy, 1980; Milman and Pizam, 1988) and improving the flow of tax revenues (Andereck et al., 2005; Ko and Stewart, 2002) can be listed among the positive economic effects of tourism. The negative economic effects of tourism include increased cost of living (Liu and Var, 1986; Rasoolimanesh, Jaafar, Kock and Ramayah, 2015), prices of products (Andereck et al., 2005; Brunt and Courtney, 1999), increase in home, land and property values and taxes (Tosun, 2002, Latkova and Vogt, 2012). In addition, the growth of economic dependence on tourism (Garg, 2002; Kozak, Kozak and Kozak, 2010), the increase in seasonal employment and employment of foreign workers (Kim, 2002; Kozak et al., 2010) and injustices in income distribution (Garg, 2002; Choi, 2003) are some of the negative economic effects manifested as a result of traditional tourism development in a destination. Tourism reveals

many social and cultural effects, both positive and negative (Kim, 2002; Gursoy and Rutherford, 2004; Dyer et al., 2007). Positive socio-cultural effects of tourism development include the development of an environment of tolerance and understanding in destinations (Ap, 1992; Harrill, 2004), improving the quality of life of local people (Gursoy et al., 2002; Nunkoo and So, 2015), increasing the availability of recreational facilities for host communities (Kim, 2002; Tovar and Lockwood, 2008), reduction of gender discrimination (Dunn, 2007; Boley, 2013), specialization in occupations (Lanza and Pigliaru, 1995; Cerina, 2007), strengthening the social structure and identity (Besculides, Lee and McCormick 2002; Boley, 2013), encouraging the protection and revitalization of traditional arts, cultures and works of art (Kim, 2002; McGehee, Andereck and Vogt, 2002), enabling the manifestation of a community pride in recognizing their resources, products (Kim, 2002; Johnson, 2010) and the transfer of these assets to future generations (Onderwater, 2011; Aref, 2011). However, hostility and resentment among local people due to the striking differences in tourism gains and inequalities in income distribution along with the development of tourism in a region (Doxey, 1975; Kim, 2002), the increase in unethical behavior due to the increase in crime rates (Andereck et al., 2005; Nunkoo and Ramkisson, 2011), corruption of traditional, social and family values (Besculides et al., 2002; Andereck et al., 2005), the occurrence of cultural conflicts with tourists (Kim, 2002; Choi, 2003), the increasing number of foreign language words included in the mother tongue (Ap and Crompton, 1998; Kozak et al., 2010), the commercialization of the culture of the host community and the increasing number of imitation products paving the way for the disappearance of traditional handicrafts (Haralambopoulos and Pizam, 1996; Dyer et al., 2007) are negative socio-cultural effects generated by tourism development. Another factor that closely concerns the perception and attitude of local people about tourism is environmental impacts. Tourism and the physical environment are inextricably linked. Therefore, the attraction elements related to the physical environment are highly effective on tourism demand (Avçıkurt, 2009; Kozak et al., 2010). While tourism development is seen as a mechanism for improving natural and artificial areas and reducing the demand for environmental pollution and excessive use of resources (Dwyer, Edwards, Mistilis, Roman and Scott, 2009) on one hand, on the other hand, it is possible that tourism activities may also negatively affect natural and physical resources (Lankford, 1994; Andereck et al., 2005; Sinclair-Maragh et al., 2015). Increasing crowds (Ko

and Stewart, 2002; Dyer et al., 2007), traffic (Kim, 2002; Dyer et al., 2007) and environmental pollution caused by waste (Ko and Stewart, 2002; Nunkoo and Ramkissoon, 2011), air, water, soil and noise pollution (Tosun, 2002; Latkova and Vogt, 2012), parking problems (Sheldon and Abenoja, 2001; Ko and Stewart, 2002) depletion of natural resources (Ko and Stewart, 2002; Sinclair-Maragh et al. 2015) and unplanned construction (Lee, Li and Kim, 2007; Avcikurt, 2009) are examples of the negative impacts of tourism on the environment. In this context, Julio (2001) describes tourism as ‘goose that not only lays a golden egg, but also fouls its own nest’.

An examination of the literature reveals that some of the studies focus on the attitudes of local people towards tourism development (Stylidis, Biran, Sit and Szivas, 2014), while other studies have focused on the perception of socio-demographic variables related to local people in terms of tourism development (Kasarda and Janowitz, 1974; Gursoy and Rutherford, 2004; Harrill, 2004). The data obtained from these studies show that the perception, attitudes and behaviors generated by tourism on local people are realized at various levels and the results change when these concepts are examined through different variables. Therefore, it is not possible to speak of a universal consensus on the effects of variables that affect the perception, attitude and behavior of local people. In fact, some study results indicate that socio-demographic variables affect local people’s perception of tourism development (Milman and Pizam, 1988; Nunkoo and Ramkissoon, 2010; Almeida-García, Pelaez-Fernandez, Balbuena-Vazquez and Cortes-Macias, 2016) while others indicate that these variables do not display any causal effect (Jurowski, 1994; Kuvan and Akan, 2005; Wang and Psifter 2008). Socio-demographic variables can be listed as age (Haralambopoulos and Pizam, 1996; McGehee and Andereck, 2004), gender (Pizam and Milman, 1984; Kuvan and Akan, 2005), marital status (Haralambopoulos and Pizam, 1996; Smith and Krannich, 1998), having children (Milman and Pizam, 1988; Haralambopoulos and Pizam, 1996), education level (Teye, Sonmez and Sirakaya, 2002; Kim, Park and Phandanouvong, 2014), income (Haralambopoulos and Pizam, 1996; Kuvan and Akan, 2005), economic dependency on tourism (Pizam, 1978; Perdue et al., 1990), place of birth (Pizam, 1978; Um and Crompton, 1987) and residence time in the destination (Liu and Var, 1986; Lankford, 1994). Furthermore, there may be some differences between rural and urban areas regarding how tourism impacts are perceived (Wall and Mathieson, 2005). In this respect, the study aimed to examine the positive and negative

effects of tourism and the perception of support for tourism development among the local people living in Beypazari district of Ankara according to their monthly income and education level.

METHOD

The population of this study consists of local people living in Beypazari district center of Ankara. The data were collected with face to face interviews between September 25 and October 1, 2018. The convenience sampling method was used for sampling which was preferred in the study instead of using the whole population. Since the population of Beypazari is more than 10,000, the $n = S^2 Z_{\alpha}^2 / d^2$ formula proposed by Özdamar (2001) for quantitative studies and infinite populations was used to calculate the sampling size. The standard deviation in the formula was $S = 1$, considering similar studies using the questionnaire and 5-point Likert scales while $\alpha = 0,05$ significance level was countered by $Z_{\alpha} = 1,96$ and effect width $d = 0,1$ to calculate the minimum sample size to be at least 385. In this context, 500 questionnaires were distributed and 418 were evaluated by taking into account incomplete, inaccurate and low reliability questionnaires.

A questionnaire technique was used as data collection tool in the study. The survey consisted basically of two parts. The first part included 6 questions (gender, occupation, age, education level, marital status, income status) in order to determine the demographic characteristics of the individuals in the sample group. The second part consisted of the scales for the effects of tourism perceived by the local people and the support for tourism development. The scale of the effects of tourism perceived by the local people was taken from the study of Segota, Mihalic and Kuscer (2017). The Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient of the scale was 0.77. The tourism support scale was taken from the studies of Stylidis et al. (2014). The Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient of the scale was found to be 0.92. The items in the scales were subjected to a five point Likert rating and the level of participation of the individuals in the sample group for each item was rated as Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Neither Agree or Disagree = 3, Agree = 4, Strongly Agree = 5. SPSS 18.0for Windows program was used for data analysis. For the construct validity of the scales, explanatory factor analysis was applied and the internal consistency of the reliability analysis was calculated by Cronbach’s Alpha coefficients. On the other hand, the demographic characteristics of the individuals have been presented with frequency and percentage distributions while the positive and negative effects of tourism and the perceptions of

support for tourism development of individuals have been presented with percentage distributions as well as arithmetic mean and standard deviation.

FINDINGS

The distribution of the participants according to their demographic characteristics is presented in Table 1. Accordingly, 65.4% of the total 418 respondents were male, 78% were married, 65.3% were under the age of 40, 81.1% had high school or less education and 35.7% earned 3500 TL and less in income. However, 19.4% were employers, 34.2% earned salaries and 46.4% had other occupations.

Table 1: Distribution of the Participants According to Their Demographic Characteristics

Variables	Groups	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	149	35,6
	Male	269	64,4
Marital Status	Married	326	78,0
	Single	92	22,0
Age	29 ≤	125	29,9
	30-39	148	35,4
	40-49	88	21,1
	50 ≥	57	13,6
Education	Primary school	41	9,8
	Secondary school	68	16,3
	High school	230	55,0
	Bachelor degree	79	18,9
Employment Status	Employer	81	19,4
	Employed	143	34,2
	Self-employed	112	26,8
	Student	41	9,8
	Housewife	22	5,3
	Others (unemployed, retirement etc.)	19	4,5
Monthly salary (Turkish Liras)	2.500 ≤	33	7,9
	2.501-3.500 TL	116	27,8
	3.501-4.500 TL	124	29,7
	4.501-5.500 TL	64	15,3
	5.501 TL ≥	81	19,4
Total		418	100,0

The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the perceived effects of tourism by the local population was determined to be 0.79 and the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the tourism support scale was determined as 0.82. The effects of tourism perceived by local people and perceptions of support for tourism development were compared according to monthly income and education level in this study and significant differences were found ($p < 0.05$).

Table 2: Comparison of the Participants' Perceptions of Positive-Negative Impact and Support to Tourism Development According to Monthly Income and Education Level

Variables	Group	\bar{x}	SS	p	Group	\bar{x}	SS	P
ECO (-)	2.500 TL ≤	3,53	0,81	<0,01	Primary School	3,53	0,81	<0,01
	2.501-3.500 TL	2,69	1,16		Secondary School	2,93	1,24	
	3.501-4.500 TL	1,77	0,53		High School	1,84	0,57	
	4.501-5.500 TL	1,75	0,61		Bachelor Degree	1,71	0,56	
	5.501 ≥	1,76	0,43					
ECO (+)	2.500 TL ≤	2,79	0,83	<0,01	Primary School	2,86	0,86	<0,01
	2.501-3.500 TL	3,63	1,07		Secondary School	3,32	1,01	
	3.501-4.500 TL	4,21	0,45		High School	4,22	0,57	
	4.501-5.500 TL	4,23	0,48		Bachelor Degree	4,32	0,52	
	5.501 ≥	4,31	0,54					
ENV (-)	2.500 TL ≤	2,86	0,70	<0,01	Primary School	3,08	0,59	<0,01
	2.501-3.500 TL	2,25	0,81		Secondary School	2,28	0,82	
	3.501-4.500 TL	1,58	0,58		High School	1,66	0,60	
	4.501-5.500 TL	1,52	0,57		Bachelor Degree	1,54	0,62	
	5.501 ≥	1,68	0,69					
ENV (+)	2.500 TL ≤	2,72	0,73	<0,01	Primary School	2,60	0,67	<0,01
	2.501-3.500 TL	3,30	0,84		Secondary School	3,15	0,79	
	3.501-4.500 TL	3,87	0,54		High School	3,89	0,54	
	4.501-5.500 TL	3,96	0,48		Bachelor Degree	3,98	0,63	
	5.501 ≥	4,00	0,60					
SOCİ (-)	2.500 TL ≤	2,34	0,59	<0,01	Primary School	2,60	0,45	<0,01
	2.501-3.500 TL	1,93	0,63		Secondary School	1,85	0,66	
	3.501-4.500 TL	1,49	0,43		High School	1,52	0,43	
	4.501-5.500 TL	1,49	0,41		Bachelor Degree	1,63	0,36	
	5.501 ≥	1,61	0,39					
SOCİ (+)	2.500 TL ≤	2,62	0,66	<0,01	Primary School	2,60	0,55	<0,01
	2.501-3.500 TL	3,23	0,79		Secondary School	3,01	0,81	
	3.501-4.500 TL	3,59	0,39		High School	3,70	0,43	
	4.501-5.500 TL	3,71	0,40		Bachelor Degree	3,79	0,41	
	5.501 ≥	3,93	0,32					
TOURISM DEVEL.	2.500 TL ≤	2,44	1,07	<0,01	Primary School	2,49	1,03	<0,01
	2.501-3.500 TL	3,50	1,31		Secondary School	3,26	1,32	
	3.501-4.500 TL	4,31	0,54		High School	4,33	0,69	
	4.501-5.500 TL	4,51	0,59		Bachelor Degree	4,52	0,58	
	5.501 ≥	4,54	0,49					

** $p < 0,05$

An examination of the averages revealed that the participants with low education and low income levels had higher perceptions of the negative effects of tourism and lower perceptions of the positive effects. Likewise, those with low education and low income levels had lower (negative) perceptions of support for tourism development.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The success of the tourism industry depends on the local attractions and the hospitality of the local people (Gursoy et al., 2002). In general, tourists are reluctant to visit places where they do not feel well (Belisle and Hoy, 1980; Diedrich and García, 2009). Therefore, hostile behavior on the part of the local people towards tourists may be an obstacle to the tourism sector while a sincere attitude can support tourism development. (Yoon, Gursoy and Chen, 1999). The attitudes of the local people also affect a positive or negative effect on the tourism development and sustainability of any destination (Sirakaya, Teye and Sonmez, 2002; Harrill, 2004).

An examination of the literature reveals that there are differences in the ways in which local people perceive the effects of tourism and develop an attitude regarding this perception because each community has its own structure and circumstances (Harrill 2004; Dyer, et al., 2007). Therefore, this study regarding how perceptions and attitudes of local people living in Beypazarı differ according to income and education variables is expected to contribute to literature. The findings indicate that the participants with low education and low income levels had higher perceptions of the negative effects of tourism while their perceptions about the positive effects of tourism were lower. Similarly, the perceptions of participants with low education and income levels in support of tourism development were more negative. It is noted that these findings obtained within the scope of the study coincide with the results of many studies in the literature (Hernandez, Cohen, and García, 1996; Haralambopoulos and Pizam, 1996; Teye et al., 2002; Almeida-García et al., 2016). In their study, Hernandez et al. (1996) stated that the local people who had not completed secondary school had a less positive attitude towards tourism development than those with a high education level. According to the authors, those who have a lower education level think that they have less chance of finding employment and / or getting direct benefits from tourism than those who have a higher education level. He also pointed out that local people with lower levels of education are more conservative in protecting their lifestyles and are more likely to be more sensitive in this matter. In their studies, Kuvan and Akan (2005) determined that the local people with a lower education level had a more critical perspective regarding tourism development. Furthermore, Haralambopoulos and Pizam (1996) and Kuvan and Akan (2005) found a significant association between higher income levels and positive attitudes of local people towards tourism development. Accordingly, more affluent residents with more positive attitudes supported tourism development more while low-income residents supported it less.

The findings of the study can be interpreted as the higher the education and income level of the people of Beypazarı, the more positively the effects of tourism will be perceived and support for tourism development will develop accordingly. In this context, some suggestions have been developed regarding the activities that can be carried out with the local people in order to ensure successful tourism development in Beypazarı. As a priority, local governments should take action in order for the local people, who earn their living mainly from agriculture, animal husbandry and trade, to participate more in tourism activities and gain economic benefits from tourism. In this context, it is considered to be useful to provide guidance on how to generate income by providing various trainings and courses to the housewives who are currently producing tarhana, homemade macaroni, handicrafts and jewelry products for the tourist demand as well as local people who do not generate income from tourism. Courses can be initiated by the municipality by making the local people aware that traditional culture such as filigree, coppersmithing, quilting, weaving, local home cooking are a means of income from tourism. Thus, both the local people earn more income and the cultural heritage is conserved and maintained. Within the scope of rural tourism, Beypazarı's villages can be brought to the forefront by creating different opportunities such as eco tourism, farm tourism, adventure tourism, thermal tourism and the destination of tourists will not be limited to Beypazarı district center. A joint cooperative can be established in which the production, sales and marketing of local products produced in Beypazarı can be carried out. In this context, local administrations, development agencies, universities and NGOs can join forces to provide local people with training on business, entrepreneurship, co-operative, marketing and tourism, and visits to exemplary tourism destinations can be organized. The establishment of foreign language courses at a basic level in the district with the cooperation of the Municipality, Ministry of National Education and universities is likely to contribute to a more positive outlook of the local people regarding tourism development.

The study involves a number of limitations in view of time, cost and application constraints. First of all, the convenience sampling method was preferred for obtaining data. The study was carried out with local people who live in Beypazarı district of Ankara and agreed to complete the questionnaire voluntarily. Therefore, the study findings cannot be generalized to the local population. It is thought that it will be

possible to monitor and predict the support for tourism development by repeating this study in the future. Furthermore, it is considered that examining the perception, attitude and support of different stakeholders of tourism in future studies will contribute to the literature.

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